

Annual Report - 1955

The activities of the Committee this year has been as always to jealously guard the amenities of Harpenden keeping a watch on footpaths to make sure that they are not overgrown or obstructed, seeing that trees were not unnecessarily cut or felled, anxiously watching the control of advertisements, and doing everything possible to reduce the nuisance of litter.

The Society has during the year, maintained its membership of just over 200 although several old members have passed away whilst others have left the district.

A further plan for improvements to the main entrance of Rothamsted Park was submitted to the H.U.D.C., and it is hoped that the final plan will be approved before long to make the entrance more worthy of the park. When it is accepted it is proposed to give members an opportunity of seeing the plan and then to appeal for funds to help finance this project.

What was probably our most enjoyable outing was held on June 4th when some 46 members and friends visited the home of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey. The Coaches passed through the Park enabling members to see many groups of the interesting animals for which the Park is famous and then the party visited the House. Later tea was taken in the restaurant on the estate and the return drive in the evening was through Bedfordshire to Old Warden where a visit was paid to the unique church returning to Harpenden via the Warden hills.

In October a meeting of members was held in the Public Hall which proved to be one of the most successful meetings in recent years, the President was in the chair and the meeting opened with a resume of the committee's work by the Chairman, Col. Scutt. There was a lively discussion on the subject of the proposed alterations to Rothamsted Park and then members were asked for their suggestions for the layout of the Common which will shortly be returned from agricultural use to general use by the public. The second part of the meeting was given over to a talk by Mr. John Chear, C.C., who spoke of the flora and fauna of Hertfordshire throughout the year and his lecture was illustrated by an excellent colour film taken by himself, showing many aspects of the natural beauties of our County.

As the whole of the Common will shortly be returning to the Trusteeship of the H.U.D.C., it was thought that suggestions for the layout of the Common might be made and a sub-committee was formed to study this. Following suggestions made at the Autumn meeting and meetings on the Common by the sub-committee a report has been drawn up and will shortly be forwarded to the Council for their consideration when they are making plans for the restoration of the Common.

Towards the end of the year the long awaited footbridge at Batford was erected across the river Lea. This unsightly steel structure was a profound shock to many members and residents although the necessity of a bridge is unquestionable it is felt that one of a more suitable design could have been built. A letter was sent to the Hertfordshire County Council, objecting to this bridge and requesting that no more of this nature be erected in the County, also suggesting that at least it might be painted a more suitable colour. The H.C.C., replied that the bridge was of a temporary nature and would be replaced by a new permanent bridge eventually. In the meantime steps were being taken to paint the bridge in a more suitable colour to harmonise with the surroundings.

It is felt that there are old residents and indeed many new ones in the district who are very fond of the town and who would be very useful members of this Society which works for the preservation and improvement of the amenities of Harpenden, and it is hoped that these people can be persuaded to join by members of the Society. The minimum subscription is 2/6d per annum and each new member helps to add weight when the Society is trying to do any particular work.

C. W. CURL.