



## Berks Archaeological Society.

---

*REPORT, 1902—3.*

---

THE record of our Society's work during the past year presents the usual features of interest, and your Committee hope that the extensive programme of Lectures and Excursions which was sketched out for our guidance at the commencement of the year has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Members of the Society. The increased numbers of the supporters of the Society who have attended the meetings seem to show that its work is appreciated by them, and that it discharges a useful purpose in stimulating the study of history and antiquity throughout the County.

### THE ABBEY GATE.

The Headquarters of the Society are still at the convenient and appropriate rooms of the Abbey Gate, Reading, which are held by the kind permission of the Reading Corporation. In accordance with the terms of their lease the Society has utilised the principal room by allowing various Associations to meet there, and during the past year the following have availed themselves of this place of meeting :—

Reading Debating Society.  
Reading Rose Society.  
Public Paths Preservation Society.  
Prospect Park Committee.  
Literary and Scientific Society.  
Boys' Brigade Ambulance.  
Reading Photographic Society.  
Non-Sectarian Society (Sundays).

The Berks Society has also established a Museum of Architectural Antiquities, but no additions to the collection have been made during the past year. Your Committee would respectfully suggest

to the Corporation that certain sculptured stones and architectural fragments which at present are lying exposed to the weather in the Forbury Gardens should be collected and stored in this Museum.

#### SILCHESTER EXCAVATIONS.

The Reading Museum has been enriched with some interesting objects which the excavations at Silchester have yielded. Amongst these may be noted a fragment of clear glass engraved with a fish and a palm branch, both Christian symbols; some pewter vessels, iron tyres of wheels, a tile scratched with the inscription *Fecit tubum Clementinus*, the remains of a supposed aviary, and a fine Mosaic floor. The Prehistoric Section has acquired two stone implements from Egypt, a palæolithic axe from Englefield, a molar of mammoth from Watlington Street, a horn core of the great ox (*Urus*) from the Kennet, some stone implements from Carnac, and tusks of hippopotamus from Reading gravel. The Historic Section has some additional Egyptian antiquities, some coins from the Mint of Reading Abbey, an old safe, and some Saxon spearheads.

The Committee recommend that a donation of five guineas be given to the Silchester Exploration Fund.

Owing to the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII., our Patron, the Annual Congress of Archæological Societies was not held this year.

#### PRACTICAL WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

Your Committee beg to record the usual number of Meetings and Excursions which have been held during the past year, and venture to remind the members that these are largely in excess of similar gatherings held by many other Antiquarian Societies, that whereas many of these content themselves with one or two meetings a year, your Society has held no less than eight. Five lectures have been given in the room of the Society at the Abbey Gate, Reading, and three excursions have taken place, which seemed to give much satisfaction to the members and friends who were able to attend. The Committee desire to return sincere thanks to the gentlemen who have read papers, and to the ladies and gentlemen who have entertained the Society at the Abbey Gate or on the occasion of excursions.

The year's proceedings were as follows:—

On May 29th, 1902, the Annual Meeting was held, and after the usual business was transacted, in place of a lecture on "The Excavations of Little Marlow Nunnery," promised by A. Vaughan

Williams, Esq., the Secretary read a paper on "Notes on the Architecture of the Cathedral of Oxford."

The first Summer Excursion took place on June 18th, when the Society visited the Western portion of Wiltshire, and the itinerary comprised Westbury, the White Horse and Bratton Castle, Edington, where luncheon was taken in the Monastery Garden, Keevil and Devizes. Theodore White, Esq., read an interesting paper on the history of the White Horse, and the President described the Churches which were visited and kindly entertained the party to tea.

On July 30th the Society visited St. Albans, and in spite of unfavourable weather had a very successful excursion. The Abbey Church was visited and ably described by the President, who also conducted the party to the other Churches of the City and entertained them to tea.

On September 19th an excursion was made to Hungerford and Littlecote House (by kind permission of A. Hirsch, Esq.), together with Avington, Wickham and Welford. About 50 ladies and gentlemen were present, including several members of the Newbury Field Club. Littlecote was described by Walter Money, Esq., F.S.A. A lecture on the History of Hungerford was given by the Secretary in the Corn Exchange, when the Constable, W. G. Alexander, Esq., presided, and there was a large gathering of residents in addition to the party. The Churches of Avington, Wickham and Welford were described by the President, and Mrs. Batson gave an interesting account of the Manors of Welford and Wickham. The Rector of Welford and Mrs. Batson kindly entertained the Society to tea.

