REEVES AND GREAVES

By L. B. CANE.

When England first became a single kingdom the Angles and the Saxons who had come from Germany and northern Europe introduced a system of government similar to that of their countries of origin. The smallest division of the kindgom was the tun or township ('tun' denoting a collection of houses fenced round by a hedge). Each had its tun-gemote or assembly of freemen, with a tun-gerefa, or town reeve, as its chief officer. A number of townships formed a 'hundred', a Parliamentary division still existing in the fen districts and other parts; a group of 'hundreds' formed the county or 'shire', presided over by a 'scir-gerefa' or sheriff; a union of shires formed the kingdom.

REEVES

The 'tun-gerefa' or town reeve was then the chief officer in control of the affairs of the town and was responsible for it to the higher authorities in the shire and kingdom. Similarly, the larger cities or boroughs were presided over by borough- or port-reeves and we still have lesser officials known as fen-reeves and common-reeves, administering the fens and commons. Of reeves the laws of Edward the Confessor state that this is 'multiplex nomen: greve enim dicitur de scira, de wapentagiis, de hundredis, de burgis, de villis." In later times there were manor-reeves whose duties were to attend to the cultivation of the land. The reeve of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales was doubtless a steward or bailiff, something equivalent to the 'grieve' in Scotland to-day.

The word 'gerefa' may perhaps be connected with the German 'graf', since the functions of a graf resemble those of a gerefa or reeve. At the present time reeve is sometimes used to describe a foreman or overseer in a coal-mine and in Canada for the president of a village or town council.

MAYORS

It was the Norman conquerors who broke up this system of government by town-reeves, port-reeves, and shire-reeves by putting in bailiffs or stewards to manage the larger towns for them and those in the 'major' or larger towns were allowed to assume the title of 'major' or 'mayor'. (The first mayor of London was appointed in 1189).

A mayor therefore may originally have been a 'town major', put in by the military conquerors in the same way as during the

World Wars the military authorities when occupying a town appointed a Provost or Town Major to be responsible for discipline and order there. Most towns have been content to carry on with mayors ever since. Not so Bungay, which is proud to be probably the only town in the country still presided over by a tun-gerefa or reeve, a good old English title far more ancient than that of the Roman or Norman mayor.

GREAVES

Whilst stationed in Yorkshire during the early years of the recent war a chance reference in a local paper brought to my notice the existence at Rotherham of a greave. Since it appeared probable that his office, like that of the Town Reeve of Bungay, had been derived from the Anglo-Saxon gerefas I took an early opportunity of making his acquaintance.

Examination of *Historic Notices of Rotherham* (by John Guest, F.S.A., published in 1879) and other records lent by him, confirmed this theory by showing that the history and past functions of the greaves of Rotherham had been similar to those of the town reeves of Bungay. Both could doubtless trace a common descent from the tun-gerefas of Anglo-Saxon times.

DUTIES

At Bungay the town reeve is yearly appointed, not from councillors elected by popular vote but according to good old custom by the nomination of the outgoing reeve himself. In theory he is an autocrat and is solely responsible for the administration of the diminished income of the Town Trust. He is under no obligation to consult his council of feoffees or even to call them together. stances are on record where a town reeve expended considerable sums of town money contrary to the wishes of his feoffees. In practice, however, he generally consults with them before taking any At Rotherham also the greave is assisted in important action. his duties by feoffees. For perhaps a thousand years or more the town reeve of Bungay, helped from Tudor times by the feoffees of the Town Trust, has remained its civic head. Like the greave of Rotherham, however, his activities and those of the feoffees have been considerably curtailed by modern forms of local government.

In both towns the reeve or greave for many years acted as chief magistrate and with feoffees from Tudor times was responsible for the government of the town and the welfare of its citizens. They did excellent work for furthering education, developing markets and transport facilities, improving health and sanitation, providing for the care of the aged and for the medical treatment of the poor. Schools were built and maintained, apprentices trained, roads and pathways made, and later public lighting installed. For the aged

were almshouses and pensions, and for the young apprenticeships and scholarships. Hospitality was offered to visitors and for the sick free medical attendance.

