

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY 2004–2005

PATRON:	Lady Gass
CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES:	Lady Gass, MA Revd Brian Kirk, BD Professor John Coles, PhD, FSA Steven Pugsley
PRESIDENT:	Professor Mick Aston
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:	<i>Chairman:</i> Dr Pat Hill-Cottingham BSc, PhD, PGCE, FPSCE, CBiol, MIBiol <i>Vice-Chairman:</i> Hilary Binding, BA <i>Hon Treasurer:</i> Trevor Bedford <i>Hon Librarian:</i> David Bromwich, MA, ALA <i>Hon Editor:</i> Peter Ellis, BA, FSA
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:	Mr Roger Ford, Grove Lodge, Coat, near Martock

COUNCIL

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:	The Custodian Trustees, the President and Executive Officers
PAST PRESIDENTS:	Dr Pat Hill-Cottingham, BSc, PhD, PGCE, FPSCE, CBiol, MIBiol Lord Rees Mogg Dr Robert Dunning, FSA
ELECTED MEMBERS (to retire at the Annual General Meeting indicated)	
2005	Bob Croft, BA, MIFA Revd Brian Kirk, BD Brian Murless
2006	Barbara Lowe, BEd, FSA Anita Sims, RIBA, IHBC Barry Lane Christopher Sidaway, BA David Dawson BA, FSA, FMA
2007	Anthony Bruce, MSc Pat Ellson, BA Adrian Webb Russell Gomm, BSc

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS REPRESENTING OTHER BODIES:

<i>Archaeology:</i>	David Baker, MA
<i>Historic Buildings:</i>	Mary Ewing, MSc, RIBA
<i>Library:</i>	Dr Roy Haines, MA, DLitt, DPhil, FRHistS
<i>Local History:</i>	John Page, MBCS
<i>Natural History:</i>	Dr Pat Hill-Cottingham, BSc, PhD, PGCE, FPSCE, CBiol, MIBiol
<i>Publications:</i>	Anthony Bruce, MSc
<i>Somerset County Council:</i>	Robin Bush
<i>Associated Societies:</i>	Jean Dagnall, MA, DPSA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in St James Church Hall, Taunton on Saturday 15 May 2004. The meeting was attended by 54 members and apologies were received from a further 20.

Professor Mick Aston was inducted as President for the year 2004–2005.

Hilary Binding, the outgoing Chair of the Society, said that, like many other organisations, the Society was going through a time of change as it entered the 21st century and that change is not always easy. Things that had been taken for granted for years like the position of the castle and the museum were having to be rethought in terms of a new lease and County Council intentions and it would be a long haul before matters were settled.

Council had affirmed that it was fully behind maintaining a County Museum Service with the castle being used for the interpretation of the history and natural history of the County and of Taunton itself. Eventually it was hoped that there would be a new Record Office and also premises to house the support services and overflow collections.

The Chairman welcomed the fact that *Proceedings* were now up-to-date and thanked Peter Ellis, the Editor for all his hard work. She also welcomed the new-look Newsletter and the development of the website, which helped the Society to reach out to others. Members were enrolling via the website and Council had agreed to dispense with the proposer and seconder although Council would still approve all new members.

It was good to know that members of the Society were working with young people in archaeology, history and natural history. The Society was made up of all sorts of people, some of whom simply enjoyed the meetings and publications while others took a larger and more active part. She emphasised

the importance of everyone's contribution – all were volunteers – and that the Society would die without active members. She remembered particularly Madge Langdon who had died earlier in the year and had done stalwart work looking after The Maltwood Fund.

The Chairman thanked the Officers, Council and Committee members for all their hard work and also David Dawson for his service as Museum Officer. She also thanked Tom Mayberry for his past work for the Society.

The Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2003 were presented by Trevor Bedford and adopted. He reported that a surplus had been generated in the year, records had been put on the Sage Accounting database, and systems had been improved to speed up deposits of funds and provide better information by the detailed allocation of investments and transactions. Investment income had decreased as a result of falling interest rates, but it was hoped that these would climb again in 2004. Future aims included achieving increased funding to enable more expenditure to support the Society's objectives. The budget for 2004 included an increase in subscription income, which was dependent on the recruitment of 75 new members. Controversial potential high revenue earners had been proposed. These included a suggestion that SANHS should have a policy in regard to Wind Turbines, and perhaps use them to raise funds for the Society. This suggestion was followed by a lively discussion that had to be cut short for lack of time.

The Chairmen of the Archaeology, Historic Buildings, Library, Local History, Natural History and Publications Committees gave reports about their activities during the year.

Archaeology events had included symposia on the Wetwang Chariot Burial and other Iron Age vehicles,

Early Christianity in the South West, and Roman Mosaics in Somerset, as well as the annual archaeological symposium, a field trip to see the archaeology of Steepholm (which had not been prevented by bad weather this time), and experimental kiln firing at Bickley.

Historic Buildings visits were made to Glastonbury, Edington House, the Stuckey and Bagehot Warehouse at Langport, some medieval buildings in Axbridge, Crowcombe, Evercreech, and Hassage Manor, Norton St Philip, home of long-standing SANHS member, Gerard Leighton. In December a social evening, held in the Adam Room in the Castle, included a magic lantern presentation of a selection from the Society's glass plate slide collection. In 2003 a sub-group of the Committee was set up and a Heritage Lottery grant was won for the photographic archive project. This was to preserve and provide access to (our) extensive collections of slides, including those bequeathed to the committee by Commander Williams. The committee awarded a grant from the Desmond Williams Bequest towards publication of *The Dovecotes of Historic Somerset* by John and Pamela McCann.

