

Berks
Archæological and Architectural
Society.

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Founded 1840. Re-constituted 1871.

Patron: H.M. THE QUEEN.

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ANNUAL REPORT,
FOR THE YEAR 1892.



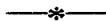
Reading :

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HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

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Berks Archæological and Architectural Society.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1892.



IN pursuance with the usual custom, your Committee beg to present the Members of the Berks Archæological Society with a Report of our transactions for the past year.

(I.) *With respect to the General Occurrences of this period:—*

The year 1892 has been marked by the foundation of the University Extension College in Reading, a notable event in the History of our Town and County. This scheme promises a hopeful and auspicious future, not only for the diffusion of higher education among the large and intelligent class of young students to whom the advantages of University teaching have hitherto been inaccessible, but also for the encouragement of accurate historical research, which forms the special object of our own Society.

It is also a matter of congratulation that the Committee of the Reading Free Library have at last adopted a measure which has long been advocated by us, viz.: in the establishment of a separate Reading Room for Students, thus enabling them to avail themselves of the valuable works in the Reference Department without disturbance or interruption. This privilege will be a real boon to students, and we believe will be increasingly appreciated.

During the past 12 months we have to notice the publication of three works of considerable importance in elucidating the History of Reading, and in the compilation of which two officers of our Society have taken part, (1) The Parish Registers of St. Mary's, dating from 1538, have been carefully transcribed and published by the Rev. G. P. Crawford; (2) The Churchwardens' Accounts of the same ancient Parish, teeming with events of National as well as local interest, have been edited by F. N. A. Garry, Esq., and are

now in the press ; while (3) the first volume of the Corporation Diary, extending from the 10th year of Henry VI. to the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign, has been printed under the editorship of the Rev. J. M. Guilding. The second volume is now completed, and will be issued to the public at the end of the present month. A valuable contribution to the History of the County has also been published in the description of Ufton Court by Miss Sharp.

In addition to these marks of progress, we must also record our satisfaction with the continuance of the excavations made by the Society of Antiquaries in the ruins of Silchester, an inexhaustible mine of antiquarian wealth, which has enriched our local Museum with an almost unique collection of specimens illustrating the Romano-British period.

(II.) *With regard to the practical and immediate work undertaken by the Society during the last year :—*

It must be remembered that the work of our Society embraces three distinct aims, which may be thus classified : (1) Experimental acquaintance with historic buildings and sites, by personal inspection ; (2) contributory help towards the restoration of public buildings of national interest, and for the encouragement of architectural and historical study ; and (3) an educative function, by the publication of articles in the *Quarterly Journal* giving the results of original investigation and enquiry. Let us see how far we have succeeded in carrying out these threefold objects in 1892, though it can hardly be expected that the results of one year will be commensurate in all respects to those of preceding years, which may have been conducted under more favourable conditions.

MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS.

Three important Excursions were made by the Society during the past twelve-months. One to Sonning on June 1st, when a Paper was read on "The ancient Bishops of Sarum" by Rev. J. M. Guilding, F.S.A., and the Society was most hospitably entertained at Holme Park by Rev. H. Golding-Palmer. The second Excursion was made to Newbury and Donnington Castle on July 28th, when a description was given of the Church erected by the famous clothier, John Winchcomb (Jack of Newbury), and a Paper read by the

Hon. Secretary, Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, F.S.A., on the Siege of Donnington Castle in 1643. The third Meeting was held at Wokingham on October 27th, when a Paper was read by Rev. C. W. Penny on the preservation of Registers and other valuable documents of a public character, followed by an interesting discussion, in which the opinion was strongly expressed that the custody of all Registers and official documents prior to the present century, should be entrusted to a County Registry, as preferable either to the present Parochial system, or to their removal to a metropolitan centre, as the Record Office, London. The Society, however, did not think the time ripe for such a course, and decided not to commit itself to a definite resolution on the subject.

CUSTODY OF ABBEY GATEWAY.—CONDITIONS REQUIRED BY CORPORATION.

