

THE SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY 2003

Changes in the layout within the Museum brought benefits to the Society during 2003. The Victorian parlour became the Info Point, a room packed with information about the County and manned – or womanned – by experts from the Museum's staff ready to answer any questions thrown at them. So, instead of visitors drifting about outside our Library door, we have new notice boards and a permanent information resource on our very doorstep.

A steady stream of visitors continue to come into our Library, some to just look, but mostly to use our research facilities, both the comprehensive bookshelves and the treasures from the muniment room below. My own forays downstairs to sort the society's own papers, always end in my being diverted by the wonderful documents stored down there.

We have taken the Society out into the wider world twice this year with stands at both the Bucks Family History Society Open Day, held at Aylesbury Grammar School on July 26th, and at the hugely successful Bucks Local History Network Conference, held all day on October 4th at Gerrards Cross. Both events brought in new members and resulted in sales of our publications.

MEMBERSHIP

From the end of 2002 until 31st December 2003 the Society saw a decline in its membership by nine. However, we gained one more institutional mem-

ber, bringing that up to 25. The total membership stands at 451, which includes 303 individual members, 132 families, 14 life, and two juniors. Over the year we lost 10 members who died, and gained 34 new members.

COUNCIL

The Society's Council met four times in 2003, on January 18th, March 22nd, June 21st and October 11th, at the County Museum. Council members were: Professor W.R.Mead, President of the Society; Dr A.J.C.Balfour; Roger Bettridge, County Archivist; Maureen Brown, Hon. Sec.; Professor John Clarke, Hon. Editor of Records; Brian Davis, Hon. Treasurer; Mike Davis, Vice-Chairman of the Council; Sarah Gray, Museum Curator; Diana Gulland, Hon. Archivist and Librarian; Cllr. Brenda Jennings from Bucks County Council; Helen Jones; Sandy Kidd, from the County Archaeological Service; Edward Legg, Chairman of Council; Gary Marshall, from the National Trust; Mike Palmer, Natural History Section; Dr David Thorpe; and Dr Ian Toplis. Newsletter Editor, Fergus Laing resigned on leaving the district, and Julian Hunt took over his duties.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Museum on April 26th and was attended by about 60 members. After the reports and elections, the meeting ended informally over drinks and a buffet.

Lecture Series 2003

- January 25th: The Collections of the
County Museum.
Sarah Gray
- February 22nd: Recent Archaeology
Projects in Bucks.
Sandy Kidd
- March 22nd: High Wycombe Past.
James Rattue
- November 8th: Whiteleaf Project.
Gill Hey
- December 13th: Chairmaking in
the Chilterns.
Catherine Weston

Outings 2003

- May 24th: Chartwell & Knole.
- June 28th: Old Amersham Town;
walk with Julian Hunt.
- August 2nd: Humps & Bumps Tour of North
Bucks with Peter Gulland
- August 30th: Sutton Hoo & Orford Castle
- September 27th: Church Crawl with Michael
Hardy

*Maureen Brown***Churches visited on Church Crawls in recent years.**

- 1999: Wing, Mentmore, Wavendon, Leighton Buzzard (Bedfordshire), Edlesborough, Ivinghoe, Pitstone, Drayton Beauchamp.
- 2000: Stone, Dinton, Haddenham, Ilmer, Long Crendon, Ickford, Ludgershall, Wotton Underwood.
- 2001: Broughton (MK), Milton Keynes Village, Gayhurst, Olney, Weston Underwood, Ravenstone, Hanslope, Castlethorpe.
- 2002: North Marston, Middle Claydon, Chetwode, Gawcott, Buckingham, Addington, Whitchurch, Hardwick.
- 2003: Iver, Slough (St Mary), Dorney, Burnham, Hitcham, Dropmore, Great Missenden.

NB *Churches visited on Church Crawls between 1972 and 1998 have been listed in earlier volumes of the Records of Bucks (e.g. 1998 was detailed on page 120 of volume 40).*

