

Transactions

OF THE

BANFFSHIRE FIELD CLUB.



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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1898.

MEETING AT BANFF.

THE Banffshire Field Club met in the Reading Room of the Town and County Club, Banff, on Friday. The President, Mr Wm. Forbes, occupied the chair. On the motion of the Secretary, the Rev. Robert Coupar, Macduff; the Rev. Wm. Edie, King-Edward; Mr Geo. A. Cumming, solicitor; Dr J. A. Cameron, County Medical Officer; and Mr Jas. Simpson, Inland Revenue, were elected members of the Club; and Mr Jas. Moir, Kinharrachie, Ellon, was nominated for election at next meeting.

A specimen of sand from an oil well, sent by Mrs Andrew, Caterangus Co., State of New York, was examined by the members with great interest.

In terms of the resolution passed at the recent Joint Meeting of Northern Scientific Societies, held at Banff, the Rev. Dr Milne, King-Edward, and Mr James Buie, Portsoy, were appointed to investigate and report on Erratics occurring in the glacial drift deposits of the district.

Dr Cramond then exhibited two handsome volumes, bound in morocco, containing between 2000 and 3000 British postal marks, arranged alphabetically in the order of places and the marks of each place arranged in the order of their dates. He also exhibited a large collection of British and American postal marks, belonging to Mr Stephenson, Berkshire.

Dr Cramond read a short paper explaining the nature of the collection. He noted that the penny post, for London at least, was originated in 1680 by Wm. Dockwra, who opened receiving offices in London and provided from four to twelve deliveries a day to different localities. He it was also who introduced the system of postmarks, his mark being of a triangular shape, bearing the words 'penny post paid.' A second small heart-shaped impression

bore 'Mor 8' or 'Af 4' to show when the letters were dealt with by the officials. By an Act of 1765 the Postmaster General was empowered to establish penny posts in large towns, and Dr Cramond pointed out specimens of Edinburgh from 1779 to 1801, Leith 1801, and Aberdeen 1829. There was a further example of date 1832 with the impression 'Banff penny post,' the only indication of which Dr Cramond is aware of Banff having then had a penny post. In Edinburgh an efficient postal system was organised by Peter Williamson, who, when the penny post was assumed by the Government, was awarded a pension. The collection, Dr Cramond continued, was in some respects unique in Scotland, containing as it did between two and three thousand specimens, many of them by no means common. As regards numbers, the collection was modest, for a gentleman in Berkshire informed him that his collection, which consists of modern specimens, numbers 35,000. The oldest postmark in the collection was a small one, considerably less than a three-penny piece, on a letter dated Amsterdam, 23rd February 1694. The oldest impression Dr Cramond said he had ever seen was a London one of date 20th November 1666. There were in the collection over 1300 Scottish varieties, and more than 500 of these were older than the present century. There were nearly 600 English varieties, more than half being older than the present century. The foreign postmarks of last century included specimens from New York, Jamaica, Stockholm, &c. Aberdeen began in 1746, Elgin in 1763, and Banff in 1766. The first example from Edinburgh was of date 1708, Brechin 1743, Glasgow 1751, and Dublin 1733. Dr Cramond traced the development of the present circular arrangement of the letters on stamps, and showed differences in the spelling of the names of towns. Thus they found Air for Ayr in 1803; in 1807 Arbroath, but in the following year Aberbrothock, which continued for some years, while Fochabers appeared as Focabus in 1761. Dr Cramond, in conclusion, mentioned that a Club called the Postmark Club, with its headquarters at Brighton, now existed for the study and collection of postmarks.

On the motion of the President, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Dr Cramond for his interesting and instructive paper, and a similar compliment to the Chairman brought the meeting to a close.