RELIGION

In their records are many references to contributions for church services and restoration. At Bungay the town reeve's accounts contain frequent items of such expenditure, including repairs to the roof of the church tower and the maintenance of its clock, and in *Historic Notices of Rotherham* we read that 'during the Roman Catholic regime greaves were appointed for the regular supply of wax lights required for the several altars and chantries in the daily church services.' They were called 'Greaves of Our Lady's Lights.' Later entries in their accounts show similar items for church expenses.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

For national defence we read that the Greaves were required to 'provide and keep in store the necessary suits of armour and weapons of warfare and other martial equipments', with details from time to time of the articles supplied.

In 1537 Guest states that equipment for defence was described. In 1569, 1595 and in other years appear charges for making or mending the Common Butts, where the inhabitants of the town at that period practised shooting. In 1595 we read: 'Item: paid to John Kidde for dressings of Armour . . .3s.', and again in 1610 Guest notes that charges about the 'armour of the sayd towne' were incurred.

In July 1631 instructions were issued by the Privy Council for 'musters, and the arms thereof', containing sundry regulations about drill and the arms proper for each class of men. It was enjoined amongst other things that upon Sundays, after evening prayer, and on holidays, these exercises should take place. Afterwards it would appear that days of training were appointed at different places and about 4d. a day was paid to the men.

In 1782 it was ordered 'that the Greaves subscribe the sum of £30 towards carrying into execution Lord Shelburne's plan for arming the people.' In 1804 for '35 Guns with Bayonnetts, Belts and Cartouch Boxes' the sum of £27 ls. ld. was paid. In the Minute Book it is stated that this was to 'arm 35 men for the purpose of Home Defence.'

At Bungay the town reeve's records contain references to support of the volunteers and, during the late war, to the Home Guard, and the organisation of the local War Savings campaign, at a time when Rotherham's greave was prominent in a War Weapons week. In Bungay the historic Castle Hills, now the property of the Town Trust, once again played their part in the defence of the town, with an Observers' Post on their crests, and beneath the ruined walls of its Norman castle the custodian had made a small shelter against bombardment from the air.

RECORDS

The first entry in the records of the greaves of the common lands of Rotherham dated 19 December 1589, relates to the repayment of cost of oil removed from the house of a man who with his family was removed to isolation in 'Rotherham More' in time of plague. From that year the accounts of the greaves and feoffees of Rotherham have been kept and rendered annually at a public meeting which up to 1696 was held in August in the church.

At Bungay the existing Town Reeve's Books begin in 1726 but in 1728 mention is there made of an earlier one begun in 1648. The accounts are published at the annual town meeting in December, at which the outgoing reeve nominates his successor. Before this the ancient town dinner has in recent years been revived. For this an Elizabethan benefactor left in his will provision for ten shillings for 'good Cheere' for those who attended the auditing of the accounts.

Throughout the records of both are frequent items of payments for the schools, for church expenses, almshouses, the clothing and assistance of the poor, and in former times for their medical attendance.

MEDICAL ATTENDANCE

Entries in the Bungay records give interesting details of fees paid for setting of fractures and other treatment and for an agreement with a doctor for attendance on the sick and poor for all illnesses 'small-pox excepted' at a rate of f 12 a year.

In the Rotherham records is an entry in 1720 'Paid Mr. Gray for cutting William Kants arm: £2 15s. 0d.', and eight years later 'Paid Mrs. Gray for setting Widdow Cundell's shoulder and her thigh, and Reresby Shant's child Legg, and curing them: £1 5s. 0d.' From this it appears that at Rotherham more than two hundred years ago there was a female practitioner in the art of bone setting.

No record has been found, however, of there ever having been a woman Greave in Rotherham, but at Bungay in 1937, for the first time in its history, a woman was nominated as Lady Reeve. This was Mrs. Messenger, who had the distinction also of broadcasting to America some account of her ancient office. During a second year as town reeve in 1951 she took a prominent part in the local Festival of Britain celebrations and a historical pageant on the Castle Hills, which she had obtained for the Town Trust fourteen years previously.

EDUCATION

Space does not permit any detailed references here to the excellent work done over many years by the reeves and greaves for the furthering of education. It was a town reeve of Bungay in Tudor times who founded its Grammar School, to which the Town Trust still contributes annually, although this has now been taken over by the County Council. At Rotherham the 'Charity School of the Feoffees' was 'regarded by them for a long period of time as one of the most practically beneficial institutions connected with their Trust.'

