

“ ’Tis Sixty Years Since.”

BY H. R. WILTON HALL.

“ So sad is the state of human frailty, that the very things which for importance and merit ought to be remembered, are easily put out of recollection by swift oblivion.” *

So wrote the St. Alban's Chronicler in the early years of the 15th century; and, being so sadly impressed, he set to work to place on record the history of familiar objects which met his eye day by day in the Church of his House.

“ ’Tis Sixty Years Since” our Society was founded, for it came into being on the 21st of October, A.D., 1845. The early history of the Society is ancient history to the oldest of its members, and unknown history to the majority of its present members. It seems, therefore, but reasonable that we should devote some time and sympathetic attention to the story of our Society on the completion of its sixtieth year. In placing this review of our past before you, I must claim your indulgence for calling attention to any detail in plain matter-of-fact terms in order that we may form a just conception of the work it has accomplished, or sought to accomplish, in the past, and by this means, so to speak, “take stock” of our present position. We shall find much to be grateful for, some things to reform, a good many lost opportunities to regret, and a considerable amount of important and useful work to take in hand in the future.

In the “early forties” of the 19th century a taste for the study of Gothic architecture was rapidly spreading amongst cultured folk; and that period gave birth to a considerable number of Local Societies, founded for the study of matters Architectural, Archæological, and Antiquarian generally. It is not necessary for our present purpose to detail a chronological list of such societies. So far as this part of England is concerned,

* “Amundesham Annales,” Vol I. Translation by Mr. Ridgway Lloyd, in “An Account of Altars, Monuments and Tombs, existing A.D. 1428 in St. Albans Abbey.” p. 5.

I would simply note that the Oxford Architectural Society was founded in the year 1839; the Berkshire Archæological and Architectural Society followed in 1840, under the name of the Berks Ashmolean Society; in 1841 the Exeter Society was founded; the Lincoln and Nottingham Society, and the Northampton and Oakham Societies in 1844; and our own in 1845.

“The St. Albans Architectural Society derives its origin from an idea that it would in many respects be desirable that an Association be formed for the purpose of Antiquarian investigation, with special reference to the Archdeaconry of St. Albans; this idea was first suggested at the Visitation of the Archdeaconry held at St. Albans early in June, 1845, when it was referred to those gentlemen, who approved the suggestion, to take steps for carrying it into effect.” [“Minute Book,” Vol. I., page 1]. No time was lost, for, shortly afterwards, a meeting was held at the Rectory, St. Albans, at which a draft constitution and rules were drawn up and submitted to the Archdeacon, the Ven. Charles Parr Burney. On the 27th June following, at Sandridge Vicarage, the constitution, as approved by the Archdeacon, was adopted, and officers for the time being were appointed, with the Archdeacon as President. The first General Meeting followed on the 21st October, at the Rectory, St. Albans, with the Rev. Dr. Nicholson as Vice-president, the Rev. Charles Boutell, at that time Curate of Sandridge, and Mr. Gerrard W. Lydekker as Secretaries. The first Committee consisted of the Rev. Richard Gee (Vicar of Abbot’s Langley), the Rev. H. Addington, (Curate of Harpenden), the Rev. H. T. Hecker, (Curate of Wheathampstead), Mr. James Espinasse, of Gray’s Inn, and Mr. F. Lipscomb, of St. Albans. The establishment of a Library was from the first deemed to be of vital importance; and, fittingly enough, the first work presented to it was a copy of Chauncy’s “Hertfordshire,” given by Mr. Lydekker. At its first meeting the Society placed itself in communication with the Committee of the Archæological Society of Great Britain. I do not propose to detail the proceedings at those early meetings. The originals of the first fifteen Annual Reports—with one exception—have been preserved, and I trust

that they will find a place in our Transactions. Unhappily, from the year 1860 and onwards to the present time, it does not seem to have been the practice to file the Annual Reports, nor to enter a copy of them in the Minute Book. I have made a careful search in many files of local newspapers for these reports of the Society, but, unfortunately, I find they have not been communicated. The careful preservation of the Annual Reports is one of the reforms which I trust will not be lost sight of in the future.

THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY IN INVESTIGATION AND RESTORATION.

The Society has assisted in works of investigation in a variety of ways, though not to an extraordinary extent, as the Society has never had but a small income at its disposal. Most of the results which have been achieved in this department have been owing to the enthusiasm and energy of a few individuals connected with the Society, and the interest of the Society at large has been “passively appreciative” rather than active. Amongst such investigations which have been brought to the notice of the Society I note the following:—

In the year 1845 some excavations were made in the central west porch of the Abbey Church, under the direction of the Committee, to which I shall refer later, and the Society approached the agents of the local railways, then in contemplation, with a view to obtaining for the Society any interesting relics which might be discovered—especially in the Archdeaconry—during the construction of those railways. Of the various restorations in the Abbey Church, with which the Society was connected, I will deal presently. In 1846 the Rev. Charles Boutell gave a description of the ancient masonry, then recently exposed in St. Michael’s Church: and, in the following year, at the instance of the Society, a brass in the same Church, partly concealed by pews, was examined by him. Excavations were made in 1847, which laid bare the Roman Theatre at Verulam, in which the Society, under Mr. Grove Lowe, took an active part; and, later still, it helped in certain excavations made within the walls of Veru-

lamium. Some excavations were made in 1848 at St. Stephen's near the Church, and some Roman pottery found there was put together at the expense of the Society. In the following year Mr. Matthew Holbech Bloxam read his paper on the "Roman Sepulchral Remains found at St. Stephen's." Sir John Evans as early as 1849, was actively urging the establishment of a Museum for the collection of objects connected with the work of the Society.

