



The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

British Archæological Association.

The visit of the Association to Berkshire in July created a little pleasurable excitement among the people of Reading and the neighbourhood. The Congress was most successful in every way. Every one took a keen interest in the proceedings of the work. The noble hospitality of the Mayor of Reading (Martin J. Sutton, Esq.) and of the President of the Berks Society, and other ladies and gentlemen, and the efforts of all to make the Congress successful, not only in Reading but also at Abingdon and Newbury, all leave pleasant recollections. We hope that the visit of the Association will tend to increase the love and veneration of the inhabitants of the County for the relics of Antiquity with which Berkshire abounds, and promote a systematic study of history and architecture.

The following is the official record of the proceedings of the Congress :—

MONDAY, JULY 17TH, 1905.

The Sixty-Second Annual Congress of the Association opened at Reading, and was attended by a large number of members and their friends, who will retain pleasant memories of the hospitality afforded them in the Royal County of Berks. At 2.30 p.m. the members of the Congress assembled in the Council Chamber, and were received by the Mayor, who was attended by the Town Clerk. The Mayor gave a hearty welcome to the Association, and expressed the great pleasure which the visit conferred on the town of Reading. Mr. R. E. Leader, President of the Congress in 1903 and 1904, on

behalf of the Association, thanked the Mayor for the very hearty reception given them, and hoped that true archæological research—the great object of the Association—might be promoted by the Congress.

The members then visited the Reading Museum, where they were received by Alderman Blandy, Chairman of the Museum and Library Committee. The Museum is especially rich in Roman antiquities, the result of the excavations carried on by the Society of Antiquaries during the last fifteen years at Silchester. In the absence through illness of Mr. G. E. Fox, F.S.A., the Curator of Silchester collection, Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., who has superintended the excavations for many years, described the progress of the work, and the remarkable specimens of pottery, ironwork, glass, tiles, tools, coins, etc., a collection of exceptional interest as containing a great mass of objects gathered from one site. The architectural section, containing examples of sculptured capitals, models of houses, building and roofing tiles, hypocausts, etc., was then examined; and much of interest was found in the General Museum, with its fine collection of prehistoric antiquities, principally amassed by Dr. Stevens, a member of the Association; numerous Saxon relics from two cemeteries discovered in the town, relics of Reading Abbey, and Egyptian antiquities. Mr. Shrubsole, Curator of the Geological and Prehistoric Section, gave a brief description.

The party then visited the ruins of Reading Abbey, passing on the way the only remains of the fortifications reared during the Civil War. Dr. J. B. Hurry, the author of a notable work on the Abbey, told the story of the rise and fall of this once magnificent monastery, founded by Henry I. in 1121, and dissolved by Henry VIII. in 1539. It covered a site of thirty acres, and was bounded by a high wall on all sides except the south, which was guarded by the Kennet and Holy Brook. Of this wall only a small portion remains, and all the four entrance-gateways have disappeared, but the inner gateway exists in a restored condition, and is the headquarters of the Berks Archæological Society. Of the church, fragments of the north and south transepts remain, stripped of the finished mason-work. The bases of two pillars of the central tower, the walls of the Chapter-house and portions of the cloisters, refectory, dormitory, *domus necessaria*, and hospitium survive, but almost all the stonework has been removed, leaving only the core of the compact flint rubble. In the Abbey Gate, the Berks Archæological Society entertained the members to tea; and a visit was then paid to the Church of St.

Laurence, which was described by Mr. Charles E. Keyser, F.S.A., who drew attention to its historical associations, to the brasses, doorways, and panels, and to the pictures which once adorned the walls. The Church of Greyfriars was then examined, under the direction of the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, F.S.A. The Franciscans established themselves in the town in A.D. 1233, on a site nearer the river, which proved to be unhealthy. Fifty-two years later, the present site was assigned to them. At the Dissolution, the church was granted to the town for a Guildhall, and then converted into a prison, the aisles being used as cells, and the roof of the nave removed. It was restored to its sacred uses in 1864.

In the evening, the members were entertained by the Mayor and Mayoress at a *Conversazione* in the Town Hall, to which a large number of residents in the town and neighbourhood were invited. During the evening, Mr. Charles Keyser, M.A., F.S.A., Chairman of the Local Committee and President of the Berks Archaeological Society, delivered the Inaugural Address. The Mayor, as President of the Congress, heartily thanked Mr. Keyser, and Mr. Leader, who seconded the vote, also expressed the appreciation by the members of the brilliant welcome extended to them. Mr. Charles Lynam, F.S.A., proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Sutton for their kind hospitality, and this was seconded by Mr. Charles J. Williams (Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Congress), who asked leave to associate as a supporter of the motion the name of Mr. George Patrick, the Hon. Secretary of the Association, who for many years has done it such loyal service.