Michael G. Hardy

THE LIBRARY

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 2003

- ALCOCK, N.W. Documenting the history of houses. 2003.
- ARMOUR, C. A display case in the Library: the history of the Chesham Town Museum Project. 2003.
- AYERS, R. & LAMBERT, A. Stony Stratford past. 2003.
- BRANIGAN, K. & NIBLETT, R. The Roman Chilterns. 2003
- CHESS VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Register of baptisms and burials 1743–1760 & marriages 1743–March 1754 for the parish of Chesham, Buckinghamshire. 2003.
- COSTAR, I, editor. Ludgershall: a village in Buckinghamshire. 2003.
- EDMONDS, G.C. A history of Chalfont St. Peter and Gerrards Cross (reprint of 1968 version) together with The history of Bulstrode by Audrey Baker. 2003.
- ENEVER, T. Lengthening shadows: Bletchley and Woburn Sands district and the impact of Milton Keynes 1970–2003. 2003.
- FAULKNER, N. The decline and fall of Roman Britain. 2000.
- FEARN, J. Discovering heraldry. 2000.
- GEM, R. All Saints church Wing. 2003.
- GREEN, M. Medieval Penn floor tiles: made by England's leading 14th-century tilers who gave their name to Tylers Green. 2003.
- GROF, L.L. Children of straw: the story of straw plait, a vanished craft and industry. 2nd ed. 2003.
- GURNEY, R.J.M. The Gurneys of St. Clement Danes: a family history. 2003.
- HUNT, J. A history of Amersham. 2001.
- HUNTER, J. A history of Upton Park and Herschel Park Slough. Buckinghamshire Papers No.3, 2003.
- JARVIS, S.M. Discovering Christian names: over 1200 names with their meanings. 2nd ed. 1986.
- LAWSON, P. George Grenville: a political life. 1984.
- LEGG, E. Woughton on the Green through the centuries: a history of Woughton on the Green Buckinghamshire through the ages. 2003.
- MEAD, W.R. Pehr Kalm: a Finnish visitor to the Chilterns in 1748. 2003.
- RATTUE, J. High Wycombe past. 2002.
- RODWELL, G. Quainton armed services 1939–1945. Revised ed. 1995.
- ROSSITER, T. Only a bloody game! (25 years playing cricket for The Lee village team). 2002.
- ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE. Review of the year 2000–2001. (Includes an article on Sarah Tomlin who was awarded a medal at the Halton Industrial Exhibition of 1868). 2001.
- ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE. Review of the year 2001–2002. (Includes an article which refers to the Buckinghamshire Rothschilds). 2002
- ROWLANDS, S. Around Iver. 2003.
- ROYE, H. Nude ego: an autobiography with 130 photographs by the author. (Horace Roye-Narbeth, elder son of Narbeth the Aylesbury draper). 1955.
- SOLIK, M. editor. New perspectives on Chiltern landscapes. Papers presented at the Chilterns Historical Environment Conference 2003.
- SPENCER, J. compiler. Recording a parish, Iver Church Fee Book 1725/6–1779. 2002.
- TAYLOR, J. & WHITMORE, T. Bletchley town historical trail (including Fenny Stratford & Water Eaton): a guided walk through the past. 2003.
- TIMMS, M. Poet's England – 1. Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire. 1976.
- TWIST, M. The glory days (Round Hill estate, Kimble). 2001.

ELLIOTT VINEY BEQUEST

ALECTO HISTORICAL EDITIONS. Domesday Book studies. 1987.

ALECTO HISTORICAL EDITIONS. The Buckinghamshire Domesday with folios and maps. 1988.

COOKE, G.A. A topographical and statistical description of the County of Buckingham. New edition. 1830.

HABERLY, L. Medieval English pavingtiles. 1937.

LIPSCOMB, G. History and antiquities of the County of Buckingham. 4 volumes. 1847.

STOWE. A description of the magnificent house and gardens. 1766 and 1768.

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY of the county of Buckinghamshire. (originally from the Dropmore Library of Lord Kelmsley). 4 volumes + index.

WILKES, J. A complete collection of the genuine paper, letters etc. from the case of John Wilkes. (Handwritten on flyleaf are names of the members of the Medmenham Abbey Society as stated by an old woman at Medmenham to John Coper July 1910). 1767.

WILKES, J. The North Briton. Numbers complete.

Illustrated with useful and explanatory notes, and a collection of all the proceedings in the House of Commons, and Courts of Westminster, against Mr. Wilkes. With all tracts and papers relating to the North Briton, Essay on Woman, Election for Middlesex, etc. 4 volumes. 1772.

WILKES, J. The speeches of Mr. (John) Wilkes in the House of Commons. 1786.

WILLIS, Browne. The history and antiquities of the Town, Hundred, and Deanery of Buckingham. (With numerous notes and additions in the margins and on slips of paper by the author). 1755.

In addition to the books listed above 175 smaller items were added to stock a large number of which were articles from journals but also included were church guides and newspaper cuttings.

Diana Gulland
Hon. Librarian/Archivist

THE NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

SUMMARY OF FIELD VISITS AND LECTURES ORGANISED BY THE SECTION DURING 2003

11th January: Black Poplars; Past, Present & Future in Aylesbury Vale. Twenty-seven members attended Alan Holmes' informative talk on this County speciality. Alan described how, out of a nationwide population of 15,000, recent survey work had identified some 4,600 specimens of this rare native tree growing within Aylesbury Vale. He noted, however, that of these, only 30 were female trees. This disproportionate ratio, he suggested, could indicate that many of the Buckinghamshire specimens had been deliberately planted, as male trees are preferred over females due to the mass of cotton-like material that accompanies the seeds of the latter. For what purpose, however, currently remains a mystery. Alan also covered how to identify Black Poplars and where to find them in Buckinghamshire and looked at their history, ecology and use.

16th February: Birdwatch at Thursley Heath. On the coldest day in living memory, the long drive to this National Nature Reserve in Surrey was rewarded with sightings of active Dartford Warblers and Great Grey Shrike. Other birds spotted included all three species of woodpecker, a lively flock of Reed Buntings with at least one Redpoll amongst them. Later, whilst we were enjoying Goldcrests and Coal Tits moving around the canopy of a group of conifers, three Bullfinches flew over. These, along with the many other species spotted, made this joint meeting with the Bucks Bird Club a very rewarding one.

