

# PROCEEDINGS

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1966

The Meeting was held in the Somerset Room, Taunton Castle, on 30th April, 1966. About 45 members were present. On a proposal by the retiring President, Mr. H. F. Scott Stokes, seconded by Mrs. S. W. Rawlins, Dr. Ernest G. Neal was elected President for the year. In introducing him Mr. Scott Stokes spoke of the Zoological Society's Stamford Raffles Award for 1965 — a bronze by Henry Moore — which Dr. Neal had received from the hands of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh on the previous day. In thanking Mr. Scott Stokes for his kind words, Dr. Neal remarked that he regarded his election not only as an honour to himself but also as a tribute to all those naturalists who had been carrying out a great deal of work in recent years on Somerset flora and fauna.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

On a proposal by the President, seconded by Mr. Vickery, the following officers were elected:

Hon. Secretaries	Mr. E. L. Kelting and Sir R. de Z. Hall
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. H. H. Adamson
Hon. Editor	Mr. I. I. Jeffries

### ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

On a proposal by Mr. Scott Stokes, seconded by Mr. Pearce, the following were elected to serve for three years: Mrs. J. B. Clark, Messrs. T. J. Hunt, E. L. Kelting, R. B. Naish and S. C. Morland.

### SUMMARY OF THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

**MEMBERSHIP.** During the year 68 new members have joined and we have lost 45 old members, a net gain of 23 members. The present membership is 905, consisting of 843 individuals and 62 institutions.

**PROCEEDINGS.** Volume 109 was sent out to members in February 1966.

**EXCURSIONS.** (i) 29 May 1965. Stavordale Priory (described by the owner, Commander G. I. Palmer); Milborne Port Church (by Mr. E. T. Long); Whitestaunton Manor (by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Dobell); Whitestaunton Church (by Rev. W. T. Taylor).

(ii) 27 July 1965. Milton Abbey and Athelhampton House.

(iii) 27 to 30 September 1965. Leamington Spa area, with visits to: Sudeley Castle, Kenilworth Castle, Berkswell Church, Coventry Cathedral, Warwick Castle, Charlecote Park, Henley-in-Arden Guildhall and Chedworth Roman Villa.

**EXCAVATIONS.** During the summer of 1965 an excavation on Glastonbury Tor was carried out under the auspices of the Chalice Well Trust and under the direction of Mr. Philip Rahtz. The Society contributed £200 towards the cost and some members worked as volunteers. This year under the joint sponsorship of this Society and of the Oxford University Archaeological Society an excavation will be conducted at Meare Lake East Village from 10 August to 13 September. The Director will be Mr. Michael Avery of the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University. The main purpose will be to interpret certain aspects of the extensive work already done on the site by the late H. St. George Gray and the late Arthur Bulleid.

**MEETING OF LOCAL SOCIETIES.** The annual meeting of our Branch and Affiliated Societies was held on 30 October 1965 in the Glastonbury Borough Council Small Hall. The programme consisted of a symposium of short talks on a variety of subjects: Mr. R. C. Sansome, Keeper, Somerset County Museum, on "Preservation of Timber from Glastonbury"; Mr. Charles Browne of the Bristol Archaeological Research Group on "Celtic Fields in North Somerset"; Mr. S. G. Nash of the Burnham-on-Sea Archaeological Society on "Recent Archaeology of the Coastal Seaboard of the Middle Moor"; and Dr. R. D. Reid of the Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society on "Low Side Windows in Somerset Churches". Mr. J. E. Hancock of the Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society showed a fine series of slides of archaeological sites in Somerset, photographed from the air. Afterwards the company was entertained to a buffet tea by Mrs. S. Morland, Mayor of Glastonbury, and Mr. H. F. Scott Stokes, President of the Society.

**LECTURES.** During the winter season the following archaeological and natural history lectures were arranged:

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23 October: "Mendip Flora" by Dr. J. F. Hope-Simpson.

3 November: Natural History Section Social Evening at Agriculture House, Taunton.

6 November: "Recent Excavations in Winchester" by Mr. Martin Biddle.

20 November: "Nature Conservation" by Mr. W. O. Copland.

27 November: "The Galaxy" by Sir Richard Woolley, the Astronomer Royal.

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19 February: "Castles and the Conquest of Wales" by Mr. D. J. C. King.

