

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
DURING THE YEAR
1903.

THE fifty-fifth annual meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Chard on Tuesday, July 28th.

The proceedings commenced with the annual meeting, held in the Assembly Room of the George Hotel, at which there was a large attendance.

The retiring President, the Dean of Wells (the Very Rev. T. W. JEX-BLAKE, D.D., F.S.A.) took the chair at the commencement, and being greeted with hearty applause, he said the dying President noticed that they hailed very heartily his expiring efforts. However, he saluted them with pleasure because it was his duty, as the retiring President, to restore to them a new President. He expected every one who was present would agree with him that they were exceedingly fortunate in securing such a good President as Mr. Francis James Fry. Mr. Fry's family had already established a high reputation for all kinds of benevolence and beneficence, and for acts of kindness and indulgence. That reputation was fully maintained by Mr. Fry, who was, in addition, a man of scientific

acquirements, and a close friend of archæology, and when his beautiful house was shewn them they would see that he looked after and cultivated art in the highest degree of perfection. He had much pleasure in asking Mr. Fry to take the chair which he now vacated.

Mr. FRY, in accepting the Presidency, thanked the members for the honour they conferred on him, and called on Lieut.-Col. BRAMBLE, F.S.A., to read

The Annual Report,

which was as follows :—

“Your Committee present their fifty-fifth annual report. Since their last report forty-seven new names have been added to the list of members. The loss by deaths and resignations has been thirty-three. Altogether the net gain has been fourteen. The total membership of the Society at date is 616.

“The balance of your Society’s general account at the end of 1901 (your accounts being made up in each year to December 31st) was £113 1s. 7d. against the Society. At the close of 1902 there was a balance of £192 4s. 2d. against the Society. In neither case was the liability for the cost of the volume for the year then expired, or on the other hand any unpaid subscriptions, taken into account. The total cost of Volume XLVIII (for 1902), including printing, illustrations, and delivery, has been £105 5s. 3d. The thanks of the Society are due to Col. Sanford and Dr. Walter for illustrations.

“Since your last meeting your Museum has been enriched by a large collection of examples of rocks, minerals, fossils and natural history specimens, including several of great rarity, presented by Mr. C. Dillworth Fox, of Waikari, New Zealand. The chief localities represented are Alsace and the neighbouring parts of France ; other examples are from Somerset and New Zealand. It is the wish of the donor that the specimens,

numbering *about* 800, be marked 'Dillworth Fox Collection.'

"Consequent on the rearrangement of your collections a substantial amount of work has been found to be necessary in the provision of additional cases and repairs, painting, etc. It has further appeared essential to provide for the warming, not so much with a view to comfort as for the preservation of your collections and books, of the Keep and other portions of the building not included with the Great Hall in the original scheme. This portion of the work it is intended to carry out in the ensuing autumn. The estimated cost of this, added to the adverse balance of last year, £238 9s. 11d., and the miscellaneous repairs before referred to, will probably leave a total balance of some £340 against the Society on the Castle Restoration Account.

"In their last report your Committee expressed the hope that the subscription list might shortly increase to such an extent that no arrangement approaching permanency would have to be made with respect to this debt. At present the necessary advances continue to be made by your bankers under the authority granted by your Society. In view, however, of an application for special subscriptions which will be made to your members next year, your Committee would be glad to receive promises, or cheques if preferred, with which to start the list.

"In connection with this year's annual meeting, your Society has, through the kindness of one of your vice-presidents, Viscount Portman, conducted excavations, extending over a period of two weeks, at Castle Neroche, with a view of ascertaining the date of its construction. Your Society's Curator, Mr. H. St. George Gray, has been in charge of the work.

"In addition to the gifts before mentioned, the Committee have to report the following:—From the Society of Antiquaries, vols. lvi, lvii and lviii (pt. 1) of 'Archæologia,' and they have intimated their intention of presenting future volumes as issued. Your Committee would be glad to obtain by pur-

chase, or preferably by gift, vols. ii to xii inclusive, vol. xvi, pt. 2, vol. xlviii, and vol. lii, pt. 2, to complete the set. From Rev. F. W. Weaver, the Index Library (Brit. Rec. Soc.) from 1890 to present date (the Canterbury Wills only excluded). Some fine work in Cornish marbles, from Mr. F. T. J. Haynes. A collection of palæolithic implements, chiefly from the Eastern Counties, from Dr. Frank Corner. A set of platinotype photographs of Somerset buildings, from Mr. John B. Clark. Amongst other donors should be mentioned—to the *Museum*: Messrs. Walter Raymond, H. W. Seton-Karr, H. H. Bagnall, Wm. Kelway, C. H. Spencer Perceval, F. T. Elworthy, W. de C. Prideaux, C. Tite, H. Franklin, and W. H. Fisher; to the *Library*: Messrs. D'Arcy Todd, J. B. Marwood, C. H. Samson, Wm. Poole, and Rev. E. H. Bates.

