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ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1975

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st DECEMBER, 1975

Council presents its One Hundred and Seventeenth Report and Statement of Accounts for 1974.

OBITUARY

Council records with great regret the death of our Vice-Presidents Sir Edward Hardy and Mr. R. H. Goodsall, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., of Mr. J. E. L. Caiger, member of Council, and of our oldest member, the Rev. J. E. Woodruff, B.A., who joined the Society in 1910.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Corpus Christi Fraternity Hall, Maidstone, on Saturday, 17th May, when the Council's Annual Report and Accounts for 1974 were received and adopted. Mr. K. A. Pollock, F.C.A. was re-elected Honorary Auditor of the Society.

The proposal to raise the subscription failed to command the two-thirds majority necessary for a change of Rules.

In the afternoon, Professor A. M. Everitt, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S., of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester, gave a most interesting lecture on "The Making of the English Landscape" to a large audience of members and their friends.

THE PRESIDENCY

Consequent upon the failure of the proposal to increase the subscription, the President felt obliged to resign. At their meeting on June 7th, Council unanimously elected our Vice-President, Mr. Frank W. Jessup, C.B.E., M.A., LL.B., F.S.A., to fill the vacancy.

COUNCIL

At the Annual General Meeting the following were elected to Council: Dr. P. H. G. Draper, B.Sc., D.I.C., Ph.D., Mr. F. Jenkins, M.A., F.S.A., Mrs. M. C. Lebon, M.A., Mr. M.D. Nightingale, O.B.E., B.Litt., F.S.A., Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A., and Mr. E. W. Parkin.

LOCAL ORGANISATION

Mrs. M. E. Davies has resigned as Local Secretary for Tunbridge Wells, but continues as Assistant Secretary, and her place has been taken by Mr. D. C. Tullett. Mrs. P. P. Day has resigned as Local Secretary for the Hundred of Hoo.

Council have decided that in the New Year a reorganisation of local areas, based mainly upon the Local Government Districts, will be carried out. The Hon. General Secretary would like, therefore, to take this opportunity to thank all those who have done so much for the Society under the old system and to express the hope that they will be willing to continue to give their services under the new arrangement.

REPORT, 1975

BUILDING RECORDING

As a contribution to European Architectural Heritage Year, the Society, in association with the C.P.R.K., has organised at Ashford two public lectures and a course of study on the structure, analysis and recording of ancient buildings. The course, which has been most ably conducted by Mr. K. W. E. Gravett, M.Sc.(Eng.), F.S.A., has proved most successful.

BRANCH REPORTS

Maidstone Branch. Reported by Mr. P. E. Oldham, M. A.

The 1975 programme consisted of three lectures organised jointly with the Maidstone Area Archaeological Group. The lectures were 'Kentish Books', by Mr. P. H. G. Draper, B.Sc., D.I.C., Ph.D., 'Excavations at Leeds Priory', by Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A., and 'The Archaeology of Maidstone', by Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A. The latter lecture followed an exhibition of work from the area, including a map of find-spots, prepared by Mr. R. M. Gurton, and photographs of local buildings, prepared by Miss P. Milton and Mr. M. A. Ocock. A continued increase in membership can be reported and the meetings of the Branch stimulate recruitment.

Tunbridge Wells Branch. Reported by Mrs. M. E. Davies, B.A.

After a period of comparative inactivity due to the ill health of the Local Secretary, who felt obliged to resign from that office in May, the Branch has revived under the enthusiastic leadership of Mr. D. C. Tullett.

Meanwhile no summer outings could be arranged this year and only two meetings were held, one, addressed by Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A., on 'Kentish Coin Hoards' and the other (jointly with the Museum Society) by the outgoing Secretary, Mrs. Davies, on 'Anglo-Saxon Life and Literature.'

For the first time in its history, as far as is known, the Branch is having a series of regular monthly meetings, for the period October 1975 to March 1976. The programme was circulated to members living in the Tunbridge Wells area.

While this report is being written other ways of fostering interest in the K.A.S. are under consideration, notably mini-exhibitions in shop windows and elsewhere.

The new Branch Secretary, Mr. D. C. Tullett, may be contacted at 41 Farmcombe Road, Tunbridge Wells (Tun. Wells 30981) and members are urged to give him all possible support so that the Branch may continue to flourish and expand.

