cure at Maidenhead, was allowed an extra salary for the danger of passing the thicket.

There are yet one or two other historical events connected with the town. At the old Greyhound Inn in 1647 Charles I. was allowed by his Roundhead captors to meet his children. The town was strewn with flowers and decked with green boughs, showing the loyalty of the people of Maidenhead to the falling throne. They dined together, and drove to Caversham where the King was held a prisoner at Caversham Park. Tradition tells, too, of James I.'s dinner with the Vicar of Bray and his curate, how the King, who was incognito, could not pay, how the Vicar indignantly refused to pay for him, how the curate readily complied, and was rewarded with a Canonry of Windsor.

The Roman City of Silchester.

A Lecture by W. H. St. John Hope, Esq., Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries.

In the year 1890 some antiquaries, anxious to know what a Romano-British town was like, formed themselves into a Committee to excavate the site of Silchester, of which the Roman name was Calleva Atrebatum. A great deal was known previously about the military side of the Roman occupation of Britain—the great wall in the North, the stations of the legions, and the lines of road connecting them—but little or nothing was known of the civil side of the occupation—of the sites and approximate areas of the towns, or of the characteristics of the buildings, except as regards a few isolated structures. In their excavations the Committee had been cordially assisted by the late and present Dukes of Wellington, the lords of the soil, and by Mr. Edward Cooper and Mr. Lush, the tenants. The site early attracted the attention

of Antiquaries. A paper read before the Royal Society in 1748 indicated a certain amount of excavation by Mr. John Stair, of Aldermaston. He had constructed a plan of the town, basing it on observations of the ancient lines, within which the corn in harvest-time was stunted, and did not flourish. Mr. Stair also uncovered parts of the Forum and Basilica. In 1833 some further excavations were made, and in 1864 more extensive works were begun by the then Rector, the Rev. J. D. Joyce, who dealt with the sites of two large and two small houses, a polygonal temple, the Forum and Basilica, the remains of the east gate, and a large building, which was perhaps a hospitium or inn. The Rev. H. G. Monro and the Rev. Mr. Langshaw continued the excavations, but in 1884 the digging was suspended. These investigations had been by far the most important at that time made for the elucidation of the Roman period in this country, but they were not conducted with any settled plan. In 1890 the systematic excavation of the whole area was begun. Each of the squares or insulæ was to be thoroughly examined by trenching, and all foundations of buildings explored and then covered up, and the land restored to cultivation. During the 14 years since then, in the summer months, the work has been carried on under the supervision of an executive committee of experts. Thirty complete insulæ—two of double size—and portions of others have been systematically explored. There have been brought to light about 50 complete houses, parts of others, and a number of small structures; also the great baths, some private bathing establishments, a Christian church, and a series of buildings, which seem to have been extensive dye-works. The tracing of the baths attached to the hospitium led to the discovery of a series of drains and a small water-gate. As in the case of most Roman cities, little else than the foundation was left. The plan of the town was irregular, and its site was probably that of an earlier Celtic encampment. The town wall, some 9½ft. thick at the base and lessening above to some 7½ft. was not less than 20ft. high; it was of rubble concrete and flints, and the facing was probably built up between a wooden casing, as was done with concrete at the present day. A great deal of the stones has been despoiled in after ages for building and road materials. The city had four gates—N., S., E. and W.—and two subordinate gates, one of them giving access to an amphitheatre. The north and south gates were each single, with no guard chamber, and near them

were platforms for placing balistæ, or war engines. The sills were of wood—oak trees being plentiful round Silchester, and large stones few. The gates to the east and west were more important than those on the north and south; each of them was double, with guard chambers on each side. The iron pivot and straps for the gate had turned up among the rubbish. The passage lay across a ditch at all the entrances, either by a causeway or a wooden bridge. The laying out of the town probably took place at an early date in the Roman occupation of the country. The roadways were of gravel, with patching of flints. There were no sewers and no signs of drainage could be found. The broadest street was some 28ft. across, and the streets were bounded by the fronts of the houses, with here and there a gate. The aspect of the streets must have been monotonous, though gables and roofs of large mansions would break the line. Between and behind the houses was a considerable amount of open ground, with numerous ash and rubbish pits. In these most of the wonderful collection of things in the Museum had been discovered. Within these spaces were the wells, the only sources of water. They varied in depth, and were sunk through the gravel into the sandstone water-bearing stratum which rests on clay. As a lining to these wells, the Romans used square wooden tubs and water barrels, and one or two of these with the hoops in wonderfully good preservation, had been recovered and were in the Museum. Of the public edifices the most characteristic were the baths—those at Silchester being represented by three different establishments. First, there was a very fine block discovered last year, about 100ft. by 80ft. These baths—the town baths proper—had evidently a source of water of their own, which it was hoped to locate. Another set of baths belonged to the hospitium, and another was attached to one of the private houses. The Roman baths resembled a modern Turkish bath, and it was possible at Silchester to follow out the whole arrangement of hot and cold chambers. The baths found last year had not been closed up yet. The courtyard had still to be explored, and the place formed a very complete example of a Romano-British bathing establishment. More important, as being in the very centre of the civic life, was the group of buildings made up of the Forum and Basilica. The Forum, or market-place, was a great courtyard, 100ft. square, with colonnades along the sides, and behind these were ambulatories and ranges of shops

