

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1954

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1954

Council presents its 96th Report, and Statement of Accounts for 1954. (The Statement of Accounts will be circulated with the notice convening the Annual General Meeting.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Museum, Maidstone, on the 28th April, 1954.

The President presented the Report and Accounts for 1953, which were adopted. He referred to losses which the Society had sustained through the death of a number of its members, including Mr. F. H. Day, a Trustee, and Dr. Armstrong Bowes, for many years a member of Council. A large number of new members had joined the Society during the year, but more would always be welcome. Field work and excavations were in progress in several parts of the County and the important Roman barrow excavation at Holborough would be fully reported in *Archæologia Cantiana*. The President spoke appreciatively of Mr. B. W. Swithinbank's generosity in preparing an index to volumes 46 to 64 of *Archæologia Cantiana*, which it was hoped would be published during the course of the year.

After the luncheon adjournment about 100 members and their friends heard an address by the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Euston on the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. Lord Euston, whose address was admirably and fully illustrated, spoke of the work of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Group and the National Trust, and referred to a large number of buildings which, thanks to the activities of these bodies, had escaped destruction, as well as to others, several in Kent, which, unfortunately had suffered that fate. Lord Euston was warmly thanked for his address.

THE LATE MR. B. H. ST. J. O'NEIL

It is with deep regret that Council must record the sudden death, in October, 1954, of Mr. B. H. St. J. O'Neil, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society. Himself a Kentish man, Mr. O'Neil found time, in spite of the responsibilities of his office of Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, to take an active interest in the affairs of the Society, and he was a regular attender of Council meetings, where his experience and wise judgment will be greatly missed.

MEMBERSHIP

55 new members were elected during the year, but there were a considerable number of resignations so that at the end of the year membership stood at approximately 1,032.

Mr. I. D. Margary, F.S.A., Major F. W. Tomlinson, F.S.A., and Dr. Gordon Ward, F.S.A., were elected Honorary members in recognition of the value of their services to the Society.

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COUNCIL

Four retiring members, namely : Mrs. E. V. Piercy Fox, Mr. J. Burgon Bickersteth, Major Eric Clarke and Mr. W. Urry, were re-elected to serve on Council for a further term of four years. The other two retiring members, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen and Mr. F. W. Tyler, felt unable to stand for re-election and Wing Commander W. V. Dumbreck and Mr. E. T. Mortimore were elected in their place.

LIBRARY AND COLLECTIONS

Council records with gratitude the acquisition of the Saxon objects which were found on the Conyngham estate at Bifrons by the gamekeeper who continued to dig after the Society's excavations (under the direction of John Brent) had finished in 1864. They represent an earlier and simpler period of the Bifrons people and may help to elucidate the origin of the unusual settlement. This material was kept at Bifrons and there remained until the contents of the house were sold ; in 1947 the Earl of Mount Charles (who had inherited the property from his uncle, the 5th Marquess Conyngham) gave it to Major F. W. Tomlinson, F.S.A., who has now generously presented it to the Society. It has been placed on exhibition at Maidstone Museum with the rest of the Bifrons collection.

Council gratefully records also the gift by Dr. Gordon Ward, F.S.A., of his remarkable collection of manuscript and printed material relating to the archaeology and history of the County. By arrangement with the County Archivist the material in Dr. Ward's collection which is of an archive nature will be housed with the County archives and will, of course, be available for inspection by members of the Society. The other material will be kept in the Society's room at Maidstone Museum.

Present and future generations of scholars will have reason to be grateful for the munificence of these two gifts.

The following other additions by gift or purchase were made to the Library and collections during the year :

