

THE
HASLEMERE NATURAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

1888 - 1988



THE FIRST CENTURY

The story of the Society's existence,
Work and Records

by
JOHN PUTTICK

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INTRODUCTION

A hundred years must seem a very long time to those who do not remember even the Second World War. Those of us who have vivid memories of both wars realised that what are now fading names in history were actually contemporaries of our parents. But it is the extraordinary change in our life-style since the Nineteen-twenties that make those early days of the Natural History Society remote not only in time but also in personnel.

If we glance down the list of past presidents with all those impressive letters after their names we understand that the young Society was in the hands of gentlemen who never had to wash up (in pantry or scullery) who were not called upon to comfort the crying baby, but whose shoes stood each morning, brightly polished, at the bedroom door. Those Great Brains had leisure and peace of mind few enjoy today. They were not bombarded by that insidious virus known as Massmedia. To them and even more importantly to us, the pursuit of natural history was, and remains, a great relaxation and renewer of the spirit.

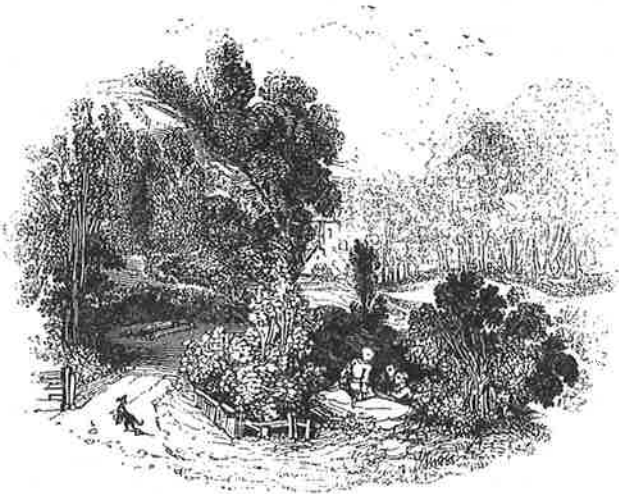
John Puttick has faithfully traced the varying fortunes of the Society as it evolved through the century. This he has done by highlighting certain facets, events and problems that mirror the manner of thought and action of each period. Our numerical strength today is not very great compared with forty years ago, but there is useful work being done and we are ever aware of the vigilance needed to conserve what is left of our heritage. Essentially our Society is also the training ground of many a budding naturalist, for we have always had amongst us outstandingly good botanists, mycologists, entomologists and ornithologists ready to lead and to lecture. Also we have always had expert field naturalists, John Puttick being one, whose enthusiasm and general knowledge of the countryside is an inspiration to us all.

The debt the Society owes to the Museum has not been forgotten but as Arthur Jewell, once our president and currently curator of the Museum, said we live in symbiosis. The Museum would certainly be the poorer should the Natural History Society take itself off.

So it is with great pleasure that I recommend this History of the Haslemere Natural History Society and put on record our sincere thanks to the author for all the painstaking work that has gone into its production.

Margaret N Hutchinson
February 1988

Dedicated to all those without mention herein - the many hundreds - who by their membership at some period of the past hundred years, have supported and furthered the aims of the Society and ensured its continued and continuing existence.



SELBORNE, FROM DORTON.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Arthur Jewell, who kindly indicated the sources of material upon which this publication is based.

Dorothy Wilson and Margaret Hutchinson, for their reminiscences of the Society in days past.

Arnold Madgwick, who gave valued assistance with illustrations and photographs.
Miss H F Rendle for the loan of the photograph of her father, Dr A B Rendle D Sc,
President 1905-1908.

Illustrations from "A Natural History of Selborne" Editions 1837 and 1853 by Rev Gilbert White, MA.

PREFACE

On January the first, 1859, the London and South-western Railway Company opened its lately extended line through Haslemere, from London to Portsmouth.

In the 1870's Professor John Tyndall, FRS, analysed the air at Hindhead and made the results known: he bought land to build there.

At the *Conversazione* of 1913, the Rev G B Stallworthy said, "Col Mason" (who had retired from Military Service in India), "was not only a shooter of tigers but was also clever in scientific work and he gave himself up with great heartiness to teaching others the neat and delicate work which was involved in the making of microscopic slides."

In 1973, in conversation with a member of the Society, Miss Dorothy Hunter, (then aged 91 and a daughter of Sir Robert Hunter, co-founder of the National Trust), speaking of her childhood remarked - "Haslemere was a paradise for children", adding, in response to a question as to the famous people she had met, "Yes, we did meet a great many interesting people and I may say a great many of them were Haslemere residents."

The railway brought Haslemere within easy access of London and such other parts of the country which had by then rail-links with the capital.

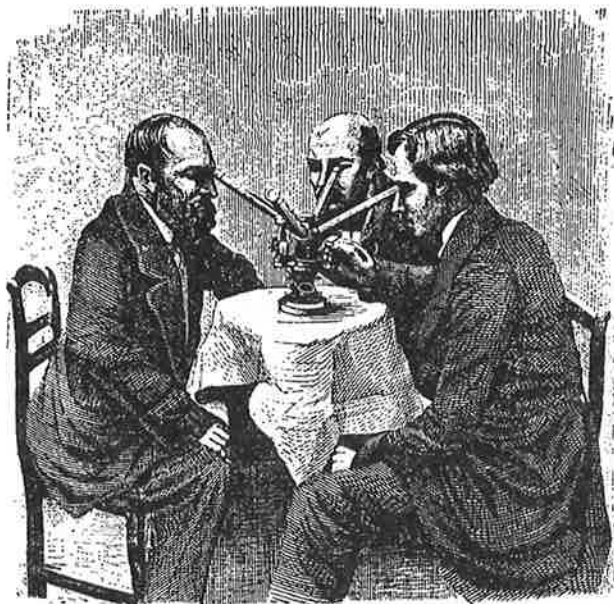
One of the great scourges at that time irrespective of class, was tuberculosis, for which the only known alleviation was pure air, free from the kind of pollution which made London fogs famous.

