

Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for the year ended December 31st, 1912.

OWING to the details given in the Council's Report at the Wellington Meeting, the Reports of the three Natural History Sections, and the detailed list of Museum and Library acquisitions during the year, there is little additional information to record here. Some permanent re-arrangement of the contents of the Museum has been carried out, especially in the new "Coin Room," and a large amount of ticketing has been done, the assistant (M. S. Bevan) being able to devote about half his time to this branch of the Society's work. The systematic labelling of the specimens acquired during the year has alone occupied much time.

The Museum has been enriched by many important objects, including the second half of the Charbonnier Collection of Pewter, one of the carved doorways of Taunton Priory, a remarkable flint implement of large size found in West Somerset, two inscribed sepulchral slabs from Mynchin Buckland Priory, the Meare Lake Village antiquities discovered in 1912, the archæological remains described in the Rev. J. D. C. Wickham's book entitled "Records by Spade and Terrier," relics from Ham Hill, miscellaneous objects presented by Mr. E. J. Jervis-Smith, Roman coins found in the county, local birds, and a large variety of miscellaneous objects, chiefly of local interest, described elsewhere.

Thanks to the bequest made by the late Miss J. L. Woodward the Coin Room has, during the past year, been furnished with polished mahogany cases costing £100, and the central cases required for the same room are at present being con-

structed (at a cost of £60), for the purpose of properly exhibiting the Society's collection of Coins and Tokens. The local Bank-Notes and Medals are already shown in separate cases; and the Lamps and Lighting Appliances have been brought together in one case. Two other cases on the north side of the room are devoted to illuminated manuscripts and early printed books. A large plate glass frame has recently been added containing an embroidered altar frontal (formerly a cope) of the XV-XVI Century,—from a Somerset church.

The other wall cases in the Coin Room are filled with the Charbonnier Collection of Pewter, consisting of over four hundred pieces, many being of great artistic merit and value. In this connection Mr. Charbonnier and the Curator have produced a Guide Book, covering 36 pages, well illustrated by typical specimens in the collection. Its price is 9d.; by post 10d.

In the Great Hall (temporarily arranged in this room), the antiquities from the Meare Lake Village have been brought together; also the series styled "Human Form in Art," and "Foot-gear." A case is now kept in this room for new acquisitions, so that visitors may see some of the objects recently obtained before they are placed in their proper collections.

The New Library has already proved a great comfort to members requiring a "silence room" for study, and it has also been utilized for meetings. During the year the Ante-Room adjoining the Library has been fitted with book-cases brought down from the Somerset Room; by degrees the books are disappearing from the latter room. In the round room the "Charles Tite Collection of Somerset Books" is still increasing, and the growth of the Library in this direction is by no means completed.

The Natural History Sections continue to do good work. The Entomological Section—the first formed—held its annual meeting at the Museum on February 8th, and since that time the Parent Society (with the assistance of the Section) has purchased a 40-drawer cabinet for a Type Collection of

Somerset Lepidoptera. It is at the present time being spaced out and partly filled by Mr. H. Doidge, whose services are of great value in this matter.

On June 20th the Ornithological Section held a meeting at the Castle, and Mr. James Turner (the Recorder) is now editing a second series of notes upon Somerset birds, which will, it is hoped, be issued before long to members of the Section. Their work has been instrumental in encouraging the presentation of rare local birds to the Museum, and the Rev. Father Chichester has already given some interesting specimens. Colonel Sanford has presented to the Museum such of his father's (the late Mr. W. A. Sanford) collection of birds as are in a sufficiently good state of preservation for exhibition.

The Botanical Section held a joint meeting with the Taunton Field Club at the Museum on November 21st, when some exhibits were made and a lecture given on the Mosses of Somerset (published in Vol. LVIII, *Proceedings*). At that meeting the death of the Rev. Preb. G. E. Smith, the first President of the Section, was announced, and emphasis was laid upon the good work he had done in various departments of natural history. The Recorder (the Rev. E. S. Marshall, F.L.S.) was elected to succeed Mr. Smith. A cabinet has, since then, been fitted up in the Great Hall for the proper display of local botanical specimens.

The Society has recently published a separate volume (bound in cloth apart from the *Proceedings*), on "The Mollusca of Somerset," by Mr. E. W. Swanton, price 3s. 6d.

The Taunton Field Club has had the privilege of holding conversaciones at the Castle on February 29th and November 21st.

The Som. Archæological and Nat. Hist. Society at this date consists of 877 members, viz. 867 ordinary members, nine life members, and one honorary member, the total at the end of 1911 being 867.

At the Annual Meeting at Wellington in July it was decid-

ed to increase the admission to the Museum and Castle to 6d. (children 3d.) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the fee on Thursdays, Saturdays and Bank Holidays remaining as before, viz., 2d. This arrangement has been found necessary to meet the growing expenses of the upkeep of the institution, and we are glad to report that there has been no decrease in the number of visitors. Indeed there has been a slight increase; from July 22 to Dec. 31, 1912, there were 2976 visitors, compared with 2918 during the same period in 1911.

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. ...	86	377	July ...	124	780
Feb. ...	133	406	Aug. ...	134	1247
Mar. ...	119	435	Sept. ..	100	727
Apr. ...	112	729	Oct. ...	110	500
May ...	113	515	Nov. ...	115	421
June ...	100	567	Dec. ..	93	335
				1339	7039

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