

## William Bidgood.

IN the early days of the new century the Society sustained a great loss by the sudden death of Mr. William Bidgood, who had for many years acted as Curator of the Museum and Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Bidgood, who was the son of a farmer, was born at Skilgate, in West Somerset, in 1840. He removed to Taunton in 1853, and was apprenticed to Mr. May, the first printer of the Society's *Proceedings*. His love of Natural History, and of knowledge generally, was greatly stimulated by the share he took in printing the annual volumes, and the attention of some of the leading members of the Society was called to his collection of insects and to his botanical and other drawings. Consequently, when the Curatorship fell vacant, in 1862, he was advised to apply for the appointment. This he did, and he was successful in obtaining it. He entered the service of the Society in January, 1862, and speedily justified the choice of those who were responsible for his appointment, by taking up the various branches of his work in a most intelligent and enthusiastic spirit. He was one of those men who can readily adapt themselves to surrounding circumstances; and as the calls upon his time, energies and talents increased, they were readily and heartily met. He had been a lover of Natural History from his early days, and had a very fair knowledge of several branches thereof. He was a keen and patient observer, a good draughtsman, and had that inborn love of accuracy, even in minute details, which goes so far to make the successful student and the good Curator. And so it

happened that, as the collections of the Society increased in number, variety, size, and importance, he was ever ready to render valuable service in classifying, labelling, and describing them. Nor was this all, for he continued and extended the studies of his youth, in order to be able to increase his usefulness, adding lithography and engraving on wood and copper to the number of his accomplishments, so as to be able to provide the plates for the volumes of the Society's *Proceedings*. The large number of his contributions in this direction is familiar to most of us. Perhaps one of the best specimens of his artistic work is the official seal of the Society, the block of which has appeared on the cover of the annual volume for so many years past. For careful composition and skill of execution, this will probably bear comparison with any other seal in the kingdom, including as it does the seals of Glastonbury Abbey, Wells Cathedral, Bath Abbey, and Taunton Priory.

Mr. Bidgood did excellent work, under the direction of Professor Boyd Dawkins and Mr. E. A. Sanford, by assisting in the arrangement of the splendid collection of bones from the Somerset caves when they came into the possession of the Society. He added not a little to his reputation also by his careful and accurate drawings thereof, for the valuable work issued by Mr. Sanford "On the Pleistocene Mammalia of Somerset."

The collection of birds and insects in the Museum bears eloquent testimony to his skill as a taxidermist and as an entomologist, and the manner in which he carried out the arrangements for stocking the great hall, shortly before his death, will long be remembered by those who best know the skill and labour it involved.

He had a most useful knowledge of the books belonging to the Society, and prepared an exhaustive catalogue of them up to 1889—a book of 190 pages. He was especially well up in the various works relating to the county of Somerset, and had, during his long term of office, accumulated an

immense fund of information about his native shire, which was always most readily placed at the disposal of anyone seeking such knowledge.

The handy little "Guide to the Museum of the Society in Taunton Castle," which Mr. Bidgood wrote, has run through six editions, and he brought it up to date for each new issue, the last of which appeared in 1897.

His principal contribution to the literature and archæology of the county was his monograph on "Somerset Trade Tokens of the Seventeenth Century, and of the Period from 1787 to 1817," which first appeared in the Society's *Proceedings* for 1886. This is a most careful and accurate piece of work, which gave him a place amongst the numismatists of Great Britain, and led to his being asked to edit the Somersetshire portion of Williamson's splendid edition of Boyne's standard work on "Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century." This he undertook with much pleasure, and accomplished most satisfactorily.

He also contributed a couple of papers to the volume of *Proceedings* for 1898: "Notes on Two Old Carved Doors" (believed to have belonged to Taunton Priory), and "Norton Camp."

An accomplished, intelligent, genial, and many-sided officer, Mr. Bidgood made a host of friends amongst the members of the Society, and was held in high esteem, especially by many of the eminent men with whom he had been associated in the long ago.

C. T.

## **Mr. Henry Duncan Skrine.**

MR. HENRY DUNCAN SKRINE, who was President at the Bath Meeting in 1895, and since one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, died on the 25th September, 1901, at his residence, Claverton Manor, near Bath. He had attained the venerable age of eighty-six. His name appeared on the List of New Members in 1874, so that he had been for twenty-seven years connected with the Society.

Mr. Skrine was actively engaged in County administration, filling up to the time of his decease the office of C.C., J.P. and D.L. for Somerset. He had also served the office of High Sheriff. He took a warm interest in the charitable and educational institutions of Bath, and, as a man of high culture and learning, was for many years the leading spirit of the Bath Literary Club.

