



Berks Archæological Society.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1917-18.

THE Hon. Secretary begs to present his Report of the work of the Society during the past year. The members are able to congratulate themselves that in spite of the war the Society has been able to hold the usual quota of lectures during the Winter Session, and to arrange two excursions during the summer. This compares favourably with other county and local Antiquarian Societies which in these critical times have in many cases abandoned holding their usual meetings. It was felt that as far as possible it was advisable to continue the Society's labours, although many of its members are busily engaged in work connected with the war, and have little leisure for antiquarian research. For those who by reason of age or sex cannot enlist for active service, it has been an advantage to pursue their favourite studies and to be able to distract their minds from the almost overwhelming anxieties of the present time. At any rate they felt that in accomplishing this they were doing no harm.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE SOCIETY.

The most important event of the year has been the removal of the Society's Headquarters from the Abbey Gate to the University College, Reading. The former building has been the home of the Society for many years. Its historical associations rendered it a fitting building for the headquarters of an Archæological Society, and many of the members regreted its abandonment; but strong financial reasons were urged by our Treasurer which could not be gainsayed. The payment of £20 per annum for rent to the Reading Corporation, as well as the rates and taxes, gas, fuel, caretaker, etc., was a heavy strain upon our finances. Your Secretary applied to the Corporation for a reduction of rent, but they were unable to do this. Hence the Committee decided to terminate the

lease on June 30th, 1917. The serious question of dilapidations arose for which the Society was responsible; but the Corporation agreed to take over our furniture in lieu of any cost of repairs which they were entitled to demand. After discussing various plans the Committee entered into negotiations with the University College who very kindly extended a hearty welcome to the Society, and agreed to place a room at its disposal for lectures and meetings and to house our library. Our best thanks are due to the Council, the Principal and other officials of the College for providing so congenial a home for the Society. It is fitting that an institution which exists for the advancement of learning should be associated with a Society that has the same object. The removal has not been accomplished without considerable correspondence and labour on the part of your Secretary, and he wishes to record publicly his grateful thanks to those who have assisted him, especially to Mr. Morley who very generously housed the Society's books and papers when, without notice, they were removed from the Abbey Gate, and to Mr. Holmes for the trouble he took in arranging for their transference to the College.

The Windsor and Eton Literary and Scientific Society has become affiliated during the past year with our Society.

We have to record a very remarkable awakening in archæological interest in the northern part of the County due to the enthusiastic action of Mr. D'Almaine, of Abingdon. He has for some time been making investigations with some excavation work at the neolithic monument known as Wayland Smith's Cave, and has made some discoveries that are of importance. He has sought the advice and assistance of Mr. C. R. Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, and Mr. Reginald A. Smith, the British Museum Expert. The results of his investigations have been communicated in lectures to large audiences in Abingdon and other places under the auspices of our Society, and has succeeded in enrolling no less than 44 new members. We congratulate Mr. D'Almaine on the success he has attained in throwing new light upon Berkshire's chief megalithic monument, and thank him for the keen interest he has shown in the welfare of the Society and for his loyal and active support. The Society would welcome cordially similar efforts in other parts of the County, and look forward to the time when every town and district in the Shire shall have its own Secretary and Committee arranging courses of lectures and meetings and promoting research in every part of Berkshire.

MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS.

At the Annual Meeting on April 24th, 1917, Professor Charles H. Moore, A.M., Hon. A.R.I.B.A., formerly professor of Architecture and Archæology at Harvard University, U.S.A., gave a lecture on "Structural Evolution in Mediæval Church Architecture."

The following were the lectures during the past winter session:—

I.—On the 31st October, Mr. W. Childs, M.A., Principal of the University College, Reading, read a paper on "Reading in the 16th and 17th Centuries."

II.—Mrs. Cope, who has often lectured to the Society, took for her subject "In Memory of" She referred to barrows, wooden and stone effigies in Churches, tombstones, brasses and other memorials of the departed.

