

Report of the Curator of the  
Somerset County Museum for the Year ended  
September 30th, 1919.<sup>1</sup>

MUCH of the time of the staff has been absorbed this year owing to the greater attendance of members and visitors to the Castle. The members have made more use of the Library than for some time past. It has been observed that visitors remain in the Museum for longer periods than formerly, and are on the whole of a more enquiring turn of mind. There has been a much larger sale of guide books than in any previous year.

The additions to the Museum have been quite up to the average both in number and interest, and several of them have been mentioned in the Annual Report of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society (printed elsewhere).

At the time of writing the bequests made by the late Dr. J. Wiglesworth have not been removed from Winscombe. These consist of his two cabinets of British birds' eggs, a collection of birds' nests, a few cases of stuffed birds, and the contents of his library other than the fine collection of ornithological works which the doctor bequeathed to Bristol University. Duplicate books may be sold by the Society provided the money obtained thereby is spent on books dealing with ornithology. Independently of the doctor's bequests, Mrs. Wiglesworth has presented to the Museum a number of ethnographical specimens.

Mr. C. R. Gawen, on leaving Milverton, presented to the Museum a large cabinet containing his collection of British birds' eggs, together with a manuscript catalogue of the same.

1. For the purpose of statistics of attendance of visitors to the Museum it has been found possible to carry this Report down to 31st December, 1919.

In the last Report it was stated that the general series of birds mounted on stands was being re-labelled, etc. This work has now been completed. Included in Dr. Wigglesworth's bequest is a manuscript catalogue of all the stuffed birds in the County Museum.

A large number of dried plants collected in Somerset have been presented during the past year by the Rev. E. S. Marshall, Dr. W. Watson and Mr. H. S. Thompson; these have been mounted and arranged in the Society's herbarium by Mr. T. W. Cowan, who has had charge of these collections since their formation. Mr. C. H. Spencer Perceval has kindly presented to the Society's Library the first thirty-three volumes of the *Journal of Botany*, and the remainder to date have been purchased by donations from members, funds for the purpose being collected by Mr. H. S. Thompson. A list of subscribers is given in the report of the Botanical Section contained in this volume of *Proceedings*.

The Library has been enriched by a number of books and manuscripts, including 78 vols. dealing with history and liturgy purchased through the generosity of members from the library of the late Canon Scott Holmes.

The Society's collections of some 2,500 parchment deeds, embracing about 250 Somerset parishes, have been sorted by Mr. Henry Symonds, F.S.A., during the past year, for which he has been cordially thanked. Deeds of other counties have been eliminated, and are being disposed of to institutions in the counties to which they refer. The Somerset deeds have been sorted and docketed, and an alphabetical list of parishes prepared. A card-catalogue of the deeds is contemplated, and manuscript for this purpose is being prepared by Miss B. Masey. This work will take some time to complete.

Certain parts of the Society's Library have been re-arranged during the year. The hope has been expressed that a card-catalogue of the Library, which now consists of 21,000 volumes, giving authors and subjects, may be prepared, if means can be found to carry the project into effect. Mr. Tite has added several volumes to his collection of Somerset Books.



Reverting to the Museum, special mention should be made of Mr. C. Tite's gift of twenty-six Saxon and Norman coins minted at Bath, Taunton, Ilchester and Watchet; also of a complete set of the gold and silver coins of the 1887 Jubilee, presented by Miss Edith M. K. Price (sister of the chairman of council).

From Mr. Evan Roberts (through the instrumentality of the Victoria and Albert Museum) the Museum has received seventeen English and French watches of the XVIII and XIX Centuries, including two by Taunton makers—Goodwyn and G. Musgrave. Mr. J. Scott has also presented four watches.

During the autumn Dr. R. Hensleigh Walter has sent to the Museum a large number of archæological remains, mostly of the Roman period, found on Ham Hill and on the site of the Roman villa at Stanchester, Stoke-under-Ham.

Mr. H. Martin Gibbs has added to his former gifts to the Museum, and has presented a number of pewter dishes bearing the marks of Bristol and West-country pewterers. He has also given a collection of elaborately worked weapons, all of which have not yet been catalogued.

From Mr. F. H. Cridland the Museum has received a small bible, dated 1629, with the original handsome binding in raised needlework; the fly-leaf is inscribed with some records of the Dyke Acland and Cridland families.

Mr. W. J. Pountney has handed over to the Museum a series of shards of delft ware found in his excavations at Wincanton; these are of value in the identification of vessels said to have been made at those potteries.

Mrs. J. G. Loveday has presented to the Society a microscope by Watson and Sons. in memory of her late brother, Mr. Thomas J. Savery, to whom it formerly belonged.

As mentioned in previous reports, the need for increased space for the proper exhibition of specimens is keenly felt. It is hoped that means will be found to store certain objects of lesser importance in a methodical manner in cabinets, so that they may be available for reference for the student who requires to view a large number of specimens of more or less similar type.