In 1850, in conjunction with the Bedfordshire Society, a tumulus was explored near Dunstable, but with no satisfactory results. Excavations were made in the Abbey Orchard Field by Mr. Grove Lowe, in which the Society had some share; but, I have, as yet, found no record of results achieved. In 1852 a small grant was made to the same gentleman towards the exploration of the Watling-street; and, in 1854, it was announced to the Society that its President, the Earl of Verulam, had lately purchased the plot of ground known as Verulam-hills, and had therefore rescued those ancient remains from the destruction with which they were threatened. In that same year, at St. Michael's, in excavating the site for the School, some Roman foundations were found, and some fragments of a fresco. Some Samian ware was found in a well which was cleared out to a depth of twenty-five feet. A suggestion was made, about the same time, that the Society should give a contribution towards the paving of the then existing public footpath through the Ante-Chapel, but, guided by the Rev. Richard Gee, it declined, saying: "That the members would feel more pleasure in contributing to the re-construction of the windows, than to the repair of the floor of the Ante-Chapel." The Report for 1855 notes that measures had been taken for the preservation of the ruins of the old house of Lord Bacon at Gorhambury; and, also, the fact that some supports had been supplied to a portion of the Sopwell Ruin. Shortly afterwards, the discovery by Sir Gilbert Scott of the remains of some canopied work behind the panelling in the south wall of the Presbytery in the Abbey Church, beneath which was "an old Norman doorway from the chancel to one of the apsidal chapels," was reported. Mr. Dorant, in

1857, allowed the Society to make some excavations at Sopwell Ruins, but nothing of any moment seems to have resulted therefrom. In that same year the opening of the arch on the north side of the Presbytery—or, as it was called, the Choir—of the Abbey Church, was reported, and the discovery of “fragments of structures of various dates and designs worked up; some of them forming portions of a coloured figure, apparently of a priest.” A little attention was called to the existence and perilous position of a tombstone in St. Peter’s Churchyard, recording the death of a child who had died during the Great Plague. The stone had the following inscription:—

“ Under this stone where now your eye you fix
 Anne Arris lies who died in 66
 April 14 Æ 9
 Peste Corripta
 John Arris after her his exit made
 In 82 and here is with her layd.”

The Society decided to try to induce the authorities to place the stone in a more secure position.

Some Excavations were made at Kingsbury in 1859, when some substantial Roman work was discovered, and some further portion of the Roman wall at the foot of Verulam-hills was laid bare. The excavation of the site of St. Andrew’s Chapel was proposed in 1861, but it is not clear whether the proposal was then carried out or not. For a good many years there are no records of any similar investigations being made in which the Society was interested. In 1876 the Rev. Henry Fowler and Mr. Ridgway Lloyd undertook some explorations of the Abbey Cloisters, and there is a minute, under date 22nd August, 1876, directing a meeting to be called to consider the propriety of continuing the exploration under the auspices of the Society, but I find no later minute referring to the matter.

In the year 1885, Dr. Griffith reported to the Committee the discovery of an ancient burial ground near Wheathampstead House, and the Committee considered what steps could be taken for the preservation of the Holy Well, in Holywell Meadow. The excavation of the site of St. Germain’s Chapel was suggested to the Committee by Mr. E. Loftus Brock in 1889. On April

25th, 1889, the Secretary reported that nothing had been undertaken by the Society in the Abbey Orchard Field; but the excavations went on there during the summer of that year, and at the October meeting it was reported that the stones from these excavations, which had been preserved, had been presented to the Society by Mr. H. J. Tonlmin, and were deposited in St. John's Chapel in the South Transept of the Abbey Church. A small grant was made from the funds of the Society towards the Verulam Research Fund; and one, in 1898, towards the preservation of St. Germain's Block. The attention of the Committee was called to the condition of the Sopwell Ruins in 1901, and a suggestion was made that an accurate ground plan and description of the site should be made; but, apparently, nothing further happened. A grant was made in 1903 towards the repair of the Abbey Gateway, and in 1905 a small sum was voted towards the excavations at Berkhamsted Castle.

The efforts of the late Mr. F. G. Kitton, warmly supported by the Society, have been successful in preserving some of the old buildings of St. Albans in the Market Place, High Street, George Street and Fishpool Street. There is nothing in the Minutes of the Society to show that it took any action, or made any protest against the drastic changes made in the restoration of the Abbey Church, or in the restoration of St. Peter's and St Michael's Churches.

This is neither a long nor imposing list of works of investigation and preservation of old buildings, but it represents a tremendous amount of personal devotion and active research by men such as the Rev. Charles Boutell, the Rev. Dr. Nicholson, Mr. Grove Lowe, Mr. Ridgway Lloyd, the Rev. Henry Fowler, and Mr. William Page.