In accordance with the terms on which the use of the Abbey Gateway was granted to the Society as its head-quarters by the Corporation of Reading, every facility has been allowed to townspeople and others for the inspection of that beautiful relic of 13th century architecture. The Gateway is also used for the weekly Meetings of the Students' Association in connection with the University Extension College, and for similar purposes, so that every effort is made to fulfil the conditions of public utility required by the Corporation. One of the special functions imposed on us as custodians of the Abbey Gateway, is that the Society shall depute one of its officers, if desired, to conduct strangers and visitors over the Abbey Ruins. Three parties of visitors from a distance (including the Warwick Field Club) were received by us in 1892, and personally conducted over the Ruins ; while several smaller parties from our own neighbourhood have also claimed the services of the Society at various times. The total number of Visitors during the past year is estimated at 250 and upwards.

PRIZES AND DONATIONS. LIBRARY.

Prizes have been awarded by the Society to various Public Schools and Institutions for encouraging the study of History, and for proficiency in Architectural Drawing. This has always been considered an important feature in the work of our Society ; and

we are of opinion that the Prizes now awarded for Architectural Drawing are inadequate, and should be increased in value. In consequence of the low state of our funds, it has not been found possible to make any Donation for the restoration of any ancient building in our County during the past year ; nor to make any addition to our Reference Library.

“QUARTERLY JOURNAL.”

The Quarterly Journal has slightly increased in circulation, but we regret to say that its sale is still insufficient to cover the cost of publication. We beg to express our emphatic hope that every Member of the Society will also become a subscriber to the official record of its proceedings.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF BERKS.

The Archæological Survey of the County, undertaken by Miss Thoyts, has been commenced, but will require a larger number of assistants to co-operate in the completion of the work.

(III.) *Financial Condition.*

The financial position of the Society has improved, but it has not yet recovered the outlay of removing its Offices and Library to its present head-quarters at the Abbey Gate. It is hoped that the balance due to the Treasurer may be materially diminished, if not entirely discharged, during the current year. The Balance Sheet for 1892 has been audited by Mr. J. Okey Taylor, and will be duly printed in the Society's Report. The Balance Sheet for the *Quarterly Journal* appears in a separate account.

The number of Members practically remains the same as last year, but two new Life Members have been added to our List, viz., Lord Wantage, the Lord Lieutenant of Berks, and C. V. Crews, Esq., F.S.A.

(IV.) *General Remarks.*

PROGRAMME FOR 1893.

An attractive programme of Excursions has been marked out for 1893, and it is contemplated to visit the following places, viz. :

(1) Guildford and Godalming ; (2) St. Bartholomew's Priory

Church, London, a monastic foundation nearly co-eval with Reading Abbey, together with the Tower of London; and (3) The Royal Palace of Windsor, which gives to Berkshire the proud distinction of the Royal County.

OBITUARY.

In conclusion, we would desire to pay a tribute of unfeigned respect to the memory of those Members of the Society, whose loss we have to deplore. Our Obituary for the past year includes the names of one Life Member, W. I. Palmer, Esq., J.P., who, although not actively engaged in archæological pursuits, yet as a typical English gentleman, took a sympathetic interest in the historical monuments and great traditions of the County in which he resided; also of two Subscribing Members, Mr. W. R. Davies, of Wallingford, an eminent numismatist, and Mr. W. G. Rivers, editor of the *Reading Observer*, whose literary abilities were of a high order, and whose early death will be mourned by a large circle of friends outside, as well as by the Society of which he was a constant and loyal supporter.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

P. H. DITCHFIELD, *Hon. Secretary.*

J. M. GUILDING, *Treasurer.*

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

BALANCE SHEET, 1892.

1892.	DR.	£	s.	d.	1892.	CR.	£	s.	d.
To Subscriptions	64	7	0	By Balance due to Treasurer ...	...	18	14	0
" Rent received from Students' Association	1	0	0	" Rates, Fuel, Light and Caretaker ...	...	15	11	11
" Balance due to Treasurer	16	3	9	" Printing and Stationery ...	...	21	5	0
					" Library Expenses ...	...	11	1	3
					" Prizes awarded ...	...	2	12	6
					" Donation to Society of Antiquaries for Silchester Excavations ...	...	1	1	0
					" Loss on Excursions ...	...	1	2	11
					" Postages and Sundries ...	...	4	2	2
					" Assistant Secretary's Salary ...	...	6	0	0
							£81	10	9

Audited and found correct, J. OKEY TAYLOR,

April 11th, 1893.