

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES

The National Register of Archives.—Archives have been defined as “all those writings, in whatever form—papers, parchments, cards, books, rolls, plans—which accumulate naturally during the conduct of affairs of any kind (public or private, secular or ecclesiastical) and are preserved for reference, by the persons who compiled them, or their successors, either in their office of origin or some other appointed place”. With this definition before them, it is unnecessary to explain to members of this Institute the supreme importance to historians of all kinds, of locating and preserving all such records. Without them, no original research can be carried out and history, whether national or local, cannot be written. What is necessary to point out, however, is the urgency of the matter. Almost every week, all over the country, valuable archives in solicitors’ offices, private houses and so on, are being destroyed as “out of date” or “useless”, in order to make space, or for other reasons. In other cases, important deeds, court-rolls and other parchments are slowly but surely deteriorating through the ravages of damp or rats, in cellars and attics.

In order to undertake the task of locating and listing archives in *private* hands all over the country, and so, it is hoped, to take one step towards their proper care and preservation, the Master of the Rolls has set up, as a branch of the Historical Manuscripts’ Commission, a body known as the NATIONAL REGISTER OF ARCHIVES, under the direction of a Registrar, Col. G. E. G. Malet, with headquarters at the Public Record Office, London.

The Register is dependent for its field work upon voluntary helpers up and down the country; in many counties local organisations have been formed and work is progressing. In Suffolk, at the instance of the Lord Lieutenant, a County Committee has been set up and honorary secretaries appointed for East and West Suffolk and Ipswich. Members are urged to assist this important work in two ways :—

- (a) Owners of archives, by reporting the existence of their accumulations and allowing them to be listed;
- (b) Other persons, by volunteering to help in the listing and cataloguing of collections.

With only a little instruction, helpers can list most documents written later than the 17th century. The work is, of course, extremely interesting and can sometimes be exciting when, for example, the correspondence or diaries of some important historical figure, the existence of which may have been quite unknown, are discovered in a loft or cellar. The Register is frequently bringing to light evidence which throws a completely new light on some aspect of local history and Suffolk must be a rich mine of such material.

The organisation in the county is as follows :—

N.R.A. COMMITTEE FOR SUFFOLK: *Chairman*, Sir Charles Bunbury, Bt.,
Naunton Hall, Rendlesham, Woodbridge.
Hon. Sec., Leslie Dow, Esq., Newbourne, Woodbridge.

LOCAL SECRETARIES:

East Suffolk: *Hon. Sec.*, W. A. Sanford, Esq., County Librarian,
County Hall, Ipswich.

West Suffolk: *Hon. Sec.*, H. J. M. Maltby, Esq., Moyses' Hall
Museum, Bury St. Edmunds.

Ipswich: *Hon. Sec.*, Mrs. Clegg, 790 Foxhall Road, Ipswich.

Any members who are interested in this work and who are able to help should communicate with one of the three *local* secretaries, who will supply all information.

L.D.

Stone Coffin at Kettleburgh.—On the 29th of November, 1948, the Rev. Mr. Davis, incumbent of Brandeston and Kettleburgh, reported to the Hon. Financial Secretary, the discovery of a stone coffin in St. Andrew's Church, Kettleburgh.

Work was going on in the Church including the removal of a match-board dado in the nave. This exposed a side of a stone coffin which is built into the South wall of the nave near the return wall of the chancel arch at a height of about two feet from the floor to the top of the coffin lid. The head of the coffin is towards the West.

The coffin is shaped for the shoulders and appears to be of a late type; the ends are flush with the wall with the shoulder part slightly protruding.

The workmen, mistaking the protruding part for old cement repair work, began chipping it away and made an aperture which revealed a cavity within which a skeleton was seen.

A medical practitioner was asked to make an anatomical examination. He reported the bones to be the remains of a male, aged from 20 to 30 years at death, height in life 5 feet 8½ inches.

No remains of clothing or wrappings were apparent.

The aperture was then sealed up.

It appears that about 1450—1500 a window was made above the built-in coffin, the coffin lid forming the inner sill of the new window. From the reveal of the window, and in the thickness of the wall, a vise to the rood loft was made, the coffin lid also forming the bottom step to the vise.

ARTHUR WELFORD.

Graffito at Newbourne Church.—Mr. L. Dow, Hon. Editor of the *Proceedings* of the S.I.A., drew my attention, in March, 1949, to this very interesting scratch drawing on stone of a ship.

It is situated, about 4 ft. 2 ins. above the present floor level, inside the western jamb to the arch of the South porch—which is formed by the ground storey of the tower. The tower itself appears to date from the first half of the 15th century.

From correspondence which Mr. Dow has had with the Rev. J. F. Williams, F.S.A., Rector of Bucklesham in 1924, it is clear that the latter noticed this graffito in that year. Mr. Williams then sent a rubbing of it