To most of us, I presume, the topic of most interest in the history and work of the Society is its connection with the Restoration works in the Abbey Church. When the Society was founded, in 1845, there was a scheme on foot for making St. Albans a Cathedral Church, and that project was of vast interest to the Society. When the object was attained after many years, in 1877, the further project for its suitable

fitting, that it might rank with the older Cathedrals in dignity, comeliness and adornment, continued to be of fascinating interest. A cursory glance at the list of Meetings held by the Society will reveal certain gaps from which a critic might be inclined to conclude that the Society was almost dead, or profoundly sleeping. But a closer and more thorough search will reveal the fact that those seemingly dead periods in our history were critical years in the history of the Abbey Church, matters of intense importance as regards organisation or the critical condition of various parts of the fabric absorbing naturally the time and thought of the Officers of the Society, and its most prominent Members. In the great Restoration Works begun in 1856, I find that the gentlemen serving on the Committee were, hardly without exception, Members of this Society. Again when we come to the period of the seventies, I find that the Committee were many of them closely connected with this Society. The Secretaries were our President and our Treasurer. It is true that neither of them has read papers before this Society, but their work for the Restoration of the Abbey Church and all they have had to go through connected therewith is certainly no indication of deadness or sloth on their part in carrying out one of the objects which this Society has always had at heart.

The Rev. Dr. Nicholson, the Rector of the Abbey Church, was a great lover of the building, and he was one of the active founders of this Society. So much has been written and such heated controversies have raged around the various restorations of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, that many points connected with earlier work done are in danger of that “swift oblivion” which the fifteenth century Chronicler of St Alban’s Monastery deprecated. To a very large number of our Members the aspect of the church before the alterations of only a quarter of a century ago are hardly known by tradition, and even to the oldest Members it is not a very easy matter now to recall “which was what.” It is therefore necessary to awake dormant recollections of things that have been as regards the Abbey Church—“which we have heard and known, and such as our fathers have told us”—and to

record them, lest they be altogether out of remembrance. Everything that Dr. Nicholson said or wrote upon the building is worth recovering and recording. Later investigation may have proved some of his theories to have been incorrect, but that does not greatly matter; we want the record of his impressions on the things he saw and handled. It was his custom from the very beginning of the Society to report to it discoveries made in the Abbey Church. There is only one paper of his Notes extant in our possession; but, I have, by hunting through a variety of files of County Newspapers in the British Museum and elsewhere, been able to make transcripts of some of them for the Society.

On the 1st December, 1845, the Society, after a meeting at the Rectory, "adjourned to the Abbey, to inspect an excavation made in the Central Western Porch, under the direction of the Committee, and with the sanction of the Rector and Parochial Authorities, with a view to lay open the bases of several shafts grouped in that place. The development thus obtained proved most satisfactory and gratifying, and elicited warm expressions of admiration from every person present." ["Minute Book," Vol. I., p. 22]. A week later another meeting was held, when the Members present "adjourned to the Abbey Church for the purpose of inspecting the arrangements made in the Central Western Porch, by which the bases of a cluster of shafts, developed by the excavation effected on the day of the last meeting, might be permanently exposed to view." ["Minute Book," Vol. I., p. 37]. In September, 1846, at a Committee Meeting, Dr. Nicholson "expressed his wish that the proposed Restoration of the De la Mare brass by Messrs. Wallers, be carried into effect, under the superintendence of the Committee." ["Minutes of Committee," p. 3]. Quite early in that same year the Wallingford Chapel had been discovered. I can find no account of it amongst the papers of the Society, but the following is from "The County Press" of January 24th, 1846:—

"We now proceed to submit to our readers a brief account of a singularly interesting discovery made during the last fortnight in the Abbey Church. At the eastern extremity of the north aisle, the blocked up tracery of two comparatively small windows forms a part of the interior wall below one of the main windows

of the Church. A plain massive wall, chiefly of Roman Bricks, constituted the external face of the closed up windows. This wall has now been removed, and it is apparent that the windows in question originally communicated with some building which had formerly been erected upon the same spot. The side of the stonework of these windows next the wall, which so long had concealed them externally, was found in a very perfect state; and the greater part of it covered with colour; the prevailing tints being blue, crimson, green, and yellow, interspersed with gilding. These colours are still wonderfully fresh, though it is to be feared that exposure to the elements must soon obliterate traces of them. Above the windows is the commencement of the vaulted ceiling of the destroyed building. The vaulting ribs are characteristically moulded and coloured—the mouldings of the windows are in perfect harmony with these, and quite entire. In the casement—a hollow moulding—is painted a series of lily-like flowers, in crimson and green, and between these flowers in black-letter characters is the legend—*Miserere Domine*. In the easternmost portions now remaining is a group of five vases, with their leaves and stalks carved in high and bold relief; and producing a very good effect. The windows themselves have each two lights, cinque foiled in the heads. Towards the interior of the Church, the cusps remain perfect, but externally they are cut away. These windows have now been glazed, and a common brick wall has been turned over them, to support the external face of the wall, and at the same time to preserve and exhibit this curious relic."

The Rev. C. Boutell, one of the Secretaries of the Architectural Society, having been induced from several circumstances to suppose that the building, which once existed in connection with the windows, was a sepulchral chapel, similar to those which are ranged laterally between the buttresses of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, undertook to remove the earth from the supposed site of the Chapel, when the foundations of the original building, together with an enclosed vault, the last resting place of its founder, was developed. The vault was empty, having in all probability been previously opened when the chapel itself was destroyed. This Chapel may have been the one constructed for his own sepulture by William de Wallingford, 36th Abbot, who died A.D., 1484. The Report goes on to say "We have much pleasure in being able to add that the St. Albans Architectural Society will immediately publish a coloured engraving of this interesting fragment."

