

## THE MUSEUM

In July the County Council purchased Church House, St. Mary's Square, which had been put up for sale by St. Mary's Parochial Church Council, for an extension to the Museum whose premises it adjoined. The building comprises approximately 3,000 square feet of single storey space consisting of two large halls and two offices. The necessary repairs, minor structural alterations and the installation of temperature and humidity control is being spread over three financial years. This will make a major difference to the Museum and it is hoped that the two halls will eventually be used for a display relating to the history of Aylesbury and its development to the present day and a temporary exhibition gallery.

To mark International Museums Day on the 18th May, an Open Day was held in the Museum. This was the first time that the public had been able to see the work which goes on behind the scenes and it proved very popular. Throughout the day until 9.00 p.m. small groups of visitors were conducted on tours to a selection of offices, stores and workrooms and some 700 people participated. They saw such work as the County Biological Record, the Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record and the Conservation Laboratory.

An important excavation under the direction of David Allen was carried out at Bierton in advance of development. A most interesting Belgic settlement was discovered with clear indications of the continuity of land use into the Roman period provided by the presence of tile, wall plaster and tesserae.

The STEP project, financed by the Manpower Services Commission, came to an end during the year. A booklet, 'Bucks Archaeology From the Air' by Denise Allen, was published and has attracted favourable comment. Philip Chaundy collected most interesting information on the small brickyards in Buckinghamshire, which will enable an exhibition to be mounted at a later date. The Biological Data Bank benefited greatly from the work of Ruth Newell, a botanist, and Chris Reid, a zoologist. The efficiency of the record system was improved by introducing changes to the system and standardising some recording techniques. Information on the history of Aylesbury was collected by Alison Cole with a view to providing notes, information sheets and activity sheets on the town of Aylesbury and in particular the activities of the market, for use by teachers and school children. It is hoped that this will enable schools to make greater use of the town and in particular of the conservation area for educational purposes.

The Museum started during the year to form a small collection of high quality modern crafts made in Buckinghamshire and four pieces of jewellery were acquired. It is intended to build up this collection as finances permit.