

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOMERSET ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
DURING THE YEAR
1941

THE Ninety-Third Annual Meeting of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society was held at Taunton Castle on Tuesday, 15 July. Owing to the European War it was impossible to arrange for the Annual Meeting and Excursions extending over the usual three days.

As the Meeting was held in the morning in the Wyndham Hall, some of the members had the opportunity of seeing alterations which had taken place in the Museum and Library, and also of paying a visit to the garden.

The chair was taken at 11.20 a.m. by the President, the Rt. Rev. Abbot E. Horne, F.S.A., who had been re-elected by the Council to occupy the presidency for a second year. He was supported by the Mayor of Taunton (Councillor C. H. Goodland), Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, F.S.A. (*Chairman of Council*), Major F. M. E. Kennedy, C.B. (*Hon. Secretary*), and Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. (*Asst.-Secretary, Curator and Librarian*).

The Annual Report

MR. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, Asst.-Secretary, read the Annual Report, which was as follows:—

‘ IN presenting the ninety-third annual report the Council wishes to state that since the last meeting 27 new names have been added to the list of members and associates, including one life member. Losses by death during the same period have amounted to 24, and there have been a few resignations.

The membership to-day is in the region of 875, but owing to war conditions it is impossible to give the exact number in this report.

'The Society has lost the "father of the Society", Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte, who joined in 1870, and died, at the venerable age of 92 years, on 24 October last. He had been a vice-president for several years. (*See* obituary notice, with portrait, in vol. lxxxvi of the *Proceedings*.)

'The Society has also sustained the loss by death of the following members during the period under review: Miss M. Beviss (1927), Mr. W. B. Butler (1898), the Earl of Carnwath (1932), Dr. Godfrey Carter (1930), Mrs. M. C. Chichester (1904), Miss Theodora E. Clark (1928), Mr. V. B. Crowther-Beynon, F.S.A. (1938), Mr. C. I. Evans (1937), Mr. C. Roberts Gawen (1904), Mr. A. E. Goodman (1899), Mr. Wesley J. Hammet (1898), Mrs. Burrow Hill (1905), Mr. W. J. Hippisley (1888), Mrs. C. A. K. Matterson (1937), Mrs. M. B. Miller (1920), Mrs. G. Montague (1935), Mr. F. N. Reckitt (1924), Miss Selfe (1931), Miss Gwendoline Sully (1918), Miss Wardell-Yerburgh (1931), Mr. R. Hall Warren (1920), Mrs. J. Wiglesworth (1921), and Mr. J. Yandle (1920).

'The volume of *Proceedings* for 1940 was issued recently. It is a smaller number, with its 200 pages, due to the increased cost of printing,¹ but it includes an average number of plates. It, however, contains a paper on Taunton Castle, and another on Bridgwater Castle. Some of the material on the Society's headquarters, in a concise and different form, has been utilized to serve as an eight-page handbook for visitors; it was published a fortnight ago, price 2*d*.

'A legacy of £100 from the estate of the late Dr. J. Wiglesworth, a former president of the Ornithological Section, which has now become payable on the death of his widow, has been placed to the credit of the Society's Endowment Fund.

'In common with other similar institutions in these days of War, precautionary measures have been taken with regard to the protection of the Castle and its contents, and a fire-fighter has been continuously employed for night duty since last December. To ensure greater safety by distribution, a

¹ The total cost to the Society of *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxvi, amounts to £214 3*s*. 4*d*.

large number of the Society's most valuable books and also a large selection of specimens from the Museum have been removed from Taunton Castle to various places within twelve miles radius. Insurance under the War Damage Act has been dealt with as far as the Society's finances will permit : further consideration of the matter will be required at the close of the summer.

' All this indicates that the Society has had to incur much additional expense in maintenance. Owing to the Asst.-Curator having been called up for military service, the monetary help from the Education Committee of the County Council has been reviewed ; but the reduced grant now being made goes a long way in helping to meet the increased cost of the upkeep, insurance, and protection of the Museum.

' Although the financial position of the Society may be considered satisfactory up to date, it is anticipated that, after the War, changed conditions will necessitate certain alterations in the scope of the Society's activities.

' The most striking acquisition to the Museum during the year is the collection of eighty-one pottery and porcelain cottages and other buildings and fifty-four figures kindly presented by Mrs. Somerset Clive ; also a small collection of books on ceramics, glass, etc., which she used during her collecting days. The greater number of the pieces are of Staffordshire ware, but some of them are Rockingham, Coalport, Worcester, Bow, Swansea, Derby, Leeds and Wedgwood. They have been exhibited together on the ground floor of the Constable's Tower.

' Other interesting gifts are constables' staves from Mrs. Cooke Hurle, a pillion, *c.* 1800, in good condition from Capt. John Bailward, a small Bible with Stuart needlework cover from Mr. F. H. Cridland, and Dr. F. J. Allen's collection of Somerset negatives, lantern slides and photographs.

