

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,  
DURING THE YEARS 1865-6.

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PART I.

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**T**HE Seventeenth Annual General Meeting was held at SHEPTON MALLET, September 21st, 1865.

On the motion of F. H. DICKINSON, Esq., President, it was unanimously resolved that R. H. Paget, Esq., M.P., of Cranmore Hall, be the President of the Society for the ensuing year.

The PRESIDENT having taken the Chair delivered the following address:—

I have found myself very unexpectedly compelled by an invitation too flattering to be refused, to accept the office of presiding over you on this occasion. Much as I appreciate the honour you have done me by your choice, it is, I assure you, no idle figure of speech which I use when I say that I would far rather have attended here as a private member of your association, content to receive instruction at the hands of one well able to impart it, of one to whose presidency this Society had looked forward with the greatest

interest, and who would have filled my present position far better than I can hope to do. I am sure it will be satisfactory to this meeting to know that Mr. Horner, to whom I have alluded, is rapidly recovering from the effects of his late accident. Long absence from England has hitherto prevented me from attending any of your meetings, and I hope you will extend your forbearance to me, for I must throw myself upon your generosity, asking you to be "to my faults a little blind," and to excuse any omissions or shortcomings on my part. And now let me congratulate you on the apparent success of the meeting here, and on the full attendance of members to-day, being the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Society. It is very satisfactory to know that at this period of its existence the Association shows no signs of flagging, but rather that it has gained fresh strength during the past year, and that the interest in it is as sharp and as keen as it has ever been. To such an audience as I have the honour of addressing, it would indeed be presumptuous on the part of one whose knowledge is but slender and imperfect, to attempt a defence of the study of archæology. But this much I may say, it is no slight tribute to its practical advantages that in this matter-of-fact, utilitarian age of ours, it awakens such a lively and increasing interest. We have, thanks to archæology, long since emerged from an age of neglect, and having passed through an intermediate age of restoration, have now happily arrived at that far more satisfactory period—an age of preservation. And here I cannot refrain from mentioning a gratifying instance in this town, where a most interesting relic of undoubted Roman origin, having been discovered in digging the foundation of a new brewery, has been arched over, and carefully preserved by Mr. Clarke—a fact which deserves to be known, and en-

titles its author to the thanks of all archæologists. Fears have been expressed to me by some of our members that our field is but small, and that Somerset will soon be exhausted ; I confess I have no such fear. There are few counties of England so rich in architectural and other archæological objects of research, but if the time should come, and to my mind it is yet far distant, when each ruin shall have been explored, and each church have been examined, are we not also a Natural History Society ? Has not nature with us been more than usually lavish of her ever varying beauties ? Surely when we consider the vast field which thus opens to our view, we must feel with Newton, when he says : "To myself, I seem to have been as a child playing upon the seashore, whilst the great ocean of truth lay unexplored before me." The object of the study of archæology is not, as some would have us believe, the mere collection of crude facts, the spending a lifetime in merely hunting for dry bones or damp caves, or a barren deciphering of semi-illegible manuscripts, but a search for the riches of that great ocean of truth which lies comparatively unexplored before us. Our aim is not alone to rescue from an inglorious obscurity the treasures of archæological lore, which are to be found nearly everywhere, but to unravel the mysteries of nature, to rifle her cavern treasures, and read that history which she has written in imperishable characters on every sedimentary rock in the globe. But archæology also has its value, and no slight value, as an inductive science. Doubtless there are some men who smile at the theories hazarded by archæologists and geologists, hard matter of fact men who believe nothing until it is proved as clearly as a problem of Euclid—to such I would say, think for a moment of the three great instances in our own day of the marvellously

correct results of inductive science. Think of the simultaneous discoveries by Adams and Leverrier of the certainty of the existence of a hitherto unknown planet; think of the triumph of inductive comparative anatomy achieved by Professor Owen in his fore-shadowing of the *Dinornis*; think of the third instance, equally wonderful, of the fulfilment of the prophecy (for I can hardly speak of it by any other name) of Sir Roderick Murchison as to the existence of the gold fields of Australia; and then who will assert that all is speculation and nothing certainty in inductive science? But the practical object we have in view as the Somerset Archæological Society is the completion of a history of the county, and with that view facts are being gradually accumulated by the Society, which cannot fail to be of the greatest use to the future historian of Somerset. I have in my possession a great mass of information compiled for a history of one of the hundreds of Somerset, a collection which is extremely valuable from the scrupulous care with which each date and each fact were verified. It was the result of years of study and labour of one doubtless known to many in the room, who took a great interest in the pursuit of archæology, one whose intellect rendered him well capable of carrying out the work, and who, had he been spared, could not have failed to produce a work of real value and interest and of lasting reputation. I can only say that I would gladly place these at the disposal of any gentleman willing to complete the labours so well begun and so untimely ended. But I am afraid I am forgetting the advice impressed upon me by our worthy Secretary, to lose no time in proceeding to the business of the day. We have plenty of work in store, and although I fear we have no object of surpassing interest, nothing pre-eminently grand

or stupendous to hold out to the archæologist, yet I would fain believe that the different churches we propose to visit will each be found to have its special merits. We have, besides, a Roman road, the Small Down encampment, and the fine old barns of Pylle and Doultling—outworks as it were bearing sturdy evidence of those grand monastic institutions which did so much for the advancement of science and the spread of civilisation throughout this country, buildings that can hardly fail to interest the archæologist, or any one who has an admiration for the picturesque. Who can look at those massive buildings seemingly constructed to last for ages without feeling that despite their rude solidity, they yet please by the picturesque arrangement of roof and buttress, whilst the pierced window and minor delicacies of detail all indicate the work of a master mind which did not disdain to leave the impress of its intellect on such an ordinary building as a barn. At the close of to-morrow's excursions you will find mention of Cranmore Hall, and I have the honour to announce that I am instructed by its owner to provide refreshment for such of the weary archæologists as may be willing to accept his hospitality after their day's excursion. I will now no longer detain you. I have endeavoured feebly to sketch what I conceive to be the aim of archæology—a search for truth, for “those sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything,” a search which I think should be entered upon in that reverential spirit which prompted the old Somersetshire worthy when he wrote—

'T is well we hear not the fleet wings of time,  
Enough, if while the summer day steal on  
We muse upon the wreck of ages past,  
And own there is a God who rules the world.