Mrs. M. E. Davies, B.A. will continue as Assistant Secretary and Treasurer and members may still get in touch with her by telephoning Tunbridge Wells 29857.

MEMBERSHIP

The Society's membership continued to rise in 1975 and now stands at 1450. In view of ever-rising costs, it is essential that this increase should continue, and all members are asked to do their utmost to assist in this.

FINANCE

The accounts for 1974, adopted at the Annual General Meeting, are published with this report. It would assist in the smooth running of the Society if members would pay their subscriptions by Bankers' Order and, if possible, with Seven-Year Covenants to enable the Society to recover Income Tax on their subscriptions at no cost to themselves. Forms

REPORT, 1975

for this purpose can be obtained from the Hon. General Secretary, the Hon. Membership Secretary or the Hon. Treasurer.

ARCHÆOLOGIA CANTIANA

Volume LXXXIX was published early in 1975. The volume maintains its unbroken high standard under the editorship of Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., and the papers it contains cover a wide field of Archaeology and History.

In November was published, as Volume XC, the General Index to Volumes LXV-LXXXVIII. This was compiled by our member Mrs. A. Stace, under the general direction of the Hon. Editor, and both are to be congratulated upon the result, which is a model of what a General Index should be and a most valuable reference book for all who are interested in the history of our County.

EXCAVATIONS COMMITTEE

Applications for grants towards the cost of excavations were approved by Council, subject to the usual conditions, as follows:

Eastry Anglo-Saxon Cemetery (Mrs. S. C. Hawkes)	£50
Eccles Roman Villa (Mr. A. P. Detsicas)	£50
Milton Blockhouse, Gravesend (Mr. V. T. C. Smith)	£20

Any applications for support for excavations in 1977 should be made by 1st November of the preceding year, but it is emphasised that the financial difficulties of the Society at the present time will make it difficult to give such help on the same scale as formerly.

Reports on excavations supported by the Society appear elsewhere in this volume, including a summary of the season's work undertaken by the Society at Leeds Priory.

An important recent development has been the setting up of a committee to deal with emergency excavations in the County. This is to be known as the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Kent and comprises representatives from the Council for Kentish Archaeology, the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit, the Kent Archaeological Society, the Department of the Environment, the Kent County Council and the Museums Service. Lt.-Col. A. A. Johnson acted as Chairman at the Committee's early meetings and his tactful initiative was, indeed, largely responsible for its formation. His unfortunate death is, therefore, a sad blow to the undertaking. Our President, Mr. F. W. Jessup, has kindly agreed to fill the office of Chairman for the future. The bodies represented on this Committee are necessarily limited by considerations of administrative convenience, but under the constitution any individual or organisation desiring the support of C.R.A.K. in undertaking an emergency excavation, including possible financial assistance, is entitled to be represented at a Committee meeting in order to state their case.

In response to our appeal in the K.A.S. Calendar, over forty persons have indicated that they wish to be included in the Society's register of members willing to take part in active archaeological work. This will be most useful for future reference and the response is greatly appreciated. The appeal is still open.

The Society sponsored a further Field Archaeology Meeting held at Maidstone District Library on November 15th, 1975. It followed similar lines to that held the previous year. Mr. J. Bradshaw gave an illustrated

REPORT, 1975

talk on 'The Discovery and Recognition of Earthworks'; Miss E. Melling, B.A., spoke on 'The Use of Documentary Evidence'; and Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A., outlined the results of 'A Survey of Hermitage Farm'. An exhibition displayed in the lecture room evoked considerable interest: Mr. Stephen Caiger provided an amazingly rich and varied assemblage of nineteenth-century clay tobacco pipes; Mr. Simpson arranged a display of archaeological photographs; the Maidstone District Archaeological Group showed the results of a survey of St. Cuthbert's Cottage; and Mrs. M. C. Lebon, M.A., exhibited material relating to field-work at Benenden School. Once again the arrangements were in the capable hands of Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Connell, while Mrs. N. Caiger and Miss K. Roome assisted in providing refreshments. It is hoped to hold another meeting next year (1976) and suggestions as to suitable subjects will be welcomed by the organisers.

