

**Report of the Curator of the
Somerset County Museum, Taunton Castle,
for nine months ended Sept. 30, 1917.**

OWING to the intention of the Editorial Committee of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society to issue the annual volume of *Proceedings* for 1917 earlier than some of its predecessors, this report will include a summary of work carried out in the Museum and Library for the first nine months of the year; so that it cannot be favourably compared with that of last year.

The above title varies from its predecessors in another respect. By a resolution of the Council passed on July 13th, 1917, the Society's museum will in future be known as the "Somerset County Museum"—not only on account of the growth and importance of its contents, but also owing to the fact that the greater part of the collections have reference to the County of Somerset.

The chief addition to the Museum has been the finely executed carved chimney-piece of Ham Hill stone discovered in altering Boots' premises in North Street, Taunton, last year. This valuable acquisition has been loaned by the Trustees of the Taunton Town Charities and is described further on in this report. It has been placed in one of the large window-recesses in the Great Hall. A photograph of it forms the frontispiece to the Society's *Proceedings* for 1917.

The Museum authorities have recently acquired a large number of Roman coins found in Somerset. Messrs. Petters Limited, of Yeovil, have presented a representative selection of 100 "third brass" coins of the Constantine period, forming part of the large hoard found on the Westland Estate, Yeovil, in September, 1916, and fully described in my paper on the subject in the *Proceedings* of the Society for that year, vol. LXII, pp. 86-112.

By means of a fund subscribed to by members of the Society, the whole of the Roman coins found in Somerset formerly belonging to the late Mr. H. Franklin have been purchased. These include twenty-one *siliquae* (small silver coins) forming part of the well known hoard found at Holway, Taunton, in 1821. Nineteen *siliquae* from this hoard were presented to the Museum by Mr. Wm. Blake in 1860, and one by Mr. Franklin in 1903; eleven, obtained from the Rev. D. J. Pring in 1912, have now been presented by him. Fifty-five specimens from the hoard were purchased from the executors of the late Dr. Norris in 1911; six from Mr. T. H. Baker, 1911; and nineteen more were bought at Sothebys (T. H. Baker collection) in the same year (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LVII, i, 102-3). So that the Museum now contains 132 specimens of the Holway *siliquae*. The Franklin collection also includes twenty-nine "first" and "second brass" Roman coins from Ham Hill; twenty-nine "third brass" coins found at Filton (or Whitchurch); forty "third brass" coins from Littleton and Somerton; and twenty-eight found at South Petherton, Ilchester, Barton St. David, Compton Dundon, Wellington, Taunton, etc.

Mr. G. E. Cruickshank, of Ealing, has presented a large number of Roman coins (mostly "third brass") found at Combe Down, near Bath, which are roughly listed in Scarth's *Aquae Solis* (1864), p. 134.

Mrs. Valentine, on leaving Somerton, has given to the Museum the bronze coins and tokens collected by her late husband, Dr. E. W. Valentine. They include many Roman coins found in the neighbourhood. These and a few other specimens (swords, flint-lock pistols, surgical instruments, etc.) are ticketed as being presented in memory of the late Dr. Valentine.

Mr. T. Charbonnier has added a number of additional pieces to his collection of Pewter, including ten spoons. The specimens now number considerably over four hundred.

Through the instrumentality of Father E. Horne, the Prior of Downside has placed on deposit in the Museum an exceedingly fine and well preserved bronze sword, of the late Bronze Age, found at Midsomer Norton in 1873. This was

exhibited at the Bath meeting of the Society in 1876, and is figured in vol. XXII of the *Proceedings*. It will be described in the Society's *Proceedings*, vol. LXIV, 1918.

The Harpsichord, dated 1790, which was deposited on loan by Mr. H. A. Jeboult (*Proceedings*, LXI, p. xlvii) was recently offered by the owner, at a small figure, provided it found a permanent home in the Museum. It has now been purchased by twenty members of the Society (*listed elsewhere*).

The ethnographical collections have benefited by Lady Tylor's gift of part of the late Sir Edward B. Tylor's museum, chiefly consisting of painted Indian pottery from North America—mostly Zuñi; and Mr. Owen I. Young has presented a small series of fragments of ornamented pottery of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages collected by him in Malta and Gozo.

The Needlework department has been enriched by an interesting collection of lace bobbins, collected chiefly in the West of England by the late Miss F. A. Waddon. A large collarette of Honiton lace designed and worked by Miss Waddon has also been given.

Collections of Somerset plants have been added to the Herbarium by the Rev. E. S. Marshall, Mr. H. Stuart Thompson, Miss M. A. G. Livett and others (arranged by Mr. T. W. Cowan); and the collections of local birds have been added to by Rear-Admiral Dare, Mr. W. H. Rendell, Mr. E. Bryan Wood, the Rev. J. A. Smart, Mr. W. B. Broadmead and Dr. J. Wigglesworth.

The labelling of the Bidgood collection of birds and other bird-cases has been completed, and the localities have been indicated as far as possible. Some attention has been given to the geological specimens; the collection of early printed books and manuscripts have been labelled; and the arrangement of coins and medals continued as far as time has permitted. Last year a large part of the specimens comprising the Arthur Hull collection, from Chard, was cleaned, catalogued and labelled; this work has been continued at intervals during the past few months and, with the exception of the identification and cataloguing of the coins, will be completed by the end of the year.

The Society's large Library of some 20,000 volumes has had the usual amount of attention. Routine work in connection with its additions and development occupies a considerable amount of time each year. Amongst the books which have been bound is Frohawk's "British Birds," in 6 vols. Weaver's "Somerset Incumbents" has been interleaved and rebound, and a large number of corrections and additions to the earlier series have been made by the Rev. Preb. E. H. Bates Harbin from Rolls published by the Public Record Office and other works. Further additions are required from 1730; and it is hoped that the interleaved copy may eventually become a full directory of the clergy of the diocese.

Mr. Martin Gibbs has added to the Society's collection of books on art, and has given ninety-four rolls on vellum comprising the Ministers' Accounts and Court Rolls of North Petherton, 1289-1432, together with a calendar of the same. Other manuscripts of local importance have also been presented.

A number of volumes on Brittany, some in English, some in French, have been given to the Library by Mr. A. H. Withers.

By drawing on the Woodward Fund it has been found possible to fill up many gaps in the series of public records and in the Historical Manuscripts Commission reports. Other books have been purchased, including Vol. II on "The Glastonbury Lake Village," by Dr. A. Bulleid, Mr. H. St. George Gray, and others.

Mr. C. Tite has added to his collection of Somerset books, and the cataloguing of them has been continued for him by Mr. A. E. Baker.

The Botanical Section held its annual meeting at the Castle on February 28th, the Ornithological Section on March 16th, and the Entomological Section on April 12th. The Taunton Field Club held conversaziones for lectures in the Museum on January 18th and March 8th.

My assistant, Mademoiselle L. Bastiaensen, who commenced her duties on December 15th, 1915, has done useful work, especially in the ticketing of the specimens in the Museum.

The Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History

Society consisted of 902 members at the end of July, 1917, including eleven life members and two honorary members.

The following is a list of the monthly attendances of visitors to the Museum and Library for the first nine months of 1916 and 1917 :—

	1916.		1917.	
	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.
Jan. ..	109	440	98	322
Feb. ..	114	400	77	320
Mar. ..	106	438	106	310
Apr. ..	119	533	79	331
May ..	120	404	94	514
June ..	143	499	95	405
July ..	*251	596	*145	549
Aug. ..	106	920	80	990
Sept. ..	112	709	90	677
	1180	4939	864	4418

* Including Annual Meeting at Taunton.

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