

## Proceedings of Societies.

(Hon. Secretaries of Archæological Societies are requested to send to the Editor reports of their Proceedings if they desire them to be incorporated in this Journal.)

### BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

#### EXCURSION TO WANTAGE AND DISTRICT.

A very pleasant excursion, the first of the season, was held on Friday, June 15th, when the Society visited the old Berkshire town of Wantage, the birthplace of King Alfred, and all the interesting villages that lie *en route*. A large number of members assembled at the early hour of 9 a.m. near the Great Western Hotel under the leadership of Mr. H. T. Morley, the Excursion Secretary, and embarked on two motor coaches, while a number of private motor cars joined the procession in the course of the journey. About 60 members and their friends were present. Mr. C. E. Keyser, the President, was in the best of health, and described admirably most of the churches visited; while the stories of the historic houses were told by the Hon. Secretary. The weather was most propitious and greatly favoured the expedition.

The first place visited was the Church of Aston Tirrold where the party was welcomed by the Vicar, Rev. C. B. Longhurst, Rural Dean, who had greatly improved it since our last visit.

There are two Saxon doorways; one was formerly blocked by a floriated grave cover, and Mr. Keyser thought it was lost and searched for it everywhere. At last he found it embedded in the South transept, having been removed from the doorway when the new vestry was added.

The very interesting Church of Blewbury was next visited, with its massive centre tower-piers and the stone vaulting. The whole Church is extraordinarily interesting and was described by Mr. Keyser. The broad rood-loft stair survives and has a finely carved Perpendicular door and a rood-loft piscina. The ring of the lantern veil remains. The South porch has some pleasing Perpendicular woodwork. There are some good

brasses, to John Balam, Vicar, 1496, Thomas Latton and his wife, 1500, and Sir John Daunce and Alice, John Latton, 1548, &c. The Vicar, the Rev. J. Smith, welcomed the company.

At East Hagbourne, the party was met by the friend and member of the Society, Mr. J. W. Walker, O.B.E., F.S.A., who resides in the village at the Grange, and who described the Church of which he has made a close study.

Harwell was the next stopping place where the Vicar met the company. The nave has graceful transitional arcades and good decorated windows, and a very fine five-light decorated East window, early English transepts and decorated chancel. The rood-screen remains with decorated shafts and has a curious squint in the woodwork on the South side. Several of the inhabitants attended and were much interested in the history of the Church. The Vicar, the Rev. H. Crowther, who takes a keen interest in his Church, conducted the party into his garden and showed some carved stones placed in the form of a cross. The principal appeared to be a decorated cornice.

From Harwell the company drove to Wantage where they were met at the Church by the Rev. A. G. Robinson and Mrs. Robinson, and after examining this noble building, and the Norman arch, much restored, now in the Grammar School buildings, partook of lunch at the Bear Hotel.

After lunch the members drove to Ardington, and then to West Hendred, an interesting Church which is now undergoing the process of restoration. Much of the building was covered up and some plaster was falling and did not invite close inspection. The Vicar was present and gave a short history of the Church to the visitors. At the suggestion of the present writer, Mr. P. M. Johnston, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., had been appointed architect of the restoration work. About £1,500 was required for the work and about £600 had been collected, and it was resolved for the Society to contribute to the cost.

The company then proceeded to the beautiful village of East Hendred. After visiting the Church under the guidance of the President, they then walked to Hendred House, by the kind invitation of Mr. Eyston and his mother, Mrs. Eyston, an

account of which was given by Mr. Ditchfield. Mrs. Eyston and her son gave the members a most cordial reception for which they were gratefully thanked.

By the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Loyd, the Society was welcomed at the noble mansion of Lockinge House, formerly the home of Lord and Lady Wantage. Mr. and Mrs. Loyd greatly regretted that they were obliged to be away from home, but they entertained the members to tea which was much enjoyed and deputed Mr. Stuart to look after them. The whole house was thrown open to them with its splendid collection of paintings for their inspection. The gem of the collection is a very fine Murillo.

After tea the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield gave a short sketch of the history of the House which owes its magnificence to Lord Overton, the father of Lady Wantage. It incorporates a house built by Matthew Wymondsold, a former owner, in 1750. The older building has a centre with two side wings and is three stories in height. The staircase is of mid-eighteenth century date. There is a very grand old screen of later 17th century date which came from one of the Halls of the City Companies of London. In the hall there is some fine Italian panelling, carved woodwork and a wealth of paintings.

