

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY 1976

Ex officio Members: The President, Vice-Presidents and the Executive Officers

Elected Members (to retire at the Annual Meeting indicated)

- 1977 N. COOK, F.S.A., R. W. DUNNING, PH.D., F.S.A., H. M. LEIGHTON, F.S.A., R. G. GILSON,
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- 1978 P. POYNTZ WRIGHT, C. F. CLEMENTS, B.A., P. J. GREENING
- 1979 Miss K. WHEELER, Mrs. M. LANGDON, B.A., D. DENTON-COX, F.R.T.P.L., F.R.I.C.S., D.P.A.,
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Committee Chairmen and Members representing Other Bodies:

C. F. CLEMENTS, B.A. (Archaeological Committee), H. L. M. PATTEN (Natural History Committee), I. P. COLLIS, F.S.A. (Publications Committee), R. W. DUNNING, PH.D., F.S.A. (Library Committee), F. HAWTIN (Public Relations Committee), M. B. McDERMOTT, M.A. (Historic Buildings Committee), L. A. HALDANE, M.A. (Finance and General Purposes Committee), I. P. COLLIS, F.S.A. (County Archivist), P. A. STEVENS, M.A., F.M.A. (County Museums Officer)

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Representative Trustee on the Axbridge Town Trust: Mrs. F. A. NEALE, B.A., A.K.C.

Representative on the Ilchester Town Trust: L. C. HAYWARD, F.S.A.

Society's Representatives, Leigh Woods Committee of Management: Miss E. RALPH, F.S.A. and
Prof. P. V. McGRATH, M.A.

Representative Trustees on the Wyndham Lecture Trusts:

Taunton Secondary: I. P. COLLIS, F.S.A. and Dr. R. W. DUNNING, F.S.A.

Taunton Elementary: Dr. P. C. DAVEY, M.Sc.

Yeovil Secondary: L. C. HAYWARD, B.Sc., F.S.A.

Bridgwater: E. L. KELTING, O.B.E., J.P., F.I.C.E.

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Ilminster: W. M. WIGFIELD, M.A.

Weston-super-Mare: D. C. WHIMSTER, M.A., J.P.

PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1976

The meeting was held at Ammerdown House, Radstock, on Saturday, 15th May, 1976.

Dr. John Coles, having expressed the Society's thanks to Lord and Lady Hylton for their welcome to Ammerdown House, introduced the new President, Professor A. K. Tratman, referring to his distinguished and interestingly varied career. On taking the chair, Professor Tratman looked forward to deepening his acquaintance with Society activities over a broad range.

Election of Officers, Members of Council and Subject Committees

The meeting confirmed the Council's nominees as Executive Officers (Rule 52). Hon. Treasurer: Mr. L. A. Haldane, M.A., Hon. Editor: Mr. M. B. McDermott, M.A., Hon. Secretary: Dr. P. C. Davey, M.Sc.

In addition, the following Council nominations were confirmed: Hon. Librarian: Mr. D. Bromwich, M.A., A.L.A., Hon. Auditor: Mr. J. V. Carrington, F.C.A.

The following were elected to serve on the Council until 1979 (Rule 26): Miss K. E. Wheeler, Mrs. M. Langdon, B.A., Mr. D. Denton-Cox, F.R.T.P.I., F.R.I.C.S., D.P.A., Mr. J. W. Gardner, F.S.A.

Subject Committees (Rule 71): no changes were made in membership of the Archaeological, Natural History, Library and Public Relations Committees. The election of Mr. M. Aston, B.A., Mr. B. J. Murless, and Mr. C. J. Norman to the Publications Committee and of Mrs. C. Austin and Mr. M. Torrens, M.B.E., F.R.I.B.A., to the Historic Buildings Committee was approved.

Summary of the Secretary's Report

Dr. Davey opened his report by stressing that the Society had two functions to perform: to maintain and promote high standards of scholarship in a county which had neither a university nor a polytechnic, and at the same time to serve and involve a wider public at a less demanding level.

