

Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

The Society was founded in 1849, but had no permanent headquarters until Taunton Castle was purchased in 1873. To this building the Society's already growing Museum was transferred, and the collections were maintained and greatly expanded during the next 85 years. In 1958 the Somerset County Council took over the Castle on a 49 year lease, and accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the Museum. The Society has retained part of the building as its headquarters and here is housed its extensive Library of approximately 40,000 volumes, amongst which are to be found many rare books and pamphlets connected with the history of the County, comprehensive sets of the publications of national and county societies, as well as sections devoted to antiquities, natural history and geology. There is also a large and ever-growing collection of Somerset prints and pictures, including the important Braikenridge and Tite collections.

Members have the use of the room known as the "Adam Library" for reading and many of the books may be borrowed at the Librarian's discretion, initially for a period of 3 weeks. Members have also the privilege of access to the Museum. A volume of *Proceedings* is published annually and supplied to all Ordinary and Life Members.

At least three excursions to places of historical and archaeological interest, inside and outside the County, are made during each summer season. A programme of lectures is arranged for each winter. The Ornithological and Natural History Sections also arrange full programmes of field meetings and lectures.

Close liaison is maintained with the Local Societies throughout the County, especial interest being taken in their excavations and similar projects. The Society normally sponsors an excavation season each summer.

MEMBERSHIP: (a) Ordinary Members, 30/- per annum; (b) Associate Members (members of the household of Ordinary Members), 15/- per annum; (c) Junior Members (14-20 years), 7/6d. per annum (15/- if in receipt of *Proceedings*); (d) Life Membership can be arranged on payment of a lump sum according to age.

Membership of the Natural History Section only, 10/6d. per annum.

Membership of the Ornithological Section only, 10/6d. per annum (Juniors (10-20 years), 5/-). (Members of Parent Society pay 7/6 if they require the Bird Report).

All enquiries should be made to the Secretary of the Society at Taunton Castle.

The Society maintains close association with:

(1) The **Somerset Record Society** (Hon. Sec., Mrs. C. W. H. Rawlins, F.S.A., Newton Surmaville, Yeovil), which was formed in 1887 for the purpose of seeking out, editing and printing such documents as bear on the history of Somerset. Sixty-seven volumes have so far been published. Subscription: £1 1s. 0d. per annum.

(2) The **Committee of Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset** (Hon. Treas., L. C. Hayward, Esq., F.S.A., 226 Goldcroft, Yeovil). This publication, which has appeared regularly since 1887, contains short notes on matters of local archaeological and historical interest. It is issued twice yearly and the annual subscription is 10/-.



Photo: Ernest G. Neal

SOW BADGER (*Meles meles L.*)

Photographed at Pyrland Hall within two miles of the centre of Taunton,
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