

## TRIENNIAL REPORT 1983

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

During the period covered by this report membership continued to grow each year, increasing by six to 615 at the end of 1980, to 634 during 1981, finishing 1982 at 638.

*Norfolk Archaeology* was issued every year and continued to provide for the many and varied interests of members. Newsletters were an innovation to keep members up to date with information about local archaeological and allied matters, and two articles perhaps call for special mention. One reports the discovery in the Society's library of part of the Norwich section of the Rev. Francis Blomefield's collections for his *History of Norfolk*, and the other is an all-embracing description of Garsett House.

There have been each year the usual six winter lectures, with an average attendance of about 100, and three summer excursions (four in 1980) – average attendance 75.

The proposal by the Secretary of State for the Environment to transfer responsibility for ancient monuments and historic buildings to a new agency within the public service but outside direct Departmental control occupied our attention for much of the period. The Society played its part from the outset when Council considered Mr. Heseltine's consultation paper at their meeting in January 1982 and, subsequently, in a letter to the Minister approved the idea of a new agency subject to certain reservations. The Department of the Environment received over 300 such submissions which showed sufficient support to justify more detailed proposals which eventually led to the National Heritage Act 1983. This will bring into force on April 1, 1984 a new Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, and it is to be hoped that this very significant change will be for the general benefit of archaeology in this country.

How it will affect the Society's involvement with buildings of special architectural or historic interest remains to be seen. Presumably we shall continue to receive new lists and revisions to existing lists as has been the practice under the Town and Country Planning Acts since 1947. In any case this important part of our work – helping to fulfil one of the Society's objects – is already involved in changes being initiated by the Council for British Archaeology, as one of the bodies that is statutorily required to be notified of applications to demolish listed buildings. As its correspondent for Norfolk the Society has recently been assisting C.B.A. in its endeavour to improve its way of dealing with these matters. The resultant reorganization of the procedures will mean that in future the Society will be empowered to act as the agent of C.B.A. when making representations concerning demolitions, but as we have always been in the habit of submitting our views to the local planning authorities in appropriate cases this change is unlikely to require much alteration to our present method.

The extent of this activity of the Society can be judged by the number of such notices received. On average in each of the past three years there have been about fifty involving either total or partial demolition, and over 300 concerned with some kind of alteration to a building. All these notices need consideration and many require a visit to the property in order to decide what action ought

to be taken and whether any representations should be made. It cannot be overlooked that considerable damage is frequently done to old buildings as a result of unrecorded restoration and conversion which effectively destroys important evidence of their history.

Where objections have been lodged the DoE usually holds a Public Inquiry at which both sides may state their case, and there have been a number of these locally at which the Society's representative has given evidence.

During the triennium there was a threat that the Centre of East Anglian Studies at the University would cease to operate as a separate entity. The Society was not alone in expressing its concern to the Vice-Chancellor, and it is good to report that, after eighteen months of uncertainty, this valuable link between the University and the region is to continue, concentrating its academic activities on local history and archaeology.

An abstract of the cash accounts for the three years follows:

Year to December 31	1980 £	1981 £	1982 £
<i>Income</i>			
Subscriptions ... ..	2,309	2,389	2,387
Tax refunds ... ..	319	298	314
Grants for publications ... ..	112	605	
Other income ... ..	3,104	3,905	4,540
<i>Outgo</i>			
<i>Norfolk Archaeology</i> printing costs &c.			
for previous year's Part	1,726	2,807	2,051
Other outgo ... ..	2,691	5,950*	2,796
End-year credit balance ... ..	12,416	10,856	13,250

\*includes £3,000 contribution towards decoration of Garsett House

'Other income' includes interest and dividends of approximately £1,500 each year, rents from Garsett House lettings, and fees for excursions which usually cover outgoings. 'Other outgo' is made up of expenses of general printing, administration, and those connected with Garsett House and excursions; together with donations and subscriptions.

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