

Congress Tickets admitting a gentleman and lady, or a lady, to all Meetings free, and to the Excursions at the same rates as the Members of the Association, may now be obtained from the Congress Secretary, C. J. WILLIAMS, Esq., 45, Birkenhead Avenue, Kingston-on-Thames, at the price of One Guinea each.

The following are the prices of the Tickets for each day's Excursion :—

Tuesday, July 18 ...	Silchester, 5/6.
Wednesday, July 19	Ashdown and Wantage, 8/6.
Thursday, July 20...	River Excursion Wallingford, 8/6.
Friday, July 21 ...	Abingdon, 7/6.
Saturday, July 22 ...	Newbury, 4/6.

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It was my privilege to be present at the famous historic pageant at Sherborne on June 13th, when the various scenes connected with the history of the old town were graphically represented by almost eight hundred performers. The stage was the inner court of the old Castle of Sherborne, the country seat of the Bishops of Salisbury. Twelve hundred years ago St. Ealdhem fixed the seat of the bishopric of the western or newer Wessex there, and had for his diocese the lands of Dorset and Somerset and the Malmesbury land of Wilts. In a short time Sherborne held the dignity of being the capital city of the west Saxon kingdom. The Conqueror moved the bishop's seat to Old Sarum. Many were the "episodes" in the play, recording scenes of its past glories, and author, poet, and townsfolk are to be congratulated on this wonderful presentment of historical events, and on the local patriotism which enabled them to so effectually carry out the enterprise.

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The annual meeting was held on May 4th, when the reports of the Society were read and the officers elected. The Principal of University College read a most interesting paper on "The Site of Early Reading." Mr. Childs said that there was no more interesting group of historical enquiries than those which tried to determine what was the original and ancient centre of an old seat of civilisation. He pointed out the necessity of exercising caution and of revising many received ideas relating to early occupa-

tion and to place-names. Conjectures and assertions, not merely of old writers such as Camden and Stukeley, but of more recent authorities such as Guest and J. R. Green, were now in many instances overthrown or dubious, and were now in many instances replaced by scientific certainty or scientific doubt. An immense amount of fruitful research had been accomplished in recent years by Mr. W. H. Stevenson and Mr. Haverfield, of Oxford, and also by Professor Maitland, of Cambridge, and by Mr. Horace Round. Domesday Book, for example, was being subjected to an interpretation not only new but infinitely more correct than any which had preceded it. In all directions the received explanation of noted place-names such as Berkshire, or Ashdown, or Wallingford, was being overthrown or modified. It was no longer possible to maintain that the advance of the South Saxons from Southampton Water was delayed simply because of "impassable woodlands" or the "ring of fortresses" at Salisbury, Marlborough, and Silchester. Mr. Childs then mentioned the important note in Mr. Stevenson's edition of Asser's *Life of Alfred*, showing that the vallum described by Asser as constructed by the Danes in 871 on the "right hand" of Reading, really meant on the southern side. Mr. Childs proceeded to say that the problem he wished to deal with was to determine the original situation of historic Reading. No evidence absolutely decisive could be adduced, but the cumulative effect of many scattered pieces of evidence of differing value was to show that the original historic Reading lay to the north of the Kennet crossing, the later Seven Bridges, somewhere in the neighbourhood of St. Mary's Church and along the great north and south road crossing Caversham Bridge. It was not possible to maintain that there was ever any such thing as Roman Reading, and Mr. Childs briefly examined the evidence depending upon Roman relics. Nor did the discovery of an ancient cemetery in a small meadow opposite the "Jack of Both Sides" inn, or of a Saxon burial-place beyond the junction of the Thames and the Kennet, or of pottery and animal remains at the Gas Works, establish any conclusion that the earliest historic Reading was to be sought for in the immediate vicinity of these discoveries, and Mr. Childs gave reasons for this opinion. The evidence he would adduce consisted of two kinds : First, the evidence of political and physical geography relating chiefly to the lie and purpose of old roads and of rivers, fords, and bridges ; and, secondly, evidence, chiefly of later date, derived from street nomenclature and documentary records. By means of sketch maps, Mr. Childs showed that historic Reading

had its centre on the north bank of the Kennet above the crossing, and that the oldest road through Reading was undoubtedly the old north and south road crossing Caversham Bridge—the only road until about 1750 connecting Reading with Oxford. Mr. Childs concluded by giving a mass of detailed evidence in support of these conclusions, and demolishing, as he ventured to believe, a contrary view maintained by some writers of recent years that early Reading was situated eastward of the Forbury. The effect of this evidence tended to show that not merely mediæval Reading but pre-Norman Reading grew up along the ancient “Old” street which passed from the Kennet Bridges and the modern Bridge-street northward along St. Mary’s Butts and West-street towards Caversham Bridge. An interesting discussion followed, and Mr. Childs was given a hearty vote of thanks for his paper.

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On June 30th the Society visited Windsor and received a hearty welcome from the inhabitants of the royal borough. A goodly number of members journeyed from Reading, and were joined by others at Twyford and Maidenhead, and several came from London and the neighbourhood of Windsor. On arrival at the Castle the party was received by the Rev. Canon Dalton, who most ably described the numerous interesting features of St. George’s Chapel. The Curfew Tower was also examined, the site of the great hall of Henry III., and the curious gargoyles of the Chapel. After glancing at the Albert Memorial Chapel, Mr. Miles, H.M. Inspector of the Castle, conducted the party to the Terrace and the State Apartments. After luncheon at the Castle Hotel, a public meeting was held at the Town Hall, where many of the residents of the Castle and the borough were assembled. The Mayor, Sir A. W. Shipley, presided, and a lecture was given by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, on the history of the town. The Town Clerk, Mr. E. C. Durant, had kindly arranged an exhibition of the charters and documents belonging to the Corporation. The Mayor and the Rev. J. E. Ellison, Vicar of Windsor, proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and expressed the wish that the lecture might be printed. The party then drove through the Great Park to St. Leonard’s Hill, the seat of Sir Francis Tress Barry, Bart., M.P. for Windsor, who, together with Lady Barry, gave them a kind welcome. After tea, Sir Francis exhibited the unique collection of prehistoric antiquities which he had excavated at Keiss Castle, the baronet’s Scottish seat. The excursion to Windsor was much enjoyed.