“The number of visitors to your Museum during 1902 was 7,444, an increase of forty-seven per cent. on the previous year. This enormous increase was not only due to the many improvements that have taken place, but from the fact of its being Coronation year, and owing to the addition of the ‘Walter Collection.’

“The Curator’s description of the Walter Collection, printed in Vol. XLVIII of the *Proceedings*, has been reprinted to serve as a guide book to this department.

“A proposal has been made by the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society for the completion of the excavation of the Glastonbury Lake Village, under the joint care of Mr. Arthur Bulleid and Mr. H. St. George Gray, and under the joint auspices of the two Societies, with the assistance of the British Association, for which application will be made by Prof. Boyd Dawkins. Your Committee have accepted the proposal on behalf of your Society.

“Since your meeting in July, 1902, there have been an unusual number of losses, by death, of old and well-known members. In addition to those of Mr. Wm. Ayshford Sanford, the Rev. Wadham Pigott Williams, and Dr. R. C. A. Prior,

of whom obituary notices appeared in your last volume, we regret to record those of: The Rev. Preb. John Earle, M.A., LL.D., Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford, an Hon. and Corresponding Member, who died 31st January, 1903, in his eightieth year. Many years ago, when his health permitted, he was a frequent visitor at our annual meetings and excursions, where his great knowledge of philology was much appreciated.

“Mr. Wm. Talbot Aveline, a member since 1884. He was for many years actively engaged on the Geological Survey of England, and his name will constantly be found in the records of the Survey as engaged on important and responsible work.

“Mr. William Adlam, F.S.A., who joined as early as 1856. He entertained the Society at Chew Magna on the occasion of their visit in 1867. Mr. Wm. Dunn, Clerk of the Peace for the County, rendered us great assistance on the occasion of the Society’s visit to Frome in 1893. Mr. J. B. Marwood, a member since 1862, who, notwithstanding his removal to London and great age, retained to the last his interest in the Society. Capt. N. J. Newnham and Mr. P. D. Prankerd, both members of thirty years’ standing. Mr. Wm. Sparks, a member since 1866. He acted as chairman of our local committee on the occasion of our visit to Crewkerne in 1891. Mr. Vincent Stuckey, who joined the Society on the occasion of its visit to Langport in 1861, and continued a member until his decease. Mr. R. Moss King, a member since 1888, died on July 7th, aged seventy-one.

“The Rev. A. H. A. Smith, Vicar of Lyng, a member of your Committee, died as recently as last Friday, after a very short illness. He was a very frequent attendant at our meetings, and his universal courtesy and great good sense were highly appreciated. His loss will be much felt.”

The DEAN OF WELLS, in moving the adoption of the report, said he would like to say one word about the work which was being undertaken by the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society,

and in which Professor W. Boyd Dawkins, F.R.S., had suggested that their own Society should co-operate. It had been suggested to him that these operations should be continued as soon as possible, and in a thoroughly scientific way. It was thought most desirable that their Curator, Mr. H. St. George Gray, should take part in the work. He had brought the matter before the Glastonbury Society only a few days previously, and it was considered that Mr. Arthur Bulleid, who had taken such a great amount of interest in the matter, and who was the original discoverer of the Lake Village, although not now living in Glastonbury, should still be closely connected with the work. Mr. Bulleid had, practically speaking, been on the spot all through the summers of 1892 and 1893, from early in the morning until late at night, and through his fingers had passed an immense quantity of that soft brown peat, from which he had singled out some hundreds of different kinds of things—oats, wheat, barley, pottery, and all kinds of implements and utensils. It was thought that the Societies should work together in these operations, and secure the help of the British Association. He hoped that this work would be carried out in a manner satisfactory to them, and with great results for archæology generally. He had much pleasure in moving the adoption of the report.