J.R.B., F.S.A.

## **The Right Rev. William Robert Brownlow, D.D.**

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM ROBERT BROWNLOW, D.D., died 9th November, 1901, at the age of sixty-one. He succeeded our Past President, Bp. Clifford, as Bishop of the See of Clifton, and, like him, was a skilled and active Antiquary, taking a great interest not only in local, but in general archæological subjects. Shortly after his appointment to the See he was elected one of the two Vice-Presidents of the Clifton Antiquarian Club, and would doubtless have become President, had he survived, in the January following his decease. He was a constant attendant at the Annual Meetings of the Society, and so lately as the Excursion to Athelney on the 25th September last, he joined the party, and his pleasant and genial presence added not a little to the success of the Meeting.

Archæologically he will perhaps be best known as one of the joint authors of “*Roma Sottoranea*,” by Canons Northcote and Brownlow, an account of the Catacombs of Rome—a book of high authority. It went through two editions and remains the English standard work on the subject. May his soul, and those of all faithful departed, rest in peace!

J.R.B., F.S.A.

### Sir Edward Strachey.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY, third Baronet, died at his residence, Sutton Court, on the 24th Sept., 1901, aged 89. He was elected a Member of the Society in 1865, and filled the chair as President at the Bristol Meeting in 1867, continuing as a V.P. till his decease. His tastes were, however, literary rather than Archæological, and various publications of his “Theology, History and Politics,” “Miracles and Science,” “Jewish History and Politics,” etc., achieved a fair amount of success. He was a J.P. and D.L. for Somerset, and served the office of High Sheriff in 1864. He was succeeded in the Baronetcy by his son, now Sir Edward Strachey, who has been M.P. for South Somerset since 1892.

J.R.B., F.S.A.

### H. W. Livett, M.D.

AT the ripe age of 87 years, and on the anniversary of his birthday, August 28th, 1901, there passed away at Wells, where he had resided since the year 1838, as a medical practitioner, Henry W. Livett, M.D., one of the original members of our Society. There was, indeed, a considerable interval during which his name is not found on the List of Members, but, both at the beginning, and during the last thirteen years, he was a steady supporter of the Society. It was

mainly through his exertions that the Wells Natural History and Archæological Society was founded, in 1888, and as one of its Vice-Presidents he gave it his constant thought and assistance. He frequently delivered lectures at the annual meetings; and the mere mention of the subjects of his addresses prove how varied were his interests. "Entomology"—"British Orchids"—"Our Rocks"—"Characteristics of Spiders," were some of them. As a medical student he became well acquainted, in early life, with London, and its famous houses; and in old age his memory reverted to the scenes of his youth, and quite recently he delivered two able papers on "The History of the Strand," and "The Old Palace of Whitehall." The Wells Museum was opened in 1894, and became an object of much interest to him. It has been truly said of him, that he was "a student by nature, yet with a keen interest in all that was going on in the world around him." The devotion of such a man to the intellectual progress of his adopted city during sixty-three years, more particularly in the branches of Natural History and Archæology, is not to be met with every day.

J. C.

## William Blake.

THE late Mr. William Blake, of Bridge House, South Petherton, was one of the oldest members of our Society, and we find his name on the Committee for the year 1851.

He was born at Crewkerne, in the year 1815, and he died at Bridge, on April 1st, 1901, thus surviving but a short time his life-long friend Mr. John Batten.

His family, which for some generations was intimately connected with the town of Taunton, claimed a common ancestry with that of the great Admiral whose statue now adorns the market-place of Bridgwater; whilst the Misses Blake, who were so prominently connected with the demonstration of the

little "Maids of Taunton" in Monmouth's time, are presumed to have been members of the same family. We learn, with more certainty, however, from *Savage's* "History of Taunton, that the foundation of our County Hospital, as a memento of King George the Third's Jubilee, was due almost entirely to the personal efforts and influence of his uncle, Dr. Malachi Blake of that town.

The subject of our notice removed in early life from Crewkerne to Bishop's Hull, where he resided until the year 1861, when he inherited the "Bridge" estate in South Petherton, where he passed the remainder of his days, leading the life of an exemplary country gentleman, taking a benevolent interest in all around him.

He was a D.L. for the county of Somerset,—had served the office of High Sheriff (in 1869),—and was perhaps the oldest J.P. in the south of Somerset; only relinquishing his magisterial duties when compelled to do so by his advanced age and failing health.

Although we are unable to record him as an authority on matters archæological, yet he always had a great respect for them, and was ever ready to join in furthering the interests of our Society to the best of his power, from the date of its inauguration until his death.

H. N.