

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

DURING THE YEAR

1935

THE Eighty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Sherborne on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, July 16th, 17th and 18th. The last meeting of the Society at Sherborne took place in 1896.

First Day's Proceedings

At 11 a.m. a large number of members assembled at

Old Sherborne Castle

by kind permission of Colonel F. J. B. Wingfield Digby, D.S.O., and the Sherborne Castle Estates. The members, who were glad to see the castle area had been cleared of many of its trees some of which had been destroying the foundations of ancient walls, were met by Mr. A. R. Rawlence and Lt.-Col. W. D. Lidderdale, of Messrs. Rawlence and Squarey, agents of the estate.

Mr. ST. GEORGE GRAY said he had compiled the following notes for the occasion mainly from the writings of the late Sir Harold Brakspear, the late Mr. Harold Sands, and others :

The Castle of Sherborne owes its origin to Roger, bishop of Sarum (1101-1139), who was also chancellor of England. William of Malmesbury, his contemporary, states that he built

castles at Devizes, Malmesbury and Sherborne, and the wall which surrounds the bailey of Old Sarum is now attributed to him. The fine jointed masonry in evidence at Sherborne is far in advance of anything of the kind that had been done before Roger's time.

On the disgrace of Roger the castle was seized by the king. Repairs are recorded to have been carried out in the reign of Richard I, and they continued during the thirteenth century. The castle remained with the Crown until 1331, when it was granted by Edward III to William Montagu, earl of Salisbury, in return for services in the overthrow of Roger de Mortimer. The earl soon had to relinquish the castle in favour of bishop Wyvill, and bishop Ergham in the third quarter of the fourteenth century obtained licence to crenellate the castle.

In 1548 the bishop, John Capon, leased the castle and adjoining estates of the bishopric to Edward, duke of Somerset, for ninety-nine years, and two years later the duke assigned the lease to Sir John Paulet. In Mary's reign the castle was again restored to the bishop; and in 1592 the bishop, John Coldwell, leased the castle and estates to queen Elizabeth for ninety-nine years, for an annual rent of £200 16s. 1d., and nine days later she sublet the estate to Sir Walter Raleigh. A little later the queen granted, by letters patent, the Sherborne estate to Sir Walter Raleigh and his heirs for ever reserving the rent to the bishop. In 1603 Sir Walter was attainted for high treason and later the family was ousted by James I, who granted it to Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, but in 1616 he forfeited the estate upon being convicted as accessory to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, and in 1617 the king granted the manor to Sir John Digby, for £10,000, who was afterwards created earl of Bristol.

In the civil wars there were two sieges of the castle, in 1642 and 1645. At the latter time the siege was laid by Cromwell and Fairfax. The castle was slighted in October 1645.

The castle is placed at the west end of a plateau of rising ground, some 250 ft. above sea level. The plan is more or less a rectangle with its angles cut off. The curtain wall, which is the work of bishop Roger, was 7 ft. thick and about 20 ft. high. At either end of the east and west faces of the curtain were

square towers, but these have been destroyed, except that at the s.w. corner which formed the gatehouse.

The main block of buildings is slightly to the west of the middle of the bailey and surrounded a small courtyard with the keep at the south-west angle. There is a deep ditch all round the curtain, and evidences of a further work on the outside of the ditch. This is also attributed to bishop Roger: if the latter is his work, he produced the earliest example of a concentric castle in England.

Nearly in the middle of the north side is a large projecting spur which was probably a barbican; in addition there appear to have been two large barbicans, the one covering the gatehouse and the other at the north-east angle of the east front.

The gatehouse is of the original work—a rectangular block, with entrance passage 11 ft. wide. There was no portcullis, but the outer protection must have been by a drawbridge over the ditch. Mullioned windows in the gatehouse were inserted in Raleigh's time.