The overall membership of the Society had declined slightly in 1975 (76 new members had been elected, whilst losses by death, resignation and lapsed payments totalled 95), and members were urged to remember that subscriptions should be renewed on 1st January.

The new Subject Committee structure had been established, and this was enabling members to participate in formulating their own programme of activities. Thus the Archaeological Committee had sponsored fewer lectures but had placed more emphasis on participatory events. In partnership with Associated Societies, visits had been arranged in June to the Ilchester excavations directed by Mr. Peter Leach and in September to Dr. J. M. Coles' trackways excavations on the Somerset Levels. The Exmoor Symposium held at Nettlecombe Court had been the last major engagement organized by Mr. H. L. M. Patten who, with a panel of advisers, provided a two-day event, run jointly with Bristol University, on the Natural History and Archaeology of Exmoor: this had attracted some 70 members and others.

A meeting for Parish Survey field-workers had been held in Taunton in September. Surveys had now been commenced in 46 parishes, and substantially completed in 5. A successful application had been made for a Maltwood grant in aid of publication, and members taking part in the surveys had been kept in touch by a duplicated circular and by an autumn meeting which seemed likely to become an annual event.

The autumn season had opened well with Dr. Max Hooper speaking to a nearly full house of members from both 'sides' of the Society on 'Hedges and History'; and in November the C.R.A.A.G.S. and M5 Symposium at Taunton had provided an up-to-the-minute account of rescue archaeology and field work in the county, most of the speakers being Society members. A new event, the Archaeological Social Evening at Taunton, had ushered in the festive season: members showed slides, enjoyed traditional Somerset fare and were vastly entertained by readings from original Somerset sources by Robin Bush and his Taunton Thespian associates.

The spring programme had opened at Taunton with a Symposium of Members' Work which drew an audience of over 50. This had been followed in March by participation in a week-end course at Dillington House on 'Medieval Towns in South West Britain', and by another joint symposium, organized by the Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society and the Yeovil and District Natural History Society, on the Archaeology and Natural History of South Somerset (with an attendance of almost 200). The finale had been Professor Tratman's lecture at Taunton on 'Man the Hunter on Mendip—the last half million years', delivered to an enthusiastic audience of some 70 members.

The Archaeological Committee had, partly through its own news sheets, endeavoured to keep the Society informed on all continuing archaeological work and of all developments involving archaeological sites in the county. Situations which had been examined included Westbury quarry, Ham Hill, Glastonbury Abbey precinct wall and Fussell's Edge Tool Works. Policy recommendations for the future of the archaeology of Exmoor had been prepared for submission to the Exmoor Park Authority, which was producing the Exmoor Plan. The Committee had also played its part in implementing the recommendations made by Mr. L. V. Grinsell in his 1971 Presidential Address. Thus Mr. Grinsell had himself been invited to prepare a field guide to the archaeology of the Quantocks entitled *Prehistoric Sites in the Quantock Country*; this was already in the press and would shortly be available for sale to the public. Another point which had been taken up was the resumption of a movable A.G.M. (hence the meeting at Ammerdown House); whilst the first of a series of 'Somerset evenings', including folk songs and folk lore, would be held at Taunton during the summer under the direction of Mr. Robin Bush.

Mr. H. L. M. Patten had taken over the chairmanship of the Natural History Committee during the year, and the Committee had decided to continue to cater for ornithological interests. Two meetings, especially for ornithologists, had been arranged for the winter, and another meeting in the Wyndham Hall. Other field events in 1975 had included an excursion to Steepholm, and continued assistance with the Somerset Flora Survey which, it was hoped, would be ready for publication in the following year. A fungi foray had taken place at Shapwick, led by Mr. J. G. Keylock, and Mrs. J. Appleyard had led a meeting at Holford Combe for the study of mosses and liverworts. At the annual social evening in October members had shown slides which included some taken earlier at Steepholm. Other notable events had been the Exmoor Symposium at Nettlecombe Court, and the shared meeting at the Wyndham Hall at which Dr. Max Hooper had lectured on 'Hedges and History'.

