

## THE MUSEUM

As a result of a decision some time ago that a structural investigation should gradually be carried out of the whole Museum, a start was made on this during the year. Unfortunately, major structural problems were found in the part of the building used for offices. This meant that three offices have been unusable and also that some relocation is necessary as a result of overloading of the second floor of the whole building. This is producing major problems as it will mean relocating the Field Archaeologist, Archaeological Records Assistant and the Biological Record.

During the year there were two particularly important exhibitions. One, 'Portrait of a Town — Aylesbury in photographs' was made up of prints made from a collection of glass plate negatives which are in private possession and which had never previously been exhibited. This as expected proved a most popular exhibition and thanks are due to the owner for

allowing it to take place.

The other main exhibition was 'Image of Man' from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation. This was of the highest quality and included work by such people as: Bourdelle, Derain, Epstein, Ernest, Giacometti, Hepworth, Modigliani, Picasso, Renoir, Rodin. Thanks are due to the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation for their help in allowing the Museum to have this exhibition.

The Aylesbury Past Project under Hal Dalwood continued for the whole year. The results of the excavation and field work is recorded in the Archaeological Notes. There was, in addition, an oral history recording project. The work done by the team has proved invaluable.

The number of visitors to the Museum during the year was: 36439.

## COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

*Condensed from the Report of the County Archivist*

The absence on sick leave of the full-time searchroom supervisor put staff under increased pressure in maintaining the existing service.

The report compiled by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts following their visit to the Office last year is being considered by the County Secretary and Solicitor. The report's recommendation for an immediate increase in staffing is to be examined by the Management Services Unit. The outcome is awaited with hope.

There was a total of 132 accessions during the year, the same total as for 1985.

Chiltern District Council deposited the records of its two predecessor authorities,

Amersham Rural District Council and Chesham Urban District Council. They incorporate earlier records of the Amersham Rural Sanitary Authority and the Chesham Local Board of Health. Included among the Chesham records are minutes of the parish vestry and the town silver band. Additional material was also received for the boroughs of Buckingham and Aylesbury, and for Newport Pagnell R.D.C. More unusual is a stray file of Quarter Sessions indictments for 1663 which predates the existing series of sessions rolls.

The ecclesiastical parishes of Amersham and Whitchurch deposited their older records. The Amersham records, a particularly fine group, include parish registers from 1560, churchwardens' accounts from 1597 (with some earlier accounts for the reign of Henry VIII), and

accounts of the overseers of the poor from 1611, as well as a tax assessment for Burnham Hundred, 1695.

Material for the study of twentieth-century political organization included the records of the Chesham Labour Party, and associated minutes of the Chesham United Trades and Labour Council from 1913. They were balanced by the records of the Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association.

School records were represented by those of Sir William Borlase's School, Great Marlow, a grammar school founded in 1624. The most substantial document is an account book recording the income and expenditure of the school trustees from 1795 to 1814. A letter of 1834 reveals the crisis caused by the imprisonment of the then headmaster, William Francis, for libelling the senior trustee.

Brown and Merry, Estate Agents, presented a sample of the files of their Aylesbury office covering the years 1930-50. Smaller groups of business records were received for Bird Brothers, builders, of Milton Keynes, 1876-1960, and Francis Coales and Son (Tring) Ltd, animal food manufacturers, 1936-1978.

Property records for three estates in north Bucks came via the British Records Association. These were Tickford Abbey, Thornton Hall, and the Hoare family's Wavendon estate. Some additional deeds for the Shardeloes estate in Amersham, and a set of late eighteenth-century accounts of payments to labourers and craftsmen on the Chester family's Chicheley estate were acquired with assistance from the

Purchase Grant Fund. The Buckinghamshire Record Society helped with the purchase of an estate map of the manor of Dunton, near Winslow, dated 1653, drawn by the astrologer Joseph Blagrave. By a happy chance the written survey made by Blagrave to accompany the map was found to be already in the Record Office among the Hampden archives.

Other estate records received included a plan for a staircase at Denham Place, 1777, and court books for the manor of Whitchurch, 1710-1888.

