

Berks Archæological Society

ANNUAL MEETING, 1920.

THE County Archæological Society held their Annual Meeting on May 5th, at University College, Reading, which by the kind permission of the College authorities is their Headquarters. Mr. Charles E. Keyser, F.S.A., President, presided, and amongst others present were the Hon. Secretary, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, F.S.A., Mr. J. Hautenville Cope, Treasurer, and Mrs. Cope, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Duff, Mr. A. E. Preston, Miss Bailey, Professor Carleton-Williams, Dr. Hurry, Miss Strong, Mr. Morley, the Rev. R. P. Newhouse, &c. After the reading of the minutes the Annual Report of the Society was read by the Secretary, which was as follows :—

The Committee beg to present their report for the year 1919-1920. Members can congratulate themselves upon a very successful year, being the first since 1914 that the Society could enter upon normal conditions. It is hoped now that peace has been established, and members who were engaged in 'war-work' have been released from their labours in connection with the great struggle which this country, together with her allies, has been engaged, that the Society will be able to make great strides not only in membership, but also in its usefulness.

MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS.

During the year which is dealt with in this report seven lectures were held during the winter session and two summer excursions took place. Besides these the Abingdon Branch, under the skilful direction of Mr. H. G. W. d'Almaine, assisted by Mr. C. O. Wright, also organised several summer excursions to places in the neighbourhood of Abingdon, and a course of lectures during the winter.

Regarding the lectures held during the winter of 1919-1920, it is very satisfactory to have to report that these meetings were very well attended by members and their friends.

At the Annual Meeting of the Society, which took place on May 9th, 1919, and by the invitation of the Mayor of Reading (Alderman Stanley Hayward) was held in the Art Gallery of the

Town Hall, after the formal business of the meeting had been concluded, the Hon. Secretary gave a lecture on 'Roman Britain with special reference to Berkshire.' At the conclusion of the meeting the Society was entertained to tea by the Mayor and Mayoress in the Mayor's parlour.

The following were the lectures held during the winter season of 1919-1920:—

I. The first meeting was to have taken place at the Town Hall, Wokingham, by the special invitation of the Wokingham Lecture Society. Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled, as the lecturer, the Rev. Dom Fortescue, whose subject was 'Boethius, the last of the Stoics,' was unable to attend.

II. The second meeting was on November 12th, when our President described the architecture of the churches of Great and Little Coxwell, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Buscot and Ingleham. The lecture, like all those given by our President, was illustrated by a very beautiful series of lantern slides, about one hundred being shown on this occasion.

III. Captain Vaughan-Williams was the lecturer at our third meeting, when he gave an account of the excavations he had made during the past summer on the site of Edward the Confessor's palace at Old Windsor.

IV. The fourth meeting was held in the Town Hall, Wokingham, by the invitation of the Wokingham Lecture Society. The lecturer on this occasion being Mr. Ernest Pythian, whose subject was 'Venice, the Sea-girt City.' A series of views were shown on the screen. This is the first time the Society has held one of its winter meetings away from Reading, and very great thanks are due to the Wokingham Lecture Society for the very excellent arrangements they made, and also for inviting the Berkshire Archæological Society to such a charming lecture and also for entertaining the members to tea.

V. The fifth meeting was on January 29th, 1920, when Professor de Burgh, of Reading University College, took as his subject 'The Place of Rome in History.' This lecture was considered one of the most interesting the Society had ever heard, and at the conclusion the professor was accorded a most hearty vote of thanks.

VI. 'The Chateaux of the Loire' was the title of the sixth lecture, which was given by one of our lady members, *viz.* Miss

Carleton-Williams. The interest of this lecture was much enhanced by the selection of slides which the lecturer exhibited.

VII. The seventh lecture was given by our Treasurer, who spoke upon the subject of 'Monasticism.'

The Society desires to record its thanks to the lecturers and also takes the opportunity of expressing its thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who entertained our members to tea at the conclusion of each lecture. Those who were so kind as to do this were the following:—Our President and Mrs. Keyser, the Mayor and Mayoress of Reading, Mr. and Mrs. Carleton-Williams, Miss Valpy and Mrs. Attwood, Miss Bailey, and the Wokingham Lecture Society.

MEMBERSHIP.

It is gratifying to have again to record that our ranks still continue to grow. During the year several members joined; this increase is largely due to Mr. d'Almaine, who in 1917 started our Abingdon Branch, and under whose direction this local branch has so exceedingly flourished. We should like to see similar branches established in other towns in our county, and hope this suggestion may take root.

PUBLICATIONS.

During the year the *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*, which was founded and edited by our Hon. Secretary more than twenty years ago, was purchased by the Society. It is now the property of the Society, but will continue to be edited by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield and Mr. Cope. It is published by Messrs. Blackwell, of Oxford, and is issued twice yearly to all members who subscribe ten shillings.

OBITUARY.

The Society has to record the death of the Rev. Charles Andrewes Raymond, who, after resigning the Vicarage of Bray, had resided in Reading, and during his residence in our county town was a most regular attendant at our winter lectures. His presence will be much missed.

