

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
ESSEX ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
AT THE TOWN HALL, COLCHESTER,
ON WEDNESDAY, 4 MAY, 1927.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Annual Report was taken as read and adopted.

The President remarked that it had been their intention at that meeting to present a testimonial to Mr. A. G. Wright, who for nearly twenty-five years was curator and librarian, as a token of appreciation from members of the Society and other friends. Unfortunately, owing to illness, Mr. Wright was unable to attend. The sum of 10*l.* 11*s.* 0*d.* had been subscribed, and it was proposed that a cheque for that amount should be handed to Mr. Wright by the Hon. Secretary. The following is a copy of a letter since received from Mr. Wright:—

Denwa Lodge, Colchester.

7 May, 1927.

Dear Mr. Benton,

The very handsome testimonial of one hundred and one pounds eleven shillings you handed to me, subscribed by so many kind friends within and without the Society, fills me with pride and gratitude. Please convey my warmest thanks to one and all.

I was very sorry not to be present at the meeting.

Yours very sincerely,

ARTHUR G. WRIGHT.

THE REV. G. MONTAGU BENTON, M.A., F.S.A.,

Hon. Secretary,

Essex Archæological Society.

In the absence, through illness, of the Hon. Auditor, Mr. J. Avery, the Annual Statement of Accounts was presented by Mr. S. J. Barns, and passed. On the proposition of Mr. Barns it was unanimously agreed that the sympathy of the meeting be conveyed to Mr. Avery, together with its sincere wishes for a happy recovery.

The Bishop of Colchester (Dr. T. A. Chapman) moved a vote of thanks to the President, Vice-Presidents and honorary officers, including the Hon. Secretary, Treasurers, Editor and Auditor. He also proposed that the President (Mr. G. F. Beaumont, F.S.A.), Vice-Presidents, and the Council, with the exception of Miss Nina F. Layard, F.S.A., and Major W. F. Dick, who had left the county, be re-elected. This was unanimously carried, and the President briefly replied.

Mr. P. G. Laver, F.S.A., Mr. Duncan W. Clark, Mr. J. L. Beaumont, and the Hon. Secretary were re-elected as the Society's

representatives on the Museum and Muniment Committee of the Colchester Town Council, on the proposition of Mr. C. F. D. Sperling seconded by Mr. Wykeham Chancellor. Twenty new members were elected.

The Hon. Secretary stated that the Society of Antiquaries had recently been considering the question of the alleged destruction and removal of ancient milestones owing to road-widening schemes, with a view of making representations to the proper authorities should the suspicions entertained prove to be well grounded. He believed that the earliest post-Roman milestones in England were set up on the Cambridge-London road in 1729; and information relating to early milestones in Essex would be welcome.

The following note has since been contributed by Mr. P. G. Laver, F.S.A. :—

The milestones on the Colchester—Alresford—St. Osyth and Clacton road having become very worn were taken up, recut, and replaced in 1912 by Durrant of Colchester. I well remember seeing them being done. I have just seen Durrant and asked him about them, and he told me that the old stones were at least 100 years old, of a brownish Portland stone of most excellent quality, and that they were all there bar one or two which he made up. Some of them had been illegally taken up and were being used in the blacksmith's forge at Alresford as supports for something. The surveyor demanded them, and was met by a curt refusal on the blacksmith's part, but a day or so afterwards the surveyor and a party of his men forcibly took them and handed them over to Durrant to recut. The first one, on Clinghoe hill, was not recut, as it was within the borough; it stood on the north side of the road, but is now missing, though I remember it being in the hedge; it was doubtless removed when the hill was widened some years ago.

Durrant also told me that, when he was at a farm in Great Oakley parish some years since, the farmer asked him to buy some stone stack stands, of which he had about three score. He did not buy, or bought only a dozen, but says that he noticed among them several (three or more) milestones.

With regard to the old milestone on Chitts hill: these go all along the road up through West Bergholt parish, where it is known by the name of the Coach road. It comes out on to the present main road at the top of Nayland hill against Great Horkesley church, and was the old road for coach and animal traffic from Bury St. Edmunds to London, joining the London road at the borough boundary at Stanway.

A search in the County records would show the date of the stones in this neighbourhood; some must be quite early in coaching days, if not before.

Another old milestone, our main Colchester one, which stood in High street, opposite the Red Lion, was removed *c.* 1856 to the Cemetery, and used as a tombstone to a departed worthy! It is still there.

Mrs. Valentine asked if anything could be done to secure the preservation of the oak crane in the old Naval Yard at Harwich, as the yard was now up for sale. Attention was also called to the dilapidated condition of the "Nelson Room" at the Three Cups Hotel.

The Hon. Secretary said that he hoped to visit Harwich shortly, when he would take the opportunity of looking into these matters.

Mr. Wykeham Chancellor reported the discovery, at Birchanger church, of an early Norman doorway, the tympanum of which was carved with the Agnus Dei.

Luncheon was subsequently served at the Red Lion Hotel, the President presiding, supported by the Bishop of Colchester and the Mayor (Councillor C. C. Smaliwood). The President moved a vote of thanks for the use of the Grand Jury Room; the Mayor in responding regretted his inability to be present at the meeting that morning and briefly welcomed the Society to Colchester.

EXCURSION TO LANGHAM.

At 2 p.m. about 150 members and friends—a record attendance for an annual meeting—proceeded by motor-car and char-a-banc to Langham. The Valley House—a picturesque sixteenth-century building, with an early seventeenth-century brick staircase wing—was first visited by kind permission of Lieut.-Col. A. H. Allen, C.B.E. Mr. Duncan Clark, A.R.I.B.A., acted as guide. The staircase is a fine example of the period (see *Trans. E.A.S.*, vol. x., n.s., p. 327, and *The Essex Review*, vol. xxii., p. 196). The Glebe Farm, dating from the sixteenth century, adjoining the churchyard, also received attention. On arriving at the parish church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, the rector, Rev. C. J. S. Ward, offered a welcome and spoke of John Constable, the artist, and his connection with Langham; Mr. Clark afterwards described the building, which does not seem to have been previously visited by the Society. It dates probably from the twelfth century, but was remodelled early in the fourteenth century: the south-west window of the chancel is set in a splayed wall, an unusual and interesting feature; the church also possesses two remarkable oak chests of early date.

At 4.15 p.m. the party was entertained to tea at Langham Hall, by the kindness of Sir Robert Balfour, Bart., and Lady Balfour, who were, however, too unwell to receive their guests. The weather was beautifully warm and sunny, with a temperature exceeding 70 degrees, and tea was served on the spacious lawn, which provided a glorious view of Dedham Vale. Hearty votes of thanks were duly accorded to the host and hostess, and to Mr. Thomas Johnston, the agent, and Mrs. Johnston. In replying Mr. Johnston expressed the regrets of Sir Robert and Lady Balfour in being unable to welcome the Society personally. The Hon. Secretary also proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the Rev. C. J. S. Ward for all that he had done towards making the excursion a success.