



Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The Annual Meeting was held in the Abbey Gateway, on Friday, April 19th. The President, Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., presided; there was a large attendance of members. The Secretary presented the Annual Report, which we print elsewhere in this copy of the journal; but desire to draw the attention of both members of the Berks Archæological Society and readers of this journal to the following statement:—
“The Society would like to record some work of excavation undertaken by the Society or transcription of ancient monastic charters or documents, but such undertakings required expenditure of time and money, and unless they could find members, who had sufficient leisure to bestow upon such work . . . and unless the Society could largely increase its membership, or double its subscriptions, it was impossible to see how such work could be attempted. Again, we wish to bring to the notice of our readers a scheme placed before the Society a year ago by the Secretary for establishing local committees in Windsor and other centres within the county; so far nothing has been done, but it is much to be hoped that before the next annual meeting a move in this direction will have been made. The Hon. Treasurer's Report is printed on page 44. The various officers were re-elected for the ensuing year, while the following gentlemen were placed on the Committee: Messrs. S. G. Collier, E. Macartney, A. W. Sutton, and Mr. J. Hautenville Cope, the latter in place of the Rev. B. C. Littlewood, deceased. The President drew attention to the small number of members belonging to the Society, viz., 78 gentlemen and 60 ladies; and also stated that other similar societies possessed a much larger membership, e.g., the Gloucester, which numbered over 500 subscribers, and expressed an earnest hope that each member would do their very utmost to obtain fresh subscribers, he also informed the meeting that a “Two-day Excursion” to Gloucester had been arranged for the 14th and 15th of June, while later in the year they hoped to visit the Churches in the vicinity of Didcot, and to have an “Half-day Excursion” to Dorchester and Nuneham. This concluded the business, after which Mr. Macartney gave a lecture on “Old Gardens,” illustrated by lantern slides.

NEWBURY DISTRICT FIELD CLUB.—ANNUAL MEETING.—The members of this Club held their 42nd Annual Meeting on 31st May, the chair being taken by the President (Hon. A. E. Gathorne Hardy), also present were Mr. C. E. Keyser, F.S.A., Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A., the Rev. R. Bruce Dickson, Mr. A. E. O. Slocock, Mr. W. H. Belcher, Mr. J. T. Strange, Mr. G. J. Watts (Hon. Secretary and Treasurer), Mr. W. J. Blacket, Mr. W. E. Lewendon, Mr. Richard Hickman, Mr. Frank Comyns, Mr. H. Peake, Mr. E. Sharwood Smith, &c.

The minutes of the last annual meeting having been read, the President addressed the members on the events of the year, remarking that they owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Walter Money for the splendid manner in which he

had edited their last volume of Transactions, also to Mr. Keyser for his admirable articles therein. As regards the excursions for the coming season, he thought they might spend a very happy and instructive day at Clayden, in Buckinghamshire, where his friend Sir Harry Verney would be delighted to receive and entertain them.

Mr. Keyser supplemented the President's remarks by giving a *résumé* of last year's excursions, and invited the Newbury Field Club to join the Berkshire Archaeological Society in a two-day excursion to Gloucester and Tewkesbury.

Mr. Watts then presented the financial statement. Commencing with a balance in hand of £56 5s. 6d., the receipts amounted to £82 16s. 3d.; and expenditure to £42 14s., leaving a balance in hand of £40 2s. 3d. The statement was adopted.

The President was unanimously re-elected, and briefly returned thanks.

The Vice-Presidents were all re-elected, and the General and Central Committees were severally re-appointed.

Mr. Watts was re-elected Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, attention being drawn to the admirable arrangements he had made for the various excursions.

Afterwards the members, joined by a number of ladies, partook of tea, and at its conclusion a lecture on "Low Forms of Animal Life" was delivered by Mr. Alan Gardiner, B.Sc.

BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—EXCURSION TO GLOUCESTER, TEWKESBURY, AND DEERHURST.—Last year, for the first time in its history, the Society undertook a two days' excursion to Wells, and finding the venture such a success, it was determined to make such another expedition this year. On the 14th June a party consisting of nearly 60 archæologists—ladies and gentlemen—members of the Berks Archaeological Society and the Newbury Field Club, assembled at Reading Station at 9.35 a.m. and proceeded by train to Gloucester, part of the journey being through the beautiful district, known as the "Golden Valley." Gloucester being reached about mid-day, the party proceeded to the "Bell Hotel," which had been chosen as the local headquarters of the Society, where luncheon was served. The "Bell Hotel" has existed for several generations, and two men—whose parents have kept this hotel—have left behind them names illustrious in the ecclesiastical history of our land. The one was George Whitefield, whose parents in the early part of the 18th century were the landlords. George, as a boy, was educated at the local Grammar School of St. Mary de Crypt, later he proceeded to Oxford as a servitor of Pembroke College. At Oxford he came under the influence of John Wesley, and was admitted a member of the Methodist Society. In 1736, at the age of 21, he was ordained deacon by Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester. At first he worked in London, but about a year later he quitted England for one of the American colonies, Georgia. He died at Newburyport, U.S.A., in 1770, and is buried in the Presbyterian Church there, though his name is perpetuated in English Nonconformity by the Whitfield Tabernacle, London, which contains the grave of Toplady, author of "Rock of Ages." Another divine, also the son of an innkeeper, rose to the high office of a Bishop of the English Church, Henry Philpotts, who as Bishop of Exeter, "Henry of Exeter" as his contemporaries styled him, is so well known in connection with the Gorham judgment. In the afternoon the party visited the Cathedral, where they were met by the Dean, the Very Rev. H. D. Spence-Jones, D.D., who gave a most interesting address on its history and architecture, and conducted the Archæologists through the nave, south

transept, choir, lady chapel, and the crypt, pointing out the various items of interest. After seeing the Cathedral a move was made to the Church of Saint Nicholas, where the City Librarian, Mr. Roland Austin, an old Reading friend, received the excursionists; going from thence to St. Mary de Crypt, the Rector gave a short description of this interesting church. The next item on the programme was tea at the Bishop's palace, where Bishop Gibson gave everyone a most hearty welcome. After tea the Bishop gave an address on the history of this Episcopal residence, which took the place of the former palace, which in its turn had in pre-reformation times served as the "Abbot's lodging." This latter house was pulled down in the last century and in its place the present one was erected; the first Bishop to inhabit it was Dr. Ellicot, who was Bishop of the united Sees of Gloucester and Bristol from 1863 to 1905. His Lordship called attention to the pictures in the hall of former occupants of the "See," and gave an account of each of the bishops. After this the party divided into two sections, one under the guidance of Mr. Keyser went to the Church of St. Mary Magdelene at Wootton; the other, accompanied by the Bishop, to the chapter-house, that historic building in which William the Conqueror convened that famous assembly to hear him give the order for the preparation of the "Doomsday Survey." Then the cloisters were next seen with their wonderful "fan tracery" roof, and the "carels," which still exist in the south cloister, these being little chambers in each of which a monk sat to read, etc., resting his book upon a stone shelf. The cloisters are glazed with coloured glass; then the old-time lavatory in the north cloister was shown, where the monks washed before entering the refectory for meals, and the cupboard or aumbry where the towels were kept. One peculiarity of these cloisters is that they are on the north side of the Cathedral, whereas in the majority of English religious houses they were on the southern side. Later in the evening the Society, on the invitation of the Mayor, were received at the Guildhall by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayoress, the City Sheriff, and the Town Clerk, the latter gentleman kindly exhibited and explained some of the city documents and the Corporation plate, having other items, four handsome maces and two State swords. But perhaps the most interesting event of the evening was the presentation of a silver centrepiece and an illuminated address, the work of Mr. Greenslade, of Reading, to Mr. Ditchfield, and a diamond pendant to Mrs. Ditchfield, both of these having been subscribed for by members of the Society. The President (Mr. Keyser) in making the presentation to Mr. Ditchfield referred to the strenuous work he had given to the Society for a quarter of a century, and also said that the flourishing position it now held was entirely owing to their Secretary's untiring labour on its behalf. The text of the address is as follows;—"To the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A., F.S.L. We the undersigned desire in a small way to express our hearty recognition and appreciation of the eminent services you have rendered to the cause of archæology in general and more especially to the Berkshire Archæological Society for which you have been for a quarter of a century the Hon. Secretary, and to which you have ungrudgingly devoted so much of your valuable time. To your energy and admirable organisation is mainly due the continued success and even the existence of the Society, and we all have a most pleasurable recollection of the many instructive lectures and interesting excursions which you have arranged. We ask you, therefore, to accept this piece of plate for yourself and a small present of jewellery for Mrs. Ditchfield as a mark of our esteem and affection, and we trust you may both be spared with health and strength to continue for many years your useful career in life." Then follow the names of the 70 members who were subscribers.

