

REPORT FOR 1898.

During the year 13 new members, each subscribing £1 1s a year, have been elected, while 33 resident, non-resident or life members have either died, resigned, or had their names removed from the books of the Society for non-payment of subscriptions. Taking into consideration that 7 of the 33 never paid any subscription at all, and that 3 were life members, the income of the Society is only reduced by £7 7s. owing to these changes. Among those removed by death are the Rt. Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, for many years a V.P. of the Society, who died full of years and honours on the 19th of May; Lord Lathom, also a Vice-President, *persona gratissima* at Court, and in Lancashire deservedly popular, who died 19th November; a former Curator of the Society, W. C. Ashby Pritt, cut off all too soon at Timmencherla, in the Madras Presidency, April 28th, who was careful to remember the Society in his will, bequeathing to it illuminated facsimiles of three ancient documents; and two other old, valuable and highly-esteemed officers of the Society—Thos. Naylor Morton, Assistant Sec. from 1882 to the end of 1897, who passed away in his 83rd year, July 9th: and Charles Potter, for many years on the Council, and for 9 years Curator of the Society's museum, who died on the 29th of November. The funerals both of Mr. Morton and Mr. Potter were attended on behalf of the Society by the Hon. Sec. and several members of the Society. A short memoir of Mr. Morton appears in vol. 49 of the Society's *Transactions*; and over his remains, at the expense of his family and a few friends, a coped tombstone of antique form, designed by Mr. Cox, will shortly be placed.

The highly conservative repair of the ruins of Birkenhead Priory, under the direction of Mr. Cox, alluded to in last year's report, was brought to a satisfactory conclusion this Spring; and it is hoped that a tablet recording the Society's share in promoting so excellent a work will soon be set up on the spot.

In the Summer the Council made a grant of £10 towards the cost of carrying on the excavations commenced by Mr. May on the site of the Roman Station (*Veratinum*) at Wilderspool, near

Warrington. A rich harvest has been the result, which has encouraged the Committee of the Warrington Museum to take up and subsidise the work. At the request of the Council Mr. Cox visited the excavations several times, and gave Mr. May the benefit of his experience in such matters.

It having been reported to the Council that in the proposed alterations in Clitheroe Church unnecessary destruction of old and important features of the building was proposed, Mr. Cox was requested to visit the church, which he did in conjunction with the Hon. Sec., the result being that many of his suggestions were adopted by the architect and building committee. In the case of Woodplumpton Church a similar course is being taken, but here the scheme for rebuilding is still *in embryo*.

The Felicia Hemans Memorial Tablet Committee of the Society have had a very artistic tablet executed from the design of Mr. W. F. Price, which early in the year 1899 will be affixed to the house, No. 118, Duke Street, Liverpool, in which this gifted lady first saw the light.

During the year 10 papers, all bearing on the history or archæology of Lancashire or Cheshire, have been read at the Society's meetings.

At a special general meeting of the Society, held on the 3rd of November, it was resolved in future to hold the annual meeting on the same day as and immediately before the first meeting of the Society in each year, instead of on the day of and immediately before the first meeting of the session, commencing in November, in each year.

At the same meeting it was resolved to make the subscription of all ordinary members, whether resident or non-resident, elected on and after 1st January, 1898, one guinea a year; and such alteration in the laws not being retrospective in its operation beyond 1st January, 1898, it was resolved to ask all non-resident members elected before that date to pay the additional amount, in order to increase the Society's usefulness.

It is gratifying to be able to announce that in April the Treasurer was able to invest £150 in Consols, which more than covers the amount of compositions paid by life members.

Two excursions took place during the summer, of which the following notices appeared in one of the Liverpool newspapers:

Favoured by the weather, this Society made the first of its summer excursions on Saturday last, when a party of some 50 members and their friends, led by the indefatigable Mr. John Hargreaves, than whom locally a better excursion organiser could not be found, left Lime Street Station at 1-40 p.m. Runcorn

