

REPORT OF THE KEEPER OF THE
SOMERSET COUNTY MUSEUM FROM
1st MAY, 1953 TO JUNE 14th, 1954

On taking up my appointment on May 1st, 1953, I was faced with a situation full of complications ; workmen had taken command of almost all the building and that part which remained was so closely packed with museum cases and material that the Museum had completely ceased to function as a museum.

During the period when the Museum was without a Keeper, workmen had moved and re-moved much museum material back and forth and plaster and dust lay over all. It was imperative that the Museum, if only in part, should be cleared and once more made available to members and the general public. Therefore, my first six weeks were given over entirely to clearing the Wyndham Galleries. Unhappily I found that much of the natural history material had suffered grievously owing to the ravages of moth and beetle. The timber in many of the cases had already been infected with beetle before storage and this constituted a most serious state of affairs in that some of it was found to be so worm-eaten when they were cleared that they literally disintegrated. The storage of this infected material in the Wyndham Galleries considerably aggravated the wood-worm trouble already there.

I should like to place on record the help rendered by Messrs. W. Potter in allowing their lorry to be used for the transport of this infected material away from the Museum.

This removal from the Wyndham Galleries was followed by a spate of cleaning by the whole staff and later the Bygones Room was cleaned, cases repainted and the folk-material re-arranged, and on June 17th, 1953, these two parts of the Museum were reopened to the public. By the end of December, in spite of the persistent rumour that the Museum was closed, some 7,659 people visited it.

By November of the same year the main structural alterations had been completed and this enabled Messrs. Hamer & Scroggs, casemakers, to assemble the exhibition cases in the Great Hall. Prior to their arrival, however, the new plastic floor was laid.

In the meantime, much sorting, cleaning and preparation of specimens to be displayed in the new cases, was going on in the workshop and early in 1954 it was possible to fix the date of June 14th for the general re-opening of the whole Museum.

In the *Proceedings*, Vol. XCVII, it was reported that the Ministry of Works had given permission for the Low Ham mosaic to be lifted and removed to the Museum. In September, 1953, the mosaic was uncovered and tenders obtained for its removal and re-setting in the Great Hall.

A day or so after the uncovering, weather difficulties were encountered. Normally, removal of such mosaics can only be undertaken after and during fine weather. It was therefore felt that, owing to the continuous rain, the lifting would have to be postponed for a further year. The extra expense for manual labour involved in this postponement was such that unusual methods for drying the mosaic had to be found. Bearing in mind the portable drying apparatus used by the R.A.F. after the East Coast floods of Spring, 1953, I approached the Commanding Officer of R.A.F., Merryfield, to whom I explained our problem and the need for urgent action. He at once gave every assistance and within two hours the necessary hot-air blower together with R.A.F. personnel was on the way to the Low Ham site. It is due, in no small measure, to the help given by the R.A.F. that the pavement was successfully lifted and removed to Bristol. Some six months later the firm employed, Messrs. Marble Mosaics & Co., Ltd., brought the pavement to Taunton and relaid it on the floor of the Great Hall.

The Society is greatly indebted to Messrs. H. J. & L. W. Cook, of Manor Farm, Low Ham, for the most public-spirited gesture in presenting the mosaic to the Society and for granting facilities for its removal at a most difficult time in their farming calendar.

Early in the New Year, the exhibition cases were completed and work commenced on the making of shelves, stands and perspex blocks for labels for the display of the Society's fine Geological collection.

In order to give the visitor some idea of the conditions thought to have existed at the time portrayed by the fossils displayed, two large backgrounds, one representing the Carboniferous and the other the Jurassic period, were painted by my wife who also made a number of black and white cut-out models of prehistoric animals to be shown alongside the skulls and other bones of these animals.

Period dresses were displayed in the other two large new cases and the Council is indebted to Messrs. Clark's of Street, for setting

up at their own expense, a typical Somerset shoe-maker's workshop in still another new case.

