

Proceedings
of the
Somersetshire Archæological and
Natural History Society,
During the Year 1885.

THE Thirty-seventh Annual Meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms, Weston-super-Mare, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the 8th, 9th, and 10th September, under the Presidency of Lord Carlingford.

HIS LORDSHIP having most kindly consented to accept the office for a second term, retained the Chair, and called on the HON. SECRETARY to read the Reports:—

Annual Report.

“In presenting their 37th Annual Report, the Council of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society have much pleasure in recording the continued prosperity of the Institution.

“As regards both the number of Members and the financial
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condition of the Society, there is cause for congratulation. The number of Members amounts to 516, against 507 last year.

“The balance in hand on the general account at the end of the year was £76 10s. 11d., against £33 12s. 6d. at the close of the previous year.

“The Report of the Castle Purchase fund, in December, 1883, recorded the amount still in arrear as £409 3s. 3d. In December, 1884, this was slightly reduced, the debt amounting to £400 13s. 11d.

“It was stated in the last yearly Report that the whole cost of the restoration work in connection with the new roofing, etc., of the geological room, would probably amount to £500; but the expenditure did in fact reach £534 7s. 10d.; towards which the Committee had received, by contributions, £228 11s. 6d. Further donations since received have raised this sum to £281 8s.; leaving a deficit incurred by this particular work of £252 19s. 10d. The work is now completed, and the entire costs paid; but your Council need hardly say that any further assistance towards lessening them will be gladly accepted. The total debt on the Castle property now amounts to £653 13s. 9d.

“Some extra expenses have been incurred in rearranging the contents of the geological room, and in painting and fitting up the ethnological room; the particulars will appear in the volume of *Proceedings* to be published next year.

“The enlargement and improvement of the Society’s library continues. Your Council have to report the receipt of 283 volumes from Her Majesty’s Record Office, published by the Master of the Rolls, containing very valuable records of the middle ages. These books, with other publications, presented by Members and friends of the Society, or acquired by subscription, amounting together to over 400 volumes, have necessitated the addition and extension of shelves in the Committee room. The library which it contains is rapidly becoming one of which the Society may well be proud. Amongst the

contributions received during the year your Council would particularise the *History of the Fortescue Family*, by Lord Clermont; the *History of the House of Arundel*, by Lord Arundel of Wardour; and the valuable book on *Medieval Military Architecture*, by Mr. G. T. Clark. Professor Boyd Dawkins and Mrs. Halliday have kindly given copies of their respective works. Your Council gratefully acknowledge also the gifts of Sir A. Trevelyan, Mr. Marshall, and others; and specially the gift of 49 volumes of the *Early English Text Society*, by the Rev. H. H. Winwood.

“Your Council have also received a valuable donation of minerals from the Trustees of the British Museum.

“Your Council further report the formation of a branch of this Society; to be called the Somerset Record Society, for discovering and publishing private records, relating both to families and events connected with the history of the county of Somerset. Your council take much interest in this effort, and propose that it should be supported by an annual subscription.

“Your Council also report, with the expression of their cordial thanks, the erection, with great taste, at the cost of one of your Vice-Presidents,—W. E. Surtees, Esq.,—of an east door to the keep of the Castle; built of Ham Hill stone, in the simple Norman style of the 12th century.

“A second application has been made to the Clergy and Churchwardens of the diocese for returns descriptive of the Church plate of their several parishes. This has been fairly responded to, but there remain still many parishes from which no response has been received.

“Your Council are sorry to report the destruction by fire of an ancient building, regarded with interest by many Members, viz., the old Fish House of Meare, of which an engraving is given in the 9th volume of the Society's *Proceedings*.

“The volume of *Proceedings* for the last year has already been distributed among the Members.”

The Rev. W. E. BULLER moved the adoption of the Report. Mr. F. SHUM seconded, congratulating the Society on its progress.

Col. PINNEY said that a short time ago he rebuilt the tower at the entrance of the muniment room of the Castle at Taunton. At first he thought he would repair it, but he found it necessary to rebuild it, the foundations having given way. He subsequently heard that some exclusive claim to that room, and the staircase leading to it, had been made by the Steward of the manor. As the room was in a very dilapidated condition, he wished to bring the matter before the Society.

Mr. CHISHOLM BATTEN said the subject had occupied the attention of the Council, and they were exceedingly anxious to do all they could to show their appreciation of Colonel Pinney's liberality. He thought he might say they were now engaged in making arrangements with the Lord of the Manor and the Steward which would be satisfactory to the Society. They were all very much obliged to Colonel Pinney for the work he had done, and also for having called attention to the subject.

Bishop HOBHOUSE proposed that the officers be re-elected, with the addition of Mr. E. Baker, as Local Secretary at Weston-super-Mare, and Mr. F. T. Elworthy, for Wellington.

The Rev. Prebendary SCARTH said he had been very pleased to hear such a satisfactory report, but as time had gone on he had seen how very much the working of the Society could be extended. Some time ago he pointed out that if they had secretaries and committees in all towns of importance, much information could be gathered that was at present lost. Taunton was at one extreme end, and Bath at the other extreme end of the scope of their operations. He knew that if his suggestions had been carried out a great deal of information which had been lost or gone elsewhere could have been obtained. The volume of *Proceedings* did not keep pace with the various subjects which they studied.

Mr. E. GREEN said he could not allow that their volume had deteriorated in its interest, but he thought it might be improved. He had suggested that it should be divided; Part I to be issued at Christmas, and the other in March; but the funds, it seemed, would not admit of it. By a slight enlargement Part I could be made more inclusive. He would like, the Local Secretaries acting with him, to add an appendix, containing notes on discoveries of the year, short obituary notices, and notices of books, and so help to make a little history for our successors. This would give greater general interest to the volume, and consequently increased interest in the Society.

Colonel PINNEY moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Surtees for erecting the new east door to the keep of Taunton Castle. In connexion with this matter he thought it would be detrimental to the Castle if they allowed a permissive right of way, which seemed now to be granted, to grow into a legal right, and he suggested that the door should be occasionally closed as a protection.

Bishop CLIFFORD seconded the motion, and hoped others would be found to follow the example of Mr. Surtees.

Mr. BATTEN intimated that steps had been taken to preserve the rights of the Society. There were iron gates placed across the path alluded to by Colonel Pinney, and they were locked once a week. That would preclude the possibility of the public acquiring a permanent right of way.

About thirty new Members were elected; and on the question as to the place of holding the next meeting, it was decided to refer the matter to the Council of the Society.