For Haslemere the catalyst was Tyndall's analysis which showed the atmosphere of Hindhead to be equally pure as that of the Swiss Alps. The unspoilt pine-clad hills of the district were irresistible to those well-off and who, in particular, had a member of their family suffering from the disease: it also attracted professional people who were obliged frequently to be in London but who much preferred not to live there and to whom it gave the opportunity of bringing up children in such an ideal spot. For those seeking retirement, too, Haslemere was excellently placed.

Reaching back over the century to grasp the further end of the tapestry of the Society's history and events - and then commencing to unfold it is fascinating. The brighter colours of achievements and enthusiasms stand out clearly: the single threads of dominant personalities are traceable: the darker weavings of apathy and disappointments form the contrasts and all are part of the warp and weft of changes in social history.

Thus, governed by the above-quoted circumstances and remarks, the seed of the Society was sown and nourished.

Since its inception all the positions of its main Officers - President, Vice-President, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer have been of an Honorary nature.



On Christmas Eve, 1888, a little band of enthusiastic naturalists, of whom Col William Mason was the prime mover, held their first "Microscope Class" in the Committee Room of The Institute in the High Street. The Educational Museum was not then in the town. The class prospered only moderately and in July 1889 the name Microscope Class was changed to The Haslemere Microscope and Natural History Society.

The First Report issued named the Society as such, noting that, "the neighbourhood is, from a naturalist's point of view, so full of interest, it is desired to obtain a good collection of objects of a local character".

That collection was later to form part of the nucleus of the Museum exhibits. The Society was fortunate in having the support of Professor Tyndall, who contributed generously to its funds.

The Society respectfully solicited annual Subscriptions of two- shillings - or sixpence a quarter - and met on the first and third Mondays of

each month in the Workmen's Club, (The Institute). On the earliest Report a hand-written note by E W Swanton, (Curator of the Museum 1897 - 1948), says, "This is evidently the First Report, though not so styled."

The following year membership had nearly doubled to 45. The subscription list includes Mr Swindells, headmaster of Haslemere Grammar School, a local Doctor, (Dr Ardagh) and the Rector, Rev S Etheridge.

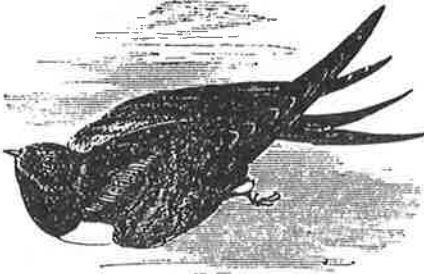
Twenty public meetings were held and one lecture was on "The Microphone".

In 1891 Mr Jonathan Hutchinson invited the membership to his Museum at Inval for a lecture, (with limelight illustrations), on "Krakatoa - the Sky Phenomenon of 1883". At about that time Professor Tyndall wrote, "I do not know of the things of which you stand in need immediately, and in my darkness fire a random shot of sending you a cheque for £5." They bought a microscope with it. The membership was now 80.

1892 saw the Presidency of Mr Jonathan

Hutchinson and the year following the membership figure stood at 270. Sir Robert and Lady Hunter appeared in the subscription list. In 1893 the Society lost a staunch friend through the death of Professor Tyndall, accidentally poisoned by his wife in administering a sleeping-draught. (Where one wonders, is the original pen-and-ink drawing of Tyndall's burial at Haslemere churchyard on December 9th, by Reg Cleaver of "The Graphic"?)

A milestone was reached in 1894 when Jonathan Hutchinson launched his Sunday afternoon lectures at his Inval Museum, to which he invited members and the public. The exhibits were moved shortly afterwards to the new building in East Street, (Muscum Hill). At these lectures the attendant came round some minutes before 3 pm to remind children that it was time for them to leave for Sunday School: their elders then settled themselves down for Mr Hutchinson's lectures.



THE MARTIN.

To the Society Mr Grant Allen, the novelist spoke on "Swallows and House Martins". New members were the violinist, Mr Joachim, together with his wife and daughter, and total membership reached 345.

A (dried) Wild Flower Competition of 1896, foundered since the rules were so severe: only four entries were received. The winner was a Miss Fowler and her collection was given to the Museum later to enlarge its Herbarium, indicating the close association between the two bodies. That year the President, (Grant Allen), complained that the

Society consisted largely of "hearers only - who hear the word and do not bring forth fruit".

He urged all to take up a branch of natural history - "anything you like but always a speciality". His vision of what might occur to a Society which was "hearers only" was fulfilled 10 years later.

Membership in 1897 soared to 502: the subscription was still two shillings per annum, and the Honorary Members numbered 62, including Conan Doyle who read a selection of his works to the Society.

The next year Bernard Shaw lectured on "Why I am a Socialist", which was followed by a discussion; and the Society, because of cramped conditions in the Workmen's Institute, handed over its own museum collection to the Hutchinson museum.

Grant Allen, whose work in Botany had been noted by both Darwin and Russell Wallace was the subject of the Society's tributes upon his death in 1899. In that year the membership list was the highest ever recorded - 522, (but see 1926), and the Institute was relinquished for Committee meetings, the Museum offering its Book Room for such. Committee meetings have been held at the Museum ever since.