Next morning (15th) an early start was made by steamer for Deerhurst and Tewkesbury. Proceeding up the Severn the Berkshire Antiquaries landed at Deerhurst and walked to the church said to be the oldest ecclesiastical monument in Gloucestershire. Founded as an Abbey towards the close of the 8th century we learn from Kemble's Codex that in the year 804 Ethelric the Earldoman of the Hwiccan district of Mercia made an endowment of land to the Abbey. Later when the Confessor founded Westminster Abbey he bestowed on it half of the estates of Deerhurst, at the same time he granted the latter house to St. Denis, near Paris, it thus became an "Alien Priory." Owing to the wars with France, the alien priories, because they sent money to the parent houses in France were accused of aiding the enemies of England and were "suppressed" or made "denizen" which last was the case with Deerhurst, but ere long it became by grant of Henry VI. the property of his foundation of Eton College, but in the next reign it was taken by Edward IV. from Eton and given to Tewkesbury. At the Dissolution the Priory was granted to George Throgmorton and his heirs, though the church was permitted to remain as a place of worship for the villagers, it thus became a parish church. The President and the Vicar conducted the visitors round the building and drew attention to the tower part of which belongs to the Saxon period. Inside the building the font was greatly admired the bowl of which is tub shaped and ornamented with "an intricate pattern of spiral lines;" it is believed to be coeval with the date of the founding of the Abbey. The two brasses, both dated 1400, the one to Sir John Cassey, Chief Baron of the Exchequer and the other to his wife, Lady Alice, were also the object of special interest as also was the stone coffin discovered in the restoration of 1861. Before leaving, some of the party ascended the tower. The small building quite close to Deerhurst Church and known as "Odda's Chapel" was next visited. This has a curious history, from a stone found in 1675 near the site of this ancient structure, and preserved amongst the Arundelian marbles at Oxford, we learn that the chapel was dedicated by Bishop Ealdred on the 2nd ides (12th April) of the 14th year (1056), of the reign of Edward King of the English. When the Confessor bestowed a portion of the lands of Deerhurst upon Westminster Abbey, Odda's Chapel was included in the Gift. The eastern extremity of the Chapel joins on to an ancient black and white building erected in the early middle ages, probably as the manor house to the Westminster estates which is still inhabited. At the Reformation the Chapel was desecrated and so remains. After the desecration it seems to have been incorporated into Abbot's Court and in the course of years its existence as a place of religion, forgotten. In 1885 on the removal of some plaster round headed windows were found; this led to further investigation with the result of the discovery of the Chapel. Embarking on the steamer the journey was resumed en route to Tewkesbury, when the "Lower Lode" was reached the passengers landed and were ferried across the Severn and thence walked to Tewkesbury by way of the Bloody Meadow the scene of the great battle of the 4th May, 1471, when the Lancastrian army was annihilated. Next on the programme came a visit to Abbey Church, and the Vicar (the Rev. A. T. W. Yerburgh) read an interesting paper on the history of the Church, telling of the foundation of the Abbey by two Mercian nobles Odo and Dodo in 715. It was rebuilt in 1087 by Robert de Fitzhamon, who a few years later (1107) received his death wound at the siege of Falaise, whence his body was brought to Tewkesbury for burial. In 1123 the Abbey was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester, Theulf. From the Fitzhamon family,