Finally, Mr E. B. Basden's collection of MS material relating to Buckinghamshire has been supplemented by his personal papers relating to his activities as collector and bibliographer, deposited by his widow.

In spite of staffing problems, time was found for classifying and cataloguing in final form the records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) which date back to the 1660s. More work was also done on the records of Wigley, estate agents of Winslow, in order to complete the list of the principal series of property papers, and a medium-sized collection of business records was catalogued.

The number of personal visits to the Office was 2645 (2469 in 1985). The figure for postal enquiries was 706(783). A total of 2735(2750) telephone calls was logged, of which 1172(1348) were enquiries and the rest were reservations, etc. Document slips presented amounted to 7728(6755) and a total of 13,452(9893) items were produced.

## REVIEWS

*The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)*. Ed. Ann Kussmaul, pp. xxxii + 101. Bucks Record Society No. 23, 1986. ISBN 0 901198 19 6. £10.00 cloth, £4.50 paperback.

In their twenty-third publication the Bucks Record Society have broken new ground.

Although not 'popular' in a pejorative sense, this most touching autobiography of a farm labourer at the beginning of the nineteenth century must have a wider appeal than some of the Society's earlier volumes and this, coupled with its use as one episode in a worthy television series (*This Land of England*) has led to it appearing not only in the familiar yellow cloth

binding but also in paperback form.

Mayett was exceptional in being literate as a labourer at that time—his mother had taught him to read—and never 'taught' to write; yet despite the lack of punctuation or grammatical form, his shaky spelling and uncertain capitalization, his narrative is clear, so spontaneous that reading is easy and has been much helped by the editor who has sensibly divided the text into logical paragraphs.

The interest is threefold. The bread-line poverty of the casual farm labourer who, if he failed to be hired at the October hiring fairs might be 'on the parish' receiving perhaps four shillings a week at least one of which went on his cottage rent. The grim details of hiring, tough farmers (although there were exceptions), the wages and the work are both valuable and moving. However, half the text is taken up with Mayett's twelve years service with the Royal Bucks Militia which he joined at Buckingham in March 1803 and served till the end of the war. It was a tough life but at least he was fed and clothed and his ability to read and write was an advantage.

The third strand—and to Mayett by far the most important—is the information he gives about the Baptist church and his own spiritual struggles. The new little chapel which still survives on Winchendon Hill (and has lately been acquired by the Friends of Friendless Churches) had been perennially short of money and their quarrels both theological and worldly make sad reading. Yet clearly it was his simple and genuine religious faith that sustained Mayett in his difficult yet somehow inspiring life.

The editor's general introduction and footnotes are models of their kind.

E.V.

*Seventy Summers*. Tony Harman, pp. 256. BBC Publications, 1986. £12.95 cloth, £8.95 paperback.

'This is the story of one farmer and one farm', written to accompany a series of tele-

vision programmes which are awaited with keen interest. The author 'had Grove Farm—that was all that mattered' at the age of 19. A full autobiography would include much that is here mentioned only incidentally, such as Harman's successful building enterprise and his distinguished public and political service, here recounted only when it directly concerned agriculture. His greatest achievement was to introduce the Charolais breed into England, and hence to the world.

During the century after the Norman Conquest the Saxon family of del Broc, whose seat was at Hundridge, were actively engaged in assarting in the upland hamlets of Great Chesham. They enclosed two virgates, about sixty acres, near Whelpley Hill (which did not rank as a separate hamlet). The bounds are still clear enough on the map and on the ground, but they soon extended their holding, and by the critical year 1290 it ranked as a manor distinct from Chesham Higham, though the Earls of Oxford still claimed overlordship. By 1362 Grove Manor was held by the great house of Cheyne, whose Lollard sympathies contributed to that radical dissent which has so long characterized the area. Their moat, on this dry plateau (520 ft.), is the best in our county, with inner and outer ramparts and an inner moat enclosing an almost unique example of medieval domestic flintwork. Harman acknowledges our President's share in his decision to turn this haunted hall, long used as a barn, into what became his home, though this was not his original intention. 'At the finish Florence and I fell in love with it.' On learning that the arch over his front door came from Tisbury in Wiltshire, he sent down to Tisbury to get the right stone. The locals insisted that this was a Roman site, and Mr Harman found many Roman and Belgic sherds when clearing the moat.