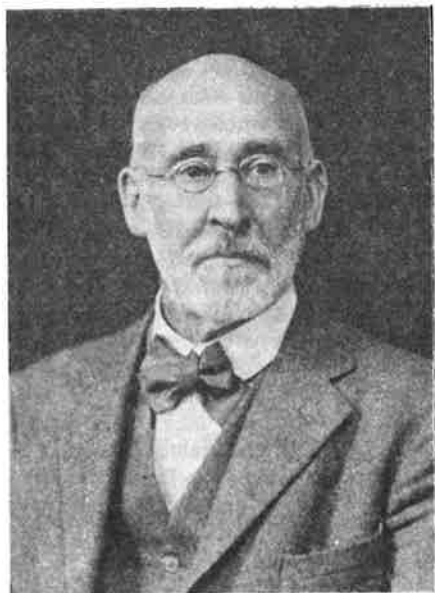
At the turn of the century Rayner Storr, Secretary for 10 years, retired. Members at this time were asking with increased insistence, "to do something more definite than that attempted yet, to foster the beginnings of microscopical and chemical manipulation amongst the more eager of its younger members." The number of Honorary Members was 100(!), when the Annual Report for 1903 began curiously, "Ladies and Gentlemen". A lady balloonist, Miss Gertrude Bacon, told of her experiences in "A Girl's Adventures in Cloudland", and the President, (Hon Rollo Russell), had the pleasure of submitting for the first time at a "Members' Evening", of the Society, the "interesting substance called Radium"(!) A disastrous outing to Losely House, when 80 members went by "brake" from Hindhead was accompanied by a morning of pouring rain: on

arrival the party did not seem expected: the bedraggled young ladies dried their hair and dresses round the great fire but the lack of an efficient guide to the House was "severely felt".

"Museum Notes", by E W Swanton, (which he had begun in 1898), had been appearing weekly in the "Haslemere Herald", and had stimulated the interest of many young people greatly, it was reported.

A decline of interest in the Society now begins to be evident.

Several Scientific Papers published by the Society, eg "Preliminary List of Fungi of the Haslemere District" by E W Swanton, was sent gratis to some members 'in the hope that those who found it useful might send the price, (3d), when forwarding the annual subscription.' Lecture attendances were falling, except for Jonathan Hutchinson's on "The Future." Membership dropped to 289.



DR A. B. RENDLE

What Grant Allen had said in 1896 was reinforced by a later remark of his, - "A Natural History Society ought to consist of naturalists.." It had become top heavy with hearers of lectures, for as Haslemere grew and other attractions became available in the district interest in the Society's meetings waned. It is recorded in the Minutes of 1906 that Lecturers had expressed themselves in strong terms at being brought a distance to lecture before such meagre audiences. It was decided that the main object of the Society should in future be the study of local natural history and archaeology and it was settled that no Annual Report be issued for 1905.



Viola canina L.

Dog Violet.

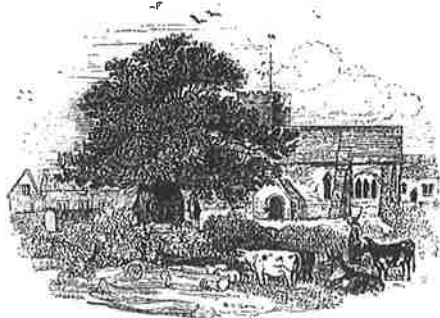
At an Extraordinary General Meeting in October 1906, the Rules of the Society were revised, the chief change being "that the Society should henceforth be known simply as "The Haslemere Natural History Society": and a non-transferable ticket would be issued to each member, giving, (by kind permission of Mr Jonathan Hutchinson), free entrance to the Haslemere Educational Museum'. The Report for 1906 is merely a list of the monthly meetings held and the Accounts are set out on a hand-written sheet of quarto. The new Secretary was F A Oldaker and the Society settled its headquarters at the Museum.

Clearly 1905-6 saw a crisis in the Society's

affairs, for in the year following at the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman "congratulated those members who had remained loyal to the Society during its vicissitudes." It was urged that local records be compiled in the branches now studied by the Society, within a radius of 6 miles of the (old) High Street Post Office in Haslemere. (This distance was reckoned to be reasonable cycling for ladies!) All lectures and rambles for 1908 were conducted by members of the Society.

Publication in 1909 of Miss Rose Jackson's "A List of Flowering Plants and Ferns", was the year's highlight. Three hundred copies plus a map, cost £10.2s.6d to produce - but it was free to members. The first *Conversazione* was held: members sent in exhibits and spoke about them at selected intervals.

Similarly to two years previously, all lectures



SOUTH VIEW OF SELDORNE CHURCH.

and rambles in 1910 were given by members of the Society: "this speaks well for the vitality of the Society and the useful work that is being done", commented the Chairman, Rev W Aitken. Through the next few years the membership steadily increased as did interest in the Society's affairs. E W Swanton led a ramble to "Kiffolds Yew," (sic); many more visits were to be made to this venerable tree with a paper being read to those assembled by the leader which embraced other ancient yews in the district. The President, (Earl of Altamont), gave a lecture on his parents'

involvement in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, he being present, then a child of seven months.

The main substance of the Annual Report of 1913 was the Society's Silver Jubilee and the death of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson. In a tribute at the Annual General Meeting, the Secretary said, "The best possible tribute the Society can pay to his memory would be to continue the good work which they, (The Society), had been doing with his approval for many years." Undoubtedly Sir Jonathan's personality had been the dominating one for the first 25 years. A resolution to "continue the good work" was carried unanimously, emphasizing at the same time the great value of the Educational Museum to the town of Haslemere, and pledging support for funds to continue its future. Concern for that "future" remained with the Society throughout 1914.