the Lordship of Tewkesbury passed to the de Clares, Earls of Hereford and Gloucester, two members of this family were buried in the Abbey. From the de Clares the lordship passed by the marriage of Eleanor de Clare to Hugh Despencer. Then later it was again carried through an heiress to the Beauchamps Earls of Warwick, and from them to Richard Nevill Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, called the King Maker, by his marriage with Ann de Beauchamp, aunt and heiress of Henry de Beauchamp, K.G., last and sixth Earl of the family of de Beauchamps, Earls of Warwick. In 1539 the King's Commissioners seized the Abbey on behalf of Henry VIII. but the patriotism of the inhabitants preserved it from destruction. They purchased it from the town as their parish Church. At the conclusion of the Vicar's interesting paper, the sacristan conducted the party round the church and pointed out the chief objects of interest, such as the handsome windows of the choir, which still retain some of their ancient coloured glass. The windows were the gift of a member of the Despencer family while hard by is the exquisite little chapel which in 1397 was built over the tomb of the founder Robert Fitzhamon. We only wish that space would allow us to describe more fully the other objects of interest in this noble Church, such as the magnificent sepulchres of Sir Guy de Brien or the beautiful Warwick Chapel wherein lie the mortal remains of Richard Beauchamp, first husband of Isabella le Despencer, or the Chantry of the Holy Trinity, the last earthly resting place of Edward Lord Despencer, whose armour-clad figure, erected on the roof of the Chantry, is kneeling and facing the High Altar, as if he was adoring the sacred elements which are being offered there. Only a passing reference can be made to this Altar; it is one of the few remaining pre-reformation Stone Altars in England, and not only this, it is the largest which is still in existence. But a last word must be devoted to the Tudor Cenotaph of John Wakeman last Abbot of the great Benedictine Establishment of Tewkesbury, who in 1539 surrendered his "House" into the hands of Henry VIII. being then made first Bishop of Gloucester.

At the Annual Congress of Archæological Societies, held at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, the Berkshire Archæological Society was represented by Mr. Garry and the Assistant Editor (Mr. J. H. Cope). Sir Charles Read, President Society of Antiquaries, presided over a large attendance of delegates. The report of the Council for 1911-12 was adopted, from which we learn that there are 43 Societies affiliated to the Union. The report also dealt with the publication, entitled the "Index of Archæological Papers published in 1908," and stated that unless the Index was better supported it would be impossible to continue its publication. Speaking for ourselves, we should greatly regret its discontinuation, as it is of the utmost use for any antiquary to know what papers dealing with various subjects of antiquarian interest are year by year placed by various workers before the general public. So we hope sufficient support will be forthcoming, especially from the various Societies in union with the Congress. The cost of production of the Index is not less than £30. We are glad to notice that the report of the Ancient Earth Works and Fortified Enclosures is meeting with better support than heretofore. Last, but not least, are the paragraphs dealing with the supply of the P.R.O. publications to various public libraries. The Congress has already been in communication with the Prime Minister on this matter, who has replied that he has placed their letter before the Royal Commission now sitting on Public Records. So that it is hoped these publications may be more generally supplied. At the present time we believe that public libraries can obtain them by purchase. And we in conjunction

with all local antiquaries have often regretted that in the Free Library at Reading there is not a complete series of the "Calendars of the Patent and Close Rolls," and have only too often suffered from the absence of these volumes. The balance sheet showed the financial position to be in a satisfactory state, there being a balance in hand of £19 10s. 3d. Other matters dealt with were the report of the Earth Works Committee for 1912, which contained a survey of the work that is now undertaken for their preservation by various local Archæological Societies. Major Freer drew attention to the legislation now before both Houses of Parliament on the subject of the "Protection of Ancient Monuments." After some discussion it was agreed to ask the Government to make a few alterations in the "Bills," but it was most distinctly hoped that these "Bills" would become law. The last item in a lengthy "Agenda" Paper was the proposed excavation of Verulamium and the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies. From this it was learnt that the proposed excavation could not be carried out till arrangements had been made with the owner of the property regarding the ownership of such objects as might be found. So ended the Congress of 1912, and from the information placed before those who attended it, the impression left on their minds was that during the past year a good deal had been done to forward the study of archæology in the United Kingdom.

