

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND OF THE COLCHESTER AND ESSEX MUSEUM.

BY THE REV. G. MONTAGU BENTON, M.A., F.S.A.

THE recent negotiations between the Society and the Colchester Town Council, resulting in the agreement between the two bodies already recorded in these pages (p. 137), led me to make further investigations into the early history of the Society and of the Museum, since certain facts as to their origin and relationship were found to be obscure. Bit by bit an interesting story has pieced itself together, and one that incidentally throws light on the 'dark places' mentioned by the late Mr. W. C. Waller in the excellent account of the history of the Society which he compiled at the time of our Diamond Jubilee (*Trans.*, vol. xiii., N.S., p. 1). Mr. Waller's article, however, is based entirely on the imperfectly kept Minute books, and is, perforce, incomplete; the following notes therefore are intended to form a supplement to what he has written.

It will be convenient to arrange our information under three separate headings, *viz.*: the Colchester Archaeological Association; the Essex Archaeological Society; and the Colchester and Essex Museum.

THE COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.—This organization not only paved the way for the formation of our Society, but may also be said to have given it birth. Fortunately, the Minute book of the Association is preserved among our documents, and from it we can trace the gradual development of the movement. We learn that on 14 August, 1850, a meeting was held 'at the Literary Institution [founded in 1848] of a few gentlemen favourable to the establishment of an Archaeological Association in connection with the Institution,' when the following were appointed as a sub-committee to frame rules for the Association, *etc.*: A. L. Laing, esquire, C. E. Blair, esquire, the Rev. B. Lodge, Mr. J. Bryant, junr., Mr. W. Wire, and the Rev. G. R. Medley.

At the next meeting, held on 28 August, it was resolved 'that every member of the Literary Institution be admissible into this

Society upon subscribing two shillings and sixpence per annum, and that the subscriptions be due on the 1st September, and be paid in advance.' Also that the ordinary meetings be held on the last Wednesday (afterwards changed to Friday) in the month at 8 p.m.; that Mr. J. Bryant, junr., be secretary and treasurer; and that the following rules be adopted :

(I.) That the objects of this Society be : to obtain and record faithful accounts of the antiquities discovered in this Town and County ; and that the Committee meet at stated periods for the discussion of any subject connected with archaeology.

(II.) To collect and preserve any heraldic or genealogical notices which may be discovered.

(III.) To investigate the ecclesiastical, castellated, and domestic architecture of this town and county ; and to use its exertions to preserve from threatened destruction any interesting monuments of past time.

(IV.) To collect coins and antiquities of any country, more particularly those discovered in this town and neighbourhood.

On 25 September Mr. P. M. Duncan, M.B., delivered an opening lecture on ' Archaeology ' to the members of the Literary Institution, 'which was numerous and respectably attended.' A meeting of the Society was afterwards held, when the following officers were elected: Rev. Henry Jenkins, *President*; P. M. Duncan, esquire, M.B., *Vice-President*; Mr. J. Bryant, junr., *Treasurer*; and Mr. W. Wire, *Secretary*.

At a meeting of the Society on 25 October, 'a letter was read from Mr. Darling in reply to one sent by Mr. Bryant, junr., requesting to be informed whether there was any intention to demolish the Gate of St. John's Abbey, stating that there was not the remotest idea of doing so.' A letter from the President was also read in which he expressed 'his determination to co-operate to the utmost of his power in sustaining the Association, and that he would shortly deliver a lecture on Colchester Castle, and read a paper for the guidance of the Association.' The Secretary afterwards drew attention 'to the fact of the beautiful Norman arch discovered at the pulling down of the old Town Hall having passed into the hands of Mr. Lay, who has formed three arches out of it at his residence in Eld Lane without any authority of the Town Council, or Building Committee of the New Town Hall.'

29 November.—One hundred cards of the meetings of the section were ordered to be printed, each member of the Association to be presented with one.' The Rev. G. R. Medley, who, it may be said,

¹ W. Wire, in a letter dated 18 Nov., 1850, says: 'Our Archaeological Association is progressing very satisfactorily, as we number 18 members at 5/- each, and 19 members at 2/6 each per ann.'

was vicar of Fingringhoe at the time, as well as rector of St. Nicholas', Colchester, was appointed Hon. Secretary.¹ The Rev. H. Jenkins having promised to deliver a lecture in March, it was proposed that it 'should be published by the Association, together with the lecture on the Castle delivered on the 28th ult^o-, with or without other proceedings, as an introduction to a series of their Transactions.' It was also reported that Mr. John Taylor, junr., had offered to guarantee the Association against the expenses of such publications. Mr. Wire gave some information 'respecting an ancient arch of doubtful date, purpose, and origin, in the cellar of a house—the last on the east side of Maidenburgh Street.'

