

From the *Transactions* of the  
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

## **Society Pages**

from 1954, Vol. 73

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## ROLAND AUSTIN, M.A., F.S.A.

Roland Austin was born at Reading in 1874 and, on completing his school education, became an assistant at the Reading Public Library. In 1896 he was made Librarian of the Public Libraries, Southwark, and, four years later, he was appointed Librarian of the Gloucester Public Library. During his long tenure of the latter post, he effected many improvements, and it may be justifiably claimed that no similar institution of its size offered the public a better service. He knew the best books on a wide variety of subjects and obtained them, and he could always tell an enquirer where to find a certain piece of information. He was author of *Some Gloucestershire Books and their Authors* and he was responsible for three important pieces of bibliographical work.

During his librarianship in co-operation with Sir Francis Hyett, he brought out a supplement to the *Biographer's Manual of Gloucestershire Literature* and later compiled his monumental *Catalogue of the Gloucestershire Collection*. It may well be that posterity will best remember him by this work.

Austin's life may be said to have been almost wholly given to his work. His domestic and family life was subordinated to it. He rose very early in the morning and would accomplish much before breakfast. There were no fixed hours or days to the time he spent at the library, and often he returned to it in the evening to work late.

When the time for his retirement arrived, he became the county's first Record Officer, an appointment he found congenial because it enabled him to handle documents in which he was greatly interested. The thoroughness, the art of organisation, of tabulation, and indexing that had characterised his work at the public library enabled the County Record Office, then a new institution, to begin on a sound and progressive basis. His unrivalled knowledge of the county and his experience as a custodian of the Gloucester city archives made him eminently fitted for the post.

He was a founder joint-editor of *Antiquity* for a number of years, and Secretary of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club from 1916 to 1919.

His association with the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society was unique. He became a member in 1908, and Local Secretary for Gloucester in 1912. He was appointed General Secretary in 1917, and held this office till 1928. He was Treasurer from 1924 to 1928 and from 1937 to 1944; Librarian from 1914 to 1951; and Editor of the Society's *Transactions* from 1923 to 1948. He was made an Honorary Member in 1928 in recognition of his outstanding services. He was Chairman in 1937-8, and President in 1939-40. No other member has ever held so many posts. As Editor he ensured that the *Transactions* maintained a high standard, and he indexed not only individual volumes, but sets of these. He also contributed a number of articles.

His services to archaeology were recognised by Bristol University which conferred on him the honorary degree of M.A. in 1927. In the following year he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and served on the Council in 1938 and 1939.

As a scholar, in many respects self-taught, he was exceptional, and made for himself a reputation that reached far beyond Gloucestershire. As a man, reserved by nature, he hated publicity. He did not suffer fools gladly, and made few intimate friends, but those who were so privileged will never forget the Sunday evenings when he sometimes relaxed from work and visited their houses for supper. It was a time of conversation, often late into the night, conversation that disclosed not only his natural sincerity, geniality, and sense of humour, but the wide scope of his knowledge and his soundness of judgment.

There is no doubt that the tragedy of his daughter's death was a great shock to him. It was a blow from which he never really recovered. He sought to hide its effects, but, by degrees, his zest in life waned, his memory faltered and finally failed. He had already achieved more than enough to ensure that the name of Roland Austin would be long remembered and honoured.

L. F-L.

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## HON. MEETINGS SECRETARY:

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MISS ELIZABETH RALPH, HON. W. R. S. BATHURST, MR WILFRID LEIGHTON and MR ANTHONY A. SCOTT

## REPORT OF ANNUAL MEETING FOR 1954

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held at the Red Lodge, Bristol, by kind permission of the Bristol Savages on Saturday, 3rd April, 1954. The chair was taken by Mr W. I. Croome (retiring President).

The Secretary presented the Annual Report.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the Accounts of the Society for the year 1953 and they were formally adopted. They are printed in the present volume of *Transactions*, pp. 254-5.

The Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Records Section were presented and adopted. The committee anticipate that the volume of Gloucestershire Marriage Allegations edited by Mr Brian Frith will be issued shortly. The early registers of St. Augustine's the Less, Bristol, and the registers of Dymock are in preparation.