Though war had broken out it was decided as far as possible to carry out a programme as usual. Soldiers stationed in camps on nearby Commons in the locality were invited to lectures: even so, in 1916 the President (Sir Archibald Geikie), complained, perhaps somewhat unfairly, that 'lecture attendances were so poor, there was little encouragement to take trouble about them'.

By 1919 the numbers of members had achieved 229; (20 years earlier it had been 522). In the next year Arthur Ponsonby's book, "The Priory and Manor of Lynchmere and Shulbrede" appeared and was commended by the Society to every student of local history. The year following the first *Conversazione* since 1913 was held, J E Wilson FGS, giving a "Demonstration with Soap-Bubbles".

The Society commenced its Library in 1921 and was given permission to keep its books in the Museum Library. Early in the year the Rev W A Shaw's "A List of the Birds of the Haslemere District" was published. It makes fascinating reading. The Red-backed Shrike was "fairly common", as was the Wryneck, "which ejects Tits from nest-boxes, which it covets." The Great-spotted Woodpecker was uncommon.



WRYNECK.

The death of Sir Archibald Geikie, the President, in 1924 was a loss keenly felt. He had held the Presidency twice, 1908-1911 and 1914-1924.

In 1925 the Society broke a practice of 37 years' standing - the subscription was at last raised, from two shillings to two shillings and sixpence! The Annual Reports were henceforth to run from 1 January to 31 December.

The year 1926 saw the total number of members reach the highest figure ever - 529: though the



SQUIRREL.

figure for 1899 was 522, it had been inflated by a large number of Honorary Members. In the same year the Museum transferred to its present premises in the High Street. The Society's President, (Rev W A Shaw), gave a lecture in the "new quarters" - the attendance being 200

persons. E W Swanton reported the Red Squirrel as not uncommon in the pinewoods in the area: in October 1927 one entered the Museum, to the astonishment of two visitors who met it in the entrance hall. The Grey Squirrel was first seen at Inval in 1928.

Over the next few years it is of interest to learn that a Mr Whittall placed on view 150 varieties of apples from his orchards at Grayswood and Lola A Williams, later a Society President, sang Folk-songs he had collected in the Haslemere neighbourhood 25 years earlier. The British Mycological Society held a meeting at Inval and Hurt Hill - they had been invited by the Society before - 1905, 1913 and 1921 - on all occasions rare species were found, including fungi new to Science; and they were entertained to tea. The taking of tea has always been a great feature of the Society - the records are littered with such happenings. Indeed, in 1930 the Secretary asked for permission to offer tea to any visiting Society without having first to refer to the Committee.

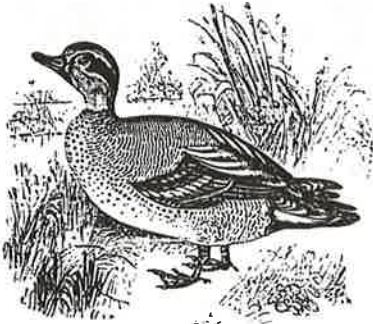
In 1935 the Museum, through a grant of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, initiated a regional and ecological survey of the district, which was almost exclusively carried out by Society members and illustrated the value of team work in such an undertaking. In the same year the *Conversazione* was a joint one with the Museum; and a Microscopical Section of the Society was begun - membership cost one shilling per annum - (the previous interest in microscopy having been abandoned in 1906); initially it met with success.

At the 1937 *Conversazione* the audience were played records by C I Blackburne, both English and German, of "Bird Song", - presumably these were by Ludwig Koch.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Society was celebrated by a pamphlet by E W Swanton, "The Rise and Development of the Haslemere Natural History Society, - the Story of Fifty Years' Work". The annual talk on "Observation of Wild-life", was given by the Assistant - curator of the Museum, R C Blockey: this lecture had been

delivered for many years by Rev W A Shaw, whose death had been regretted during the year.

The outbreak of war in 1939 curtailed events - and membership, but Phyllis M Bond, - the first time she appears officially to have led a ramble - conducted a party to Pagham Harbour, bird-watching. All other excursions, because of petrol shortage were confined to the immediate



TEAL

Haslemere neighbourhood "for the duration". The same year Phyllis Bond proposed that the virtual practice of electing Committee members en bloc at the Annual General Meeting, should be discontinued and that members should be chosen by vote for three years, automatically retiring at the end of that period, not being eligible for re-election that year. "New blood would be brought on to the Committee and active interest spread among the Society". It was decided after lengthy discussion that the next Committee would be elected by ballot: unfortunately the outbreak of war prevented the adoption of the proposal. (The matter was not raised again until 1953, when, at the Annual General Meeting Miss Bond's idea of pruning aged branches in the Committee was written into the Society's Rules).

The death of Flt Lieut R C Blockey on active service was a deeply felt loss: his engaging personality and skills as an all-round naturalist had been greatly appreciated. It was he who produced



MISS PHYLLIS M. BOND

a live Peregrine Falcon, (trained for falconry), at a meeting in 1933.

1948 was marked by the retirement of E W Swanton. He had held office in the Society for more than forty years. Curator to 'the exhibits' of the Society, in 1904: secretary 1917-1934: Treasurer 1917-1947: President 1935-1937. The year previously he had attained his fiftieth year as Curator of the Museum and the Society congratulated him on the award of OBE in the Birthday Honours List. 1948 also saw the inception of the "Frensham Watchers" - 'Some of our members have formed a group to make regular

observations on bird-life at Frensham Pond(s)'. It was to form, by its work, a very important part of the Society's records.

A lecture in 1949 by a local medico, Dr G R Rolston, on "Haslemere 200 Years Ago", attracted so large an audience that many were turned away: a repeat the following evening still brought 140 hearers.