The keep is rectangular in plan, with walls 9 ft. in thickness, and on the west side there is a small projecting building; these are attributable to bishop Roger. The ground floor of the keep is covered by two barrel vaults, and the addition by an unribbed vault of two bays resting upon a circular column with scalloped capital, dating from the middle of the twelfth century.

On the north side of the court is a range of buildings, 68 ft. by 20 ft., of which the ground floor was vaulted. The upper storey had formerly been regarded as a chapel, but we are now assured by Mr. A. W. Clapham and others that this building was the great hall.

Covering the east side of the court is a narrow range, but the south end is destroyed. This group is an exceedingly interesting example of a large house of the twelfth century. Some of its ancient windows remain.

Mr. C. E. BEAN, surveyor to the Sherborne Urban District Council, afterwards pointed out and described the excavations which had been carried out under his superintendence, and which it was hoped would be put on permanent record when the work has been completed. At 12.15 p.m. the members visited

Castleton Church

which was described by Mr. F. C. EELES.

The small church of St. Mary Magdalen, Castleton, has been undeservably overlooked, partly because of the proximity of the great Abbey but partly because it dates from the eighteenth century, a period of which the ecclesiastical architecture was persistently misunderstood and despised in the Victorian era. It was built by the good Lord Digby with whom Pope used to stay. In one of his letters to Miss Blount, Pope writes of the church, 'The next pretty thing that caught my eye was a neat little chapel for the use of the town's people (who are too numerous for the cathedral). My lord modestly told me he was glad and liked it, because it was of his own architecture'. The building has both the excellencies and the defects of its period. It represents the continuance of the gothic tradition into the eighteenth century, but there is a loss of the gothic vitality and richness. On the other hand there is all the practical simplicity that we associate with the classical tradition. The Church consists of nave with north and south aisles of four bays separated by arcades of the simplest construction with octagonal pillars and pointed arches. The nave has a waggon-roof, the aisles flat roofs; all are plastered. There is a pleasing variety in the treatment of the west end. Over the central gable is an open bell-cot: the west window of the nave is square-headed with five elliptical-headed lights: the west windows of the aisles are circular. The doorways are like seventeenth century gothic work with depressed four-centred heads of the most extreme type under square-headed outer mouldings. The gables terminate in small pinnacles.

The original intention seems to have been to maintain the English tradition of the east window, for one of two lights like the side windows is visible externally, but very soon after the Church was built it must have been determined to block it and substitute the high classical reredos which fortunately still exists. This is of the type so very common in the eighteenth century with the decalogue in two large panels surmounted by a dove in rays and a classical pediment. It is good work of its time, though not very elaborate or refined.

There are two early seventeenth century chairs with carved backs ; these, with the gallery staircase rail, probably part of the old altar rail, and the royal arms of Charles II, painted on a panel and dated 1671, must have come from the previous church.

Another relic of the older church is the panel outside the east end containing the dedication inscription of 1715 : the top of it bears the date 1601 in large figures. It is also possible that the square-headed west window in the late Perpendicular style is older work recut ; indeed it may be that the good Lord Digby re-used more of the earlier church. The inscription on the panel at the east end runs : ' 1601. This Church being ruinous was rebuilt with the addition of two side aisles ; together with the churchyard, then first enclosed, was consecrated. Anno Domini. 1715. Soli Deo Gloria'.

There is a brazen ' branch ' or chandelier with twelve lights and the following inscription on the ball :

THE · GIFT · OF · IONATHAN
BEATON · TO · THE · PARISH
CHURCH · OF · CASTELLTOWN
1714

Beaton is commemorated by a rather good white marble cartouche on the south wall : he died in 1717. There are mural monuments to Thomas Prankerd 1737 and Elizabeth wife of Benjamin Bastard 1732 on the north wall.