The Place Names of Oxfordshire, parts I and II, English Place Name Society, Vols. XXIII and XXIV : gift of Mr. B. W. Swithinbank, C.B.E. *Sutton-at-Hone Church and its Worshippers*, by Horace J. Balls : purchased. *St. John the Evangelist, Groombridge, The Church of All Saints, Brenchley*, by William H. Fear, *A History of the Parish of Pembury, Kent and History of Speldhurst*, by D. D. Mackinnon : gifts of Mrs. V. M. F. Desborough. *Eynsford* ; *A Story through the Ages*, by W. I. Curnow : gift of Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates, F.S.A. *Specimens and Parts* ; *containing a History of the County of Kent*, by Samuel Henshall : gift of Mr. Frank W. Jessup, F.S.A. Historical Notes which appeared in the Parish Magazine of SS. Gregory and Martin, Wye, 1953 : gift of Wye Historical Society per Mr. E. T. Mortimore. *The Inns of Cranbrook and Watermills and Windmills of Cranbrook*, by C. C. R. Pile (Nos. 6 and 7 of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Local History Society's *Notes and Records*) : gifts of the Author. *The Denehole Controversy*, by John E. L. Caiger : gift of the Author. *Brasted Place and its Owners*, by H. G. H. Singleton ; and Lambert Larking's *The Domesday Book of Kent*—the author's own copy, with the original proof sheets having his corrections, 3 folio volumes : gifts of Dr. Gordon Ward, F.S.A. *Archæology*, by S. Graham Brade-Birks : from the publishers, English Universities Press, Ltd. *Herefordshire, Chapters written to celebrate the centenary of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* : gift of the

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Woolhope Club. *Archæology in Britain—Observing the Past*, by I. Noël Hume : gift of the Author. *Heraldry in the Churches of Beckenham*, by David Christie-Murray : gift of the Author. *The XVth Mile Stage*, by Harold Mair : gift of the Author. *The Story of Biddenden* (Biddenden Local History Society) : purchased. *Archæological Bibliography for Great Britain and Ireland, 1950-1951* (Council for British Archæology) : purchased.

Photograph of Ashurst Bridge, *circa* 1937 : gift of Mr. W. K. McDermott. Two horse-shoes, probably 15th to 16th century : gift of the President, Major M. Teichman Derville, F.S.A.

HONORARY LIBRARIAN

Mr. Joyce felt himself obliged to resign as Honorary Librarian because of pressure of other work, and at the Annual General Meeting, Mr. A. Warhurst was appointed in his place.

EXCURSIONS

The following excursions were arranged during the year :

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>
Gravesend District	Saturday, 24th April.
Mereworth and the Peckhams ..	Saturday, 19th June.
Tenterden and Appledore	Saturday, 17th July.
Faversham Town and District ..	Saturday, 18th September.

The excursions were all successful and much appreciated by the members and their friends who were able to take part in them.

In addition a weekend meeting was held at Kingsgate College from the 28th to 30th May when members of the Society dealt in a number of papers with different aspects of practical archæology. The meeting was well attended and certainly one of the most successful of its kind which the Society has held.

RECORDS BRANCH

It is with regret that the Records Committee record the death of Mr. E. P. Boys Richardson who had been Honorary Treasurer of the Branch for many years. For the time being the Society's Honorary Treasurer, Mr. Sam Mendel, will look after the financial affairs of the Records Branch.

The writing of the Introduction to Feet of Fines, 1195 to 1272, has been completed and the whole of the manuscript is now with the printers.

EXCAVATIONS AND DISCOVERIES

Bexley

Mr. P. J. Tester reports : Hall Place, Bexley, has recently been extensively repaired by its present owners, the Bexley Borough Council. This interesting old house, which is of 16th and 17th century age, has been unoccupied for many years. It is now open on Sundays for public inspection. A fact revealed by the recent work and worthy of record is that the 16th century rubble walls contain great quantities of re-used medieval carved stones, such as voussoirs, capitals, shafts and bases. So much of this has been found that it seems certain that the material used in the construction

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of the Tudor house was largely derived from a dissolved and demolished religious house, a conclusion supported by the fact that Sir John Champeneis, who is generally accepted as the builder of this portion of Hall Place, received the property in 1537, a year after the general Dissolution commenced.

Canterbury

The work of the Canterbury Excavation Committee continued at Easter and again during the summer under the direction of Mr. S. S. Frere. The main effort was directed to the site of the Bypass Road near Whitehall Road, where evidence of Belgic occupation was discovered. A few Neolithic finds were also made. At three other sites work was done on the Roman defences. A tower in the City Wall at the Dane John angle was sectioned ; at the Riding Gate an area was cleared along the inside face of the wall, north of the Gate ; and in Burgate Lane a deep trench was cut against the interior of the City Wall to examine the defences.

