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incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EDITORIAL

THE list of members published on pp. 94-6 of this issue has been carefully checked for accuracy but we shall welcome notifications of any corrections which need to be made. For this purpose a postcard to the secretary or treasurer is all that is needed and such will be gratefully received. Another reason for printing the list is the belief that it will help in a drive for new members for our Society. Existing members will know of people who could be approached and a glance down the list will doubtless suggest others. Application forms are available from the secretary but we hope that our members will seize every recruiting opportunity, whether or not they happen to have a form by them. It will suffice so long as the name and address are clearly notified and accompanied by the appropriate subscription. A drive to enlist more supporters scarcely needs justifying in these pages. The Society's work may be unobtrusive but it is important and worthy of the backing of many more than those whose names appear on the membership list at present. Our finances also stand in serious need of reinforcement. It would not take a very great effort to double our numbers. One has only to think, for example, of the flourishing state of our Baptist student societies in recent years to realise that there must be many now in our churches who might be expected to give us their support. We hope that all members will put their thinking caps on and start making those personal contacts which will turn this recruiting effort into a resounding success.

A valuable piece of research from the pen of Mr. C. B. Jewson has appeared in *Norfolk Archaeology* (Vol. XIII). In it he investigates a return of conventicles made for the diocese of Norwich in 1669. The bishop reported to Archbishop Sheldon on eighty-one conventicles or illegal religious societies and this return was the first official account of dissenting bodies in the diocese subsequent to the Restoration and Great Ejection. Of these only a handful were Baptist. The Quakers, on the other hand, had twenty-one known meetings but Mr. Jewson's suggestion that this total may owe something to the fact that the Quakers scorned secrecy is a reminder that the official list would probably be incomplete for most bodies, including the Independents who were reported as having twenty-nine conventicles. After an introductory survey of the return Mr. Jewson proceeds to an examination of all the conventicles included in it and he provides many detailed notes on them and their leaders. It is a fine piece of investigation, the kind of painstaking work on which historical knowledge is built up. One's only regret is that like the bishop in 1669, Mr. Jewson was unable to identify No. 28, the meeting at Great Snoring. It consisted of thirty to forty persons, contemptuously summed up by the bishop as mostly "silly women."

The General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations is the ministerial counterpart of the better known Dissenting Deputies. With the Deputies the General Body shared in the efforts which eventually led to the removal of most of the disabilities under which Nonconformists once laboured in this country. Although the ecclesiastical situation is vastly different today the General Body still meets twice a year, remembering that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance and remembering, too, that from the beginning it was concerned not only with the freedom of its constituent denominations but with the maintenance and extension of civil and religious liberties generally. It still possesses its ancient privilege of personal access to the Sovereign. An outline of its history by Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall has recently been reprinted and this is available, price 1/-, from the Carey Kingsgate Press.

April, 1963