REGALIA

Until comparatively recent times neither the reeve of Bungay nor the greave of Rotherham possessed any official badges or regalia. In 1820, however, the town reeve presented a large silver badge, originally issued as a Coronation medal, to which in recent years have been added other jubilee and coronation medallions and one added in 1954 bearing the new Arms granted to Bungay in that year by the College of Heralds. Another commemorates the appointment of the first Lady Reeve. This Lady Reeve in 1951 presented also a silver badge bearing a representation of Bungay's Butter Cross, with a chain, to be worn by the consort of the reeve. In 1952 a specially designed robe of office was presented by the outgoing reeve for the use of his successors.

At Rotherham, in 1906 the greave of that year presented a badge of gold, beautifully enamelled, to which was added a chain and later a mace. The mace is of solid silver of Elizabethan design and the chain of gold with oblong shields and a large central link charged with the arms of Queen Elizabeth in enamel and gold.

CELEBRATIONS

In both towns the feoffees were prominent in organising and contributing to local celebrations in times of national rejoicings. At Bungay for example the passing of the Reform Bill was celebrated by a dinner to over 2000 persons in the public streets. At Rotherham, on 27 June 1706, £2 was 'spent on ye rejoycing day for ye Duke of Marlborough's victory at Ramileys.' In the following year 'For a Horseload of Coales for a Bonefire on the Union between England and Scotland: 6d.' That 6d. was the usual price for a load of coals in those good old days is shown by later entries, for example in 1716' Paid for forty horse loads of Coales: £1.'

In 1726-28, 'Paid for Ale at the Proclamation of King George 3 ls. 6d.' and 'Paid Thomas Hale for 5 loads of Coales for Bonefires 2s. 6d.'

In 1788, at the 'Commemoration of the centenary of the Glorious Revolution', which had ended the rule of the Stuarts, the greave and feoffees 'gave the Master of Eight Clubs or Friendly Societies that walked in the procession the sum of Three Guineas each, to be applied to the use of their Societies'. The procession was followed by a service in church and a public dinner in the Town Hall. At this a song, attributed to Lord Effingham, a Feoffee of the Common Lands of Rotherham, formed part of the programme. This although chiefly concerned with the downfall of the Stuarts and their 'popery' contains lines that might be topical even to-day. The prefacing stanza reads:

'Sound, sound your Trumpets, proclaim the Heaven-born day,
On which our Glorious William landed at Torbay;
Not to enlarge his Empire, but set the Nation free,
To curb the Haughty Tyrant and raise the suppliant three:
His mind forever Godlike superior to success
Declining Spoils and Conquests for Liberty and Peace.'

In one of six following stanzas:

'The Tyrant with his Black Guards fled, By Flight his Guilt confessing, To beg of France his daily Bread Of Rome, a worthless Blessing.'

And in the final verse:

From all who dare to Tyrranise May Heaven still defend us.'

In 1820 expenses at the Proclamation of George IV amounted to £2 12s. 6d.; and in addition £1 1s. 0d. was paid to John Wragg who 'lost his arm by a Cannon at the proclamation.' In both towns of course the reeve and greave, with their feoffees, took a prominent part in the Victory celebrations at the close of the two World Wars.

FEOFFEES

In both towns the town reeve or the greave have for centuries had the support of prominent citizens as feoffees. From the middle ages wealthy or benevolent citizens from time to time gave lands or other property for the enjoyment and betterment of their poorer brethren and those who come after. These 'fiefs' or feudal grants of lands etc. were vested in 'feoffees' or trustees. In Bungay the earliest feoffment deed relating to such lands is dated

6 May, 1639 and the next conveyance to new feoffees was made in 1666, both in Latin.

Of these in Bungay there were elected at first two 'Primal Feoffees', or managing directors of the Trust. As the reeve was the chief person of importance in the town he naturally became associated with the feoffees and eventually assumed the office of Primal Feoffee or chief managing director of the Trust.

Not only this but he became during his term of office a practical dictator as to the expenditure from the Town Purse and this autocratic power he still in theory possesses. The reeve's power, however, has become more limited. The government of the town is now chiefly in the hands of the Urban District Council and the income of the Town Purse has diminished.