Some account of this Chapel was published in the *Journal of the Archæological Institute of Great Britain*

and Ireland. At the meeting on May 6th, 1846, Messrs. Brandon's lithograph was submitted to the Society, and at a Committee Meeting, 2nd June, 1847, the distribution of copies to the Members of the Society was ordered.

In the January of 1846, Dr. Nicholson inaugurated the system of admission to the Abbey by ticket, and his communication to the Society explaining his scheme and the results achieved was delivered in October, 1846. Out of the ticket fund £10 had been subscribed towards the deficit on the Memorial Window to Archdeacon Watson, now destroyed, and he called attention to the state of the De la Mare Brass, announcing that "a person named Waller was capable of putting it entirely to rights for about £30," towards which amount he had collected £9. At the April meeting in 1847, Dr. Nicholson gave some further particulars of what had been done in and around the Abbey Church. In making an apartment for the use of the sexton who showed visitors over the Church, in the Little Churchyard against the Church, a passage was opened and some early English work discovered. He refers also to the Wallingford Chantry Chapel, and the excavations made by the Society disclosing the older floor levels at the west end of the Church. Further explorations had been made in what Dr. Nicholson calls the "Abbot's Cloister," under the great South Transept window, of which he gives an account which is worthy of special attention, as it shows what were the prevailing ideas of restoration at that time. I have found a very interesting letter from Messrs. J. C. and C. A. Buckler, dated 10th April, 1848, written to Dr. Nicholson, in the "County Press," 15th April, 1848. Dr. Nicholson had opened out the Northernmost of the three arches at the east end of the Saints' Chapel, and they give a detailed account of what was disclosed and established thereby. I can find no particulars of this discovery noted in our Minute Book.

The next note communicated to the Society referring to Abbey Restoration was made in 1853. It states what had been done to the grille of Duke Humphrey's Tomb, in the Watching Gallery, to the Norman Door in the South Transept, and to the Abbot's Door.

There is also an account of the investigation of the old floor levels in the South Choir Aisle. The history of the present Font is given; an account of the repair of four gravestones at the foot of the Altar steps, some alterations to the Saint's Chapel, and the finding of certain fragments of the Shrine of St. Alban. At the Annual Meeting in 1855, he gave a further report, the original of which we have in our possession. Certain Restorations had been made in the porches on either side of the western porch, the paint removed from the west door, and the Restorations of the Abbot's Door and the doors in the Nave Altar Screen; the removal of the fragment of the wood screen in the Choir, and the discovery and the arrangement of certain old tiles. He concludes with the well-known and oft quoted note upon the Date of the Martyrdom.

At the Annual Meeting of 1861, Dr. Nicholson made some observations on the accumulation of earth on the north side of the Abbey Church, in an orchard which had been then recently purchased by the Restoration Committee. I cannot find a full report of the notes given, but they refer to Restoration of the Roof of the North Aisle, the purchase of an Organ, which was erected in the North Transept, and the repair of the roof above it. In the following year, 1862, he gives several interesting particulars; amongst them the fact that the earth in the orchard was ten feet above the floor line of the Abbey, and that the lowering of the ground, drainage works, and outside Restorations had cost £1,303 5s. 1d. The works completed at that time were under pinning foundations and complete drainage into the River Ver. He notes—but I can find no particulars—“the discovery of fine tabernacle work towards the west end of the wall on the site where a chapel had existed.” The sum of £4,351 0s. 9d. had been expended on the Abbey Church. The Report of the Society for the year 1865 was, contrary to custom, communicated to the Press, but there is not special reference in it to the Abbey Restoration.

I do not find indications that the Society, actively as a Society, took any special action in providing that descriptions should be made of the various Architectural and Antiquarian discoveries made during the Restora-

tions in the Abbey Church, and there is no record of the discovery of the frescoes in the Nave. The papers read by the Rev. Canon Davys, Mr. Ridgway Lloyd, Mr. Waller, Mr. Keyser, and Mr. Chapple are very valuable contributions to the history of the years between 1870 and 1880, and the almost overwhelming Newspaper Correspondence over the Nave Roof, the West Front, the Transepts, and the High Altar Screen are more than interesting and illuminating.

The Rev. Henry Fowler's papers and memoranda on the Abbey Church are voluminous. In quite recent years, with the kind co-operation of the Dean, Mr. Page arranged all the detached brasses he could find on the board now in the Wheathampstead Chapel, and arranged the small objects in the aumbries of the Watching Loft. Some old glass found there has been carefully leaded, and hung in a window in the North Transept. The fragments of the "Red Cross Knight," now in the Chapel of St. John in the South Transept, he, with the aid of Mr. W. G. Alderton, carefully put together. The architectural fragments in the same chapel were arranged by him and Mr. A. S. Flower. Some fragments of the Shrine found in the Watching Loft, with some the Rev. G. H. P. Glossop had found, have been fitted into their several places. Mr. Page, finding that the distemper paintings were scaling in consequence of the varnish with which they had been coated having dried up, consulted Professor Church, the Chemist to the Royal Academy. After trying, at his suggestion, certain experiments, Mr. Page treated them according to recipes which appear to have been quite successful in arresting the decay which threatened them. Mr. Page has also excavated and worked out the north side of the Cloisters and the buildings to the west of it. The results of this investigation will appear in due course in the "Victoria County History of Herts." Mr. Charles H. Ashdown has made some interesting investigations in the Abbey Orchard Field and in the Great Gateway and its surroundings. The Revision of Dr. Nicholson's "Guide to the Abbey Church," by the Dean and Mr. Page, is another important work. Mr. Page's account of the Brasses and Indents, which appeared in the

