

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archæological and
Natural History Society,
during the Year 1875.

THE Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Society was held at FROME, on Tuesday, August 10th, in Mr. Harrold's Auction Mart.

The public proceedings began at 12 noon. The Chair was taken by the President, Mr. H. DANBY SEYMOUR. The President said that he had a very short duty to perform, it was to resign his office as President, and to propose as his successor the Right Honourable THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY, the Lord Lieutenant of the County. The proposal was seconded by Mr. R. K. M. KING. Mr. H. D. Seymour then left the Chair, and the Earl of Cork was voted President with much applause. The new President thanked the Society, and spoke of the ability of Mr. Darby Seymour, the interest which he took in the well-being of the Society, and in the furtherance of the objects for which it was founded, and of the efficient way in which he had during the last year filled the office of President. The noble President welcomed the Society to Frome, and said that he would do all in his power to make the meeting both profitable and pleasant.

The PRESIDENT then called upon the Rev. W. HUNT, Honorary Secretary, to read the

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

“The Council of the Society have the pleasure to report that the year which has passed since our last annual meeting has been one of prosperity. The number of members is now 434 (an increase of 31), and there is every reason to believe that it will increase, as the interest which has of late been taken in our proceedings seems to promise that we may look forward to having the means of doing more than we have been able to do in drawing out and preserving those natural, historical, and architectural treasures in which our county is rich. An increased number of Members means greater power given to the Society of carrying out the ends for which it exists ; and at the same time encourages those who are entrusted with the work of forwarding its interests, by assuring them that their work is approved. And though the Council by no means desire numbers alone, yet unless the Society is well supported it will necessarily be unduly crippled in its operations. Each member who has the welfare of the Society at heart can do much for it, and if his tastes or his time do not allow him to join often in its pursuits, he can at least make known its aims and enlist others in its ranks. While on this subject the Council must beg leave to remind the Members of the necessity of punctuality in the payment of their subscriptions. The amount of the present subscription is small compared with the work which the Society undertakes. The publication of the volume of Proceedings, on which much of the welfare of the Society depends, alone takes up so large a part of the yearly receipts that but a small sum is left for the many other purposes for which our Society exists. If the Society is to continue its present work, still more if it may hope some day to engage in some of those undertakings which are continually claiming our attention (such as the publication of the Registers of the Dean and Chapter of Wells), it is necessary that its income should be paid in with regularity.

“It will be recollected that at our last Annual Meeting the completion of the purchase of Taunton Castle was reported to you, and you were informed that part of the purchase money had been borrowed from Stuckey’s Banking Co. A series of entertainments was then in contemplation as a means by which money might be raised for the repayment of this loan and for needful alterations, and your interest was bespoken on behalf of “the Castle Week.” These entertainments have now been held, and the Council rejoice to learn that this effort for the Society has been attended with success. The thanks of the Society are due to those ladies and gentlemen who have worked so well for them—their names are many, but amongst the gentlemen we may perhaps be allowed to mention three to whom we owe much for this and many other things they have done, Mr. W. A. Sanford, Mr. O. W. Malet (one of our Hon. General Secretaries), and Mr. W. E. Surtees. A balance sheet of the receipts and expenses of the “Castle Week” will be published and sent to each Member with the annual volume of Proceedings.

“The Council must mention the munificent offer of Mr. Prankerd, of the Knoll, Bristol, who has taken great interest in the purchase of the Castle, and has promised to give a donation of £100 to pay off the debt, provided fourteen others will come forward with a like sum within six months from the first of August. The Council venture to hope that this example will be followed, and consider that the thanks of the Society are due to Mr. Prankerd.

“During the past year the whole of our collection has been moved to the Castle and arranged by our Curator, and the moving has been managed so carefully by him, that not a single article has been lost or injured.

“Our means have been so scanty that we have been able to do but little in the way of restoration, though we have in some degree fitted up the Castle to meet our requirements. The Great Hall has had its unsightly galleries removed, and has been

decorated with our Wells casts and recoloured. This part of the Castle will be a source of income to the Society, as the Committee propose to let it out for public purposes.

“In the lower story of the Norman Keep a stone doorway has been restored and the partitions removed. Our collection of antiquities has been placed here.

“In the upper story, which has now been made into a large room, entered by a stone archway, we have placed our splendid geological collection. This can now for the first time since the foundation of the Society be seen as it should be. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has kindly directed that specimens from his Cornish mines are to be sent to us, and this will add to the interest and importance of this department. The attics above this story are at present used as store rooms. The ground floor of the south-west tower has been fitted up as a library and Committee room. Better quarters have been provided for our Curator. The upper story is occupied by the ethnological collection. Gas has been laid on in all the rooms, and the roofs have had some repair.

“In the Castle Court Yard a wretched looking red brick erection has been taken down, and this has brought out a very interesting square turret on the east of the entrance, and gives a good view of the house, which, though badly treated in the time of Queen Anne, is of nearly the same date as this side of the Castle. On the east side a path has been made through the grounds to meet a new entrance from North Street. Mr. W. E. Surtees has given a right of way through his premises at this point. The thanks of the Society are due to this gentleman for his kindness, which has proved a great convenience, as visitors are now able to enter the Castle without passing through the Cattle Market.