As regards the early history of the estate, Lockinge is first mentioned in A.D. 868 when Elthelwyth, Queen of the Mercians, granted to her thane Culthwulf, 15 hides of land, which passed into the possession of Abingdon Abbey and there remained until the Dissolution. It was in the King's hands till 1546 when it was sold to John Winchcombe, the rich clothier of Newbury, commonly called Jack of Newbury, whose grandson sold it to Edward Keeth. He left it to his younger son Francis and his heirs. The descent was somewhat complicated. Five sisters became co-heirs who sold the estate to Matthew Wymondsold, the builder of the first large house. Again it passed through various hands and was sold in 1853 to Lord Overton who gave it to his daughter on her marriage to Colonel Loyd Lindsay, afterwards created Lord Wantage. From Lady Wantage it descended to her nephew, Mr. A. T. Loyd, the present

owner. A member of the Society, Mr. Hallam, wrote an admirable little history of Lockinge, a copy of which he has just presented to the Library. After a visit to the Church, which was described by Mr. Keyser, the party bade farewell to Mr. Stuart who promised to convey the thanks of the members to Mr. and Mrs. Loyd, and all expressed their thanks to the Excursion Secretary, Mr. H. T. Morley, for his excellent arrangements for the excursion which was in every way most successful.

On August 13th and 14th the Society made a two days excursion to Dorset and Hampshire, making the Burlington Hotel their headquarters and visits were paid to Romsey Abbey, Christ Church Priory, Corfe Castle, Wareham and Milford, where the company was entertained to tea by Mr. Ravenscroft. On September 17th a half-day's excursion was made to Aldworth, Hampstead Norris, Ashampstead and Yattendon. It is hoped that a detailed account of these excursions may be contributed later.

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The first meeting of the Winter session was held on October 29th, 1927. The President was unfortunately absent owing to a severe cold, and Sir Aubrey Strahan was voted to the chair. There was a large attendance of members.

The Hon. Sec. expressed the regret of the Society on account of the illness of Mr. Keyser and said that he had received a letter from him, and on finding at Aldermaston that Mr. Keyser would be unable to be present he had asked Mr. Morley to deliver his Lecture on that occasion instead of December 17th. This Mr. Morley kindly consented to do.

Mr. Morley then delivered a most interesting lecture on the History of Playing Cards, of which he possesses a very large collection. The lecture was illustrated by lantern slides and the exhibition of numerous examples hung about the room. A vote of thanks was accorded to him, proposed by Mr. Dodgson and Mr. Sacret.

Mr. Ditchfield proposed a vote of thanks to the President and Mrs. Keyser for entertaining the company to tea, and also reported



that Mr. Sacret had obtained a room for the Library and arrangements were in progress for its opening.

On November 27th the second meeting of the Winter session was held. Prior to the meeting the Council inspected the room which the University has assigned to the Society for its Library. Mr. Sacret, the Librarian, was prevented from being present on account of illness and Mr. Dodgson kindly welcomed the Council and conducted them to the room.

At the meeting the members were rejoiced to welcome back the President after his illness. He presided and said how fortunate the members were to hear another lecture by Mrs. Holden.

The lady then delivered her valuable and interesting lecture on "Palæolithic Art in Spain and France," which was illustrated by a long series of slides.

Mr. J. W. Walker and Mr. P. Williams proposed a vote of thanks to her and this was supported by the President and the Hon. Sec., who also expressed the thanks of the members to Mrs. Holden and Miss Walter for kindly entertaining them to tea.

On December 17th, 1927, the third meeting of the Winter session was held when the Society was fortunate enough to welcome again the President, who delivered the Lecture which he had been prevented from doing by illness in October. His Lecture was entitled "Notes on the Churches of Hitcham, Burnham, Stoke Poges, Horton and Upton-cum-Chalvey."

A large number of members were present. The lecture was illustrated by an important series of slides specially prepared for the occasion. The Hon. Sec. acted as Chairman.

Major Rivers-Moore proposed a very cordial vote of thanks to the President for his most interesting lecture and this was seconded by Mr. Sacret and carried with acclamation. A second vote of thanks was given to Mr. and Mrs. Keyser for kindly providing tea for the members.

The fourth meeting of the Winter session was held on January 21st, 1928. In the unavoidable absence of the President, Sir Aubrey Strahan presided. The Chairman expressed regret

that illness had prevented the Hon. Sec. from being present and a unanimous vote was passed that this expression of sympathy and hope for his speedy recovery should be conveyed to him.

He then called upon Major Rivers-Moore to deliver his lecture on "Rushen Abbey and other historic places in the Isle of Man," which was illustrated by an excellent series of slides.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. J. W. Walker and seconded by Mr. A. J. Heelas, and the Chairman expressed the thanks of the members to Miss Bailly for kindly providing tea, a generous service which she is always ready to perform.

The fifth meeting of the Society was held in Reading University on February 18th, 1928, when the President presided. There was a large number of members.

The President called upon Mr. J. W. Walker, F.S.A., to deliver his lecture on Church Plate and remarked on the great work he had done in compiling and publishing the magnificent volume on the "Church Plate of Berkshire." Mr. Walker delivered his most interesting lecture which was illustrated by a charming series of slides prepared for the occasion.