The Library Committee had reported that all existing publication series had been maintained, that a few gaps in some series had been filled, and that a small number of new books had been purchased. Dr. R. W. Dunning had begun rearranging the Braikenridge Collection in files in alphabetical order of parishes; and Miss J. Peden was engaged in checking the card catalogue of the Natural History section of the library. The non-Somerset volumes amongst the collection of manuscript notes on churches by the late Henry Corder, recently received by the Society, had been passed on to the Society of Antiquaries of London; and an unwanted Oriental manuscript, brought home by a member many years ago as a curiosity, had been sold during Sotheby's Islamic Week.

The Historic Buildings Committee had been formed very recently and, after useful exploratory meetings, hoped shortly to begin tackling a vigorous practical programme.

The Public Relations Committee, which had also been set up quite recently, had produced a combined information leaflet and membership application form which was already available at the Committee Room, the County Museum and County Library branches; and a greetings card was being prepared. The provision of display facilities for Society publications had been considered and, with the co-operation of the County Museums Officer, a cabinet would be permanently available in the entrance hall of the Museum. A display had been mounted at the Yeovil Symposium, and more appropriate ways of transporting and arranging material were being explored. The design for a Society tie, in a range of colours, had been chosen, and the ties would shortly be available at £1.50.

Much thought had again been given to the quality, range and form of Society publications. The Hon. Editor and the members of the Publications Committee, whilst necessarily safeguarding the academic standard of the Society's major production, the annual issue of *Proceedings*, with the quality of which the reputation of the Society was closely linked, were always ready to advise on the presentation of fresh material—particularly from new contributors. In the most recent issue of *Proceedings* (Vol. 119) there had been no repetition of the page duplication which had marred a few copies of Vol. 118, but an apology was owed to the Associated Societies for the omission of their customary list. Discussion continued on the contents and form of the Newsletters, and members' views were always welcome. It was recognized that other types of publication might have their part to play in matching more completely the requirements of many members, and this had resulted in the issue of Mr. Grinsell's *Prehistoric Sites in the Quantock Country*.

The Society's office staff continued to be well occupied—and at times severely stretched—in dealing with all aspects of membership and in providing information and coordination within the Society's organizational structure. To match the growth of committee responsibilities, complete records had to be kept, including agendas and minutes of all Subject Committee meetings. The smooth functioning of the office depended greatly on the experienced services of Mrs. Lindsay; and the regular voluntary assistance given by Mr. Thompson also deserved special mention, as did the generous gift to the Society of a Gestetner duplicator by another member, Mr. Berridge.

The aim of the new Society Rules had been to involve more members in the active running of their own Society, and there was a need to assess whether this had been achieved. The Society undoubtedly had its own 'silent majority', but it owed much of its stability over the years to their quiet, continuing and uncomplaining support. There was perhaps a tendency to underestimate the satisfaction which these members gained simply from supporting a Society which they believed worthily contributed to Somerset culture through the objectives it seeks and the standards it maintains—and with which they wished to be associated. Nevertheless, the Officers and Committee Chairmen felt the need for reassurance that their programmes did meet the needs of members, and would welcome members' comments on whether the dual function of the Society, mentioned at the beginning of the report, was being fulfilled.

Annual Accounts

After distributing copies of the accounts, Mr. L. A. Haldane, the Hon. Treasurer, referred to the savings achieved by careful management, but pointed to forthcoming expenditure which would arise from the activities of the increased number of Subject Committees. The adoption of the accounts was approved.

Somerset Record Society

Mrs. C. W. H. Rawlins reported briefly on the Somerset Record Society's year's work. The membership figure had increased and it was hoped to maintain publishing activities with the issue of the 'Harrington Diary' and the reprint of another volume of general interest.

Presidential Address

Dr. John Coles, M.A., F.S.A., the retiring President, then addressed the meeting on the controversial theme 'Experiments in Living Archaeology', well illustrated by suitable slides.

After the meeting tea was served.