

REPORTS ON THE YEAR 1986

THE FIELD CLUB

Secretary's Report

1986 was the year of the Hampshire Landscape. This was the theme of both the Annual Conference and the O G S Crawford Lecture and a new Landscape Section was established. The landscape is a topic uniting archaeologists, historians, geologists, geographers, and ecologists. The rapid expansion of multi-disciplinary projects in Hampshire in recent years indicates the need for a new county wide forum, which the Field Club is anxious to provide. Following Council's approval for the new section in principle in June, an open meeting was held for interested parties on 18 September to elect a steering committee, which drew up a constitution, list of objectives, and draft programme. The Inaugural General Meeting was held on 6 December following the Crawford Lecture. The first officers were Mr Oliver, Chairman; Mr Carr, Secretary; Mr Broderick, Programme Secretary; Mr Fancett, Treasurer; and Mr King, Newsletter Editor. Committee members are drawn from throughout the county and include archaeologists, historians, geographers, and a geologist, several of them serving teachers. The section hopes to involve schools, hitherto scarcely touched by the Society's activities, and will focus its attention on field events. The establishment of the Landscape Section signalled the demise of the Geology Section, which was formally wound up by the December Council. Thanks are due to Dr Barton for holding the fort for so long.

Mr Stagg, President, and Mrs Hull, the longstanding Publications Officer, left office at the Annual General Meeting on 14 May. The new President is Mr Jude James, the third in succession from the New Forest. Dr Hicks and Mr Caudell were re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer and Dr James Thomas and Mrs Barbara Turnbull were elected to Council.

Miss White succeeded as Publications Secretary, Mrs Hughes and Mr Whinney became Programme Secretaries, and Mrs Moore was appointed Publicity Officer. For the first time for some years there was thus a full complement of officers, so that the administration ran extremely smoothly, and could stand the resignation as Joint Membership Secretary of Mrs Cleford in December. Principally due to the Publicity Officer and Mrs Turnbull as Membership Secretary, membership increased rapidly, rising to 536 in November, little short of the peak in 1983. As subscriptions remain at 1984 levels, membership is now very good value. To encourage new members and to avoid mass-resignations as in 1984, Council resolved in December to retain subscriptions at their current level in 1988, even though this may require unpleasant economies.

There were four meetings of Council, two meetings of the Executive Committee, and three meetings of the Editorial Board during the year. After a quiet beginning, these meetings handled a great deal of business towards the end of the year.

The final event of the year, at the Allen Gallery, Alton on Friday 12 December, was a reception to launch *Excavations at Neatham* by Martin Millett. This is Monograph 3 in the Society's series and there is a queue of other important reports for publication. Although such monographs are 75 per cent funded by English Heritage and assisted by other bodies, the Society's share of publication costs, which cannot be recouped from sales, is a constant worry to Council and will remain one in future years. At present the series performs a vital role in publishing important reports that lack any other outlet and enhances the prestige of the Society in Hampshire and outside.

The working party set up by Council in December 1985 and chaired by Mr Hughes

produced three concrete results. First of all, a new sense of urgency was imparted to those running the Society; secondly, there was the recruitment drive mentioned above; and thirdly a questionnaire was circulated to members in the autumn posting. A fifth of the membership replied, mainly favourably and many at length, casting a flood of light on the age, residences, interests and priorities of the membership. Their responses were analysed in a nine-page report by the Secretary presented to the December Council and summarised in the Spring 1987 *Newsletter*. Council accepted a series of detailed proposals designed to improve coordination of the programme and resources of the Society, better communication with members, and hence a better service for all.

Annual Conference on 'The Hampshire Landscape' at Hampshire Farm Museum, Botley on Saturday 20th September 1986.

The venue was the video room, kindly lent by Hampshire County Museum Service. Seventy members heard eight talks (mostly illustrated) in four sessions that selectively traced the way man has moulded his geological inheritance into the Hampshire we recognize today. Different approaches to the landscape were exemplified by experts in archaeology, geology, history, buildings and agriculture, yet a considerable consensus emerged: Mr Fancett showed views in which Dr Reynolds identified Celtic fields, and relief maps like those of Dr Hare; Dr Hare and Mr Currie both focussed on Bishops Waltham Pond; they and Mr Williams agreed on the management of fisheries; Dr Reynolds and Dr Yates agreed on woodland; and the whole day had a satisfying synthesis in Mr Williams' contribution.

