

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
DURING THE YEAR
1939

THE Ninety-First Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Crewkerne on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 11th, 12th and 13th. The last meeting of the Society at Crewkerne took place in 1921. The 1939 Meeting proved to be one of the largest in the history of the Society.

First Day's Proceedings

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

Church of St. Bartholomew, Crewkerne

where they were met by the Vicar, the Rev. Preb. G. R. P. Norris. The building was described by Dr. F. C. EELES, O.B.E., and Mr. C. E. W. SLADE.

Since the meeting Dr. Eeles has studied the Church in greater detail, and has written the following description :

This magnificent building is one of the finest Perpendicular churches in the west of England. While the details are in the main characteristic of Somerset work, there are some very unusual features.

The west front is particularly striking both in detail and proportion. It is most exceptional to find so large a nave

with only three bays. It is still more exceptional to find side windows of six lights : this feature may even be unique in an English parish church. The waggon-roof in the nave is unusual in detail and proportion. There is evidence that the rood-loft was arranged in a most uncommon manner. It is very rare to find a church, with scarcely any visible detail of an earlier date than we find here, of cruciform plan with a central tower. This feature, indeed may well provide us with a clue to the development of the building.

In the first stage of the north side of the tower on the inside, is the inner part of a window, now built up consisting of plain jambs and a straight lintel with a relieving arch over it, apparently of the thirteenth century. The existing tower arches are very massive, and of no great height ; though their detail is Perpendicular, they almost certainly mask the core of an earlier tower. Apart from the evidence of the built-up window above, it is inconceivable that the fifteenth-century builders would not have erected much higher and less massive arches, had they built the tower from its foundations. As it was, they accommodated their detail to the lower arches of an earlier date, and when the clerestory was added to the nave it seems to have been found necessary to adopt a peculiar arrangement for the rood and rood-loft.

We may justifiably assume the existence of a cruciform church of the thirteenth century or earlier with a central tower. The chancel of this church was certainly narrower than the present chancel and probably shorter. The east walls of the transepts were in the same position as at present, but the transepts were narrower and their west walls further east. The nave was wider than the present nave. We cannot tell whether it had aisles.

Early in the fourteenth century the south transept was rebuilt, and a recess made for an altar in the east wall of the southern part.

Late in the fourteenth century (or, perhaps, a little before that) the chancel was rebuilt, wider than the old chancel, the north wall being set further out. There are traces of fourteenth-century work in the south wall, including the piscina of the high altar.

About the middle of the fifteenth century, or perhaps a little later, the chancel was rebuilt, with the existing east and south windows, and with a vestry outside the east end.

Next, the tower was rebuilt, perhaps about the same time. Later still, towards the end of the century, the nave was rebuilt as we see it at present, with its clerestory.

Lastly, the north transept was rebuilt in a later style of Perpendicular, and an aisle was added to the chancel on the north side, with a chapel in the angle between the aisle and the transept. All this work seems to have been of about the same date, and when it was done the builders re-used the two mid-fifteenth century windows which they found in the north wall of the chancel. These can easily be distinguished, for the heads of the lights of the later windows are ogee-shaped. The flatter heads of the other later windows may also be noticed, as well as the late type of enriched roof on transept and chapel.

We have practically no documentary evidence to help us in tracing the growth of this important building. The remaining Crewkerne wills tell us little. We have to depend almost entirely upon architectural evidence. Of the history of the interior fittings, the changes after the reformation period, and even the work of the nineteenth century, we can say much less than is usually the case in a church of such importance.

The church was given by William the Conqueror to the Abbey of St. Stephen at Caen in Normandy. Later the patronage was in the hands of the Courtenay family, and there were three rectors, the tithes being divided into three portions as at Tiverton and Chulmleigh, also in Courtenay patronage. The clergy-house was demolished in 1846.¹

If the choir of the Church was collegiate it would account for certain unusual architectural features of the building. The evidence provided by Gerard of Trent, writing in 1633, may be considered sufficient that this was the case. Probably, if the rights attached were of a major character, the foundation was by papal brief, and consequently is not recorded in the register of the contemporary bishop. Gerard states that, 'it was heretofore a quarter Collegiate Church, founded I presume

¹ Illustration, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxxvii, i, 24.

by the Earle of Devon, and hath untill this day the use or rights of a Collegiate or Cathedral Church.' (*S.R.S.*, xv, 67).