At Rotherham even more than at Bungay, in the words of Mr. W. Hastings J.P., the greave in 1936, 'the area of opportunity has been restricted by the march of civic enterprise' and by the growing encroachment of central institutions.

COMMON ORIGIN

These random extracts from the records of the Feoffees of Rotherham and the accounts of their greaves, wrote John Guest, 'furnish a history of the internal management of the town.' The same may be said of the ancient records of the town reeves of Bungay.

It would appear, therefore, that both in origin of name and in subsequent history, the town reeve of Bungay and the greave of Rotherham may claim direct descent from the 'gerefas' who in Anglo-Saxon days presided over their respective towns and of whose long record of beneficent local government their descendants are justly proud. Both towns have reason to thank those public spirited men who for centuries have devoted so much of their time and experience to promoting the welfare of their fellow citizens and whose continued work is so beneficial to their towns to-day.

NOTE:-

For details from the historical records of the greaves and feoffees of the Common Lands I am much indebted to Mr. John Dickinson, Greave in 1941, and especially for the loan of his copy of *Historic Notices of Rotherham* and also for several cuttings from past issues of the *Rotherham Advertiser*.

To the records and accounts of the town reeve I had access during three years in which I held the office of town reeve of Bungay.

OFFICERS OF THE SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHÆOLOGY

1953

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REPORT FOR 1953

Forty new Annual, two Life and eleven Associate Members were elected during 1953. We lost by death or resignation 27 Members.

The membership at 31 December, 1953 was:—

Annual Members	399
Associate Members	87
Life Members	58
Honorary Members	4
	·
	548

Excursions, Lectures and Meetings.—Three excursions were arranged during the summer:—

- April 9 Hengrave Hall; Little Saxham Church; Chevington Church.
- June 15 Moor Farm, Middleton Moor; Sibton Park; Sibton Church; Sibton Abbey; Walpole Chapel; The Elms, Walpole; Bramfield Church.
- Sept. 9 Cowlinge Church; Kirtling Tower; Kirtling Church; Gt. Bradley Church; Sawston Hall; Sawston Church.

Five lectures were given at Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich during the year. Those at Ipswich were held in conjunction with the Ipswich Historical Society:—

- Feb. 18 Some Troubles of Mediaeval Town Life, by Mrs. M. E. Clegg, B.A., F.R.HIST.S.
- Mar. 10 The English House in the 13th Century, by Margaret E. Wood, M.A., D.LITT., F.R.HIST.S.
- April 17 The Historical Development of the Suffolk Landscape, by Norman Scarfe, M.A.
- Nov. 21 Some Aspects of the History of Fen Drainage, by L. E. Harris.
- Dec. 19 Robert Bloomfield and his Brothers, by the Earl of Cranbrook.

Officers.—The Rev. W. M. Lummis tendered his resignation as Excursion Secretary and it was decided to amalgamate the office with that of General Secretary and to appoint Mr. D. Thompson and Mr. M. P. Statham as Joint General Secretaries.

The Council were deprived of the services of valuable members by the resignation of Mr. G. Maynard and Miss L. J. Redstone and by the death of Miss Janet Becker.

Finance.—The Hon. Financial Secretary reports:—

'Last year I had to report a deficit on the year's working to the extent of £64 10s. 11d. Though the absolute amount actually fell short of this figure owing to certain offsets received after the accounts were closed and the carrying forward of part of the cost of the triennial index, which fell due during the course of the year, to a suspense account, a deficit still remained, indicating that with the rising costs of our publications, obligations and activities, our income was falling short of our requirements. In view of this, all officers undertook to observe rigid economy and various suggestions were considered for increasing income; and I have to

acknowledge gratefully a donation from our president and the sacrifice by the honorary librarian of half his honorarium. Our efforts have borne fruit and I am happy to be able to report that the year 1953 closed with a credit balance of £83 13s. 9d. This is all the more creditable in that the suspense account has been wiped out and that we made a donation of £10 to the Historic Churches Preservation Fund.