was reached at 2-7, where a contingent of over 20, under the leadership of Mr. William Handley, joined the party. A start on brakes, waggonettes, and cycles was speedily made for Halton Castle, the points of which in and about which were pointed out by Mr. Handley, whose knowledge of the district well qualified him for the task. The curious old library, close to the castle, founded by Sir John Chesshyre, the premier Sergeant-at-Law to King George II, in 1733, was next visited, where the honours were done by the librarian, the Rev. Mr. Wray, and a short but interesting address on the contents of the building given by Mr. Madeley, curator of the Warrington Museum. Starting thence about 3-30, Dutton Hall, a fine old half-timbered house, was reached at 4-15. Here Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, its present occupants, obligingly pointed out the many interesting features the house contains, calling special attention to the elaborate carvings in and about the entrance, the magnificent old front door, and what can be seen of the massive framing, carved cornice, and inscriptions in the great hall, built in 1539, now divided into two stories and cut up into a number of rooms. After leaving Dutton, a drive of some two miles brought the party to the pretty village of Aston, where they found a substantial meal awaiting them in the National School. Having partaken of this, the visitors proceeded to the church, rebuilt by Sir Thomas Aston, the Cavalier, about 1630, and again altered and enlarged in 1730. The numerous monuments in memory of members of the Aston family, and of the Talbots, their successors at Aston, from about 1630 down to 1869, were pointed out by the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Wray. The church and well-kept "God's acre" adjoining it are in perfect order, highly creditable to the vicar and all concerned, and very pleasant to behold. From the church a move was made to Aston Hall, which was reached after a walk through extensive shrubberies, where the rhododendrons in full bloom made a gallant show; past a pretty lake, and the now dilapidated buildings of the ancient house of the Astons, now converted into stabling and farm buildings. The great hall, for many years past a brewhouse, has a fine open timber roof, and a portion of the "screens," with an elaborately-carved beam of 15th century work, which probably carried a minstrels' gallery, is still in its original position. The withdrawing room beyond the upper end of the hall, with a ceiling of massive well-moulded beams, is now a cowhouse. At the present hall, built towards the close of the 18th century, the party were received by Mrs. Talbot, in the absence of her husband, the owner of the estate, some members of her family, and Mr. Linaker, of Frodsham, the agent for the estates. Mrs. Talbot most courteously exhibited and explained the "family tree," giving the pedigree of the Astons from A.D. 1086 to 1671, written and emblazoned on vellum and forming a

roll five feet wide and 38 feet long. The house contains, besides, some fine old tapestries and furniture, while a splendid series of family and other portraits adorns the walls of the hall, the grand staircase, and principal entertaining rooms. Having thanked their entertainers for their great politeness, the party drove off to Runcorn, and within an hour of leaving these venerable and interesting relics of the past, embosomed in woods, and apart from the busy haunts of men, they were rushing behind the "iron horse" past those distinctly modern creations, the great railway bridge at Runcorn and the odoriferous factories of Widnes.—*Liverpool Mercury*, June 24th, 1898.

The second excursion this season of members of this Society and their friends took place in charming weather on Saturday last, and comprised a visit to several of the mediæval halls of South Lancashire. The party left Tithebarn Street Station at 2.5 p.m., arriving at Rochdale at 3.30, where conveyances were waiting, and the party at once drove to the ancient hamlet of Newbold, where a family of that name was settled as early as the time of King John. The old hall of the Newbolds, a many-gabled building with a small courtyard, existed till the year 1840, but at present its only remains comprise the gateway and the large masses of granite which formed the quoins to the angles of the building. After inspecting the relics and surroundings of what must once have been a residence of considerable proportions, the party drove to Belfield Hall, a mile distant. Adam, the son of Henry de Belfield, was living here in 7 Ed. I (1271-9). About the middle of the 16th century the Belfields left the place, and a branch of the family settled at Cleggwood and Clegg Hall, Belfield being afterwards the seat of a branch of the Butterworth family, the last of whom, in the direct line, died unmarried in 1714. Ultimately the estate passed to Richard Townley, who had been steward to the Butterworths, and who was high sheriff in 1752, in which year he refronted and probably spoiled the old hall. The Ven. Archdeacon Wilson, rector of Rochdale, here exhibited a curious ground plan of the hall as it used to be. The place is now in utter decay, but bears ample evidence of the unfortunate attempts made to improve its ancient characteristic architecture. Clegg Hall, above mentioned, was next visited. This occupies the site of an older building known as "Clegg," where in 1550 Ralph Belfield was living, and whose son married a daughter of Edmund Hopwood, of Hopwood. From his issue the estate descended to the Assheton family, who in 1618 sold the hall to Edmund Howorth. The present building, which was erected early in the 17th century, was described in 1626 as a "sfaire capital messuage, built with free stone, with

"all new ffaire houses of office thereunto belonging, with "gardens, fishponds, and closes of land." The hall is still an ornate building, though all its rural accessories have departed, and it now stands in juxtaposition to a railway and a canal, which destroy all semblance to the picturesque and reposeful beauty it must once have enjoyed. This hall, it may be mentioned, is the scene of Roby's "Clegg Hall Boggart." The party now drove through pleasant scenery over hill and dale towards Rochdale, passing the sites of Buckley, Hamer, and Howorth Halls, and also "The Great House" at Amen Corner in Rochdale, the oldest house in the town. This district is, of course, classic ground to the admirers of the Lancashire worthy, "Tim Bobbin," who was born in the neighbourhood and lies buried in the churchyard, his simple grave being duly visited by most travellers. Rochdale Church, founded about 1194 and several times rebuilt, was inspected, its interesting features being pointed out by Archdeacon Wilson, not least among them being a very curious ancient font, which, after lying hidden in the ground upwards of 250 years, was discovered in 1892 and once more set up in the church. After being courteously shown through the very handsome interior of the Town Hall, the party proceeded to the Public Library, where is preserved a fine collection of MSS. and sketches of "Tim Bobbin." In anticipation of the visit adequate arrangements had been made for the inspection of these relics, which, in the absence of the chief librarian, were exhibited by his deputy, and evoked much interest. After an excellent repast the party returned to Liverpool, which was reached at 9-30. The outing proved one of much interest, and was greatly enjoyed by all who participated in it. Their cordial thanks are due to Col. Fishwick, F.S.A., who acted as cicerone to the party, and elaborately described the various places of interest visited, and recounted the vicissitudes of the ancient families who had inhabited them. The management of the excursion was undertaken by Mr. John Hargreaves, who carried out his kindly duties in an exceedingly efficient manner.—*Liverpool Mercury*.

