

THE MUSEUM

As a result of a decision some time ago that a structural investigation should gradually be carried out of the whole Museum, a start was made on this during the year. Unfortunately, major structural problems were found in the part of the building used for offices. This meant that three offices have been unusable and also that some relocation is necessary as a result of overloading of the second floor of the whole building. This is producing major problems as it will mean relocating the Field Archaeologist, Archaeological Records Assistant and the Biological Record.

During the year there were two particularly important exhibitions. One, 'Portrait of a Town — Aylesbury in photographs' was made up of prints made from a collection of glass plate negatives which are in private possession and which had never previously been exhibited. This as expected proved a most popular exhibition and thanks are due to the owner for

allowing it to take place.

The other main exhibition was 'Image of Man' from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation. This was of the highest quality and included work by such people as: Bourdelle, Derain, Epstein, Ernest, Giacometti, Hepworth, Modigliani, Picasso, Renoir, Rodin. Thanks are due to the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation for their help in allowing the Museum to have this exhibition.

The Aylesbury Past Project under Hal Dalwood continued for the whole year. The results of the excavation and field work is recorded in the Archaeological Notes. There was, in addition, an oral history recording project. The work done by the team has proved invaluable.

The number of visitors to the Museum during the year was: 36439.

COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

Condensed from the Report of the County Archivist

The absence on sick leave of the full-time searchroom supervisor put staff under increased pressure in maintaining the existing service.

The report compiled by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts following their visit to the Office last year is being considered by the County Secretary and Solicitor. The report's recommendation for an immediate increase in staffing is to be examined by the Management Services Unit. The outcome is awaited with hope.

There was a total of 132 accessions during the year, the same total as for 1985.

Chiltern District Council deposited the records of its two predecessor authorities,

Amersham Rural District Council and Chesham Urban District Council. They incorporate earlier records of the Amersham Rural Sanitary Authority and the Chesham Local Board of Health. Included among the Chesham records are minutes of the parish vestry and the town silver band. Additional material was also received for the boroughs of Buckingham and Aylesbury, and for Newport Pagnell R.D.C. More unusual is a stray file of Quarter Sessions indictments for 1663 which predates the existing series of sessions rolls.

The ecclesiastical parishes of Amersham and Whitchurch deposited their older records. The Amersham records, a particularly fine group, include parish registers from 1560, churchwardens' accounts from 1597 (with some earlier accounts for the reign of Henry VIII), and

accounts of the overseers of the poor from 1611, as well as a tax assessment for Burnham Hundred, 1695.

Material for the study of twentieth-century political organization included the records of the Chesham Labour Party, and associated minutes of the Chesham United Trades and Labour Council from 1913. They were balanced by the records of the Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association.

School records were represented by those of Sir William Borlase's School, Great Marlow, a grammar school founded in 1624. The most substantial document is an account book recording the income and expenditure of the school trustees from 1795 to 1814. A letter of 1834 reveals the crisis caused by the imprisonment of the then headmaster, William Francis, for libelling the senior trustee.

Brown and Merry, Estate Agents, presented a sample of the files of their Aylesbury office covering the years 1930-50. Smaller groups of business records were received for Bird Brothers, builders, of Milton Keynes, 1876-1960, and Francis Coales and Son (Tring) Ltd, animal food manufacturers, 1936-1978.

Property records for three estates in north Bucks came via the British Records Association. These were Tickford Abbey, Thornton Hall, and the Hoare family's Wavendon estate. Some additional deeds for the Shardeloes estate in Amersham, and a set of late eighteenth-century accounts of payments to labourers and craftsmen on the Chester family's Chicheley estate were acquired with assistance from the

Purchase Grant Fund. The Buckinghamshire Record Society helped with the purchase of an estate map of the manor of Dunton, near Winslow, dated 1653, drawn by the astrologer Joseph Blagrave. By a happy chance the written survey made by Blagrave to accompany the map was found to be already in the Record Office among the Hampden archives.

Other estate records received included a plan for a staircase at Denham Place, 1777, and court books for the manor of Whitchurch, 1710-1888.

Finally, Mr E. B. Basden's collection of MS material relating to Buckinghamshire has been supplemented by his personal papers relating to his activities as collector and bibliographer, deposited by his widow.

In spite of staffing problems, time was found for classifying and cataloguing in final form the records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) which date back to the 1660s. More work was also done on the records of Wigley, estate agents of Winslow, in order to complete the list of the principal series of property papers, and a medium-sized collection of business records was catalogued.

The number of personal visits to the Office was 2645 (2469 in 1985). The figure for postal enquiries was 706(783). A total of 2735(2750) telephone calls was logged, of which 1172(1348) were enquiries and the rest were reservations, etc. Document slips presented amounted to 7728(6755) and a total of 13,452(9893) items were produced.