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ANNUAL MEETING.

THE last meeting of the Winter Session, that being the Annual Meeting, was held at the University on Saturday, April 13th. In the much regretted absence of the President, Mr. Charles E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A., Mr. J. H. Sacret, History Lecturer of the University, occupied the Chair, and there was a large attendance of members.

The proceedings began with the reading of the Hon. Secretary's (the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A.) Annual Report, which was as follows:—

REPORT, 1928-29.

The Hon. Secretary begs to present his Report of the work of the Society during the past year. He has to record the usual amount of activity with regard to the Society's operations: the usual number of lectures have been delivered and successful excursions made to places of historic interest.

The serenity of the Society during the past year has been disturbed by the serious illness of its officials. First of all, there was the very alarming sickness of our President, who has been very ill nigh unto death. It was with infinite regret that the members received the intelligence that our beloved friend had been struck down by an attack of double pneumonia, and a letter received by your Secretary from his daughter seemed to convey the news that his case was hopeless. For some weeks we seemed to be hoping against hope, and it was with infinite relief that we heard that he was recovering. He has such extraordinary vitality and recuperative power that he seemed to have triumphed over his severe disease in spite of his advanced age, and when your Secretary visited him about ten days ago he showed his keen interest in the Society and looked forward to be amongst us again. We have reason to hope that his valuable life may be spared to us. I may add that he was employing his enforced leisure in writing an article for our Journal.

The second victim to illness was our good friend Mr. Morley. He was busily engaged in arranging our second long excursion when he, too, was struck down by a severe attack of pneumonia and was obliged to abandon the journey. In spite of his extreme illness and weakness he bravely continued his arrangements until the very last moment, so that it was not very difficult for the President and Secretary to carry out his plans and directions. We are thankful that he also made a brilliant recovery.

The third victim was your Hon. Secretary, who was suddenly struck down by appendicitis late in September, he having been foolish enough to postpone such operation until approaching old age. Such as was left of him after the doctor's treatment he managed to convey to the November Meeting, where the President was good enough to welcome his return.

READING UNIVERSITY.

The Society continues to enjoy the hospitality of Reading University and congratulates the College upon attaining to the proud dignity of having gained its Charter and become one of

the English Universities. The Society greatly appreciates all the arrangements that were made for its convenience, and receives every attention. It regrets very much the departure of Mr. Childs from the office of Vice-Chancellor, which he has held with so much distinction, and thanks him for the courtesy he has always shown to us.

LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS.

On April 14th, 1928 (after the last Annual Meeting) Lieut.-Colonel West gave a lecture on Mythology, and Mr. Piggott described some prehistoric discoveries he had made at Yateley.

On October 27th the President lectured on "Architectural Notes on the Churches of Silchester, Hants, and Studland, Dorset, illustrated by his own slides.

On November 24th Dr. Gunther, of Oxford, delivered a learned lecture on "John Blagrave of Reading and his Inventions," illustrated by slides and mathematical implements.

On December 15th Mrs. Holden lectured on "The Caves and Temples in India," illustrated by numerous slides.

On January 26th, 1929, Mr. Morley lectured on "The Bayeux Tapestry," illustrated by photographs of the whole of the scenes represented thereon.

On February 23rd Mr. Reginald Taylor, F.S.A., was to have lectured on "The Cinque Ports," but at the last moment was prevented by illness, and his place was taken by your Hon. Secretary.

On March 23rd the Right Hon. the Earl of Mayo lectured on "The Preservation of Rural England," with lantern slides, and the Society welcomed the members of the Local History Recording Scheme for their Annual Meeting.

The Society begs to thank all the ladies and gentlemen who have delivered lectures or entertained the members and their friends to tea on the occasion of lectures and excursions: the President and Mrs. Keyser, Lieut.-Colonel and Mrs. West,

Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Loyd of Lockinge, Mr. Ravenscroft of Milford, the Misses de Chaumont, Mrs. Holden, Miss Walter, Miss Baily, Mr. Frederic Turner, Mr. H. T. Morley, and Mr. Willcocks.

Three excursions have been made during the year.

- I. June 15th. To Wantage, East Hendred, West Hendred, Ardington, Hendred House, where we were welcomed by Mr. Eyston and his mother, and to Lockinge House, where the members were entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Loyd.
- II. August 13th and 14th. This was a two days' excursion in Dorset and Hants, staying the night at the Burlington Hotel, Boscombe. Visits were paid to Romsey Abbey, Christ Church Priory, Corfe Castle, Studland, Wareham and Milford.
- III. September 17th. This was a half-day excursion to Aldworth, Hampstead Norris, Ashampstead and Yattendon.

PUBLICATIONS.

