



## Berkshire Archæological Society.

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### ANNUAL MEETING, 1916.

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THE Annual Meeting of the Berks Archæological Society, of which the King is the Patron, was held at the Abbey Gate, Reading, on Monday, May 1st, 1916, at 3 p.m., the chair being taken by the President (Mr. C. E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A.).

#### *ANNUAL REPORT, 1915—1916.*

##### LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS.

Notwithstanding the many calls upon the time of the Members of this Society on account of the War in which this Empire is engaged, it yet has been found possible to hold, as in past years, the Annual Winter Session, when lectures on various archæological subjects were given. At a time when many Archæological Societies have been unable to continue to hold their meetings and excursions, the Berkshire Society is to be congratulated upon the fact that, in spite of the national crisis and the concentration of the minds of the people upon the war, it has in some way been enabled to perform the functions for which it exists and to carry out its usual programme. Whereas in times of peace many County Associations confine their labours to the arrangement of one or two excursions in the year, your Society for many years past has always held its Winter Session in addition to its excursions, and it is satisfactory that although only one excursion was possible this year, the series of lectures has been continued; and the Society has been fortunate enough to secure the services of several experts in archæology who have favoured it by their interesting and valuable addresses on subjects which they have made their own.

In war time it is impossible to carry out much research work, but for the first time the actual and extraordinarily interesting results of the President's excavations at Sonning, which were conducted prior to the war, have been laid before the Society in an important lecture by Mr. Harold Brakspear, F.S.A. The discovery and reconstruction of an episcopal palace that has been buried for cen-

turies is not the least important of all the antiquarian explorations that have been made during recent years, whether by public bodies or private individuals.

There are few matters of architectural interest to which the Committee desire to direct your attention. There is, however, one subject that should occupy the thoughts of our members and calls for special consideration, and that is the safety of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London. Mr. Mervyn Macartney, F.S.A., gave a lecture on the subject, as recorded subsequently in this report. He is the official surveyor of the Cathedral appointed by the Dean and Chapter. It is believed that unless the magnificent building, the "chef d'œuvre" of Sir Christopher Wren, be attacked by a Zeppelin raid, its safety has been secured ; but the cost of the work has been enormous, and the time is difficult for raising money. Canon Alexander, who is the Chairman of the Committee appointed to carry out the restoration, is of opinion that Reading and Berkshire might be willing to contribute to this national work. *The funds of our Society are none too flourishing*, and it might be difficult for us to vote a donation for this purpose ; but if any of our members would be willing to subscribe some small or large contributions the Secretary and Treasurer would be pleased to take charge of the amounts and to forward them to the Cathedral authorities.

At the last Annual Meeting, May 3rd, a paper on "The Old Hospitals of Berkshire, by Professor Carleton Williams, who through illness was prevented from attending, was read by the Hon. Secretary.

On November 29th, 1915, the first lecture of the winter session took place, when Mr. Mervyn Macartney, F.R.I.B.A., F.S.A., who is the Surveyor of St. Paul's Cathedral, gave a most charming lecture on the history and architecture of this Cathedral.

Mr. Cator, F.S.A., on December 11th, 1915, took as his subject "The Friars, with particular reference to the Austin Friary of London." Of this lecture no report appears in the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archaeological Journal*, as the lecturer has promised to print it *in extenso* in the July number of that publication.

Mr. Guy Dawber, on January 28th, 1916, interested his audience by his account of "The Mountain Roads in Tyrol and Italy." This lecture was illustrated by slides made from photographs which Mr. Dawber had taken during his travels in that region. Interest was added to this lecture that it dealt with the country in which the Austrian and Italian armies are fighting over.

The fourth lecture was by Mr. Harold Brakspear, F.S.A., his subject being "The Excavations of the Episcopal Palace at Sonning." The lecturer described the results of the excavations carried out by our President. The illustrations were from a special set of slides prepared under the direction of Mr. Keyser. This lecture, with illustrations, will be published in the April number of the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*.

The fifth and last lecture of the session was given by our President, who dealt with "The Architectural Notes on the Berkshire Churches of Sutton Courtney, Appleton, Fyfield, and Besselsleigh." Our President's lectures on the architecture of the churches of this county are one of the chief features of the winter session, and are always illustrated by a fine series of slides specially prepared for each lecture.

Despite these abnormal times, the attendance at each of these lectures was large, and proves how very much this side of our work is appreciated.