TUESDAY, JULY 18TH, 1905.

The party, which numbered about 80, left Reading station at 8.35 a.m. for Mortimer, whence they drove to the Roman City of Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*). Mr. Mill Stephenson conducted the party to the Amphitheatre, situate outside the city walls and approached through a postern gate. It consisted of mounds of earth, and had tiers of turf seats; but it was probably used for bear-baiting and cock-fighting, and not for gladiatorial combats. Local tradition still call it the "Lion's Den." The walls of the city, constructed of flints bonded with stone and having ironstone foundations, were then examined. They are a mile and three-quarters in length, and in some places rise to a height of 16 ft. Mr. Stephenson described the progress of the excavations, explained the plan of the city, the Basilica and Forum, and told the story of the gradual decay of Silchester. He explained the necessity of covering up the excavations

on account of the destructive action of frost and rain: it was a national disgrace to have allowed the only Roman Forum in England to fall into a heap of stones. After an inspection of the houses in Insula V, which were in process of excavation, Mr. Leader thanked Mr. Stephenson, and said that he was doing a national work for which all should be grateful.

The party then drove to Pamber Church, the chapel of the Benedictine Priory of Sherborne, founded by Henry de Port in the twelfth century. The church—which was described by Mr. Keyser—originally consisted of a short nave without aisles, choirs, transepts, central tower and two chantry chapels. The Priory was attached to the monastery of St. Vigor in Normandy, and was suppressed as an alien Priory in 1417; the nave, transepts, and chantries were destroyed; the tower was converted into a kind of porch, and the choir retained as the church of the parish. The church dates from the twelfth century; but alterations were made in the thirteenth. At the suppression, Henry VI. granted the church to Eton College; afterwards it belonged to the *Domus Dei* at Southampton, and at the Dissolution it passed to Queen's College, Oxford. Its most interesting features are the piscina, the monumental slabs, and the recumbent wooden effigy of a cross-legged knight—supposed to represent John de Port, son of the founder, but pronounced by Mr. Keyser to be of later date.

The next place visited was Aldermaston Court, the residence of Mr. Keyser, who hospitably entertained the members to luncheon, a cordial vote of thanks to him and Mrs. Keyser being moved by Mr. Richard Horsfall.—Mr. Keyser then sketched the history of the estate. The manor was one of the possessions of Earl Harold, and many of the trees were older than his time, one being known as the Conqueror's tree. Henry I. gave the manor to Sir Robert Achard; William Achard gave the church to the Priory of Sherborne. The estate passed, in 1358, to the De la Mares, and then to the Forsters. Sir George Forster's monument in the church is one of the finest alabaster tombs in England. In 1711 the manor passed to the Congreves, then to Mr. Higford Burr, and finally to the present squire. The house, erected by Sir Humphrey Forster in 1636, was burnt down in 1843; but the chimneys, the carved oak staircase, and some ancient glass have been preserved. The church was then visited and described by Mr. Keyser. The oldest portion is the west door (A.D. 1130 to 1150). The chancel was built about 1250; the nave, which is Decorated work, was finished in 1280 or 1300; the tower was added

a hundred years later, and the west window is Perpendicular. There are two low-side and two high-side windows, the latter being used for the service in the rood-loft, some interesting thirteenth century glass, and some mural paintings—a thirteenth-century St. Christopher, and one which Mr. Keyser supposes to depict the consecration of St. Nicholas.

Leaving Aldermaston, the party visited the little apsidal Norman church of Padworth, where some early mural paintings have been found: one of Norman date, the legend of St. Nicholas and the Three Children, can be clearly seen. The chancel arch, consecration crosses, and the doorways are the principal features of the church, which was described by Mr. Keyser.

Ufton Court, a fine example of an Elizabethan mansion, was next visited, and its history was described by Miss Sharp. It was built in the latter part of the sixteenth century by Lady Mervyn, who left it to her first husband's nephew, Francis Parkyns. The oldest part is the kitchen. The east front, where the hall and principal chambers are situated, is the work of Lady Mervyn. The house was much altered in Queen Anne's time by Francis Parkyns, who married Isabella Fermor, the heroine of "The Rape of the Lock." The family were recusants, and the house contains an oratory, chapel, and two hiding places. Miss Sharp kindly entertained the party to tea.

At the Evening Meeting, Mr. Andrew Oliver gave an interesting account of the Brasses of Berkshire, illustrated by excellent rubbings. Mr. R. H. Forster being absent through illness, his Paper was postponed.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19TH, 1905.