The Index Volume of the Victorian County History of Berkshire has been issued, which renders the volumes much more useful than they were before its production. Berkshire has not quite done its duty in the support of this great undertaking, and the publishers have still copies to be sold.

The official Journal of our Society, *The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archaeological Journal*, is still being published and presented gratis to our members. The concluding issue of Dr. Grundy's valuable work on *Berkshire Charters* is about to be published. It has occupied a prominent place in the *Journal* for several years and the Charters relating to every parish in the County have been transcribed and annotated with consummate learning by the distinguished author, who has conferred a considerable benefit on Berkshire scholars and on our Society by the publication of his researches in our *Journal*. We are grateful to him for his valuable work, the magnitude of which may be realised when it is known that other counties have been dealt with in the

same manner. Other valuable communications have been received from the Rev. Dr. Cooke, Vicar of Mapledurham, the Rev. Bertran Long, Mr. Miles and other writers. Dr. Price has kindly consented to assist the Editor in the production of the *Journal*.

The Society has presented the usual prizes to architectural students and some excellent drawings were submitted and adjudicated upon by Mr. Willcocks and the Berkshire Branch of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Society of Architects.

The Library has benefited by the watchful care of our new Librarian, Mr. Sacret. A temporary home had been obtained by the kindness of the University authorities, but unfortunately recently the room was required for other purposes and at present the books are enjoying the hospitality of the Librarian in his own chambers. We trust that they are not causing him inconvenience.

The financial position of the Society, owing to the care and skill of our Treasurer, Mr. Morley, is sound, and the accounts are printed on the notices of this meeting. They will be presented by Mr. Morley.

Some important excavation work has been accomplished by Mr. J. W. Walker, the results of which will be described by him at this meeting. The authorities of Reading Museum have taken in hand some excavations, and the Curator, Mr. Smallcomb, and his Assistant, Mr. Stuart Piggott, have obtained some excellent results. We congratulate them on their enterprise and thank them for undertaking this important branch of archæological research. It is not sufficient to hold meetings and listen to lectures and to make excursions without endeavouring to add to the knowledge of the archæology of the County and this can only be done by means of the spade or by the study of ancient MSS. However, it may be said with truth that the Berkshire Society is a very active Society. Some County Societies content themselves with one meeting a year and a very meagre publication. With regard to the number of its meetings

and its excursions it is scarcely surpassed by any Archæological Society, though its work as a County Society is somewhat hindered by the existence of small local societies which detract from the muster roll of its members, though they are affiliated to it. Individual members have not been without their achievements. The President has given to the County a long series of architectural studies of its churches. The production of the Victorian County History is a monument of careful research of which any County might be proud. Professor Stenton is one of the greatest authorities in England on the science of place-names, and is assisted in his work by Major Laffan. The work of the Local History Recording Scheme deserves the greatest credit and praise for what it has done under the guidance of Mr. Willcocks. Mr. Peake has accomplished much by his studies of Anthropology and the Bronze Age. Mr. Walker has aided us much by his coming to Berkshire as his lecture this afternoon will illustrate. Mr. Morley has explored the Brasses of the County and produced an important work on the subject. Mr. Garry transcribed the Churchwardens' Accounts of S. Mary's, Reading, and time would fail me to record all the good work that has been done and is being done in Berkshire, but these may be sufficient to stir up our members to fresh endeavours to uphold the honour, dignity and reputation of our Society in its endeavour to promote the study of the antiquities and history of the Royal County.

The Report was received with applause. Mr. H. T. Morley, the Treasurer, then presented his Balance Sheet, which showed a balance in hand of £47, an increase on the previous year. There were about 340 members on the books and several new ones had been added. The names of the Right Hon. Lord Meston of Agra and the Right Hon. Lord Mayo were added to the list of Vice-Patrons, and Mr. C. J. Smallcomb, the Curator of the Museum, to the Council. The Officers were then re-elected :

Mr. Keyser as President, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield as Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. T. Morley as Hon. Treasurer and Excursoin Secretary, and Mr. J. H. Sacret as Hon. Librarian : who were all cordially thanked for their services.

Mr. J. W. Walker, F.S.A., O.B.E., then delivered an important and interesting lecture on "Prehistoric and Roman Finds at Aston Tirrold and Didcot," the actual objects discovered being exhibited. These included various skulls, mammoth teeth, a very remarkable vase which appeared to be unique as no similar vase had been discovered, and many other finds of supreme interest.

Colonel West, O.B.E., proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Walker for his lecture and this was supported by Mr. Treacher, Mr. P. Williams and others, and Mr. and Mrs. Walker were also thanked for their hospitality in entertaining the members to tea at the close of the proceedings.