“The cost of these repairs and restorations has been about £500.

“The Castle week has proved a success, and will greatly help us in the large outlay which we have been forced to make.

Amongst its various features the Council wish to call special attention to our Fine Arts Exhibition, which will remain open during the rest of the month. It has been chiefly furnished by the kind contributions of residents in this county, with the aid of the South Kensington Museum. The articles have been collected and arranged by the exertions of Messrs. W. E. Surtees, A. Malet, C. Eden, and the Rev. I. S. Gale. Upwards of 300 pictures in oil and water colours, some of rare value, adorn the walls. There are many cases of rare and valuable china and articles of vertu, including the priceless Byzantine vase of Mr. Sanford. The Council can say with confidence that as a whole this exhibition has never been equalled in the West of England. Mr. Owen, the chief director of the South Kensington Museum, expressed his full satisfaction with the arrangements and fittings of the Castle, and he has asked that plans should be sent to the South Kensington Museum.

“The Council have long regretted the lack of an Index to the volumes of the Society’s Proceedings. Much vexation and loss of time are occasioned by having to search volume after volume for some piece of information which is known to exist in their pages, but the clue to which has been lost. The volumes at present published are rising in value, and an Index volume to the whole set will cause their value to increase. The publication of the Twentieth Volume of Proceedings seems a fitting opportunity to supply this long felt want. The low state of the funds of the Society has hitherto prevented this being done. The Council are now happy to announce that an Index volume to the Twenty volumes already published is in course of preparation by your Hon. Secretary, Mr. Hunt, and that it will be published without any risk or cost to the Society, and will be sold at a price not exceeding that of the ordinary annual volumes. This Index volume will complete a distinct series of the Society’s publications, for the Committee have requested the Secretary in charge of the publishing work of the Society to make such changes in the form of the next volume of Proceedings as may

seem to mark the beginning of a new series of volumes, in order that newly-elected Members may not have fragments of a set. The Council hope that Members will avail themselves of the opportunity which will be given to them of enhancing the value of the volumes which they at present possess, by giving orders for this Index volume, and will secure those at whose risk this scheme is undertaken from ultimate loss. The publishers' will, with the sanction of the Committee, shortly forward a prospectus to every Member.

“The Council have received the following report from the sub-Committee appointed at our last annual meeting, held at Sherborne, to secure the preservation of the buildings of the Vicar's Close at Wells, and to forward any plan for its judicious restoration. The Committee consists of the Bishop of the Diocese, Canon Meade, the Members of Parliament for the division of mid-Somerset, Messrs. W. A. Sanford, F. H. Dickinson, T. Serel, and the Rev. W. Hunt, as Secretary.

COMMITTEE ON THE VICAR'S CLOSE.

The Committee appointed last year at Sherborne to secure the preservation of the buildings of the Close and to forward any plans for judicious restoration have to report that two of their members, Mr. Neville Grenville and Mr. Dickinson have had an interview with the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who promised that the reversionary interest in the Commissioners in the Houses in the Close should not be sold. They have also to report that a careful restoration of the Chapel will probably be made, and that it has been leased to the Trustees of the Theological College by the College of Vicars Choral, at a nominal rent, for a term of fifty years, with a view to that restoration. Perhaps it may be as well that this Committee be made permanent, with the addition of the name of the Rev. E. L. Elwes, who has planned the restoration.

“The Council recommend the adoption of the report, and

also that this sub-Committee should be made permanent with the addition of the name of the Rev. E. L. Elwes.

“The Council have received the following report from the sub-Committee appointed to further the publication of the Wells Ecclesiastical Records. This committee consists of Messrs. F. H. Dickinson, J. Batten, T. Serel, and the Honorary Secretaries.

COMMITTEE ON THE WELLS ECCLESIASTICAL RECORDS.

After a discussion raised by Mr. Serel of Wells, at our meeting in 1871, on the Ecclesiastical Documents at Wells, a Committee was appointed to carry out his suggestions.

They have since given their attention more particularly to the Records of the Chapter, and have prepared for publication copies of the indexes to those records, which they recommend for publication in the next proceedings of the Society ; or, if that is impossible, separately by subscription.

In the course of the last year the attention of the Committee was drawn to a publication by direction of the Master of the Rolls of the earliest Register of the Bishops of Durham, that of Bishop Kellawe, 1311-6, and application was made to him by the Committee for the publication of the Register of Bishop Drokensford, 1309-29, the earliest extant at Wells, and he has been so good as to say that he will consider their application when he proposes to the Treasury, at the beginning of next year, the works which he desires to publish.

Copies of the application and reply are submitted with this report.

“The Council recommend the adoption of this report.”

This report, with the reports of the two committees, was declared adopted.

