

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
DURING THE YEAR
1934

THE Eighty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Wellington on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 17th, 18th and 19th. The last meeting of the Society at Wellington took place in 1912.

First Day's Proceedings

Motor-coaches left Taunton Castle at 9.30 a.m., and, having picked up members at Heatherton Grange and Wellington, proceeded with several private cars, to

St. Michael's Church, Milverton

where the members were met by the Vicar, the Rev. Preb. H. L. Maynard, and Mr. F. C. EELES described the edifice.

Descriptions of this Church by Mr. E. Buckle, Mr. Bligh Bond and others will be found in *Proceedings*, xxxviii, i, 51-56, and lviii, i, 83-86.

The Parsonage, Milverton

was shown by Prebendary Maynard; short accounts of this building (with an illustration) will be found in *Proceedings*, xxxviii, i, 56-57, and lviii, i, 86-87. From Milverton the motors proceeded to

Halse Church

where it was announced that the Rector, the Rev. F. J. Montgomery, was unable to be present owing to the very serious illness of Mrs. Montgomery.

Mr. F. C. EELES said the Church was one of the most interesting buildings in the district, and it had escaped nineteenth-century mishandling far more than most churches. A good deal of the nave walling and part of that of the chancel might go back to Norman times. The font was late Norman or very early thirteenth-century work. The tower was rather like that of Milverton, and was probably late fourteenth or early fifteenth century work. To that period belonged two windows on the south side and the wagon roof of the nave, the latter being one of the earliest examples of a wagon roof in the district. The aisle was obviously later than anything in the nave, but there was an aisle there in much earlier times, and probably the people who rebuilt the aisle re-used the earlier arches and recut the capitals. The work was rude, and altogether different to the later good and normal Perpendicular work of the Church. The wagon roof was of the same period as the rebuilding.

He hoped no one would go away with the idea that the paintings on the wall at the west end of the aisle were at all like ancient wall paintings. The part of the rood-screen across the nave dated from round about 1500, and was of the typical West of England type; it was of definitely East Devon make. In the east window of the chancel were several Low-Country medallions, some of them of extreme beauty; but contemporary people would not have put them in the position they now occupied.

Many of the visitors were interested in a framed leaf from a fifteenth-century Sarum missal, on view in the vestry.

Through a farmyard access was gained later in the morning to the little

Church of St. Bartholomew, Dake

where the members were received by the Rev. G. A. F. Pearson, curate.

Mr. EELES said the Church was evidently always that of a poor parish. The bulk of the walls of the nave and one side of the chancel might go back to the thirteenth century, though no details were now visible to enable a positive statement to be made. In the fifteenth century the little aisle was built: the work was roughly done. To that aisle was added not very long afterwards the base of the tower with an arch into the west end of the aisle, which was subsequently blocked up. When they had more money later still the tower was finished, the upper portion being made to overlap the bottom. That was about the beginning of the fifteenth century. The most interesting thing in the Church was the large window on the north side of the nave. It was obviously not made for the position. The Priory of Taunton had owned the rectory of the Church, and appointed the vicars; and he accepted the tradition that when the Priory was dissolved in 1535 and its church pulled down the people of Oake obtained the window from the Priory, and re-erected it in their own church. It was inside out and had been shortened, but fragments of the beautiful stained glass still remained. That was not the only case where the transference of a church window had taken place. It was known that after the dissolution the parishioners of Morebath secured a window from the priory church of Barlynch, and there was good reason to believe that the great east window of the north aisle of Huish Champflower, obviously too big for its present position, was also part of the spoil of Barlynch. The font was a plain one of the thirteenth century.

Mr. GRAY said there was in the churchyard the base of a cross not mentioned by Charles Pooley (1877).

The Annual Meeting

After luncheon the members met at the Chapel of Wellington School, where the Headmaster (Mr. George Corner) kindly gave a description of the building and its contents.

The Annual General Meeting was held in Great Hall by kind permission of the Headmaster and Governors. There was a good attendance.

Mr. JOHN POPE, J.P., on behalf of the governors and also as

chairman of the Urban District Council welcomed the members of the Society to the school and town.

