

## The Berkshire Archæological Society, 1922-1947, and Volume 50 of the Journal.

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**I**N Volume XXVII of the Berkshire Archaeological Journal the late Hon. Secretary, Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, wrote of the Society's activities for its Jubilee 1871-1921, and I have now been asked to do the same for the succeeding 25 years, culminating in Volume L. of the Journal.

In 1922 Mr. C. E. Keyser was President ; on his death in 1929 he had held this office for 33 years, and spared neither experience nor wealth in the interest of the Society. He was succeeded by Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, who had been Secretary, and Editor of the Journal, for 35 years. The Volumes which appeared under his Editorship show how much the Society owed to these two men who worked together for so many years. On September 23rd, 1930, after an all too brief period of office, our President passed away. Early in 1931, Rev. Dr. Bernard Attlee, brother of the present Prime Minister, was elected President, and on his leaving the district, was succeeded by the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, C.H. In 1937 Mr. A. T. Loyd, Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, became President, followed in 1946 by the Right Hon. Lord Meston. In 1947, Professor Sir Frank Stenton, Vice-chancellor of Reading University, honoured the Society by accepting the Presidency, and the Society wishes to take this opportunity of offering its congratulations to Sir Frank on his Knighthood in the New Year's Honours of 1948.

During the last 59 years the Society has had only two Secretaries : the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield became Secretary in 1889, and when he was elected President in 1929, Mr. H. T. Morley, who had been helping Mr. Ditchfield for many years, became Secretary, and still holds office.\*

The Journal has been fortunate in the Editors who have undertaken the production of Volumes XXVII to L. We would express our grateful and sincere thanks to them for the splendid way in which they have carried out their arduous and important work. The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield was succeeded in 1930 by Mr. Ernest W. Dormer, whose work on Berkshire is well known. Mr. Stuart Piggott took over the Editorship from 1938 to 1940, and we would offer him our congratulations on his election as Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at Edinburgh University in succession to Prof. V. Gordon Childe. Mr. P. S. Spokes has carried on the

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\* This is a great record of service, and in recognition of the part Mr. Morley has played in the Society's work he was elected a Vice-President in 1946, Mrs. Morley at the same time being elected an honorary life-member of the Society.—Ed.

editing to Vol. XLIX, and has been succeeded by Mr. E. M. Jope. Mr. Spokes has served the Society in very many ways for many years. During this 25 years there have been many valuable contributions to Berkshire History in the Journal, and it is hoped that it may be possible to produce an Index to the whole 50 Volumes at some time in the not-too-distant future.

To those who have looked after the financial affairs of the Society and held the often thankless office of Treasurer we extend our especial thanks. Mr. F. M. Underhill has not only been Hon. Treasurer since 1937, but has also contributed in recent years most valuable notes to the Journal on Recent Archaeological Discoveries: this patient searching and recording of finds, both large and small, while they are fresh in the minds of those responsible, is one of the most necessary functions of our Society, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Underhill will be given all help possible by our members in this work. Miss A. Baily has been a staunch supporter of the Society's work over many years, and a generous contributor to its funds.

Over 90 places of Historical and Archaeological interest have been visited by the Society during the past 25 years. For many years these excursions were organised by the Hon. Secretaries, Mr. Ditchfield and Mr. H. T. Morley, but for some time the work has been carried out by Col. C. N. Rivers-Moore, who, with untiring work, has in addition to ordinary excursions, arranged each year a Congress of 2 or 3 days in a number of interesting Towns and Districts. During the 25 years also about 160 lectures on Historical and Archaeological subjects have been given, and we offer our thanks to those who have imparted to us so much valuable knowledge.

Excavations organised or financed by the Society have been carried out during this period at Southcote and Calcot, at Knowl Hill by Mr. F. M. Underhill and Mr. W. A. Seaby, at Hurley Priory by Col. C. N. Rivers-Moore, at Hinton Waldrist\* by Mr. E. M. Jope and Miss Gardner, and the Aldworth Romano-British pottery kilns in conjunction with the Newbury and District Field Club. Now, in 1947-8, Mr. W. A. Smallcombe and Mr. A. E. P. Collins are excavating the Iron Age camp on Blewburton Hill, towards which our Society voted £50 to augment a similar sum provided by the Reading Public Museum Committee: work here is being continued. The results of most of these excavations are fully reported in our Journal.

In 1924 the Berkshire Branch of the Local History Recording Scheme was formed under the auspices of the Society and other bodies. During the last 23 years the Scheme has made steady progress and now has a collection of over 700 local history records,

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\* Mr. Nicholas Davenport generously contributed the cost of labour in this excavation.

such as is possessed, it is believed, by no other County Recording Society. The Scheme, however, needs the help of all interested, and particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, Miss M. Swadling. Mr. P. S. Spokes is Chairman, Mr. C. B. Willcocks is Hon. Director and Mr. H. T. Morley is Hon. Treasurer.

In 1944 a grant of £200 was made by the Pilgrim Trust towards the publication through the Society of Mr. E. A. Greening Lamborn's book "The Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese," and it is hoped that this will soon be leaving the printers, the Oxford University Press.

In spite of the recent war, membership is now over 400, slightly above the pre-war level, and it is clear that interest never flags in the study of the past of the county. Taking stock of our activities as Volume L. of our Journal goes to press there appears a most stimulating *Survey and Policy of Field Research* published by the Council for British Archaeology, which covers the whole Prehistoric period up to the 7th century A.D.: and a volume covering Mediaeval and Post-Mediaeval period is promised. It is to be hoped that our local studies in the future will be co-ordinated within the larger national programme. But the *Survey and Policy* is not intended to suppress individual Regional initiative: and enterprise in local investigation has never been lacking in Berkshire, so let us express the hope that the Berkshire Archaeological Society may long flourish to continue its work.