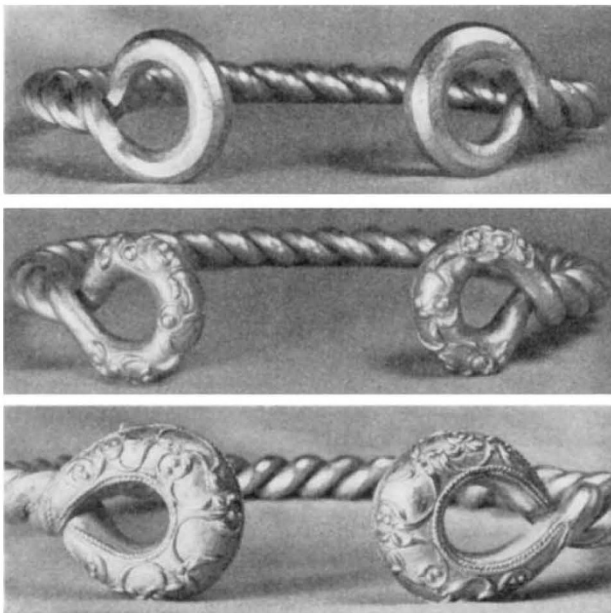


difficulties facing planners of new towns. It is an excellent theoretical exercise, but how will it work in reality? Some crucial points remain in doubt. Will development of the city be coordinated sufficiently, both internally and regionally? Many of the planners' proposals for the city have had to be guesswork because the Government's economic strategy for the south-east will not be completed before December 1969, the date of the completion of the master plan for Milton Keynes. The city's future depends on the attraction of the right industries—if it does not succeed it could become a dormitory town for Birmingham. Another problem is water supply. Buckinghamshire Water Resources Board only has definite sources of supply decided up to 1975—only the first six years of the thirty years of rapid growth of the city as proposed in the report.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Treasure Trove



Three of the five late Iron Age gold torcs or neck collars which were found last October at Belstead near Ipswich by a workman driving an excavator. The torcs, declared treasure trove in December, are now on permanent exhibition at the British Museum and their finder has received a £45,000 reward. Each is about 8 inches in diameter and their weight ranges from 858 to 1,044 grams. Four of the five are decorated in the same style as the torc found several years ago at Snettisham in Norfolk and also now at the British Museum. The Snettisham torc was found with a silver coin of the second quarter of the first century BC stuck in one of its decorated ring terminals. Because of similarities of style the Ipswich torcs are believed to date from this period. They are particularly valuable to archaeologists because they are unfinished and thus reveal the methods used by Iron Age goldsmiths. The three illustrated, for example, show the sequence in which the incised decoration was built up on the ring terminals. (Photographs by courtesy of the British Museum.)

CONSERVATION

Naturalists to Unite?

NATURALISTS seem to have been taken by surprise by the memorandum "Plan for a Merger" in which Sir

Landsborough Thomson has set out proposals for a society to coordinate bodies concerned with nature conservation in Britain. Sir Landsborough proposes a merger of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves and the Council for Nature. This is not a new idea; the SPNR and the RSPB already have a liaison committee which agrees that a merger is a good long term aim, and throughout 1968 there were discussions with the Council for Nature about the formation of a new organization. Sir Landsborough Thomson's document, produced independently of the Council for Nature of which he is chairman, is intended to give some impetus to this process of rationalization, which many people believe cannot be hurried.

There is considerable overlap of function between the existing organizations, although each originally had a distinct purpose. The RSPB, with more than 30,000 members, has 104 acres at its headquarters in Sandy, Bedfordshire, where 13,000 birds are kept and ecological work is carried out. The SPNR devotes most of its energies to being the national mouthpiece of the county naturalists' trusts (which now cover the whole of England, Wales and Scotland), encouraging local government, river authorities, sporting organizations and similar bodies to adopt an enlightened attitude to conservation. The Council for Nature was set up in 1958 to represent and coordinate the voluntary conservation movement as a whole. More than 400 societies are affiliated, and several of them, including the RSPB and SPNR, are represented on the council. It is the fact that the Council for Nature is an affiliation of societies and not an autonomous society that is worrying some people about the merger—it looks as if the Council for Nature would be merging with part of itself. Last April a new constitution was adopted and the old executive committee was replaced by the present council of members elected by the affiliated bodies. These changes were regarded at the time as a step towards closer cooperation with other voluntary bodies.

Sir Landsborough Thomson's proposed constitution for the new merged society suggests that there should be both corporate and individual members, with all bodies associated with the Council for Nature as corporate members and the county naturalists' trusts as "associated trusts". Members of the RSPB and the SPNR would be able to be members of the new society, which would have a name such as the "Royal Society for Bird Protection and Conservation"—fresh permission would probably be needed for the "Royal" title. Two councils are suggested, one elected and executive and one appointed and advisory. The proposed constitution includes provision for a magazine, on the lines of *Birds* now published by the RSPB, but with a wider scope and title such as "Birds and Habitat".

POLLUTION

London grows Cleaner

THE River Thames and London's air are becoming progressively cleaner. That is the cheerful message of the annual report for 1967 of the Scientific Adviser to the Greater London Council which says that, for the first time for more than half a century, "not a single sample (from the Thames) at any time during the year was devoid of oxygen". The river is sampled in