27 December.—It was announced that the Rev. D. F. Markham, the Rev. Barton Lodge, and A. L. Laing, esquire, had accepted the offices of Vice-Presidents. Mr. P. S. Sparling exhibited two deeds of the seventeenth century, relating to the Blue Anchor public-house, Magdalene street; and the Rev. G. R. Medley presented a copy of *The Antiquities of St. Neots*, by the Rev. G. C. Gorham.

1851: 31 January. —It was resolved that the books of the Association be deposited for the present in the book-case provided by Mr. Scott, under the charge of the librarian of the Institution; also that the Secretary apply to the Town Clerk for permission to take a copy of the large map of the town. 'Mr. J. Bryant laid upon the table certain specimens of bone-pins, one glass bead, and three Roman coins, viz.: Allectus, Domitian, and Constantine the Great—all of which were found in a field at the back of the Union, accompanied by a skeleton, supposed by Mr. Bryant to be of the Romano-British period.'

28 February.—The Rev. D. B. Wells read a paper by the Rev. H. Jenkins on a passage from Domesday, referring to certain property assigned by William Rufus to Eudo Dapifer. Dr. Clark presented some engravings of Roman medicine stamps, 'one found at Colchester by Chishull 130 years ago'; Mr. J. Bryant laid upon the table a silver coin of Faustina, found at the Union.

28 March.—Mr. Laing read a paper by the Rev. H. Jenkins on the etymology of the names of parishes and the situation of their churches.

25 April.—The Rev. H. Jenkins read a paper on the derivation of Colchester, and the situation of its cathedral; also upon the etymology of Mile End, and the situation of its church.

¹ This appointment led Mr. Wire to resign the Secretaryship, when he was given a gratuity of one guinea for his past services. 'I fully thought,' he says, in a letter dated 15 Feb., 1851, 'when at my suggestion and by my endeavours the Archaeological Association was raised here, that I should have been its permanent Secretary at a salary which would have assisted me very much in my archaeological studies.' Eventually he withdrew from the Association,

30 May.—The Rev. D. B. Wells read a paper by the Rev. H. Jenkins on the derivation of the names Berechurch and Grinstead. Mr. Jenkins also submitted for inspection a map of Colchester, drawn up by Mr. Gilbert, showing the spots where various Roman antiquities had been discovered. Mr. W. B. Smith was elected Treasurer in place of Mr. Bryant, junr., who had resigned the office.

27 June.—Mr. Laing read a paper by the Rev. H. Jenkins on the origin of the name Fingringhoe; and Mr. Bryant exhibited a silver-gilt ring, supposed to be of the fifteenth century, dug up in a field at Tollesbury.

29 August.—Dr. Duncan produced five Roman bronze coins (described) found in the Hospital grounds.

26 September.—On the proposition of Dr. Duncan, seconded by the Rev. G. R. Medley, it was agreed that the meetings in future be held once in three months, instead of monthly, at 2 p.m. Dr. Duncan read a paper on the fortifications of Colchester; and a drawing of the interior of the chancel of Copford church was presented by Miss Clissold through Miss Bailey.¹

1852: 5 January.—Dr. Duncan's previous paper seems to have created unusual interest, for he was unanimously requested to read it again, which he did; and in spite of the new regulation it was agreed to hold a meeting in a month's time to pursue the subject of the fortifications of Colchester. The Rev. J. Papillon exhibited some specimens of Roman bricks taken from the Roman wall at Wroxeter—also some bones and iron nails; and the Rev. G. R. Medley showed a drawing of a Norman font in Palgrave church, Suffolk.

3 February.—Thanks were accorded to the Rev. D. F. Markham for a measuring tape; and to the Rev. H. Jenkins for a diary and plan of the Siege of Colchester. The latter read a supplementary paper to his former one on the Castle.