Two outstanding events occurred the following year. Specially written for the Society, G O Allen published his "British Stoneworts". It was, and remained for many years, the only small, compact work available on a rather obscure group of plants. It brought him widespread recognition, not only in this country but abroad as well. At the same time an ecological survey of the Devil's Punchbowl was launched to add to the knowledge of the district. This was the first full-scale attempt to record as many aspects of natural history in that particular spot as possible, though many rambles and excursions had been held there previously. It was arranged during the survey for Dr Ludwig Koch to come and record "badger noises", but "the project had to be given up because one of the badgers was shot by a creature with a gun and the sett abandoned".

At the Annual General Meeting of 1951 two alterations were made as regards the Officers of the Society. The office of Chairman was abolished at the suggestion of the then-incumbent, (F A Oldaker), and the Secretary and Treasurership, which had frequently been held by the Secretary in a dual capacity were disassociated. In June of that year, Phyllis Bond resigned, (temporarily say the Minutes), from the Secretaryship and Dorothy Wilson was co-opted on to the Committee to take over the office for one year. In the event Miss Wilson continued to be Secretary for the ensuing 24 years.

The cover design by C F Tunnicliffe appeared on the Annual Report of 1953 and has done so ever since: it was resultant upon the friendship between the artist and John Clegg, (President 1960). Lectures during the preceding and following years

included Sir Charles Tennyson recalling memories of his poet-grandfather; Oleg Polunin on "Plant Collecting in Nepal"; "Digging up History" by Sir Mortimer Wheeler; and Sir Edward Salisbury spoke of "The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew" on the bicentenary of their foundation.

The death of Col C J F Bensley in 1955, who had been the inspirer of the Punchbowl survey, brought the work to an end. Arthur Jewell compiled a final Report on the undertaking, praising the work done but adding, "Should the Society ever contemplate a similar survey it would be well advised in the light of experience to choose a smaller and more sharply defined area." During the year Observer Books published "Mosses" by A L Jewell.

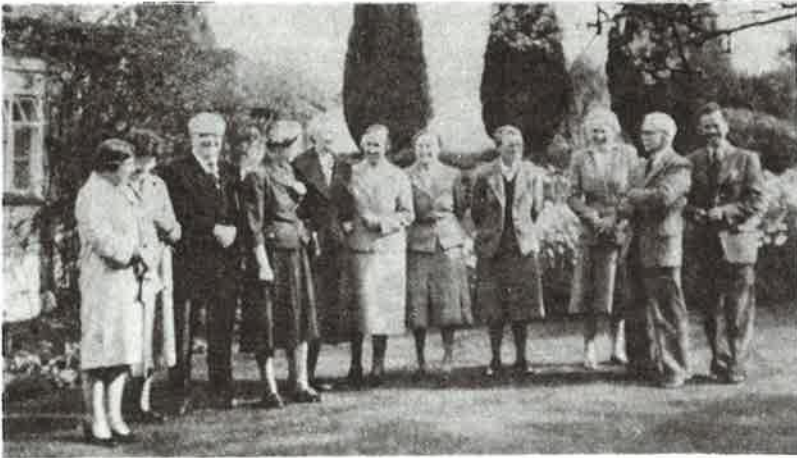
In 1956 Phyllis Bond became the first woman President and F A Oldaker, who had been a member since 1904, died. The year previously he had led an entomological ramble for the fiftieth year in succession. For that last excursion he chose Shillinglee Park, "which had been his choice for the first ramble ever led by him".

At the Conversazione of 1957 members were received by both Presidents, that of the Society and the Museum - which appears to be the first occasion officially when the practice, which continues today, commenced.

During the 70th anniversary year of the Society, members were saddened by the death of E W Swanton, - "Our debt to him is incalculable and we are proud to have had the interest and support of so outstanding a naturalist." Thus the Report. Regrets were expressed upon the departure of the President, John Clegg, to take up an appointment with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1962; and of Arthur Jewell who had left for a post at Kew the previous year.

Margaret Hutchinson, a dual member of the society and Museum, re-instituted the monthly "Museum Notes in the local paper in 1963.

1964 saw the continuing of mapping in the area for the "New Surrey Flora", under the direction of



FRENHAM WATCHERS

the Society's Maud Howard. It was in the Society's records for 1965 that a Great Reed Warbler, (the first for Surrey for a century) had been at Frensham Great Pond: it was ringed by



YELLOW WILLOW WREN

Peter Davis. Indicated from his ringing around the Haslemere district, Mr Davis told the Society that his recoveries showed that Willow Warblers returned year after year to the same breeding area. Audrey Thomas found the rare fungus *Cordyceps*

canadensis, which grows upon a species of truffle and Margaret Hutchinson discovered over 50 of the alternate generation of the Oak Marble Gall at Kingsley Green - of which E W Swanton said, "I have not succeeded in finding the Turkey Oak Bud Gall, though I have repeatedly searched for it in many districts."



MISS DOROTHY HUNTER AND MR JOHN PUTTICK 1973

One item in the Children's Exhibition held in 1968 so impressed the judges that they awarded the three young self-taught taxidermists a prize each.

The present format of the Annual Report into



A GROUP VISIT TO AVEBURY SEPT 1975

separate sections, Ornithology, Botany, Field Meetings, Indoor Meetings etc, was initiated in 1971. The subscription in 1972 was 75p. John Puttick was elected President.

The following year at the Annual General Meeting, a tape was played of a conversation which the President had had with Miss Dorothy Hunter, who reminisced about her childhood in Haslemere and her memories of her father and the founding of the National Trust. Miss Hunter, aged 91, was present and after the meeting she and the President planted an English Lime in the Museum grounds for "Plant-A-Tree Year".