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Chancel

The chancel has three bays : there are three windows in the south wall, with a small ogee-headed doorway at the west side of the middle bay. On the north side are two arches leading into the north aisle, and a window near the east end. The east window has five cinquefoiled lights and tracery lights in groups of three, the lower trefoiled, the upper cinquefoiled.

There are doorways on each side of the altar with straight-sided, four-centred heads and flanking pinnacles. Over the head of each doorway and beneath the string-course is a blank shield, intended to be coloured, supported on the north side by the Courtenay boars, on the south by angels. The carving is rather coarse. The doors themselves still remain, covered with basket-tracery in three lights. These formerly led to a vestry, situated as at Ilminster, but now destroyed.¹ Their bases are hidden by a modern floor. The space beneath the east window is filled by a modern reredos of conventional nineteenth-century type, not coloured, placed there in 1903.

The side windows are similar to the east window, but in four lights supporting three panels with three sub-divisions, as in the east window : in the heads are three lozenge-shaped quatrefoiled lights. The arcade has clustered columns, fair-sized moulded capitals to the shafts, and depressed four-centred arches. The arches into the chapel between the transept and the north chancel aisle are similar, and clearly of the same date—the early part of the sixteenth century.

Externally the chancel and transept walls are finished by moulded battlements, with shafts for pinnacles over the buttresses between the windows. The battlements are plain ; the buttresses have moulded offsets of the usual type, and there are large grotesques on the string-courses. Save for a small area at the west end of the south wall of the chancel, and

¹ The remains of this building are shown in the print of Crewkerne Church in Collinson's *History of Somerset*, 1791.

the east wall of the south transept, which are earlier work, all the walls are finished externally with ashlar.

The chancel roof is very peculiar: it is a form of waggon-roof with tie-beams supported by small brackets on short wall-posts. Over each of these is a brace: there are bosses where these braces cross the three purlins. Stone angel-corbels support the wall-posts: there is a fairly large moulded wall-plate. The curve of the waggon-roof is peculiar: the struts from the wall-plate which stiffen the lower part of the roof rise steeply but straight as far as the first purlin, after which the braces are curved. The rafters are covered with plaster and there seems to have been a certain amount of restoration.

South Transept

The south transept may be described as having two bays, of which the inner has, on the east side, a four-light window with cinquefoil-headed lights, a low pitched, four-centred arch with flat sides, no label, two main divisions, and tracery in six trefoiled lights, of a type unlike anything else in the church, possibly slightly earlier than the other Perpendicular windows. The outer bay contains remains of a fourteenth-century arch, plainly chamfered, which at first sight looks as if it led into a chapel eastwards, but which really seems to have been a relieving-arch to give a little more space for an altar. Though a few stones of it are visible externally, there seems no trace of an eastward extension here. This arch was partly destroyed, partly built up, in the fifteenth century, when a four-light window, like the side chancel windows, was inserted. This window has, on the inside of the central mullion, a miniature figure of St. George slaying the dragon, which may be compared with the lily crucifix on the central mullion of the east window of the south aisle of Wellington. In the south wall of this transept at its eastern end is a piscina of the early part of the fourteenth century, with a trefoil-headed niche with a crocketed arch. The south window is of five lights, and of the same general type as the west window of the nave. It has three main divisions, the two central mullions being carried up to the arch, and the tracery-mullions over the second and fourth lights being carried through the tracery-arches to the

main arch, the tracery-lights being trefoiled. The west side of this transept has, in the inner bay, the arch into the south aisle of the nave, and, in the outer, a modern doorway. The roof is of low pitch and lean-to construction, replacing an earlier roof of higher pitch, traces of which may be seen on the outside of the tower.