5 March: Natural History Section Annual Meeting, with a showing of the film, "The Vanishing Coast".



- 12 March: "Estate Investment in Medieval Somerset" by Dr. R. W. Dunning.  
 26 March: "Animal Life in a Tropical Forest" by Mr. M. H. Robinson.

The lecture by the Astronomer Royal was held in Bishop Fox's School hall and was arranged jointly with the Museum Governing Body. It was open to the public and was attended by about 500 people.

NATIONAL NATURE WEEK. The latest activity of the Society during the year under report was the Nature Trail organized for National Nature Week by our Natural History Section.

On a proposal by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Haldane, the report was accepted. The President congratulated Mrs. Hallam and her helpers on the Nature Trail. It had involved much hard work and had proved an undoubted success.

#### ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Secretary explained the accounts and, on a proposal by Mr. Scott Stokes, seconded by Sir R. de Z. Hall, they were adopted.

#### SOMERSET RECORD SOCIETY

The Honorary Secretary of the Somerset Record Society, Mrs. C. W. H. Rawlins, read the annual report for 1965:

The Council is pleased to report that, although much delayed, Vol. 67 *Sales of Wards in Somerset 1603-41* at last appeared in July 1965. The cost was considerable, but the volume was nearly 100 pages longer than 66. The introduction gives a most useful account of the working of the Court of Wards and Liveries and the documents show how the system worked in Somerset and give much interesting genealogical and topographical information. Dr. Dunning, in spite of pressure of other work, continues to make progress with the Hyll Cartulary, but it will not be possible for it to appear before 1967. There has been a considerable demand for back numbers, and their sale has maintained the reserve fund, but it is a wasting asset and income from this source can hardly reach the same level in future.

New leaflets describing the Society's work were printed and, with the kind assistance of Dr. Dunning, distributed to a large number of universities at home and abroad. This has produced a small but welcome increase in the number of members, the total membership now being 150.

The Rev. Colin Morris has not been able to follow up his proposal for a volume dealing with the ecclesiastical courts, and the Council is now considering other plans, which include the letters of Sir Francis Hastings in the late sixteenth century, and the Cheddar Cartulary.

**CHANGES TO THE RULES**

On a proposal by Mr. Scott Stokes, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the following amendment to the Rules was passed:

**RULE 6 Constitution of the Council**

The Keeper of the Museum shall be added as an ex-officio member of the Council.

On a proposal by Mr. Tolson, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the following amendments to Rules were carried unanimously:

**RULE 3 Membership (a) Ordinary Members**

Clause (ii) The part which reads: "Members who joined before 1/1/1952 have the option of continuing to pay 21/-" shall be deleted.

(The effect of this will be that from 1/1/1967 all ordinary members will pay a standard annual subscription of 30/-).

**RULE 3 (b) Associate Members**

Clause (ii) The part which reads: "Associate Members who joined before 1/1/1952 have the option of continuing to pay 10/6" shall be deleted.

(The effect of this will be that from 1/1/1967 all Associate Members will pay a standard annual subscription of 15/-).

**RULE 3 (c) Teacher Members — Subscription 15/- annually**

Teacher Membership shall be abolished. Teacher Members shall automatically become Ordinary Members. They will become liable for the full Ordinary subscription of 30/- from 1/1/1967.

**RULE 12 Branch Societies**

The subscription of 30/- per annum shall be raised to £2.

**RULE 13 Affiliated Societies**

The annual fee for affiliation of 30/- shall be raised to £2.

**MUSEUM GOVERNING BODY**

Sir Robert Hall, Chairman of the Body, said that the restoration of the fabric of the Castle was now complete. The capital expenditure had been considerable and the Governors were indebted to the County Council and the Ministry of Public Building and Works for grants received. The garden had been levelled and the lawns could now be walked on. Sir Robert expressed gratitude to Mrs. Jeffries for her work in the garden and to Mrs. Clark for her gift of plants and shrubs. The Museum now had a full curatorial staff, which included an archaeologist. The post of technician had been abolished and each member of the staff was now his own technician. With the acquisition of additional storage space it was hoped now to proceed with the indexing of specimens. Wall cases had been added in the Somerset Room.

**SECRETARY'S SALARY**

On a proposal by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mrs. Clark, it was agreed that the question of increasing the Secretary's salary should be considered by the Council.



#### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In the afternoon Dr. E. G. Neal delivered his Presidential Address on "The Ecology of the Badger in Somerset". This was followed by tea at the Castle Hotel.

#### BRANCH AND AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

*Ornithological Section.* Total membership for 1965 dropped slightly to 322, despite the election of 41 new members.

Two lecture meetings were held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle: on April 3rd 1965 Mr. R. E. Hitchcock showed his excellent film, "Waders on the Wash" and a short study of Stone Curlews at their nest, and on October 19th Mr. M. Kendall introduced a new film on the work of the Wildfowl Trust, entitled "Wild Wings".

Seventeen field meetings were held at places as widely separated as Dawlish Warren (Devon) and the Wildfowl Trust, Slimbridge (Gloucestershire), Steep Holm (Somerset) and Studland Nature Reserve (Dorset).

The Section's 52nd report, *Somerset Birds* 1965, was published in August.

*West Somerset Branch* arranged visits to Lacock and Clevedon in the summer of 1965 and followed this up with a full programme of winter lectures.

*Weston-super-Mare Branch* made two summer excursions in 1965 and held a number of lectures in the following winter. This year sees the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Branch, which was originally known as the Axbridge Branch.

*Glastonbury Antiquarian Society* arranged four winter lectures in the 1965/66 season, mainly on subjects concerned with the history of the town or with some of the many sites of archaeological interest to be found in and around Glastonbury.

Two summer outings, five winter lectures and an evening of nature films made up the programme of the *Shepton Mallet Natural History Society*.

*Wells Archaeological and Natural History Society.* Membership during the year increased to over 250 and the usual series of summer excursions and winter meetings was held.

Excavations took place on the supposed site of the first English Carthusian Priory (and home of St. Hugh) at Witham under the direction of Mr. Peter Barlow and Dr. R. D. Reid. This site had been completely lost and confused with the lay brothers' church in the village. In 1921 a former Vice-President of the Society, Dr. Armitage Robinson, Dean of Wells, pointed out where, after an extensive study of the documents, he thought the Priory might have stood, and later air photographs seemed to confirm his conclusion. This has now been placed beyond doubt by the discovery of medieval

foundations, tiles, etc. The exact purpose of the rooms so far uncovered has not been revealed, but that one may well have been the Chapter House can be surmised from a comparison of its size and position with the corresponding building at the daughter house of Hinton Charterhouse. Much of the tracery of a 15th century window has been unearthed this year. The neighbourhood is of considerable interest: a mansion, erected in the next field by Sir Charles Wyndham, Lord Egremont, was apparently destroyed by the next owner, the notorious William Beckford, and there was a medieval iron works on the banks of the Frome here, which river also served to fill the fish ponds. Offers of help with the systematic digging of this interesting site would be welcomed by the Secretary of the Wells Archaeological Society.

*Clevedon and District Archaeological Society* reports that the usual activities took place. During the winter there were monthly talks as well as fortnightly lectures arranged in collaboration with the Extra-Mural Department of Bristol University. There were evening visits in the summer months to places of interest and a day excursion to the Cirencester excavations and Chedworth Roman Villa.

A number of members took part in various excavations, including those at Glastonbury Tor.

*The Historical Association, Ilminster Branch*, began as usual with their Annual Meeting in October, when the Hon. Secretary showed her slides of the Holy Land. The Branch also arranged three lectures and two excursions.

*The Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society* arranged visits to the Mendip lead mines, Bridgwater Potteries, and the excavations at Sea Mills and Glastonbury Tor. Several members are carrying out research projects on Mendip which will be reported in detail later.

*Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society* have been conducting excavations at Wall Mead, Timsbury, Somerset, and at Nettleton, Wilts. At Wall Mead a second Bronze Age barrow was examined to the east of Barrow 1, and this has produced evidence of a group of grave goods similar to that discovered by the Rev. John Skinner in 1817 in Barrow 1. It is expected that this excavation will be completed during 1966 and a report is well under way.

A successful conference was held at Bath in the spring of 1965, at which a number of speakers presented papers on local historical and archaeological subjects. These papers have been published by the Society in *A North Somerset Miscellany* (see p. 118).

An interesting series of winter lectures was well attended and the Society's other activities have continued at its headquarters and in the field.