20 April.—The Rev. E. L. Cutts, who was to take such an active part in the formation of the County Society, and whose name appears for the first time, read a paper on the antiquities of Coggeshall abbey. Thanks were accorded the Earl of Ellesmere for a copy of his *Guide to Northern Archaeology*; and to the Rev. H. Jenkins for a plan of a Roman villa found at Stanway. Dr. Duncan gave notice that at the next meeting he should bring before the Society notes on a sepulchral urn found at Boxted; on the name Wigborough; and on the foundations lately discovered in the field by West Lodge.

¹ This drawing, signed 'E. Clissold, 1851,' is to be found on fol. 157 of the Wire Collection of *Illustrations of the County of Essex*, now in our library.

II May.—' It was resolved that best thanks be given to the Rev. H. Jenkins for his kindness in having formed the Association, as also for the able manner in which he has discharged the office of President during the last year; also that Dr. Duncan, V.P., be elected President for the year ensuing.' The meeting was then adjourned to 22 June for the General Annual Meeting.

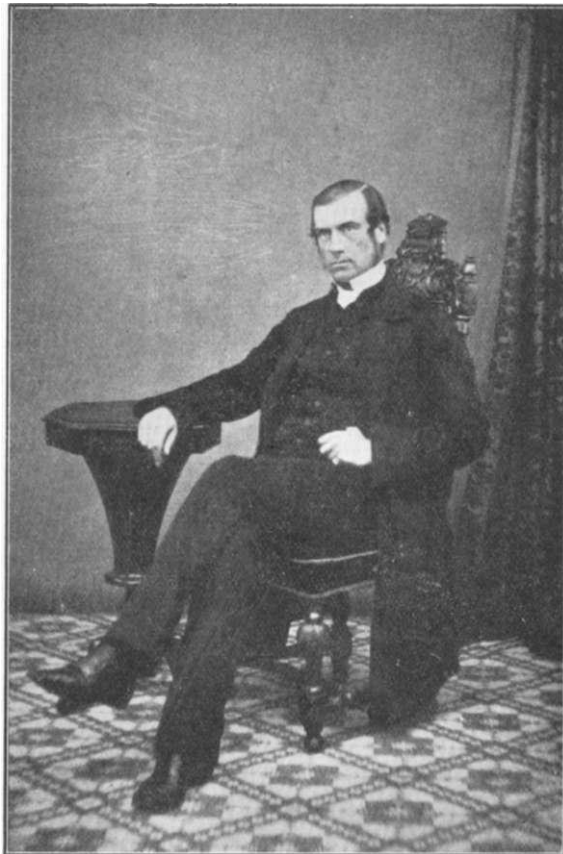
A letter from Mr. Jenkins, addressed to the Rev. G. R. Medley, acknowledging the vote of thanks, is preserved in the Minute book.

22 June.—The development of the Society is evinced by the fact that whereas the average attendance during the first year of its existence was seven, the number had risen to fifteen 'and many others' at this, the last meeting of which the Minutes are properly recorded. Dr. Duncan read a report 'on the various excavations conducted under the superintendence, and at the expense of the Society, also on the coins, pavements and fragments of fictile ware lately discovered in and about Colchester.' The Rev. E. L. Cutts afterwards exhibited a perfect quern found at Coggeshall; the Chairman (Rev. C. Merivale) and members then proceeded to view the excavations.

The next meeting was held on 1 September, 1852, and a rough draft of the minutes, written on a loose sheet, is pinned to the last page of the Minute book; an account of the meeting also appeared in the local newspapers.¹ From these sources we learn that a proposal for disconnecting the Society from the Literary Institution and establishing it on an enlarged basis as a county society was discussed; and the Revs. H. Jenkins, D. F. Markham, J. H. Marsden, J. T. Round, B. Lodge, C. Merivale, and E. L. Cutts; Dr. Duncan; and A. L. Laing, esquire, were appointed as a Committee, with power to add to their number, to draw up a report on the matter for presentation at the annual meeting in November. The President (Dr. Duncan) then gave a brief description of the progress of the excavations (which were afterwards viewed) at the back of the residence of the Rev. J. T. Round, where the old Roman sewer had been traced a considerable distance, and remains met with which promised still more important discoveries.

The Association, therefore, was active until the last; and although it had but a brief life of two years, it is clear that it laid the foundations on which our Society was built, and instead of dying of inanition became merged into the wider organization that it had helped to create.

¹ *Essex Standard*, 3 Sept. (2nd edn.). 1852.



From a photograph kindly lent by Miss M. Gardner, of Coggeshall.

THE REV. EDWARD LEWIS CUTTS, B.A.