The retiring President called on Dr D. P. Dobson Hinton to take the chair as President. In doing so, Mr Croome spoke of Mrs Hinton's long association with the Society.

Dr Sharp proposed and Mr Allport seconded the election of the Vice-Presidents, members of Council, Local Secretaries and Executive officers.

Mr E. Glyn Daniel, M.A., PH.D., then delivered an address entitled: *The Art of the Megalith builders*.

Mrs E. M. Clifford proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Daniel which was heartily endorsed by the meeting.

This was followed by tea given by the Lord Mayor of Bristol, after which a warm vote of thanks was accorded him for his kindly hospitality.

## REPORT OF COUNCIL, 1953-1954

The Council in presenting its seventy-ninth Report states that since its last meeting 53 new members have been elected. Losses by death and resignation or lapse of subscription have accounted for 39. The membership today is 561.

Among those who have died during the year are MRS E. S. BADHAM (1946), MR W. BUTT (1920), PROFESSOR E. T. CAMPAGNAC (1940), MAJOR CLIFT (1934) SIR PAUL GUETERBOCK (1922), MISS I. C. R. PAINE (1925), MISS I. O. PHILLIPS (1912), MR H. S. RADCLIFFE (1920), MRS M. S. MC. M. STOCK (1922), MRS C. B. TRYE (1931), MISS D. WERE (1922).

### *Publications*

Volume 71 of the *Transactions* was issued during the year. A grant from the Council of British Archaeology was received towards the cost of printing the report of the excavations at Whittington Court Roman villa.

### *General Meetings*

The Annual General Meeting of 1953 was held in Gloucester with the Society's President, Mr W. I. Croome, M.A., F.S.A., in the chair. The usual business was transacted. The proceedings of the meeting will be reported in the next volume of *Transactions* but reference to it at this stage gives the Council an opportunity to express its thanks to Mr Croome for his presidential address and kind hospitality. This meeting, attended by 80 people was the first of this new series and its great success owes much to the President. The Spring Meeting was held on the 16th May, when Northleach, Icomb, Oddington and Great Rissington were visited. At Icomb, Miss Harding kindly showed members round her house and garden. Many of her treasures had been brought from her former home at

Maddingley Hall, Cambridge. Mrs Marling of Rissington Manor generously provided tea for members. The Summer Meeting was held at Hereford on the 11th-13th June, when we had the great advantage of hearing Mr Geoffrey Webb describe the churches and Cathedral. Mr F. Morgan gave much help during the rest of the meeting. The Autumn Meeting was on the 19th September when North Cerney, Rendcombe, Stoke Orchard and Badgeworth were visited. Mr Clive Rouse described Stoke Orchard mural paintings. Mrs Clifford entertained the large company to tea at the close of a very pleasant day.

### *Council Meetings*

The Council met four times during the year. Many matters were considered and reports received. At Stoke Orchard it has been found necessary to reroof the chancel, for which £350 more is required. The Council has made a grant towards this sum. Mr Clive Rouse hopes to finish the treatment of the walls this Spring. At the request of the Council of British Archaeology Group XIII, a survey of redundant churches in Gloucestershire and Bristol has been made. As the nave of St. Michaels, Gloucester, is to be demolished and the site sold, the Corporation of Gloucester and the Ministry of Works are prepared to finance an excavation of the site. Reports have been received concerning another fragment of a sculptured stone found at Daglingworth; of a Roman well at Farnwell gravel pit, Lower Slaughter; that early Iron Age pottery had been found on Rodborough Common; and that fragments of 12th-14th century pottery had been found on the supposed site of a chantry chapel at Berkeley. Mr Moray Williams has continued his excavations at Beckford.

### *Meetings at Bristol*

The following papers were read at the Winter meetings at Bristol:

'The Roman Theatre,' by Professor Beare.

'London and Bristol in the 17th century,' by Mr P. V. McGrath.

- 'The meaning of English Medieval wall paintings,' by Mr Clive Rouse.
- 'Hugh Despenser, the younger, and Bristol,' by Dr Margaret Sharp.
- 'The family of the Rev. Dr Thomas White of Bristol, by Mr W. Leighton.
- 'The Cotham estate, with especial reference to the Cotham Tower lately demolished,' by Mr I. V. Hall.

