

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

DURING THE YEAR

1899.

THE fifty-first annual meeting of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Clevedon on Tuesday, July 25th, and the proceedings in their entirety lasted for three days, excursions being made to neighbouring churches, and many historic places of interest were visited amid the charming scenery with which the district abounds.

The proceedings at Clevedon commenced with the annual meeting, held on Tuesday at noon, in the Public Hall. In the absence of the President, Mr. E. J. STANLEY, M.P., Mr. E. B. CELY TREVILIAN, one of the Vice-Presidents, took the chair, and having read a letter from Mr. Stanley, regretting his inability to be present, he introduced the President for the year, the Right Hon. Sir EDWARD FRY, P.C., of Failand House, North Somerset, late Lord Justice of Appeal.

Report.

Lieut.-Col. J. R. BRAMBLE submitted the annual report as follows:—

“Your Committee beg to present their fifty-first annual report.

“In the first place they have the satisfaction of announcing that the Earl of Cork and Orrery, K.P., Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, has cordially accepted the invitation of your Society to become its Patron.

“Since our last report twenty-three new names have been added to your list of members. On the other hand the loss by deaths and resignations has been nine, leaving a net gain of fourteen members. The total number is 651, as against 637 at the date of our last report.

“The balance of your Society’s General Account at the end of 1897 (your accounts being made up to the end of the year) was £76 16s. 10d. in favor of the Society, the liability for the cost of the volume for the year then expired not having been taken into account. The balance at the close of the present account was £118 11s. 10d. in favor of the Society.

“The total cost of Volume XLIV (for 1898), including printing, illustrations and delivery, has been £104 15s. 7d. The cost to the Society was greatly reduced by the liberal gift of Mr. W. H. Hamilton Rogers of the whole of the illustrations to his paper, by the President of the two pictures of the ‘Old Doors,’ and by the Rev. Preb. Buller of two views of North Curry church. Professor Allen was also good enough to supply the excellent photographs from which most of the illustrations were taken. The thanks of the Society are due to each and every of these gentlemen.

“The total amount of the subscriptions to the Castle Fund, up to date, is £714 6s. 6d., including Colonel Pinney’s legacy of £300. Your Committee have entered into a contract with Mr. Fox for substantial repairs to the Castle Hall, including the

opening out and complete repair of the roof. This roof is modern, but of good construction, and the timbers throughout sound. The ceiling, however, was in a bad condition, and portions were liable to fall at any time. The work has also included reinstating the windows, the repair of floors, and the supply of new guttering and down pipes. The fine portico or two-storied porch is being improved by the removal of modern brickwork, and a high-pressure heating apparatus is being supplied, this being necessary to protect your valuable collection from damp.

“The roof over a portion of the Library and Museum, adjoining the Curator’s house, which was in a very bad state, is to be thoroughly reinstated, including new lead gutters.

“As usual, during the carrying out of the work, the absolute necessity of replacing unsound timbers and other additional work has been apparent, and further aid towards the cost will be welcome.

“It is proposed that immediately on the completion of the repairs to the Great Hall, the Geological and some other portions of the Museum shall be added to the part of the Natural History collection, which has been hitherto all that was exhibited there. Want of space, has, until now, prevented the proper exhibition of much which was valuable and highly interesting.

“The Mayor and Corporation of Taunton have presented to the Society the oak framework of two of the almshouses, formerly standing in St. James’ Street, called St. James’ Almshouses, which were taken down about two years since. They have been re-erected on the portion of the Castle Lawn, nearly opposite the Library, and form a very interesting example of the ‘half-timbered’ houses of the sixteenth century.

“The Castle House, unfortunately, still remains void.

“The Council have to report the gift by Mr. Harvey Pridham, of the Vicarage, West Harptree, of a large volume, containing a type-written copy (one of three) of his ‘Notes on Somersetshire Fonts,’ the result of several years work. He

proposes, at some future time, to deposit with us the measured drawings, to an uniform scale, of all such fonts. The cordial thanks of the Society are due to Mr. Pridham.

“Several interesting additions have been made to the Museum.

“Two volumes of the Somerset Bibliography, containing the county books, Bath excepted, are already printed, and the Bath volume is being actively proceeded with.

“The Photographic Record Committee report that their work continues to make progress, although not so rapidly as might have been expected, and they invite the co-operation of additional workers.

“The number of visitors to the Museum in 1898 was 5082, a decrease of 154 as against 1897.