EXCURSIONS 1975 REPORT

Dover, 10th May. Visits were made to the Maison Dieu, St. Edmund's Chapel, the Western Heights and Crabble Mill. The Society's thanks are due to Mr. E. W. Parkin and Mrs. R. Coveney, Curator of Dover Museum, for their assistance and support. Special thanks are due to the Local Secretary for Dover, Mr. T. D. Crellin, who organised the excursion and, in spite of considerable physical difficulties, led the party throughout the day.

Sturry and Fordwich, 28th June. Visits were made to Milner Court, Sturry and Fordwich Churches, Fordwich Town Hall, Watergate House, Monk's Hall, The Manor House, Tancrey, Mead Manor and Blaxland Farm. Very special thanks are due to Miss K. McIntosh and Mr. K. W. E. Gravett, who co-operated in the planning and organisation of the excursion and, especially, to Miss McIntosh who provided the tea. Thanks are also due to the many kind people who allowed us to look over their houses and to those who helped and gave their assistance in many ways, namely: Mrs. M. Sparks, Miss F. Palmer, Mrs. P. Gilling, Mr. and Mrs. J. Ward, Mr. C. Walker, Mr. N. Graham, Mr. S. E. Rigold, Mr. F. Jenkins, the Revd. P. Gausden, the Revd. J. Edmonds and Mr. J. E. Collard.

East Grinstead, 26th July. Visits were made to Worth Church, the Sackville College, Puttenden Manor and the Watermill Museum, Haxted. Our thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Wood of the Sackville College, Mr. D. G. A. Sanders, Church Warden of Worth, and to the Curator of Haxted Mill for their co-operation and assistance.

Faversham, 13th September. Visits were made to Preston Church, Chart Mill, Davington Church and Priory, the 'Hasard', Faversham Town and the Old Grammar School. Again our thanks are due to Mr. K. W. E. Gravett for his continued support and assistance and to the Faversham Society's Local Secretary, Mr. A. Gidlow, members of the Faversham Society, Mr. C. Gibbs, of Davington Priory, Councillor Britten, of 'Hasard' and Mrs. Lloyd, of the Old Grammar School.

LIBRARY AND COLLECTIONS

The following books and booklets have been added to the Library:
A History of Saint Mary's Church, Bexley, Kent, by K. M. Roome, given by the author; *Through this Door: St. Michael's Church, East Peckham*, by

REPORT, 1975

Margaret Lawrence, given by the author; offprint: *A Medieval Jug found in London, decorated with human and animal figures*, by G. C. Dunning, given by the author; *Maidstone Our Heritage*, by Susan Legouix, purchased; *Bexley Village*, by P. J. Tester, given by the author; *Kent Family History Society, Journal*, i, nos. 1-5, given by P. E. Oldham; *Anglo-Saxon Garnet-inlaid Disc and Composite Brooches*, by R. Avent, purchased.

The Römisch-Germanisches Zentral Museum, Mainz, and the Museum für Ur-und Frühgeschichte, Potsdam, have been added to the list of corresponding societies with whom the Society exchanges publications.

REPORT ON THE TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF BUILDING RECORDERS, HELD IN THE MUSEUM, MAIDSTONE, ON SATURDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 1975.

The conference this year, at Maidstone on October 4th, was attended by some twenty members.

The first speaker, Mr. John Parsons, described the process of restoration of the Tudor Cottages at Foot's Cray, and showed that they were not Tudor at all, but dated from about 1870, although they incorporated old timber carefully re-used. His excavations of the surrounding area only revealed Victorian artifacts and this suggested that the cottages were built on a new site.

Next, Mr. Peter Gray spoke about the single-aisled hall at Skinners Farm, Chiddingstone. Interestingly, this appeared to be of an unusually late date, perhaps late fifteenth century.

Lastly, Mr. Andrew Webster described nos. 184-6 High Street, Tonbridge, the two town houses he had surveyed in detail and lucidly explained their complicated structural history. Largely due to Mr. Webster's excellent report at the public inquiry, these houses are not now to be demolished.

Finally, the Chairman, Mr. K. W. E. Gravett, thanked the Benthif Trustees, for the use of the room and especially thanked Mr. L. R. A. Grove, for his kindness, hospitality and encouragement over twelve years. The next Conference of Building Recorders will be held on October 2nd, 1976.