Deal

Mr. W. P. D. Stebbing reports the following : (1) An old costrel of the 16th century or earlier date has been fished up from the sea off Deal. (2) At St. Margaret's Bay a Type A beaker and at a rather higher level an early Iron Age site with bones, burnt and chipped flints and typical pottery, have been found. (3) A probably 2nd century cremation burial consisting of a large dark grey-ware jar with fragmentary bones, two small pots (broken) and fragments of thin glass, possibly of a small cup, have been found in a round-bottomed circular pit in the chalk on the new housing estate at Waterworks Road, Upper Deal.

Dover

The Dover College Archæological Society followed up Mrs. Murray-Threipland's excavations in Dover by digging a further trench in Adrian Street ; this will be dealt with in her report.

Examination of the wall painting in the Refectory at Dover College has revealed traces of true fresco underneath the plaster at present covering most of the area, but investigation is not yet complete.

Faversham

Mr. S. Wilson reports that the revived Faversham Historical Society have done a good deal of work on the site of Faversham Abbey, although the excavations have so far yielded nothing of importance. In readiness for the Kent Archæological Society excursion in September the Faversham Society cleared much of the overgrowth from the ruins of Stone church. Further work has since been done and it is now possible for the ruins to be examined more closely than for many years past.

Keston

Mrs. Piercy Fox reports : the new owners of Caesar's Camp, Holwood Park, Keston, have very kindly offered facilities for excavation and resistivity surveying and that is the big task ahead. As a preliminary to excavation a topographical study has been made with models of the physical features, geology, etc., and a huge ditch has been discovered 66 feet wide

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with sides 35 feet deep (now partly filled in) which crosses a strategic bridge of chalk, the only level and unforested approach to Caesar's Camp from the South and East. It is not proved by excavation to be an outlying defence of the Camp, but it is impossible to escape this conclusion on all other grounds. It is proposed to call it the Shire Ditch from Shire Lane, an old name for the road which flanks the lip of the ditch.

Lullingstone

Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates reports : the whole 1954 season was taken up by investigations to determine finally the date of the Bath Block and to find out how the Roman building was first sited.

To effect this, an immense trench, eight feet wide and attaining a depth of thirteen feet, was dug into the hillside immediately to the west of the Furnace. The section was exposed right down to the natural chalk, which was found to have been naturally terraced, and the builders had flattened the highest terrace into a sort of backyard. The Roman débris over this was some feet in thickness, and from an examination of the pottery fragments in the lowest and earliest levels, the late Antonine date (c. A.D. 180) for the construction of the Bath Block was confirmed.

A second trench was begun behind the Apse containing the Europa Mosaic, and a third, parallel, one is projected farther north. These three trenches will eventually disclose the extent of the immediate environs on the west.

The amount of clay-and-flint hillwash is prodigious, seven feet thick in the long trench, where it overlies another six feet of successive Roman deposits.

At the north-west corner of the Barn, just outside its wall, a deep trench was found containing much coarse native pottery of the early 1st century A.D. It included one almost complete little bead-rim bowl and part of a Samian platter of Claudian date, in addition to many animal bones and an iron lamp. This ditch is the earliest evidence of occupation on the site and became filled up not long before the villa was built about A.D. 90-100.

It is hoped next season (1955) to obtain the east end of the Basement Room with its filling containing the remaining painted plaster from the Christian Room above, and to investigate the east façade of the house and the extent in that direction of the Bath block. This work will probably take place in March, and members of the Society are invited to participate in the work.

Lyminge

Mr. A. Warhurst reports : during the summer of 1954 a Jutish cemetery at Lyminge was excavated on behalf of the Society under the direction of Mr. Alan Warhurst, Assistant Curator, Maidstone Museum. Forty-four inhumation graves of the 6th century A.D. were excavated ; the grave furniture is both rich and varied. The objects have been given by the owner of the land, Mr. A. Hall, Riversdale, Lyminge, to the Society and a full report of the season's work will appear in *Archæologia Cantiana*.

