

ACQUISITIONS—1934-5.

Amongst additions to the MUSEUM may be noted:—

	Given by	
Plan of Aylesbury, 1809	Col. G. R. Crouch.	
Stay-busk of wood, 1785, from Castlethorpe, of particular interest, since the initials on it probably refer to the marriage of Ch. Denny and Ann Mayew on 8 Mar. 1788, as recorded in the parish register.	Miss Burrowes.	
Silver varvel, 16th or early 17th century, marked: OB. <i>Anthony Chester of</i> REV. <i>Chicheley in Buck'sh.</i>		Purchased.
28 Tradesmen's Tokens of the 17th century from the late Col. Pixley.....	Miss Pixley.	

To the MUNIMENT ROOM have been presented:—

Conveyance of land at Swanbourne, 1690	
Sheet from Gt. Horwood Court records, 1676-7	Mr. A. J. Clear.
Deeds from Waddesdon, 1699 and 1762.....	Miss Griffin.
Manor Roll of Winslow, 1672	Lord Cottesloe.
57 deeds,—Biddlesden	Mr. E. L. Reynolds.
12 — Steeple Claydon and Stewkley—Messrs. Willis Br.	
283 — Addington	Lord Addington.
5 — Chesham, Chalvey, & Amer- sham	Col. H. Southam.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT RELATING TO EXTENSION OF PREMISES AND MUNIMENT ROOM.

RECEIPTS.				PAYMENTS.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Subscriptions:—				Payments to Contractors	1,897	10	3
Liberty Trustees	200	0	0	Architect's Fees	100	0	0
Bucks Standing Joint Committee	250	0	0	Printing, Postages & other Expenses	27	12	2
Aylesbury Borough Corporation...	25	0	0				
Lady Smyth's Legacy	500	0	0				
Other Contributors	781	10	0				
	<hr/>						
	£1,756	10	0				
Interest on Deposit Account	8	1	10				
From Council Funds:—							
Reserve Account	170	0	7				
Current Account	90	10	0				
	<hr/>						
	260	10	7				
	<hr/>						
	£2,025	2	5				
	<hr/>						
					£2,025	2	5
					<hr/>		

ANNUAL EXCURSION

19 July, 1934

The Annual Excursion took place on a day which was ideal for the purpose, a pleasant breeze always tempering the bright sunshine, which made the lighting of landscape and of the interior of buildings alike perfect. Over one hundred members and guests attended, amongst whom were Sir Thomas Barlow, the Rev. R. F. Bale, Capt. Stewart-Liberty, Col. Guy Crouch, Mrs. Ross-Todd, the Rev. F. J. Winterton, Mr. A. Macdonald, Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Harrison, Mrs. Clifton-Brown, Lt.-Col. J. Wyness, Mrs. Harrison and Mr. G. Rowe.

CRESLOW.

The first place visited (by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. King) was Creslow Manor House, where the Society had not been since 1885, and the following paper was read:—

John de Stretley acquired Creslow in 1312; eight years later Richard de la Welde (who had married the sister of a former owner—Tidmarsh) disputed his right by forcible entry of the house and breaking Stretley's coffers, this, too, when Mrs. Stretley was not in a condition to be disturbed. The Patent Rolls tell us that, so it is a relief to find that the lady (then a widow) survived, as she was in possession in 1346. Some time between 1312 and 1346 this house must have been built—for convenience we will say it was in 1330, and the surprising thing is that such a great deal of it remains structurally intact. Like all mediæval houses, there was a great hall, of which two-thirds remain, but it is disguised from the ground-level by reason of the fact that about 1610 a floor was inserted, making two storeys—the bay next to the solar was made higher, the main staircase was put in, and, with much other woodwork, remains to-day in admirable condition. Early in the 19th century the most northern bay became ruinous and was pulled down, and further internal alterations were made.

Members then visited the solar, or domestic rooms of the tenant; the ground-floor is now given up to kitchen, dairy, etc.; the rooms above are used as bedrooms, and one contains a fine overmantel of the late 17th century.

One of the most remarkable features of the house is the undercroft, or crypt, beneath the dairy, which has 4-ribbed vaulting, with deeply undercut bosses where the ribs intersect. These are wonderfully preserved, and represent the untouched work of 1330.

The main staircase is a fine specimen of early 17th century carpentry, and the double-doors (with their ironwork) leading to the solar on each floor were admired.

The Church from the early part of the 13th century belonged to the priory of St. John of Jerusalem; it was a rectory and the last presentation was made in the reign of Mary—1554. The north wall contains a 12th century doorway (re-set) with chevron moulding and billeted label, and two blocked 15th century windows beyond.

WINSLOW.

From Creslow the Society then went to Winslow, where the Church was visited, and its principal points were explained by Mr. E. C. Rouse, who gave an interesting account of the mural paintings on the north wall of the nave; they are very imperfect, but he was able to show how the eastern-most one represented the murder of St. Thomas a Becket. Under Mr. Rouse's guidance one could make out the figure of the kneeling Becket, and the murderer striking his head with a long sword. The painting to the west is more mixed, but seems to include a Doom and parts of the heavenly Jerusalem. Both paintings are very late (c. 1480), and, though executed in tempera, may have some oil with their pigment. The question of their having been executed by a painter attached to St. Albans Abbey (which owned the living until the Dissolution) was discussed.