Set between the double buttresses at the s.e. corner of the south transept is an arched recess with a roof flat within but sloping externally, enclosing a space roughly 3 ft. square, in which is a niche, the stone-work of which has been mutilated, with what appears to be a stone seat below it facing outwards into the churchyard. The entrance has a narrow moulding and a depressed four-centred arch, and just within it are traces of fixtures for a grating or for doors. The date is about the middle of the fifteenth century. Such a structure is most unusual if not actually unique, and its purpose is hard to determine. It is not a cell for an anchorite; it is not large enough, and there is no connection into the church. It has been suggested that what appears to be a seat is really a shelf for offerings placed before the figure in the now empty niche.

That there was an anchoress here we know, with a cell at or near the west end of the church. That there was also a hermit we know, and he had a cottage in the churchyard.¹ Anchorites and anchoresses were enclosed in their cells, while hermits moved about, and did various works, such as bridge-building. At the same time there seems to have been considerable variety of practice. Normally, an anchorite or anchoress was not supposed to leave the cell which adjoined the church, and into which there was an opening that enabled the recluse to follow the service. But sometimes anchorites' cells were in churchyards, and in those cases the condition of enclosure probably was held to be satisfied by the recluse not leaving consecrated ground. It is therefore suggested as not impossible that the anchoress may have been able to resort at certain times to this place, and sat on the seat behind doors with a grating when receiving people who came to her for advice.

¹ *S.R.S.*, xix, 224; *Patent Roll*, 16 Eliz.

Robert Cherde (Chard), 1402, hermit, see *The Story of Ford Abbey*, by Sidney Heath (1911), 48.

North Transept

The north transept presents several peculiarities. These are particularly evident on examining the roof construction. There may have been two rebuildings. There is a panelled relieving arch on the north side of the tower carrying the upper part of the north wall, upon a line between the north buttress and the arcade of the north chancel aisle. — It is here that we have clear evidence of the widening northward of the chancel, which must have taken place subsequent to the building of the original tower arches.

Externally this transept represents a very rich variety of late Perpendicular work. The view of the church from the north-east, including chancel, aisle, north-east chapel, transept and nave beyond, exhibits one of the finest displays of Perpendicular architecture to be found anywhere in the county, or, indeed, in the west of England.

The great north window and the two on either side have spandrels enriched with circles and quatrefoils above their arches. On the east side is a shield of the Courtenay arms, and beneath the north window is a band of quatrefoil panelling. The doorway on the west side has a depressed arch and a panelled soffit.

The north window has six lights with quatrefoil ogee-heads, and tracery in groups of two trefoiled panels. It is subdivided into three main sections by thicker alternate mullions running to the head, and also branching left and right so as to make pointed heads to the two side sections.

The adjacent side windows and the east window of the chancel aisle have similar tracery in five lights, of course with a narrower central section, while the chapel windows have four lights, as has the short window over the doorway.

The roof of the north transept consists of three sections. First, a lean-to roof with moulded principals but no carving, over the space immediately north of the tower, like a continuation of the roofs of the nave and chancel. Then comes a very rich roof of very low pitch with massive principals, the panels subdivided and subdivided again by moulded ribs with carved bosses and panels containing quatrefoils, following a type of

ornamentation frequently found in the central parts of the county, *e.g.* at Somerton, the inner aisles of St. Mary Magdalen, Taunton, and elsewhere. There is a roof of the same type over the small chapel between the transept and the chancel aisle. The outermost bay of the transept follows the same outline, but has longitudinal enriched rafters only in the panels, and no cross ribs.

It seems fairly clear that the second or middle type of roof is that which belongs to the architecture of the transept, and therefore one may justifiably regard the roof of the outer bay as a later reconstruction.

The Tower

The arches of the crossing have wide Perpendicular mouldings, unbroken, except for small moulded capitals to the inner attached shafts. Their massive proportions show that they encase the arches of an earlier tower, a definite trace of which can be seen on the north side of the first stage inside in the form of the jambs and relieving-arch of a narrow window. The wooden fan-vault is modern.

Arrangements connected with two rood-lofts will be described later.