There is a simple vase-shaped font, probably of the same date as the building. Notwithstanding alteration in the seats and their fittings the Church is a really significant example of the work of an age which has not left us very much in the actual structure of the churches of the West of England.¹

¹ In Dorset the large church of Blandford Forum (1732) is a fine piece of eighteenth-century work in renaissance style ; St. George's, Isle of Portland, is even finer because it is untouched ; St. Mary's, Melcombe Regis (in Weymouth), is another example ; Wimborne St. Giles (though altered after a fire) is another. In Wiltshire is the not very beautiful tower of Tisbury, with Wood's Church of Hardenhuish (1779), near Chippenham. In Somerset we have Bruton chancel (1743) and the exquisitely refined little Church of Berkeley (1751), near Frome, as well as Babington, Walcot, St. James, Bath, and Wookey. Bristol has Christ Church, All Saints and St. Nicholas (1762),

The Annual Meeting

After luncheon the members assembled in the Music Room of Sherborne School, by kind permission of the Headmaster, Mr. A. Ross Wallace. The chair was taken at 2.10 p.m. by Mr. Arthur F. Somerville (*Vice-President*), supported by Sir Archibald L. Langman, Bart., C.M.G. (*President-Elect*), the Very Rev. Prior E. Horne, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*), 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*).

Apologies for absence were announced from Mr. W. Wyndham (*outgoing President*), the Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse, and the Bishop of Sherborne.

Mr. A. F. SOMERVILLE in introducing the President-Elect said that Sir Archibald Langman was already well known to them in his capacity of President of the Somerset Folk in London.

Sir ARCHIBALD LANGMAN 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-seventh annual report, the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 62 new names have been added to the list of members and associates. Losses by death and resignation for the year 1934–35 have been 56, and the net gain is 8. The total membership at date is 990, against

and St. Thomas (1790). Tetbury (1785) in Gloucestershire is a strange and clever gothic church. Devonshire has St. George, Tiverton (1714–30) and St. Paul, Exeter (1680–93)—shortly to be pulled down—and Bedford Chapel (1831–2), with Charles Church, Plymouth (1658). Cornwall has King Charles the Martyr, Falmouth (1665).

Further north, in the West Midlands, churches of this period are much more numerous and some are exceedingly fine examples of renaissance work, still too little appreciated.

The destruction of the most valuable classical alterations and fittings at Symondsbury in Dorset, now a church of little interest, was, it is hoped, the last example of such vandalism to be tolerated by ecclesiastical authority.

982 at the Wellington Meeting last year, 992 at the Shepton Mallet Meeting in 1933, and 1,001 at the Frome Meeting in 1932.

'The Society has sustained the loss by death of the following members during the period under review: Mr. W. D. Ainger (1922), Mr. J. B. Braithwaite (1902), Miss E. M. Bramble (1899), daughter of a past honorary secretary, trustee and president, Col. J. R. Bramble, Mr. E. W. Chambers (1908), Mrs. Mildmay Clerk (1909), Mrs. E. B. Clothier (1932), Mr. Charles Collier (1912), Mr. A. G. Copp (1912), Mr. A. B. Cridland (1919), the Ven. Walter Farrer, Archdeacon of Wells (1904), the Rev. W. Goodchild (1930), Miss A. B. Greenwood (1924), Mr. G. D. Hardinge-Tyler, F.S.A. (1928), the Rev. Prebendary D. L. Hayward, formerly local secretary for Bruton (1891), Mr. L. Ingham Baker (1908), Mrs. Hartley Maud (1905), Mr. John Morland (1876), who spoke at the Wellington Meeting last year, and on whom an obituary notice was given in the last issue of *Proceedings*, Mr. H. P. Palmer (1897), a member of Council (*see* obituary notice in this volume), Miss I. M. Roper, F.L.S. (1920), a member of the Committee of our Botanical Section and an authority on monumental effigies, Sir T. E. Scrutton (1915), Mr. A. J. P. Skinner (1910), Mrs. W. Simms (1921) and Mrs. Basil Woodd (1924).