The Frensham Watchers Group celebrated their 25th year at the *Conversazione*; all members of the group present wore a pink flamingo feather! The Annual Report recorded the finding of a rare gall by Margaret Hutchinson - *Andricus corruptrix* - of which the British Museum did not have a specimen in their collection. Coral cage fungus, (*Clathrus cancellatus*), last found 40 years earlier, and before that in 1896, appeared in a local garden.

In 1974 Christopher Howkins, (a member of the Society), led the first of many very popular visits

he conducted to study churches - at Dunsfold, Alfold and Hascombe.

Dorothy Wilson, the "temporary Secretary" of 1951 retired, after holding the post for 24 years! The presentation of a bird-watching telescope, subscribed to by members and accompanied by their thanks for her unstinting service, was made at the Annual General Meeting. Gina Cooper was elected as the new secretary.

Two notable lecturers were invited: Barbara Everard spoke about her botanical paintings, with a frank disclosure of the technique she used and Margaret Rule lectured on "Excavating the Mary Rose".

The Annual subscription was raised to 1.25 in 1976. At an exhibition to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Museum in its present building, the Society made a feature of the Wild Flower table, (regularly maintained by members in the entrance hall), illustrating many facets of members' interests and work. The radius of the Society's records was altered to 10 kms - a slight increase on the former 6 miles.

Undoubtedly the outstanding event of 1978 was



BIRD WATCHING, CHURCH NORTON NOV 1984

the publication of the Society's new Flower List for the area, almost exclusively the work of Laura Ponsonby. The cover illustration was by Reg Davis, a Society member, who was the artist responsible for the flower paintings in the new edition of Observers book of "Wild Flowers". The Society supported the conservation bodies concerned in threats to Pilsey Island and Amberley Wild Brooks. Honorary Membership was conferred on Phyllis Bond and Margaret Hutchinson to mark the ninetieth anniversary, in recognition of the outstanding contributions that they had each made, over more than 50 years.

The Annual Report contained congratulations to Arthur Jewell on his being awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal during the previous year.

Gina Cooper resigned the secretaryship in 1979 upon leaving the district and was presented with a copy of the most recent edition of "White's Selborne". Penny Kirkpatrick was elected to fill the vacancy. A curious echo of 1903 arose when a member, who had climbed the Matterhorn 40

years earlier, took her first flight in a hot-air balloon at the age of 81.

The President wrote to congratulate Joan Chatterton.

In 1980 Wilfred Warren, who had been a keen member for many years, remembered the Society in his Will, (among several other institutions), and grateful acceptance was made of the resulting augmentation of funds. Of 23 meetings held all but three were led by members of the Society, indicating the variety of expertise to be found within it. The British Trust for Ornithology's "Nightingale Survey", (organised by Peter Davis), found not a single bird in the immediate Haslemere area. It was noted that there had been a resurgence of plants on roadsides now that the local Authority had diminished maintenance. A short walk down the High Street yielded 40 species among stones, walls, pathsides and pavements, including Purple Toadflax, (*Linaria purpurea*). A myxomycete was discovered, the first in southern England, (*Badhamia lilacina*) -

and the President sat on a wasps' nest while watching Little Owls!

In 1983, John Puttick retired after a Presidency of 10 years and was given Honorary membership in recognition of his services. Laura Ponsonby was elected to succeed him.

Peter Davis was awarded the "Tucker Medal" of British Trust for Ornithology, for services to Amateur Ornithology. Severe weather, (-15° C was recorded by a member at Liphook), brought reports of Siskins at bird-tables and some 200 Blue Tits were seen ferrying out grain through a broken window in a store at Ebernoe. The fungus, *Leccinum roseofracta*, was found in a car-park at Grayshott - hitherto reliably found, (but rarely), in Scotland.

1985 was one of the great 'Butterfly Years' of the century. The Field Meetings reached a record number - 26. Several Firecrests nested in the district and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew confirmed the identification of *Laxitextum bicolor* - a fungus found at Grayswood and discovered only once before in the country in the last 100 years.

The Society was sorrowed by the death of Phyllis Bond in 1984: she had been a member for 63 years and served as Secretary, Treasurer and President.

In 1985 surveys were carried out for Waverley District Council at Sicklemill and Hammer Copse and some members assisted in a survey for the National Trust at Hindhead. During a sharp cold spell an unexpected sight was that of a Grey Partridge one evening walking down the High Street!

The membership for 1986 was 297. The

Society placed the "Atlas of Wintering Birds", on permanent loan in the Museum Library - members having been some of the 10,000 volunteers during 1981-1984, who made observations for inclusion in the volume published by the British Trust for Ornithology.

Arthur Jewell's lecture on "The Wonderful Weald", attracted an audience of some 130, which overflowed into the adjoining room.

In 1987 the society lost its oldest member with the death of Mr C F Hemingway; he had been born the year before the Society was founded. The Secretary, Penny Kirkpatrick, resigned and in appreciation of her exceptionally enthusiastic, energetic and efficient ordering of the Society's affairs she was presented with a sculpted Otter by George Taylor, (a local member of the Society of

Wildlife Artists), which had been subscribed to by members. Ursula Taylor was elected and welcomed as her successor.

