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THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY:

ANNUAL REPORT for the year 1959

This year will be remembered in Harpenden for the demolition of the ivy-covered cottages in Church Green and for the dismay it has caused to those who knew the district as it used to be. Your Committee reluctantly decided that no action could be taken because

- i) The cost of necessary repairs to the cottages would have been far greater than their architectural merit justified.
- ii) There appeared to be no way of raising sufficient money to out-bid the purchasers of the site.
- iii) The Harpenden Urban District Council could not be expected to buy it, nor would the Ministry consider it a reasonable case for a loan.
- iv) It was felt that the Committee's attention could best be devoted to supporting the Council in their control over the design of the new buildings to be erected in Church Green.

South-East Harpenden Residents' Association:

Relations have been formally established with this Association, which now sends its Chairman, Mr.W.H.Coventry, to the Society Committee.

Development of Crabtree Lane:

Mr.M.L.Hine represented the Society at a public enquiry into the application to build two workers' cottages opposite "The Granary". He supported the Urban District Council's objections and the application was dismissed.

General:

A number of less public town-planning and maintenance points were considered by your Committee and dealt with, for the most part, by personal approach to the authorities concerned.

Social Events:

Sir Mortimer Wheeler's lecture "Human Progress" in the Public Hall on 4th May was well supported and enjoyed by all. For the Summer Outing members visited Staple Inn, Holborn, by arrangement between Mr.J.C.Eccleston and the Institute of Actuaries. In October Alderman B.Marsden-Smedley O.B.E., of Chelsea spoke to members about the work of the Civic Trust, which has since featured in the Piccadilly Circus dispute.

The 1960 outing has been arranged for 21st May when a visit will be paid to Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, former home of the late Mr.James de Rothschild.

Annual Accounts:

The Receipts and Payments Account to 31st December 1959 shows a balance at that date of £62 as against £54 in the previous year. Membership figures are now approaching 200.

Committee:

The Society has been unfortunate in losing Mr.Hennessy, Hon.Treasurer; Mr. Barlow, Hon.Secretary; Mr.Arthur Miller and Mr.M.Summerskill from the Committee during the year. Mr.Hennessy's and Mr.Barlow's services to the Society in their respective offices were greatly appreciated. Mr.Miller was a founder-member of the Society. His contributions to Committee debates, and those of Mr.Summerskill over a shorter period, will be much missed.

Future Policy:

A special sub-committee met during the year and submitted policy proposals to the main Committee. It was decided that in general the Society should continue to seek the preservation of urban and rural amenities, and the protection of rights of way, commons and open spaces in accordance with past practice and with the objects of the Societies to which we are affiliated.

In addition, that the initiation or support of any special case for the improvement of local amenities of any kind or in any way whatsoever, should be within the Society's province if your Committee so decides.

JOHN WYBORN  
Hon. Secretary