*Burnham-on-Sea Archaeological and Natural History Society* arranged six very successful summer excursions, going as far afield as Warwick Castle and Blenheim Palace. They also held six lectures and an annual dinner.

*Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society* reports that membership has been maintained at a satisfactory level. Six excursions were made during the summer, including an all-day trip to Mendip. There were seven winter lecture meetings.

*Portishead Preservation Society.* Mrs. Moreton and Mrs. Burns, who have been acting for the Hon. Secretary during his absence for a year in Helsinki, have now taken over as Joint Hon. Secretaries as Mr. Herbert has moved permanently to London. The usual programme of lectures and visits to places of interest was arranged during the year, and support was given to other local societies in their opposition to the proposed development of the top of Woodhill, known as "the Tump".

*Frome Society for Local Study's* activities during the year included work connected with the provision of a museum for Frome. There were many money-raising events, and numerous working sessions to repair and decorate the rooms, and set up and label the exhibits. "The Old Church House", St. John's Church Steps, has now become "Frome Museum", and is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. from Wednesday to Saturday each week. Grants have been made by the Frome Urban and Rural District Councils towards the rent of £5 per week. The balance of rent and the cost of heating, furnishing and repairs will be raised by the Society. The Museum, which is staffed by Society members, is intended to be used as a centre for local research and will only collect *local* material. The most interesting exhibit is a quern in working order complete with a supply of corn for visitors to grind.

Other events during the year included visits to places of interest, eight lectures, and an exhibition of weaving, spinning, dyeing and other crafts, which was staged for several days. Membership is rapidly increasing. There were 125 members on 31st December and more than 20 new members have joined since that date.

*North Somerset Archaeological Research Group* had a year of consolidation. No excavations were undertaken; instead, investigations were concentrated on the settlement area on the Kenn-Yatton Moors. By the end of the year another two sites had been found at the extremities of this area and this brought the known length of the settlement to almost 1½ miles. In addition to this the normal garden and building-site surveys were continued.

The winter season saw more lectures given to clubs, etc. with the object of stimulating interest in what might be found by members of the public in their gardens or in the fields. For the first time the

Group also circulated a pottery display to some of the local flower shows, with the accent on "History in your Garden". As a result several small pot scatters were reported.

*Bristol Archaeological Research Group* published during the year the first of its field guides to archaeological sites in the region—*Prehistoric Sites in the Mendip, South Cotswold and Bristol Region*, by Leslie Grinsell (see p. 117). Further guides in preparation cover the Roman and Medieval periods and Industrial Archaeology. *The Preparation of Archaeological Reports* by Grinsell, Rahtz and Warhurst, originally published by B.A.R.G. in duplicated form, has now been issued in a printed edition (see pp. 117-18).

In addition to lectures for adult audiences, a series for school children was arranged jointly with the Museum Schools Service, and a weekend course, "An Introduction to Ancient Fields", jointly with the University of Bristol Department of Extra-Mural Studies.

Excavations at Sea Mills, jointly with the City Museum, have been carried out by Mr. M. Hebditch and Mrs. J. C. Gill, and at Row of Ashes Farm, Butcombe, a fortnight's training excavation under the directorship of Mr. P. J. Fowler was arranged in association with the University Extra-Mural Studies Department. The site investigated is a rural settlement of the Roman period, of unusual interest because it is integrated with its trackways and fields in a well-preserved complex, which can be studied as an economic unit.

*The Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society*, formed in June 1965, had a very satisfactory first year with membership, at the end of the winter, standing at around 60.

Well attended meetings were held each month during the autumn and winter period.

Study groups investigating a variety of historical aspects, were formed. These included Inns and Ale-houses, the Pre-History and Roman Periods, Industrial Archaeology, and Places of Worship. The individual organization of these several groups varied considerably, as did the enthusiasm for specific research projects. Nevertheless the overall picture, both present and future, is remarkably bright.

The Inns and Ale-Houses Group have unearthed a file of documents on existing licensed premises in the district and have surveyed and measured buildings threatened with demolition.

The Pre-History and Roman Group have ascertained the locality of the Roman Villa at Burnett, whilst the Industrial Archaeology Group have started a complete survey of industry in the area. Members of this latter group were responsible for an article on the Dyewood Industry appearing in the *Journal of Industrial Archaeology* and subsequently provided material for feature programmes on B.B.C. Sound and T.V.