A party (limited to sixty, owing to transit difficulties) left Reading at 8.50 a.m. for Lambourn, and proceeded to the church, which was described by Mr. Keyser. The nave is very Late-Norman work, with a good clerestory. The rebuilding of the church was begun about A.D. 1170, starting at the west end and working eastwards, pure Transitional work being found in the tower arches. The chantry chapels, founded by the Estbury family, were inspected. In one of them is the tomb of John Estbury, rebuilder of St. Mary's Chapel, with a brass placed there by his son Thomas in 1400. On the arch of this chapel is an *alto-relievo* representation of a greyhound coursing a hare, and men blowing horns. The monuments of Sir Thomas Essex and Margaret his wife, erected in 1558, in the chapel of St. Catherine, are fine examples of alabaster work. The church has

several good brasses, some old plate and chests, and an early font of Norman date. Afterwards, the site of Canute's palace, the fifteenth-century market-cross, and the source of the Lambourn stream, were visited.

During the drive to White Horse Hill, a halt was made at Ashdown Park to inspect the numerous Sarsen stones which abound there ; and the party proceeded along the old Ridgeway to Wayland Smith's Cave. Mr. Money explained that it was a denuded chambered long barrow, with an encircling ditch. It is alluded to in a charter of Eadred of 935, and is a good instance of the value of planting as a means of preserving ancient earthworks. The party then climbed to Uffington Castle, a Celtic stronghold with very perfect earthen ramparts, from which a fine view was obtained extending over ten counties. Mr. Theodore White pointed out the objects of interest in sight, including the famous "White Horse," 380 ft. long, and 10 ft. to 15 ft. wide, cut out in the chalk hill. He upheld the tradition that it was cut out by Alfred's men to commemorate his victory over the Danes, this spot being, he maintained, the site of the battle. He also described the old festival of "the Scouring" as depicted by the late Judge Hughes.

At Sparsholt, the "Blowing Stone," a Celtic relic, erroneously called "King Alfred's Bugle-horn," was made to give forth its weird note, and a visit was paid to the church, which Mr. Keyser described. It was originally cruciform, but the north transept was pulled down in the eighteenth century. There are two Late-Norman doorways, the nave and lower portion of the tower belonging to the same period. The church contains a fine Easter sepulchre, the cross-legged effigy of Sir Robert Achard, a curious squint, a very Early Norman font, some fourteenth-century glass, a fourteenth-century screen, several brasses and a chapel built by the last of the Achards, with beautiful monumental recesses, and the effigy of the knight and his two wives.

The party then drove to Wantage, and returned to Reading. In the evening, an interesting Paper was read by the Rev. J. E. Field on "The History of Wallingford," and Mr. I. Chalkley Gould lectured on "The Walls of Wallingford."

THURSDAY, JULY 20TH, 1905.

The members left Caversham Bridge at 9.30 a.m. in a launch, and journeyed to Wallingford, the river excursion proving very enjoyable. At Wallingford they were met by the Rev. J. E. Field and the Rev. A. W. N. Deacon, Rector of St. Mary's. After lunch they visited the market-place, with its ancient bull-ring, the Carolean Town

Hall, and Church of St. Mary, where tradition says the first curfew was rung. At St. Leonard's Church Mr. Field pointed out some pre-Norman carving, and a doorway in the south wall, with a triangular arch supported by a wooden frame. Mr. Gould pointed out that the rampart which anciently protected the church had been levelled, but the brook which ran through the fosse still remained. Mr. Tudor kindly permitted an inspection of his residence outside the eastern vallum; and after viewing the earthworks which surround Kine Croft, the members were received at the Castle by Miss Hedges. The triple line of earthworks, indicating the outer and inner castle moats and the town moats, were examined, and also the museum, where the owners of the Castle have stored many objects of interest discovered in the town. On the return to the river Mr. Field pointed out the old bridge, which is said to date from the reign of John, and was improved by Richard, King of the Romans. During the siege of the town in the Civil Wars, two of the southern arches were removed and a drawbridge erected. The party then returned to Reading by river.

In the evening a lecture on "The History of Abingdon" was read by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, F.S.A., who also exhibited a collection of old Berkshire prints and engravings.

FRIDAY, JULY 21ST, 1905.