The upper part of the tower was completely rebuilt in the fifteenth century by the same builders who erected the towers of Hinton St. George, Norton-sub-Hamdon and Shepton Beauchamp. It contains some characteristics common to other work in the south of the county. We may note the staircase turret, hexagonal, and terminating in a crown-like arrangement of string-course, with grotesques at each corner, rising clear of the main parapet, surmounted by deeply moulded battlements, and no trace of a spirelet, but with pinnacles at each corner. The belfry windows, as in the other towers of this group, are in two lights, breaking through into the stage below, the division marked by an enriched and embattled transom. These are of two lights, cinquefoiled, with two trefoiled tracery-lights. They have secondary tracery in the form of stone lattice, and labels with carved stops.

There are double buttresses reaching to the string-course below the top stage, and supporting a triangular shaft ter-

minating in a pinnacle. Thus, each corner of the tower has two pinnacles, and two only, as in the other towers of this type. The western buttresses at each side come down inside the transepts, showing that the tower was built after the transepts were widened westwards.

The Nave

This is the work of the latter part of the fifteenth century, and is very remarkable. There are only three bays, about 14 ft. 6 in. wide, with clustered pillars and very small capitals to the shafts, of the usual mid and south Somerset type. The west front may be compared with that of Yatton in its general arrangement. It is flanked by two octagonal towers, with string-courses, grotesques, and battlements at the top, giving rather the effect of the tower staircase turret. These turrets contain staircases to the roofs. The west doorway has many and rich mouldings and flanking pinnacles: there are enriched subcusped quatrefoils in circles in the spandrels. On either side of the doorway is a niche with a crocketed canopy, and instead of the usual spirelet terminal, the bust of a bearded king on one side, and of a queen on the other. The doorway has an outer arch of ogee form, crocketed, and running up to the string-course beneath the window, where it terminates in three small pedestals, which may have supported a miniature carved rood.

The great west window is one of the finest and largest in the county: it has seven lights with cinquefoiled ogee-heads, arranged in three definite divisions, like smaller windows, each of which has tall trefoiled tracery-lights. The mullions enclosing the three central lights are carried to the top. There is a transom with the lower lights also cinquefoiled and ogee-headed. Above the window is an empty niche with what appears to be a wyvern beneath the pedestal.

The aisle west windows have four lights with a transom. Each window is divided into two sections by the central mullion branching to each side of the main arch. The tracery in each side division has two panels, each with two trefoiled lights. The window on the south side has plain label stops, but that on the north has carved stops and a small figure holding a staff, above the top of the window.

There are double buttresses at each corner of the aisles and of the porch : over each a shaft runs up through the battlements prepared for a pinnacle. As with the tower, the nave aisles and porch have plain embattled parapets. The string-courses have carvings over each buttress, most of which on the south side represent grotesque figures playing on musical instruments, probably the finest series of the kind in the west of England. Unfortunately, many of them have decayed considerably with the weather, and some have become broken.

The side windows—two on the south, three on the north—are of exceptional size and width. They have six lights, and are divided by the central mullion branching to each side of the main arch. The tracery in each side division has two panels, each with two trefoiled lights and a small head light in the usual manner, but the central section above is crossed by a transom with two small lights below and three above ; on either side there is a small pear-shaped light placed horizontally. The east window of Stoke-sub-Hamdon has similar tracery in some respects, but the lay-out is unusual in Somerset.

The porch has an upper storey, to which access can only be obtained through a small door high up inside the aisle wall. Its parapet and buttresses are treated like the rest. The outer doorway has deep mouldings and flanking attached pinnacles, but no crockets or enclosing arch. Above is a large niche with a tier of small blank panels on either side : it has a tall crocketed canopy in the form of an attached spirelet. The statue of the patron saint is modern, and so is the window on the west side.

There is a fine fan vault of the usual Somerset type : each fan has four trefoiled panels : there is a central circle containing four quatrefoiled circles enclosing leaf ornaments, while there are large foliage bosses where the fans touch the circle. In the south-west corner are the remains of a large holy-water stoup.