“The Library is gradually increasing by purchase, gift, and exchange, but the funds available after payment of necessary annual outgoings do not admit of large expenditure in this direction, and it is on gifts from members and others that we must to a great extent rely.

“Your Committee have lately received a letter from the Town Clerk of Taunton enquiring whether they ‘would be prepared to treat with the Taunton Town Council for the laying out and throwing open of the grounds of the Castle and Museum to the public under terms and restrictions to be agreed upon.’

“Your Committee desire to have the views of the General Meeting of Subscribers upon the suggestion, and recommend that they be authorised to entertain the application, so far as the Castle grounds are concerned, subject to a satisfactory arrangement of terms and other details, and that your Committee be empowered to negotiate and to carry into effect any terms which may be mutually agreed upon.

“A third branch has, since your last meeting, been added to your Society, having its head-quarters at Taunton. It is called the ‘Taunton Conversazione and Field Club,’ and is

under the Presidency of your Treasurer, Mr. H. J. Badcock. The first meeting was held at the Castle Hall on April 6th, and already they number more than fifty members.

“Your Committee greatly regret to report the severe illness of your Assistant Secretary and Curator, Mr. William Bidgood, who has filled with credit the position of Curator since he was appointed in 1862—thirty-seven years—and to this the position of Assistant Secretary was added ten years later. His illness attacked him with great suddenness so lately as Wednesday, 12th inst., while engaged in preparation for this Meeting, where his absence will be greatly felt by those who have had experience of his readiness and courtesy on former occasions. Your Committee have made temporary arrangements for the performance of his duties.

“Since your last meeting your Committee are happy to report that you have suffered comparatively few losses by death, but the genial presence of the Rev. E. L. Penny, D.D., R.N., of Plymouth, will no longer add to the pleasure of our annual meetings, at which he was for a long series of years a regular attendant. Dr. Penny was one of the sons of a well-known former Head Master of Crewkerne School, and he took a great interest in all that appertained to our Society and the county generally.

“The Rev. Prebendary Hook, Rector and Rural Dean of Porlock, has also died since our last meeting. He was a member of some ten years’ standing, and as a Local Secretary, was an ex-officio Member of Council. Although he seldom attended our annual meetings, he gave us every assistance in his power, especially when we visited his parish in 1889. Prebendary Hook wrote, and recently published, a ‘History of Porlock,’ which must have been the result of a great deal of investigation and research.”

Mr. TREVILIAN, in proposing the adoption of the report, expressed regret at the illness of Mr. Bidgood. He referred to the proposal to utilise the Taunton Castle grounds, and said that the idea of a conference between the Committee of

the Society and the Town Council of Taunton, in order to lay out this ground, was a good one.

Canon CHURCH seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

Colonel BRAMBLE presented the financial statement, in the absence of the Treasurer, Mr. H. J. Badcock.

Treasurer's Account.

The Treasurer in Account with the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, from January 1st to December 31st, 1898.

DR.			CR.		
1898.		£ s. d.	1897, Dec. 31st.		£ s. d.
By Balance of former Account	...	76 16 10	To Expenses of Annual Meeting	...	13 16 1
" Members' Entrance Fees (58)	...	30 9 0	" Reporters' Notes of Meetings	...	3 10 0
" Members' Subscriptions for 1898 (560)	...	293 18 6	" Stationery and Printing	...	23 7 7
" Members' Subscriptions in arrear (19)	...	9 19 6	" Cases, Repairs, &c.	...	27 16 6
" Members' Subscriptions in advance (22)	...	11 11 0	" Coal and Gas	...	19 13 5
" Members' Subscriptions (Life)	...	10 10 0	" Purchase of Books, &c.	...	21 18 0
" Non-Members' Excursion Tickets	...	12 2 6	" Printing Vol. 43, &c.	...	81 5 0
" Museum Fees	...	26 0 8	" Cost of Illustrations	...	14 5 3
" Sale of Publications	...	15 1 3	" Postage of Volume	...	9 5 4
" Sale of Index Volume	...	19 6 0	" Printing and Binding Index	...	28 11 0
" Balance of Conversazione	...	2 9 4	" Curator's Salary	...	105 0 0
" Balance of Exhibition	...	0 11 3	" Errand Boy	...	11 0 6
" Donation, G. H. Rogers, Esq.	...	5 0 0	" Insurance	...	4 3 9
" " H. H. P. Bouverie, Esq.	...	2 9 6	" Rates and Taxes	...	13 19 0
			" Subscriptions to Societies	...	8 13 0
			" Carriage and Postage	...	8 12 7
			" Sundries	...	1 15 6
			" Subscription returned (paid in error)	...	1 1 0
			Balance	...	118 11 10
		<u>£516 5 4</u>			<u>£516 5 4</u>

H. J. BADCOCK,
Treasurer.

Sept. 29th, 1899. Examined and compared with the vouchers and Bank Book, and found correct. } HOWARD MAYNARD,
ALEX. HAMMETT.

