

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
DURING THE YEAR
1938

THE Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Clevedon on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, June 21st, 22nd and 23rd. The last meeting of the Society at Clevedon took place in 1922.

First Day's Proceedings

At 10.45 a.m. a large number of members assembled at the

Church of St. Andrew, Clevedon

where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. J. E. Pugh. The building was described by Mr. F. BLIGH BOND, F.R.I.B.A., who drew mainly upon his account of the building published in *Proceedings*, lxviii, pp. xxix-xxx. Those specially interested should also read the guide book to the church by Dr. R. S. Renton.

An announcement was made that there was some ancient glass to be seen in Christ Church, Clevedon, including some of the thirteenth century, some heraldic glass, and some French glass of the sixteenth century.

Before leaving the old town the members were conducted by the Excursion Secretary to Wain's Hill overlooking the Bristol Channel, where the remains of earthworks, apparently of ancient origin, were inspected.

The Annual Meeting

After luncheon the members assembled in St. John's Hall, Clevedon, at 2 p.m., and were welcomed by the President, Colonel W. O. Gibbs, D.L., supported by the Very Rev. Prior E. Horne, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*), Sir Ambrose Elton, Bart., Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, F.S.A. (*one of the Hon. Secretaries*), and Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. (*Asst.-Secretary, Curator and Excursion Secretary*).

The Annual Report

Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, Asst.-Secretary, read the Annual Report, which was as follows :—

‘In presenting the ninetieth annual report, the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 72 new names have been added to the list of members and associates. Losses by death and resignation for the year 1937–38 have been 48, and the net gain is 24. The total membership to date is 979, as against 955 at the Taunton Meeting in 1937, and 974 at the Wells Meeting in 1936.

‘The Society has during the past year lost the Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse, who was senior vice-president and one of the trustees; Dr. Alfred C. Fryer, F.S.A., the authority on the monumental effigies in our Somerset Churches; and Dr. R. Liddon Meade-King, the senior honorary secretary,—obituary notices of all of whom appear in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxiii, now being published.

‘The Society has also sustained the loss by death of the following members during the period under review: Mr. O. G. Abraham (1936), Miss C. H. Allen (1914), the Rev. W. B. Atherton (1911), Mrs. William Barrett senr. (1916), Mr. R. S. Bate (1934) who catalogued the manuscript in Wells Museum, Mr. A. H. Burge (1919), Mr. W. D. Carøe, F.S.A. (1909), the well-known architect, Miss S. A. K. Carver (1920), Mr. C. P. Clarke (1893), Mr. K. Hewlett, O.B.E. (1935), the Rev. C. H. Bickerton Hudson (1903), Mr. C. H. Lance (1923), Mr. F. W. Mathews (1919) who wrote a Blackdown Hills history, Professor E. J. Rapson of Cambridge (1917), Mrs. B. M. G. Ross (1922), Mr. O. T. Sadler (1906), and Mr. J. H. Woollan (1934).

'The volume of *Proceedings* for 1937 is overdue, but some of the copies have been issued during the last few days. Although the letterpress is a little shorter than in some recent years the book contains thirty-six plates and is the best illustrated of the whole series of eighty-three volumes. The total cost of the 1937 *Proceedings* to the Society will be published in a footnote to this Report (not being yet available).¹ Members are reminded once more that they are invited to contribute to the Publication and Illustration Fund; these donations are now separately acknowledged in the annual volume.

'A new bye-law has come into force with regard to the distribution of the volume of *Proceedings*. Hitherto, the book issued in the spring or early summer, was sent to ordinary members whose subscription covered the previous year; but persons joining the Society in the first quarter of a year will now be entitled to a copy of the volume representing the work and records of the previous year. Thus, members who joined the Society between January 1 and March 31, 1938, receive the *Proceedings* for 1937.

'During the past winter and spring two subjects in particular have engaged the attention of the Development Committee. In the Annual Report read at Wells in 1936 it was reported that the manuscripts of the Manor of Taunton and Taunton Deane had been transferred from the Exchequer rooms at Taunton Castle to the Somerset Record Office. Space has thus been gained, and these two small rooms over the Inner Gateway have now been repaired and decorated and electric light has been installed. Direct access from the main Library of the Society has been rendered possible by building a newel-staircase in the thickness of the Castle wall where one had existed previously, that is before the arrival of the Society. Thus, much needed space has been acquired for the extension of the Society's large Library. Funds for this purpose were provided by the Roland Paul Bequest.