“Home Counties Magazine,” must also be mentioned. Copies of all the inscriptions in the Nave, compared with a MSS list made at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Pridmore, with their several positions, indicated on a plan having been taken for the Society.

WORK IN THE COUNTY.

In common with most of the other Architectural Societies founded in the middle of the nineteenth century, this Society aimed at becoming a kind of Advisory and Vigilance Committee in matters relating to Architecture and the Restoration of Churches. It has never come prominently to the front in this department of its work. Dr. Nicholson was very particular to keep the Society well informed as to the Restorations undertaken in the Abbey Church in his time. Quite early—in the first year of our history—the Vicar of St. Michael's (Mr. Brogden) communicated to the Society a brief account of some work done in that Church, the MSS of which we have in our possession. About the same time the Vicar of Ardeley (Mr. Malet) wrote a number of letters relating to Ardeley Church, and the building of the Church at Ardeley Wood End. In the Report for 1850, it is stated that accounts had been received of certain churches restored, viz., Ware, Hadley, St. Peter's (re-pewing), and Redbourn. Of the last Church it is stated that the nave and aisles had been recently restored

“as far as the well-known and unrivalled rood-screen, and it is expected that during the ensuing year the east window will be replaced in exact conformity with the original design, and also the chancel appropriately re-fitted.”

In the Report of 1852, Aldenham and Watford Church Restorations are referred to, and also the Church of Leverstock Green, “built by a Member of your Society, correct in style and elegant in design.” The building of the following Churches was referred to in the report for 1854: Thundridge, Ardeley Wood End, Bengoe, Newgate Street, Elstree, St. Andrew's Watford, and Leavesden. The building of Schools at St. Michael's, Hitchin, and Weston is also reported. The fitting up of Christ Church St. Albans, by Mr. Gilbert

Scott, is reported in 1858. The Report of 1860 notes that Restoration Work was going on in all or nearly all of the Churches in St. Albans, and reference is made to the revived proposal for making the Abbey Church a Cathedral. It further notes "that there was little or no hope of attaining this desirable result at the present time," and that a fresh appeal had been made for £3,000 to carry on the more urgent repairs required in the Abbey Church. As early as the year 1850, Professor Donaldson read a paper on the Clock Tower, and the question of the Restoration of that building came before the Society on several occasions, and £30 was subscribed by the Society in 1865, when at length that restoration was carried out under Sir Gilbert Scott. Ten pounds were voted from the funds of the Society in 1866 towards Restoration Works at Wheathampstead and St. Michael's Churches.

The establishment of the Hertfordshire County Museum was a work in which some of the most active Members of this Society took part, and the connection of our Society with the Museum has hitherto, and I trust always will be, both close and cordial. The acquisition of the Lewis Evans' collection of Hertfordshire Topographical Books and Prints by the Museum authorities is a most happy circumstance, and the fact that our own Library is housed in the same room as the Museum Library gives facilities for reference which could hardly be greater if the whole was the property of the Society. As Curator of both collections, I should like to see more use made of these Libraries by the Members of the Society.

THE LIBRARY.

Our own Archæological Library is a very small collection to point to after sixty years. During those sixty years it is but fair to note that London has been brought so near to St. Albans that that has been a drawback to the growth of our Society's Library. Nevertheless a Library such as ours may be of very great service, if first of all realising what such a Library should contain, we could systematically add to it year by year one or two volumes worth acquiring. We have, I regret to say, very largely dropped exchanging our Transactions with other Archæological Societies. This

is a pity, because not only does such an exchange keep us in touch with those in other parts of the country engaged in a work similar to our own, but a knowledge of what other Societies are doing suggests ideas, and gives a wholesome incentive to emulation and fresh enterprise. I would point out that the Society has been able to help in the re-binding of the first volume of the St. Peter's Churchwardens' Accounts, and in the recovery, repair, and restoration to the parish of some old volumes of Sandridge Parish Accounts. With regard to Parish Registers, there is a field of work open to this Society, which might possibly be undertaken in conjunction with the Parish Registers' Society.

MEETINGS.

Since June, 1845, to the present date, 145 meetings of the Society have been held. During the first half-year of its existence, no fewer than twelve such meetings were held, and much detail work was done, which resulted in the establishment of a very vigorous Society. It was very soon apparent that its operations could not be confined to the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, and before it had completed its first year of life its scope was extended to embrace the whole county at least. In the year 1850, the name of the Society was altered from the St. Albans Architectural Society to the St. Albans Architectural and Archæological Society. During the year 1853-4 the rules were revised, and in 1858 the terms of subscription were altered. The rules were again revised in 1872, and were re-cast into their present form in 1897, when the Society adopted its present title, THE ST. ALBANS AND HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

During this long period of sixty years, as we should expect, there has been considerable fluctuation in the vitality of the Society; it has had its periods of great activity and its periods of depression. It held its Annual Meetings regularly on 17th June—except when that day fell on a Sunday—until the year 1863, when, by the casting vote of the Chairman, the date was altered to the 22nd June. The resolution was not acted upon, for the Annual Meeting of 1864 was held upon 17th June, and in 1865 on July 13th. Then, for many years, the

Annual Meetings were held at various dates; in the years immediately preceding 1897 frequently on the occasion of a summer excursion.