The clerestory has a series of two-light windows not in relation to the windows below. It has a continuous series of plain battlements. There are shafts between the windows outside intended to support pinnacles, but there are no bases for the pinnacles on the face of the battlement above. Internally, shafts rise from the nave string-course, supporting large

and vigorous, if rather coarse, figures of angels. There is one of these shafts in the centre of the east wall of the nave against the west wall of the tower, just where one would have expected the rood would have been.

The waggon-roof has sharply curved sides and a flattened centre, along which runs a purlin of enormous proportions. There are four massive braces rising from the angel supporters, with large foliage bosses at their intersection with the purlin. There are small intermediate cross-ribs. The writer is unable to recall another similar roof, though the roof of Yeovil also has only a single central purlin. But it is much earlier in date and of normal contour.

This brings us to the problem of the rood and screen arrangements. There must have been a rood and a loft on the west face of the tower above the chancel-arch, for a small doorway with steps down to it, entered from the first stage of the tower, exists in the east wall of the nave (*i.e.* the west wall of the tower) on the south side. But it is by no means certain that there was a screen beneath this loft, although there may have been. Undoubted traces of another loft exist further east, in connection with the eastern arch of the crossing. Here we find two corbels in the N.E. and S.E. corners of the tower, and two others at the same height on the east side of the respond. Above them are two other corbels higher up, just below the spring of the tower arches.

As far as can be determined, there must have been a loft here, with a floor or platform supported by the lower pair of corbels on each side, with something like a partition on the east side, the top of which was supported by the pair of corbels higher up. This loft was entered from the tower staircase by a door now blocked, and it may perhaps have had an altar in it, as at Dunster. The rood itself seems to have been in a loft on the west side of the tower, access to which was obtained by steps downwards in the thickness of the west wall of the tower, leading down from the stage below the belfry. There may or may not have been a screen below: perhaps not, if there were a screen further east with an altar above it.¹

¹ Very likely the earlier rood was under the eastern tower-arch, and the rood and loft over the western arch a later addition.

The font consists of a square basin of Purbeck marble, ornamented with simple and shallow arcaded panels, of a very common late twelfth or early thirteenth-century type, resting on a modern base. Font basins of this kind are found all over the country. There is little doubt that they were made in the Isle of Purbeck and exported far and wide.

There is a scratch dial on the first buttress from the east end on the south side of the chancel.

The dimensions of the church have been given as follows: total length 167 ft., width of transepts north to south 146 ft., nave 56 ft. long and 56 ft. wide, height 50 ft.; height of tower 80 ft.

The high railings enclosing the churchyard date from 1839. In 1866, galleries at the east ends of the aisles, extending into the transepts, were removed. The church was restored and reseated in 1888, when a gallery at the west end of the nave was taken down and the south porch reopened: it had previously been blocked up from outside and used for pews. The chancel was restored in 1900: either then or previously the great mistake was made of raising the chancel floor, and obscuring the original proportions of the building.

Monuments

There are some remarkable if small brasses which are described by Mr. Connor in this volume.

At the east end of the chapel between the north transept and its north aisle, and occupying the place where the altar stood, is a rather crude monument consisting of two large upright lias slabs, framed by thin stone columns supporting an entablature commemorating John Merefield serjeant-at-law, 1666, and Eleanor, daughter of John Williams, Kt., of Herringston, Dorset, 1635.

At the east end of the north chancel aisle are three mural monuments in the form of sunk panels. There are two small ones on the southern part of the east wall containing embossed brass plates to members of the Sweet family, who were goldsmiths, 1683.