The conference began with 'The Natural Landscape', surveyed by Mr Fancett, a geographer, and went on to three talks by Dr Reynolds, Dr Hare and Mr Casebourne on the Celtic, medieval, and modern landscapes under the general heading 'Moulding the Landscape'. After lunch three speakers treated 'The Legacy of the Past': Mr Currie on 'Fishponds', Col. Roberts on 'Buildings', and

Dr Yates on 'Woodlands'. After tea Mr Williams spoke on 'The Hampshire Landscape Today'.

Neolithic man, Dr Reynolds argued, was already master of his environment, engaged in managing even the timber, with the result that today there is probably no primeval forest, as Dr Yates pointed out. Much of our mature woodland was planted quite recently. It is surely no accident that woods are concentrated on the poorer soil. Older woodland can be identified by a variety of techniques and so too can the impact of medieval man outlined by Dr Hare. Fishponds are everywhere and their importance and technological sophistication deserves to be better known, as Mr Currie triumphantly demonstrated. Some, e.g. at Fishers Pond, remain quite adequate for modern commercial needs. Indeed, it was the profit motive that created or preserved the fishponds, the woodlands, the fields and hedgerows described by Mr Casebourne, and Col. Roberts's buildings, it was the profit motive that recently threatened them, and it is commercial considerations again that offer hope of a better future.

The modern farmer has cleared hedgerows, ploughed up boundaries, used chemical sprays, and drained wetlands. Now the process is being reversed, Mr Williams showed, not for conservation reasons, but because there is now profit in organic farming and recreational fishing, because less intensive farming encourages sport, and because grants now encourage timber production. 'Only the cheque book has moved.' Ironically the demands of conservation are mutually contradictory, as woodland management demands periodic felling, as coppicing is incompatible with uncontrolled roe-deer, and as natural predators proliferate. Most of our landscape is less than 200 years old, much only 20 years old, and current agricultural students know only the latter. Which landscape should we conserve? On this challenging note, the conference closed.

O G S Crawford Memorial Lecture, Tudor Merchants Hall, Southampton, Saturday 6th December 1986.

The pioneer of aerial photography and 'land-

scape archaeology', O G S Crawford worked extensively in the Test Valley, so it was highly appropriate that the memorial lecture should be delivered by the current Director of the Test Valley Archaeological Trust, Mr Francis Green. His title was 'New Approaches to the Archaeology of Landscape', but he set out to demonstrate how much of the modern practice of landscape archaeology was anticipated by the work of Crawford, and how little was actually new, environmental archaeology being an obvious example.

He began by outlining the scope for studying the landscape without destroying it: satellite photography, field walking, surveying, work on maps ancient and modern, location of features from documents, and hedgerow-sampling. The archaeologist properly concerns himself with decaying parklands, industrial archaeology, and even modern housing.

Excavation is often required as development destroys the landscape: almost the whole of the parish of Nursling, for example. There are still some profitable areas yet undisturbed, such as Ashley castle and the prehistoric earthworks and barrows on Stockbridge Down. His own work, he stressed, was essentially rescue archaeology, but even then he had to be selective about which sites to investigate. He had to decide his aims in advance and make threatened sites serve as sampling for research purposes.

Archaeology must be undertaken to professional standards, so that bone, plant and other environmental remains are fully investigated. Only then can sites be placed in their proper contexts. Listeners were asked not to undertake random digs, the collection of surface evidence, or excavations in which only part of the evidence was recovered. Mr Green referred amateur groups particularly to the monitoring of trenches made by public services and to field-walking as valuable forms of landscape archaeology.

The third part of his talk treated the Test Valley specifically and demonstrated the range of sites investigated from the deserted villages at Foxcotte and Bosington, to urban sites in Romsey, and John of Gaunt's palace in King's

Somborne. Clearly the Test Valley is being studied with a depth and rigour that even Crawford could not match and all disciplines – history, geology, and geography – are being brought to bear on our understanding of its past.

The meeting was followed by the Inaugural General Meeting of the new Landscape Section and by a sherry reception at Gods House Tower Museum. Both venues were kindly made available by courtesy of Southampton City Museums.

M.A.H.

ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION

1986 was a very successful year for the section in terms of both lectures and field trips. A Roman theme was chosen for the lecture series:– Ken Qualmann discussed the latest results of excavations in Winchester at a meeting in Basingstoke held with the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society, and on Tuesday 25th February a large audience turned up at the Tudor Merchants Hall, Southampton, for a talk on Clausentum at a joint meeting with Southampton City Museums Archaeology Society. Due to illness, Bob Thompson was unable to lecture but David Johnston proved an excellent stand-in, summarising the present state of knowledge about the site and placing it in the regional context. The short series of lectures was rounded off on Tuesday 25th March at Winchester Guildhall by Dr Michael Fulford, who addressed more than 30 members on the important results of the latest excavations at the Forum Basilica, Silchester. In September members were invited to a special viewing of the newly opened Museum of the Iron Age at Andover, which depicts the results of the long campaign of excavations at Danebury Hillfort.

Both field trips were fully booked:– on Saturday 26th July a coach-load travelled to Silchester for a guided walk around the town walls led by David Johnston, with the assistance of Dr A C King. This was followed by a tour of the excavations given by Dr Fulford. On Saturday 30th August members

travelled to Maiden Castle for an instructive talk on the current excavations directed by Niall Sharples. Kenneth Roberts also gave an entertaining talk about Wheeler's excavation campaign of the 1930's. This is published in the Spring 1987 edition of the *Newsletter*.

The Conference this year represented a significant departure from the normal format. Held at King Alfred's College and entitled 'Living Archaeology', it combined formal lectures with practical demonstrations. The keynote lecture was given by Dr Peter Reynolds of the Butser Ancient Farm, who emphasised the importance of experiment in enhancing our understanding of ancient technology and subsistence practice, but questioned the value of 'recreating' the past in an attempt to escape from the present. The rest of the morning was taken up with a series of short talks, priming the audience for the practical sessions:- David Johnston spoke about techniques of flintwork, Peter Stone of Southampton University discussed the application of 'Living Archaeology' in education, and Geoff Denford talked on the evidence for the Kimmeridge shale industry. Maureen Locke rounded off the morning with some details on Roman cookery. After lunch, demonstrations took place in the rather cramped art studio, which left little room for members to watch the proceedings. In addition to flint knapping (D Johnston), shale turning (D Sloper) and Roman cookery (M Locke), Jean Smith displayed medieval spinning and weaving techniques, and Diane Hall showed examples of floor tiles produced in the medieval style. Over 70 people attended and, despite problems of signposting and some confusion over lunch arrangements, the day was judged an outstanding success.

The officers of the section remain unchanged and Jo Bailey (Winchester Archaeology Office) was elected to the committee at the AGM.

M.M.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS SECTION

The Historic Buildings Section continues to prosper. Its meetings have been well-attended

and the section now enjoys support equal to the longer established Archaeology and Local History Sections. The committee was re-elected *en bloc* at the Annual General Meeting in October and shows no sign of running short of ideas for future events: an attractive and varied summer programme is again in prospect. The *Newsletter* continues to flourish and the vetting of listed buildings planning applications becomes ever more comprehensive.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the day conference on the English Renaissance in June 1986 at Bramshill Police College - a Jacobean prodigy house not normally open to the public - organised jointly with the Hampshire Gardens Trust and other societies. Although an expensive day out, this was very well-supported and was singled out for particular praise by respondents to the Society's questionnaire. A second day conference at Portsmouth on 'Parish Churches' was also organised jointly with another society, the Portsdown branch of NADFAS, and it is hoped to organise similar co-operative events in future. The section's regular autumn conference in October at King Alfred's College, Winchester on the theme of 'Roofs' featured speakers of national and local repute and an exhibition of roofing materials. It too was successful.

The section has again organised a programme of evening lectures in winter in Winchester on topics as varied as flint buildings, stained glass and churches. Attendances have varied considerably, but responses to the questionnaire have revealed them to be an appreciated part of the Field Club programme. The other summer events were a practical recording session at Silkstead led by Nick Molyneux and an extremely popular tour of the watercourses of Winchester directed by John Crook.

On behalf of the Field Club and the Council for British Archaeology, the section examines between 200-250 planning applications for consent for alterations to listed buildings per annum. These are referred to local correspondents, who usually visit the site and make comments on the schemes, which are used in

our reports to the local authorities. County-wide coverage has now been achieved. There have been relatively few controversial schemes in the past twelve months. We have, however, objected to the proposed demolition of the Bell School, Old Portsmouth, and to the demolition of St Mary's House in the same city. Most observations forwarded to local authority take the form of advice on the detail of the various schemes offered. One problem is the considerable cost of the vetting operation, partly financed by the CBA and partly by the Field Club, both somewhat reluctantly!

M.W.D./M.A.H.

