# SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY 1941 – 1976

By I. Cresswell, F.S.A. Hon. General Secretary

Prior to the Second World War, Annual Reports and the Proceedings of the Society were always printed in Norfolk Archaeology, but paper shortage and the rapidly rising cost of printing caused this to be discontinued. The last Report and Accounts to appear regularly were for 1940. Accounts only for 1941 and 1942, and a short Report with Accounts for 1943 were published in Vol. XXVIII. Subsequently a report has been issued to members with the agenda for the Annual General Meeting each year except 1942 when no meeting was held (two years were covered by the report presented at the 1943 meeting). However, as no details of the Society's activities during the past thirty years is to be found in our Journal, except a summary for the years 1949-1952 in Vol. XXX, Council consider this should now be remedied. The information is available in the Minute Books. Indeed this was put forward in the past as a reason for not publishing. But some or all of these records could so easily be lost, as happened in the 1898 fire at the Norfolk and Norwich Library where the Society's books were housed at the time. Again, until the mid 1950s the local newspapers printed fairly full reports of the Society's excursions and lectures, but with the changing economic scene the space allotted has gradually diminished, making this alternative source of information far less fruitful than it used to be.

## SOCIETY'S CENTENARY

Before the war ended the significant decision was taken to make preparations for a special volume of the Transactions to celebrate one hundred years of the Society's existence in 1946. Fortunately hostilities ceased in time to allow the volume to be issued and the centenary to be marked by a Lord Mayor's reception for about 500 guests in St. Andrew's Hall in the afternoon of April 27, followed by the Society's A.G.M. at Guildhall and a social evening in Stuart Hall for 150 members and friends.

For many years these annual meetings had taken place in Guildhall, but in 1958 a change was made and ever since they have been held during a summer excursion in various parts of the county, thereby attracting a much larger attendance.

# MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Another casualty of the war was the published list of names and addresses of members. The last list, corrected to June 1939, appeared in Vol. XXVII, and although Council have from time to time considered its revival they have never felt able to justify the printing cost. Full records are kept in our library.

At a meeting in March 1939 Council's attention was drawn to 'the rather surprising fact that half the personnel of the Society had changed in the past ten years.' It is interesting to note that for the years 1967-1976 there was a similar experience. Of the 614 members at the end of 1966, 292 were still members at the end of 1976, by which time the total had gone down to 573, although over 500 new members had joined during the ten years.

The membership has fluctuated over the years between 330 and 688 (Table I).

TABLE I - Publication dates, membership and accounts

	End- year credit balance	£	61	27	51	16	74	39	72	84	637	35	88	26	99	54	57	91	27	16	82	50	39	70	05	82	99	10	43	182	16	113	
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	Other	43	37	19	21	10	2 4	73	103	302	149	201	215	182	125	314	203	315	103	197	269	236	401	466	1 020	707	675	712	939	789	1,003 1,624	2,120	
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	Year to Dec. 31		1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1945	1946	1947	1949	1930	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1959	1960	1961	1963	1964	1965	1966	1968	1969	1970	1971	1973	1974	1976	*two parts

The 1976 figure of 573 comprised 497 individuals and 44 corporate members in the U.K. and 32 overseas.

Various recruiting drives have taken place. In 1951 efforts were made to attract the older pupils of some of the secondary schools, and in 1954, bearing in mind the interest of many Americans in their antecedents, moves were made to extend membership to more of the universities, colleges and learned societies of the United States and Canada. These met with some success as did the 300 or so letters sent out by the President in 1962 which resulted in forty-two new members.

Membership naturally declined during the war years, and there was also a drop in numbers when subscriptions had to be increased. There have only been two such occasions since the war, postponed as long as possible and preceded each time by a period of voluntary increase. In 1955 subscriptions went up from 15s. to 25s. (from 25s. to £2 for joint membership, husband and wife); and in 1975 to £3 (joint £4) rising to £4 (joint £5) from 1977. The age limit for junior members was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1975 and their subscription increased from 7s. 6d. (38p) to £1. Entrance fees and compounded subscriptions were abolished in 1954.