Mr. C. Musgrave, of Stoke St. Gregory, gave a collection of withies and baskets, and on the day of opening, one of his craftsmen demonstrated the art and technique of basket making.

All this entailed so much work to be accomplished before June 14th, that the staff and helpers had to work like Trojans until late each night until the work was completed.

Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, a man with strong Somerset ties, had been invited and had agreed to perform the reopening ceremony. Unfortunately, just before June 14th, he had to leave Great Britain for the United States of America; the High Sheriff of Somerset, Major W. F. Q. Shulldham, most nobly stepped into the breach at the last moment.

At 3 p.m. on June 14th, the President-Elect, Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, took the chair and introduced Major-General Evans who gave a report on how the reorganisation and maintenance had been undertaken and emphasised the magnificent help afforded by the Carnegie, Pilgrim and Dulverton Trusts. The President then invited the High Sheriff to perform the reopening ceremony in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. The High Sheriff was supported on the dais by Lord Kilmaine, representing the Pilgrim Trust, Sir George Dyson, Vice-Chairman of the Carnegie United Kingdom Joint Committee, Sir Cyril Fox and the Mayor of Taunton, Mr. A. W. Villar. A vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs. Miller Barstow, Chairman of the Somerset County Education Committee, and seconded by Mr. C. E. Burnell, a senior member of the Society's Council. The 350 members and friends then inspected the Museum and afterwards had tea at the kind invitation of the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Five lectures were held during the year. All were well attended :

- “ A Background to Jane Austen : Mrs. Broadhurst's Bath Academy for Young Ladies,” by Mr. A. K. Hudson, on January 31st.
- “ The Dartington Experiment,” by Mr. V. Bonham-Carter, on February 21st.
- “ The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial,” by Mr. R. Bruce Mitford, B.A., on March 21st.

“ Exmoor,” by Mr. H. J. Wickenden, M.A., on November 14th.

“ Somerset in the early 17th Century,” by Mr. T. G. Barnes, B.A., on December 12th.

On Thursday, September 24th, a day excursion was held, the centre being Exeter. The Cathedral Church of St. Peter, the historic underground passages, the Guildhall, St. Nicholas Priory and Tucker’s Hall were visited.

The Council decided on April 29th, 1953, in conjunction with the Bristol Naturalists’ Society, Mid-Somerset Naturalists’ Society and Bristol Folk House Archæological Club to lease from Lord Wharton the island of Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel. It was agreed that Mr. E. L. Kelting should be asked to act as the Society’s Trustee on the Steep Holm Trust. The Society’s representatives on the Executive Committee should be Mr. E. G. Neal and Mr. A. D. Hallam.

In view of the serious financial difficulties encountered early in 1953 the Council reluctantly terminated the services of Miss A. N. Maltby as Library-Assistant.

The Museum and Library were visited by 13,095 persons during the period which the Museum was partially open.

ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM

(From September, 1952 to December, 1954.)

ARCHÆOLOGY

Pax, latten, late 15th—early 16th century. Described in *Antiquaries' Journal*, xi (1931), 285. Another with figures from the same mould. "Billy and Charlie," lead, in form of mitred figure, standing.—Abbot E. HORNE Bequest.

Part of a jug, glazed earthenware with trailed slip decoration. Dug up by donor while ditching on Wall Common, Stogursey.—Given by Mr. L. S. CLATWORTHY.

Collection of Iron Age "A" type pottery and one sherd of Romano-British coarse ware. Dug up on west side of Bathampton Down, near Sham Castle, and from flower-beds at "Nutley," a house nearby.—Given by Mr. J. R. T. COLLEY.

Leaf-shaped arrow-head flint. Picked up on South Cadbury Camp by donor.—Given by Mrs. A. D. HALLAM.

Samian and Romano-British coarse ware from Charterhouse-on-Mendip. A nearly complete cooking pot of grey ware, provenance unknown.—Given by Mrs. TREGELLES.