Our main source of income, that is from subscriptions, did not materially change during the year; experience shows that we tend to lose every year practically as many old members as new members we enrol. But there has been a curtailment of the bulk of the volume of *Proceedings* published and of purchases for the library, for which we must thank the Hon. Editor; and a very marked improvement in the expenditure on excursions. In 1951 the net cost of the last, including printing and issue of circulars, amounted to £24 12s. 9d.; in 1952 it was £37 16s. 0d. and in 1953 it was only £4 10s. 0d., that is to say the gross receipts covered all the expenses of coaches, teas, etc., leaving no less than £22 19s. 6d. to be set off against the cost of excursion letters. For this tightening of control over expenditure under this head we are indebted to the excursion directors and in particular to my colleague the Hon. General Secretary, the remarkable result being due undoubtedly to the introduction of the ticket system for participation.

As for the *Proceedings*, they cost us £251 3s. 3d. in 1951; £300 15s. 4d. in 1952; and £258 19s. 4d. in 1953. The last figure unfortunately disguises the fact that the publication as regards bulk is not comparable with that published for the practically similar sum spent in 1951. The publication of *Proceedings* is the most important activity of the Institute and in order that its value may be maintained, another appeal is to be circulated to all members, other than those who have already covenanted, to agree to covenant for their subscriptions, to enable us to reclaim income tax thereon and so increase our resources. Incidentally the income from this source will decrease this year owing to the reduction in the standard rate of tax. If there is a good response—and efforts have been made in the appeal to allay certain misapprehensions which seem to persist regarding the inevitability of the obligations undertaken by the execution of these documents—the full scope of our activities will, it is hoped, be restored. While therefore I cannot recommend that the Hon. Editor should be shewn the green light at once, I hope it will be possible to recommend this later in the year. In conclusion, our thanks are due to Mr. Turner who has again undertaken the work of auditing our accounts, gratis, and accomplished this with his usual promptness and efficiency.

THE SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHÆOLOGY

RECEIPTS AND EXPEN	DIT	ΓUF	RE	FC	R.	TH	ΙE
Expenditure.		£	5.	d.	£	S.	d.
To Printing and Stationery:—				٠			
General (including Telephone, Postages, etc.).		14	12	6			
Index, vol. xxv		17	8	0			
Proceedings, vol. xxvi, part i	٠.	258	19	4			
Winter Programmes		7	10	0			
Excursion Letters		27	9	6			
	-				325	19	4
"Honorary Editor's Expenses					10	0	0
" Honorary Financial Secretary's Expenses					3	0	2
" Honorarium to Librarian	٠.				10	0	0
" Donation to Historic Churches Preservation Trust					10	0	0
,, Bank Charges and Cheque Books	١.					15	6
,, Insurance				, .	2	.0	6
" Subscriptions to Various Societies					. 7	6	0
" Sundry Purchases for Library and Binding					12	. 3	6
" Lecture Expenses					- 3	9	6
" Balance being Excess of Receipts over Expenditure				_	83	13	9
				£	468	8	3
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LIABILITIES.			£ S.	a. £ s.	u.
Capital' Account:—					
Balance at 31st December, 1952		• •	1299 19	9	
Life Subscriptions received in the	Year	••	20 0	0	
			1319 19	9	
Excess of Receipts over Expenditu	ire .	••	83 13	9	c

£1403 13

AND NATURAL HISTORY

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1953.

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RECEIPTS.	:	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
By Subscriptions:—								
Ordinary	3	308	7	0				
Less Refunded		3	2	0				
	<i>'</i>	<i>:</i>			305	5	0	
"Refund of Income Tax 3½%, Conversion Stock	••	12		10				
" Refund of Income Tax under Covenant Scheme	••	61	16	7				
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" Interest on 3% Savings Bonds 1965/75	• •					. 0	0	
"Interest on £730/15/4 3½% Conversion Stock	• •					10	·l	
" Interest on Trustee Savings Bank Account " Credit for Off-Prints 1951 Proceedings	. • •				11	12 7	6	
" Sales of Copies of Proceedings					9	14	6 3	
"Excursions Account	••				. 22		6	
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31st DECEMBER, 1953.					,			
Assets.					£	s.	d.	
3½% Conversion Stock at cost	, .				730	15	4	
3% Savings Bonds 1965/75 at cost					90	16	0	
East Anglian Trustee Savings Bank	, .				465	17	1	
Cash at Bankers on Current Account					72	12	4	
Index Suspense Account	• •				17	. 8	0	

Audited and found correct, 12th March, 1954.

