The 1994 Annual General Meeting of the Association took place on 21st May 1994 at Chickands Priory, beautifully decorated for the occasion - red carpet for the platform and magnificent floral displays. Did we benefit, perhaps, from the fact that there was to be an Anglo-American ball there that night and the Priory was en fete for that occasion? The assembled members and their friends were welcomed to the Base by Squadron Leader Fraser, the RAF Commander. The preliminary items on the agenda were efficiently despatched and the minutes of the Inaugural General Meeting were accepted without dissent with no matters arising. The Treasurer, Peter Wood, then reported on the years finances. The majority of the local history societies within the county together with a number of institutions have joined our Association. The overall income had exceeded expenditure by £54 and the Treasurer was in the happy position of being able to recommend that subscriptions remain at £10 for affiliated groups and £5 for individual members for the year 1994/5.

The largest item of expenditure in the year had been the printing and despatch of the quarterly newsletter. The Chairman, Martin Lawrence, referred in his report to the two main events organised by the committee in the past year. Both the Local History Exhibition at Houghton Conquest in September and the more recent talk at Biggleswade by Dr. Mark Bailey on "Mediaeval Bedfordshire: the Scope for Local Historians" had been very successful. In fact, for some of the 120 people who came to Biggleswade it was literally standing room only but, standing or sitting, all agreed it was a superb lecture.

The Chairman emphasised that the Committee were supporting the affiliated societies and individual members who were displaying at the Bedfordshire Festival in August and he urged all members to support this event.

The next item on the agenda was the consideration of the revised draft of the Constitution. The Committee had spent a great deal of time on the revision of the Constitution, taking into account all the views expressed at the Inaugural General Meeting in May 1993 and the Extraordinary General Meeting in January this year convened specifically to discuss the changes. The motion to ratify the modified Constitution was passed unanimously.

The meeting then proceeded to the election of Officers and Committee Members. Nominations had been received for the offices of Chairman and Treasurer and nine nominations for Committee Members. The following Committee was then elected: Chairman - Martin Lawrence; Treasurer - Peter Wood; Committee Members - Stephen Coleman, Joan Curran, Ron Gregory, Michael Kemp, Brian Lazelle, Joyce Low, Norman Parry, Rex Skinner and Linda Swain. No nominations had been received for Secretary and as none were put forward at the meeting it was agreed that the appointment should be left to the new committee.

Chris Pickford, County Archivist, announced a proposal for a competition for speakers from local history societies who had used the CRO to research their material. A small prize would be offered and ways and means of judging the competition would have to be discussed. Such a competition could provide a means of helping one another by encouraging society's members to speak on subjects in which they were interested. This proposal received a favourable response from the meeting.

Before concluding the business of the meeting the Chairman thanked Chris for his interesting proposal and congratulated Chris and his staff at the CRO on the award of the Charter Mark. Full minutes of the meeting will be issued to members in the usual way.

JOAN CURRAN

TALK BY DR. MARGARET BONNEY.

Following the official business of the meeting, members were stimulated and enthused by a talk given by Dr. Margaret Bonney, Editor of The Local Historian, the official journal of the British Association for Local History, entitled SEEING THE WOOD RATHER THAN THE TREES - writing and publishing Local History in the 1990's. Dr. Bonney provided a very clear guide to preparing research for publication. She argued for local historians, both amateur and professional, to strive for the same high standards. She revealed some editorial trade secrets and outlined how clear narrative within a strong structure can be supported by objective arguments. The utilisation of computers had transformed the area of publication and insights were provided into good and bad use. She declared herself a missionary in the cause of raising standards and extending the range of local history publication.

MARTIN LAWRENCE
PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

by Pamela E. Ormerod

The Dominions & Colonies
Slavery & the Slave Trade
Defence & the Armed Services
Foreign Affairs & Diplomacy
Appendices, unprinted papers & others
Subject Index
I would suggest that in the first instance it would be useful to look at the subject index which is to be found at the end of Volume V.