The PRESIDENT then called upon the Rev. W. Hunt, in the absence of the Treasurers, to read the following FINANCIAL STATEMENT :—

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

<i>Dr.</i>			<i>Cr.</i>		
1874. Aug. 14.	£	s d	1874-5.	£	s d
By Balance of former Account	12	5	To Expenses attending Annual Meeting,		
" Excursion Tickets ...	14	15 0	Advertising, &c.	15	10 2
" One Life Member ...	10	10 0	Repairs, &c.	10	0 0
" Entrance Fees ...	18	10 0	" Stationery, Printing, &c. ...	13	10 10
" Subscriptions ...	183	12 0	" Coal, Gas, Water ...	20	0 1
" Museum Admission Fees...	8	9 7	" Curator's Salary to Midsummer, 1875	65	7 6
" Sale of Volumes from Mr.			Half Year's Rent to Institution for		
May ...	40	0 7	Rooms ...	15	0 0
" Sale of Volumes and Illus-			Mr. May for printing and binding		
trations ...	5	5 6	Vol. XIX. ...	78	11 6
" Transferred from Castle			Ditto on account of Vol. XX. ...	20	0 0
Purchase Fund, on ac-			" Engraving and Printing Illustrations	18	1 3
count of Printing, Pos-			" Rates and Taxes ...	5	13 0
tage, &c. ...	10	0 0	" Subscription to Palaeontographical		
			Society, 1875 ...	1	1 0
			" Ditto, to Harleian Society, 1875 ..	1	1 0
			" Ditto, to Ray Society, 1875 ..	1	1 0
			" Postage of Volumes of Proceedings	10	13 5½
			" Postages, Carriage, &c. ...	6	0 3
			" Sundries ...	2	18 10½
			Balance ...	24	15 2
	£ 291	15 1			
				£ 291	15 1

H., H. J., & D. BADCOCK, *Treasurers.*

Examined, compared with the vouchers, and found correct, Aug. 6th, 1875.

HENRY ALFORD.
C. J. TURNER.

Mr. W. A. SANFORD said that he thought the present a fitting opportunity for calling the attention of the Members to the way in which the Society was crippled in its work for want of funds. By the time that the absolutely necessary expenses of the Society were paid there was nothing, or next to nothing, left to meet any demand, however much it might be for the welfare of the Society or for the furtherance of its objects. The Members could not but be aware that the present subscription was exceedingly small, considering that it entitled each Member to receive a copy of the annual Journal. It was so small that he thought that it was quite impossible that it should remain at the present amount. He could not make any proposition on the subject at present; he only wished to throw out a suggestion which he hoped would be carefully considered by all during the year which must pass before they again met as at present. He was sure that there were many who were able and willing to increase their subscription. He thought that it might be well if those who felt inclined to do so should for the future pay a guinea subscription, while others could of course

continue Members at the same subscription as they had paid heretofore, and that all new Members should pay one guinea entrance fee, and one guinea each year as subscription.

The Rev. W. HUNT said that he could endorse all that Mr. Sanford had said as to the way in which the Society was cramped for want of funds. Year after year it had been proposed that some work should be done by the Society of great and lasting importance, such as the publication of the Indexes to the Wells Records, but each year the schemes had to be laid aside for want of funds. Even additions to the Museum had to be made by a special appeal. As to Mr. Sanford's scheme he could not as yet express any opinion upon it.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD thought that if there were two classes of subscriptions there must also be two classes of Members. Instead of the arrangement which Mr. Sanford proposed, which would, he thought, cause an invidious distinction between the older Members, and also probably check the present rate of increase of the number of new Members, he thought that it would be fairer if the Members who lived near Taunton—say within a radius of ten or twelve miles,—and who therefore derived much more benefit from the Society than those who lived in other parts of the county, should pay the larger sum, while the subscription of Members who resided at a distance, and who probably hardly ever saw or used the Museum, should remain as at present.

The Report of the Treasurers was then received and adopted.

The Vice-Presidents were re-elected with the addition of Mr. H. Danby Seymour.

The Treasurers, General Secretaries, and District Secretaries were re-elected.

The following gentlemen were elected Members of the Committee:—Mr. H. Alford, Rev. I. S. Gale, Mr. R. K. Meade King, Mr. A. Malet, Mr. Cecil Smith, and Rev. W. P. Williams.

Mr. W. Bidgood was re-elected Assistant Secretary and Curator, and Mr. SANFORD spoke of the untiring energy and

care which he had shown in the removal of the Society's collections from their old quarters to the Castle.

Mr. SANFORD then proposed that the next Annual Meeting of the Society should be held at Bath. He had last year proposed Dulverton as the place of meeting for 1876, but as he understood that it was likely that the West of England Society and Southern Counties Association would hold their meeting for 1877 in Bath, and as it was wished on all sides that an early visit should be paid to that city, he thought that it would be well to make it next year.

Rev. W. HUNT seconded the proposition, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. C. MOORE and Rev. H. H. WINWOOD both expressed their pleasure at this decision, and said that they were sure that the Society would be heartily welcomed in Bath.

Six gentlemen were then elected by acclamation as new Members of the Society, the rule requiring ballot being suspended for the occasion.