The Museum assistant, Mdle. L. Bastiaensen, returned to Antwerp in February after over three years' service. Although inexperienced at first, her later work gave much satisfaction. Owing to the difficulty of getting a suitable assistant at short notice, Mrs. Gray offered to fill the gap temporarily, and at the time of writing is still rendering useful help.

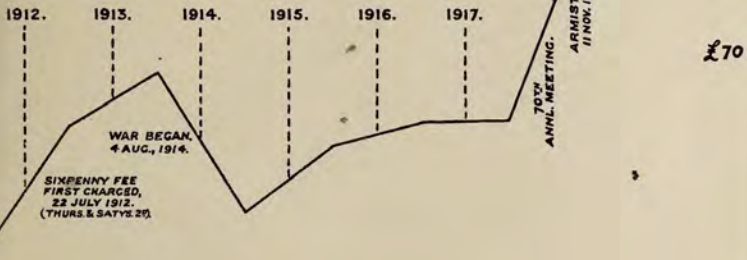
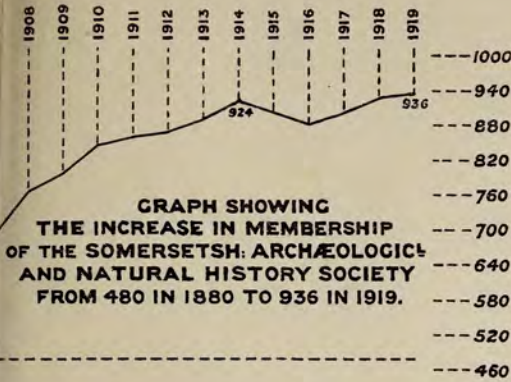
The Entomological Section held its annual meeting at the Castle on February 21st, the Botanical Section on February 27th, and the Ornithological Section on February 28th. The Botanical Section also held a meeting on December 18th, rendered necessary owing to the death of the Rev. E. S. Marshall, its President and Recorder. The Taunton Field Club held conversaciones for lectures in the Museum on November 21st, 1918, and in 1919, on January 9th, February 6th, and March 13th.

The Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society consisted of 936 members at the end of July 1919, including thirteen life members and three honorary members.

The Museum and Library were visited by 5891 persons in 1917, 7313 in 1918, and 8760 in 1919. The following is a list of the monthly attendances of visitors for the years 1917, 1918 and 1919 :—

	1917.		1918.		1919.	
	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.
Jan. ..	98	322	91	361	101	605
Feb. ..	77	320	77	391	122	449
Mar. ..	106	310	83	369	121	540
Apr. ..	79	331	106	591	114	728
May ..	94	514	69	578	169	730
June ..	95	405	74	495	121	764
July ..	*145	549	*163	686	*225	836
Aug. ..	80	990	91	1337	126	1510
Sept. ..	90	677	76	801	108	1088
Oct. ...	93	595	92	568	143	535
Nov. ..	95	451	102	537	120	423
Dec. ...	73	427	96	599	165	551
	1125	5891	1120	7313	1635	8760

\* Including Annual Meeting at Taunton.