much as in a modern "arcade." A series of public offices also existed. In the centre of the east side of the Forum were the foundations of a gateway, which formed the main entrance. The Basilica was a great hall 276ft. long—as long as Rochester Cathedral—with a central nave and aisle on each side, and tribunes, where the Magistrates sat. Elsewhere was the place where the Senate met. The Basilica took in, in its length, the whole breadth of the Forum, and stood on its western side. Excavation showed that the Basilica had been destroyed by fire, and at some period rebuilt in a different fashion. From floor to ceiling it had a height of about 60ft. The fronts of the tribunes were of marble slabs, and the walls were stuccoed and coloured. The first building probably dated from the reign of Hadrian. There were remains of the Corinthian columns, and much of the material was probably used in the reconstruction of the Basilica after the fire. One of the capitals served for years as a horse block, at the old farm at Silchester. Three temples, the largest polygonal in plan, had been discovered. The remains of the other two, which were square, were uncovered in the year 1890, and lay partly under the parish church, and partly under the farm buildings. Perhaps the rising power of Christianity was a moving spirit towards the destruction of these temples. The Christian church at Silchester was the only example of Roman date yet found in this country. In the position of the altar and other points it was different from, or the reverse of, a modern parish church. It was a small church of the basilican type, about 42ft. in length. Its building probably dated from not long after the promulgation of Constantine's Edict of Toleration in 313, and it was contemporary with the early churches of Northern Syria. No actual church in Rome itself had any part of its building as old as this one at Silchester. As regards the lighting of the Roman houses and the arrangement of the corridors, there was evidence that the Roman houses were glazed—glass in small quantities was found at Silchester every year. It was of the same character as our ground glass—made somewhat as we make plate glass, by being poured out of a crucible, but on to a slab of sandstone instead of steel. One side thus took a cast of the sandstone and was like ground-glass, and the other side was smooth. The Roman windows were high up, and it did not matter whether the glass was transparent or translucent. The roofs of the houses were covered with red tiles or hexagonal

sandstone slabs, and the outer walls were sometimes plastered, and perhaps coloured. Neither externally nor internally was there much architectural effect, but all that could be done by colour was lavished on the inside. The colouring was mostly in imitation of marbles, and the design of a dado had been recovered. The mosaic pavements of the houses were better known, as specimens were numerous in Britain. At Silchester there was scarcely a house which did not possess them. A border of coarser work usually enclosed the design for the tesseræ or tiles —black lines on a white ground being used for the finer class. It is interesting to compare some of these pavements with others found at Pompeii and elsewhere. One of the Silchester friezes is, without doubt, the finest specimen found in this country. Pompeii was destroyed in the year 68; and allowing, in the case of the Silchester pavement, say 20 years for the knowledge to filter across the Continent, they still had a date well within the first century, and much earlier than anything else yet found in Britain. The tesseræ were of native material. No foreign marbles had been found at Silchester. The arrangement for the warming of the Roman houses was by a central pit or hypocaust, fed by a furnace from without, and with radiating passages to the walls, and flues carrying the hot air up inside of the walls to a vent above. The houses as a whole gave accommodation similar to that of a middle-class house of to-day, and were as spacious, and gave as much or more comfort than those of any English town in the 18th century. They were not at all similar to the houses of southern Europe, being meant to protect from damp and cold, not from light and heat. Probably the plan was developed from Gaul. One quarter of ancient Calleva was probably occupied by dyers—there were traces of the furnaces which carried the boiling dye-vats. Silver-refining, the metal being from the lead mines of Britain, was also carried on; the Romans were familiar with the de-silvering of lead, and used the identical process employed to-day. After the departure of the Romans the city gradually fell into decay, and its site was levelled.