The larger panel on the north side contains the following inscriptions, incised in a finely grained stone:

[Shield] Elisabeth Wyke the wife of John Wyke of
 Henly in the county of Somerset esquier
 Daughter of James Coffine of Munckley in the
 County of Devon esquier Was borne the 5 of Augt
 1565 died the 21 of May & was buried ye 28 of May 1615
 being then of the age of 50 yeares & had issue 3 daugh
 ters then living Elisabeth Rebecca and Francis

E nding in Earth to rebegin in Heaven
 L oving my Maker dearer then my Mate
 I calmelly in a quiet Ocean driven
 S ayld to this Port where loue admitts no Hate
 A nkord I haue so safly that I scorne
 B e it with Wind Tyde Weather to be borne
 E clipsing sins darkning bright vertues Sun
 T hat weaue such webbs of woes t'entangle soules
 H aue here no Residēce but downeward run
 E arthy they are Heauens Iudgments them controules

God hath appoynted firey Seraphins
 to stand as sentinells gaynst death gaynst sins

W ell came my death that brought me vnto life
 I ll gain my life which would procure my death
 K nouing the carefull rest from combrous strife
 E njoy I should with my creator's breath

For by this meanes such powre I do attaine
 ever to live never to die againe.

At 11.45 a.m. the members were met at the Old Grammar School by the Rev. R. Grosvenor Bartelot, F.S.A., author of the *History of Crewkerne School*, A.D. 1499—1899. The subject of Mr. Bartelot's address has since been amplified (see Mr. Vivian-Neal's paper, *Agnes de Monceaux and Crewkerne School*, in Part II of this volume).

The Annual Meeting

After luncheon the members assembled in the ballroom at the George Hotel at 1.50 p.m., when the chair was taken by the Rt. Rev. Abbot E. Horne, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*), and he was supported by Mrs. Edward Clive (*President-Elect*), Mr. A. E. Eastwood (*Chairman of Finance*), Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, F.S.A., and Major F. M. E. Kennedy, C.B. (*Hon. Secretaries*), and Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. (*Asst.-Secretary, Curator and Excursion Secretary*). The attendance was large.

The Annual Report

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

‘ In presenting the ninety-first annual report, the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 46 new names have been added to the list of members and associates. Losses by death and resignation for the year 1938–39 have been 64, and the net loss is 18. The total membership at date is 961, as against 979 at the Clevedon Meeting in 1938, and 955 at the Taunton Meeting in 1937.

‘ The Society has during the past year lost two vice-presidents, the Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew Nathan, G.C.M.G., and Professor H. Balfour, F.R.S., both of whom had been presidents of the Society ; Mr. C. H. Bothamley, who had been closely associated with the work of the Society, and had been secretary and latterly president of the Weston-super-Mare Branch ; Mr. H. D. Badcock and Mr. W. Simms, both members of Council ; Dr. J. E. King, late headmaster of Clifton College, who recently compiled *Somerset Parochial Documents* for the County Council ; Mr. J. E. Jones who joined the Society in 1878—son of the Rev. W. A. Jones, for twenty years one of the Society’s secretaries ; and Mr. T. G. Simmonds and Mr. F. J. Clark who had been greatly interested in the work of the Society.

‘ The Society has also sustained the loss by death of the following members during the period under review : Mr. H. E. Anderdon (1932), Mrs. Berthon (1898), Miss R. Clatworthy (1915), Mr. H. R. Corner (1916), Mr. R. Cornish (1896), Mr. H. O. Dickin (1918), Mr. W. C. Goodden (1914), Mr. E. Haughton James (1900), Mr. P. E. Martineau (1925), Dr. John Oldershaw (1922), Mrs. W. F. Pepper (1931), Mr. A. J. Pictor (1913), Mr. A. M. Porter (1933), Mr. W. S. Price (1912), Mrs. John Rose (1912), Mr. H. T. Sully (1908), Mr. Lionel Vibert (1924), Mrs. E. Wansbrough (1925), and Mr. W. G. Willis Watson (1920).

‘ The volume of *Proceedings* for 1938 has recently been published and most of the copies have been distributed. It is a volume of average size with seventeen plates of illustrations. It has two supplements, viz. the second and last part of *Royal*

Arms and Achievements in Somerset Churches, by Professor E. Fawcett (which can be bought separately at 2s. 6d., postage 2d.), and another part of *Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset*, by Miss Bates Harbin; in the next volume the final instalment (no. viii) will be issued. The total cost of the new volume is not yet known.¹

'The Society's property has been increased by the acquisition of a small tenement known as "Ina Cottage" on the N.E. boundary of the precincts of Taunton Castle. It was found necessary to draw upon two or three of the Society's special funds for this purpose. Recently the chimneys have been repointed and the roof repaired: a certain amount of internal work remains to be done. The cottage, with its small garden, is let.

