

## Local History Recording Scheme : Berkshire Branch.

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

*January 1st to December 31st, 1941.*

FROM our Local Correspondents 16 records have been received, and up to the end of 1941, 581 approved records have been sent in relating to 141 parishes in the county. Five new Correspondents have been enrolled during 1941 and our Correspondents now number 212, representing 181 parishes. We again regret to report the loss by death of several valued Correspondents : some are serving with H.M. Forces, or engaged on Civil Defence and other wartime duties, and can no longer give us active help, while others have left the district. In spite of war conditions, however, it is encouraging to report that interest in the Scheme is well maintained ; numerous queries are received with regard to the local history and the antiquities of the county and interesting records have been sent in ; it is known that many others are being compiled. As much work is waiting to be done, the Committee would take this opportunity of asking all who can help to do so.

There is one branch of work to which special attention should be given. It is most desirable that in each parish a record should be kept of the effects of the War on the district. With regard to this our Chairman, Mr. P. S. Spokes, wrote recently,

"I hope the Scheme will be able to encourage the recording of the War activities and happenings in the parishes at this present time ; it may be difficult to persuade people to record things as they happen, but it will be still more difficult, I think, when peace comes, and the local events tend to be forgotten very soon."

If notes on such matters as the ploughing up of grass lands, evacuees, billeting, effects of enemy action, the Home Guard, distinctions awarded to Members of the Forces and others engaged in the war effort, etc., were made while the information is readily available, such particulars would form an invaluable series of records at the end of the war. Great assistance in this respect can be given by members of Women's Institutes and by teachers, and it is hoped that a greater measure of co-operation between all persons interested in local studies and in the various problems of country life will result in work which will be of lasting value and a permanent contribution to the history of the countryside.

The Committee wishes to lay stress once more on a further important point connected with the war, and that is the problem of salvage. It is realized that salvage is a patriotic duty, but the Committee feels that a word of caution is here necessary to avoid

the indiscriminate destruction, without careful examination, of books, pamphlets, old deeds, family papers and letters and other manuscripts, prints, photographs and pictorial matter which in some cases may contain valuable, or even unique, information concerning the history of the neighbourhood and of the families connected with it.

With regard to Monumental Inscriptions, one list relating to Grove, near Wantage, has been received this year and four others are nearing completion. Up to the end of 1941, lists of Inscriptions in 130 parishes has been received, or promised.

In our last Annual Report reference was made to the newly formed Architectural Records Committee. This Committee, our Local Correspondents will be glad to know, has made excellent progress and up to the end of last year had obtained 2,130 photographs and other illustrations of Berkshire buildings, mostly in duplicate, many of which will be of considerable local historical value in the future. More photographic helpers, however, are required, as there is a great deal of work waiting to be done, and the Committee will, be glad of the assistance of any Local Correspondents who take photographs. Arrangements can be made with regard to materials.

With reference to finance, the Hon. Treasurer reports that he now has a balance of 9/5.

The Committee again wishes to thank the various affiliated Societies for their constant interest and support, and also the Chairman, the Hon. Director, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, and to express its gratitude to the various Correspondents who have sent in records and helped in other ways during the year to further the work of the Scheme.