Leaving Reading at 9.51 a.m. the members went by train to Culham, and drove to Sutton Courteney, a former possession of the Abbey of Abingdon. Mr. Ditchfield explained that there were two manors here: one held by the King, and granted to Reginald Courtenay by Henry II., and the Abbey Manor, granted after the Dissolution to Lord Wriothesly. The old manor-house has a Norman doorway, and, as Mr. Lynam pointed out, must have been the chapel attached to the manor. The fourteenth-century "Abbey" or manor-house was described by Mr. Ditchfield. The party then visited the church, which was described by Mr. Keyser. The porch has a parvise, and over the entrance is a carving of a flaming beacon one of the badges of Henry V., and also the arms of the Compton family. The tower ranges from Norman to Early English; the original chancel-arch was displaced in the fourteenth century and re-erected in the south arcade. The doorway, arcades, and clerestory are Decorated, and the church has some Perpendicular windows, a Jacobean pulpit, two altar-tombs, and a double piscina of the fourteenth century.

On arriving at Abingdon, the members were received by the Mayor in the Town Hall. Alderman Harris exhibited the municipal plate, and the Town Clerk described the charters. Luncheon was served in the Council Chamber, and the Mayor gave an interesting account of the portraits which hang there. A visit was then paid to the remains of the Abbey, which were described by Mr. H. Redfern, who thought that the so-called "Prior's House" was the residence of the official in charge of the exchequer, and that the adjoining building was the infirmary. The churches of St. Nicholas and St. Helen were described by Mr. J. G. T. West and Mr. Keyser; and the story of Christ's Hospital, with its treasures of ancient documents and curious portraits, was told by Alderman J. T. Morland, the Clerk of the Governors.

In the evening, Mr. W. M. Childs, Principal of University College, Reading, gave an interesting lecture on "The Place of Reading in the National History." Mr. C. J. William's Paper on "The Commercial Aspect of Reading in the Middle Ages" was postponed.

SATURDAY, JULY 22ND, 1905.

The members travelled to Newbury, where, after a reception by the Mayor in the Council Chamber, Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A., gave a short account of the history of the town. A visit was then paid to the Church of St. Nicholas, which was described by Mr. Money. This church is particularly interesting, as having been built entirely in the reign of Henry VIII. by the famous Jack of Newbury. After a short visit to the Cloth Hall and Museum, the party drove to Shaw House, a fine Elizabethan residence built by Sir Thomas Dolman, 1581. The drive was then continued to Donnington Castle, where the members were cordially welcomed by Mrs. Sperling. After an inspection of the Castle, which stands at a height of 403 ft. above sea level, and commands a magnificent view, Mr. Money, who is the author of several books on the subject, gave a graphic account of the origin of the Castle and its gallant defence by Sir John Boys. In order that the members might have the full benefit of listening to so great an authority, the time allotted was extended to fifty minutes. Mr. Money clearly explained the movements of the Royal and Parliamentary Forces in the second battle of Newbury, and mentioned that £500 or £600 were spent weekly on the works necessary for the defence of the Castle. The old farmhouse, now Mrs. Sperling's residence, was described as the Hougomont of the position in the last days of the siege. Some of the outworks were as perfect as if they had been thrown up yesterday.

The members were then most hospitably entertained to luncheon by Mrs. Sperling, to whom a hearty vote of thanks was passed on the motion of Mr. C. J. Williams, seconded by Mr. W. E. Hughes; while the Rev. Dr. Russell proposed, and Mr. S. W. Kershaw, F.S.A., seconded, a vote of thanks to Mr. Money. This concluded the business of a highly successful Congress. The arrangements made by the Hon. Congress Secretary worked excellently throughout; and it was generally agreed that the members of the Congress had spent an instructive and pleasurable week,

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—Following on the Congress of the British Archæological Association, this County Society arranged a most pleasant River Excursion (to which members of the B.A.A. were welcomed), and the trip, being favoured with delightful weather, proved a great success. Leaving Caversham Bridge shortly after 10.15, on Mr. Cawston's steam-launch *Starlight*, the party proceeded to Mapledurham House, where they disembarked at the private landing stage. At Mapledurham House the party were welcomed by the Hon. Algernon Mills, who himself conducted them through the historic building, and gave much valuable information, which was supplemented by remarks from the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, who between them pointed out most of the chief features of interest. Mapledurham House has been so often described that it is only needful to repeat that the front part is Elizabethan, though it has been considerably altered. It was fastened on to a much older building, a portion of which, of half-timbered work, remains on the south-west, of which the porch is the best. This was the original residence of the Blount family, to whom it still belongs, the present owner being Mr. J. Darell Blount. The principal front consists of a curtain wall 103 feet long, with an entrance to the hall in the middle, flanked on each side by a wing 20 feet wide, the material being brick, with stone quoins and mullions. At the back are irregular buildings, amongst which is a small chapel for Roman Catholic services, which are still performed. The windows are all mullioned,