Total recall is an uncommon gift, and a style to convey it even rarer. It was not until his first seventy years were almost complete that Mr Harman began his delightful series of articles in the *Guardian*. In this book he records just what it feels like to drive a cow home from Milk Hall along the lanes, to milk by hand in a cold leaky cowshed, and to overcome the difficulties of

harvesting flax or vegetable seeds. He recalls with candour and not without regret his enthusiastic bulldozing of hedges in the forties; but he has planted trees intermittently since he was ten, and he was not the first hedge-grubber, even on this demesne farm of small closes. The map of the environs of the Grove on p. 6, which superimposes the Tithe Award on the first six-inch cadastral survey, shows that during 1840–79 ten small fields lost their identity and five little woods or dells disappeared; but the following sixty years of low farming substantially froze the late medieval field pattern for Tony Harman to inherit and to change. He was born in 1912 at Little Grove Farm (within the two virgates) which his father, a Bond Street silversmith, had bought very cheaply. In that year the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments identified the Grove Farm complex as 'especially worthy of preservation', as *The Times* noticed; Lord Beauchamp's Ancient Monuments Bill had just been passed, and was invoked to protect it. The manor had been held by the Lowndes family since 1692, and its tenant was allegedly the worst farmer in Bucks. Sydney Harman bought Grove soon after the Armistice, when landlords were panicking; his son assumed control in 1931, after one year at Cambridge. During the twenties its bailiff, 'The Preacher', a thoroughgoing nonconformist, set to work to teach young Tony everything he could.

The only local book like this, and its acknowledged exemplar, is John Wilkins's *An English Gamekeeper*. 'I decided to carry on where he left off.' Mr Harman kept no diary, but where one can check his memories they appear generally accurate, perceptive and quite fair. His highly memorable gallery of characters includes old-fashioned farming Puddephatts, Batchelors and Browns who still did things properly, his formidable grandmother Alice Warrender and his great friend Aneurin Bevan, whom he introduced to Asheridge and who in return secured him Cowcroft, once a capital messuage of Chesham Bury.

Mr Harman's reconstruction of William Cobbett's rural ride of 1822 is clearly right as regards his own neighbourhood; however, it

seems clear that Cobbett entered Chesham but chose to miss the pocket borough of Amersham. If so, his route was probably up Fuller's Hill and through Pipers Wood to Mop End. The commons which he crossed were Sheephanger ('Shipangle' to us locals), Ley Hill and what was then Wycombe Heath.

Perhaps regrettably 'The Road to Wooden Babylon' is the title of a chapter rather than of the book. The eight cottages so called were replaced by a health farm, the predecessor of Champneys, and the site was renamed Orchard Leigh (*quaere*, because the neighbouring Lye Green was alternatively Leigh Green?). Now the orchards are gone.

The busiest of the Seventy Summers occurred about halfway through. Mr Harman's public life became increasingly varied, his farming less so. The Grove came to specialize in beef cattle, and its crops were limited to wheat, barley and rape, with yields beyond all expectation. 'We have given up our capability for doing a lot of different things'; but he foresees a future more diversified and less boring. The end of high farming a century ago led to the countryside becoming more beautiful, with more woods, more flowers and more wildlife. 'The same thing will happen again.'

A.H.J.B.

*A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes*. Paul Woodfield and Milton Keynes Development Council, pp. xvi + 192, 14 pp. colour plates. Milton Keynes Development Council, 1986. ISBN 0 903379 05 8.

To report on 663 buildings is an heroic undertaking, and the authors have discharged it with notable success. Their introduction strikes a most welcome note: '... historic buildings . . . provide an intangible link with time past and with geographical identity. Research has shown that this link seems to be an important factor in the stability of . . . human communities'. This needed saying.

The definition of 'Historic Buildings' here applied is happily wider than that allowed to DoE listers, and many good recent buildings

are included. The authors are sensitive to townscape, and sympathetic to the work of minor architects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The fact that a number of hands have been at work is not obtrusive, and the writing is in general lucid and lively; the writer whose work stands out in this respect is clearly a person of wide-ranging scholarship.