#### **ACCOUNTS**

As the cash statements show (Table I) the Society's main source of income is from subscriptions and it benefits considerably from income tax refunds resulting from those paid under seven-year covenants. However, there was a period in the 1950s when the Inland Revenue refused these refunds on the grounds that members received certain benefits for their subscriptions, but following a successful appeal by the Society of Antiquaries in 1959 they were once again conceded to all the societies involved, and back payments were eventually received in 1962 enabling our Treasurer to produce his first satisfactory report for several years. It is to be hoped that any further trouble will have been prevented following receipt in April 1965 of official confirmation from the Department of Education and Science that our Society had been entered in the Register of Charities in accordance with the provisions of s.4 of the Charities Act, 1960, under the number 311116.

Other regular receipts include rents received from tenants occupying the part of Garsett House not required for the Society's headquarters. These rents over the years have been sufficient to meet items for maintenance and repairs (often heavy), as well as the usual outgoings for cleaning, rates, insurance, etc. There are also lecture collections and excursion fees (which normally cover expenses), interest and dividends from investments, and proceeds from sale of publications. From time to time there are grants for articles in *Norfolk Archaeology* (mainly from the Department of the Environment and the Council for British Archaeology), and very welcome legacies and donations which over the past thirty years have amounted to more than £1,500 including two each for £500.

On the payments side, apart from administration expenses, general printing and stationery costs (which include the rapidly rising item of postage), there are small subscriptions and donations. Although the Society has never felt able to contribute to such things as general repairs to churches and other buildings it has supported many specific appeals for objects of archaeological interest, and made grants to various bodies, especially the Norfolk Research Committee which, since it was set up in 1934, has carried out the field work and excavation previously done by the Society.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The main annual payment, however, is for Norfolk Archaeology. Ever since the Society was founded in 1846 Council have regarded the publication of these Transactions as a principal object of the Society because they are a concrete record of archaeological research in Norfolk. During the war, although Government regulations severely reduced the amount of paper available, the Society continued to publish, and it was in order to make Vol. XXVIII uniform in size with earlier volumes that it was resolved in 1944 to include four parts instead of three. This practice has been continued ever since. The only exception was the Centenary Volume (XXIX) published in 1946. It contained articles covering every aspect of the Society's work, and a specially bound copy was presented to His Majesty King George VI – the Society's patron at the time – and added to the Sandringham library. Incidentally, this royal patronage dates back to 1862 when H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who had then become a landed proprietor in Norfolk, 'most graciously expressed his commands that his name be put on the Society's list as one of its Patrons.' He continued as patron when he later became King, and each monarch since has honoured the Society in this way. It is particularly appropriate in this Silver Jubilee Year to recall that Her Majesty the Queen was pleased to continue this patronage in 1952.

The first part of Vol. XXX was issued in its new format in 1948 (although dated 1947), and no further changes were introduced until Vol. XXXVI in 1974. Meanwhile Council were often very concerned at the continued increase in the cost of printing. In the late 1950s alternatives to traditional printing methods were explored, but no satisfactory solution was found. When, however, in 1972 the cost, even allowing for the grants obtained, amounted to more than the income from subscriptions and tax refunds, Council again investigated ways of reducing it while maintaining the standard, and they decided to experiment with typewriter composition and offset litho printing involving a change of printers. At the same time the opportunity was taken to use cheaper white paper and to increase the page size to facilitate the preparation of plans and drawings by authors. The experiment proved far more successful than many had anticipated.

As a general guide Council have long felt it right to preserve a balance between the more technical articles and those with a wider appeal. This has been more than ever necessary in recent years with the growth in rescue excavation. It is most important that reports of this work should be published and it is fortunate that there are now alternative avenues available thus reducing the pressure on the Society's limited space.

Issuing volumes by parts inevitably involves a problem of dating particular articles when the parts are bound into a volume and their individual covers bearing the year of publication are discarded. To overcome this the contents page of Vol. XXXIV and subsequent volumes has shown the date of publication of articles in each part, and it has been felt appropriate to take the present opportunity of giving similar information for earlier volumes in Table I.

