

37th ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

This Annual Report of the Berkshire Local History Committee covers the period from the 1st January to the 31st December, 1960.

During the year the Committee's activities have continued and the seven records received bring the total number of approved records to 832, representing 163 parishes in the county. Six new Correspondents were enrolled, bringing the total number to 176, representing 187 Berkshire parishes.

We much regret to report the death of several Local Correspondents during the year, including that of Mrs. Muriel Clark, a member of this Committee, who was always willing to assist enquirers in their researches into Berkshire local history, and more particularly into Reading family history and genealogy. Her great MS. local index, the fruit of 40 years' work and research on local matters, has been deposited in the Reading Public Library Local Collection.

At the present time interest in local history is widespread throughout the country; the press, radio, television and the documentary film having all played their part in bringing this about. In Berkshire, lectures on local history are eagerly sought after, but suitably qualified lecturers who can devote time to the necessary research are not easy to find. It is hoped that those possessing special knowledge of Berkshire localities and willing to assist by giving talks, or courses of lectures, on the history of these districts, will communicate with the Hon. Secretary so that a much-needed panel of local lecturers can be formed.

In spite of the increasing interest in local history, our Correspondents have sent in fewer records than usual during the past year, which is partly due to several records now being prepared not having been completed in time. There is much material still available in Berkshire towns and villages illustrating the past life of the countryside, but here, as in other counties, collectors of this unpublished local material often fail to make systematic records of their findings, and thus much valuable information is lost. We would, therefore, urge all Local Correspondents to do their best to send in at least one record during the present year; in particular, information relating to customs, legends and traditions should be gathered together and recorded without delay.

During the year the "*Reading Standard*", in conjunction with this Committee, sponsored a Local History Essay Competition to encourage the recording of material which would otherwise be lost, but the response, unfortunately was smaller than expected.

The Committee was represented by two delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Standing Conference for Local History (National Council of Social Service) held in November at Friends' House, London.

With regard to finance: the balance in hand at the end of the year was £13 13s. od. Further donations and subscriptions will be gratefully received, as the income of the Committee is derived from these voluntary gifts.

The Committee again wishes to thank the various Affiliated Societies for their continued interest and support, to record its appreciation of the work of its officers and also to express its gratitude to the various Local Correspondents who have spent in records during the year and in other ways have helped to further the work and aims of the Berkshire Local History Committee.