Three-pronged object of baked clay (?), Iron Age, found at Brean Down.—Given by T. J. MILES and V. R. C. SMITH (per Mr. H. S. L. DEWAR).

Iron Age "A" type pottery and sling stones; part of a human skeleton. From Brean Down.—Given by Mr. H. S. L. DEWAR.

Iron Age, Romano-British and later pottery, sling stones, flint implements, etc. From South Cadbury Camp.—Given by Mrs. M. G. HARFIELD.

A small collection of the same.—Given by Miss WOODWARD.

Socketed celt, bronze. Irish type. Said to have been found at Wellington.—Given by CITY MUSEUM, BRISTOL.

Part of finial of ridge tile, or possibly from an aquamanile, earthenware. In form of a man's head wearing helm, with orle and crest. (?) Late 14th or early 15th century. Dug up by donor at Alcombe, near Minehead.—Given by Mr. S. G. DUNSCOMBE.

Fragments of medieval pottery, paving-tiles and ridge-tiles, excavated at Hinton Priory, Hinton Charterhouse.—Given by Major P. C. FLETCHER, F.S.A.

Paving-tile, decorated with two-headed eagle displayed, 14th or 15th century. Found built into the wall of a cottage half-a-mile from Barlinch Priory.—Given by Mr. L. G. PERRY.

Two fragments of early medieval unglazed pottery (12th century type) from Castle Hill, West Crewkerne ; fragments of 17th century pottery dug up at Chard, 1954.—Given by Mr. A. B. DAVIE.

Part of ridge-tile from Refectory, Cleeve Abbey.—Deposited by H.M. MINISTRY OF WORKS.

BYGONES

Collection of late Victorian and early Edwardian dresses, underskirts, sleeves, shawls, gloves, shoes, etc.—Given by Miss R. HANCOCK.

A silver brocade wedding dress, late 18th century, 2 18th century waistcoats, 1 flowered cotton dress with red shoes, a crinoline and wig.—On loan from Mrs. S. RAPER (on behalf of the descendants of Major and Mrs. Hamilton).

A scarlet feather muff.—Given by Mrs. M. C. OWEN.

A black silk parasol covered with black lace and red silk lining.—Given by Mrs. N. ELGAR.

Large collection of baby's clothes.—Given by Mrs. E. A. DODD.

A complete uniform of an officer of the West Somerset Yeomanry.—Given by Mrs. G. BARRETT.

A white knitted counterpane, commenced in the middle of the 18th century and finished in the early 19th century.—Given by Miss M. EVANS.

Six Victorian dolls including two mechanical walking dolls ; a collection of Victorian Christmas and New Year cards ; a collection of pieces of lace and tapestry, etc.—Given by Mr. G. D. G. HAKE.

A telescope and microscope.—Given by Miss HARRISON.

A gridiron.—Given by Mrs. VIRGIN.

Wooden leg-guards.—Given by Mrs. P. T. PERRETT.

Two Victorian children's books.—Given by Mrs. D. F. WINCKWORTH.

Order signed by the Earl of Feversham on the eve of Sedgemoor.—Bequeathed by the late Mr. W. WESTLEY MANNING.

Collection of prints of Victorian costume.—Given by Mr. J. S. COX, F.S.A.

Original price list of trousseau of Mrs. R. Hancock for her marriage in 1832.—Given by Miss E. C. BADCOCK.

Turret clock from Stocklinch Magdalene Church, Ilminster, 18th century.—On loan from the VICAR and CHURCHWARDENS.

Constable's staff, painted green with CP in red. Provenance unknown.—Given by Miss TURNER.

Banner of the Nether Stowey Women's Friendly Society.—On loan from the WOMEN'S FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

NUMISMATICS AND PLATE

Testoon of Guglielmo II Palaeologo, Marquis of Monferrat (Piedmont), 1494-1518. Dug up at Newport Farm, North Curry, Taunton.—Given by Mrs. DOVE.