The official luncheon then took place at the "Bell Hotel," and afterwards the annual general meeting was held, under the chairmanship of the Rev. F. Bale, through the unavoidable absence of Major Disraeli. The proceedings were only formal, including the adoption of accounts and re-election of the officers, but it was mentioned that membership had slightly increased, and the year's financial result required only a small decrease in the amount carried forward. Capt. Stewart-Liberty mentioned the finances of the fund for the construction of the Muniment Room and extension of the Museum.

After luncheon members were able to make brief visits to the old Baptist Meeting House, belonging to the early part of the 17th century and associated with the name of Benjamin Keach. The extreme simplicity of this little building, which retains a contemporary oak table, deeply impressed those who saw it, and Mr. A. J. Clear was good enough to be present and tell all that is known of its history.

Winslow Hall was also thrown open to members by the courtesy of Mr. N. McCorquodale, and the fine bolelection-moulded panelling contemporary with the house (1702) was much admired. The house was built by "Ways and Means"

Lowndes, and his friend, Sir Christopher Wren, passed some of the building accounts, if he was not responsible for the actual design. The panelling itself was made by Charles Hopson, "His Majesty's Joyner," and cost 11s. per yard. Many of the original brass door-locks remain, and the house, though altered at different dates, retains much original work.

Upon leaving Winslow the Society went to

DORTON HOUSE

and the following account of it was read:—

This is presumably the work of that Sir John Dormer, who was Sheriff in 1596, and is now commemorated by the large recumbent effigy in the south transept of Long Crendon Church; the date of his death is left blank on the monument, but it is supposed to have taken place in 1626-7—just about the time when this house was completed, for the date can be seen very plainly on one of the plaster panels which form the soffit of the main staircase. The Dormers and the Berties, with whom they had married, held Dorton until 1773, when Sir John Aubrey bought it and made it his residence. The Aubreys did not leave the house alone, and some of the panelling probably went at this time to the chancel of the Church, where it still is, but very much remains. The plaster-work is also very remarkable; here are ceilings bearing an eye, which is said to be a Dormer badge; it was not their crest, so possibly it was a kind of inverted rebus, to belie the sleepiness of their name.

The house was then examined, and the elaborate screen in the Hall, with its Ionic pilasters and entablature, was admired. The magnificent carpentry of both staircases also aroused great interest, and the oak bedroom upstairs, with its original panelling and overmantel, pleased everyone. The fact that a passage-way had been made through this room aroused doubts in some, but there is no doubt that it formed part of the original design.

From Dorton the Society then visited Chilton House, where they were kindly received by Mrs. Aubrey-Fletcher and given tea. The following paper was read:—

CHILTON HOUSE.

The early history of Chilton really begins with its grant in 1244 to Paul Pever; in the Pever family it remained until early in the 15th century, when it passed to a grand-daughter, whose father was Lord Zouche. In this family it continued until 1529, when John, Lord Zouche, sold it to John Croke, who became a master in Chancery, and from whom a distinguished line of lawyers descended.

The existing house retains some of the Croke house, which one may suppose was built in the first half of the

16th century, altered early in the 17th Century, and largely re-built in 1740 by Richard Carter, a relative by marriage of Sir John Aubrey. The north and south walls belong to the original Croke house, which is believed to have been an E shape with the wings projecting towards the east. The north wall retains an original chimney-stack, with black headers set in a diamond pattern, and a second plain stack which was built early in the 17th century; of the same date is a fireplace in a room on the first floor, with several contemporary inscriptions scratched on it in French.

The grandson of the Croke who bought Chilton was the third Sir John, and it was probably he who was responsible for this early 17th century work; he died in 1640 and was succeeded by his son, the fourth Sir John, who raised a troop of horse for the service of the king, and so began the ruin of his estate. This did not in the least prevent Prince Rupert from instructing Sir Will Campion (the Governor of Boarstall House) to "demolish and raze" Chilton House "that it may not anye wayes be useful to the Enemye." This was on 27th January, 1644; next day the order was modified to pulling down "ye outwalls and doors," but luckily Sir Wm. Campion did nothing of the kind.

It would have been better for Sir John Croke if the house had been pulled down on top of him, for he lived on to the Restoration and figured very ingloriously by falsely indicting the curate of Chilton on a charge of robbery. Sir Matthew Hale, who presided over the trial, left Sir John with very little character; through his debts he became a prisoner in the King's Bench, and died in London. He sold Chilton to Harvey, and Harvey's son sold it to Rd. Carter, a Welsh Judge, who made the house much as it is now in 1740.

He made new east and west fronts, filling up the space between the wings, which formerly projected towards the east, and entirely altered the interior.

What remains of the original house has been indicated; in addition the stone-rubble wall between the garden and stable-yard has a 16th century stone doorway, and another one, now blocked, opens into the Churchyard. The most important relic of the old house is a length of linenfold panelling on the second floor. Some panelling belonging to the early 17th century alterations is in three rooms at the south end of the house.

Another relic of the original Croke house cannot now be seen; it is a large fireplace in the present drawing-room, into which the later fireplace has been built; it was found when attending to the 18th century panelling in that room, but to expose it now would entail a complete alteration of the room.

A point to which attention was particularly invited is the garden wall, in which a series of shallow niches appear; they are scarcely imposing enough to form architectural decoration, but are altogether too small for the beehives, vases or statues which were sometimes placed in deeper recesses in the 17th and 18th centuries.

No member succeeded in giving a plausible explanation of these recesses, but both they and the contents of the house roused much admiration.

Some members took the opportunity of visiting the extremely interesting Church, which was officially visited in 1925.