Minutes are in existence covering almost every year of our history. Only one meeting was held in 1854, and there are no records of any meetings for the years 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1873, and 1875. It must be borne in mind that a good deal of the work of a Society of this character falls upon its Committee. There are records of 180 Committee Meetings during the sixty years. Although there was but one meeting in 1854, the Committee met four times in that year; in 1866 the Society did not meet once, but there were two Committee Meetings; and the Committee met four times in 1867, although there was no General Meeting. The years for which I can find no records of Committee Meetings are 1864, 1868, 1869, 1873, 1875, 1878, and 1880. The Restoration of St. Albans Abbey Church extended over a period of something nearly approaching fifty years, and there were several important, critical and fascinating periods in that Restoration which attracted, and even demanded, an undivided, and I may also say, a breathless attention. Such periods were particularly noticeable in the fifties—1856, in the sixties, and continuously from 1870 to 1893, when the nineteenth century battles of St. Albans raged "fierce and long," and though, happily, bloodless battles, they were lost, hopelessly lost, by Archæologists and lovers of Antiquity. The seasons of fierce strife will be found to correspond pretty exactly with the periods during which the Society held no formal meetings.

EXCURSIONS.

About the year 1882 began a series of Excursions to various places of interest in the County and Counties adjoining Hertfordshire. These have been most valuable, and have formed a most important part of our work. Quite early in the history of the Society a careful and exact record of the architecture of Churches and ancient buildings was put forward as one of the objects to be attained. Until the institution of Excursions, however, very little was done in this direction. Up to the present time, we have accounts of some twenty-six

Churches in the County only. In the early days the the Society rarely travelled outside St. Albans. It visited Hertford in 1847, and again in 1871. In 1850 it met the Bedfordshire Society at Dunstable. In 1856 it held a meeting in conjunction with the Bedfordshire, the Northampton and Oakham, and other Societies at St. Albans, and again in 1876. The visit of the British Archæological Society in 1869 was a most important event.

EVENING MEETINGS.

Evening meetings in the early days were very rare, and that for obvious reasons. They were mooted, however, several times, notably in 1872. Since the year 1893 they have become the rule. About the year 1899, the “lantern” came into use to illustrate papers read before the Society, and this has been of very great service, and has added much to the interest of our meetings. But there is a perceptible danger attaching to the use of the lantern, which it is well to point out. There are many matters which should come within the purview of the Society which cannot be illustrated by pictures, matters which need consideration, attention and exemplification. An interesting and popular lecture on matters archæological is an excellent thing, but the systematic work of collection and co ordination of archæological facts, which shall be of sterling value to those who are to come after us, is of even more importance, though less attractive and popular.

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS.

The Society has a very respectable record to show of its work in this direction, though that work has been sorely hampered at times.

“ Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.”

Reference to the list of Papers read before the Society which you will find in the last number of our “Transactions,”* shows that in the sixty years 250 papers have been produced, 174 of them relating to the County, the remainder dealing with places outside the County and with general archæological subjects. There

* Vol. II. N.S. pp. 104—114.

must be a certain number of other papers and notes, which do not appear in this list. There have been several Excursions organised by the Society since 1899, of which there are no minutes or record. An examination of the list will show the papers which the Society has published. We have a few—a very few—original manuscripts. There are some notes of the Rev. Dr. Griffith and the large collection of the Rev. H. Fowler's papers. Some Papers read before the Society have been published in various Periodicals and Transactions of other Societies, and these I have indicated as far as I could trace them. But there are a great many papers which are only to be found in newspaper reports. They are not all of equal value and interest, but it seems very desirable that they should be collected by the Society. The most important of them are well worth re-printing in future "Transactions." The earliest publication of the Society was a Drawing of the Mural Painting in the North Transept of the Abbey Church, over the site of the altar of the Holy Cross, which formed part of the story of the Resurrection. It was engraved by Jewet, Headington, Oxford, and issued to Members at the price of 6d. plain, 2s. coloured, Indian proofs 1s. 6d. per copy. Collectors may occasionally secure a copy. About the same time an engraving of the De la Mare Brass was made, and issued at a somewhat similar rate. Active steps were taken for the publication "of a popular work descriptive of the Abbey Church." This was the work of the Rev. Charles Boutell, and it was issued in 1846. Copies of it are now rather rare. Not long after, the Society issued the drawing of Messrs. Brandon, of the newly discovered Wallingford Chapel, as a coloured lithograph. This can be occasionally procured now. Early in the year 1847, Mr. Boutell was instructed to prepare Part I. of Volume I. of the Transactions of the Society, which was to be supplied to Members at a cost of 5s. per copy; and £20 was allowed from the funds for that purpose. But just at that time Mr. Boutell removed from Sandridge into Norfolk, and I imagine that the work was never really taken in hand. At any rate, I can find no trace of any such publication, and there is no further reference to the matter in the Minutes. So far as I can

