



## Berks Archæological Society.

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*REPORT, 1909-10.*

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**V**OUR Committee has the honour of presenting its Report for the past year.

In the last Report a sketch was given of the history of the Society and the opinion expressed that its work which has been carried on for so long a period has borne fruit in the increased interest taken by the public in archæological studies, in the respect for the relics of antiquity bequeathed to us by our forefathers, and in the general genuinely active spirit and keenness to preserve the memorials of the past. We trust and believe that there has been no diminution of interest during the past year and that the members maintain their interest and affection for the Berkshire Society to which they belong.

We are reminded that next year will be the fortieth anniversary of the re-founding of our Society, actually the seventieth commemoration of its foundation, if as our fathers have told us, we may claim to be lineally descended from the Berks Ashmolean Society which flourished in 1840 and 1841. It seems to us that some notice should be taken of this event, some celebration of the birthday of a Society which can now claim to be somewhat venerable and antiquarian on account of its age, as well as for the subjects it endeavours to study. The imagination of its members may be in the meantime usefully employed in devising some means for an appropriate and adequate commemoration.

The new buildings of the Berkshire County Council are rapidly rising in our immediate vicinity, and we trust that they will be architecturally worthy of their proximity to the Abbey Gate. It will be remembered in our last report that we ventured to point out to the Council the advisability of establishing a new County Record Office for the preservation of deeds, registers, court-rolls and other

valuable manuscripts. The Hon. Secretary has had some correspondence with the Chairman, Sir Robert Mowbray, Bart., who kindly considered the matter, but regretted that the very limited space at the disposal of the Council prevented them from devoting a special fire-proof room for the safe custody of such documents.\* This is much to be regretted, but we can only bow to the inevitable, and trust that at some future time the Council may see their way as other County Councils have done to the establishment of such a Record Office.

During the past year the architectural side of the Society's work has been evinced by the careful study of several of our most ancient Berkshire Churches by the President who has for several years acted as an accomplished cicerone on the occasions of the visits of the members to these edifices, lectured to the Society on their architectural features and presented these lectures for publication in the Society's Journal with a considerable wealth of excellent illustrations. We have to record also the restoration of several churches in the County, amongst which may be mentioned Boxford, Ashbury and Avington. The erection of a fine new church, under the direction of Mr. Slingsby Stallwood, former Secretary of the Society, at Spencers Wood, has not been already noted in our reports.

Your Secretary has been in communication with Lord Burghclere, the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments. It would greatly aid the work of the Commission if the members of this Society would begin at once to help in compiling a list of ancient and historic objects, so that when the Commission begins its work in Berkshire there may be something for them to work on. Your Committee recommend this to the notice and attention of each member.

#### MEETINGS AND LECTURES.

During the past year the usual number of meetings of the Society has been held when lectures have been delivered and excursions made to places of historic interest.

On April 22nd, 1909, on the occasion of the last Annual Meeting, Mr. J. Tavenor-Perry gave a valuable lecture on "The Towers and Spires of Mediæval Rome," illustrated by an admirable series of sketches and drawings made by the lecturer.

On November 19th, Mr. E. K. Purnell gave an interesting lecture on "The History of the House of Parliament," being a judicious and clearly delivered contribution to the constitutional history of England,

a subject that is not without some topical interest at the present crisis of the nation's history.

Owing to the incidence of the general election the monthly lecture in January was postponed.

On February 3rd, the Hon. Secretary gave a lecture on "The Manor Houses of England," illustrated by lantern slides, a portion of a work that has since been published in book form.

On February 22nd, the President delivered one of his valuable series of lectures on "The Architecture of the Churches of Berkshire." This year he took for his subject the interesting churches of Boxford, Uffington, Avington, Ashbury and Longworth. As on former occasions his lecture was illustrated by a charming series of lantern slides from photographs specially taken for the lecturer by Mr. Marcus Adams, and Mr. Keyser has kindly promised to publish his lecture with numerous illustrations in the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*.

On March 10th, Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., lectured on "Some Continental Brasses," his lecture being admirably illustrated by a series of lantern slides. Mr. Stephenson being the chief authority in England on the subject of Memorial Brasses, his lecture was authoritative and especially valuable.

On April 6th, Mr. R. H. Forster, Treasurer of the British Archæological Association, gave an interesting lecture illustrated by lantern slides on "The Roman City of Corstopitum," near Corbridge-on-Tyne, the excavation of which he had devised and superintended. It was described as a Northern Silchester, and the results of the lecturer's work and the discoveries made rewarded him for much arduous toil.

With this day's lecture by the Rev. R. S. Mylne the series will close.

#### EXCURSIONS.

On June 28th, the Society, in conjunction with the Newbury District Field Club, visited Bradford-on-Avon and had a most enjoyable excursion to that old-world town. The members visited the bridge, the Saxon Church, Kingston Manor, where they were welcomed by the owner, Mr. Moulton, the Parish Church, and in the afternoon the manor house of Great Chalfield and South Wraxall by permission of their respective owners.

On August 5th, the Society made an excursion to Sonning, Shiplake, Harpsden Court and Henley, and spent a very pleasant and satisfactory day. Mr. Martin J. Sutton welcomed the members at

Holme Park and then they visited Sonning Church described by the President, who also pointed out the beauties of the Church at Ship-lake. By the kind permission of Mr. Leonard Noble, Harpsden Court was visited, when a paper by the Hon. Secretary was read describing the history of the house, and then the town of Henley was reached. The Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. E. Chamberlain, gave a reception at the Town Hall where the members were welcomed by a large company and an exhibition of municipal documents was made for their inspection. Papers by the Hon. Secretary and the Town Clerk (Mr. J. F. Cooper) were read, and the President thanked the Mayor for his kind hospitality. After a visit to the church the members returned home after a pleasant and satisfactory excursion.

The cordial thanks of the Society are due to the gentlemen who have delivered lectures, and to the ladies and gentlemen who have entertained the members at the meetings of the Winter Session, or during the excursions. The names of our lecturers have already been recorded. Among our hosts and hostesses, to whom our gratitude is due, are the following :—The Mayor and Mayoress of Henley (Mr. and Mrs. E. Chamberlain) the President and Mrs. Keyser, Sir Edward Barry and Lady Barry, Mrs. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Keep, Miss Hissey, and Miss Cooper-Smith.

During the ensuing summer the Committee hope to arrange a series of excursions, and the following have been suggested :—

Maidenhead, Cookham, Bisham Abbey and Marlow.

Uffington and Ashbury.

Beaconsfield, Jordans and Chalfont St. Giles,

Chipping Norton, Rollright Stones and district.

London—The Tower, Westminster Abbey, &c.

#### PUBLICATIONS.

We are glad to be able to announce that the publication of the Victoria County History of Berkshire has been resumed, and that the present year will probably see the issue of the 3rd volume of that important work.

It is with much satisfaction that we notice the literary activity and painstaking research by several members of our Society, and this may be taken as some evidence of its good work when its members set themselves to indite the history of their town or village.

A foremost place must be given to Mr. Stephen Darby's "History

of Cookham." Mr. Darby is an old and much valued member. He has set himself to write the chronicles of his own native village, and we congratulate him upon the production of such an attractive and important volume.

We have to welcome most cordially the publication of an authoritative History of Maidenhead, by Mr. J. W. Walker, formerly Mayor of that borough, and a member of our Society. It is an admirable volume, reliable, comprehensive, and based upon careful research.

"Untravelled Berkshire" is a brightly written volume by L. S. (Miss Salmon), which shows a sympathetic appreciation of Berkshire character, and treats with a light touch the antiquarian subjects relating to the county.

The Rev. F. T. Wethered, Vicar of Hurley, has pursued his researches into the history of his Church and parish, and has published an excellent work on "The Lands and Tithes of Hurley Priory."

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal continues to be published containing the transactions of our Society. It has now reached its 16th volume. Its pages have been enriched for some years past by the President's architectural studies, illustrated by many plates. Besides numerous Notes and Queries relating to the county, in each number appears a complete record of the Feets of Fines relating to the county. These have been transcribed at the Record Office by Mr. J. L. Acton Pile, Barrister, of London, to whose hard work Berkshire genealogists are much indebted. Mr. Wethered has contributed an article on the Last Days of Hurley Priory, and there are numerous other items relating to the county.

The Librarian desires to acknowledge the generous gift by Miss Woodward of five large volumes of Lean's Collectanea, the work of her uncle, Mr. V. S. Lean, the most complete and valuable collection of proverbs and folk lore sayings ever published.

Your Committee will endeavour during the coming season to arrange a series of excursions and lectures, which we hope will be agreeable and useful to the members, and would gladly welcome any suggestions which the members may make.

We ask for the cordial support of each member during the present season, and increased interest in the welfare of the Society. We scorn to be a mere "picnicing society," that exists simply to provide pleasure parties and agreeable social afternoons. We aspire to promote the systematic study of the treasures of antiquity which

our fathers have bequeathed to us, knowing well that the lessons of the past are needed for the welfare of the nation in the progress and developments of the present and future, and that to discard and ignore the national traditions of our country is the sure beginning of demoralisation and disintegration.

The Committee craves the interest and support of every member of the Society. By reading and study, by contributing notes on genealogical or antiquarian matters to our transactions, by constant attendance at our meetings and excursions, by helping to increase our membership, so that we may be enabled to undertake some works of excavation or restoration, and by each member doing his utmost to promote the principles of the Society in his own town or neighbourhood—by all these efforts the work of the Society will be greatly strengthened and the object of our existence attained.

P. H. DITCHFIELD,

*Hon. Secretary.*

## Highways and By-Ways in Buckinghamshire.

*By Clement Shorter, with Illustrations by Frederick  
L. Griggs.*

**T**HIS is one of the noted series of volumes published by Messrs. Macmillan and Co., denominated the "Highways and Byways Series." They are always welcomed as bright and pleasant reading, containing dry-as-dust information picturesquely described, reflecting the personality of the writer who views his county with his peculiar spectacles, and records the objects which more especially interest him. Some of the volumes can scarcely be taken seriously as contributions to historical or antiquarian research. The Berkshire volume was singularly lacking in all that might be deemed essential to a successful guide book, or a record of the notable