Born 2 March, 1824; died 2 September, 1901

The virtual founder, and first Hon. Secretary (1852-1866)
of the Essex Archaeological Society.

THE ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—It would appear that the Rev. E. L. Cutts, B.A., the first Hon. Secretary, was virtually the founder of the Society; it was he who drew up 'the rough draft of a prospectus and rules for the Society'; and certainly its initial success and permanent establishment was in a large measure due to the 'time, energy and talents' he devoted to its promotion. This was recognized at the second meeting, held at Chelmsford in 1853, when Mr. Cutts, in responding to the toast of his health, remarked that 'he was very glad to have the opportunity of mentioning that the origin of the Society was not due to himself entirely, for within a week or two of his proposing it the same idea had been conceived and suggested, almost simultaneously, by two other gentlemen—Mr. Chancellor and Mr. King, of London. He therefore supposed himself to be entitled to about a fifteenth part only of the merit, but he was very glad his exertions had been thus far successful.'

The formation of a county society having been agreed upon, matters moved quickly. "A Prospectus of the Essex Archaeological Society"¹ appeared among the advertisements in the local newspapers during November, 1852, which stated that :

An Archaeological Society has already been in existence for about two years in Colchester; but finding that there is a very general desire for a new Society, with a more extended sphere of operations, it has deputed certain of its Members to form, in conjunction with several Antiquaries and other gentlemen of Essex, a Provisional Committee, for the purpose of establishing an Essex Archaeological Society.

A list of those forming the "Provisional Committee" is appended, together with a "List of Members," which at first numbered 42; but by 26 November the number had increased to 67.

On 14 December, 1852 'an influential meeting' was held at the Town Hall, Colchester, 'for the purpose of establishing an Archaeological Society for the county of Essex, and taking steps for the formation of a Museum at Colchester.'

In the absence of John Disney, Esq., the intended president of the Society, the Mayor (F. Smythies, Esq.) was requested to take the chair. He was supported on the platform by Archdeacon Burney; C. G. Round, Esq.; J. G. Rebow, Esq.; and other gentlemen and clergymen, among whom as well as in the body of the room we observed George Round, Esq.; J. M. Leake, Esq.; J. Bagshaw, Esq.; Rev. J. H. Marsden, Disney Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge; Revds. J. T. Round, D. F. Markham, P. Bayles, Guy Bryan, W. R. Browell, H. R. S. Smith, T. Henderson, K. C. Bayley, S. Dunn, R. Duffield, F. Curtis, H. B. Newman, J. M. Chapman, R. Drummond, J. H. Swainson, W. Wright, and W. Laing; Captain Jesse; A. L. Laing, Esq.; J. M. Churchill, Esq.; Rev. E. L. Cutts and P. M. Duncan, Esq., joint

¹ *Essex Standard*, 22 April, 1853.

- *Ibid.*, 19 (2nd edn.) and 26 Nov., 1852.

secretaries; Mr. W. Bolton Smith, Mr. John Taylor, Mr. J. O. Carr, Mr. Thomas Smith, Mr. W. A. Warwick, Mr. Benham, &c. A large number of ladies also honoured the meeting with their presence.

Officers of the Society for the first year :

President—John Disney, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.A., the Hyde, Ingatestone.

Vice-Presidents—Earl de Grey, K.G.; the Lord Bishop of London; the Lord Bishop of Rochester; Lord Petre; Lord Rayleigh; Lord John Manners; Hon. R. C. Neville, F.S.A.; Hon. and Rev. F. de Grey, M.A.; Ven. P. Burney, D.D.; Rev. H. C. Jones, D.D.; Rev. Professor Marsden, B.D.; T. W. Bramston, Esq., M.P.; T. J. Miller, Esq., M.P.; F. M. W. Peacock, Esq., M.P.; W. W. Hawkins, Esq., M.P.; D. Waddington, Esq., M.P.

Treasurer—Charles Gray Round, Esq.

Council—President and Vice-Presidents, ex-officio: Richard Almack, Esq., F.S.A.; Rev. Guy Bryan, M.A., F.S.A.; G. Buckler, Esq.; F. Chancellor, Esq.; P. Martin Duncan, Esq., M.B., F.G.S.; Rev. W. Harrison; Captain Jesse; Rev. H. Jenkins, B.D., F.G.S.; H. W. King, Esq., Secretary of Antiquarian Etching Club, London; J. M. Leake, Esq.; Arthur Louis Laing, Esq.; F. N. Landon, Esq.; Rev. Barton Lodge, M.A.; Ashurst Majendie, Esq., F.R.S.; Rev. D. F. Markham, M.A.; Rev. C. Merivale, B.D.; J. Gurdon Rebow, Esq.; Rev. J. T. Round, B.D.; Rev. W. Stubbs.