LOCAL HISTORY SECTION

The Local History Section held two meetings during the year. In April the Annual Spring Symposium was again held jointly at Southampton University with the University Adult Education Department. The theme for 1986 was Parliamentary elections in the county from medieval times up to 1945. Lectures were given by Dr Michael Hicks on the origins and evolution of Parliament, by Dr Andrew Coleby on Hampshire elections between 1660 and 1690, by Mrs Barbara Carpenter Turner on the Winchester election of 1880, by Mrs Sarah Bussy on the Labour landslide in Winchester in 1945, and by Dr Stuart Drummond who drew the symposium to a close. This year for the first time a 'workshop' session was also included. Miss Philippa White first discussed and illustrated the wealth of archival material held by the Hampshire Record Office which is related to elections. This was followed by a study of copies of the relevant archives by those attending. The innovation proved to be most successful and popular.

The second meeting of the year was a day conference and the section's AGM. This was held at the Allen Gallery in Alton. The conference centred on the history of the Alton area with an extremely interesting, illustrated lecture on the history of the town by Mrs Georgia Smith, a lecture on the early activities

of the Quakers in Alton and Hampshire by Miss Rosemary Dunhill, and a lecture on historical aspects of the profits and difficulties of hop cultivation in the area between 1700 and 1900 by Dr Gavin Bowie. The lectures were enhanced by an excellent tour of the old market town which included the Friends Meeting House and many of the buildings earlier illustrated in the lecture by Mrs Smith. The helpfulness of Mr Tony Cross, curator of the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery, and his staff assisted in making the day most pleasant.

At the AGM the general success, both financial and in terms of interest shown, of the year's meetings was reported. Possible ways of coordinating the work of the section with the activities of other organisations around the county was also discussed. The committee, the Chairman, Miss Rosemary Dunhill, and the Treasurer, Miss Alison Savage, were re-elected. Mrs Barbara Burbridge was elected Secretary to replace Miss Bethanie Aston, and Mr George Watts was elected *Newsletter* Editor to replace Mr Tom Mayberry.

During the year the *Newsletter* continued to provide an interesting and informative insight into the varied research that is being carried out in the county. Under the new editorship it is hoped that more information on the activities of other organisations interested in the history of the county will be included.

B.A.

NEW FOREST SECTION

Section Affairs

We are glad to welcome two new members on the Committee, Mrs Brook and Mr Ogilvie.

At the Annual General Meeting in March, Rule No 7 stating that the AGM be held before the end of March was amended to 'before the end of April'. This is in order to allow our Annual Report to be in members' hands at the AGM now that it is sent with the spring mailing.

Sales of the booklet 'The New Forest and Heywood Sumner' have now recouped 75% of the cost.

Programme

Two lectures have been held. An account of the marine life to be found at coastal power stations was given by Terry Langford of the Central Electricity Generating Board, and in a joint meeting with Lyndhurst Historical Society we had a stimulating talk by Kenneth Hudson on 'Industrial Archaeology of our own time'.

Instead of inviting a speaker to our AGMs we are giving an account of field work and excavations carried out during the year, and using our own members to present short talks on their various interests.

Field meetings included a joint meeting with the South Wessex Archaeological Association at Sloden, led by A H Pasmore; a well-attended visit to Hurst Castle led by Jude James, and a fungus foray at Roydon Woods led by Gordon Dickson of the British Mycological Society and held jointly with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists Trust.

Despite a reduced labour force and one day lost through rain the Field Work Group carried out further excavation at Church Green. A grey ware kiln was found.

New Forest Review

A group has been set up by the bodies concer-

ned in the Conservation Study of 1972 to review the results of that study and to make recommendations for future action to safeguard the New Forest. Our committee has submitted some comments and recommendations to the group.

Lyndhurst Bypass

Hampshire County Council has promoted a Bill to authorise the construction of a bypass for Lyndhurst. A summary of our objections to this Bill:

- 1) It is unnecessary in that sufficient powers already exist for the acquisition of the land.
- 2) It represents an attempt by the Council to set aside existing Acts of Parliament in order to secure a route which would not otherwise be sanctioned under the existing statutory protection of the Forest.
- 3) The proposed works would seriously damage the character of the Forest, while other routes are available which would avoid this damage.
- 4) The attempted removal of the veto of the Verderers which the Bill seeks to secure would constitute a dangerous precedent for further damaging development.

We are joining other societies in united opposition to the Bill.

J.I.