

37TH ANNUAL CONGRESS
HELD IN LONDON OF THE
SOUTH EASTERN UNION OF SCIENTIFIC
SOCIETIES.

BY

A. E. HENDERSON.

As your joint representative with Mr. C. J. B. Fox, I desire to give the Society this short report of the proceedings of the Congress which I was privileged to attend.

The Congress proceedings will be published in due course and a copy given to the Society, but the following will be supplementary to it.

The Congress met at the Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, under the presidency of Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, M.C., M.A., F.S.A.

On 1st June we met in the morning, and in the afternoon the Archaeological Section visited Westminster Abbey under the able guidance of Mr. Lawrence Tanner, F.S.A. We were shown the interesting wall forming the south boundary of the Cloisters, and a few of its difficult problems were discussed. The monastic portions belonging to the School and Ashburnham House were closely examined and compared with Winchester School, which we visited the year before. It was a great pleasure to observe how well the house is being preserved, and at the same time being made use of. The planning of the staircase is particularly interesting.

We were shown the Muniment Room of the Abbey up in the west side of the South Transept triforium and over the Cloister. Here many treasures are kept, and a good view could be had of the cleaning of the

fabric of the South Transept, especially the beautiful carving of angels in the spandrils of the arches. The party were taken along the triforium around the choir, and I should have desired longer time to study the upper surfaces of the vaultings over the ambulatory and eastern chapels, and also the rough timber constructed roofs. We then ascended to the external parapets and gutterings, and had a hasty examination of the lead work and timber construction of the main roofs which last appear to be of very massive scantlings.

One cannot help admiring the extraordinary inventive genius and the dexterity of the Gothic period in erecting such magnificent structures for the sole purpose of enclosing one floor for worship.

On Thursday morning, the 2nd June, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler took the chair at the Representatives' meeting. It was decided to hold the next Congress at Norwich. Various reports were received and action decided to be taken. The enclosing of part of Woolwich Common by the War Office for building was protested against, but the case appeared to be rather hopeless. The enclosing of part of Bostal Wood as a sanctuary for wild birds, etc., as promised by the London County Council was not altogether satisfactorily carried out by that body. Another report stated that the foreshore near Dungeness was fouled by waste oil from steamers, and asked that further action should be taken to obviate the terrible fatality occurring to sea birds at this part of the coast.

Mr. C. J. B. Fox took the chair at the business meeting of the Archaeological Section, after which the President of the section, Alderman Dr. W. E. St. L. Finny, J.P., M.D., F.S.A., read a very instructive paper illustrated by lantern slides upon Mediaeval Games and Gaderings. He traced these from their earliest beginnings to the eighteenth century. I expressed to him the hope that he would be able to reproduce some of the dancing and play scenes he showed, by utilising

the talent in one of the Kingston Schools, and that we would be delighted to go.

After this, Mr. Reginald A. Smith, B.A., Dir.S.A., tried to arouse our interest in Pre-Historic and Proto-Historic Sciences, but we were not very responsive, although he had taken infinite pains.

The President of the Archaeological Section and his lady gave a delightful luncheon to the Section, and then adjourned to the London Museum, where Mrs. Mortimer Wheeler gave a brilliant introductory discourse to us whilst we sat on the Grand Staircase. After perambulating the rooms and corridors, Dr. and Mrs. Wheeler entertained us to tea.

On the afternoon of 3rd June, Goldsmiths' Hall was visited under the leadership of Mr. R. W. Strickland. Goldsmiths' Hall is one of the magnificent palaces where all is not gold that glitters, and craftsmanship has not kept pace with design. The architectural ornament is anything but reticent and has lost all its constructive meaning. Boldly moulded stucco, gold leaf and paint run riot, and even the golden exhibition in glass cases, on the walls and over the chimney piece, while of exquisite craftsmanship, often shows paucity of design and is in reality gilded silver or, at times, even baser material.

In the afternoon of 4th June, Hampton Court was visited under the best guide possible—Mr. Edward Yates. Unfortunately I was debarred from joining the party.

The meetings and visits I attended were of exceptional interest, and I gathered many new facts which I hope will at various times be of use to the Society.