Where dissatisfaction is felt it is not as a rule the fault of the authors. It must have been financial constraint that led to the exclusion of measured drawings, apart from one long section and one isometric; but the absence of plans and sections makes it harder to understand some of the buildings. One would have very much liked to know more, for example, about the 'quasi-cruck' at Brookfield Cottages, Bradwell (what *is* a quasi-cruck?). But this is perhaps a specialist's complaint. Similarly the brevity of the essays is no doubt unavoidable, but it has allowed very little in the way of supporting evidence for most of the dates proposed. This is the more unfortunate in that a number of photographs of timber-framed buildings give some grounds for questioning the

suggested dates. However, the more important buildings are properly given much fuller treatment.

The 'hammer beams' in the Chantry House, Fenny Stratford, would have been better designated 'stub ties', since their structural function is quite different from that of true hammer beams.

The lack of captions to make clear the viewpoints of the pictures is a small obstacle to comprehension, as it sometimes makes it difficult to relate picture and text. The pictures themselves are mostly informative, however, though of varying quality. The proof-reading leaves something to be desired.

The function of a guide is to accompany a visitor, and this book will come into its own when used in that way. It is a considerable tribute to it, however, that it is to some extent a substitute for a visit, giving a clear and comprehensive conspectus of what there is to be seen in the new City.

J.C.T.

## OBITUARY

### *Rex Wailes*

Reginald (Rex) Wailes, OBE, FSA, FFSA, FIMechE, died in January 1986, aged 84, after being ill for some time. He was a remarkable character in many ways, combining the unusual qualities of a practical and practising engineer with a keen and perceptive artistic appreciation. Even at school he showed an interest in history, winning a school history prize.

After training and apprenticeship he entered his father's engineering firm in the Euston Road. During the war, he adapted its equipment for the production of precision tools for the Government and finally became Manager. He was closely associated with the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the Newcomen Society, of which he became President.

From 1963 to 1971 he served as consultant to the first Industrial Monument Survey spon-

sored by the Council for British Archaeology—a most important and exacting task for which he was awarded the OBE in 1971. He also had close links with the SPAB, for whom he published a source book of Windmills and Watermills. His best-known work, for which he will be principally remembered, was *The English Windmill*, published in 1954. His wide historical and practical knowledge in this field took him far and wide, and he actually designed and supervised the construction and erection of a windmill for Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia.

He was a member of the Bucks Archaeological Society for many years and his advice was always available concerning windmills and watermills in the county. He was elected a Vice-President and was a regular attender at our meetings.

His wife, Enid (née Berridge) survives him, and through her his artistic appreciation was nurtured and sharpened. Her father ran the Wigmore Hall (where I was often privileged to hear music I could never otherwise have enjoyed, from the Director's seats!). Enid was herself a talented violinist. One of Rex's great friends was Tom Hennell, the artist, and he had a collection of his paintings—many of which, needless to say, were of windmills.

So passed a notable character who will be sadly missed and gratefully remembered in a number of fields, but above all, as a man.

E.C.R.

#### *Mrs Kate White*

Kate White was a great Aylesbury personality. Starting as a junior in Aylesbury Borough offices, she was elected to that council

in 1945 and was Mayor 1951–53. At that time she and her husband were managers of the King's Head. A number of years in the printing industry were followed by an appointment as Appeals Secretary of a national charity (Spina Bifida). She was a keen and informed member of this Society.

E.V.

Other losses to the Society during 1986 were occasioned by the deaths of Mr E. Muir-Smith, Mr D. E. North and Mr Alan Ruse who, for many years, was a regular attender at the Outings. Lady (Evelyn) Pauncefort-Duncombe of Great Brickhill died on 31 May not long before her ninetieth birthday; although not an active member she always took a lively interest in the Society for the near sixty years that she was a member. She had resigned as a member a year before her death.

## THE SOCIETY

### *Membership*

The Society learnt with regret during 1986 of the deaths of Lady (Evelyn) Duncombe, Mrs Kate White, E. Muir-Smith, D. E. North, F. Peers, and Alan Ruse.