Mr. E. SLOPER said it was a very great pleasure for him to be there, and to be asked to second the adoption of the report, because when they looked back over the past thirty or forty years, during which time he had been connected with the Society, the progress which it had made shewed how hard they had worked to get it into the position which it now occupied. He could remember when some two or three of them commenced the building up of the Society, in a small way, by having a literary institution. Then the Society, with the assistance of the late Mr. Sanford, Col. Pinney, and others, set about purchasing the Castle. The Castle was one of very great historic interest, being one of the castles built by Henry of Blois,

Bishop of Winchester in the year 1137. There was not another castle remaining like it, so far as the keep was concerned, that was built in the XII Century by the Bishop. They had got rid of the greater part of the debt in connection with the Great Hall, and he had, several years ago, acquired, in the interests of the Society, the piece of laud close by the Hall, which was destined to be one of the markets of the town ; and he hoped that would form a nucleus of further additional buildings in connection with their great institution. Then each year they got out a most valuable volume. These seemed to be getting scarcer each year, and he thought they ought to pride themselves as a Society upon those very valuable volumes which they possessed. Nor must they forget those men who had passed away to their rest, having added their share in many respects to those volumes, and whose communications were of great archæological and scientific importance. He was pleased that they still had such good workers in their midst. He wished the historian of Chard was present that day to help them in their endeavours to push on the work of the Society. He trusted that the success which had been given to them would be recognised by the members, and that it would be an impetus leading to still better work in the future ; also the means of adding many more names to their list of members.

The adoption of the report was then put to the meeting and carried.

Finances.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER, M.A., F.S.A., in the absence of Mr. H. J. BADCOCK, the Hon. Treasurer of the Society, presented the annual balance sheet.

Taunton Castle Restoration Fund.

Balance Sheet of Income and Expenditure for the year 1902.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
1902.		£ s. d.	1901, Dec. 31st.		£ s. d.
By Rent of Premises	...	59 0 6	To Balance of former Account	246 15 11	
„ Subscriptions towards Repairs Fund, including £3 3s. 0d. from the Dean of Wells	...	3 5 6	„ Repairs to Castle	10 6 0	
„ Sale of Benches	...	3 10 0	„ Repairs to Castle House, etc.	27 1 5	
„ Old Cases and Fittings sold by Auction	...	0 7 1	„ Rates and Taxes	4 5 11	
Balance	...	238 9 11	„ Insurance	3 16 6	
		<u>£304 13 0</u>	„ Miscellaneous Expenses	0 6 6	
			„ Interest on Overdrawn Account	12 0 9	
				<u>£304 13 0</u>	
			To Balance brought down	£238 9 11	

H. J. BADCOCK, Treasurer.

Jan., 1903. Audited and found correct.

ALEX. HAMMETT, }
 HOWARD MAYNARD, } Hon. Auditors.

Mr. T. S. BUSH moved that the accounts be received and adopted, remarking that they were about as satisfactory as usual. They had borrowed money to a certain extent, but possessed a valuable asset in the Castle and its contents.

The motion was seconded by the Rev. J. WORTHINGTON. He said he did not look upon this proposition merely as a formal matter. As a member of the Committee, he looked upon it from a somewhat different point of view. The Committee were becoming constantly aware of the fact that they wanted more money, and they felt that they had to deny the Society a great many articles and books, which were badly wanted, for the reason that they had not the wherewithal to purchase them. He hoped the coming year would bring in a large number of ladies and gentlemen as supporters and members of the Society. He would like to add a sentence or two about what Mr. Sloper had referred to, viz., the loss, by death, of several of their old members, and he would refer particularly to a gentleman whose death had only recently been such a shock to many of them. He alluded to their old friend, the Rev. A. H. A. Smith, of Lyng, who gave a great deal of his time to the Society, and whom they held in high esteem. Mr.

Smith had delivered to them a most eloquent speech in connection with the restoration of the Church at Lyng, as a memorial to King Alfred. His courtesy and hospitality was open to all.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. C. TITE moved the election of forty-seven new members.