Farthing token, 17th century, place and issuer illegible; lead package seal, 17th-18th century. Both dug up in donor's garden.—Given by Mr. T. J. HUNT.

Silver flagon dated 1724 from Nether Stowey Church.—On loan from the VICAR and CHURCHWARDENS.

NATURAL HISTORY, Etc.

Ammonite (*Haugia* sp.) from the Upper Lias, Brent Knoll.—Given by Mr. J. FOWLER.

Slab of limestone with *Pleuromya tatei* Rich. and Tutch. From the Lower Lias, Thornfalcon, Taunton.—Given by DAVID SMALL.

Slab of limestone with *Cardium cloacinum* Quenst., *Pleurophorus elongatus* Mérian and *Chlamys valoniensis* (Defr.). From the Westbury Beds, Rhaetic, Watchet.—Given by Mrs. F. G. HIGHWAY.

Pholadomya ambigua Sow. From the Middle Lias, Ilminster.—Given by Mr. L. B. OSTRAHAN.

Otozamites obtusus L. and H. From the Lower Lias, Catcott.—Given by Mr. P. C. DAVIS.

DRAWINGS, PRINTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, Etc.

Picture, said to be of John the Baptist, from the George Hotel Tap.—Given by Mr. H. F. SCOTT STOKES, F.S.A.

Seven paintings of Somerset Views by the late Miss L. C. Hammett; and a framed illuminated address presented to her father.—Given by Miss J. E. DULEY.

Two photographs of Ivythorn Manor (taken from Piggott Collection of Drawings).—Given by Mr. E. J. CHAPMAN.

Collection of photographs of houses and churches in N.E. Somerset, 19th century.—Given by Sir ARTHUR ELTON.

CERAMICS AND GLASS

Cup and Saucer of Worcester Porcelain.—Given by Mr. A. R. LLEWELLIN-TAYLOUR.

3 Specie jars, 7 ointment jars, 1 blue glass 19th century bottle.—Given by Messrs. H. R. HOYLES & SON.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

(From September, 1952, to December, 1954)

DONATIONS

Some Medieval Sword Pommels, by R. Ewart Oakshott.—Given by the AUTHOR.

The Canynges Pavement, by Elizabeth Eams.—Given by the AUTHOR.

The British Trust for Ornithology, Bulletins 45-52; *Bird Study*, vols. 1, Nos. 1 and 2; *British Birds*, 1953 and 1954; *Bird Protection*, 1952; *Bird Notes*, Journal of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, vol. 26, Nos. 1-4; *The Birds of Leicestershire and Rutland*, Report for 1952; *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain*, by R. Peterson, Guy Mountfort and P. A. D. Hollom; *Reports on Somerset Birds*, 1952 and 1953.—Given by the ORNITHOLOGICAL SECTION.

The Early Christian Monuments of Wales, by V. E. Nash Williams.—Given by Mr. C. A. RALEGH RADFORD.

The Mid-Somerset Naturalist Society, First Report and Supplement; *British Snails*, by Arthur E. Ellis; *Colours of Animals, their Meaning and Use*, by E. G. Poulton; *Insect Natural History*, by A. D. Imms; *Various Contrivances by which Orchids are Fertilized by Insects*, by Charles Darwin; *British Flowering Plants*, by John Hutchinson; *Problems of Instinct and Intelligence*, by R. W. G. Hingston; Freshwater Biological Association, Scientific Publications, Nos. 5 and 13; *Synopsis of the British Fauna*, by T. H. Savory; *Insects*, by Frank Balfour-Browne.—Given by Mr. J. COWLEY.

Climate and the British Scene, by Gordon Manley.—Given by Mrs. A. D. HALLAM.

Taunton School Natural History Society, Report for 1952.—Given by Mr. E. G. NEAL.

Woodland Ecology, by E. G. Neal.—Given by Mrs. A. D. HALLAM.

The Insect Legion, by Malcolm Burr; *Insects of the British Woodlands*, by R. N. Chrystal.—Given by Mr. A. H. TURNER.