'There was a balance of £5 6s. 11d. on the Society's general account at the end of 1933, besides which £75 was put aside towards the production of the *Proceedings*, vol. lxxix for 1933. At the end of 1934 there was a balance in hand of £15 15s. 9d., and in addition £125 was placed in reserve to meet part of the cost of *Proceedings*, vol. lxxx for 1934.

'The total expenses of the *Proceedings* for 1934 (recently circulated) amounted to £200 7s. 7d. The cost of the volume was £229 2s. 4d. for 1932, and £262 3s. 0d. for 1933. The supplement on "Saxon Charters of Somerset", covering 250 pages, including index, has been completed. The Society's best thanks are extended to Dr. G. B. Grundy, who in his preface says, "I hope that this edition of the charters may afford students of the archæology of Somerset evidence contributory to problems which they seek to solve". The Society has reprinted some copies of the complete work, price 2s. 6d., by post 2s. 10d.

‘ The other appendix to *Proceedings*, “ Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset ”, by Miss Bates Harbin, is now in progress, and 80 pages have been issued, carrying the record down to the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is intended to illustrate this compilation with plates of coats of arms. Donations towards the cost of these plates and also of other illustrations for the *Proceedings* are solicited ; and in future all contributions to the Publication and Illustration Fund will be acknowledged in the annual volume.

‘ In connection with the subject of the Society’s publications, steps are being taken to publish the volume of *Proceedings* in the spring, at least two months earlier than has been the practice during the last few years. No accepted manuscript for the year’s volume can be received for printing after the first of November.

‘ The chief event of the past year in the affairs of the Society is the completion of the building of the new galleries and their opening by the donor, Mr. William Wyndham, on 3 October last, when speeches were made, among others, by Sir Frederic Kenyon and Dr. (now Sir Cyril) Fox. This has been reported upon in vol. lxxx of the *Proceedings* and in vol. xxxiv of the *Museums Journal*. This building, in which some of the Lake Village remains are already exhibited, is shown by request to members of the Society and to special parties, but it is not yet open to the general public owing to the difficulty of proper maintenance and supervision.

‘ It is obvious that the Society cannot, out of its slender funds and with its other work and interests, adequately maintain this county collection—great and varied as it is—and in parts remodel it in a manner best calculated to serve as a valuable adjunct to scholastic education. Moreover the schemes brought forward by the Council and the Curator cannot be evolved without outside help, and it is clearly seen that the Museum department of our Society’s work, although it has been attended with much success and is widely known, has outgrown the possibilities of proper upkeep and development by the Society alone. And so it has become imperative to consider whether the income of the Society can be increased from outside sources.

‘ A Taunton lady, who wishes to remain anonymous, has given £100 to be spent on the Museum in the manner considered by the Curator to be most urgent.

‘ Members visiting the Castle will not fail to notice a number of improvements and additions. Quite recently a miscellaneous collection of specimens of local interest has been received from Mr. R. Neville Grenville of Butleigh Court, and a great part of the collections of glass and pottery owned by the Misses M. M. and L. M. Badcock has come to the Society by bequest. The Kettlewell collection of Somerset Club Brasses, formerly deposited on loan, was bequeathed by Mrs. Kettlewell of East Harptree.

‘ Concentrated efforts have been directed this year to the general improvement of the local Geological collections, which are large. This has been made possible by the engagement of Mr. A. D. Hallam, B.Sc., to carry out the work. This rearrangement is long overdue and some of the labels adhering to specimens were fast becoming undecipherable.

‘ Several minor repairs have been carried out both in the museum and in the upkeep of the fabric ; and Mr. Wyndham has very kindly provided money for improvements, fencing, walling and gates on the land surrounding the new galleries.

‘ The Library grows steadily ; several books have been presented by Mr. F. de F. Daniel in memory of his father, the late Prebendary Daniel, and by the executors of the late Mr. John Morland.