'Three red-brick chimneys on Taunton Castle have been rough-cast and other roof repairs carried out. Certain walls on the S.W. boundary of the property will soon have to receive attention as, in this position, a large station and offices of the Western National Omnibus Company are to be built.

'Last spring the Council had a plan (scale 1/500) made of Taunton Castle and its immediate surroundings. No such plan of the Society's property existed showing the various additions in recent years.

'The Great Hall of the Castle is now to be seen in its new dress. Decorators and the Museum staff have carried out a large amount of work to bring this building into its present condition. The old walls have been re-decorated (now a cream shade). The Somerset birds and mammals have been temporarily re-arranged and nearly all the foreign birds have been eliminated, and many other things have gone into store to render the hall more spacious. A large proportion of the extraneous material has been placed in the Somerset Room upstairs for the time being. All the chief show-cases both here and in the so-called Keep have been relined to match the walls of these rooms. These changes have entailed the re-arrangement of the china and pottery cases, and the collection of minerals. This work, too, has necessitated the preparation of

¹ It was found later that the total cost to the Society of *Proceedings*, Vol. lxxxiv, had been £258 7s. 7d.

new labels for most of the cases. It is hoped that members of the Society will pay a visit to the Society's headquarters and see for themselves what has been done since the last annual meeting.

' Much more might be said about the Museum, if one specified all the improvements that were in progress. It so happens that the Museum contains one of the finest collections of ancient Querns or mill-stones in the kingdom. The best examples are shown on two tiered stands, and others have now been systematically stored for reference. The three Somerset volunteer flags, 1804, are receiving skilled attention, and are being covered on either side with netting; one has been completed so far.

' The Council wishes to report that the collection of Candlesticks mostly of brass (107 specimens), brought together by the late Mr. Ernest Treplin, has been purchased from his estate. They had been on loan in the Museum for a number of years.

' Other acquisitions waiting to receive attention are the very large series of horse-brasses and another of lace-bobbins, presented by Mr. John Taylor in memory of his wife, who personally was the collector.

' Turning to the Library, mention in the first place must be made of the arrival, a few days ago, of the manuscript Genealogical Collections, compiled and used for his professional work by the late Mr. E. Dwelly, who had published a large series of volumes on Somerset ecclesiastical and other records. The gift has been made by Mr. Dwelly's widow and children. The cases have not yet been unpacked, and it will be some time before these records will be available for the use of those interested in genealogical research.

' Since the Society's last annual meeting the Ernest E. Baker collections and library have been dispersed. A large number of parchment deeds relating to Somerset have been deposited by Mrs. Baker in the Somerset Record Office at the Shire Hall, Taunton. The main library and manuscripts were offered for sale in London last winter. Some of the Somerset MSS. were acquired by the Bath Reference Library and others by our Society.

‘ Mr. E. A. Greswell has presented to the Society his uncle’s, the Rev. W. H. P. Greswell’s topographical works relating to West Somerset. These were the author’s personal interleaved copies containing additional notes.

‘ The Society has purchased Cokayne’s *Complete Peerage*, in 8 vols. (1887–1898).

‘ A valuable MS., known as the Hungerford Cartulary, c. 1460, which the late Mr. Henry Hobhouse presented to the Society some years ago, has been handed over to the Somerset Record Office for proper repair and for preservation with the county records.

‘ The Society has entered into an agreement with H.M. Stationery Office and the Public Record Office whereby we have received the free gift of fifty volumes of Record publications (which will go a long way to complete the series in our Library), on the understanding that the Society subscribes for all the new volumes published during the next fifteen years.

‘ Although insufficiently subscribed for, the publishers are proceeding with the issue of the *Supplement to Collinson’s History of Somerset*, compiled by Miss F. M. Ward.