#### **INVESTMENTS**

Each volume of *Norfolk Archaeology* incorporates its own index, but this does not obviate the necessity for a more comprehensive one covering a much longer period. Hitherto such an index has been compiled for each successive ten volumes, the last being issued in 1957 for Vols. XXI-XXX. Inevitably the demand is limited

and the cost cannot be fully met by separate subscription. This must not be a reason for not publishing and Council endeavour from time to time to invest any surplus funds against the time in the early 1990s when money will be needed for this purpose. During the 1960s they placed such funds in equity-type investments hoping their value would keep pace with the rising costs of printing. They also sold the Society's holding of £500 3½% War Loan, which had depreciated in value over the years, and reinvested the proceeds. Although the amount realized from this sale was only about half what was paid for the stock originally the price has since halved again! Apart from 4,865.65 Save and Prosper Investment Trust Units and 1,731 Charities Official Investment Fund Units held as a hedge against inflation, other surplus funds are normally placed on short-term deposit, which over recent years has yielded useful amounts of interest. In mentioning the Society's investments ownership of the freehold of Garsett House must not be overlooked.

### LAWS

The Laws of the Society, last published in Vol. XXVII, govern its activities. Except to incorporate changes in subscription rates they have not been greatly altered during the last thirty years. A revised edition was circulated to all members and approved at the A.G.M. in 1952, the revision being introduced in order that the Society might be in a more favourable position over the rating of its property. An earlier alteration in 1940 authorized the introduction of a Chairman of Council to preside in the President's absence as he was not resident in the county at the time. This office continues. In 1951 the Law defining the objects of the Society was simplified, but a shortened version of the old Law is still retained on the Fixture Card of Winter Meetings.

## **EXCURSIONS AND LECTURES**

Lectures had been inaugurated during the winter of 1934-1935. Naturally during the war there was only the occasional one, but they were resumed in 1946. Since then there have been five or six held each winter, at first in the Suckling Hall and more recently at the Assembly House. In the early years the average attendance was in the region of fifty, but later on they became more popular, especially after 1957 when the general public were invited. Meetings used to be held on various week-days, mostly in the evening, but the gradual move to afternoon sessions some years ago better suited members living outside Norwich. Now the practice of holding Saturday afternoon meetings seems to be approved, with recent attendances of up to 170 and a yearly average around the 100 mark, but car parking is an increasing problem. For many years there have been joint meetings occasionally with the Norfolk Research Committee and other local societies. In 1969 a programme of archaeological films was shown to a full house at the Noverre Cinema in collaboration with the Norfolk and Norwich Film Theatre. Meanwhile in 1965 there was a successful joint meeting with the University of East Anglia, continuing a link with them which began two years earlier when the Society presented a complete set of its publications to their new library.

A detailed summary of these lectures for the past thirty years would make an interesting compilation, but unfortunately it cannot be contemplated here. The same applies to the Society's summer excursions. These too had to be discontinued during the war, except for one in Norwich in 1940, but like the lectures they were resumed in 1946. Since then there have been at least three each year and sometimes more, with an average attendance only slightly below one hundred. In the

main they have taken members and friends to interesting sites, houses and churches in Norfolk, but from time to time they have involved journeys into neighbouring counties. Records show that continuously from 1851 private houses have been included in itineraries, and the fact that the Society wishes to make such visits tends to emphasize to owners the importance of their property. The Society is most grateful to the various hosts for this privilege, which is much appreciated; but it may also be said that not infrequently owners probably glean fresh information about their houses as a result. Excursions including such visits are popular, and it was one such in 1953 that attracted the highest attendance ever experienced — by coincidence, 170, the same figure as for the lectures!

Both lectures and excursions involve a great deal of interesting research by the speakers, and much of this is lost now that they are no longer reported in detail. Tape recording has been tried on one or two occasions with little success, and in any case many lecturers do not wish verbatim reports to be published. However, where a talk is regarded as specially worthy of publication it is sometimes possible to arrange for the speaker to produce an article for *Norfolk Archaeology*.