III.—Our President, on January 21st, described the Churches of East and West Hendred, Lockinge and Ardington. This lecture, like all Mr. Keyser's previous ones, was illustrated by a series of photographs specially taken for the occasion by Mr. Walton Adams, of Reading, and Mr. Taunt, of Oxford.

IV.—"Windsor Forest" formed the subject of a lecture given by the Hon. Secretary on March 21st.

V.—The fifth and last lecture on March 19th, 1918, was by Mr. Morley, who described the various brasses still to be seen in our Berkshire Churches. At this lecture Mr. Morley showed several rubbings he had made of "local brasses."

The Society desires to tender its grateful thanks to the lecturers. To those ladies and gentlemen who entertained the Society to tea on the occasion of the lectures, thanks for their hospitality should be recorded, viz. :—The Principal of University College, Miss Bailly, Sir Edward Barry, Bart., and Miss Barry, our President and Mrs. Keyser, and Mr. and Miss Treacher.

Excursions.—The first excursion took place on May 26th, when by the kind invitation of our treasurer and Mrs. Cope the Society visited Finchampstead Place, where they were entertained to tea and most hospitably welcomed in the beautiful garden which was then at the height of its summer glories. Finchampstead Church was visited and described by the President. Cordial thanks were given to Mr. and Mrs. Hautenville Cope for so kindly inviting the members and for their hospitable entertainment.

On August 27th and 28th the Society held a two days' excursion to Oxford when over 30 members were present staying the night at the Randolph Hotel. It was considered a somewhat bold experi-

ment in war-time, but in spite of somewhat broken weather the excursion proved very enjoyable and was pronounced to be successful. The University buildings and several Colleges were visited, including the Cathedral and some of the Oxford Churches. Your Secretary acted as conductor and described most of the collegiate buildings; the Churches were described by the President. The members were welcomed by the Fellows of several of the colleges and the Deputy-keeper of the Bodleian Library; and Mr. Taunt, who knows Oxford so well, accompanied the party and contributed much information. The members will retain pleasant recollections of their visit to Oxford in the unusual conditions of war-time, when the colleges are for the most part depleted of students, very many having laid down their lives for their country, and when Cadet Corps and Army Flying Squadrons filled their places in the collegiate halls.

MEMBERSHIP.

It is pleasant to have to record a considerable increase in membership. In addition to the 44 new members introduced through Mr. D'Almaine's lecture (27 gentlemen and 17 ladies) there has been an increase of 19 (11 gentlemen and 8 ladies). Three of our members have passed away and 10 have retired. The total increase of new members is 53, and the total number of subscribers is 178 (92 gentlemen and 86 ladies). In spite of this large increase the membership is scarcely worthy of a County Society, and we must hope that it may still be further augmented. The Treasurer, Mr. John Hautenville Cope will present his separate report. His printed balance sheet is in the hands of the members, showing the very satisfactory balance in hand of £38. Upon this satisfactory result of the year's working he is to be heartily congratulated, and your Secretary desires to convey his personal thanks to him for the help he has invariably given in the Society's work as well as in the conduct of the Journal. The thanks of the Society are also due to Mr. T. R. Kent for kindly auditing the accounts.

OBITUARY.

During the past year three of our members have passed away from earth. The first was Mr. Theodore H. White, a gentleman well known in Reading. He was a member of the committee, an hon. member, having been so qualified by his holding for a long period the Secretaryship of the Reading Literary and Scientific Society. He was a keen antiquary and was for some time a lecturer

at University College, a good linguist and a genial and pleasant companion. He has been much missed in Reading since he passed away after undergoing a severe operation.

The Rev. A. R. Price, Vicar of Ruscombe, was also a member of our committee, and during the few years he has lived in Berkshire he was a constant attendant at our meetings and helped us by his counsel and interest in our proceedings.

Quite recently we have had to deplore the loss of the sister of one of our most zealous workers, and herself a member. Miss Treacher has belonged to our society for many years and took a keen pleasure in our meetings and excursions. The very last time she was able to leave her home she acted as hostess with her brother at our last meeting but one. We shall miss her greatly and beg to offer our most heartfelt sympathy to her brother and aged mother in their great and overwhelming loss.

PUBLICATIONS.

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal has concluded its 23rd Volume. It has been enriched, as for many years past, by a wealth of plates kindly and generously presented by the president, whose valuable series of articles on Berkshire Churches are well known and greatly appreciated. Owing to the increased cost of printing and of paper three numbers were issued last year instead of four, the last being an enlarged number. Your Secretary has been financially responsible for the publication since the commencement, when at the request of Mr. James Parker and other antiquaries in the three counties he undertook the work. He would gladly be relieved of this responsibility, and some negotiations have been entered into with a Oxford publisher for the purchase of the Journal.

It has been suggested that the Rules of the Society should be reprinted. None has been issued within the recollection of the present officers, but some ancient copies are in existence. They would require careful revision, and if it should be thought necessary to have a new issue, the work should be entrusted to a committee and submitted to a future meeting of the members.

In conclusion we may express the hope that the Society may continue to flourish as it has done in the past. Not only has it contrived to carry on its existence in very difficult and anxious times, when many Societies seem to be moribund, but it appears to have renewed its youth and taken a new lease of life. With increased

funds and a larger membership, it may be enabled to devote more time and money to research and excavation work and to publication, and thus promote the study of antiquities in the Royal County and perform the functions for which it was founded many years ago.

P. H. DITCHFIELD.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Your Hon. Treasurer begs to present his report for the year ended 31st December, 1917.

Dealing first with the receipt side the chief item which calls for remark is the amount received for subscriptions, viz: £34 2s., against £51 2s. for the previous year 1916, a difference of £17. This may be explained that during 1916 £3 was received from one subscriber as a "life composition" instead of paying the usual annual subscription of 5/-, and £3 15s. represents subscriptions for 1917, paid toward the close of the year 1916. The net difference may therefor be stated as £10 5s. which comprises subscriptions for the past year still unpaid or else those due from members who have resigned during the year without forwarding their subscriptions.

Turning to the expenditure side very little calls for comment. As the Society during the year under review relinquished the tenancy of the Abbey Gateway the amount paid in rent, rates, taxes, caretakers wages is of course less than formerly and will in future disappear. The Society closes the year with a balance in hand of £38 12s. 3d., against £13 11s. 2d. That the year should close with such a large balance is, I venture to think, very satisfactory.

J. HAUTENVILLE COPE.

BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Balance Sheet for the year ending 31st December, 1917.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance, Lloyd's Bank, Reading, 31st December, 1916	11	1 2	Wages, Caretaker, Abbey Gateway ..	..	6 1 2
Cash with Hon. Treasurer	2	10 0½	Rates and Taxes of Abbey Gateway ..	..	8 3 1
Subscriptions, 1917 .. ..	..	..	Rent of Abbey Gateway .. ..	..	5 8 6
Affiliation Fee, Windsor & Eton Scientific Society .. ..	..	..	Lewis, for Lantern Hire .. ..	..	1 5 0
Profit on Excursion to Oxford .. ..	..	..	Gas, Coal and Wood .. ..	..	6 17 5
Rents for Abbey Gateway .. ..	..	..	Postage .. ..	..	2 0 0
Rates returned .. ..	..	..	Printing .. ..	..	5 18 6
			Hon. Secretary, for Journals ..	..	0 10 0
			Cheque Book .. ..	..	0 5 0
			Balance, Lloyd's Bank, Reading, 31st December, 1917	29	14 7
			Cash with Hon. Treasurer	8	17 8½
				<u>38</u>	<u>12 3½</u>
					<u>£75 0 11½</u>

J. HAUTENVILLE COPE, *Hon. Treasurer.*
 16TH APRIL, 1918.

Audited and found correct,
 T. ROWLAND KENT, *Hon. Auditor.*
 160, Friar Street, Reading.
 27TH APRIL, 1918.