

Somerset Archaeology

Papers to mark 150 years of the
Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society

Edited by C. J. Webster

Somerset County Council
2000

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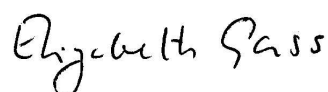
Foreword

The Dillington Conference was a resounding success and a great credit to the organisers and speakers. The submission of these papers to the printers in just over six months from the conference is a tribute both to the editor and to the individual contributors who have supplied their work so quickly.

The wide range of subjects shows the breadth of work which is currently being undertaken in Somerset. They represent an important milestone in research and understanding at the end of the twentieth century.

It is fitting that these papers should also be looking forward as well as reviewing our current state of knowledge and celebrating past achievements. This approach added to the great interest of the conference. I hope the result will be to encourage understanding of the importance of investigating and recording our heritage, and looking after it for future generations to enjoy.

I am delighted to see this report, and I look forward to the results of further research in the near future.



Lady Gass
Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset,
and a Commissioner for English Heritage.

Preface and acknowledgements

In 1999 the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (SANHS) celebrated 150 years of existence. As it was also 25 years since the appointment of Mick Aston as the first County Archaeologist, a joint conference was organised by Somerset County Council to present the results of work in the county since the publication of *The Archaeology of Somerset* in 1982 (Aston and Burrow 1982a). That book had followed a successful conference at Dillington House and it was decided to use the same venue.

The conference was organised by Bob Croft, Richard Brunning (SCC Environment and Property Department) and Steve Minnitt (SCC Museums Service). It was held over the weekend of 15th–17th October 1999 and attended by over 140 people. The stimulus provided by the papers was enlivened by the demonstration of the Meare Heath Bow by Stuart Prior.

In addition to those presented here, papers were given by John Dallimore (vernacular buildings), John Barrett (changing perceptions of the Iron Age), Tom Mayberry (150 years of SANHS), David Musgrove (medieval wetland reclamation) and Warwick Rodwell (Wells Cathedral). These were unavailable for the present volume and it is to be hoped that they will be published elsewhere. Mick Aston has kindly provided an additional paper on medieval monasticism which was not presented at the conference.

The production of this volume has benefitted enormously from the cooperation of the individual authors in providing their texts swiftly and in electronic form which has eased the task of bringing this volume to publication. I would like to thank them all for their hard work, both in making the conference so memorable, and for providing the material for this book.

Chris Webster
May 2000

Acknowledgements

The organisers would particularly like to thank Dr Robert Dunning, Betty Cloak, Keith Jackson and the Council of SANHS for supporting the event. Thanks are also due to Wayne Bennett and the staff at Dillington House for their smooth running of the conference. We would also like to thank Lawrence Bostock of the Somerset County Museum Service for his work on the conference display.