'The other building matter has been the repair of certain parts of the Curator's House which, if left longer, might have proved a danger. A considerable amount of unforeseen work

¹ It was found later that the total cost to the Society of *Proceedings*, Vol. lxxxiii, had been £264 14s 0d.

had to be done, and the north side of this part of the Castle has been repointed following the removal of some ivy a year or two ago. Money had been set aside for this purpose.

‘Further strides have been made in the development of the Society’s Museum and the presentation and labelling of the specimens especially in the local archæological and historical departments. This has been rendered possible by the financial help, previously reported, given by the Education Committee of the Somerset County Council. The greater part of this annual grant has paid for the services of an assistant-curator ; and the work in the new Wyndham Galleries is so far completed that the proper means of instructing children is now a very real thing ; and it is hoped that the Maintained and Aided Secondary and other schools in the County, who are admitted free, will make more frequent visits to the Museum, when talks may be given to such schools giving notice a few days previously.

‘During the past six weeks several classes from the elementary and secondary schools of Taunton have been guided through the Museum in small groups, accompanied by masters and mistresses. Under one scheme at least 900 Taunton children will have had the opportunity of gaining special local knowledge which will illuminate their studies in a practical manner. Careful descriptive labels for groups of objects are now a great feature of their display. The *individual* ticketing of specimens has for many years past been a strong point in making your Museum famous.

‘At the time of the Henry Irving Centenary a small exhibition was assembled in the Museum temporarily, consisting of portraits, autographs, programmes, etc. ; this little collection is still intact, as the space is not yet required for other purposes.

‘Two loan collections have been exhibited during the last month or two, namely “the Neolithic Culture of the Cotswolds” and “the Evolution of the Axe” ; these are circulating loans of the S.W. Group of Museums.

‘The Library grows, and recently a selection of some sixty volumes was made from the Library of the late Dr. R. L. Meade-King, in accordance with his wishes. The books relate chiefly to genealogy and history. Among the books purchased is Burke’s *Peerage*, 1937.

‘Last autumn a joint Committee representing our own Society and the Somerset Rural Community Council was formed, with Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal as chairman, and Mr. St. George Gray and Miss B. Spencer as joint secretaries, for the purpose of listing the chief ancient inhabited buildings in Somerset built prior to 1825, with special reference to Section 17 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932. This arduous task was undertaken at the request of the Surveyor’s department of the Somerset County Council, afterwards backed by the Congress of Archæological Societies who discussed this matter, for Great Britain generally, at their conference in London on 16 November 1937.

‘The important point in the Act of 1932, so far as the archæological societies are concerned, is that the planning authorities—urban and rural councils—are empowered, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health, to provide in their schemes for the protection of buildings and other monuments of archæological interest. The preparation of the Somerset lists by the Joint Committee should prove to be of permanent importance, and the planning authorities have already expressed themselves very grateful for the reliable assistance given. This work will soon be completed. For the purpose, the county had been divided into nineteen areas, and various helpers had been secured to make the necessary enquiries in the districts in which they reside. This report gives the Society the opportunity of thanking all those who have rendered assistance in bringing that work to a successful issue.

‘Last summer the foundations of the monastic kitchen at Glastonbury Abbey were excavated by the joint committee of the Society of Antiquaries and the Somerset Archæological Society. It was found to measure 35 ft. square and had, apparently, a vaulted roof, as at Ely. These excavations are now being continued, to trace the foundations of the abbot’s house, and the season’s work will be in progress till about 23 July.

‘At Camerton, Prior Horne has completed the excavation of the Iron Age site in Seven Acre Field, and he hopes to do further work in the near neighbourhood next autumn.

‘At the present time Mr. H. E. Balch and others are engaged

upon a careful examination of the Badger Hole at Wookey, progressing by slow steps.

‘Excavations were continued towards the close of last summer in the eastern half of the Meare Lake Village by Dr. A. Bulleid and Mr. St. George Gray. The numerous “finds” included some of special interest, and a selection of them has recently been exhibited at the Institute of Archæology, Regent’s Park, London, with discoveries from many other archæological sites in Great Britain and Ireland. The work at Meare will be continued from 22 August; and donations are now being solicited.