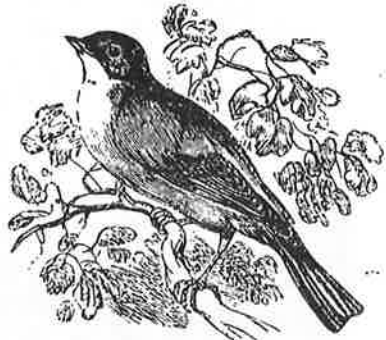
There were indications that the effect of the Whitethroat "crash" of the early seventies might be lessening; 17 males were holding territory on a local common. At Frensham Great Pond a pair of Ruddy Duck bred, the first known in the area. In September a Cetti's Warbler went into the records, also the first ever reported. The huge storm of October destroyed many trees in rookeries and heronies: pheasants blown from their autumn roosts were picked up dead below them the following morning. Seabirds forcibly displaced sought refuge on inland waters - a Pomarine Skua, Grey Phalaropes and a Sabine's Gull appeared at Frensham.

Musk (*mimulus moschatus*), the pot plant of Victorian times which lost its distinctive scent, was found on a recently-cleared site, over 50

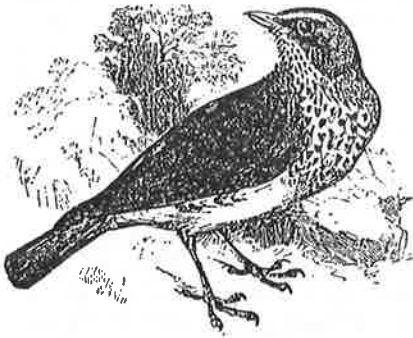




PARTRIDGE.



WHITETHROAT



FIELDFARE.



HERON.



STORM DAMAGE NEAR MIDHURST 1987

flowering specimens being counted. It was a superb year for fungi. *Cystoderma cinnabarium*, last seen in 1977 and before that between 1850-1860 was discovered. Collecting was almost impossible in some woodlands, such was the devastation of October.

Regarding the Society from the perspective of a century onwards, the changes which have shaped it appear.

The founders were men and women mostly based in a Science, imbued with the zeal to associate with others of like kind, in the fostering of interest in Nature, particularly concerning the surroundings in which they lived. Scarcely less vigorous was their burning desire to include those ordinary folk who instinctively, they felt, were eager to learn and who formed a considerable section of the populace awaiting instruction. It was no accident that Sir Jonathan Hutchinson uniquely inserted the word "Educational"

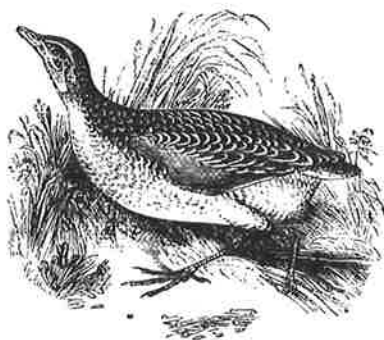
between Haslemere and Museum. Accompanying the professionally-trained were country clergy and medicos who then much less burdened with commitments, enjoyed the relaxation afforded by indulging in natural history as a hobby; nevertheless following it with great dedication.

In those early days local excursions were by shooting-brake, bicycle or train: collecting was by vasculum. (The Society once made a request to the Railway authorities that a special reduction be made for members travelling upon an outing which would be available upon the production of a Membership card.) Some 40 years on the numbers of highly-qualified professionals had rather diminished and gifted amateurs of independent means became prominently involved in the Society. The important link between the Society and the Museum, (after the death of Sir Jonathan), was E W Swanton, curator of the Museum for over 50 years and a Society member for longer.

He trod in the footsteps of the founder of the Museum and inseparably welded both bodies together - many members of the Committee of one simultaneously being members of the other. Buses and private cars, (though many still cycled), were modes of transport; the vasculum was eventually superseded by the much more convenient plastic bag!

After the Second World War the fortunes of the Society were entrusted perceptibly more and more to highly enthusiastic and skilled amateurs who, though with full-time jobs pursued the aims of the Society as a relaxing hobby - but with much serious purpose and concern for the Society's welfare. An indication of this change was the holding of field excursions at week-ends: for the first 75 years or so such outings had been on weekdays. The chief exceptions to the "amateurs" were the highly trained and experienced professionals, John Clegg and Arthur Jewell, both at some time Curators of the Museum and Presidents of the Society; each continued to maintain and cement the link.

In sifting through the mass of material provided by the Annual Reports, Minute Books and recollections of members, a huge number of striking, fascinating and forgotten facts and happenings are perforce doomed to be omitted. (The Minute Books run from July 1906 to date,



LAND-RAIL.

prior to 1906 the books seem to be missing. None of the Reports is mislaid, all are bound into volumes.) Samples of these omissions include:

Corncrakes in the late 1880's were to be heard in the field at Shottermill now occupied by the Swimming Pool. The Royal Fern, (*Osmunda*



regalis), which grew to perfection in the Devil's Punchbowl in the early years of the century, "was depredated by dealers who carried away the roots by the cartload". Conversazioni were originally given, (as it seems were the AGM's) in the Museum galleries, everyone standing among the cases whilst lecturesses were delivered upon the objects brought - "long discourses by old men", which a young member found "very boring". Reports in the Haslemere Herald of lectures were almost verbatim and the recording of outings in the field almost equally fully. Cuttings of such were posted in the Minute Books (1906-1923), forming an invaluable and immediately accessible record of proceedings.

The Frensham Watchers Group was the result of thoughts by Phyllis Bond and Margaret Hutchinson. During the War the ponds were drained to prevent their assisting enemy flyers as landmarks. It was out of interest to see what birds returned when the ponds were re-filled in 1948, which led to the forming of the group. (The first bird to arrive was a Shelduck!) For 40 years the Watchers have visited the ponds every week, with the exception of one week-end in 1963, when a snowfall at the commencement of an exceptional winter prevented anyone reaching them. The weekly records of those 40 years are lodged at the Museum and information is circulated to the County Bird Recorder, Surrey, specific records to County Bird Recorder, Hampshire and the Editor of the Border Report; Wildfowl counts are sent to the Wildfowl Trust.