The Rev. Preb. C. GRANT, R.D., in seconding, said the actual addition to the membership, after reckoning the losses they had sustained in various ways, and especially by death, was only about twelve, and this showed the importance of their taking upon themselves the duty of trying all they could to get additional members during the next year, so that when the annual meeting came round again they might see a more tangible increase in their numbers. He expected there was great scope for them all, in their various neighbourhoods, to do more than they did now, in getting others to join this excellent Society, which was doing such good work in the County.

The resolution was carried.

Election of Officers.

The Rev. T. W. WHALE, in proposing the re-election of the officers, with the addition of the names of the Dean of Wells to the list of Vice-Presidents, Mr. H. Franklin to the Committee, and the Revs. Preb. C. Grant and W. H. P. Greswell as Local Secretaries for Glastonbury and the North Quantocks respectively, said a great deal had been spoken about the rise of the Society from a small beginning to its present most important dimensions. As an ardent archæologist, he took a great interest in the Library of the Society, and he

was always pleased to be able to get access to the books. He had very largely used them, and derived benefit from them. The good management of such a Society was, of course, due to the officers from time to time, but he thought very few of the members had any idea of the amount of work the officers had to accomplish in order to make the Society acceptable to its subscribers. They tendered hearty thanks, therefore, to the officers, with the full assurance that they would do the work equally well in the future, and generally to endeavour to make their Society still more prosperous.

The Rev. JAMES STREET said, as a comparatively young member of the Society, he had pleasure in seconding the motion. He had been told that this was an unusually large gathering, and that spoke well for the attractions of Chard and Ilminster; it was doubtless due also to the energy and enthusiasm that had been put into the proceedings by the Society's officers. The Society was an advantage to its members in many ways. If any of them were trying, like himself, to get out a history of their own neighbourhood, they would get an immense amount of help from the officers, and he was extremely grateful to them personally, and especially to his good friend and neighbour, Mr. Bates.

The PRESIDENT said he heartily agreed with the remark that every member of the Society must feel indebted to the officers for the valuable services which they had rendered, not only to the Society, but to the general study of archæology in the kingdom at large.

The motion was then put to the meeting and carried with acclamation.

The Rev. F. W. WEAVER announced that the Rev. H. A. Cartwright, the Local Honorary Secretary, was unable to be present that day on account of indisposition, but he hoped he would be able to meet the members on the morrow, when they would visit Mr. Cartwright's very interesting Church at Whitestaunton.

Somerset Record Society.

The Rev. E. H. BATES was called upon to give a statement in connection with the Somerset Record Society, of which he is the Honorary Secretary. He said he made his statement in a different frame of mind to what he usually did, because last year was the first time he was able to issue the volumes at the right time of the year; therefore he could meet all the subscribers that day with a clear conscience. The volume for the present year was also going forward well. For 1902—Volume XVII—carried on the calendar of *Pedes Finium* from 1347 to the end of the reign of Richard II in 1399. Volume XVIII contained Hopton's Narrative of his campaign in the West of England, 1642—1644, and other papers relating to the conflict, with a map and plan of Lansdown fight. In 1903 the subscribers would receive a second volume of Somerset Wills, preserved at Somerset House, for the period 1501—1530, with a supplement of many early wills, contained in the Archbishop's Registers at Lambeth, edited by the Rev. F. W. Weaver. The publication for 1904 had not yet been finally settled. The recent issue of the Report of the Local Records Committee¹ shewed that the work, begun some sixty years ago on the Public Records stored in London, now required to be extended to similar collections scattered all over the kingdom, and in too many instances neither properly cared for, nor available for research. The Somerset County Records were gathered together in an underground chamber at the Shire Hall, Taunton, and were sorely in need of cleaning and arranging. The County Council had recently appointed a committee to confer with a committee of the Council of the Record Society as to the best means for preventing further decay, sorting and arranging the documents, and for making known

(1). Report, Cd. 1335, price 6d.; Appendices, Cd. 1333, price 2s. 4d., issued in 1902.

the contents of the more interesting classes. The oldest documents were the rolls of deeds enrolled at the Quarter Sessions according to the Statute; these went back to the reign of Henry VIII. The Quarter Sessions Records began early in the reign of James I, with a few of the XVI Century. They embraced all classes of business brought before the Sessions, sitting in a civil as well as a criminal capacity, including the original papers of petitions, complaints, presentments, etc., on which the formal proceedings were based. A calendar of such would be of the highest interest in studying the history of the county during the eventful XVII Century.