Taunton Castle Restoration Fund.

Treasurer's Account from 1st January to 31st December, 1898.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
1898.		£ s. d.	1898, Dec. 31st.		£ s. d.
By Rents of Premises	...	28 16 10	To Balance of former Account	...	39 7 8
" Rents of Castle Hall	...	40 16 0	" Repairs to Property	...	35 15 11
" Messrs. Hancock, Rent of 3 lights	...	0 1 6	" Rates and Taxes	...	9 4 11
" Telephone Company Wayleave for Wires	...	0 1 0	" Gas	...	4 0 2
" Sundry Subscriptions	...	371 18 6	" Sundry Expenses, Castle Hall, &c.	...	7 0 8
" Legacy from the late Col. Pinney	...	300 0 0	" Fire Insurance	...	3 16 6
			" Interest	...	0 18 10
			" Placed on Deposit Account at Interest	...	500 0 0
			" Balance carried forward	...	141 9 2
		<u>£741 13 10</u>			<u>£741 13 10</u>

H. J. BADCOCK,
Treasurer.

Sept. 29th, 1899. Examined and compared with the vouchers and Bank Book, and found correct. } HOWARD MAYNARD,
ALEX. HAMMETT.

Col. LONG, the High Sheriff, proposed the adoption of the account, which he remarked was most satisfactory. To hear that there was a credit balance on the Castle account was almost unique.

Mr. W. J. BRAIKENRIDGE seconded the motion, which was carried.

Dr. NORRIS proposed the re-election of the officers of the Society, with the addition of Mr. H. C. A. Day, as a District or Local Secretary. He regretted very much the illness of Mr. Bidgood, their esteemed Curator, and spoke of the successful and useful work he had done for the Society by his quiet influence.

The motion was seconded by the Rev. D. L. HAYWARD, and agreed to.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER proposed the election of twenty-three new members of the Society.

Preb. HERRINGHAM seconded, and the resolution was adopted.

Somerset Record Society.

The Rev. E. H. BATES, Hon. Sec. of the Somerset Record Society, made a statement respecting the work of the Society during the past year, and what was proposed to do. He was happy to say that they had not only wiped out the debt of the Society, but they had a balance of about £35 or £40 with which to begin the year. This year they were anxious to continue the series of the "Monastic Cartularies of the County," and they proposed to publish the lately recovered one of Muchelney, whose first charter was dated 695, which shewed that the monastery was one of the oldest in England. They were also anxious to get hold of the "Cartularies of Athelney and Cleeve." In the series of Bishops' Registers they had taken Bishop Bowett, 1401—1408, and the register of Bishop Giffard, who was Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1264—1267, and afterwards Archbishop of York, and the document has recently

been found bound up with the York registers. So far as it goes, however, it would be a very valuable addition to their scattered records of the 13th century. They also had permission to print the Survey of Somerset, made in the reign of Charles I, and which had only been discovered about two years. Mr. Batten has found that the writer was Thos. Gerard, of Trent, and the date 1632. The volume was now being transcribed for the purpose of being issued next year, and he had no hesitation in saying that it would be exceedingly interesting. It was a sort of combination of Collinson's History and Murray's Handbook, but more accurate than either. Unfortunately the survey dealt only with the South and West of Somerset. The survey made by Mr. Strachey 1736¹ still remains in manuscript, and if the owner's consent could be obtained, it would be well to print, for a commencement, that part which dealt with the other portions of the county. Three documents, hitherto quite unknown, was not a bad record, and on that ground he asked for additional support for the Society.

The Very Rev. the DEAN OF WELLS spoke in support of the work done by the Record Society, and among the volumes published by them, he said that Bishop Hobhouse's book of Churchwardens' Accounts of five centuries ago, was an exceedingly interesting publication.