At 31 December 1986, paid-up membership comprised 396 ordinary members, 133 family memberships, 3 juniors (exclusive of those in family memberships) and 16 affiliated societies.

### *Council*

Council met five times during the year, under the chairmanship of Dr A. H. J. Baines, FSA. With great regret Council accepted the resignation for reasons of ill health of Mrs E. M. Elvey, for many years the Hon. Archivist, and wishes to express its sincere thanks for the great contributions made to the work of the Society by both Mrs Elvey and her late husband, G. R. Elvey, FSA. Mrs L. M. Head undertook to double the job of Hon. Archivist with that of Hon. Librarian and Publications Officer. Co-opted to Council were Miss M. E. Devereux (Membership Secretary), E. J. Bull (Newsletter Editor and Meeting Organizer), A. F. Elcoate (Hon. Secretary, Natural History Section), Mrs

Sue Gill (who assists the Hon. Archivist), and G. N. Gowing, MA, FMA (Museum Curator). Miss M. M. T. Gornall assists the Hon. Librarian.

Thanks were expressed to Mrs Elvey for the bequest of £100 received under the will of the late Gerald Elvey.

The Liberty Trust was thanked for a grant of £150 towards rebinding of books in the Society Library and for the gift to the Museum of a John Schorne pilgrim medallion.

Council elected Miss T. E. Vernon, now the senior member of the Society, having joined in 1921, an Honorary Member.

A grant of £10 was made to the Buckinghamshire Council for Voluntary Service.

### *Bucks County Council*

#### *Library & Museum Sub-Committee*

Society representatives were Elliott Viney, FSA, Dr A. H. J. Baines, FSA and Dr R. P. Hagerty.

Financial stringency has hit projects that the County Council had been planning relating to the establishment of Museum services outside Aylesbury. Thus the County Council has had to withdraw from the joint scheme with Wycombe District Council to build a High Wycombe Arts Centre and Library and also to postpone plans for extension of the library at Milton Keynes also to include museum space.

Most worrying for the Society has been the discovery of structural defects in the County Museum. Rectification by the lessees, the County Council, will require considerable work, of which only the most vital can be carried out in the present financial climate.

Careful planning is needed to ensure that essential repairs can be done with least disruption to the opening and usual Museum activities. Heavy items (e.g. filing cabinets) have had to be removed from the second and top floors, a considerable inconvenience for staff and creating further pressure on already inadequate storage space.

It can at least be reported that refurbishment is said to be in hand of a building in Great Missenden as Museum store to replace the store on land in Walton, planned to be sold by the County Council.

#### *Cicely Baker Prize for Historical Research*

Nine entries were received for the third competition. Their high standard posed a difficult problem for the judging committee (Elliott Viney, Mrs Jean Davis, Hugh Hanley and John Chenevix Trench), but the prize was finally awarded to Mrs Jo French, for a paper published in the present volume.

#### *Lecture Series*

Six lectures were organized by Ted Bull and were held generally on Saturday afternoons, usually at the County Museum:

- 18 January: Churches of Buckinghamshire, by Elliott Viney, FSA.
- 8 February: Bancroft—Pre-historic Farm to Roman Villa, by Bob Williams.
- 8 March: Buckinghamshire Medieval Wall

Paintings, by Dr E. Clive Rouse, FSA.

- 16 April: In conjunction with Bucks Historical Association, 1066 and all that—Domesday Book and the Normans, by Professor R. Allen Brown.
- 10 May: At the Misbourne Centre and in conjunction with the Centre. Old Chiltern Maps, by Hugh Hanley, and Missenden Abbey, by Mike Farley.
- 8 November: At the Grange School, Aylesbury, in conjunction with the Bucks Historical Association. Manorial Records of Aylesbury, by Hugh Hanley, and The 1986 Excavations at Walton, by Hal Dalwood.
- 6 December: Viking Period London—the Making of a Capital, by Dr Pamela Nightingale.