‘ Mr. Fitzroy Jones, on behalf of the Society, is still engaged upon the clerical “ Who was Who ” for Somerset, and besides the manuscript notes collected by the Society, he has examined such sources as the *Calendars of Patent Rolls* and Brown’s *Somerset Wills*, all in the library at Taunton Castle, and Wells Transcripts lent for the purpose by Mr. E. Dwelly. Incumbents are particularly requested to send to the Society all references to clergy in their registers, churchwardens’ accounts, etc. Particulars of clerical monumental inscriptions will also be appreciated.

‘ Excavations are in progress at the present time at Glastonbury Abbey on the presumed site of the chapter-house on the east side of the cloisters. Prior Horne, in continuation of his

work at Camerton, carried out some excavations there in the spring.

‘ Mr. St. George Gray in May–June conducted a survey and excavation at Combe Beacon, Combe St. Nicholas. The work was of an instructive character and the mound proved to be a Bronze Age barrow covering a large cairn of nodules of flint which again covered what appears to be the primary interment. A report will appear in the volume of *Proceedings* for the current year.

‘ At the end of the programme of the excursions an appeal is made for funds to continue the excavations at the Lake Village and also to clear off the deficit on the work at Combe Beacon. The excavations will be resumed at the Meare Lake Village on 26 August and will be directed as before by Dr. Bulleid and Mr. Gray.

‘ The Natural History Sections (Entomological, Botanical and Ornithological) have been actively engaged with their periodical meetings and field days. It is hoped that before the close of the year a Geological Section will have been formed. These Sections conduct their own business ; subscriptions, for members of the Parent Society, 2s. 6d. per Section ; for other persons, 5s.

‘ It is hoped to revise the list of the Society’s Local Correspondents in the autumn and to add to their number.

‘ Taunton Castle was visited during 1934 by 8,865 persons, including 1,834 attendances from members, as against 8,738 in 1933 ’.

Dr. J. E. KING, late headmaster of Clifton College, in moving the adoption of the Report, said that in November 1933 a questionnaire had been sent out on behalf of the Somerset Record Office in order that a list of records, civil and ecclesiastical, in all the parishes of Somerset, should be drawn up. These returns had been coming in very well, but a number of them were not sufficiently detailed to publish in book form.

The Rev. Preb. D. M. Ross seconded the Report.

The adoption of the Report was carried unanimously.

Election of Officers

The vacancies in the list of Vice-Presidents were filled by the re-election of Dr. A. Bulleid, and Sir Henry C. Maxwell Lyte.

Dr. R. Liddon Meade-King, Honorary Secretary, Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, Honorary Secretary and Hon. Editor, and Mr. F. L. England, Honorary Treasurer, were re-elected.

In the Council of fifteen there were six vacancies. The following were re-elected : Mr. H. Corder, Miss S. Bates Harbin, Mr. I. Fitzroy Jones, the Rev. Preb. D. J. Pring and Mr. W. Simms. The Rev. G. de Y. Aldridge was also added to the Council.

The proposal was formally made by Mr. C. E. Burnell, and seconded by Mr. J. O. Lewis.

Finances

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO THE SOCIETY'S

Publication and Illustration Fund

FROM 1 JANUARY 1935, TO 1 MARCH 1936

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Aldridge, Rev. G. de Y. .	1	1	0	Harbin, Miss Bates .	3	3	0
Allen, Dr. F. J. .	6	6	0	Vivian-Neal, A. W. .	1	10	0
Botanical Section .	2	0	0	Wickham, A. K. .	1	0	0
Entomological Section .	2	0	0				
Field, Rev. H. E. .	2	2	0		£20	2	0
Fryer, Dr. A. C. .	1	0	0				

The Very Rev. Prior E. HORNE, F.S.A., Chairman of the Council, presented the Accounts of the Society for 1934, and they were formally adopted. They had already been printed in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxx.