

PART I — PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1971

The Meeting was held in the Somerset Room, Taunton Castle, on Saturday, 1st May 1971 at 2.15 p.m. About one hundred members were present.

On behalf of the members of the Society the Chairman of Council, Mr. T. J. Hunt, congratulated Lord Waldegrave on his recent appointment to the Order of the Garter. After thanking Mr. Hunt, Lord Waldegrave said he had enjoyed his presidential year and pointed out that proposed changes in local government should not trouble a society which was considerably older than any county council. Having left Taunton, Mr. Adamson, our Honorary Treasurer for over fifteen years, had expressed a wish not to stand again. On behalf of the Society Lord Waldegrave thanked him for all he had done for the Society; his financial advice and assistance had been invaluable. Lord Waldegrave then introduced the new President, Mr. L. V. Grinsell, who thanked the Society for the honour done to him and Lord Waldegrave for his remarks. Mr. Grinsell then took the chair.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

On a proposal by Mr. Frewin, seconded by Mr. Pearce, the following officers were elected: Mr. E. L. Kelting and Sir Robert Hall (Hon. Secretaries), Mr. R. G. K. Evens (Hon. Treasurer), Mrs. P. A. Langmaid (Hon. Editor).

On a proposal by Mr. Pearce, seconded by Mr. Baker, the following five members were re-elected to serve on the Council until 1974. Professor E. B. Ford, Mr. W. J. Wedlake, Mr. L. C. Hayward, Dr. R. W. Dunning and Mr. H. G. M. Leighton.

SUMMARY OF THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

During the past year 52 individuals joined the Society and 58 old members dropped out, making a net decrease of 6. Total membership is now 925, consisting of 67 Life Members, 658 Ordinary Members, 96 Associate Members and 21 Junior Members; i.e. 852 individuals, together with 73 institutions.

Since the last meeting Mrs. St. George Gray has died at an advanced age. She most generously made the Society her residuary legatee and the Society has already benefitted by £7,000, with a substantial balance to come. This will enable the Society to extend its activities at what is likely to prove a crucial period.

In addition to books for the library, other gifts to the Society have included a collection of local varieties of Lepidoptera collected round Street by the late Mr. Edmund Page, and presented by Mrs. Page, and also a collection of Somerset Coleoptera bequeathed by Mr. C. N. Hawkins.

Volume **114** for 1970 of *Proceedings*, now known as *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History*, was issued to members in April. A section for short notes had been included again and it was hoped that those who were engaged on archaeological, historical and similar work in the county would contribute to this where they did not feel that a full-scale article was appropriate. More contributions to the Natural History Section would also be welcome, as would more extensive reporting to the Recorders.

The usual excursions were made. On May 30th Mrs. Hamilton Gault most kindly

showed members round Hatch Court and entertained them to coffee. Lacock Abbey was visited in the afternoon. On August 19th Stourhead House was visited in the morning and in the afternoon Mr. Rees-Mogg was good enough to conduct members round Ston Easton House. This excursion concluded with a visit to Chewton Mendip church where the Revd. Mr. Clarkson showed members the church and the pre-Reformation plate and Mr. Poyntz-Wright pointed out features of the tower. The four-day excursion from 28th September to 1st October was based on Paignton. Places visited included the Rougemont House Museum and St. Nicholas' Priory in Exeter, Grimspound under the expert guidance of Mrs. Miles, Dartmouth Castle and St. Petroc's church, Totnes, Berry Pomeroy Castle, Buckland Abbey, Saltram House, Compton Castle, Bradley Manor and Bovey Tracy church. The Society is grateful to Miss Mace and members of the Totnes Society for showing members the most interesting parts of Totnes and to the Revd. Mr. Duxbury for the tour of Bovey Tracey church.

Mr. Leslie Alcock again kindly arranged for members to be shown round the South Cadbury excavations where he addressed them on August 13th.

Lectures given during the winter were: Houses of the Welsh Countryside by Mr. P. Smith, The Archaeology of Exmoor by Mr. Grinsell, Deer by Lt. Col. Cockburn, The Geology of the Dorset Coast by Miss Samuels, Food from the Sea by Dr. Ryland, Donyatt Pottery by Messrs. Coleman-Smith, Morley and Pearson, and the Mediaeval Gold Coinage of Britain by Mr. P. J. Seaby. Thanks are due to those ladies who have prepared tea at the conclusion of lectures.