Two Summer meetings were also arranged. The Council express their thanks to the Bristol Savages for allowing the meetings to be held in the wigwam of the Red Lodge and to Mr Page, the Secretary, for Bristol for his work.

The Council approved the suggestion that two evening lectures be given in the county to stimulate interest in the Society. One was held in Cheltenham on the 1st March, when Professor Jocelyn Toynbee spoke on *The evidence of Christianity in the Roman period*. The second to be given by Mrs E. M. Clifford on *The coming of the Romans* unfortunately had to be postponed because of the illness of the speaker.

BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET

For the Year ended 31st December, 1953

LIABILITIES	£ s. d.	ASSETS	£ s. d.
GRANT TOWARDS VOL. 71—Council for Brit. Archaeology .. .. .	130 0 0	£650 3½% WAR STOCK (Market Value £546) ..	650 0 0
MEETINGS ACCOUNT—		125 NATIONAL SAVING CERTIFICATES ..	268 4 7
Cash in hand for Meetings		CASH AT WEST MIDLAND SAVINGS BANK ..	562 4 6
Secretary I.I.53 .. £26 6 9		CASH AT BANKS .. .. .. .. ..	512 18 4
Profit on Meetings .. .. 25 12 11		CASH IN HAND—Hon. Librarian .. ..	2 9 2
	51 19 8	Bristol Secretary .. .. ..	10 10 0
GENERAL ACCOUNT .. .. .		PAYMENTS IN ADVANCE, Vol. 71 .. £29 16 6	
Less Cash on Meetings	1704 18 10	Add—ditto .. .. .. ..	13 0 0
Account .. .. . 26 6 9			42 16 6
	1678 12 1		
Add Cash in hand of Bristol			
Secretary I.I.53 .. .. . 7 3 5			
Surplus for the year .. .. 181 7 11			
	1867 3 5		
	<u>£2049 3 1</u>		<u>£2049 3 1</u>

ENDOWMENT FUND

£1,650 John Dickinson & Company Limited Ordinary Stock

I have examined the above accounts with the books and vouchers relating thereto, and I certify the same to be correct.

10th February, 1954. °

(Signed) L. FULLBROOK-LEGGATT, Hon. Auditor.

BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
RECORDS SECTION, 1953

PUBLISHING ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	£ s. d.	PAYMENTS	£ s. d.
BRISTOL MARRIAGE LICENCE BONDS—SALES ..	7 4 11	SURVEY OF PARISH RECORDS—	
ADVERSE BALANCE .. .. .	29 16 3	Mr E. S. Lindley's Expenses .. ..	34 13 8
		Photographs .. ..	1 9 0
		HON. SECRETARY—Postages, etc. .. ..	18 6
	£37 1 2		£37 1 2

BALANCE SHEET

LIABILITIES	£ s. d.	ASSETS	£ s. d.
LEGACY—Alfred Bruce Robinson, Deceased ..	5000 0 0	£2400 3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 .. ..	2206 1 10
INCOME FROM INVESTMENT—		£1246 11s 8d 2½% Funding Stock 1956-61 ..	1176 7 9
3% Savings Bonds .. .. £72 0 0	72 0 0	Post Office Savings Bank .. ..	716 13 4
2½% Funding Loan .. .. 16 15 0	16 15 0	Cash at Barclays Bank Limited .. ..	193 16 11
Income Tax Refund. . . . 14 16 0	14 16 0	EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT—	
Post Office Savings Bank .. .. 17 9 6	17 9 6	Balance as at 1.1.53 .. .. £798 4 5	
	£121 0 6	Add Excess payments over receipts bt. down .. ..	29 16 3
			828 0 8
		Less Investment Income .. ..	121 0 6
			707 0 2
	£5000 0 0		£5000 0 0

I have examined the above accounts with the books and vouchers relating thereto and I certify the same to be correct.  
10th February, 1954.

(Signed) L. FULLBROOK-LEGGATT, Hon. Auditor.