Debtors for Sales of Periodicals, etc.
Prepaid Insurance
Electric Stove, Duplicator and Furniture

Library lodged at Cullum Library, Bury St. Edmunds

HENRY M. TURNER, F.C.A. Chartered Accountant.

Not valued

Not valued £1403 13 6

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED DURING 1953

Bamford, Mrs., Deben House, Thorofare, Woodbridge. Binns, Mr. & Mrs. H. W., 69 Kensington Church Street, London, W.8. Body, Miss Dorothy, Middleton Moor, Saxmundham. Carthew, Peter, Jnr., Priory Lodge, Woodbridge. Clough, J., Churchside, Lt. Waldingfield, Sudbury.
Cotton, S. O'Grady, M.I.C.E. and Mrs. Cotton, Lovely Cottage, Gt. Henny,
Sudbury. Cross, Mrs. Stanley, Dairy Farm, Ixworth, Bury St. Edmunds. Fellowes, Major C. D., M.G., A.F.C., F.L.A.S., and Mrs. Fellowes, J.P., Badlingham Manor, Chippenham, Ely, Cambs. *Fitch, M. F. B., F.S.A., Olivers, Nr. Colchester. Fleming, Mrs. Irene J. R., B.A., Rose Bank, Cowlinge, Newmarket. Frost-Hogan, Mrs. D. M., Church Farm, Hitcham, Ipswich. Hadrill, Mrs. Hilda F., Bramblewood, Melton, Woodbridge. Hamel, G. Wynn, The Old House, Harleston, Norfolk. Harvey, Milton, A.R.I.B.A. & Mrs. Harvey, 59 Valley Road, Ipswich. Herbert, Mr. & Mrs. Aubrey, Chilton Hall, Sudbury. Hitchcock, M. C., The Mill House, Bures. Holmes, Mr. & Mrs. A., Holly Tree Farm, Bramfield, Halesworth. Jarvis, Lt.-Col. J. B., The Elms, Southwold. Johnston, Mrs. Iris Ó. H., Clare Hall, Clare, Sudbury. Keeble, Mr. & Mrs. F. R., Brantham Lodge, Manningtree. Knight, J. W. H., 50 Abbeygate Street, Bury St. Edmunds. Leédam, Gerald, O.B.E., Fairfield House, Framlingham. Lowestoft Boro' Libraries, Central Library, Suffolk Road, Lowestoft. Mower-White, Mr. & Mrs. A. P. W., 53 Links Avenue, Felixstowe. Niedersachsische Staats-U-Universitatsbibliothek, Prinzenstrasse 1, Gottingen, Germany. (All communications to Blackwell's, Broad Street, Oxford). Norris, Mrs. Dorothy, Wingfield Priory, Fressingfield, Diss. Pirani, Rev. M. R., 19 Crown Street, Bury St. Edmunds. Playford, Mrs., 18 Friars Street, Sudbury. Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2. *Raven, E. J. P., 12 Beaconsfield Place, Aberdeen. Rose, Rev. & Mrs. Howard, The Vicarage, Stoke-by-Clare, Sudbury. Scott, Miss, Churchside, Lt. Waldingfield, Sudbury. Shorter, Mrs. Joan, Manor Farm House, Gosbeck, Ipswich. Shuter, Mrs., The Mill House, Ufford, Woodbridge. Smedley, Norman, M.A., F.M.A., Curator, Ipswich Corporation Museum, High Street, Ipswich. Smith, Rev. A. Leslie, Gt. Blakenham Rectory, Ipswich. Symonds, Mr. & Mrs. R. W., The Ancient House, Peasenhall, Saxmundham, Tennyson, Sir Charles, c.m.c., The Middle House, Park Lane, Southwold. White, The Very Rev. J. L., The Provost's House, Bury St. Edmunds. Williams, Mrs. T. M., St. Johns Well, Gt. Barton, Bury St. Edmunds. Wood, Mr. & Mrs. A. Logan, The Gables, Brantham, Manningtree. Wrinch, Mrs. E. P., Roborfield, Cordy Lane, Trimley St. Mary, Ipswich.

100

^{*} Life Member.