The outgoing President, Mr. A. F. Somerville, took the chair at the beginning of the proceedings and he was supported by Mr. William Wyndham (*President-Elect*), Sir Matthew Nathan, G.C.M.G. (*High Sheriff*), Mr. John Morland, Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. (*Asst.-Secretary, Curator, and Excursion Secretary*), and others.

Mr. A. F. SOMERVILLE, in introducing the new President, recalled that Mr. Wyndham had previously occupied the office in 1931, when the meeting was held at Minehead.

Mr. W. WYNDHAM then took the chair as President.

The Annual Report

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

‘In presenting the eighty-sixth annual report, the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 58 new names have been added to the list of members and associates. Losses by death and resignation for the year 1933–34 have been 68, and the net loss is 10. The total membership at date is 982, against 992 at the Shepton Mallet meeting last year, and 1,001 at the Frome Meeting in 1932.

‘The Society has sustained the loss by death of a large number of members during the period under review: Mr. E. T. Alms (1930), Mr. Arthur Beck (1929), Miss Rose Bland (1933), Mr. G. W. Wynter Blathwayt (1908), Miss M. Bowen (1912), Miss E. A. Capel-Cure (1931), Mr. Arthur Cay (1928), Mr. Harris Doidge (1910), treasurer of the Society’s Entomological Section, whose collections have been presented to the Society by Mr. W. B. Butler in his memory, Mr. C. Leslie Fox (1928), Mr. E. A. Fry (1893), the well-known genealogist, who had a profound knowledge of the documents at the Public Record Office, Mrs. A. E. Goodman (1919), Mr. H. W. Goodman (1930), Mrs. E. A. H. Hartley (1919), Mr. B. H. Hill (1885), Mr. H. M. B. Ker (1911), Mrs. F. B. Kettlewell (1917), Major-General R. Leir-Carleton (1913), Mr. R. B. Magor (1917), Dr. W. H. Maidlow (1903), Captain C. C. Marsh (1922), Mr. W. G.

Mathews (1925), Mr. W. D. Miller (1910), secretary and treasurer of the Society's Botanical Section, an obituary notice of whom was given in vol. lxxix, Mr. Alfred Pope, F.S.A. (1908), Mr. C. S. Prideaux, F.S.A. (1896), who recently became curator of the Dorset County Museum, Mr. H. Radcliffe (1905), Mr. E. A. Rawlence, F.S.A. (1911), Mr. J. J. Simpson (1920), Miss Janet Spiller (1916), Mr. R. H. Symons (1921), the Hon. Mrs. Trollope, of Crowcombe Court (1908), Mr. A. T. Tyler (1921), Colonel A. V. H. Vaughan-Lee, of Dillington Park (1917), and Lord Wharton, of Halswell Park (1918).

'There was a balance of £13 4s. 6d. on the Society's general account at the end of 1932, besides which £125 was put aside towards the production of the *Proceedings*, vol. lxxviii for 1932, and £125 for repairs and painting. At the end of 1933 there was a balance in hand of £5 6s. 11d., and in addition £75 was placed in reserve to meet part of the cost of *Proceedings*, vol. lxxix for 1933, also £45, the unexpended balance of the £125 placed on reserve in the previous year for repairs and painting.

'It was made known at the last annual meeting that Mr. Charles Tite had bequeathed to the Society the sum of £2,000, the dividends from which were to be devoted to the purchase of Somerset books and show-cases for the Museum. The capital sum was received last November. Owing to extension of the Museum the need for show-cases is increasingly felt. Mr. Tite also bequeathed several pictures of local interest.

'The total expenses of the *Proceedings* for 1933 (recently circulated) amounted to £262 3s. 0d. The cost of the volume was £234 5s. 7d. in 1931, and £229 2s. 4d. in 1932. The supplement on *Saxon Charters* will come to an end in vol. lxxx for 1934.

'The whole of the external painting of the Castle buildings has been carried out and completed in stages during the last three years, and at the same time the roof and windows have been repaired where necessary.