## MONUMENTS AND BUILDINGS

Over the years the Society has endeavoured to play its part in the preservation of ancient buildings and monuments of the past. During the last war it had a sub-committee dealing with the National Buildings Record and one of its tasks was to compile a list of secular buildings to be recorded and of those already recorded. On a number of occasions since it has been invited to assist the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and latterly the Department of the Environment, regarding 'listed' buildings. The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 placed a much greater responsibility on the county societies for the protection of these buildings as it only allowed twenty-one days for representations to be made. The Society reviews all applications for listed building consent in the county, and this work has escalated rapidly over the years until in 1973 the number of cases investigated rose to fifty (double the previous year). That was the year when Norfolk had the third highest number of such cases of all the counties. Over one hundred notices of proposed alteration of listed buildings were also considered. The Society does not normally make representations unless it regards the application as a serious threat to a building of archaeological importance and it is prepared to send a representative to support its case at a public enquiry should this ensue. The Society has attended a number of these inquiries over the years with some success, and its representations have also contributed to the saving from demolition of other important buildings. Unfortunately refusal of permission to demolish is not always synonymous with preservation. On a number of occasions attention has also been drawn to unlisted buildings threatened with demolition, with the result that archaeologically important buildings have not been lost merely because they were overlooked when the listing took place.

A constant watch over the years has been kept on monuments in Norfolk. The Norwich City Walls are an instance. They were a regular matter for concern after the war, and in February 1964 a report prepared jointly with the Norwich Society was sent to all members of both organizations and to each City Councillor. All along the Society urged preservation as a whole and the City Council's decision by a decisive majority in 1970 to retain the walls was warmly welcomed.

In 1955, at a time when there was considerable national alarm at the damage and often complete disappearance of ancient monuments, the Society carried out

a detailed check in Norfolk and Council recommended a number to the Ministry of Works for scheduling, but with no success. In 1964 the Society again assisted in a similar survey. Meanwhile in 1962 an ad hoc committee was formed to compile a list of monuments and buildings worth preserving. There was then, and still is, an immense amount of survey work to be done in the county in connexion with cottages, farm houses and small manor houses. On this occasion, as previously in 1948 following the wider provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, the Society circularized all its members enlisting their help, but sadly the response was disappointing.

## **ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS**

It was also in 1962 that the Society undertook a preliminary survey in the county of early industrial monuments worthy of preservation or recording, and submitted a first list to the Ministry of Public Building and Works. Later on the Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society was set up, but not before our Society had been mainly responsible for the preservation at Fakenham, after it had ceased gas production, of the last remaining example in the whole country of a self-contained 'one-man' gasworks.

For many years such organizations in the county were affiliated to the Society. There was for instance a Great Yarmouth Branch of the Society until 1953 when it finally severed its connexion with the parent on the ground that since its formation in 1888 it had grown in numbers and stature to such an extent as to justify acting independently. To many this was understandable in what might be termed the Age of Independence, but old ideas die hard with some and it was many years before the breach was entirely healed.

Other archaeological societies have since been formed independently in various parts of the county and have been welcomed whole-heartedly by the Society. In 1959 the Society was one of the sponsors of the Norfolk Buildings Record, but it did not survive very long. The Norwich Buildings Survey was set up in 1966 and was actively supported by the Society in its ambitious aim of making a record of all buildings within the city walls, but it too was disbanded a few years later. Fortunately the work was continued under the auspices of the Centre of East Anglian Studies at the University and from 1971 in a somewhat different manner through the Norwich Survey project. More recently we saw the formation of the Norfolk Archaeological Rescue Group, which aims to co-ordinate amateur interest in rescue archaeology in the county. One of its activities is to record historic buildings, and there can never be too many doing this very important work provided there is no overlapping of effort.

One momentous development towards the end of the war was the establishment in London of the Council for British Archaeology, and the Society has actively co-operated with it from the outset. Under the C.B.A. group system there are opportunities for all the independent local bodies just mentioned to join and meet occasionally to exchange views. In many ways this can effectively replace the old idea of affiliation with the parent county society.