MEMBERS ELECTED, 1898.

Jan. 20.	Geo. Percival Mason.	Nov. 3.	A. W. Brierley.
Feb. 3.	Charles Scarisbrick.	" 3.	F. H. Seddon.
" 3.	Mrs. Hilda Gamlin.	" 3.	Harold Ehrenborg.
" 3.	Miss Ellen Poole.	" 3.	Ambrose Marshall.
" 3.	James Moon.	" 3.	Edw. Russell Taylor.
Nov. 3.	John Sampson.	" 3.	Wilfrid Hawley.
" 3.	William Handley.		

PAPERS READ, 1898.

- Jan. 6. "A concise account of the Muniments and Records of the Corporation of Liverpool."
(the late) T. N. Morton.¹
- " 6. "William Daniels, Artist." - - - John Thompson.
- " 20. "Ancient Freemasonry in Lancashire and Cheshire."
W. Harry Rylands, F.S.A.
- Feb. 3. "The Parish Church of St. Mary-in-the-Fields, Urs-
wick, and its Surroundings." - - W. E. Gregson.
- " 17. "The Manor of Halton, co. Lancaster."
W. O. Roper, F.S.A.
- Mar. 17. "Further 'Finds' at *Veratinum*."
Thomas May, F.S.E.I.
- " 31. "Archæological Discoveries at Birkenhead Priory;
with remarks on Conservation *versus* Restoration
of Ancient Buildings." - - (the late) W. E. Cox.²
- Nov. 3. "Goosnargh and its 'Twelve Sworn Men.'"
Rev. E. D. Banister, M.A.
- " 17. "The lesser known Gatehouses of Lancashire and
Cheshire." - - - - - James A. Waite.
- Dec. 9. "Recent 'Finds' of Flints in Cheshire and North
Wales, and their bearing on the antiquity of man."
Joseph Lomas, F.G.S.
- " 15. "A 'Neolithic Floor' recently discovered on the
Coast of Wirral." - - - - - Charles Roeder.

¹ Printed in vol. xlix of the Society's *Transactions*.

² Should Mr. Cox's notes for this be found, they will be printed in a subsequent volume of our *Transactions*, along with a short memoir of the lamented author.



The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire in account with the Hon. Treasurer,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1898.

	RECEIPTS.	£ s. d.		PAYMENTS.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Balance from last account		131 18 6	SESSIONAL EXPENSES—			
Subscriptions received		253 11 0	Fire Insurance	0 16 0		
Interest on investment in Consols		0 18 0	Teas	7 14 9		
Bank Interest		1 8 3	Thomas Brakell Limited—Printing	12 11 0		
Donation from Canon and Colonel Blundell, towards expenses of paper on Halsall		10 0 0	Rent	10 10 0		
			Secretary	26 5 0		
			Treasurer, for stamps and stationery	6 17 5		64 14 2
			EXPENSES OF PAPERS AND VOLUME—			
			Drawings of two seals	1 0 0		
			Mr. Cox, for illustrations and sundry expenses at Clitheroe, Woodplumpton, and Veratinum	10 1 1		
			Mr. Roeder, expenses to Liverpool	0 10 0		
			Photographing Preston Regalia	0 15 0		
			Expenses of Halsall Paper	3 15 6		
			Expenses of Freemasonry Paper, first part	9 13 0		
			Indexing Volume	4 4 0		
			Copies of Archæological Index	2 3 9		
			Thomas Brakell Limited—Printing	126 11 1		
			Miss Lynch—Typewriting	0 13 1		159 6 6
			Librarian's Expenses—Binding and purchase of books			14 0 3
			SUBSCRIPTIONS TO SOCIETIES—			
			Lancashire Parish Register Society	1 1 0		
			Congress of Archæological Societies	1 0 0		
			Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society	1 1 0		3 2 0
			EXTRA EXPENSES—			
			Warrington Excavations	10 0 0		
			Loss on Excursions	5 7 10		15 7 10
			Balance carried to next year's account			141 5 0
			Made up as follows:—			
			Investment—£144 3s. 8d. Consols, at 2½%, purchased 9th August, 1898, cost	150 0 0		
			Less amount due Bank	8 15 0		
				£141 5 0		
		£397 15 9				£397 15 9

NOTE.—In addition to the above, there were certain subscriptions outstanding on 31st December, 1898.

Audited and certified correct,
BEN. COOKSON, CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT.

Liverpool, 23rd June, 1899.