The Committee, on behalf of the Society, wish to tender their grateful thanks to the above-mentioned gentlemen for their most interesting lectures.

The Society desires to record its gratitude to those who entertained the members to tea at the conclusion of each lecture. The names of the hosts and hostesses are Mrs. F. E. Williams, the Rev. Frank Varley and Mrs. Varley, Mr. and Mrs. Duff, the Rev. and Mrs. Morris Williams, Miss Strong, Miss Hissey, and Miss Cooper-Smith.

It is satisfactory to know that the Victoria County History of Berkshire has been completed, but its publication has been delayed by the war, and it has been deemed advisable to delay the issue of the remaining two volumes until the day of peace dawns.

A volume on "The Parish Church," containing an account of the treasures of architecture and ecclesiastical art to be found in many village churches, including several in Berkshire, has been written by your Hon. Secretary and was published last autumn season.

#### EXCURSIONS.

Only one excursion took place during the year 1915, on September 7th, when, favoured by a fine autumn day, the Society visited Wokingham, Easthampstead Park, Finchampstead, Barkham, and Shinfield Churches. For an account of this excursion see *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal* for October, 1916.

## OBITUARY.

During the period dealt with in this Report there have passed away Lord Burnham, one of our Vice-Presidents, Lady Barry, of Ockwells Manor, and the Rev. J. E. Howe. All these took a keen interest in the work of the Society. Mr. Howe will be especially missed, as until lately he was a regular attendant at our meetings, and was one of those who had been so kind as to come and lecture to the Society.

## TREASURERSHIP.

In the autumn Mr. Ravenscroft, who had been Treasurer for some years, resigned on account of leaving Reading. At the meeting of the Society on November 29th, 1915, Mr. J. Hautenville-Cope was elected as Treasurer till the next Annual General Meeting.

## PUBLICATIONS.

The *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal* now enters on its 22nd year of publication. This opportunity is taken of asking all members of the Berks Archæological Society to become subscribers to it: it is the official publication of the Society, and not only contains accounts of each meeting, but it has articles dealing with matters of archæological interest relating to our county. The Editors would be glad if fresh correspondents would come forward; old ones drop off, and new writers are very earnestly invited to contribute to its pages.

## GENERAL.

In conclusion your Committee, knowing well to what a very large extent of patriotic work of various kinds all the members are taking part, yet venture to express the hope that all present subscribers will continue to remain within our ranks, and where possible to enlist from amongst their friends fresh support.

The Report and Balance Sheet having been passed by the Meeting, Mr. Keyser was again unanimously re-elected President, Mr. Ditchfield and Mr. Cope were respectively re-elected Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The Vice-Presidents were all re-elected with the exception of Mr. J. Okey Taylor, who, on account of illness, retired. Lord Burnham was elected Vice-President. The following were appointed as the Committee: Messrs. Anderson, Collier, Cope, Duff, Haynes, Gordon-Hills, Macartney, Petrocokino, Preston, Rev. A. R. Price, Radford, Treacher, Rev. F. Varley, Walker, White and Williams. After the conclusion of business the members adjourned to the Town Hall, where Mr. Ditchfield lectured on the "Tercenary of Shakespeare," after which those present were entertained to tea by the Mayor.

# BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

## *Treasurer's Statement and Balance Sheet for year ending 31st December, 1915.*

### Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
Balance, 1914 ... ..	12	6	4½
Received for hire of Abbey Gateway ...	20	1	0
Profit on excursion to Easthampstead ...	0	15	0
Subscriptions received during 1915 ...	55	0	6

£88    2   10½

### Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Rents, Rates and Taxes of Abbey Gateway	36	0	6
Gas Account ... ..	8	6	9
Coal ... ..	0	18	9
Cleaning Materials ... ..	1	0	6
Salary of Caretaker ... ..	8	2	6
Postage and Telegrams ... ..	2	15	0
Treasurer's Expenses ... ..	5	6	0
Printing ... ..	10	18	0
Hire of Lantern for Lectures ... ..	4	10	0
Balance in Bank 31st, December, 1915 ...	9	10	10
Balance with Hon. Treasurer 31st December, 1915 ...	0	14	0½

£88    2   10½

Audited and found correct

T. ROWLAND KENT, *Hon. Auditor*,  
160, Friar Street, Reading.  
14th March, 1916.

J. HAUTENVILLE COPE,  
*Hon. Treasurer.*