‘ At the last annual meeting it was reported, in some detail, that a joint committee representing our own Society and the Somerset Rural Community Council had been hard at work in compiling lists of ancient buildings with special reference to Section 17 of the Town and County Planning Act of 1932, and the majority of the lists had been sent to the Somerset County Council. Since that time the lists for the Langport, Wincanton, Chard and Dulverton areas, and a first supplementary list for the Axbridge area, have been completed and deposited at the County Hall; and this arduous task has now been practically completed.

‘ Space forbids reference to archæological excavations in so much detail as in some years, and particularly as for the most part the work of the past year has been a continuation of that previously undertaken.

‘ The digging at Glastonbury Abbey on the site of the abbot’s house, etc., is now in progress and the season’s work closes on 22 July. The excavations at Camerton were continued last spring, and the work at the Badger Hole at Wookey is still in progress.

‘Excavations were again undertaken at the close of last summer at the Meare Lake Village. It was a very rich season. This work will be continued from 21 August, and donations are now being solicited.

‘In April Mr. St. George Gray undertook some excavations on the Mump at Burrowbridge,—as far as funds would permit. On the summit, a portion of a building, presumably of Norman date, was found at the west end of the present church, and the greater part of the foundations of an earlier church was also traced. Among the most interesting remains were some pits containing early medieval pottery; the largest of these shafts was excavated to a depth of 21 feet without reaching the bottom. No ancient ditches were found encircling the hill, which is of natural formation from bottom to top. An illustrated report will be published in the *Proceedings*.

‘In recognition of the Tercentenary of Taunton, Mass., the Society, following the lead of other organizations, has presented to the Old Colony Historical Society a silver copy of a beaker of Charles II period, by Thomas Dare, of Taunton, Somerset.

‘We again take this opportunity of congratulating the Somerset Rural Community Council on having secured, through the generosity of Captain W. D. M. Wills, the historic Almshouses in East Reach, Taunton (now known as “St. Margaret’s”) as their headquarters. It was only on the 8th instant that this interesting building was re-opened for its new purpose. It should not be forgotten that in 1936 the Council of our Society took immediate action in the hope of saving this building when an order was drawn up for its demolition, by getting into communication with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Almshouse trustees and H.M. Office of Works.

‘We are reminded by the British Records Association that in case of national emergency, when a call would be made for waste paper, there is danger of the indiscriminate destruction of irreplaceable records both of parchment and paper. The Association asks kindred societies to be vigilant in saving manuscript calculated to be of value for the furtherance of historical research.

‘The Natural History Sections of the Society have held their

indoor meetings at Taunton Castle and the Botanical Section had regular field-days last summer and again this spring. The Entomological Section has practically ceased to function from want of support from persons under the age of fifty. But the Parent Society hopes to publish in the *Proceedings* for 1939 a list of all the new records of Lepidoptera in the county since Mr. A. E. Hudd's list was printed in the *Victoria County History* in 1903; this compilation has been undertaken by Mr. A. R. Hayward of Crewkerne. The Ornithological Section has produced its Report for 1938, covering 42 pages, which is given gratis to members of the Section. With increased cost of printing and illustrations, the Section will have to reduce the size of its annual report unless a rather better membership can be obtained. The subscription is 5s., but only 2s. 6d. to those who are members of the Parent Society. The value of the report is fully recognized in ornithological circles, and we solicit greater support to maintain our position.

'Taunton Castle was visited during 1938 by 10,450 persons, including 1605 attendances from members and a greater influx of school-children than ever before. In 1937, there were 9,348 persons, and 10,127 in 1936 (now the second largest total).

'The Wyndham Lecture Hall has been used as much if not more than ever, largely in connection with Air Raid Precautions and for the school lectures under the Wyndham Trust.'

On the proposition of Mr. Philip Sturdy, seconded by Mr. Roger Clark, the adoption of the Report was carried unanimously.

Finances

Mr. ARTHUR E. EASTWOOD, Chairman of Finance, presented the Accounts of the Society for 1938, and they were formally adopted. They have already been printed in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxiv.