IDEAS INTO ACTION

Analysis of the questionnaire and other documents passed on by the initiating committee clearly indicate that the overriding need felt in the county is for a communication medium where ideas, information, expertise etc. can be exchanged. Your committee’s first public action, therefore, is to issue History in Bedfordshire No. 1 as the embryo of that idea. How it develops and flourishes is in your hands, dear readers, your input for future issues is essential to prevent a stillbirth. Your editor has listed below some of the topics that have been suggested for inclusion. Please send him your contributions on these topics or any other subject you think will interest others or you want aired (the address is on the last page). History in Bedfordshire No. 2 will be issued in March therefore all contributions must be received by March 5th. at the very latest. The editor hopes you are already itching to contribute and will send them in earlier.

Our publication is not intended to replace the Local History Bulletin issued by Barry Stephenson at the Local Studies Library but to complement it.

Suggested future topics:- News from Societies, Schools and Professional Organisations including research projects, new discoveries, publications, help wanted or offered etc.; Directory of Experts; Directory of Lecturers; News of Conferences, History Fairs; Readers Letters.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Steering Committee has met twice since its election at the General Meeting on the first of October 1992 at the White Hart, Ampthill. Their first action was to appoint officers as follows:

Chairman Martin Lawrence
Minutes Secretary Joan Curran
Correspondence Secretary Pamela Ormerod
Treasurer Peter Wood
Editor & Publicity Officer Brian Lazelle

It was decided that the organisation should be provisionally known as the Bedfordshire Local History Association until the formal Inaugural General Meeting at which time it can be ratified or modified in accordance with the wishes of the membership. The Committee authorised the opening of an account in the name of the Association so that the monies offered by various Societies to assist with the start up costs could be banked. The Treasurer has taken the appropriate action.

Correspondence leading up to the formation of the Association, the answers to the initial questionnaire and other documents have been circulated within the Committee to assist them in formulating the initial policies of the Association. An initial summary is given later in this issue.

A subcommittee was formed to prepare a draft constitution in a form that could be submitted to the Charity Commission if so required.

INAUGURAL MEETING

Arrangements are being made to hold the formal Inaugural General Meeting of Bedfordshire’s new Countywide Local History Body on Saturday May 15th. 1993 from 2.00 until 5.00 p. m, Dr. Joan Thirsk has kindly agreed to be the keynote speaker. Dr. Thirsk is an ex-President of the British Association of Local History and is a past Reader in Economic History at Oxford University. Please enter this important date in your diary. The venue, programme and other details will be circulated later when all the arrangements are finalized.

START UP COSTS

Donations towards the start up costs have been received from nine Societies bringing the total value of donations to £105. Until the organisation is formally set up and annual subscriptions from a membership are collected, donations from this source is the only income available to help defray the costs of printing and circulating the newsletter etc. as well as the expense of the forthcoming Inaugural meeting. The Committee would be grateful, therefore, to receive donations from those Societies who have not yet contributed so as to avoid last minute hitches.

A budget is being prepared for the projected first years plans so that subscription levels can be recommended to the Inaugural Meeting.
SUMMARY OF PERCEIVED NEEDS

The national committee set up to review Local History concluded that "When local circumstances or individual initiative make it possible regional based organisations can play a valuable role in furthering local history studies". They went on to define a list of functions such a body should perform. (Blake Report - 1979).

Analysis of the answers (returned by 16 out of the 24 Local History groups approached) to the questionnaire sent out last year by Betty Chambers indicated that the needs in Bedfordshire closely matched the functions recommended in the Blake Report.

To meet the perceived needs in Bedfordshire the new organisation will be required to act in an enabling capacity, promoting the advancement of Local History in the County by:-

a) Seeking to learn the difficulties experienced by local Societies and helping devise solutions.
b) Organising educational events such as Conferences, one day workshops, field days etc.
c) Acting as a central clearing house of useful information to assist the running of local Societies such as lists of experts, speakers, contacts in professional organisations etc.
d) Providing for the exchange of views, news and other information between the membership and, where appropriate, other bodies. Publication of a regular News Bulletin being a central part of this function.
e) Increasing the awareness of the activities of the Local Societies and encouraging the growth of membership of them by contact with schools, local government and other parties and by such other means that that may be deemed suitable.

Such activities should be designed to complement, enhance but not to conflict with those of the existing local Societies.

RECENT LOCAL PUBLICATIONS

The past year has been a record one for local publications and a selection are listed below. To have yours included in future editions send full details to the Editor at the address below.

Around Ampthill, A5 PB. £2.00.
Andrew Underwood.
Contact:-
Andrew Underwood, 39, Church St., Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2PI.

Bedfordshire Muster Lists 1539-1841, A5 PB. £15.00
Bedfordshire Historic Record Society. Vol.71
Contact:-
Mrs. Budek, 10, Kimbolton Ave., Bedford, MK40 3AD.

Eversholt: Odds & Ends, PB. £3.95.
Richard Ireland & Wendy Featherstone.

Flitwick: A Vanishing Village, A5 HB. £7.95.
Ampthill & District Archaeological & Local History Society.
Contact:-
B. D. Lazelle, 63, Ampthill Rd., Maulden, Bedford, MK45 2DH.

Langford Through The Lens, A5 PB. £3.50.
Langford History Society.
Contact:-
R. Turner, 87, High St. Langford, Beds.

Biggleswade Local History Society.
Contact:-
K. H. Page, 6, Pine Close. Biggleswade, SG18 0EF.

Old Toddington Revisited, HB
Farnon Books.

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Contributions welcomed and should be sent to the above address together with a stamped addressed envelope if the contribution is required to be returned. Contributions can be in any readable form including on IBM compatible disc. If the latter please consult the editor before dispatch to avoid compatibility problems.

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