On November 19th an interesting lecture was given by O. A. Shrubsole, Esq., on "An Ancient British Barrow containing cinerary urns at Sunningdale," some of which were exhibited.

On January 15th, 1903, Dr. Peechy, of Brightwalton, gave a valuable lecture on "The History of Book-Plates," illustrated by magic lantern slides.

On February 26th, Harold Peake, Esq., lectured on "Our New County History," a full report of which appeared in the April number of the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archaeological Journal*.

On April 2nd, the Secretary gave a lecture illustrated by lantern slides, on "English Village Life, Past and Present."

#### PROGRAMME FOR 1903—4.

An excursion has already been arranged for Tuesday, June 9th,

in conjunction with the Newbury Field Club, when under the leadership of Walter Money, Esq., F.A.S., the Society will visit the Battlefields of Newbury.

It has been suggested that the Society should visit Malmesbury and Charlton Park during the summer; Maidenhead, Taplow and Cookham, Avebury, Aldworth, &c.

A lecture has been promised by the Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Places of National Interest, in the autumn.

It is requested that any member of the Society who is willing to read a paper will kindly inform the Secretary.

#### DEMOLITION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

The Society regrets that it has been found necessary to pull down the interesting old Elizabethan house at the corner of Minster Street and Broad Street, which has been doomed to destruction. Modern improvements are, of course, inevitable, and old buildings must be sacrificed for the sake of modern convenience; but your Committee desire to express their regret that this relic of ancient Reading could not be spared. Having ascertained that protest would be useless, your Committee did not see their way to take any steps in the matter.

Your Committee also regret the demolition of a portion of the Sonning bridges, which form such a beautiful and picturesque feature of the Thames. Every effort was made to oppose the action of the Oxfordshire County Council, but without avail, and further protest was deemed useless.

#### "THE BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON ARCHÆOLOGICAL JOURNAL."

This Journal, which is the official organ of the Society, continues to be published. Some of the chief communications are:—Indices of Berkshire Marriage Registers, papers read before the Society, the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish Church of Thame, the History of the Kendrick Family by the Hon. Greene Kendrick, of Waterbury, U.S.A., &c. An Inventory of the Church Plate of Berks has also been commenced in the Journal, and when this has been accomplished it is proposed to publish the collection in book-form. The co-operation of the incumbents of parishes in the County is earnestly desired, in order that the Inventory may be complete and accurate.

Initial steps have been taken with regard to the compilation of the Victoria County History of Berks. Many able workers have

kindly undertaken to collect information in various parts of the County, but additional help is needed to complete and perfect the history. The opportunity of producing a history of Berkshire is never likely to occur again, and therefore every effort should be made to make the volumes worthy of the Royal County.

CLOTH HALL, NEWBURY.

Your Committee desire to congratulate the Newbury people upon the completion of the restoration of the Cloth Hall, a 16th century building of much interest, associated with the ancient cloth-making industry of that town. We hope that the rooms of the Hall may soon be filled with a large collection of local antiquities and art.

The restoration of the interesting Church of Sutton Courtney has been decided upon. Care will be exercised to preserve all the ancient features of this curious building, which is of much architectural importance. Your Committee venture to recommend that a small sum be voted towards this work if they are satisfied that the work is being satisfactorily carried out.

PRIZES.

The usual Prizes have been given for the study of history in the Kendrick Boys' and Girls' Schools, and your Secretary, who examined the Schools, can testify to the keenness of the competition for the Prizes and the improvement in the knowledge of history which the giving of the rewards has effected.

CONCLUSION.

Before closing their Report, your Committee would wish to point out that the whole work of a County Archæological Society should not consist merely in arranging a few lectures and excursions. It has other and more definite objects. To encourage the study of the past, to perform some real work such as the excavating of tumuli, the mapping and planning of earthworks, the collecting of information relating to discoveries, the contents of our Churches or Municipal strong-rooms, the transcribing and publishing of documents—these and many others are objects for which the members of the Society should strive to attain; and all such information will prove to be of immense value in elucidating the history of the County and be a true *raison d'être* for your Society's existence.