The last decade has also seen a remarkable growth in the number of local amenity societies resulting in a much stronger body of opinion caring for the county's heritage. This enables the Society to concentrate more on the strictly archaeological aspects of preservation. A close liaison is maintained with these organizations through the Norfolk Society, and our Society is able in this way to see that the archaeological angle is not neglected.

#### GARSETT HOUSE LIBRARY

Until the end of 1951 Council met in the Norfolk and Norwich Library, but from January 1952 their quarterly meetings have been held in Garsett House. The summary in Vol. XXX tells how the Society came into possession of this property in 1951, but does not explain its name. The building bears the date 1589, and it was no doubt this which led it to be named Armada House until the Society decided it preferred Garsett House, from Alderman Robert Garsett who is known to have lived in the house around 1600 and whose memorial can still be seen in St. Andrew's Church across the road.

It was in September 1951 that our library was moved to Garsett House from the Norfolk and Norwich Library thus ending a tenancy held for 62 years. In the following year the Librarian reported that the whole of the 2,100 books together with the manuscript collections had been catalogued — a mammoth task to be followed in subsequent years by an *index locorum* and an index of personal names. The history of the library may be traced from the Accession Books kept there. To-day there are about 3,800 books. Although the manuscript collection, like the book section, has attracted gifts and bequests throughout the years (for which the Society is exceedingly grateful) it has not increased as much as the books because in 1962 Council very wisely decided that all pre-19th century material should be deposited for safe keeping in the Norfolk Record Office. Microfilm copies of the parish register transcripts were also transferred there in 1972.

This reference library affords comfortable research conditions for members of the Society and while many seek information from the parish register transcripts it is a pity less use appears to be made of the wealth of material relating to the many other branches of archaeology. For instance there are publications of about thirty kindred societies in various parts of the country obtained by subscription or exchange, and in 1969 this collection was greatly improved by obtaining back numbers to complete 'runs' of these journals. The first body with which the Society started such an arrangement in 1848 was the Sussex Archaeological Society and we have a complete set from Vol. I of its transactions.

#### **GENERAL**

On numerous occasions the Society has put forward its views on plans, etc. which could have affected archaeological sites. Cases in point are the Norwich Plan of 1945 and the Norwich Road Traffic Report in 1959 (which envisaged a road through Garsett House threatening a similar truncation of the building to the one which took place just before 1900 to permit the construction of a road to take the new tramway line). In 1966 an invitation was received from the Ministry of Works to submit written evidence to the Field Monuments Committee. This the Society regarded as a compliment as only the C.B.A. and three other archaeological societies were similarly involved. The Norwich City Commission was appointed to consider *inter alia* the future of the City's medieval churches and in 1968 the Society and the Diocesan Advisory Committee submitted a joint report to this Commission making suggestions for adaptation to other uses should some be declared redundant. Other instances are too numerous to list.

#### SOCIETY'S FUTURE

During the last decade or so there has been a large increase in the number of professional archaeologists, which has fortunately coincided with the growing

need for intensive excavation of sites threatened by large-scale road works and other development schemes (rescue archaeology as it has come to be called). One outcome locally was the formation in November 1971 on a voluntary basis by some professional people closely concerned with archaeology in Norfolk and Suffolk of the Scole Committee whose declared aim was to 'co-ordinate the work of professional and amateur archaeologists' in East Anglia and to 'formulate detailed regional policies.' Then in 1972 came the setting up of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, followed by a similar unit in Suffolk, to carry out this rescue excavation and field surveys with the aid of funds from the Department of the Environment.

These organizations, together with those already referred to which in former days would have been affiliated to the Society, all have an important part to play in the local archaeology of to-day, but it is very desirable that they should not pursue their own ways in entire independence of the long-established societies. Undeniably the position of societies such as ours has been affected by this kind of development throughout the country and one might well wonder what is the future role of the county societies. The integration of the old and new is perhaps the best hope for the future, even if it does present problems. For our part we have all along welcomed these new elements and endeavoured to assist them in their formative years either by way of a grant or, as was the case with the Norfolk Unit, by lending them a complete set of *Norfolk Archaeology* and some other books from the Society's reserve stocks for their own library. It is also good to know that where possible there is reciprocal representation on our Council and their committees either officially or *ad hominem*.