How excellently each successive Secretary has served the Society is evident in the almost unbroken progress it has made: on their careful control of the daily affairs hinged the satisfaction of the membership.

Equally important, though their role is less limelighted, are the Treasurers. The Society is not rich in funds yet not obvious crisis is discernible in the financial records. Since late 1951 only two Treasurers have been in charge. Mr E E Tipper was succeeded by Mr A D Erant in 1967.

Such continuity and dedicated service through occasions which have undoubtedly been stringent, are benefits the Society would sorely miss.

Thus to the present: the many attractions which were blamed for the diminution of interest in the Society in 1905-1906, are even more numerous today. Curiously, it is probably to the two great 'modern entertainers', radio and television, that the prevalent concern for the environment has become so vigorous. The heritage of the countryside was cherished by those who lived in it in 1888, stimulating interest in its conservation. The Society today happily offers its expertise to many local authorities, including the National

Trust, who frequently avail themselves of it.

Research indicates the oldest Natural History Society in the country (London), began in 1859. Between then and 1890 only five more Societies were started. Haslemere was the fifth.

The original aims of the founders a century ago, through social and scientific changes which few of them could have visualised, continues with the enthusiasm of the present membership.

The Society greets - and advances into its second century.

PRESIDENTS

(Annual Reports of the Society ran from 1st June-31st May. At an Extraordinary General Meeting in 1926 the relevant rule was altered: henceforth 1st January-31st December.)

1888-1893	Colonel William Mason
1893-1896	Sir Jonathan Hutchinson ScD, FRCS, LLD, FRS
1896-1899	Grant Allen
1899-1902	Sir Frederick Pollock MA, LLD
1902-1905	The Hon Rollo Russell FR Met Soc
1905-1908	A B Rendle D Sc, MA, FRCS, FLS
1908-1911	Sir Archibald Geikie KCB, PRS
1911-1914	The Earl of Almont FSA, (Marquess of Sligo)
1914-1924	Sir Archibald Geikie OM, KCB, DCL, FRS
1925-1928	Rev W A Shaw MA
1929-1932	The Right Hon, The Viscount Exmouth, FCS
1933-1934	F A Oldaker MA, FRES
1935-1936	E W Swanton OBE, Hon FLS
1937-1938	Dr Arnold Lyndon OBE
1939-1941	Iola A Williams FLS
1942-1945	Dr Ronald Gray MA, MD
1946-1947	A S Edwards FLS
1948-1951	Gerald Ash FLS
1952-1955	Lt Col CJF Bensley
1956-1959	Miss Phyllis M Bond
1960-1961	John Clegg Hon FLS
1962-1967	Dr Roland Milton
1968-1971	A L Jewell AMA, FLS
1972-1982	John Puttick
1983-	Miss Laura Ponsonby

HASLEMERE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY - SCIENCE PAPERS

1903. No. 1 SWANTON, E. W. A preliminary list of Haslemere fungi.
1903. No.2 PANNELL, C. A short account of the land and freshwater mollusca of Haslemere, Surrey.
1904. No. 3 FOWLER, J. B. A local geology for amateurs and beginners. A popular collection of notes collected in neighbourhood of Haslemere, Liphook, Petersfield and Lyss. (first published privately in 1895).
1909. No. 4 JACKSON, R. A list of the flowering plants and ferns occurring within six miles of Haslemere . (with Supplement). 1924: 2nd Edition revised and extended.
1913. No. 5 OLDAKER, F. A. A list of the Lepidoptera occurring within six miles of Haslemere.
1920: Supplement.
1914. No. 6 GEIKIE, A. English science and its literary caricaturists in the 17th and 18th centuries.
1915. SWANTON, E. W. Vanished and vanishing animals and plants of the Haslemere district.
Issued but not published as a Science Paper.
1921. No. 7 SHAW, W. A. A list of the birds of the Haslemere district: approximately within a radius of six miles.
1923. No. 8 GEIKIE, A. The Weald.
1946: reissued.
1926. No. 9 NICHOLSON, E. M. Birds of the Haslemere Educational Museum.
1928. No. 10 SWANTON, E. W. The mammals, fishes, reptiles and amphibians of the Haslemere district: approximately within a six mile radius.
1934. No. 11 SWANTON, E. W. A list of fungi (Basidiomycetes) of the Haslemere district, including the forests of Woolmer, Verdley, Charlton and Singleton.
1950. ALLEN, G. O. British Stoneworts (Charophyta).
1951. OLDAKER, F. A. Lepidoptera of the Haslemere district.
Revised edition of Science Paper No. 5.
1953. HUTCHINSON, M. M. The bird life of Frensham Great Pond, 1947-1952.
- 1954 BENSLEY, C. J. F. Natural history of the Devil's Punch Bowl.
- 1955 BOND, P. A revised list of the birds of the Haslemere district.
- 1955 MORGAN, M. The geography of the Haslemere district. (published in the Annual Report).
- 1962 HOWARD, M. A list of flowering plants and ferns of Haslemere and district.
- 1963 DAVIS, P.G. Bird ringing in the Haslemere district. (published in the Annual Report).
- 1968 BARLOW, I. H., BOND, P. M., DAVIS, P. G. and HUTCHINSON, M. M. A review of the birds of the Haslemere district.
- 1968 HUTCHINSON, M. M. Some local Galls caused by insects. (published in the Annual Report).
- 1978 PONSONBY, L. A list of the flowering plants and ferns of Haslemere and district.
- 1980 KIRKPATRICK, P. A. and DAVIS, P. G. The birds of the Haslemere district.