

STEEP HOLM TRUST, 1964/5

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A certain amount of weather damage to the roof of the Barracks building had been reported at the meeting of the Trust in 1963 and repairs were carried out in 1964 by voluntary labour. These repairs included some re-slating and the replacement of a small amount of roof timbers. It was not possible to finish the whole of the work in the 1964 season, but it is hoped that the whole of the roof repairs will be completed by the end of 1965.

Because of the increase in small boats using the Channel, it is anticipated that by the time these *Proceedings* go to press, new notice boards will have been erected to help preserve the privacy of the reserve. Temporary notices were recently placed at the landing places. The cat-ladder leading to the Rudder Rock look-out is fast deteriorating and will have to be replaced within the next few years.

Work proceeded on the site of the Priory of St. Michael and by the end of 1964, the inner faces of the lower courses of the walls with some plaster had been exposed. It is hoped to clear some of the floor area by the end of the present season. The Priory was a small dwelling occupied by Austin Canons, probably established about 1160 by one of the members of the de Ewyas family. It may not have lasted for more than a century. Little is known about its occupants. There is a reference to a Prior William (c.1236) and it is known that 2 lay brothers were arrested in the hundred of Uphill for petty larceny. Judging from the small size of the building, the community can never have been a large one. In fact, it was known that in the 12th century, the community consisted of a minimum of two Austin Canons, the elder being the Prior. Robert de Tregoz of the de Ewyas family, who was killed at the battle of Evesham in 1265, was a patron of the Priory. He transferred it to the care of Studley Priory in 1260, apparently, with the intention that a community was to be maintained on Steep Holm. But there is no evidence to indicate that Steep Holm conventual house did in fact continue.

The famous wild paeony is flourishing well on the paeony ledge and in the Paeony Glen, while the plants in the two other gullies, discovered in recent years, appear to be on the increase. Two further plants have been discovered this year away from the concentration areas. As the plants in the Paeony Glen have been growing closer to the path than before, a wooden open rail barrier has been erected

at the entrance to the Glen to prevent visitors trampling on young plants, but at the same time giving an adequate view.

A number of plants of the wild leek appeared in 1964/5 in the South Landing area; they seem to be getting more numerous. This same area gives bush shelter for the nesting Shelduck, which confine themselves to the Calf Rock area. During the last few years suitable view points have been found for the Cormorant nests on the north face.

Visits to the island have been maintained throughout both seasons, including visits by Natural History Societies and a number of schools.

E. J. MASON,
Hon. Secretary.