CHURCHES COMMITTEE

Considerable progress has been made in the plans to preserve Murston Old Church, which has now been listed as an Ancient Monument. Grants totalling £1920 have been offered by the Society and by the Friends of Friendless Churches, Sittingbourne and North Downs Society, Kent County Council and Swale Council towards the cost of essential repairs. The Committee are also hopeful of support from the Ancient Monuments Board of the Department of the Environment, which would allow more ambitious restoration work to be undertaken.

Further contributions have been received towards completing work on the Roper and Hugessen memorials in Lynsted Church, leaving about £800 still to be found.

A successful outcome now appears assured in the case of two Canterbury City Churches in which the Committee has been interested. Plans to convert Holy Cross to a suitable alternative use as the City Guildhall have now been approved. Ownership of the tower of St. Mary Magdalen has now been transferred to the City of Canterbury who have agreed to glaze the openings and to carry out other basic repairs. The Victoria and Albert Museum are to restore the Whitfield monument in the tower.

The Committee has expressed its concern at the growing number of Churches which are now of necessity kept locked, with no indication as to where the key may be obtained.

KENT COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE: REPORT OF THE KENT HISTORIC BUILDINGS COMMITTEE, 1974-75

1. It is a matter of great satisfaction to the Committee that the Priory outbuildings, Orpington, have now been most successfully restored. The Committee, along with other bodies, had been trying since 1950 to save this interesting range of buildings from demolition, and had been faced throughout with apparent determination on the part of the local Borough Council to demolish them. The Chairman of the company which has carried out the restoration kindly showed members of the Committee round the buildings, and was congratulated on what he had done.

2. The fate of the once most attractive Queen Anne Ripple House, situated near to the church, hangs in the balance. It would cost a very large sum to acquire and restore it, and the District Council, while considering compulsory purchase, is endeavouring to ascertain whether anyone would be prepared to buy it from the Council and to guarantee its preservation. It is deplorable that it has been neglected for so long, which led to it being savagely vandalized.

3. Arising from reports in the Press to the effect that the new owner of Mereworth Castle, one of the most important buildings in the British Isles, was proposing to carry out certain restoration of structural defects, restoration of works of art, and replanning of accommodation, several members of the Committee, by prior arrangement with the P.R.O. of the firm carrying out the work, visited the Castle and were shown what is being done. As a result of the visit it is clear that the work is being done in a responsible manner, and that there is no cause for disquiet.

4. The long history of the widening of Tonbridge High Street, involving the demolition of several listed buildings, would appear to have been taken a stage further by the acceptance by the Secretary of State of the recommendation of his Inspector, who carried out the public inquiry, to refuse consent to demolish Nos. 184, 184a, 184b, and 186, while granting consent in the case of No. 210.

5. What the S.P.A.B., with which the Committee keeps in close touch, describes as one of the most difficult cases at the present time, is that of the Darnley Mausoleum at Cobham. It was included, along with other buildings, in an illustrated article in *Country Life* on 26th September 1974 under the heading 'Conservation in Action—A case of guardianship?', which showed that money had been found from the Historic Buildings Council and K.C.C. to brick-up the windows and doors to protect it from vandals, and that within six months the new brickwork had been undone. From the practical point of view the only way this building will not attract the attention of hooligans is to have it inhabited in some way, and meanwhile the Committee has suggested to the District Council that, unless some other means can be found to restore and preserve this interesting building, listed Grade I, a fence be erected similar to the one surrounding the monument to Lord Romney in Mote Park, Maidstone.

6. St. Michael's Church, East Peckham is now in the care of the Redundant Churches Fund. Opposite to it is an interesting weatherboard barn with a tile roof, no windows, and one entrance. Inside it are a number of stalls, with boards giving the names of parishioners to whom each pair

REPORT, 1975

of stalls was allotted, presumably for use during church services. Many of the stalls bear good old Kentish names. The building is very pleasant to look at and interesting historically, and it is hoped that the Redundant Churches Fund will be able to 'stretch a point' and repair the stable, and it will be asking the Department of the Environment to list the building.

7. The Kent Building Preservation Trust has regretfully been obliged to sell the Ferry Cottages, Stone-in-Oxney, which it had partly restored. This is a sad report to have to make in European Architectural Heritage Year and would seem to indicate that the kind of revolving fund originally envisaged is not practicable unless an initial large sum is available.

By Order of the Council,

A. C. Harrison,

Hon. General Secretary

1st January, 1976.