discover, Mr. Grove Lowe's paper on "The Roman Theatre at Verulam," was the first paper issued by the Society. It was issued to Members at 1s. per copy, but, I regret to say, we have no copy of it in the Library. The next paper issued was Mr. Matthew Holbech Bloxam's account of the "Roman Sepulchral Remains found at St. Stephen's." Copies of this can be occasionally secured. In the year 1850 this Society joined with the Lincoln, the Northampton and several other Societies in the production of the "Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers." In the first part issued, Dr. Nicholson's paper on the "Alleged Relics of St. Alban at Cologne," and Mr. Albert Way's paper on "Bone Seal found in St. Alban's Abbey Church," appeared. Difficulties arose between this Society and the other Societies in the Association as to "who was to pay" and "how much." There are a number of letters relating to this dispute in our possession. That scheme for publishing the "Transactions" unfortunately fell through, and the next year the Society printed the Rev. Richard Gee's paper on the "Two Langleys." We have no copy of this paper. There was a considerable amount of bungling over its production, and the first edition, owing to glaring errors, had to be withdrawn. Of this we have no copy either of the original edition or of the revised edition. The discovery of the fresco of St. William of York in the Saint's Chapel in 1852, led to the publication of a coloured lithograph of the fresco, which may occasionally be acquired from a dealer. Another paper by the Rev. Richard Gee, on "Bricks and Brick Buildings," was printed in 1856. The paper by the Rev. H. Hall on "Place Names in Herts," was issued in 1859; and, in 1863, another paper by the Rev. Richard Gee, entitled, "The Story of Our Illustrious Neighbour—Lord Bacon."

Nothing more seems to have been published by the Society until the "Three Papers," viz., "The Boundary Wall of the Monastery," by the Rev. Henry Fowler; "Recently discovered Paintings on the Choir Ceiling of St. Alban's Abbey Church"; and Mr. Chapple's paper "On the work of Restoration in St. Alban's Abbey." These were issued in 1876, a special sub-

scription, amounting to about £25, being raised for the purpose. Nothing more was published by the Society until 1883, when the account of "Dunstable Priory Church," by the Rev. Canon Davys, and notes on the "Documentary History of the Priory," by Mr. Ridgway Lloyd, were issued as the first number of our "Transactions." From the year 1884, the "Transactions" have been regularly printed. The first volume of a new series began in 1895. In addition to the "Transactions," the Society has issued a copy of Hare's "Map of St. Albans," and just recently a new departure in the publication of a Calendar of the "Gape Family Papers" has been made.

THE SOCIETY GENERALLY: ITS OFFICERS AND MEMBERS.

It is a noteworthy fact, and a matter of very hearty congratulation that we have still with us one who has been a Member of our Society from the very first year of its life—Sir John Evans.* He has not been an ornamental figure-head, but an ardent strenuous worker in archæological research throughout his long useful career. Of Presidents we have had only four, viz., Archdeacon Burney, for a few months in 1845; the Earl of Verulam from 1846 until his death in 1896; Lord Aldenham from 1896 until 1900, from which date the Dean of St. Albans has held the office. It was in the year 1870 that he joined the Society. The Treasurer of the Society, Mr. Henry Joseph Toulmin, has been Treasurer since 1872. The first Vice-President was the Rev. Dr. Nicholson. The Rev. Canon Davys joined the Society in 1863, and was appointed a Secretary in 1864; this office he resigned in 1890.

Of secretaries we have had a goodly number:

- 1845—Rev. Charles Boutell, till 1847.
- 1845—Gerrard Wolfe Lydekker, till 1853.
- 1847—Roland Townshend Cobbold, till 1857.
- 1851—Rev. F. Lipscomb, till 1853.
- 1853—Rev. H. D. Nicholson
- 1857—Rev. John G. Hale, till 1860.
- 1860—Thomas Hill.
- 1864—Rev. Owen W. Davys, till 1900.

*Sir John Evans died 1908.

- 1870—Ridgway Lloyd.
 1884—Rev. Henry Fowler.
 1896—William Page.
 1900—Robert J. Hillier.
 1901—Mrs. Maude C. Knight.
 1903—E. Stanley Kent.
 1905—Charles Henry Ashdown.

The names of most of these are familiar to us all: some of them hold no mean place in the Archæological World—all of them have done good work for the Society, some more, some less. The work they have done cannot be estimated by the number of meetings which they succeeded in calling together, nor gauged by the number of interesting lectures which they induced members and others to prepare and deliver. All of them have had great difficulties to face, and the hardest times have been when the Society has been passing through a period of depression, when everybody says “The Society is asleep; why doesn't somebody do something?” A secretary of such a Society as this needs to be something more than a man of affairs and a skilful organiser, though these are necessary qualifications—he must be a man of keen archæological instincts, and be ready, often at a moment's notice, to step into the breach himself with some archæological psalm or doctrine to supply the default of some promised lecturer. I need scarcely remind the members of the Society that the most valuable of the papers in our very lengthy list are the productions of those who have toiled as Secretaries of the Society.