A meeting of the Branch and Affiliated Societies was held in Glastonbury on 17th October. Papers read included the Norton Fitzwarren Excavation 1970 by Mrs. Langmaid, Recent Excavations at Ilchester Mead by Mr. Hayward, Archaeology and the M5 by Mrs. Langdon, Marchey Farm by Mr. Batt, and Excavations at Catsgore by Mr. Leech.

Well-attended archaeological field meetings were held at Charterhouse on Mendip, Dowsborough Hill-fort, Withypool Common and Norton Fitzwarren Camp. Four field meetings were held by the Natural History Section as well as a social evening and exhibition on October 13th. Members of the Section also contributed to a number of events in connection with European Conservation Year.

To ensure continuity of expertise it has now been agreed that the M5 Research Committee should be responsible for supervision and expert help on the M5 Motorway from Edithmead to the Devon border, with local committees at Bridgwater and Taunton. Shortly after the initial meeting the arrangements were tested to the full on the extensive Roman site at Crandon Bridge.

An interim report on the Society's successful excavation at Norton Fitzwarren under Mrs. Langmaid's direction has appeared in Vol. **114**. It is proposed to continue excavations there this coming season (See p. 55).

In view of experience elsewhere it has been deemed advisable to tighten up security arrangements for the Society's premises, to keep them locked except when attended and to issue membership cards.

A part-time assistant to the Secretary was engaged in January and this has allowed the library to be kept open on Thursdays and more work to be undertaken in the library itself. The Society is grateful to boys from Taunton School who have been re-organising the collections of glass slides and also to Mr. Thomson who is now giving a regular hand in the library.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MEETINGS

Five archaeological field meetings were held in 1971, and, although attendances were not as high as in 1970, those who participated did so with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

In May, Mr. Whittaker and Mrs. Langmaid led a party to look at the geology and archaeology of Ham Hill, a fascinating site with unsolved problems in both fields. It has been extensively quarried for Ham stone, and is now under consideration for a country park. In June, Mr. Poyntz-Wright led a group to look at various sites in Glastonbury that have been excavated in the last few years, and are throwing new light on the Early Medieval period in the island, and on aspects of its history not directly connected with the Abbey. In August, members visited the excavations at Cadbury-Congresbury where they were shown around by Peter Fowler (note, p. 51), and in September a similar meeting was held at the Society's excavation at Norton Fitzwarren (note, p. 55). Mr. Elkington conducted a walk over Hod and Hambledon Hills in Dorset; these are both huge Iron Age hill-forts, and Hod Hill has the additional interest of a Roman military fort inside the earlier ramparts. Hod Hill has been brilliantly excavated by Sir Ian Richmond, so that a detailed account of its capture and use by the Romans can be given.

It is hoped that more members will take advantage of the field meeting programme next year; details will appear on the Summer Programme, and in the Spring number of the Newsletter. If you would like to suggest areas that might be visited, or would be interested in leading a meeting, please will you contact the Secretary or Mrs. Langmaid at Taunton Castle.

BRANCH AND AFFILIATED SOCIETIES 1970/71

The *Ornithological Section* has suffered a tragic loss in the death, in August 1970, of Ernest Gerald Holt, a member of the Section since 1926 and its President since 1963. His cheerful and much loved personality will be sadly missed. Two meetings have been held at the Wyndham Hall: on 25th April Malcolm Ogilvie of the Wildfowl Trust gave a lecture on "Swans", and on 3rd October Michael Kendall of the B.B.C. presented the films "The Private Life of the Starling" and "Birds of Majorca". On 17th October, at a meeting held at Bishop Fox's School, Taunton, in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the films "Birds of the Grey Wind" and "Winged Aristocrats" were shown to a large audience. Twenty-one field meetings have been held during the year, including a successful joint meeting on Exmoor with the Bath Natural History Society. The Section's Annual Report "Somerset Birds, 1969" was published in September.

At the Annual General Meeting of the *Weston-super-Mare Branch* tributes were paid to Mr. F. A. Gundry and Mrs. D. Braithwaite, long-standing committee members whose sad deaths had recently taken place. Mr. G. P. Rye, who was retiring as President, and Mr. M. Windeatt, who was also retiring as Hon. Secretary/Treasurer and Hon. Excursion Secretary, were thanked for their years of valuable service, and the following appointments were made: Mr. D. C. Whimster as President, Mrs. H. Morrisey as Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. H. Andrews as Hon. Treasurer, and Mrs. M. White as Excursion Secretary. The winter programme took the form of three lecture meetings, and during the summer there were excursions to Tewkesbury Abbey and Sudgely Castle, to Lundy

Island (in conjunction with the Lundy Field Society), to Cadbury Camp, Congresbury, where Peter Fowler led a conducted tour of the excavations, and to Woodspring Priory for a conducted tour led by David Tomalin.