'The chief event in the work of the Society during the past nine months has been the extension of the Museum buildings beyond the east end of the Great Hall. The new building, given by Mr. W. Wyndham (to be known as the Wyndham Galleries) was designed by Sir George Oatley, the architect of

Bristol University. It was hoped that the new building would be opened during the period of this meeting, but that has been found impossible owing to the large amount of work entailed. The opening ceremony, however, will take place on Wednesday, 3 October, and in due course notices will be sent out to members living within a 50-miles radius and to any other members who express a wish to attend. One of the galleries will be devoted to the fine collection of early Iron Age remains from the Meare Lake Village, where excavations will be continued by Dr. A. Bulleid and Mr. St. George Gray from 20 August for three (perhaps four) weeks. The Lake Village funds are low, and this allusion to the subject gives us an opportunity of appealing for donations, however small, for the purpose of carrying on this interesting field-work.

‘Reverting to the new building, Mr. Wyndham has given a sum of money to provide a large part of the cases required for the Lake Village gallery. They are now being constructed, so that some of them may be in position at the time of the opening.

‘Excavations are in progress at the present time at Glastonbury Abbey on the south side of the dormitory range, and the rere-dorter foundations and large sewers have been revealed. This work, as before, is being carried out by a joint committee of the Society of Antiquaries and the Somerset Archæological Society, the greater part of the funds being provided by the administrative trustees.

‘Prior Horne was excavating at a new site at Camerton in the spring, and hopes to continue the work there later in the year. Other excavations to claim attention in the south-west are Hembury Fort, near Honiton, and Maiden Castle, near Dorchester, both of which begin on 30 July.

‘At the General Meeting held on 15 December 1933, the scheme for admitting Teacher Members on special terms was passed, and the new Rules on this point will be found in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxix for 1933, p. 149.

‘The third annual meeting of the South-Western Group of Museums and Art Galleries was held at Taunton Castle on 12 April, when the Society entertained the company to luncheon and your Curator completed his year of office as President of the Group.

‘The Wyndham Hall has been found increasingly useful for meetings and lectures.

‘Mr. B. W. Taylor has been acting as sub-librarian for over a year, and the result is that the Society has now a complete card-index of its printed books under authors and subjects. The chief accession has been Garner and Stratton’s great work on *Tudor Architecture*, presented by Mr. Roland Paul. The memorial edition of Walter Raymond’s works has been purchased for the library.

‘Perhaps the chief manuscript acquired this year is the large work on “The Church Bells of Somerset,” by H. B. Walters, F.S.A. It is hoped, when the time is favourable, to publish this interesting monograph for subscribers.

‘For years past the Society has collected and been presented with a large amount of additional material on the subject of Somerset Incumbents, which will amplify and correct the lists in Weaver’s *Somerset Incumbents* very considerably. Mr. Fitzroy Jones has kindly undertaken to edit this material and the work has been begun. Members having notes on this subject are requested to send them to the Society’s headquarters.

‘Taunton Castle was visited during 1933 by 8,738 persons, including 1,561 attendances from members, as against 8,869 in 1932.

‘In conclusion the Council wishes it to be borne in mind that the Society’s responsibilities are increasing year by year, and although the income has improved in certain directions, the normal activities of the Society are hampered by the maintenance of a large and rich museum and of the ancient buildings comprising Taunton Castle. Up to the present time it has been possible to open the Museum to the public and to schools every day of the year except Sundays, Christmas and Boxing Days and Good Friday, but the Council considers that the time has now come when a great effort should be made to transfer the custody of the County Museum and of at-any-rate a part of the buildings to a public authority, or to obtain from public funds substantial grants towards the upkeep of the Museum.’

Sir MATTHEW NATHAN, F.S.A., proposed the adoption of the report. He said that the Society in its great educational work

for the county was going through a stage not unusual in these times, for voluntary institutions. It found the burden of its increasing work too heavy for its available resources. It was felt that an effort should be made to transfer the custody of the County Museum and of part of the buildings to a public authority, or to endeavour to obtain from public funds a substantial grant towards the upkeep of the museum. Later on the Council of the Society would no doubt have definite proposals to make.

Mr. GEORGE CORNER seconded the adoption of the Report, which was carried unanimously.

Finances

Mr. A. E. EASTWOOD, Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented the Accounts of the Society for the year 1933, and they were formally adopted. He made allusion to Mr. Wyndham's magnificent gifts of buildings, and also to the fact that a greater income was now required for maintenance. He also referred to the Endowment Fund which had been started a couple of years ago, and had now reached the sum of £365. This fund was in part increased by diverting all entrance fees into it.