

PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1973

The meeting was held in the Somerset Room, Taunton Castle, on Saturday, 5th May, 1973, at 2-15 p.m.

Mr. Hunt, in introducing the new President, commented on the long connexions which Mr. Morland had with Somerset. After making a suitable and entertaining reply, Mr. Morland then took the chair.

Election of Officers and Members of Council

The Officers of the Society were re-elected and the following were re-elected to serve on the Council until 1975: Dr. Radford, Mr. Grinsell, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Denton-Cox. In addition, Mr. Goodall was elected, Mr. Fowler having asked for his nomination to be withdrawn.

Annual Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer presented the annual accounts, which were duly adopted.

At the conclusion of business, Mr. Hunt as retiring President, gave an address on "Early Taunton".

Summary of the Secretary's Report

Total membership remains fairly constant at around 900. 76 new members joined in 1972, as against 60 the year before, and it is encouraging that this included 13 new junior members. Losses through deaths and resignations were 29, whereas in 1971 this figure was 107. The actual loss for 1972 is likely to be nearer 50, however, since some 20 members must be assumed to have resigned since, despite several reminders, their subscriptions remain unpaid.

It is hoped that a new list of members will be available this year.

Certain economies had to be made in the production costs of Volume 116 of the Proceedings; members will no doubt agree that the Hon. Editor is to be congratulated for having cut the costs without loss of quality. A new method of printing is to be used next year, which will cut costs even further and have other advantages also.

The Newsletter has been slightly enlarged and now includes the reports from Branch and Affiliated Societies previously included in the Proceedings. This move met with mixed reception, but was inevitable on grounds of economy. The addition of an extra newsheet of general information has, it is hoped, been useful.

The annual joint meeting of Branch and Affiliated Societies was held at Weston-super-Mare, by invitation of our branch there, and was very well attended. In planning the programme, it was felt that it was time that Natural History had its share and so speaking honours were shared with Archaeology. The same formula will be followed at Minehead this year. There was an informal business meeting and lunch in the morning, which was useful, but not representative; some societies sent two or three representatives, most of them none. Discussion of some points was slightly inhibited by the uncertainty of what plans Avon would be making. Other matters discussed were the usefulness of a county Newsletter, which presented editorial problems, and affiliation and what it implied; surely it implies just as much as anyone cares to make it? As a county society, based in Taunton, we cannot hope to know what is going on in every corner of the county, and local societies, affiliated to us, may see part of their role as acting as our eyes and ears in their area. Other matters raised were the functions of the Hon Secretaries and whether Council members should serve for more than three years without a break of a year. It was also suggested that the Executive Committee should meet more frequently; it is intended that they will.

Mrs. Langmaid was unable to continue as Chairman of the Archaeological and Historic Buildings sub-Committee on taking up a full-time teaching appointment and so this committee was split into two. Mr. Clements is the current Chairman for the Archaeological sub-Committee and Mr. Goodall of the one for Historic Buildings.

The Norton Fitzwarren excavations had to be shelved, but there is to be an official excavation at Creech Hill, Bruton this year and work will continue at Catsgore, to which the society has made a grant. A grant was also made last year to the Donyatt pottery excavations.

The lowering of the wall around the castle garden has not so far caused any problems. Only two members showed any interest in helping to look after the garden so that other arrangements will have to be made.

The Local History Library is now fully operational and has already proved a great help in dealing with queries. This does not mean that members are not welcome in the society's library; indeed it is a pity so few make use of it.

The Courtauld Institute has photographed the Piggott collection of Buckler drawings and some of the Braikenridge collection also. In due course prints will be available for reference in the Local History Library.

The Somerset Historic Buildings Trust was formed last year and Mr. Goodall represents the society on this.

On May 20th there was an excursion to Arlington Court and Chamberscombe Manor. On June 4th there was a trip to Lundy Island, for those who were fortunate enough not to be on the coach which broke down. Fortunately none of those passengers had been on the visit on May 20th, so that programme was repeated. Brownsea Island was visited in August; there is to be a repeat in October, since this is the best time to see the birds.

The Wyndham Hall has been much improved by being redecorated; lectures included "Birds of the New Forest" by Sq. Ldr. Norman Orr, whose splendid photographs delighted everyone, "Excavations at Catsgore" by Roger Leech, "Parochial Check Lists" by Professor Thomas, "Excavations at Pilsdon Pen" by Mr. Gelling, "The Wildflowers of the Maltese Islands" by Mrs. Wolseley, and "Excavations at Exeter" by Mr. Bidwell, who kindly took over from Mr. Griffiths who was ill. Illness also deprived us of a talk on "Caesar and Towns of Gaul" by Mr. Collis, but Mr. Kelting nobly filled the breach at the last moment by talking about the Somerset Levels. It is appropriate to mention here that it is hoped to arrange a symposium on the Somerset Levels next year.

The Archaeological, Ornithological and Natural History sections each had a number of field meetings and the Natural History Section had an enjoyable social evening in October.

An encouraging number of members have shown interest in the proposed trip to Jersey in 1974.

A joint film show was held with the R.S.P.B. at the County Hotel; this was well attended, but the volunteer stewards asked for failed to materialise. It is hoped to do better at the film show we have arranged with the Wildfowl Trust in October.

As an experiment it is planned to run a course of about ten lectures on Natural History subjects this winter in co-operation with the W.E.A. There will also be the usual number of archaeological lectures.

Somerset Record Society

The Council much regret that vol. 72 has not yet been published. Acceptance of financial assistance from the Historical Manuscripts Commission has meant having the printing done by the Stationery Office and we have to await their convenience. We have now been assured that unbound copies will be delivered during the summer and, allowing for binding, and if there are no more unforeseen delays, members should receive the volume before the end of this year. In the mean time, work has progressed on vols. 73 and 74 and it may be possible to issue both in 1974. Dr. Kemp has completed the calendar of the Cartulary of St. John's Hospital, Bath, and Mr. S. C. Morland has done most of the work on transcribing and calendaring some of the seventeenth century proceedings of the Committee for Sufferings of the Society of Friends.

Membership remains at about 160. More new members joined in 1972 than in 1971 but there were as many losses from death or resignation, and we have already to record the loss in 1973 of Dr. Edwards, Dean of Wells, a member of the Council, and of Mr. R. B. Naish, who had a keen interest in Somerset history.