The programme of the *West Somerset Branch* included five lecture meetings and a social afternoon at which short talks were given by members, and in the summer there were excursions to Lee Ford and Barrington Court.

The *Glastonbury Antiquarian Society* has sponsored, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, an emergency excavation at The Mound, Beckery, under the direction of Miss Jane Hassall of Southampton University. The Society's activities have also included two lectures, a Brains Trust (with Mr. H. F. Scott Stokes, Mr. Stephen C. Morland and Dr. A. M. Boyd as the panel), and a visit to Lundy Island under the guidance of members of the Lundy Field Society.

The winter programme of the *Shepton Mallet Natural History Society* comprised five lectures on archaeological and natural history subjects and a meeting at which films on natural history were shown. During the summer there was a nature walk in Ebbor Gorge Nature Reserve, a tour of the Hardy country in Dorset, and a visit to a conifer nursery at Devides.

The *Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society* organized a programme of lecture meetings during the winter months, and one of the lectures was later followed-up by an excursion to the Mendip lead mines. Other excursions during the summer included visits to Biddlecombe Valley, Lacock Abbey, West Bradley Manor, Llandaff Cathedral and the National Museum of Wales at St. Fagans, and Barrington Court. Members of the Society have helped to complete the work of alteration and redecoration in a display room at Wells Museum where agricultural and domestic exhibits are being assembled.

The activities of the *Clevedon and District Archaeological Society* have included a programme of lectures and a social gathering at Christmas. Visits have also been made to Cleeve Abbey and to the excavations at Winchester. Individual members of the Society have also given practical help at a number of excavations.

The *Ilminster Historical Society* has been instrumental in securing the preservation of a recently-discovered fragment of late medieval wall-painting. The Society has also held a series of lecture meetings, and during the summer months there have been three excursions: to Saltram House, to Cothelstone Manor and Cleeve Abbey, and to Pilsden Pen and Bettiscombe Manor. With the deaths of Dr. Harte and Major Dowling the Society has lost two valued friends.

Robert H. Harte, M.A., PH.D., was Head Master of Belfast High School until 1966, when he retired and settled at Creech Heathfield. He was in demand as a lecturer on "Celts, Romans and Saxons in Somerset". Each summer he camped at South Cadbury, where he became a favourite guide, while his wife and daughter washed pottery and other finds. Dr. Harte got his M.A. for a thesis on the Eleusinian Mysteries, and his PH.D. for a chronological arrangement of Pliny's Letters. After a distinguished military career, Major Dowling retired to West Quantoxhead, and later moved to Wrantage. He was a popular lecturer on several historical subjects and on industrial archaeology (see Obituary, p. 24).

The *Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society* organized five winter meetings (including a symposium on recent work by members) and a series of summer field meetings which included a joint expedition to the East Wansdyke with the Banwell Society of Archaeology. Members again took part in the excavations at Butcombe and Cadbury-Congresbury, and the Society's excavation at Hay Wood Cave was completed and a report prepared for publication. An exhibition on the Charterhouse Minery was arranged by members at the "Mendip '71" Exhibition in Wells, and, with the restoration of King John's Hunting Lodge in Axbridge, it is hoped that the Society's museum collection will be rehoused there.

The *Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society* arranged a small excavation to locate the site of the Roman villa at Paulton, and it is intended to resume the work there in 1972. The Chairman has continued with the preparation of the Nettleton site material for publication, whilst the Secretary represented both the Council for British Archaeology and the Society at the public enquiry at which Bath Corporation sought leave to demolish a range of List II buildings in New Bond Street, Bath: at the time of writing, the Secretary of State's decision was still awaited. The Society published a "Second North Somerset Miscellany" in 1971 (reviewed on p. 71).

