

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
SOMERSET ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
DURING THE YEAR  
1947

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THE Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Dulverton on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8-10 July. The last meeting of the Society at Dulverton took place in 1923.

**First Day's Proceedings**  
**The Annual Meeting**

At 11.15 a.m. the Annual General Meeting was held at the Town Hall, Dulverton. In the absence of the outgoing President, Earl Waldegrave, Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*) introduced Lt.-Colonel J. A. Garton, M.C., *President-Elect*, and they were supported by Sir William Savage (*Vice-President*), Mr. I. FitzRoy Jones (*Hon. Secretary*), 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 ninety-ninth report the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 110 new names have been added to the list of members and associates, as against 81 in the previous year. Losses by death during the year have

amounted to 25, as far as can be ascertained, and there have been a few resignations. The membership to-day is about 960, but it is not possible to give the exact figure owing to post-war conditions.

‘ Among those who have passed away during the year are the Rt. Rev. St. John Basil Wynne Willson, D.D., formerly Bishop of Bath and Wells, and President of the Society in 1936 ; Dr. C. S. Myers, C.B.E., F.R.S., of Winsford ; the Rev. R. G. Bartelot, F.S.A., who joined the Society in 1891 ; and the Rev. Preb. J. D. Gedge, of Cothelstone.

‘ It is with pleasure that the Council reports that His Majesty the King has recently granted his patronage to the Society.

‘ The Somerset County Council (Education Committee) has generously increased its annual grant of £300 to £500 per annum. One of the provisions is that all maintained and aided schools in Somerset will have the right of free admission to the Museum in conducted parties during school hours.

‘ It is regretted that Vol. xcii of the *Proceedings* for 1946 has not yet been published. The aim was to issue the volume in the late spring, but there have been several difficulties to contend with, especially in getting paper in sufficient quantity to supply all the members and provide for certain extra copies for stock. The printers inform us that they will be unable to get paper until the next quota is announced in September, and there is great uncertainty as to the quantity.

‘ Repairs at the Castle, as elsewhere, are much in arrears, but some money has been set aside for certain work to be carried out when materials are released. In the winter it was possible to arrange for the re-decoration of the Wyndham Lecture Hall, which is in constant use.

‘ The re-arrangement and development of the Museum and Library (following the war period) has been steadily maintained, but the need for more staff and more space are greatly felt. Many of the books, in fact, have to be stored on the floor. Much Museum material which should be shown has to be relegated to the store-room (which is really a closed museum gallery). These matters will no doubt be remedied as time goes on.

‘ However, the Museum collections are being systematically overhauled ; the ceramic specimens have been exhibited in the



Constable's Tower, with an overflow into the Great Hall ; the best of the English Glass and the Nailsea Glass are shown in separate cases ; the bones of the extinct mammalia from the Mendip Caves have been thinned out in their re-arrangement ; the Bygones collections and Folk material are being re-catalogued, and all specimens will now bear a registration number.

'The Council has sold John Martin's large picture of "The Coronation of Queen Victoria" to the Tate Gallery. It has been kept in a store-room at the Castle for a number of years. Enquiries have been made concerning it by Mr. T. Balstone, who is writing a book on John Martin.

'Among the additions to the Museum is a Charter of Æthelred the Unready to Muchelney Abbey, concerning Iminster, dated A.D. 955 (a permanent loan from the Marquess of Ailesbury) ; an important manuscript volume, the *Memoirs of John Cannon*, chiefly relating to Glastonbury, Meare and West Lydford, 1684-1742 (presented by Mrs. St. George Gray) ; and a letter from John Wesley to Richard Locke of Burnham, dated 1788.

'Having been informed that the Bridgwater District Town Planning Joint Advisory Committee's permission had been given to the Castle Hill Quarry Company to continue quarrying limestone at Cannington Park—it is feared in very close proximity to the Early Iron Age camp which was probably used later in the Saxon campaign against the Danes—the Curator has got into touch with the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments as this interesting camp has not yet been scheduled.

'During 1946 Taunton Castle was visited by 18,853 persons, including visits from 1,972 members. This showed an increase of 6 per cent. over any other year, the largest previously being 17,771 in 1945. The largest day record of visitors (333) occurred on 14 June 1947, a wet day for the South African cricketers at Taunton !'

The Report concluded with mention of the field-work continued at the Roman villas at Low Ham and Lufton ; and to the meetings of the Botanical, Geological and Ornithological Sections of the Society.

The adoption of the Report was proposed by the Rt. Rev. Bishop R. Dyke Acland, seconded by Mr. C. E. Burnell.

## Finances

### LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

TO THE SOCIETY'S

### Publication and Illustration Fund

SINCE THE LIST PUBLISHED IN 'PROCEEDINGS,' VOL. xci (1945), p. 7.

						£	s.	d.
Field, Rev. H. E.	..	..	..	..	..	4	4	0
Wyndham, William	..	..	..	..	..	2	10	0
Vivian-Neal, A. W.	..	..	..	..	..	2	0	0
Wickham, A. K.	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
Botanical Section (1945)	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0

Mr. A. W. VIVIAN-NEAL presented the Accounts of the Society for the year 1946, and they were formally adopted. They are printed in the *Proceedings*, Vol. xcii.

### St. George Gray Research Fund for Archæological Excavations in Somerset

Reference had been made briefly to the above fund in the Annual Report. It was due to Mr. St. George Gray's personal efforts that this fund has been started, and it was considered fitting that it should bear his name. A small balance has been transferred from the old 'Somerset Excavation Fund', supplemented by a few donations which had already been received. It was hoped that members and others would, from time to time, contribute towards it.

### Election of Officers

The following officers of the Society were re-elected: The Rev. Preb. G. W. Saunders and Mr. I. FitzRoy Jones, Hon. Secretaries; Mr. John L. Sheldon, Hon. Treasurer; and Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, Hon. Editor.

Four of the retiring members of Council were re-elected and Maj.-General R. Evans, C.B., was elected to fill the vacancy.



## **Somerset Record Society**

The Report was read by Mr. A. Vivian-Neal. In it he made reference to the Stogursey Chartulary from the archives at Eton, which was in course of preparation. He stated that the Somerset Committee of the National Register of Archives had obtained a great deal of information as to the whereabouts of ancient documents in the county and relating to the county, and they would be glad to know of any other Somerset collections of interest.

## **The Presidential Address**

Lt.-Colonel J. A. GARTON, M.C., then delivered an address, entitled 'Our Heritage'.

In opening his address, Colonel Garton first spoke of Somerset in comparison with, say, Kent, the first landing-place of those invasions which brought great changes to this land. Somerset was the last stronghold of resistance of those who had been overcome. Picturing our county as it would have been then, nearly two-thirds water and the rest hills and woods and swamps, he felt that some little places they of Somerset knew so well must have been veritable havens of refuge and rest and peace. And this, he thought, was among many other reasons why Somerset had still an atmosphere that was unique. Then his thoughts went back to that beautiful tradition of St. Joseph of Arimathea coming to Glastonbury and founding there the first Christian church in all Britain. He liked to think of the story of Joseph planting his staff, and of its miraculously taking root and budding, as symbolic of the planting and blossoming out of the Christian Gospel of good news and hope from that holiest earth in England to the rest of our country and Empire and to the world. Passing on another five hundred years he thought of another great tradition and inspiration—the tradition of King Arthur, also in our midst, making his stronghold at Cadbury, and with his knights upholding, in rude times by possibly rude methods, those same Christian traditions implanted by St. Joseph, of fair play, honesty, nobleness and