A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to him on the proposition of Mr. Sacret and seconded by the Hon. Sec. (in the absence of Mr. St. George Littledale), who also proposed a vote of thanks to the Rev. Henry and Mrs. Wilder for very kindly inviting the members to tea at the close of the proceedings.

The sixth meeting of the Winter session was held at Reading University on March 24th which welcomed the Local History Recording Scheme (Berkshire Branch) for its annual meeting. Members of the Historical Association were also invited. The President was unfortunately prevented by illness from attending and wrote a letter of regret. Mr. J. W. Walker was voted to the Chair. Mr. Ditchfield alluded to the sad loss the Society had sustained by the death of Sir Aubrey Strahan, F.R.S., the distinguished geologist and scientist, who took a keen interest in the Society. He also alluded to the severe illness of Mr. A. L. Humphreys—and to the Congress of Scientific Societies at Rochester on June 6th to 9th.

On behalf of Mr. Willcocks the Hon. Sec. read the annual report of the Local History Recording Scheme.

Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds, F.S.A., of the Ashmolean Museum then delivered a learned and important lecture on "A Saxon Village at Sutton-Courtenay" which he had been engaged in excavating. Two years ago, Mr. Leeds gave his first lecture on the subject and since that time he had made additional explorations which were attended by important results. He had uncovered several further houses, which with the aid of lantern slides he described and also their contents and then showed by means of maps the way the Saxons came to conquer Britain. This he declared to be along the Icknield Way after their landing on the coast of Norfolk. The line of interments which had been discovered pointed to the same conclusion and also the finding of a certain brooch at Sutton-Courtenay, the like of which had only been found in Norfolk. It had usually been supposed that the Saxons came along the Thames Valley, but it was evident that that was not the only line of attack they took, and he thought that the Icknield Way was their principal course.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Philip Williams and the Hon. Sec. proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Manders, of Eversley, for kindly entertaining the members to tea.

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LECTURE ON MYTHOLOGY, BY LIEUT.-COL. WEST,  
O.B.E., M.D.,

*Before the Berkshire Archæological Society and the Newbury  
Field Club.*

The lecturer's theory was that America was known to the Ancients, and that its histories had got "mixed up" with the histories of the Old World, and he further considered that a knowledge of the lost histories of America gave the keynote to the mysterious writings of the author of the first eleven chapters of the Pentateuch. The Bible abounded in myths, and its writings were enigmatical and allegorical in the highest degree. Unfortunately, the Bible had no chronology, the figures

were modern additions. However, he considered that the Bible was still the best text book we possessed of modern anthropology. He wished to explain that far from mythology being, in any sense of the word, mythical, legendary, allegorical, fabulous or traditional, he looked upon it as the concealed history of the Ancient World, a sort of gazetter of the Old World geography ; that pedigrees were its ethnology, and poetical astronomy its geography. The period in the world's history that he wished to take them back to that afternoon was from 11,600 to 26,000 years B.C., at which period he suggested that there was in certain parts of America, and possibly Atlantis, a fairly high order of civilization, with inter-communication and traffic between the Pillars of Hercules and the Western Isle on the East, and Japan, China, Persia and Syria on the West, this corresponding geologically to the late Pleistocene period, and embracing the Palæolithic and Neolithic Ages. He had made this research from the following authors : Moses, Solon, Hemmocrates, Socrates, Plato, Heriod, Homer, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. The lantern slides shown were from drawings from various authors and a study of Greek and Egyptian Mythology in British Museum. One myth was given to illustrate : "Taurus draconem genuit, et taurum draco," the bull begat the dragon, and the dragon the bull.

This, considered to be the master myth of antiquity, related to the very ancient mingling of Asiatic and Western blood, and (1) its future dispersion over Europe, Africa and Asia, he wished to draw special attention to the extraordinary clearness of the couplet ; (2) the deep mysteries involved in the transformation ; (3) and the vastness of the hidden histories. Several most interesting slides were shown. The first was the Throne of Neptune or Posidun, the Ocean God, the lecturer drawing attention to this celebrated mythological picture, its beauty and adaptability to his subject. He considered all ancient pictures spoke, in fact they were vocal with meaning. He invited them that afternoon to approach the Throne and to draw aside the veil hiding the mysteries of the dragon land. The Ocean God himself was concealed behind the veil ; this intimating that the



mysterious region over which he reigned was also concealed. He considered that these slides now exhibited afforded incontrovertible evidence of inter-communication, consanguinity, and combined histories between the two hemispheres in ancient time. That there was no book of history like the Bible. The pedigrees of the Jews in the first book of Chronicles comprised the annals of all mankind, and that the Bible was not only the revelation of the Will of God in point of religion and morality, but the best exponent of the lost histories of America and of the world.