I cannot hope to do justice to the vast coverage of material in this short article but can just mention that all the subject headings are subdivided. For example in Volume II, Transport & Communication is subdivided into:

- Railways
- Shipping
- Roads & Bridges
- Canals & Inland Waterways
- Postal Communications
- Tunnels

Some sections which may be of interest to local historians in discovering information about local persons may be those on shipping, the army & navy and the various industries. For example in the 1840s there was a Royal Commission to enquire into Condition of Framework Knitters, in particular in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and their deliberations appear in 1845. Where conditions of work are examined there are interviews with employees. The Papers contain a great deal of early railway history. Perhaps because a Member of Parliament was killed at the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway on the 15th September 1830, there are many pages concerning railway accidents and the results of investigations by officials of the Board of Trade as well as lists of accidents of a lesser degree. In many accounts, especially in the early years, many names are mentioned.

The following are some examples of titles of Papers and their references:

Return of persons bitten by dogs and conveyed to hospitals in the Metropolis in 1865. - 1865 (414) XLVII. 15 mf 71.352

Return of persons convicted of stealing horses 1823 - 1825. 1826 (111) XXIV.515 mf 28.157

Return of persons convicted of stealing sheep 1823 - 1825. 1826 (12) XXIV.525 mf 28.157

Report of Inspector of Poor Laws on state of Pauperism in Co. of Bedford, 1850 - 1851. 1851 (480) XLIX.1 mf 55.401

Report on the state of Pauperism in Counties of Bedford & Huntingdon, January 1852. 1852 (61) XLV. 579 mf 56.362 - 363

The term 'return of persons' is important as it indicates that names are involved. However it does not mean a uniform return, for example in the return of persons bitten by dogs, Middlesex, the Royal Free, St. Thomas's and Westminster...
BEDFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL 1994

By the time you read this you will have noticed the signs outside Charles Wells hostelries and elsewhere announcing the 1994 Bedfordshire Festival. This celebration of country life in the 1920s and 30s will take place at Shuttleworth College from August 27th to 29th. from 9am daily, entrance £6 each day (£3 for senior citizens or children). The Festival is billed as an exciting, educating and thought provoking event that will enthral the whole family. There promises to be a spectacular programme of living agricultural demonstrations, trade skills, steam events, flying displays, a 1920s' funfair and unusual arena events. In addition to exclusive shops, refreshment can be partaken from the Festival Brew and the Country Bakery (with authentic working 1920s bakery). There will be guest appearances by the Princess of Wales Parachute Team.

Do not forget to visit the Russell Hall to view the wide ranging exhibition of Bedfordshire History displayed by BLHA members including the Ampthill & District Archaeological & Local History Society, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. Biggleswade History Society, Dunstable and District Local History Society, Harlington Heritage Trust, Maypole Heritage, Potton History Society, Stotfold Local History Group and Todington Historical Society, together with displays by the Bedfordshire Magazine, Great North Railway Society, Sandy Transport Society (of airships), Kempston Clockwork Railway Society, The Post Office, and Luton Health & Safety, also a Dan Albion exhibition and a Malcolm Hanscombe display of photographs. In short an educating thought provoking trip into the past to interest all ages and tastes.

The Festival is sponsored by W. Jordan & Sons Ltd., Charles Wells Ltd. and others, all profits will go to charity. Do come along and enjoy a pleasurable day out and support your local societies and make all their hard work worthwhile.

Parliamentary Papers continued from page 2 column 2

hospitals listed persons by name, other hospitals just gave figures. Persons stealing horses and sheep were listed by name, county by county, and their punishment given, generally transportation.

A complete explanation of the reference entry is given in the front and back of every Index Volume. The Bedford Library requires the full reference when you order a 'fiche. Please do look at these Papers for they are full of information although you must have patience for they do not give 'instant' answers. For those readers living in or within easy reach of Bedford it is possible that if we do not use these Papers the opportunity of easy access to such a unique archive may be lost. I suggest that members further afield enquire at their larger libraries for the Parliamentary Papers as they too may have the Chadwyck-Healey microfiche.

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £100!!

The County Record Office has announced details of a competition it is running sponsored by the Nationwide Building Society. A prize of £100 will be awarded for the best collection of oral history reminiscences submitted to the County Record Office by 1st. March 1995. The competition is open to groups and individuals who must interview at least four persons resident in Bedfordshire. The transcription of each interview should be typewritten onto A4 paper and accompanied by a photograph (preferably black and white) of each person interviewed.

