

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archæological and
Natural History Society,
during the year 1879.

THE Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Taunton, 7th August, 1879. In consequence of the visit of the Royal Archæological Institute to Taunton it was resolved by the Committee that the Society should not undertake its annual Excursion, but that it should meet as usual for the transaction of ordinary business. At the opening meeting of the Institute, the President of our Society read an Address welcoming the President and Members of the Institute to the county of Somerset and the town of Taunton, which was acknowledged by Lord Talbot de Malahide, who spoke in warm terms of the work of our Society. A large number of our Members took part in the Meeting of the Institute, which was very pleasant and well managed. The Meeting on the 7th August was simply for despatch of business. It was held in the Committee-room of the Society and was not largely attended.

The PRESIDENT, Rev. Canon Meade, took the chair.

Mr. W. E. SURTEES proposed, and Mr. HUNT seconded, that the President be re-elected for another year. This was carried. The President accepted the continuance of office, and thanked the Society for this expression of confidence and approval.

Mr. HUNT then read the

Report of the Council.

“Your Council have much pleasure in presenting their Thirty-first Annual Report.

“They are glad to be able to state that the Society continues to meet with no less welcome and support than in past years, and that the number of its Members has somewhat increased

since the last Report was presented. Several valued Members have been lost by death during the past year. Among these should be named Sir Walter Trevelyan, Bart., who was the first President of the Society, and who delivered the opening address at its first meeting in 1849. He was a warm friend and liberal supporter, and has recorded in his will his unabated interest in the welfare of the Society by a bequest of £100. The death of Mr. Richard Walter, of South Petherton, one of the Local Secretaries, is also noticed with regret.

“During the past year a fresh case has been added to the Museum for the reception of specimens of the Mammalia of the county. This was done at the suggestion of Mr. W. A. Sanford, who kindly contributed £10 towards it.

“A valuable addition has been made to the Fauna of the Museum by Dr. Woodforde, who has deposited there his fine collection of British Birds. The President, the Rev. Canon Meade, has kindly presented the Society with a collection of fossils from the chalk and greensand.

“The Council regret to observe that the finances of the Society are scarcely in a satisfactory state, as the balance is against them, although no extraordinary expense has been incurred during the past year. The Society has in consequence been unable to grant any pecuniary assistance to works which it would otherwise have gladly furthered, such as the excavations at Wedmore and the exploration of Pen Pits.

“Schemes for improving your financial position have more than once been anxiously discussed, and your Council have always felt unwilling to recommend anything which may tend to narrow the usefulness or decrease the popularity of the Society. It appears, however, that our receipts may be increased without doing this, and they recommend that to this end the Annual Subscription and Entrance Fee be changed from 10s. to 10s. 6d., and the fee paid by non-Members, for joining the Annual Excursions, &c., from 5s. to 10s. 6d. These changes will probably produce an increase of £20 in your income, and seem to be of a

character which cannot excite any well grounded dissatisfaction. The Council propose to call a meeting in accordance with Rule 16, to obtain the sanction of the Society for these changes and for the necessary alteration of Rule 11, which they will entail if accepted.

“Your Council feel that it is unadvisable that any further changes should be made in, or work done to, the fabric of the Castle without a plan being drawn up by some competent architect of all the changes which appear necessary, in order to make it meet the requirements of the Society, with due regard to the great and important trust which the possession of such a building entails. In order to avoid a patchwork treatment of the Castle, and to ensure that whatever may be done, either for use or beauty, may be a cause of pride and not of shame and annoyance, it seems advisable to employ an architect, and to work by such degrees as we can, in accordance with his directions.

“The Council therefore recommend that Mr. E. Ferrey be appointed architect of the Society, that he be requested to draw up a plan for the Castle alterations, that he be paid for this and such work as he may do from time to time for the Society from the Castle Purchase Fund; that a small sub-Committee be appointed, in place of the Reconstruction Committee, to assist and control his work, consisting of Messrs. G. T. Clark, W. A. Sanford, W. E. Surtees, I. S. Gale, and E. Sloper; and that no change be made in the Castle, except in accordance with Mr. Ferrey’s plan and under his direction as architect.

“Your Council beg to report that in consequence of the Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland now being held in Taunton, it has been thought advisable to discontinue the Annual Excursion for this year.

“At the last General Annual Meeting a sub-Committee was appointed to explore Pen Pits. Mr. Boyd Dawkins, F.R.S., kindly drew up a preliminary Report, which is printed in the last volume of the Journal, and added some instructions for the

Council be empowered to make arrangements for the same, and for the appointment of a President.

The following gentlemen were elected Members of the Society: Mr. Fowler, Mr. D. Badcock, Mr. H. Cox, Mr. Jno. Ostler, Major Parr, Mr. Jno. Taylor, Mr. Geo. Abraham.

Moved by Mr. A. MALET, seconded by Mr. HUNT, and resolved that, the plan for the restoration of the Castle, when made by Mr. Ferrey, should be shown to Mr. Davis, and that he be asked if he feels disposed to carry out the promise formerly made by him of supplying a doorway and door to the Castle Hall.

A letter was read from Mr. Vidal respecting the excavations at Wedmore, intimating that the time had arrived when the ground disturbed by Mr. Hervey should be filled in.

It was resolved that Mr. Vidal be informed in courteous terms that the Society deeply regrets that it is unfortunately not in a position to be pecuniarily responsible either to him or to his tenant, as regards any expense or damage connected with the Mudgeley excavations.

The thanks of the Society were given to the Rev. Canon Meade for presiding.

On the 10th October, 1879, at a Special General Meeting, convened for the purpose of considering the proposal contained in the last yearly report, to increase the Annual Subscription from 10s. to 10s. 6d.—

The Rev. I. S. GALE took the chair.

Proposed by Mr. CHISHOLM BATTEN, seconded by Mr. SURTEES, and resolved "that the question of an increase of subscription be adjourned until the next Annual General Meeting."

On 29th January, 1880, the Committee of the Society received the Report of the Committee appointed to explore Pen Pits, in consequence of the visit of the Society to that place in