In the early days of the Society, especially, a number of men whose names are “familiar in our mouths as household words,” were connected with it as honorary or as ordinary members. This list is an inspiring one. I take a few names as I turn over the Minutes—John Britton, whose bust calmly reposing on our old bookcase has been an antiquarian puzzle to the Society for many years past; Bishop Wilberforce, Beresford Hope, Albert Way, Charles Newton, F. A. Freeman, Matthew Holbech Bloxam, Sir Francis Palgrave, Professor Willis, Lewis Cottingham, Sir Henry Ellis, Sir Richard Westmacott, Revs. George Ayliffe Poole, Makenzie, E. C. Walcott; George Gilbert Scott, Dean Stanley, John

Edwin Cussans, and the Rev. Dr. Griffith. One feels inclined to say "there were giants in those days," and as we regard ourselves in comparison with such personalities as these, and the little we have done in these latter days, we shall, I trust, be moved to a determined and sustained effort to make our work in the future worthy of the best traditions of our past, that this first decade of the twentieth century shall see some sound, solid, useful, accurate archæological and antiquarian work carefully done, even if we cannot produce anything very striking or brilliant.

It is with both pleasure and regret that I note the vigorous life of the EAST HERTS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY; pleasure, because in some sense we may be regarded as the parent Society from which it has sprung; and regret, because its existence almost seems to confine our interests, sympathy, and work to this side of the Great Northern main line. The great trunk lines running from the south to the north and north-east across the county, seem to force the eastern and western sides of the county apart, as they provide no ready means for connecting the two sides of the county. But this is a difficulty not altogether insurmountable, and I trust that the two Societies may be more closely in touch with each other than they have been. Of late years our excursions have not been very successful, and I venture to suggest that co-operation with the East Herts Society in their excursions would be of service to both Societies. There are groups of Churches which this Society has never visited, and though visits have been paid to other Churches on the other side of the Great Northern, these visits took place years ago, and to very many Members of our Society East Herts is unexplored territory.

Although some good and useful work has been accomplished by the Society during these sixty years, it is well that we should realise some of our shortcomings. There has been a lack of systematic work in definite directions. For instance, during the period covered by the life of the Society every Church in the county, almost without an exception, has undergone Restoration, and many buildings have been altered so thoroughly that their present aspect reveals little or

nothing of their history. Every Restoration of an old building presents an opportunity for the investigation and verification of the architectural history of that building. Our Society has no records of work done in this direction. We have hardly any plans of Hertfordshire Churches, no copies of Architects' Reports thereon, and I venture to say that in the majority of cases of Church Restorations carried out thirty or forty years ago, no record exists even amongst the notes and memoranda in the Church safes. In looking through our "Transactions," we are struck by the fact that very few ground plans have been attempted. Yet ground plans, carefully drawn, are one of the most valuable means by which we can compare one Church with another, and groups of Churches in one part of the country with groups of Churches in others. We have no means for comparing the architectural details of one old building with those found in another, for very little such architectural work has been done by this Society. Most of us feel regretful as we re-call instances in which the history of a building, has been falsified and its distinctive features obliterated in order to make way for an ambitious imitation of a favourite style of architecture. Yet, so far as we can gather from our Proceedings and Records, the Society has held its peace, content to let those who pay the piper call the tune, forgetful of the fact that an Architectural Society exists for the purpose of finding out and recording truth. Even if we were powerless to prevent drastic alteration and obliteration, something might have been done to secure accurate record of the "things that were" for future reference.

Nothing, or almost nothing, seems to have been done in the direction of making systematically collections of Field Names, Local Customs, Folk Lore, Moated Houses, Earth-works, Ancient Boundaries, Epitaphs, Church Plate, and Memorials of the Dead—to mention some matters of interest which readily arise in our minds. Attention to some of these has been called from time to time. The Rev. Dr. Griffith more than once urged the systematic collection of field names, and, in later years, Mr. Charles Johnston has called attention to the need for this work being undertaken on a definite plan. In 1898 the idea was mooted of making a careful and

systematic Photographic Survey of St. Albans, in conjunction with the Photographic Society. Certain preliminary arrangements were made, and, I believe, a Sub-Committee was appointed, but up to the present time it has made no report to this Society. This is a work which it ought not to be very difficult to revive, and to bring to a successful issue. A little later a Sub-Committee was formed to organise a survey of all the Old Buildings in the County. Schedules were drawn up and issued to Members of the Society, but with practically no result. The long illness and subsequent death of the Secretary of that Sub-Committee, Mr. F. G. Kitton, and the removal of Mr. Flint Clarkson from St. Albans, at a critical time in the work of its organisation, have brought this matter also to a standstill. This, too, is a branch of work which might with advantage be revived, and pushed forward energetically in the near future. I mention these two—the Photographic Survey and the Survey of Old Buildings—because they afford scope and open out possibilities to a large number of Members of doing useful work for the Society, and I venture to commend them to your consideration, as one means by which interest and work for the Society may be revived.

From time to time in the history of the Society men have asked: "What is your Society doing?" They are asking it now very pertinently, and I trust that this review of the last sixty years may help us to realise, as individual members, our responsibility for the life of the Society. It is a good sign of life in a Society when its Members "want to know, you know," and if only a half-a-dozen Members at each Meeting propounded questions relating to the work, aims, objects, and means by which the Society's work could be extended, new interests would be awakened, and fresh vigour would be infused into this "most respectable and useful Society."