In a period of much change since the war the Society has continued its long tradition of voluntary service. Fortunately it has not been found necessary to engage paid officers as has been seen elsewhere. Indeed with its relatively small income compared with the State-financed bodies this would have been quite out of the question. After 130 years it is on the stability of this amateur element drawn from many walks of life that its strength, like that of so many similar learned societies, depends. There would seem to be no reason why the Society should not continue to exert its influence by making its voice heard at the appropriate time when major issues affecting its interests are involved, and by fulfilling the functions set forth in its Laws and so admirably paraphrased by a former President as follows: 'To further the cause of antiquarian study in the county, to provide attractive lectures and excursions, to play its part in the preservation of ancient buildings and monuments of the past, and most important of all to continue the publication of Norfolk Archaeology.'

#### **VOLUME XXXVI, 1974-1977**

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

President:

1974 DENNIS KING, F.S.A. (1962) 1977 THE REV. CANON A. R. B. WYLAM, M.A. (1957)

Honorary Life Fellow:

1972 The late B. COZENS-HARDY, D.L., M.A., F.S.A. (1922)

Vice-Presidents:

LIEUT.-COL. P. L. BRADFER-LAWRENCE, M.C., B.A., F.S.A. (1969) 1969

1956 The late B. COZENS-HARDY, D.L., M.A., F.S.A., (1922)

THE LADY EVERSHED, O.B.E., F.S.A. (1962) 1973 E. R. GRANGER, F.A.M.S., A.R.Hist.S. (1950) 1972

1972 P. HEPWORTH, M.A., F.L.A. (1954)

1967 C. B. JEWSON, F.S.A. (1959) (Chairman)

1977 DENNIS KING, F.S.A. (1962)

PROFESSOR P. E. LASKO, B.A., F.S.A. (1972) GEORGE LEVINE (1952) 1972

1972 1972 G. A. F. PLUNKETT (1947)

1973

M. V. B. RIVIERE, T.D., M.A., F.S.A. (1964) THE VERY REV. GILBERT THURLOW, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S. (1949) 1966

1960 A. B. WHITTINGHAM, M.A., F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A. (1935)

The Council:

G. N. BARRETT, B.E.M. (1969) M. R. BEGLEY, A.R.Hist.S. (1975) H. A. BOND (1963) ALAN CARTER, M.A. (1976)
P. M. G. EDEN, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A. (1977) The late REV. H. G. B. FOLLAND, M.A., F.S.A.(1970) M. E. GOOCH, M.A., A.A.Dip., R.I.B.A. (1974) MISS B. GREEN, B.Sc., F.S.A., A.M.A. (1964) LADY HARROD (1961) L. A. HOWES, O.B.E. (1959)

W. E. A. HURCOMB (1970) ROBERT MANNING, B.A. (Yale) (1972) MISS A. S. MOTTRAM, M.A., A.M.A. (1960-75) A. J. ORANGE, A.I.B. (1976) The late MRS. R. O. PICKERING (1966) C. G. RYE (1969) M. J. SAYER, M.A. (1972-77) A. HASSELL SMITH, B.A., Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S. (1966) P. WADE-MARTINS, B.A., Ph.D. (1973)

THE HON. MRS. ROBIN WALPOLE, M.A. (1973)

Hon. Treasurer: 1973 T. W. MARRIOTT, B.A., LL.B. (1972)

Hon. General Secretary: 1959 I. CRESSWELL, F.S.A. (1959)

Hon. Editor: 1973 PAUL RUTLEDGE, M.A. (1973)

Hon. Excursion Secretary: 1950 E. R. GRANGER, F.A.M.S., A.R.Hist.S. (1950)

> Hon. Assistant Secretary: 1974 R. BELLINGER, F.I.A. (1974)

Hon. Librarian: 1952 G. A. F. PLUNKETT (1947)

Hon. Tax Secretary: 1970 G. W. D. WINKLEY, F.I.B. (1970)

Note: Year of election to particular office precedes name. Year of election to Council (and year of resignation where applicable) follows name in brackets.