

## Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for the Year ended December 31st, 1914.

OWING to the European War there have been less visitors to the Museum during the last few months than for the corresponding period last year. There has however been no less work in progress at the Society's headquarters, and the new acquisitions to the Museum and Library have been quite as numerous as in the previous year.

The Museum has been enriched by many important objects of local interest, including the J. McMurtrie Collection of archæological remains from the neighbourhood of Radstock, and the "finds" from the excavations conducted at the Meare Lake Village during 1914, which include some metal and other objects of new and rare types. Mr. A. V. Cornish has been collecting antiquities on Ham Hill during the summer and autumn, and has deposited all the best specimens on loan in the Museum (with his former collection). A large number of the local archæological and ethnographical objects collected by Mr. G. James at Wellington (when landlord of the London Inn) have been purchased from the collector, who presented a few additional objects to the Museum. Mr. E. C. Treplin, F.S.A., has deposited on loan 117 English and Foreign Candlesticks, dating from the time of Henry VIII to the XIX Century. Mr. Charles Tite has added several specimens to the Museum, in addition to his larger donations of Somerset Medals and Trade Checks to the coin department. Through the kindness of twenty members of the Society an interesting set of glass rummers, inscribed "King and Constitution," and stated to have been made for the town of Taunton, *temp.* George III, have been acquired by purchase. Mr. T. Charbonnier has made some additions to his collection of Pewter.

A few pictures of local interest have been added to the Museum; and a framed and well-preserved charter of Edw. I, 1291, granting the right to hold a market and two fairs at Bishops Lydeard. Some stuffed birds recently shot in the county have been presented to the Museum, and Mr. Milton has added to his collection two drawers containing representatives of the orders *Trichoptera*, *Neuroptera*, and *Hemiptera*.

In the annual report of the Council (Bath Meeting) a number of useful additions to the Society's Library were mentioned, and since that time the Library has been enriched by several manuscripts and illustrations described in the following pages. The Charles Tite Collection of Somerset Books has grown considerably during the year, and the cataloguing of them has been continued. A large number of the Society's pamphlets have been sorted and put in cases.

The re-arrangement of the Society's collections of coins and medals has been continued in the Coin Room. The Tite Collection of Somerset Trade Checks has been largely increased, and these specimens have now been permanently arranged and labelled. It is hoped to deal with the XVII Century Trade Tokens in a similar manner ere long.

In the Somerset Room upstairs the large collections of antiquities from Ham Hill, which are continually growing, have had more space allotted to them and have been entirely re-arranged and ticketed. Other series in the same room have been overhauled.

In the Norman Keep there is a considerable crowding of archæological and ethnographical material, but the trouble has been partly met by the removal of the coins to the Coin Room. In the Keep the Monmouth Relics have been re-arranged, also the Bronze Age Hoards and Torcs and the Late-Celtic Remains. The Locks and Keys have been given more space, and this series is now displayed to good advantage. It is hoped to re-arrange some of the other series in this room soon, including the local Arms, Armour, and "Bygones."

The bones of the Extinct Mammalia from the Mendip Caves, exhibited in the Great Hall, have been overhauled, and the cases containing them cleaned out; many of these bones had not been moved for a number of years. In this room the Haddon Collection of Somerset and Devon Birds has been arranged along the s.e. wall, and many of these cases have been ticketed during the year. The large wall-case of Foreign Birds has been moved to the other end of the Hall and they have been cleaned and re-arranged. Other bird cases have received attention and have been ticketed.

Last year some of the objects belonging to the Woodhouse Collection (deposited on loan in 1907) were ticketed. This year the remainder of the specimens have been cleaned, repaired, and labelled, and exhibited under the subjects to which the objects refer. The collection includes a fine series of Italian majolica, chiefly Urbino ware, 1525-1560.

The Supplement to Murray's "Flora of Somerset," by the Rev. E. S. Marshall, F.L.S., was issued last spring as a separate volume bound in green cloth. Its price has recently been reduced to 5s. net.

In the autumn the Society published as a separate cloth bound volume, "A Descriptive List of the Printed Maps of Somersetshire, 1575-1914," by T. Chubb, of the Map Room, British Museum, with sixteen plates. It may be purchased at 10s. net.

During the past year the Society's property has been more adequately insured, not only against fire, but other risks also, and in this connection the annual expenditure has been increased from £14 to £34. A "Minimax" fire extinguisher has been provided, and it is hoped to add others as time goes on.

During the summer one of the high-pressure heating furnaces had to be provided with a new coil, and recently an order has had to be given to provide a new coil for the heating furnace attached to the Great Hall.

The out-of-date signboard over the entrance gateway has been removed, and a larger and more attractive one erected in

a position in which it is well seen without obstructing the view of the Society's buildings from Castle Green.

The Store Room No. 3 adjoining the Castle House has been turned out during the year and has been repaired and re-decorated. It was found necessary to extend the repairs into the Curator's house. Store Room No. 1 adjoining the Great Hall, containing the stock of the Society's publications and other things, has also been turned out, but the sorting of the papers has not yet been completed.

The Entomological Section held its annual meeting at the Castle on February 5th, the Botanical Section on February 20th, and the Ornithological Section on February 12th. The Taunton Field Club held conversaciones for lectures on Jan. 8th, March 26th, and November 26th.

My assistant, M. S. Bevan, who began his duties at the Museum on July 30th, 1908, left me on Sept. 4th, 1914, and is now with the 5th Battalion P.A.S.L.I. in India. His place has been filled by W. H. D. Bence.

The Somersetshire Archæological and Nat. Hist. Society at this date consists of 923 members, *viz.*, 912 ordinary members, nine life members, and two honorary members, the total at the the end of 1913 being 895.

The following is a list of the monthly attendances of visitors to the Museum and Library for the year just completed :—

	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.		No. of Members.	Total Visitors.
Jan. ...	122	446	July ...	105	594
Feb. ...	114	285	Aug. ...	81	692
Mar. ...	139	405	Sept. ...	95	437
Apr. ...	124	601	Oct. ...	69	350
May ...	112	479	Nov. ...	94	342
June ...	124	543	Dec. ...	83	284
				1267	5458

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