Hon. Secretary—The Rev. Edward Lewis Cutts, B.A.

'At five o'clock' we read 'between 30 and 40 friends of the newly-formed society re-assembled at the Cups Hotel, and partook of a bountiful dinner,' Mr. John Disney, the President, occupying the Chair.¹ According to W. Wire (letter, dated 8 December, 1852) tickets for this repast included a pint of wine, and cost 7*s.* 6*d.*

The first quarterly meeting of the Council of the Society took place at the Literary Institution, Colchester, on 17 February, 1853, when a paper on "Roman Urn Burial" was read by Mr. John Taylor, junr., and one on "Ancient Armour" by the Rev. E. L. Cutts; Mr. C. G. Round was in the Chair.²

On 19 April, 1853, a general meeting was held at the Shire Hall, Chelmsford, at 1 p.m., and we are told, in an account of the proceedings, that 'the subject of archaeology is not one of great interest in the immediate neighbourhood of Chelmsford, although much hitherto latent antiquarian curiosity has been revived by the recent excavation of Roman Antiquities in this locality; but the highly respectable company who composed the audience on the present occasion was by no means confined to this district.' The President, in his opening remarks, was able to announce that the Society was 'going on exceedingly well,' and he believed it to be 'now firmly and permanently established.'³

¹ *Essex Standard*, 17 Dec. (2nd edn.), 1852.

² *Ibid.*, 18 (2nd edn.) and 25 Feb., 1853.

³ *Ibid.*, 22 April, 1853.

It may be worth while to add here that a full report of the general meeting held at Colchester on 30 August, 1855—not recorded in the minutes—appeared in the *Essex Standard* on the following day.

THE COLCHESTER AND ESSEX MUSEUM.—A museum was formed at Colchester in connection with the Philosophical Society, as far back as 1822-3, and a list of its 'curiosities,' including a certain number of local antiquities, mainly Roman, is given as a footnote to Cromwell's *History of Colchester*,¹ published in 1825. This society was dissolved before 1845; its museum was afterwards presented to the Corporation, and transferred to a room in the Town Hall,² and here this *omnium gatherum* reposed in more or less obscurity for some years.

Mr. William Wire, one of the pioneers of archaeological research in Colchester, then conceived the project of establishing a local museum under his own supervision; and he issued the following prospectus, a copy of which is pasted on the inside cover of an account and letter-book of 1841-3, now preserved with his other MSS. in our library: **WILLIAM WIRE,**

WATCH MAKER,
AND DEALER IN CURIOSITIES,
No. 45, High Street, Colchester,
(NEXT DOOR TO THE RED LION INN.)

Begs to announce that he has fitted up a room for the express reception of Articles of Interest or Curiosity, to form a nucleus for a Museum, to be called

THE COLCHESTER MUSEUM,

any lady or gentleman who feels willing to deposit articles to further such an object, may be assured that they will be taken particular care of.

As an expense has been incurred and other charges will arise, the terms of admission are, a Donation, either pecuniary or something of interest, that will not only enlarge, but add to the value of such an establishment. All Articles deposited are to be considered given to the Museum.

Any lady or gentleman feeling disposed to aid the objects of such an institution by an Annual Subscription are apprized that it will very much help to forward the views of the projector
6th November, 1840. _____

Antiquities, Coins, &c, Bought, Sold, or exchanged.

DENNIS, PRINTER, COLCHESTER.

¹ Vol. ii., pp. 349-354.

² White's *Directory of Essex*, 1848, p. 86; 1863, p. 92. Mr. C. E. Benham has kindly drawn my attention to a letter in *The Essex Standard* of 8 Oct., 1831, which implies throughout that the Philosophical Society had already ceased to meet; it would seem, therefore, that the institution died in the autumn of 1831.

At the foot of the sheet is written 'Referee : G. Stokes, Esq', Jas. Tabor, Esq', Colchester.'