‘Vol. I of the monograph on the western half of the Meare Lake Village is now in a forward state of preparation for publishing and it has already been advertised. Full particulars may be obtained from Mr. Gray.

‘Renewed interest is being taken in the preservation and proposed further investigation and repair of Worlebury Camp. This was the result of a lecture on the subject given by Mr. St. George Gray at the Annual Meeting of the S.W. Group of Museums at Weston-super-Mare last spring, and a fund was then started for the promotion of such work in the future.

‘Following the discovery of two hoards of late Roman silver coins on Shapwick Heath in successive summers, 1936 and 1937 (both described in the *Proceedings*), a third hoard was found in peat-cutting on 13 June, 10 ft. distant from Hoard No. 2. The coins, numbering about 1,150, are of bronze (known as “third brass”) and weigh about 6 lbs. avoirdupois. They were found deposited in a canister-shaped bottle of pewter (neck broken off). As far as is known at present the coins date from about A.D. 320 to 390, but very few of them have as yet been closely examined.

‘This report would not be complete without reference to the Leper or St. Margaret’s Hospital at Taunton, and especially as our Society took a leading part, at the beginning of the negotiations, in saving this ancient building (described by the Rev. Thomas Hugo) from demolition. We congratulate the Somerset Rural Community Council on having secured this ancient monument for its headquarters through the generosity of Captain W. D. M. Wills. It will, after some internal re-

conditioning, provide office accommodation and a guildhall for Somerset craftsmen.

‘ We also congratulate the county surveyor in altering Long Load Bridge, for having had the new ironwork copied from the old design, with the approval of H.M. Office of Works.

‘ On 3 April a West Somerset Branch of the Society, with Minehead as headquarters, was inaugurated, and officers and committee duly elected to manage the details of the organization. For record and other purposes this Branch should find much scope in the Exmoor country.

‘ The Natural History Sections of the Society have held their meetings periodically at Taunton Castle and other centres. Both the Ornithological and Botanical Sections are in a strong position, but the Entomological Section, owing to lack of support, especially now-a-days from young people, will probably have to suspend its activities. The Ornithological Section has produced an illustrated Report on Somerset Birds for 1937, covering 40 pages.

‘ The Botanical Section has recently provided for the Museum, at its own cost, a special stand of revolving frames in which Dr. W. Watson has now exhibited a representative series exemplifying the Flora of Somerset. This is an excellent step forward in the Museum work of the Natural History sections.

‘ Taunton Castle was visited during 1937 by 9,348 persons, including 1,650 attendances from members. This figure has been exceeded only twice before, namely 10,127 in 1936, and 9,404 in 1931.

‘ In concluding this Report reference should be made to a matter which is engaging the attention, more or less, of the whole community—Air Raid Precautions ; and it will interest the meeting to know that official lectures and demonstrations are now taking place almost every other day in the Wyndham Hall at our headquarters, Taunton Castle. This, together with the increasing demands for this well equipped and central meeting-place, has made it necessary to rail it off from the Castle grounds, as the hall for general purposes is approached by a separate doorway leading from the public motor-park. During the year a new electric lantern has been

provided for the hall, and the cost of this and the iron fencing has been defrayed from the hall receipts.'

On the proposition of Sir Ambrose Elton, seconded by Mr. L.H. Barnard, the adoption of the Report was carried unanimously.

Finances

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

TO THE SOCIETY'S

Publication and Illustration Fund

FROM 1 MARCH 1938 TO 1 MARCH 1939

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Bailey, W. H. . . .	10	0		Horne, Very Rev. Prior	17	6	
Bulleid, Dr. A. . . .	7	12	5	Jackson, Dr. J. W. . .	15	0	
Connor, A. B.				Meade-King, The Misses	1	0	0
(Sale of reprints)	7	8		Morgan, F. W. . . .	2	0	0
Druce, G. C. . . .	1	5	8	Vivian-Neal, A. W. . .	2	0	0
Field, Rev. H. E. . .	2	2	0	Sale of Blocks . . .	1	2	6
Glastonbury Abbey Excavation Fund . .	17	0					
					£20	9	9

The Very Rev. Prior E. HORNE, Chairman of Council, presented the Accounts of the Society for 1937, and they were formally adopted. They have already been printed in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxiii.