



Berkshire Archaeological Society.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting was held at the Abbey Gateway, Reading, on Tuesday, April 24th, 1917. The President, Mr. Charles E. Keyser, F.S.A., presided. There were present between forty and fifty members.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed, after which the Hon. Secretary (the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield) read the Annual Report, which was unanimously passed.

The Hon. Treasurer (Mr. J. Hautenville Cope) then presented the Financial Statement ; this was also adopted.

Mrs. Cope proposed that some inquiry should be made in the town for a suitable room for the Society's lectures. This was carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The Hon. Secretary proposed the re-election of the President, Mr. Keyser. The Society owed much to him, and was fortunate to have a gentleman at its head who was so capable of performing the duties of the office and who took so keen an interest in the Society's welfare. This was seconded by Mr. Radford and carried with acclamation. The President proposed the election of the Vice-Presidents and Committee. In the place of Mr. Blandy, Mr. A. E. Preston was appointed Vice-President, and the latter gentleman's place on the Committee was filled by the appointment of Mr. T. Morley. Thanks were also given to Mr. T. R. Kent for his kindness in auditing the accounts. This concluded the business.

Mr. Charles H. Moore, late Director of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, U.S.A., then gave a most interesting lecture on "Structural Evolution in Mediæval Church Architecture." A very hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer, proposed by Mr. Cope and seconded by Mr. Dodgson, was unanimously carried.

Thanks were also accorded to Miss Hissey and Miss Cooper-Smith for entertaining the Members to tea.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1916—17.

Your Committee have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1916-17. During this period of war, owing to the occupation of many in war work at home and in military service at the front, many learned Societies have abandoned all meetings and excursions and closed their doors until this disastrous period of the world's history be ended. It is with some satisfaction that your Committee are able to report that they have been able to carry on their work in some degree. The usual number of monthly lectures have been delivered during the Winter Session, and a very enjoyable and instructive excursion was made to Abingdon and the neighbourhood of northern Berkshire. This was very well attended, and the utmost kindness and hospitality were shown to the Society by the Mayor of Abingdon, Mr. Preston, Mr. J. T. Morland, and other gentlemen, while the President, with his usual architectural knowledge, explained the features of the Churches visited. The attendance at the lectures has been very good throughout the session, and has encouraged the Secretary and the Committee to endeavour to carry out the usual programme.

ABBAY GATE.

The Society still continues to occupy the Abbey Gate, which, from its associations dating back to monkish times and to the making of English History, is without doubt the most suitable place for the meetings of an Archæological Society. Our Treasurer sometimes warns us that this is purchased at a somewhat severe cost. The rent is £20, and besides this we have to pay for coal and gas £8 os. 2d., for caretaker £8 2s 6d., and rates, taxes and repairs £9 13s. 8d., making a total of £45 16s. 4d. Against this we receive for re-letting the room the sum of £20 17s. 0d. Hence the total cost of this admirable room amounts to £24 19s. 0d. a year. It has been suggested that we should abandon the library on the right of the entrance gateway, which would save us £5 a year, and we have sundry architectural relics in the room below, which may have been a porter's lodge or a prison cell. We may add that for some years we have had no increase in the number of our treasures. Your Secretary wrote to the Corporation requesting a diminution of the rent, but that body did not see their way to granting our request.

We may add that the Corporation at one time granted the Society the use of the Gateway rent free, but unfortunately a member of the Council took ill-advised action in the matter and burdened us with a rent which lies somewhat heavily upon us. It would be possible for us to rent a room for our meetings at a much smaller cost per annum, but it is for the members to consider whether that would be in accordance with the dignity of the County Archæological Society, or in other ways advisable. Certainly it would save the older members of the Society the somewhat painful climb up the steep stairs of this august apartment.

GENERAL.

We are not aware of any work of architectural importance that has been achieved in the County during the past year. The cost of the war and the prevention by the Government of the spending of large sums of money on buildings that are not absolutely necessary, have caused the work of all architects to be somewhat at a standstill. We may mention that our member Mr. A. E. Preston, who is now chairman of Christ's Hospital at Abingdon, has made arrangements for the restoration of the tomb of Sir John Golafré at Fyfield, the ruined condition of which was shewn in the President's admirable series of slides exhibited in his recent lecture. Some time ago the Secretary suggested that a tablet be inserted in the Church of White Waltham in memory of the distinguished antiquary Thomas Herne, who was born in that village. The Committee suggests that this idea may be kept in view, though there is no prospect of its fulfilment until after the war.

It was the intention of the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies to hold its Annual Congress in Reading this year, and your Society was invited to take a leading part in trying to make it successful. Your Secretary attended a Council meeting in London at Burlington House when the matter was discussed, and a deputation was sent to Reading to consult with the Mayor and other gentlemen with regard to the feasibility of holding such a Congress this year. For various reasons it was decided that the visit would be inopportune at the present time, and the officials determined to hold the gathering in London this year, and to visit Reading later on. The President and Secretary have been appointed delegates. When the Congress comes to Reading we shall certainly do our utmost to welcome it and to promote its welfare.

ACTUAL WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

As we have already stated, the usual number of lectures have been delivered, seven in all, of which the following is the list :—

After the last Annual Meeting on May 1st, 1916, which was held as usual at the Abbey Gateway, the members adjourned to the Town Hall by the kind invitation of the Mayor (Mr. Leonard Sutton), who had with his usual hospitality also invited a large number of residents in the town and county. A lecture on "Shakespeare's Country" was given by the Honorary Secretary in connection with the Tercentary of the poet, all the company being entertained afterwards to tea by the Mayor of Reading. The hospitality of the Mayor was greatly appreciated, and he was cordially thanked by the President.

The first lecture of the current winter session (1916-17), on October 20th, was by Mrs. Cope, who spoke on things "New and Old."

On November 20th, at a very largely attended meeting, Mr. Anderson, one of our members, interested his audience with a lecture on "Salonika and the Country Round." This was illustrated with slides made from photographs which the lecturer had taken when travelling in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Treacher, F.G.S., on December 8th, took the "Origin of Berkshire Villages" for his subject. Our members will be glad to know that this lecture will be printed in the July number of the "Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal."

The fourth lecture, on March 5th, was by the Hon. Secretary, on "London Signs and Inscriptions." The views to illustrate this lecture were kindly lent by Dr. Phillip Norman, Vice-President of the Society of Antiquaries.

At the fifth meeting our President gave "Notes on the Churches of Besselsleigh, Appleton, Cumnor, Wootton and Sunningwell." Like all Mr. Keyser's lectures relating to the architecture of Berkshire Churches, this one was greatly appreciated by a large audience, and the views shown on the screen gave very clear architectural details.

After the Annual Meeting on April 24th, 1917, Professor Charles H. Moore, A.M., Hon.A.R.I.B.A., late Director of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, U.S.A., has kindly consented to give a lecture on "Structural Evolution in Mediæval Church Architec-

ture." Mr. Moore is the author of various well-known books on architecture, so that his lecture will be certain to be replete with interest.

Notwithstanding the crisis our nation is passing through, so many of our members being engaged upon various descriptions of "war work," these meetings were well attended, a fact which shews that it was a wise policy to hold a winter session.

The Committee, on behalf of the Society, returns thanks to all the lecturers for their kindness in addressing the Society.

Thanks must also be given to those ladies and gentlemen who kindly provided tea at the close of each lecture, viz. : The President and Mrs. Keyser, Mr. and Mrs. Radford, Mr. and Mrs. Cope, Mr. and Mrs. Carleton Williams, Miss Baily, Miss Hissey, and Miss Cooper-Smith.

EXCURSIONS.

Only one excursion was held in 1916, to Abingdon, Appleford, Sutton Courtney and Drayton. Through the kindness of the Governors of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon, the Society was not only allowed to see over the building, but also to inspect the MSS. belonging to the Hospital. These were explained by one of our members, Mr. A. E. Preston, who has made a careful study of the documents. The site of the Abbey was also visited under the guidance of Mr. Preston, and a lecture delivered in the Council Chamber by the Hon. Secretary on the history of the town. To both the Mayor (Mr. T. H. Clarke) and to Mr. Preston the Society desires to record its gratitude for all they did to make the visit to Abingdon so successful. Thanks are also due to the Mayor for his hospitality in providing tea in the Council Chamber.

The Committee propose to arrange an excursion in the summer to Wallingford, or Cumnor and neighbourhood, if the members think this would be agreeable to them.

OBITUARY.

It is the sad duty of the Committee to report that two members, Mr. H. B. Blandy, of Wokingham, and Mrs. Stilwell, of Yateley, Hants, have passed away since our last Annual Meeting. Although neither of them had recently been present at any of our meetings, they were two of the oldest subscribers to our Society, and were the personal friends of many of our members, and will be greatly missed.

PUBLICATIONS.

The "Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal" now enters the twenty-fourth year of its existence. It is the official publication of the Society, and all members are very urgently asked to subscribe to it. Besides our President's lectures which are published in each number, there are other papers relating to matters of archæological interest. It may not be out of place to mention that the expense of producing the Journal has increased considerably since the commencement of the war, and is still increasing owing to the ever-growing cost of paper and printing materials. Should there not be sufficient support given to the Journal, much as one would regret the fact, there is the chance that its publication may have to cease.

The University College, Reading, has published an account of the excavations at the Romano-British Site at Lowbury Hill, Berks, by Mr. Donald Atkinson, the Research Fellow in Roman Archæology at the College.

We must also call attention to an important and admirable work on the Silchester Pottery in the Reading Museum, compiled by Mr. Thomas May, who has accomplished his task with immense labour, accuracy and precision, revealing a thorough knowledge of the subject. The quarto volume abounds with excellent illustrations, and is published entirely at the cost of the Corporation of Reading. It does infinite credit to the Borough Council of this town, to the author, and to the Reading printers, Messrs. Poynder and Son, for the excellent manner in which the volume has been produced.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. John Hautenville Cope, presents his own separate Report, but the Committee desire to record their appreciation of the admirable way in which he has kept the accounts of the Society, collected the subscriptions, and managed the finances. In spite of the difficult times through which we are passing, he has succeeded in ending the year with a creditable balance of £13 11s. 2½d., which is more than £3 in excess of last year. The Secretary desires also to express his personal thanks to Mr. Cope for his services during the autumn of last year, when he was called up to act as Bishop's Missioner and was sent to conduct the National Mission in several villages in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Our thanks are also due to Mr. T. Rowland Kent for very kindly auditing the accounts of the Society.

In conclusion, your Committee trust that in spite of the hard and difficult times through which we are passing the Society may continue to carry on its useful mission of endeavouring to study and preserve the antiquities of the Royal County. When the war is over there seems to be a general desire for reconstruction in all phases of our national life. It is hoped that when peace comes we may be able to increase and extend our activities, and this can only be accomplished by a determination on the part of those who are now members to continue their membership, to assist in the work of the Society, to inform themselves with regard to its objects, to send notes of discoveries of objects of interest and importance to the Journal, to introduce new members, and to do their utmost to advance the cause of archæology in the neighbourhood in which they live. Reform and renovation and reconstruction are in the air, but unless these movements are guided by the stored wisdom of the past, they may tend to retard and hinder rather than to advance and promote the best progress of the nation.

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT.

It will be within the recollection of our members that I succeeded Mr. Ernest Ravenscroft in November, 1915. At this Annual Meeting, 24th April, 1917, the first balance sheet for which I am solely responsible will be presented. I wish to lay the following facts before the Society :—

The number of members (men), those who subscribe 10/- per year, was on the 1st January, 1916, 64 ; on the same date the number of lady members, those who subscribe 5/- per year, was 74, making a general total of 134 members. During the year 1916, in the former class four resigned, but were replaced by three new members. In the second group 14 left the Society and two joined, one of whom is a life member, thus the total membership now stands :—Men members, 62 ; lady members, 60—total, 122.

I, however, regret to say that during the present year 1917 in neither class has there been any acquisition to our ranks. Furthermore, it is my duty to point out both to the Committee and to the Society, that some further subscribers have already intimated to me that they are unable to continue their membership. Unless steps are taken very quickly by the members of this Society to replace those who have left it is my candid opinion that very drastic steps will have to be taken to reduce the expenditure of the Society.

I now pass on to review the balance sheet. Taking the receipts side, it will be seen that, compared with the year 1915, subscriptions received in 1916 show a decrease over the previous year, 1915, of £3 18s. 6d. On the other hand, there is a profit of £1 14s. 6d. on the Abingdon excursion. The receipts obtained for letting the Abbey Gateway for mission services, meetings, etc., show a small increase of 16/-, which has only been obtained by your Treasurer asking those who have hired the room to pay a slightly increased sum on account of the higher charge for gas, coal, etc.

Taking the expenditure side, the rent of the Abbey Gateway, including taxes and rates, shews a reduction of £4 1s. 9d. over the amount paid in 1915; this is accounted for that a portion of the rent due for 1914 was not paid till 1915, *i.e.*, before I became Treasurer. It must be remembered that the Abbey Gateway is held by the Society from the Corporation of Reading at an annual rent of £15 per year, and the room called the Society's Library is also held from the same body at a further rental of £5 per year. Thus the Society has annually to pay the sum of £20 a year in rent, and in addition, by the terms of the lease, is responsible for rates, taxes and repairs.

Taking other items which call for report, I am glad to be able to state that I have been able to pay off part of a debt of £8 which has been owing to our Secretary for some time; the amount paid is £4 4s. 2d., *viz.*, £4 for printing, and 4/2 for postage. It is my intention to discharge the whole of the remaining portion of this debt, for I consider this to be a first charge on our funds.

It is with pleasure that your Treasurer can report that from the funds which have passed through his hands during the year 1916 he has been able to pay the subscriptions due to the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies, as well as to the Congress of Archæological Societies. These are new items in our expenditure, as hitherto they have been paid through the generosity of our President.

In conclusion I wish very strongly to state that owing to the number of resignations as well as the number of pending resignations, and to the slow way in which subscriptions are coming in, that I do not consider the finances of the Society to be in a sound condition. From the Committee I should be glad to hear what steps they intend to take for the future continuance of the Society.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Treasurer's Statement and Balance Sheet for year ending 31st December, 1916.

Receipts.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand, 1915, at Lloyds' Bank, Reading		9	10	10			
In Treasurer's hands		0	14	0½			
		<hr/>			10	4	10½
Subscriptions, 1916					51	2	0
Profit on Excursion to Abingdon, etc., 1916					1	14	6
Rents received for Abbey Gateway					20	17	0
		<hr/>			<hr/>		
		£83 18 4½					

Expenditure.					£	s.	d.
Rent of Abbey Gateway	..	..	..	..	22	5	1
Rates and Taxes	..	..	..	..	9	13	8
Salary of Caretaker	..	..	..	..	8	2	6
Hire of Lantern	..	..	..	..	6	13	0
Gas, Coal and Wood	..	..	..	..	8	0	2
Postage	..	..	..	..	2	16	2
Printing and Stationery	..	..	..	..	10	9	6
Cheque Book	..	..	..	..	0	2	6
Commission, Postal Order	..	..	..	..	0	0	1
Subscription, South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
Subscription, Congress of Archæological Societies	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
Repairs, Abbey Gateway	..	..	..	..	0	19	6
Balance at Lloyds' Bank, Reading,							
31st December, 1916	..	..	11	1	2		
Cash in Hon. Treasurer's hands, 31st							
December, 1916	..	..	2	10	0½		
						13	11
							2½

Audited and found correct,
T. ROWLAND KENT, *Hon. Auditor.*
160, Friar Street, Reading.
16TH APRIL, 1917.

J. HAUTENVILLE COPE, *Hon. Treasurer.*
16TH APRIL, 1916.