As might be expected, the establishment of a museum on this uncertain and restricted basis met with little encouragement, and the scheme fell through, Wire moving shortly afterwards to 54 North hill.' Moreover, although, according to Mr. C. Roach Smith, he had great perseverance and intelligence, Wire failed to find favour with the leading townspeople, and in his letters he even complained of the treatment he received. His antiquarian zeal, however, was extraordinary, and his carefully compiled *Journal* of events in Colchester from 1842 to 1857—he died in the latter year—is of great value to the local antiquary. The following extracts from its pages reveal interesting sidelights on the origin of the Museum :

30 June, 1843.—G. Stokes, esq., informs me that he will not pay the five pounds promised towards a fund for forming a museum, in consequence of its being deferred so long, and his going to leave the town ; and that he would call and tell Mr. John Taylor, jun. so.

Mr. John Taylor and other persons are purchasing antiquities for a museum without either judgment or discretion.

In respect to Mr. Stokes' departure, Wire, in a letter dated 1 July, 1843, says : 'Mr. Stokes is [leaving] for Cheltenham ; there is no society here for a literary character, especially as he is of too independent a mind to stoop to political controversy or polemical Divinity. I shall sustain a great loss by his removal ; he has been a kind friend to me by lending me books and counselling me in difficult matters.'

18 Dec, 1844 —The Rev. S. Carr informs me the reason why the Rev. James Round does not intend to assist in the formation of a public Museum is because he is afraid it will lessen the amount of subscription to erect a new church on the site of the present St. Nicholas, as it is in contemplation to remove St. Runwald's church [this did not take place until 1878] and unite the two parishes.

19 Dec, 1844. —Attended a public meeting at the Cups Hotel convened by the Mayor (Henry Wolton, Grocer), who was in the chair, to take into consideration the best way to form and permanently establish a Public Library and Museum, when resolutions were passed to that effect. Several persons set down their names for shares in the building, others for donations to accomplish the object in view. There were only two or three clergymen in the room, they as a body being opposed to it, likewise the Bankers, the former for reasons above stated, and the latter in consequence of having so recently erected the new Corn Exchange.

The last two extracts may perhaps account in some measure for the apathy that apparently existed in certain quarters with regard to a museum.

¹ The catalogue of Wire's museum is preserved among his MSS. The cost and selling prices are appended to a majority of the entries ; opposite a few is written 'sold,' or 'presented,' 'not to be sold.'

28 Oct., 1846.—Carried to the Town Hall, where a room is set apart for the reception of articles of vertu, forming the nucleus of a town Museum, a pair of hippopotamus tusks and a spermaceti-whale tooth.

The above entry is, I suspect, the authority for the statement which first appeared on the wrapper of the *Annual Report* for 1908-9, that the Corporation Museum was founded in 1846. The exact position of affairs at this date is revealed by the following remarks made by Mr. John Taylor at the opening meeting of the Society: 'Mr. Rebow was the first contributor to the museum attempted to be formed about five or six years ago, in connection with a general literary institution.' Not being successful in their object, the committee invited the good offices of the Town Council, who, although they did not then feel at liberty to make a rate for the purpose, appropriated one of the smaller rooms in the Town Hall for the reception of the objects contributed by different individuals. . . . They had lost something by the failure in the former attempt to establish a museum, as the then Mayor (Mr. Wolton) and the late Mr. Vint each promised £50. The latter gentleman, as they were aware, was always most anxious for the formation of a museum, and he had evinced his interest in the object by bequeathing to the town his valuable collection of local antiquities.¹²

22 April, 1847.—Carried a human skull from the Roman cemetery, Butt Lane, to the Town Hall, where there is a room set apart for the reception of articles of antiquity and curiosity to be transferred to a public Museum—if ever there is one established in this Town.

This is the last reference to a museum that occurs in Wire's *Journal*;³ possibly he felt that it was useless to entertain the idea of one being established during his life-time. Certainly, if we may judge from the following remarks made by Mr. Taylor at a meeting of the Town Council, held in November, 1859, no great interest seems to have been shown in the objects that had accumulated. 'Some years ago,' Mr. Taylor said, 'a valuable collection of antiquities was deposited in one of the rooms of the Town Hall, and the Corporation undertook the care of it on the part of the public, but there had certainly not been that care taken of it which was

¹ Mr. F. G. Laver, F.S.A., has called my attention to a notice of a meeting held 19 December, 1844, for the purpose of founding a Colchester Literary and Scientific institution [*Colchester Christian Magazine*, 1845, p. 12]. The formation of an Institution was then agreed upon, but according to the printed *Rules* (1849), it was not actually established until 1848. A Museum in connection with the Institution was proposed in 1844, and the *Rules* of 1849 state that it was 'intended to collect a Museum.'