In the *Library*, the holdings of annual reports on birds of other counties had been rationalised by completing sets for neighbouring ones and disposing of those from further afield. The new Heraldry Society had brought an extension of purchases in that area and there had been an attempt to fill in some lacunae in the historical sphere, particularly with respect to basic reference books.

Local History events had included a symposium on Somerset and the Weather to mark the tercentenary of the Great Storm of 1703 which resulted in the death of Bishop Kidder and his wife, a tour around North Curry, and the first of three talks for Taunton 1100 – a discussion of the archaeological aspects of the town's history.

Natural History activities had followed the usual pattern of winter talks and summer field meetings. Talks had included Warblers, Taunton Deane rocks, the evolution of flowering plants, and the Pyrenees. There had been field trips looking for fossils at Charmouth, fungi on the Quantocks, Beer and Aller woods.

Barbara Lowe's book *The Decorated Medieval Floor Tiles of Somerset* had finally been published, despite many difficulties. Thanks were expressed to the many people who ensured its publication. The next publication would be Brian Kirk's book on the Taunton Dissenting Academy. A popular

interdisciplinary book, produced in conjunction with English Nature, was planned to be published following the Symposium on the Avalon Marshes. It was planned to improve the layout of *Proceedings* and double column printing was being considered. Thanks were expressed to Peter Ellis for his work as Editor. The committee had considered the indexing of *Proceedings* from 1972. Thanks were also extended to Robin Downes, the new editor of the Newsletter, and Anthony Bruce for all his work on the Society's website.

Steve Minnitt, the Acting County Museums Officer reported that the service had seen dramatic changes and now formed part of Heritage Services of Somerset County Council. Tribute was paid to David Dawson, former County Museums officer. There had been a 93% rise in visitors to the County Museum since the abolition of charges. A new surface has been laid under the gateway of the Castle in collaboration with Historic Environment service. Work on the trees and shrubs in the moat garden was planned to open up views of the castle. It was then hoped in collaboration with TDBC to enhance the Jubilee gardens on the north side. The Society's collection of Pleistocene bones was being conserved, documented, and repackaged. The European Quaternary Mammal Association had visited the Museum on 14 May and seen much of the collection. A new publication on the Silver collection had been published. Under the Treasure Act a gold ring from Cannington was acquired by the Society for the Museum.

Olga Shotton, the new Administrator of the Maltwood Fund, distributed copies of a report of the grants awarded this year. Grantees would be reminded that they should submit reports on their work to the Society for publication.

The following officers were elected: Chairman – Dr Pat Hill-Cottingham; Vice-Chairman – Hilary Binding; Hon Treasurer – Trevor Bedford; Hon Editor – Peter Ellis; Hon Librarian – David Bromwich. Pat Hill-Cottingham thanked Hilary Binding and Alex Maxwell Findlater for their work during the year. Mr Roger Ford of Grove Lodge, Coat, near Martock was elected as Independent Examiner of the Society's Accounts.

Mrs Pat Ellson, Anthony Bruce and Adrian Webb were re-elected as members of the Society's Council for the three years to 2007. Mrs Penny Cudmore was not standing for re-election and Russell Gomm was elected to fill the vacancy. Stephen Minnitt was standing down as an elected member and David Dawson was elected to fill the vacancy to 2006.

Resolution, proposed by Council of the Society that 'Council is authorised to interview and appoint an Honorary Secretary'

After a great deal of discussion this was amended to read 'acting Honorary Secretary' and agreed (proposed David Dawson, seconded Anita Sims, none against, no abstentions).

Resolution, proposed by Alex Maxwell Findlater and seconded by Anita Sims, Anthony Bruce, Christopher Chanter, Dr Roy Haines, Mary Ewing, Pam Brimacombe, Alan Ewing, that 'the Society adopts the Statutory Model Code of Conduct (authorised in the Local Government Act 2000, issued as Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 3575) and that the Code should be incorporated into the Rules of the Society'

Following the issuing of the agenda, the following Amendment to the above Resolution was submitted in accordance with the Rules of the Society (proposed Dr RW Dunning, seconded Mary Siraut, D Bromwich, W Deckner, BJ Lane, DP Dawson, V Dawson, Brian J Murless):

'It is proposed that the Society's Council shall take urgent steps, in consultation with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, to frame a Code of Conduct for Managing Conflicts of Interest, such

a Code to be based on appropriate models including those arising from the Local Government Act 2000, and that Council shall in addition frame such amendments to the rules of the Society, including the addition of a new rule specifying the requirement for the Society to have such a Code, as, in consultation with the Commission and with its consent, may seem necessary for the better management of Conflicts of Interest, and that such a Code and any such rule changes shall as soon as reasonably possible be brought to a General Meeting of the Society for approval'.

After much discussion it was agreed that a compromise might be reached by adopting a model code of conduct now available on the Charity Commission web-site. There were four abstentions, none against.

Dr Robert Dunning gave a short report on the activities of the Somerset Record Society.

Anthony Bruce gave a short talk about the Society's web-site which he had set up on a laptop for members to view. The site comprises a newsletter archive, articles from *Proceedings* and programme pages.

Tom Mayberry then gave a short talk on Taunton 1100.