The Rev. W. A. JONES, M.A., F.G.S., one of the Hon. Secretaries, having expressed his regret at the absence of his colleague the Rev. F. Warre, from ill-health, presented the following Report :—

ANNUAL REPORT.

“ Your Committee, in presenting their Seventeenth Annual Report, are happy in being able to announce that the Society continues to maintain its ground. Considering the very limited income at their disposal, they cannot but regard the progress made towards a more complete history of the county, by the valuable papers published in the proceedings, as encouraging and satisfactory. They are, however, aware that the operations of the Society need to be enlarged and improved; but they would suggest that more extensive support and more individual co-operation on the part of members in different parts of the county is needful to produce this result.

“ The Committee rejoice in being able to report that considerable progress has being made in the arrangement and classification of the very extensive and interesting collection of Mendip Cave Bones now in the possession of the Society; and they desire to record their sense of the highly important services rendered by Mr. Wm. Ayshford Sanford in the classification of them, by whose arduous labours and scientific knowledge the value and interest of the collection has been greatly increased. Arrangements are being made by which the members of the Society will be supplied with a catalogue of the collection and illustrations of the most important specimens. If the Society had not purchased this, in many respects, unique collection, it would probably have been dispersed, and the county of Somerset would have lost the means of illustrating one of the most interesting features of its Natural History, and

of contributing, as it will now, to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

“Your Committee regret much to have to complain of the tardiness and irregularity with which many members pay their subscriptions. With an income barely sufficient to do the work absolutely necessary, and falling far short of what this large county might supply, it is obvious if this continues the operations of the Society cannot fail to be hampered. After repeated applications, the arrears at present amount to upwards of £80. It is hoped that next year this evil may be remedied, and in future avoided, and that the Committee will be able to express their congratulations without any drawback or qualification.”

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Rev. W. A. JONES also read the following Financial Statement:—

The Treasurers in account with the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

1864.	£ s. d.	1864-5.	£ s. d.
To Balance of former account	78 6 3	By expenses at Annual Meeting	
„ Subscriptions ... ..	160 1 6	at Burnham ... ..	4 10 9
„ Entrance Fees ... ..	2 10 6	„ Advertising ... ..	11 0
„ Illustration Fund ... ..	3 4 6	„ Stationery, Printing, &c. ...	5 7 5
„ Transfer from Beard collection Fund in part payment of loan of £55 0s. from general account ...	41 2 1	„ Coal, Gas, &c. ... ..	14 2 9
		„ Curator's Salary, 1 year to 3rd August, 1865 ... ..	29 13 9
		„ Postage and delivery of Volumes ... ..	6 2 0
		„ Postage, Carriage, &c. ... ..	4 5 3
		„ Sundries ... ..	1 5 2
		„ May on account of printing Vol. XII. ... ..	40 0 0
		„ Shewbrooks (new cases for Beard collection) ... ..	53 9 3
		„ Ford (printing illustrations)	3 0 0
		„ Rent (1½ years) to Christmas, 1864 ... ..	37 10 0
		„ Subscription to Palaeontographical Society, three years to 1865 inclusive ...	3 3 0
		„ Insurance ... ..	1 2 6
		„ Parker (Illustrations of Wells) ... ..	62 11 8
		„ Balance ... ..	18 10 4
	<u>£ 285 4 10</u>		<u>£ 285 4 10</u>

September 19th, 1865.

Audited and found correct,

WM. P. PINCHARD.

H., R. G., H. J., & D. BADCOCK,

Treasurers.

Both Reports having been received and adopted,  
The Vice-Presidents were re-elected, with the addition of Sir Alex. A. Hood, Bart., M.P., and F. H. Dickinson, Esq.

The following gentlemen were added to the list of Local Secretaries :—

- Rev. Canon Meade, Castle Carey ;
- Rev. H. H. Winwood, Bath ;
- Rev. W. B. Caparn, Draycot, Wells ;
- Rev. James Coleman, Chapel Allerton ;
- Mr. Thos. Serel, Wells ;
- Mr. John Batten, Yeovil ;
- Mr. J. Shore, Whatley, Frome ;
- Mr. J. W. Spicer, Chard.

The General Secretaries and Treasurers were re-elected.

The following gentlemen were elected Members of the Committee :—

Rev. W. R. Clark, Rev. W. T. Redfern, Capt. Doveton,  
Mr. T. Meyler, Mr. W. P. Pinchard, Mr. Edwards  
Beadon, Mr. H. Alford.

“Resolved that all the Officers of the Society, who by Rule II. are *ex-officio* Members of the Committee, be summoned quarterly for the transaction of business, such meetings to be called Meetings of Council.”

“Resolved that the next Meeting be held at Ilminster or Chard.”

The Rev. PREBENDARY SCARTH read a paper on “The Roman Potters’ Kiln,” in Shepton Mallet. These interesting remains were discovered while excavations were being made for a new brewery, and at a considerable expense they were carefully arched over and preserved by the proprietors, Messrs. Morris, Clarke, and Co. This paper is printed in Part II.