² *Essex Standard*, 17 Dec. (2nd edn.), 1852.

³ I have since found a later allusion in a letter Wire addressed to Mr. C. Roach Smith, dated 30 April, 1851. He says: 'Another attempt is being made to get up a Museum here, but with what success time will decide. It reflects no credit on this town to be so long without one, but let's hope the apathy is fast wearing away and better times are coming.'

expected by those who placed it there: several vessels of the interesting groups of Roman sepulchral vessels were injured . . .; and the glass case containing, with many other valuable contributions, some gold coins, presented by the late Mr. Vint, which might be opened with much ease, he once found put out upon the landing, while workmen were being employed in the Hall. The room appropriated to the collection was frequently left open; and if there had been no loss of the more valuable objects, it was certainly not attributable to any vigilance exercised by the Town Council.¹

In spite of this criticism, however, it must be acknowledged that Colchester was in advance of most towns in having made some effort to retain its antiquities; a beginning had to be made, and even if the conditions under which they were housed were not ideal, we may well feel grateful to the Corporation of eighty years ago for preventing the dispersal of many objects of local interest, at a time when their importance was not generally recognized. But a new era was about to dawn.

We have already seen that the Society, at its inception in 1852, set itself the task of establishing a museum, but although it gradually amassed important collections, the designs promoted for their accommodation were delayed owing to lack of funds. Nevertheless, matters were not allowed to remain at a standstill, and at length the Town Council agreed to co-operate with the Society in forming a museum at the Castle. The following extracts from the Society's annual reports show how the scheme developed:

1854 (Aug. 29).—The establishment of a museum, which is one great object which the Society proposed to itself, has not been lost sight of, though it has been delayed, the first scheme for the building of a museum on the site which C. G. Round, Esq., offered to the Society in Colchester Castle was found too costly; but Mr. Round has now with his usual kindness, offered to the Society the use of the room called the chapel in the Colchester Castle, which, together with the corridor by which it is approached, can be converted into very excellent museum rooms at a reasonable expense. The drawings of this scheme are upon the table for the inspection of members, and their subscriptions towards carrying it out are requested.²

1855 (Aug. 30).—The Museum, it is hoped, will shortly be completed for the reception of the antiquities of this portion of the county.³

1857 (Aug. 31).—The valuable bronzes discovered at Colchester, and bequeathed by the late Mr. Vint in trust to the Corporation of Colchester, which are mentioned in the very first prospectus of your Society, have at length, after long delay, caused by legal difficulties [they narrowly escaped a chancery suit], been transferred to the custody of the Corporation. Charles Gray Round, Esq., your

¹ *Essex Standard*, 16 Nov. 1859.

² *Ibid.*, 1 Sept., 1854.

³ *Ibid.*, 31 Aug., 1855.

Treasurer, has very generously given the use, under a long lease, of a large and convenient apartment in Colchester Castle, for the purposes of a museum, in which it is proposed to combine the Vint bronzes, the collection of antiquities already existing at Colchester, and the collection belonging to your Society. The Corporation of Colchester have appointed a Committee on the one hand, and your Council have appointed a Committee on the other hand, to confer together upon a scheme for the formation and management of this museum; the sum of £50 : 15 : 6 has already been subscribed by members of your Society towards the expenses, and further contributions to this object are solicited.

It is confidently expected that your Society will thus shortly acquire a local habitation in the archaeological capital of the county: and we may hope that this event will conduce greatly to the prosperity of the Society.¹

At the annual meeting of the Society held at Hadleigh on 16 September, 1858, a letter from the Mayor of Colchester (Dr. P. M. Duncan) was read respecting 'the relative positions of the Corporation of Colchester, and of the Essex Archaeological Society, concerning the "Museum." ' This statement² advised the Society to let the president sign an agreement embodying the terms laid down: the Corporation, it may be said, expected 'the Society to collect funds to furnish the museum, and to render it fit for the reception of antiquities, objects of ancient art, and the Fauna and Flora and Geology of the county'—the estimated sum being nearly £300; while they in turn agreed to pay the current expenses, and act with any trustees the Society appointed. A few weeks later (6 December, 1858) the Secretary of the Society, Rev. E. L. Cutts, addressed a letter to the Town Clerk, submitting proposals for the consideration of the Town Council, and this letter was embodied in a report which the Museum Committee of the Corporation made to the Town Council in November, 1859.³ The Committee (Arthur L. Laing, Chairman) stated that the proposals contained in the letter appeared unobjectionable, and such as might with propriety be acceded to; and that it was calculated to secure for the town the advantages to be derived from a museum at a very moderate cost. After some discussion this report was adopted. The museum was at length opened on 27 September, 1860, when the Society held its annual meeting at Colchester. Mr. Gurdon-Rebow took the chair in the absence of the President, Lord Braybrooke; and the following paragraphs are taken from the report, which was read on this occasion.