Herefordshire, its Natural History, Archaeology and History; *Herefordshire Birds*, by H. A. Gilbert and C. W. Walker.—Given by the WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB.

The Identification of Trees and Shrubs, by F. K. Makins.—Given by the AUTHOR.

Tacitus on Britain and Germany, translated by H. Mattingly.—Given by Miss A. M. MALTBY.

The Evolution of the Bristol Channel, by Dr. F. J. North.—Given by Mr. W. A. SEABY.

Churches of Somerset, by A. K. Wickham.—Given by Mrs. A. K. WICKHAM.

Exploring Old Buildings—Every Child's Guide to Architecture, by Evelyn C. Clark.—Given by the AUTHOR.

Archæological Bulletin for Great Britain and Ireland, 1948-49.—Given by the COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGY.

British Records Association, 20th Report.—Given by the ASSOCIATION.

Ilchester Historical Monographs, No. 7, *The Ancient Churches of Ilchester*, by J. S. Cox, F.S.A.—Given by the AUTHOR.

The Ancient Defences of Winchester, by Frank Cottrill.—Given by the AUTHOR.

The Romance of the Wool, Lace and Pottery Trades in Honiton, by J. R. W. Coxhead.—Given by Mr. A. D. HALLAM.

Journal of the Axbridge Caving Group, vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2, 3; vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2; Somerset River Board, Engineer's Reports on the Weather for 1953 and 1954; Roman Exeter, Excavations in the War-damaged Areas by Lady Fox.—Given by Mr. J. S. Cox.

Biology and Geology in the Festival of Britain, by Kenneth Chapman.—Given by the AUTHOR.

University of Bristol, *Notes on County History from Local Records*.—Given by the DIRECTOR.

The Tribunal, Glastonbury.—Given by the MINISTRY OF WORKS.

Proceedings and Journal of the Downside Archæological Society, vol. 1, No. 3.

Clevedon and District Archæological Society, News-Sheet, No. 2, 3. *Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Reports 39 and 40*.

Further Selections of Somerset Place-Names, by A. G. C. Turner.—Given by the AUTHOR.

Ancient Burial Mounds of England, by L. V. Grinsell.—Given by the PUBLISHERS.

Church of All Saints, Culmstock, Devon, by R. L. Thorne.—Given by the AUTHOR.

Cotehele, on the banks of the Tamar, by Nicholas Condy.—Given by Mr. H. S. HOWARD.

Monumental Brasses of Lancashire and Cheshire, by James L. Thornely; Catalogue of Rubbings of Brass and Incised Slabs at the Victoria and Albert Museum; *Monumental Brasses of Kent*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Supplementary Notes to Thornely's Monumental Brasses of Lancashire and Cheshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Some notes on the Brasses and Matrixes of Cambridgeshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of Hampshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of the City of London*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of Middlesex*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of Herefordshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of Derbyshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of Lincolnshire*, compiled by H. Eardley Field; *Monumental Brasses of the City and County of Oxford*, compiled by H. Eardley Field.—Given by Rev. H. EARDLEY FIELD.

Archæologia, vol. 95 for 1953.—Given by the SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

Axbridge Caving Group and Archæological Society Journal, vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2; *Teach Yourself Archæology*, by S. Graham Brade-Birks.—Given by the PUBLISHERS.

British Museum Guide to early Iron Age Antiquities (1925).—Given by Lady HYLTON.

Allerton and its Church, by A. G. R. Buck.—Given by the WRITER.

Camertonia, Journal of the Camerton Excavation Club, No. 2.—Given by the CLUB.

The Life and Works of James Jennings, 1772-1833, by G. D. Carnall.—Given by the WRITER.

The Church of St. John the Baptist, Churchill, by Dr. J. W. Walker.—Given by Miss M. I. WALKER.

Claverton Village History.—Given by the CLAVERTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

Clevedon and District Archæological Society News-Sheet, No. 3.—Given by the SOCIETY.