THANKS.

The Committee desires to express the grateful thanks of the Society to the Principal and other authorities of the University College, Reading, for their hospitable reception of the Society in affording it such a pleasant headquarters. They have afforded space in the College Library for our books and placed at our disposal a room for our lectures, and in addition enabled the members to be refreshed with tea at the conclusion of the intellectual feasts. The Society is greatly indebted to the College, and we trust that its aspirations may soon be gratified and that it may blossom out into the University of Reading.

EXCAVATIONS.

Under the auspices of the Society two important schemes of excavation have been commenced. Mr. d'Almaine is pursuing his work at Weyland Smith's Cave, and Captain Vaughan-Williams has discovered an overwhelming amount of material for investigation on the site of Edward the Confessor's Palace at Old Windsor. Both he and Mr. d'Almaine require funds to enable them to proceed with the works, and the Society is earnestly requested to provide money. How far we are enabled to do this depends upon our resources, which are somewhat limited, and upon the Treasurer's report. It must be remembered that the Society promised £5 to enable Captain Vaughan-Williams to commence his work. This was paid, and various additional sums have been given, including £5 by our President and an amount collected by our affiliated Society, the Windsor and Eton Scientific and Antiquarian Society. How much more can be raised depends upon the interest and liberality of our members.

RESIGNATION OF MR. COPE.

We regret to have to record a very serious blow that has befallen the Society, and that is the resignation of the office of Treasurer by Mr. John Hautenville Cope. For private reasons he feels compelled to resign the duties which he has so faithfully discharged for the last six years. Under his fostering care the funds of the Society, relieved of the great burden of the rent of the Abbey Gate, have increased greatly, and the loss of his services will be felt enormously by the Society and every member

of it, and by no one more than by his old friend and colleague, your Hon. Secretary. No one could have devoted himself more cordially, loyally or zealously than Mr. Cope to the work of the Society. Unhappily his decision to resign is irrevocable in spite of all persuasions to the contrary, and we can only try to express to him our gratitude for his great services, and our deep regret that he feels it necessary to resign. It will be very difficult to find another gentleman to fill his place, and offers of service will be gratefully received.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

The Hon. Treasurer then made a report, which showed that after purchasing the copyright of the *Journal*, and contributing to the cost of the excavations in Windsor Park and Weyland Smith's Cave, there was a balance left of £47. As it was recorded in the reports the Society deeply regretted the resignation of Mr. Cope, and it was moved that the best thanks be given to him for the good work that he had done during the last six years.

Mr. Keyser was then re-elected President on the proposition of Mr. Ditchfield, seconded by Dr. Hurry, and the Vice-Presidents and Committee were re-elected. The President proposed in eulogistic terms the re-election of Mr. Ditchfield as Hon. Secretary, and this was carried with acclamation. Mr. T. Rowland Kent was elected Hon. Treasurer if he would consent to serve, but we understand that owing to pressure of business he is unable to accept the office. The Rev. Morris Williams was re-elected Librarian.

Professor Stenton then delivered a very important and valuable lecture on 'Some Problems in the Early History of Reading,' which it is hoped will be published *in extenso*. Dr. Hurry proposed and Mr. Preston seconded that a cordial vote of thanks be given to the lecturer, and this was supported by Mrs. Cope and other speakers. By the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Duff the members were entertained to tea at the close of the proceedings.

In conclusion, both the Committee and the Hon. Secretary express the hope that the Society will advance in numbers, and continue to carry out the chief object for which it was founded,

viz. to spread information dealing with the antiquities and the archæology of the Royal County. One fact in pleading for an augmentation of our ranks is this; the Society, as already recorded, has recently purchased the *Journal*, consequently the Society is responsible for all the cost of printing and publication of this magazine, and this can only be done by our ranks being kept up to the numbers which they have now reached. Unless this is done the publication will have to cease. This last point is one which our Treasurer wishes to very strongly impress on all our members. He appeals in this report to each member to introduce one friend during each year. If this is done then he will have no cause for anxiety.

The Will of Master Anthony Forster (1572)

TRANSCRIBED BY HARRY G. W. D'ALMAINE.

THE transcript of the Wills of three Vicars of Hurley, dated 1507, 1541 and 1552, are set out in the *Journal* (July to December, 1918).

Here is a copy of the Will of Anthony Forster (1572), the supposed murderer of Amye Robsart.

Scott—the great ‘Wizard of the North’—with all his well-known perversion of historical facts, never perpetrated a greater and more unpardonable fault than when he painted, in his *Kenilworth*, the memory of Forster, a man of education, of good family, and of many parts, and elected as Member of Parliament for Abingdon in 1570, as a mean, debased, unscrupulous villain and murderer.

Let the reader judge of the kindly heart of Anthony from the terms of his Will set out below.

ANTHONY FORSTER'S WILL.

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN. The vth daie of November, in ye yeare of oure Lord god, 1572, I Anthonye Forster, of Comenore, in ye Countie of Barke, Esquier, being of perfitt mynde and memorie, I thanke my god therefore, doe