' Last year the arrival of the J. L. Newman collection of British birds, which was presented by Mrs. R. M. Pearson, greatly improved the ornithological collections in the Museum. This year British entomology stands out prominently, for the collections of the late George Donne Hancock and the late W. B. Butler are finding a home at the Castle. Both the Ornithological and Botanical Sections have carried out their

usual activities during the year, and the latter has had a few field-days. It is hoped that a Folk-lore Section may mature when brighter times come.

‘ In the Library department the books bequeathed by the late Roland Paul and the late Hugh Daniel Badcock, and also those acquired from the John Coles collection (Wellington) have been catalogued. One of the chief gifts has been the three handsomely-bound volumes, presented by the President, containing his, Abbot Horne’s, photographs of all the scratch-dials and dovecotes of Somerset.

‘ Ever since last autumn the Society has given office accommodation on three mornings a week to the British School of Egyptian Archæology, the leaders of which, Sir Flinders and Lady Petrie, are now resident in Jerusalem. For a time, too, much of the work of the official Committee on the History of Parliament was being carried on at Taunton Castle.

‘ No excavations have been undertaken by or for the Parent Society during the year, and although considerable areas of land have been disturbed for the purposes of the War, for drainage of low-lying ground, etc., very few archæological remains have been found. Excavations on behalf of H.M. Office of Works have been carried out by Mr. W. F. Grimes at Charmy Down, near Bath, and close to the Gloucestershire border; and the excavation of barrows in the parish of Ston Easton is now taking place under the Office of Works.

‘ Last summer much exploratory work was done at Burcombe, commonly called Burgundy, near Minehead, under the auspices of the West Somerset Branch of the Society. It is hoped this work may be completed (perhaps this summer) before the details of the investigation can be properly described for publication.

‘ Tarr Steps over the Barle in Hawkrigde parish have suffered seriously during the last year or two by storm and deluge. The County Council has the difficult matter of repair in hand at the present time, and it is expected that reconstruction as far as possible will be undertaken a little later on.

‘ One reads in the press of the further wonders which have been revealed in the limestone caverns of Mendip, in the parish of Charterhouse (between Lower Farm and Tynning’s Farm), and spelæologists and others have great expectations of being

able to gain admission to the more accessible of these caves after the War.

'The Wyndham Hall, in which we are assembled, has been used as much as ever, not only for the Wyndham Trust school lectures, but by A.R.P. and other war and commercial organizations, and by various bodies interested in science, art and literature.

'The attendances at the Museum have been well maintained during the War period; the numbers, however, are somewhat less in the summer season owing to the reduction in holiday-making visitors, but in the winter the visits of the general public and H.M. Forces have appreciably increased. During 1940 the Castle was visited by 8,012 persons, including 1,310 members.'

On the proposition of the Mayor of Taunton, seconded by Dr. F. C. Eeles, the adoption of the Report was carried unanimously. The latter speaker made allusion to the excavations which had been conducted by the West Somerset Branch of the Society at the chapel of the Holy Trinity at Burcombe, near Minehead.

Finances

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO THE SOCIETY'S

Publication and Illustration Fund

DURING THE YEAR 1941

	£	s.	d
Bulleid, Dr. A.	4	12	0
Field, Rev. H. E.	2	2	0
Horne, Rt. Rev. Abbot E.	1	0	0
Maxwell-Lyte, Miss A.	1	5	0
Vivian-Neal, A. W.	15	5	
Woodforde, Rev. C.	5	0	
Ward Perkins, J. B.	4	6	

Mr. ARTHUR E. EASTWOOD, Chairman of Finance, presented the Accounts of the Society for 1940, and they were formally adopted. They have already been printed in *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxvi.

The Accounts for 1941 will be printed at the end of this volume.

Election of Members and Officers

At the beginning of the Meeting the following six candidates were elected members of the Society: Mr. W. Leslie Price, Mr. M. B. Turner, Mrs. P. B. Lightfoot, Mrs. Lister-Empson, the Rev. J. McW. Vallance, and Bristol Grammar School.

The vacancies in the list of Vice-Presidents were filled by the re-election of Dr. A. Bulleid and the Rt. Rev. Dr. F. Underhill, Bishop of Bath and Wells.

Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, Honorary Editor, Major F. M. E. Kennedy, Honorary Secretary, and Mr. F. L. England, Honorary Treasurer, were re-elected.

In the Council of fifteen there were six vacancies. Mrs. C. W. H. Rawlins, Dr. W. B. Winckworth and Mr. H. Corder were re-elected, and the following were elected: Lord St. Audries, Sir Alexander Rodger, and Sir William Savage.

Somerset Record Society

The continuance of war and the consequent stringency is making further inroads into the list of subscribers; there have been six deaths and resignations during the year 1940, without any addition of new members.

Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte's death has been a very great loss; for apart from his literary contributions to the list of volumes published, he had been from the earliest years of the Society the main director of its policy. Owing to his position in the Public Record Office, and his knowledge of the resources of the county, the Council relied implicitly upon his judgment.

On a closer examination it was found that the Depositions from the records of the Consistory Court were not suitable for publication for the volume for 1940. Instead of this, subscribers will receive a further volume of Episcopal Registers, 1518 to 1559. Sir H. Maxwell-Lyte had practically completed this volume at the time of his death; the Dean of Wells has seen it through the press.