Otford

Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates reports, concerning the Charne Building Site, west of river Darent and 200 yards south of the Pilgrims' Way : A Roman site was suspected as a result of finds from service trenches. A

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large amount of Romano-British pottery dated c. A.D. 100-200 came to light during a three-day intensive excavation designed to establish dating, stratification, and if possible the type of building. A modified grid-system was used, the building being found at the third test—a very satisfactory circumstance. A *denarius* of Commodus dated A.D. 191-192 was found in the highest of the three undisturbed Roman levels and helps to secure the latest dating. The building was of wood, probably with a thatched roof and was clearly of some extent. A number of horn-cores and animal bones suggest that it may have been a cowhouse belonging to a neighbouring farmstead. It is an exceedingly interesting find. A full report will appear in due course.

The dig was conducted by the Darent Valley Archæological Research Group, at the suggestion of, and helped by, the Otford and District Historical Society. Permission to dig was kindly given by the Sevenoaks Rural District Council ; the foreman and his men were most helpful.

Southborough

Mrs. Desborough reports the finding of a Neolithic polished flint hand-axe during the excavations for the foundations of a new secondary school at Southborough. It has been deposited at Maidstone Museum and will be described in *Archæologia Cantiana* by Mr. Grove.

LOCAL SECRETARIES AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Dane and Mr. E. H. Clark have resigned as Local Secretaries for the Tonbridge and Maidstone districts. They have been succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates, F.S.A., as Local Secretary for Tonbridge and Mr. R. C. Stone as Local Secretary for Maidstone. Council wishes to take this opportunity of expressing, both to the retiring and to the new Local Secretaries, its gratitude for their work on the Society's behalf.

Mrs. Piercy Fox, Local Secretary for Bromley, arranged another very successful meeting at her house in Keston on 23rd October, when a large and appreciative audience listened to a talk on Charles Darwin, given by Dr. W. E. Swinton, F.G.S., of the Department of Geology, British Museum (N. H.). The subject, fascinating in itself, was made more so by the knowledge which Dr. Swinton obviously possessed of the life and work of the great naturalist, and by the manner in which he communicated it to his listeners.

After the talk the audience inspected an interesting exhibition arranged by Mrs. Piercy Fox ; it was devoted to a regional survey of the North-West Kent area, with emphasis on the Pleistocene Geology, Archæology and History. The survey was illustrated with maps and models and a well-arranged collection of Pleistocene fossils from a number of sites, authoritatively identified and documented by Mr. A. G. Davis, and by our members Mr. J. N. Carreck and Mr. M. P. Kerney.

Mr. John Evans expressed the gratitude of the Society to Dr. Swinton for his talk and to Mrs. Piercy Fox for arranging the meeting and for her kindly hospitality. The meeting closed with members and their friends discussing the many interesting topics arising from a most pleasant meeting.

At Tunbridge Wells on the 6th March Mrs. Desborough, the Society's Local Secretary, arranged a lecture given by Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates on Lullingstone Roman Villa and its Christian Chapel. The Tunbridge Wells members enjoyed an excursion, also arranged by Mrs. Desborough, to Boxley Abbey and to Stoneacre, Otham, on the 15th May.

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FINANCE

Council reports with pleasure the generous donation of £500 by Mr. I. D. Margary, F.S.A., towards the cost of publications. A legacy of £100, received under the will of the late Mr. Aymer Vallance, is being used towards the costs of publishing the Index Volume.

A statement of Income and Expenditure for 1954 and a copy of the Balance Sheet at the 31st December, 1954, will be circulated with the notice convening the Annual General Meeting for 1955.

Council again urges members to send their subscriptions promptly to the Collector, Mr. C. W. Hopper, 14 Nunnery Road, Canterbury.

Council would also bring to the notice of members the advantages accruing to the Society from the contributions of members who have signed undertakings to continue payment of their subscriptions for a period of seven years, such undertakings automatically lapsing in the event of death. The effect of this method of payment is that it enables the Society to reclaim Income Tax paid on a gross sum equivalent to the net amount of the subscription, without adding anything to the amount paid by each member concerned. New undertakings may be entered into by members at any time on forms obtainable from the Honorary General Secretary, and Council trusts that many more members will decide to pay their subscriptions in this way.

By Order of the Council,

FRANK W. JESSUP,
Honorary General Secretary.

January, 1955.