The programme of the *Burnham-on-Sea Archaeological and Natural History Society* included a series of lecture meetings and a season of well-attended excursions to Farley Hungerford Castle and Norton St. Phillip Church, Compton Acres and Poole Pottery, Llanthony Abbey in Monmouthshire, the Brendon Hills mines and West Somerset Mineral Railway, Stourton House and Stourhead Gardens, and Taunton Castle. During 1971 the sand dunes south of Berrow Churchyard were excavated, prior to development, in order to locate the two buildings described in Abbot Beere's Terrier of 1516. Pottery finds proved occupation from the 14th to the 19th centuries, and the foundations of two buildings were revealed: one has been provisionally identified with the smaller of the two buildings of 1516. Another excavation, at a Romano-British site (also threatened by development) near the Lighthouse Inn, Burnham, uncovered two floors, one roughly cobbled and the other better made with small pieces of stone in the interstices of the larger cobbles, lying partly beneath the water-table and covered by a ten-inch spread of occupational debris.

The *Frome Society for Local Study* has had another active year. The Wainwright collection of Friendly Society brasses was shown to the public for the first time at Frome Museum, and an exhibition of dolls illustrating royal fashion through the ages was also popular. A course of lectures on the local landscape was well-supported, and visits were made to Batcombe Church, the site of the Somerset and Dorset Canal, Bruton and Vallis Vale. The highlight of the year was a visit to Bradley House where the Society was entertained by the Duke and Duchess of Somerset. Trial excavations were carried out at Poplar Farm, Lamyatt, where Roman tesserae and pottery were found. The Society has accepted with deep regret the resignation of its Chairman, Mr. W. G. Carver, and of Mrs. H. Massey, who has been Secretary since the formation of the Society in 1958.

The *North Somerset Archaeological Research Group* organized no excavations this

year, but continued with field survey work and "motorway watching", whilst during the winter months the lecture team visited the various clubs and organizations which had requested talks. The Group has also co-operated with the Bristol Archaeological Research Group, passing on to them a list of the sites (over eighty in number) found to date.

The lecture programme of the *Bridgwater and District Archaeological Society* included a series organized by Bristol University in which Professor Tratman dealt with the Archaeology of Mendip. There was also an outing to Exeter to visit the excavations and the Maritime Museum, but the Society's year was largely dominated by the M5, with members taking part in "motorway watching", the excavation of the Romano-British site at Bush Marsh, and the recording of the 19th century lime kilns and limestone railway cuttings and tunnels at Puriton which lay in the path of the motorway. Photographic records were also made of the storage tanks at the Downend Salt Works and of hand-made tile processes at the Puriton works of Colthurst Symons before the latter, the last factory of its kind in the area, closed down. Reports on the motorway sites are now being prepared (see note, p. 53).

One of the highlights of the programme organized by the *South East Somerset Archaeological Society*, whose membership has now reached more than fifty, was a meeting in Wincanton at which John Laidlaw gave a talk on the excavations at South Cadbury. Mrs. N. Langmaid continued her lecture series and arranged visits to Ackling Dyke, Hod Hill and Caerwent, whilst Robert Machin led meetings on the Archaeology of Fields and Domestic Architecture; and at the Annual General Meeting, Keith Gardner gave an illustrated talk on Cadbury-Congresbury. An excursion was made to Lundy Island and there were also opportunities for members to visit excavations at Butcombe, Shapwick and Cadbury-Congresbury. In the field of rescue archaeology, the Society plans to keep a close watch on the road widening works at Wincanton.

The regular discussion meetings of the *Chard History Group* were continued during the past year, and work is in hand with a view to producing a short History of the town and parish and a publication on the buildings of Chard. Members made regular visits to the County Record Office during the winter months to study a variety of documentary sources, and this work will continue during the coming year. Summer excursions arranged by the Group included a visit to Holditch Court, and an excavation at Chardstock provided members with useful archaeological experience as well as producing late Saxon and medieval pottery.

The *Banwell Society of Archaeology* organized a programme of eleven lecture meetings during the year, and the increase in membership of the Society has necessitated a move to larger premises for the meetings. Excursions were made to Lundy Island, St. Fagans, and the Wansdyke, and the Society also took part in visits arranged by the Somerset Society. The Project Groups, which are investigating the recent history of Banwell, arranged a supper for some of the older inhabitants of Banwell at which slides of old photographs of the village were shown: the occasion was a great success, and valuable historical information was gained from the recollections which were evoked in this way. Members of the Society acted as stewards at the "Mendip '71" Exhibition held at Wells,

and the Society has planned a money-raising programme, including an exhibition of its own on the theme of "Old Banwell", to assist "Rescue". The Society has also written to the Minister for the Environment objecting to a compulsory purchase order on a building in the Square in Banwell; and the tenth issue of "Search", the Society's journal, has now been published.