15th March: Switzerland. Fourteen members were in attendance to hear Victor Scott recount his recent visit to Switzerland. The country's plant life was his main focus of attention, taking him to valleys and mountains alike. Particular attention was paid to different microhabitats that occur and the influence of geology on these. The talk was accompanied by slides of superb quality, taken by his wife, Christine.

5th April: The Annual General Meeting was followed by an impromptu plant identification exer-

cise, complete with audience participation. In the first, of what is to become an annual '*members' contributions*' event, Mike Palmer brought along a selection of botanical slides from the Museum's collection that, up until this meeting, had been filed under '*to be identified*'. With the aid of Roy Maycock's expert eye we embarked on a botanical mystery tour, pondering, deliberating and ultimately identifying (in most cases) a wide selection of British and Mediterranean species. Sixteen members attended.

24th May: A joint meeting with the Bucks Invertebrate Group to Langley Park. The morning began with the four people in attendance progressing slowly along an avenue of aged oaks, pausing at selected trees to shake branches vigorously over a large beating tray. Such was the diversity of resulting fall-out that, even with the aid of County Moth Recorder, Martin Albertini, it wasn't possible to put names to all the creatures. It was, however, a lesson in the rich biodiversity to be found in an oak tree and several useful identification tips were learnt. Eventually, our route led us to the Park's small arboretum, in which it was nice to find a specimen of the rare Wild Service Tree.

5th July: A botanical walk around Calvert Reservoir. Eight members joined Roy Maycock to explore the flora of this former clay pit and landfill site. Starting at the southern end we made our way through a patch of young woodland onto the grassy margins at the south east end of the lake. Here, we saw a range of typical grassland plants including Wild Strawberry and Devil's-bit Scabious. Grasshoppers were very much in evidence as were Marbled White, Ringlet and Essex Skipper butterflies. As the land narrowed between the lake and the wooded former railway line, we discovered Perforate and Square-stemmed St John's-wort growing in close proximity. Emerging into the more spacious northern margins of the lake, the Reserve's former use as a rubbish dump was most obvious. Here, a thin covering of poor clay-based soil (callow) was only sporadically colonised with

ephemeral weeds, with the pretty Scarlet Pimpernel and the distinctive Yellow-wort providing some colour.

20th September: A geological excursion with Dr Michael Oates. The morning was spent at Studley Grange, Swindon, scouring the exposure of Lower Kimmeridge Clay. The site was notable for the sheer number of fossils lying on the surface and the huge cemented nodules containing beautiful, cavernous, calcite crystal formations. Finds included specimens of ammonites (*Rasenia* sp.) and brachiopods (*Lingula* sp.). Lunch was taken at The Plough, Cirencester, a pub famous for being the home of W.J. Arkell, author of '*Jurassic Geology of Great Britain*', (1933), combining real ale and excellent food with a 'museum' of local fossils. After lunch, we headed to the Lower Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds at Latton where we scoured for fossil remains of mammals and reptiles without success. However, an ammonite of gigantic proportions was lowered into the finder's boot to become a garden feature. The presence of a Romano-British burial site, which had just been pegged out prior to excavation, added interest. Before the day's end, one final visit was made to investigate the underlying clay and Kellaways Sandstone at nearby Kent End. The spoil heaps from the quarry workings were littered with, what looked like, stone cricket balls. Each one, on closer inspection, revealed itself to be a perfect *Cadoceras* sp ammonite, a rather sphaeroidal genus, common in the Kellaways Beds which formed the base of the gravel pit.

19th October: Joint meeting with the Bucks Fungus Group to Hodgemoor Woods. Unfortunately no members were able to attend this particular meeting.

21st November: A Friday afternoon 'behind-the-scenes' visit to the Bird Collections at the Walter Rothschild Museum, Tring. Eleven members were met by Collection Manager, Dr Robert Prys-Jones. He began by noting that the collections stored here represent the National Bird Collections, as managed by the Natural History Museum, rather than the Rothschild bird collection. Most of the latter had, unfortunately, been sold to the American Museum of Natural History by the Rothschilds well before the NHM moved its collections out here in the early 1970s. The tour began in the impressive surroundings of Walter Rothschild's library, before moving on to the more practical environment of the specimen preparation areas. Here, we were shown how bird skins were preserved while, in a side room, tanks of beetle larvae were literally stripping others to the bone. The collections proper were spread over three floors and included many rare and historic specimens; Darwin's Finches collected on his Beagle voyage, eggs from the Great Auk and a composite skeleton of a Dodo, to name but a few. At the end of the day, despite the afternoon's explorations, we were still very aware that we had only managed to see a fraction of this vast collection.

20th December: Andorra. On the weekend before Christmas, eleven members attended this illustrated talk by Victor Scott. The two sides of Andorra were shown. Firstly, the well known tax-haven and duty-free destination that is the town, and secondly, and of greater interest, the surrounding countryside that formed the main body of this talk. As usual, slides of excellent quality illustrated the country's flora and fauna. This, combined with the knowledge and enthusiasm of the speaker, produced another fascinating and informative talk.

Mike Palmer