#### *Outings*

Six outings were arranged by the President:

- 17 May: Kent. Rochester Cathedral and castle and Lullingstone Castle (G. Hart-Dyke).
- 14 June: Northants. Castle Ashby (Lord Northampton), Stanford Hall (Lady Braye), and Rugby.
- 19 July: Oxfordshire. Stanton Harcourt, house, garden and church (Hon. Mrs Gascoigne), and Pusey House gardens.
- 16 August: Perambulation of the bounds of Monks Risborough, led by Arnold Baines.
- 13 September: Warwickshire. Ragley Hall, Alcester (Lord Hertford), and Packwood House (National Trust) at Hockley Heath.
- 18 October: Bucks Church Crawl. Little Hampden, Great Hampden, Lacey Green, Bradenham, Hughenden, Radnage, Bledlow, and Horsenden.

#### *Defending Our Monuments*

In the course of the year, the Hon. Secretary, on behalf of the Society and the Council for British Archaeology, has dealt with some 90 planning applications. Objection was registered to four applications for listed Building Consent. These were for retrospective consent to demolition of the baldachino in the erstwhile chapel at Britwell House, Burnham (it turned out that the remains were not restorable), to demolition of a cottage at Stoke House, Stoke

Poges (consent believed refused), to conversion into offices of the Derby Arms, St Mary's Square, Aylesbury (refused), and to works proposed by the County Council at Huntercombe House, Burnham (not resolved).

Objection was also made to an application to demolish a building at the rear of 3 Market Square, Buckingham (refused and building now Listed).

The Hon. Secretary has also been involved in opposition to four applications to the Department of the Environment for Scheduled Monument Consent. These were two by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, one to make a cricket pitch on top of earthworks of the Deserted Medieval Village at Woughton-on-the-Green (refused) and the other to build houses obliterating the earthworks of a monastic grange at Shenley Church End (undecided). Wycombe District Council were proposing to build old people's accommodation on the open space adjacent to and within the circuit of the pre-historic limits of Desborough Castle (refused). Another application might have resulted in damage to a mound, most probably a windmill mound, in Wavendon (refused but on other grounds).

Three other planning applications to build in areas of archaeological interest although not Scheduled were also opposed. One was to build a motel/filling station on a piece of land immediately outside the defence line of the Romano-British town of Magiovinium in Bow Brickhill between the old A5 and the new A5T (refused). Two others were concerned with

resiting a cafe/filling station alongside the A5/A5T just to the east of the proposed motel/filling station site (result not known).

As regards the proposed moving of the statue of John Hampden in the Market Square, Aylesbury, neither the Society nor the Aylesbury Society found any interest among members or others.

#### *County Museum Archaeological Group*

There has been no excavation in the county this year calling for major deployment of Group effort, but the Group has continued to give invaluable assistance to the County Field Archaeologist in, among other tasks, post-excavation work which is sometimes tedious and always time-consuming.

#### *Publications*

*Records* Volume 26 (1984) was available at the Annual General Meeting and distribution was completed during May. A Spring and Autumn Newsletter were also distributed to members. It is understood that some numbers of the Newsletter were donated to the Bodleian Library, since when the Society has been asked to supply to four of the six Copyright Libraries. The Society once again owes its thanks to John Chenevix Trench and Mike Farley, FSA, who edit *Records* and to Ted Bull who edits the Newsletters, as also to the Corps of Deliverers who help with distribution. The monograph on Roman Milton Keynes, published by the Society on behalf of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, became available early in 1987.

## NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In 1986 the Section held monthly meetings, seven in the field and five indoors at the County Museum. The Committee met three times, at 13 Forest Close, Wendover, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs H. Bradburn. An outline of the monthly meetings is given below.

*11 January:* On a fine but cold and windy day Mr David Roberts led a party of 17 to

Foxcote Reservoir to see wintering birds and also to Buckingham Canal where he explained the management of this BBONT reserve.

*15 February:* Mr Brian Williamson of BBONT and leader of the Oxfordshire Bat Group gave a very interesting talk on 'Bats' to a large and enthusiastic audience.

*15 March:* With his subject 'Caterpillars',



Mr Victor Scott entertained us with another of his interesting talks.

*5 April:* The Section held its annual general meeting, which was followed by a talk on 'Wildlife in The Lee village' by Mrs Susan Cowdy, MBE.

*30 May:* A small garden party, guided by Mr Victor Scott as night drew in, saw badgers at their setts.