In order to learn more about oral history and methods of recording a W.E.A. one day workshop will be held at Hastingsbury Community College on Saturday 8th. October 1994 from 10.00 a.m. until 3.30 p.m. The course will be led by Roger Kitchen of the Milton Keynes Living Archive Project and will cost £5.00 which includes a light sandwich lunch.

Further details and entry/application forms can be obtained from Bedfordshire Record Office, County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP. Telephone (0234) 228833.

Readers Letters.

As a member of the Council of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, I would wish to recommend membership of this Society to all local historians in the County. The 72 volumes published since 1912 are one of our most important sources for local research. By printing Bedfordshire documents, BHRS has made these more accessible to people who do not read Latin or have not the time to travel to see the original documents. At a time when there is growing interest and activity in local studies, it is vital that the work of this society continues to serve the research projects of associations and individuals.

The 1994 volume is the first of three on 'Bedfordshire Churches 1820-1865', edited by Chris Pickford, County Archivist, and will cover parishes from A to G. Members receive each year's publication and have a chance of buying back volumes at greatly reduced prices. The subscription for individuals is £10.00 and £14 for institutional membership.

A separate leaflet giving more background is enclosed with this issue of HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE. To join the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society please contact Betty Chambers, 50, Shefford Road, Meppershall, Bedfordshire, SG17 5LJ.

Martin Lawrence.

Blakesley
In light of recent developments, including the potential changes in local government, the Harlington Heritage Trust feel that there should be an opportunity for its Centre to be more widely used on a regular basis. In the past, in addition to trust members, the Centre has been used by the BLHA, the Mid-Bedfordshire Local History Conference and many local societies and adult evening classes. However, the Trust believes that its centre is still under utilized and there is a willingness to offer the Centre as a regional Heritage Centre for South Bedfordshire, if there is an interest in the idea. The Trustees have requested the BLHA to consider the idea and canvas their member bodies, as the Trust believes that this idea would be of mutual benefit to all concerned and would help to cement the growing links between local historians in the area.

The BLHA Committee, would like to hear your opinions and any ideas for maximising the usage of this resource to the benefit of local history. Please write to the editor who will pass your letters to the Committee.

**NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER - JOYCE LOW**

Educated in Berkshire where an early interest in history was awakened by visits to nearby Windsor Castle. Married, moved to Bedfordshire and spent the next 18 years bringing up a family, during which two years were employed 'helping out' at a local school. Joyce Low decided to do the job properly, so she studied at Bedford College of Education taking History as the main subject (Credit in the finals). She taught at a Bedfordshire Primary School for 11 years and, for half this time, had responsibility for Environmental Studies (with a strong history bias). Joyce then took early retirement to look after her elderly mother. Currently she is a member of Toddington Historical Society, a music society and numerous conservation bodies, thus typifying her interest in classical music, all things historical, and concern for our diminishing wild life and heritage.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS**

BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY Vol 21

Articles describing the excavations, fieldwork and analysis of archaeological sites in Bedfordshire by amateur and professional workers. Also included are details of recent acquisitions, enquiries and research on collections at Bedford and Luton Museums.

Subjects covered include a rescue excavation of a ring ditch at Cople; evidence from a Romano-British kiln site at Harrold (an important pottery manufacturing site from the 1st to 5th century AD where unusually pottery and tiles were made side by side on the same site ); the discovery of a copper-alloy disc found in a grave in Marina Drive and the detailed metalurgical analysis of the Anglo-Saxon solder used on it with an explanation of its original function and purpose.

This volume, which is comprehensively illustrated with drawings, photographs and plans of sites and their artifacts, is a welcome addition to the library of published data of archaeology in the County.

**STOP PRESS**

BEDFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL- Notice to members who intend to exhibit at the Bedfordshire Festival and were not able to attend the meeting at Shuttleworth on July 26th or have not had the information from Ken Page detailing the setting up arrangements and exhibitors entry allocation. Please contact Ken urgently on telephone 0767 312330 or at 6, Pine Close, Biggleswade, Beds. SG18 0EF.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** - The Treasurer requests members who have not yet paid their subscriptions to forward them to him at 14, Glebe Avenue, Flitwick, Bedford, MK45 1HS.