

SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY 1977

Ex-officio Members: The President, Vice-Presidents and the Executive Officers.

Elected Members (to retire at the Annual Meeting indicated):

- 1979 MRS. M. LANGDON, B.A., D. DENTON-COX, F.R.T.P.I., F.R.I.C.S., D.P.A., J. W. GARDNER, F.S.A., R. LEECH, M.A.
- 1980 R. J. E. BUSH, B.A., DR. R. W. DUNNING, F.S.A., W. J. WEDLAKE, F.S.A., MISS K. J. EVANS, B.A.
- 1981 M. A. ASTON, B.A., B. MURLESS, J. H. CROTHERS, M.A., MRS. M. NEWSON, B.A.

Committee Chairmen and Members representing Other Bodies:

C. J. HAWKES (Archaeological Committee), H. L. M. PATTEN (Natural History Committee), DR. R. W. DUNNING, F.S.A. (Publications Committee), F. HAWTIN (Public Relations Committee), MISS J. PEDEN, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., M.CHEM.A. (Library Committee), M. B. McDERMOTT, M.A. (Historic Buildings Committee), D. M. M. SHORROCKS, M.A. (County Archivist), P. A. STEVENS, M.A., F.M.A. (County Museums Officer).

TRUSTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES NOMINATED BY THE SOCIETY

Representative Trustee on the Axbridge Town Trust: MRS. F. A. NEALE, B.A., A.K.C.

Representative on Ilchester Town Trust: L. C. HAYWARD, B.A., B.Sc., F.S.A.

Society's Representatives, Leigh Woods Committee of Management: MISS E. RALPH, F.S.A. and PROF. P. V. McGRATH, M.A.

Representative Trustees on the Wyndham Lecture Trusts:

Taunton Secondary: I. P. COLLIS, F.S.A. and DR. R. W. DUNNING, F.S.A.

Taunton Elementary: DR. P. C. DAVEY, M.Sc.

Yeovil Secondary: L. C. HAYWARD, B.A., B.Sc., F.S.A.

Bridgwater: E. L. KELTING, O.B.E., J.P., F.I.C.E.

Wells: DR. R. D. REID, B.Sc.

Ilminster: W. M. WIGFIELD, M.A.

Weston-super-Mare: D. C. WHIMSTER, M.A., J.P.

PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1978

At the meeting held at the West Somerset School, Minehead, on Saturday, 13th May, 1978, the retiring President, Mrs. Olive M. Hallam, M.A., welcomed her successor, Mr. Philip Rahtz, M.A., Professor-elect of Archaeology at York University, and referred to the extensive range and significance of his quarter of a century of successful archaeological excavation. Mr. Rahtz responded appropriately, and took the chair for the meeting to follow.

Election of Officers and Members of Council

The meeting confirmed the Council's nominees as Executive Officers (Rule 52). Hon. Treasurer: Mr. L. A. Haldane, M.A.; Hon. Editor: Mr. M. B. McDermott, M.A.; Hon. Secretary: Dr. P. C. Davey, M.Sc.

In addition, the following Council nominations were confirmed: Hon. Librarian: Mr. D. Bromwich, M.A., A.L.A.; Hon. Auditor: Mr. J. V. Carrington, F.C.A.

After a ballot, the following members were elected to serve on the Council (Rule 26):

To May 1981: Mr. M. A. Aston, B.A., Mr. B. Murless, Mr. J. H. Crothers, M.A., Mrs. M. Newson, B.A.

To May 1980: Miss K. J. Evans.

Election of Members of Subject Committees

Nominees to all Subject Committees were returned unopposed.

Summary of the Secretary's Report

Dr. Davey opened his third annual report by stressing the theme of continuity: the Society's early objectives remained clear and unchallenged, whilst the activities of the Society, with its revised organization, constituted a re-interpretation of, rather than a break with, past practice. Thus the mid-19th century *Conversazioni* had their counterpart in the symposia which had been held on the subjects of town houses and recent developments in archaeology, geology and Natural History in the county; whilst the collecting of coins had continued with the acquisition of a Henry I penny, minted in Taunton, which would be displayed in the Museum. Again, the publication of the *Survey of Wambrook* (the first, it was hoped, of a series of parish surveys) could be seen as a fulfilment of the Society's early aim of promoting accurate local knowledge through field excursions.