*28 June:* The warden, Mr John Phillips, explained to the 17 members present the management of Aston Clinton Ragpits reserve and pointed out the rich flora it possesses.

*26 July:* A periodic visit to Bledlow Cop, by kind permission of Lord Carrington. The site is now much overgrown and Mr Victor Scott verified the plants seen, the details being passed to the County Museum's Keeper of Biology who, over the years, has kept a record of plants identified.

*30 August:* Mrs Susan Cowdy on a cool, cloudy afternoon led the party at Wilstone and Marsworth reservoirs when the following birds were observed: Mute Swan, Coot, Mallard, Pochard, Ruddy Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Moorhen, Tufted Duck, Green Sandpiper as well as House Martins and a young Cuckoo.

*20 September:* The following were noted at Rushbeds Wood when Mr Aubrey Woodward was our guide: Ragged Robin, Wood Sorrel, Spindle, Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage, Water Starwort, Dogwood, Honeysuckle, Great Valerian, Devilsbit Scabious, Fleabane, Great Burdock, Hemp Agrimony, Yellow Pim-

pernel, Creeping Jenny, Red Bartsia, Figwort, Foxglove, Gypsywort, Yellow Archangel, Aspen, Jointed Rush, Wall-rue Spleenwort and Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*).

*11 October:* With Mr Victor Scott leading the fungus foray at Stockgrove Park when ground conditions were very dry, 21 species were identified: *Amanita citrina*, *A. muscaria*, *A. pantherina*, *A. rubescens*, *Amanitopsis fulva*, *Armillariella mellea*, *Boletus aereus*, *Collybia maculata*, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, *Laccaria loccata*, *L. turpis*, *Mycena galericulata*, *M. polygramma*, *Paxillus involutus*, *Piptoporus betulinus*, *Russula cyanoxantha*, *R. emetica*, *R. nigrans*, *R. ochroleuca*, *Scleroderma citrinum*.

*22 November:* Our member, Dr May Reed, have a very interesting talk and showed many slides of her recent travels in the countryside of China.

*13 December:* A pleasant afternoon was spent looking at slides on natural history subjects presented by members of the Section.

Our Recording Secretary reports that 1986, with its dull, damp summer, was a lean year for butterflies—a great drop was noted from the usual numbers. Several reports of sightings were received of Hummingbird Hawkmoths, two being observed at Chiltern Close, Stone. It was a poor breeding season for many birds, such as Swallows and Warblers and, especially in the Aylesbury area, Whitethroats and Spotted Flycatchers.

A. F. Elcoate

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(as at 31 December 1986)

### *President*

ELLIOTT VINEY, FSA

### *Vice-Presidents*

LADY BARLOW  
MAX DAVIES  
T. A. HUME, CBE, FSA, FMA  
DR E. CLIVE ROUSE, MBE, FSA  
MAJOR J. D. YOUNG  
MRS S. COWDY, MBE

SIR FRANK FRANCIS, KCB, FSA, FMA  
PROFESSOR W. R. MEAD  
SIR DENNIS WRIGHT, GCMG  
COMMANDER THE HON. JOHN  
FREEMANTLE, Lord Lieutenant and  
*Custos Rotulorum*

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R. J. AYERS  
DR A. H. J. BAINES (Chairman)  
E. J. BULL  
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MRS PAT COLE  
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G. C. LAMB  
MRS F. SHAND KYDD (CC)  
E. R. THROSSELL, FRIBA

(CC: Nominated by the County Council)

### *Hon. Secretary*

DR R. P. HAGERTY

### *Hon. Treasurer*

H. I. R. SPRINGTHORPE

### *Hon. Editor*

J. G. CHENEVIX TRENCH

### *Hon. Archivist & Librarian*

MRS L. M. HEAD

### *Hon. Secretary (Natural History Section)*

A. F. ELCOATE

### *The Society's Representatives on the County Library and Museum Sub-Committee*

ELLIOTT VINEY, FSA    DR A. H. J. BAINES, FSA    DR R. P. HAGERTY

### *Headquarters*

THE COUNTY MUSEUM, CHURCH STREET, AYLESBURY HP20 2QP



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