The original prospectus of the Essex Archaeological Society stated that one of the principal objects which it contemplated was to establish a Museum for the

¹ *Essex Standard*, 9 Sept., 1857

² *Ibid.*, 17 Sept., 1858.

³ *Ibid.*, 16 Nov., 1859.

collection and preservation of the antiquities of the county. The council have the satisfaction of announcing that at length it has secured a most appropriate home for the Society, and for its collections, in a building which is itself one of the chief antiquities of the county, and of great historic interest, viz : in this Castle in which we are to-day assembled.

It is also a subject of congratulation that this important acquisition has been made absolutely without expense to the Society, except for the construction of the cases necessary to contain its collections.

For this the thanks of the Society are due in the first place to Mr. Round, the owner of the Castle ; he has granted to the Corporation of Colchester in trust for the purposes of a Museum for the collections of the Corporation and of the Society a lease, at a nominal rent, of the room in the Castle known as the chapel; he has also placed at the disposal of this Society, rent free, the house in the north-east corner of the Castle, that the Society may be able to offer it in part payment of the salary of a Curator. He has, moreover, had this room put into thorough repair ; the walls plastered and painted, the windows reglazed, a warming apparatus provided, and, in short, has left nothing for the tenants to do on entering upon its occupation but to tender their warmest acknowledgments to Mr. Round for his munificent kindness.

The thanks of the Society are due in the next place to the Town Council of Colchester, who have entered into an arrangement with the Society, in pursuance of which the objects of antiquity possessed by the Corporation will be placed in the Museum and will be freely open to the members of the Society. They have also voted an annual sum of £30 towards the salary of the curator and the general expenses of the Museum, thus ensuring the permanent maintenance of the Museum in good order, and its easy access to those who shall be entitled to its use. The management of the collection and the regulations under which the public will be admitted are placed in the hands of a Joint Committee, composed of an equal number of members of the Town Council and of the Society. The formal agreement, of which this is an abstract, is contained in a letter, which was sent by order of the Council of this Society on December 4th, 1858, and accepted by the Town Council on the 9th of November last.

It is recommended that the Society shall to-day appoint Trustees in its behalf, in whom the property of the Society shall be vested.

And now that the Society has a perfectly secure place for the custody, and a convenient place for the exhibition of, its curiosities, the Council is prepared to request donations of objects of antiquity. It also invites those who please to deposit their private collections in the Museum, for public exhibition, under the security of a formal receipt from the officers of the Society.

The Society is thus steadily and successfully accomplishing the various works for which it was established ; and it is confidently hoped that this day on which it enters upon its new home, and throws open a very valuable collection of antiquities to its members, will be the commencement of a period of increased prosperity and usefulness.

The Council desire, before any other business is entered upon, to ask the meeting to join in a cordial vote of thanks to Chas. G. Round, Esq., for the munificent kindness which has provided a Museum and Curator for the Society and the public; and to the Town Council of Colchester, for their valuable co-operation in the establishment and conduct of the Museum.¹

¹ *Essex Standard*, 3 Oct., 1860.

To the newspaper record of the above there is appended a short description of the Museum at the Castle.

We have now traced the steps whereby the Colchester and Essex Museum came into being. It was founded, as we have seen, in 1860, by the joint efforts of the Essex Archaeological Society and the Corporation of Colchester, and the Society may well feel a pardonable pride in the share it had in its establishment. The lines on which it has developed—a museum of local antiquities—must be due in some measure to the influence of the Society, which provided the original momentum; little progress, however, would have been possible if continued and increasing financial support had not been forthcoming from the Corporation, and to that body the Colchester Museum largely owes the fulfilment of its early promise of becoming one of the finest museums of local antiquities in the kingdom.