On the subject of the Silver Jubilee, Dr. Davey reported that the message of congratulation which had been sent by the Society to its patron, Her Majesty the Queen, had been duly acknowledged, and that the Taunton Deane Borough Council, in a tripartite agreement with the Society and Somerset County Council, had taken over the lease of the Northern Garden as a commemorative scheme. The garden had subsequently been renamed Castle Garden (although widely referred to as the Jubilee Garden) and was now open to the public. This was intended to be the first step in a long-term programme to transform the Castle site and its environs into the town's central and most attractive feature.

Dr. Davey mentioned the appointment of Miss Joan Peden as Hon. Press Officer, whose task was to ensure that the Society's activities received adequate coverage in the press. He then referred to the tragic death of Mr. Christopher Cookson, who had formerly served the Society as its Secretary for a period of ten years, and who had continued to remain in active contact with the Society since his retirement. Mr. Cookson was a highly respected individual who would be greatly missed.

Turning to the work of the subject committees, Dr. Davey reported that the Archaeological and Natural History Committees had continued to arrange joint activities, including the survey of Steep Holm which would in due course be published in *Proceedings*. On its own account, the Natural History Committee had been involved in a projected revision of the Flora of Somerset, and was hoping to promote a study of lichens. The Archaeological Committee had also worked in conjunction with the Public Relations Committee to arrange a highly successful joint meeting of the Somerset and Devon Archaeological Societies: this took place at Taunton Castle, where an address of welcome was given by Col. C. T. Mitford-Slade, J.P., the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, followed by conducted tours of the Museum and, after an excellent lunch, talks on 'Prehistoric Man in Lowest Somerset and Highest Devon'. The Archaeological Committee had also shared in the planning of the Annual Standing Conference of Associated Societies (at which the Banwell Society acted as hosts), and was involved in a number of projected ventures, including a policy statement on the Somerset Wetlands (in consultation with the Natural History Committee) and the possibility of establishing a Society Archaeological Trust Fund with a view to acquiring threatened sites in Somerset. Another initiative by the Committee had resulted in the award of a grant from the Maltwood Fund for the purchase of air photographs to complete the coverage available in the county for archaeological use.

The Historic Buildings Committee had continued to check planning applications for the demolition of listed buildings within the county, and had made representations on the Society's behalf in a number of instances. Concern over the future of Priory Barn, Taunton, and the keep of Taunton Castle (a concern shared, in the latter case, with the Archaeological Committee) had resulted in initial reports on the structures by members of the Committee, and full reports were subsequently prepared by the Department of the Environment and C.R.A.A.G.S. The Committee's programme of meetings had included a symposium on town houses, a visit to Vicars Close, Wells, and a training session for those interested in measuring and recording buildings.

Dr. Davey paid tribute to the contribution made to the running of the library by members of the Library Committee and others. The library continued to be of great service to a few Society members, and deserved to be better known to the remainder. Meanwhile, the Hon. Editor and other members of the Publications Committee had been concerned with the preparation and publication of another volume of *Proceedings*, which this year had been produced by a different printer. Volume 121 had been the most expensive issue so far, and members should appreciate that their annual subscription covered little more than the cost of *Proceedings* alone.

The Public Relations Committee had successfully advocated the appointment of a Press Officer, and was urging the use of display material to publicize the Society as widely as possible. The Committee also planned to arrange a social evening at which new members of the Society could meet the officers and committee chairmen.

Dr. Davey then asserted that consideration would always be given to the expressed wishes of members in support of relatively neglected aspects within the Society's overall aims; and, after paying tribute to the services of the Society's officers and committee members, he stressed the continuing need for others to involve themselves actively in the work of the Society.

Annual Accounts

Mr. L. A. Haldane, the Hon. Treasurer, distributed audited copies of the accounts with brief comments on the main features and the small credit balance. The adoption of the accounts was approved.

Somerset Record Society

Dr. R. W. Dunning reported on behalf of the Somerset Record Society, paying tribute to the work of Mrs. C. Rawlins, for many years Treasurer as well as Secretary, who was unavoidably absent. He said that Mr. Morland's volume (the 75th to be

undertaken by the Society), an edition of the Quarterly Meeting minutes of the Society of Friends in Somerset from 1668-99, was in the press. The next volume would be an edition in book-form of the May and Masters map of the county. Eighteen new members had joined the Society in the previous six months.

Presidential Address

After the tea interval, Mrs. Olive M. Hallam, M.A., addressed members on 'Vegetation and Land Use on Exmoor'.