The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Croscombe, by Rev. N. G. Cole.—Given by the WRITER.

The Conquest of Wessex in the 16th Century, by Gordon J. Copley.—Given by the PUBLISHERS.

Country Life (from June, 1953).—Given by Mr. C. E. BURNELL.

A History of Exford.—Given by the EXFORD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

History of the Parish of Winford, by Rev. A. J. H. Hobbs.—Given by the WRITER.

The Bond of Green Withy, by Berta Lawrence.—Given by Mr. P. STURDY.

The Adventures of the West Somerset Yeomanry from D Day to VE Day, by Major Peplow.—Given by Mr. A. R. CASS.

Farmer's Joy, by John Read; *Latter Lammas*, by John Read.—Given by the AUTHOR.

Council of the Order of St. John, *County Year Books*, Nos. 14 and 15.—Given by Mrs. BINGHAM-HALL.

A Paper on Shepton Mallet Church, by Rev. G. A. A. Wright.—Given by Mr. C. E. BURNELL.

Wine Labels Circle Journal, Nos. 5 and 6.—Given by Mr. E. J. PRATT.

Transactions of the Somerset Masters' Lodge, vol. 10, parts 2 and 3, edited by W. Fisher.—Given by the EDITOR.

Somerset County Gazette, 1953 and 1954.—Given by the PROPRIETORS.

Somerset County Herald, 1953 and 1954.—Given by the PROPRIETORS.

Bundles of Correspondence, notes and cuttings, together with photographs relating to Scratch Dials, tithe barns, etc.—Bequeathed by the late Abbot E. HORNE.

Eleven *Museum Reports*.

PURCHASES

Flowers of the Coast, by Ian Hepburn.

Watsonia, vols. 2 and 3, pts. 1 and 2.

Botanical Society of the British Isles, Year Books for 1952 and 1953.

The Spider's Web, by T. H. Savory.

British Pyralid and Plume Moths, by B. P. Bierne.

An Angler's Entomology, by J. R. Harris.

Lepidoptera Notes on the Bristol District.

Entomological Report for 1951 (reprinted from Wilts. Arch. Magazine).

Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects.

List of the Lepidoptera of Devon.

4th Report of the Entomological Section of the Devonshire Association.

Drawings of British Plants, by Stella Ross-Craig.

Dartmoor, by L. A. Harvey and D. St. Leger-Gordon.

Sea-Birds, by James Fisher and R. M. Lockley.

Geography of Flowering Plants, by Ronald Good.

Mountains and Moorlands, by W. H. Pearsall.

Fleas, Flukes and Cuckoos, by Miriam Rothschild and Theresa Clay.

British Mammals, by L. Harrison Matthews.

British Amphibians and Reptiles, by Malcolm Smith.

Insects Indomitable, by Evelyn Cheeseman.

Building in England down to 1540, by L. F. Salzman.

Late Saxon and Viking Art, by T. D. Kendrick.

English Prehistoric Pottery, by Hugh Wakefield.

The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History, 2 vols., by C. W. Preiste-Orton.

The Roman Roads in Britain, by Thomas Codrington.

Skara Brae: A Pictish Village in Orkney, by V. Gordon Childe.

A Guide to the Stained Glass Collection: Victoria and Albert Museum, by Bernhard Rackham.

Excavations in New Forest Roman Pottery Sites, by Heywood Sumner.

Church Plate of Gloucestershire, by J. T. Evans.

English Art 871-1100, by D. Talbot Rice.

Llyn Cerrig Bach Report, by Sir Cyril Fox.

Archæology in the Field, by O. G. S. Crawford.

The Complete Peerage, vol. 12, part 1.

Kelly's Directory of Taunton, 1954.

Calendar of Treasury Books, XX, iii; XXI, i, ii; XXII, i.

Curia Regis Rolls, Henry III, 4 and 5.

Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Edward III, vol. XIV, 48-51.

Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward IV.