**GRAPH SHOWING FLUCTUATIONS IN ENTRANCE FEES TO THE SOMERSET COUNTY MUSEUM FROM £25 IN 1900 TO £129.15s. IN 1919.**



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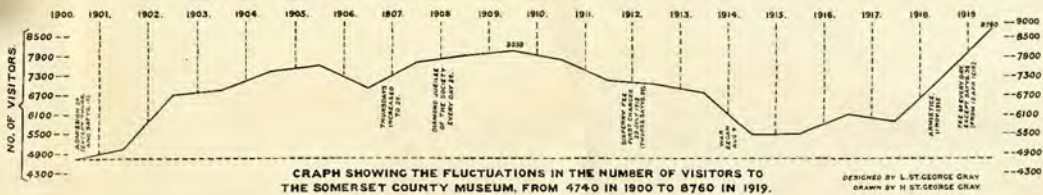
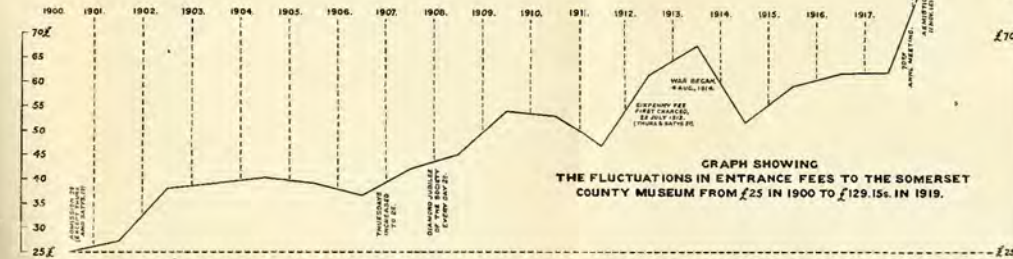
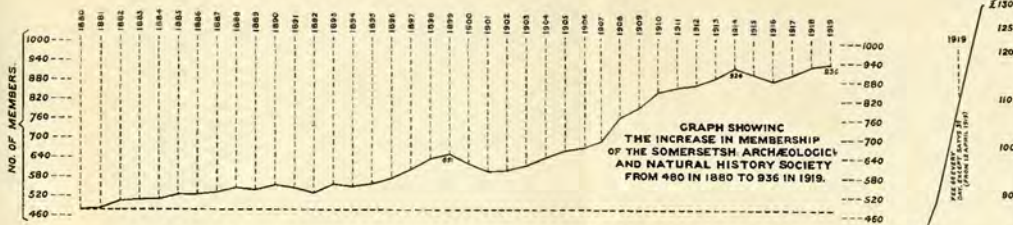
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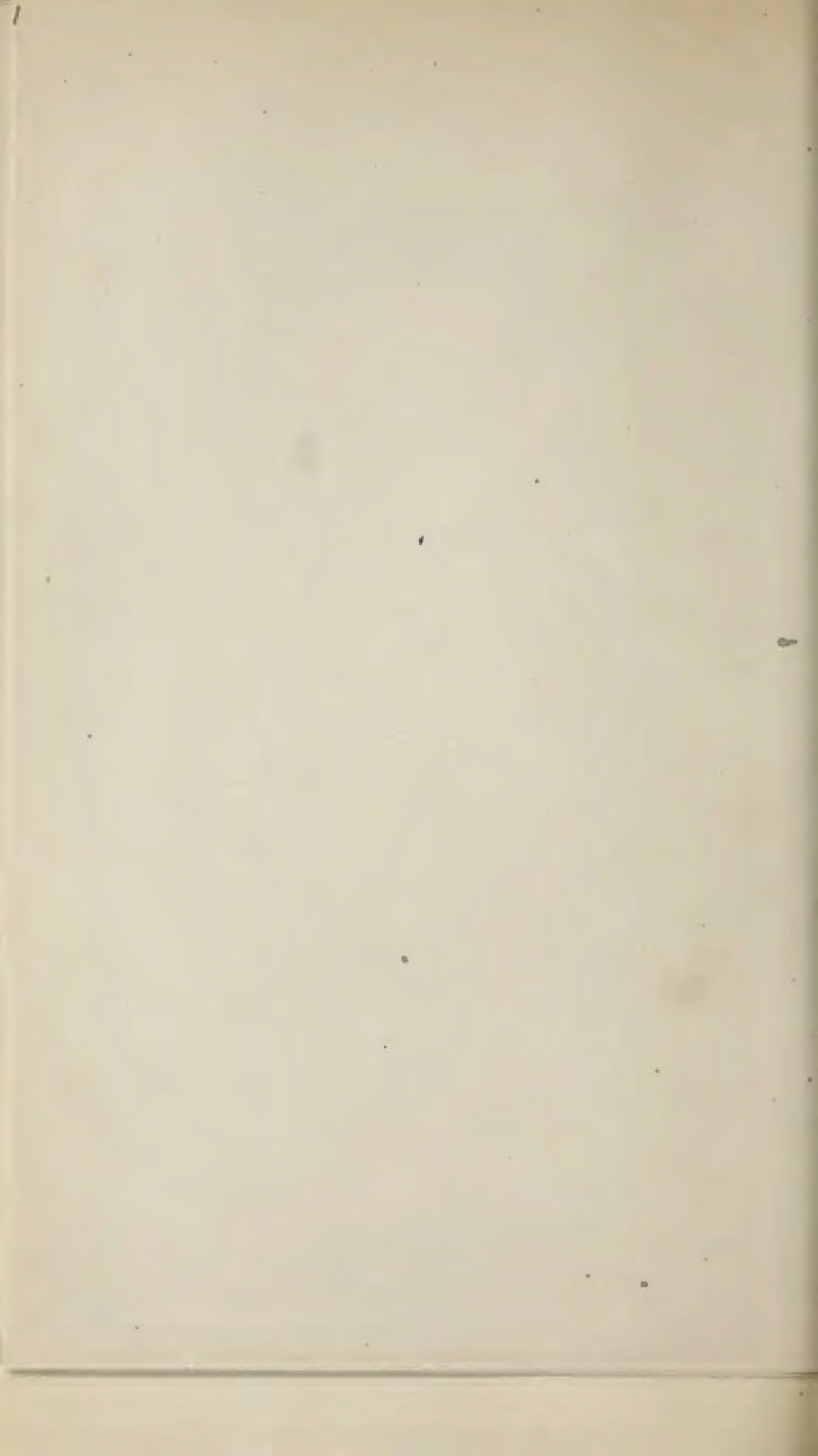
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DESIGNED BY L. ST. GEORGE GRAY  
DRAWN BY H. ST. GEORGE GRAY





The accompanying set of graphs (Plate II), drawn by the Curator and originally designed by his son (L. St. George Gray) in 1917, is published with this Report for the first time. The upper graph shows the growth of the Society from 480 members in 1880 to 936 in 1919, and another the fluctuations in the number of persons visiting the Museum from 1900, when there were 4740 visitors, to 1919 when 8760 persons visited the Castle.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

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Curator of the Somerset County Museum.*