

THE MUSEUM

DURING the year the Museums Sub-Committee was reconstituted as a Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee and was given responsibility for administering the Schools Museum Service as well as the Museum.

A great deal of work has arisen in connection with the proposed new city in the north of the county. Lists of known sites were compiled and a search made of air photographs of the area. In addition, all sites and possible sites were visited on the ground.

A Romano-British kiln and associated pit at Fulmer were excavated, under the direction of Miss Naomi Tarrant. The site of this had been located by a proton-magnetometer survey which had been kindly carried out at the request of the Museum by the Research Laboratory for Archæology at Oxford.

A visit to No. 1 and 2 Market Hill, Buckingham, which was to be demolished, led to the discovery that it was of considerable importance. The building was of late fifteenth century date, containing sixteenth-century wall paintings, and two bays of the roof were also painted. A very large number of visits were made to this house, so that it could be properly recorded and arrangements made with the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments for it to be adequately photographed. A report on the building will be published in the *Records* next year.

There were some extremely successful exhibitions during the year, including the 1962 Group of the Embroiderers' Guild, an exhibition for National Folk Week which showed examples of crafts in the county, an exhibition of C.S.E. Art which comprised a selection of work submitted by schools in Buckinghamshire for the Department of Education and Science Certificate of Secondary Education Examination in 1967, and an exhibition of art by the Bucks Federation of Women's Institutes. The standard of this last was high, and the exhibition was so popular that it is intended to make this an annual event.

The Museum purchased an oil painting of Burnham Beeches by the nineteenth-century artist, Thomas Creswick, R.A. It acquired an interesting group of Pleistocene bones, including some of mammoth, which were found during the construction of the new Wraysbury Reservoir. A considerable quantity of good costume was acquired during the year, the earliest being a dress of 1780, and costume of this date is now difficult to find. The majority of costume was, as might be expected, nineteenth century in date, but none the less welcome for that.

In December, Miss V. A. Airey took up the post of Schools Museum Assistant, and Miss J. Royston, who had been the Schools Museum Assistant, became Assistant Curator (Natural History), which was a new appointment. This will enable both the Schools Museum Service and work in the natural history field to expand satisfactorily.

The number of visitors was 24,757, compared with 22,374 in 1966.

C.N.G.

MILTON KEYNES RESEARCH COMMITTEE

MAJOR problems concerning archæology and natural history arise from the building of the New City. These include the preservation of sites of importance, the collection of records, and the collection of specimens. The North Bucks Historical Committee, set up in 1966 by the Bletchley Archæological and Historical Society and the Wolverton and District Archæological Society, had done some work, and a photographic survey of the area and an industrial archæology survey had been started, and some work done in the archæological field. In addition, the Museum had produced lists of archæological sites. At the beginning of the year, the only work done in the natural history field was in connection with the botanical survey of Bucks, apart from some limited work done by a few individuals. It was evident, therefore, that there was a great deal of work to be done, including detailed surveys of sites of archæological and natural history interest, and of historic buildings. The photographic survey of villages and landscape required completing and also industrial archæology monuments recorded. It was also evident that a number of archæological sites would eventually require excavating and there would be the major problem of sites found in the course of construction work.

When the matter was considered by the Museums Sub-Committee of the County Education Committee, it was considered that the best solution to these problems would be to establish a Milton Keynes Research Committee, consisting of both official and voluntary bodies. The Council of the Archæological Society also considered the matter and came to the same conclusions. A meeting called jointly by the two bodies was, therefore, held in the County Hall, Aylesbury, on 17th November, 1967, to consider setting up a Milton Keynes Research Committee. It was agreed to establish the Committee, with the following objects: To make recommendations for the preservation of sites of scientific interest, to collect records and specimens, to make surveys of sites of archæological and natural history interest and of historic buildings, to excavate archæological sites and to make a general photographic survey; in the designated area of the city of Milton Keynes.

It was agreed that membership should be open to local authorities in the area, societies and institutions with similar objects, the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, and Government Departments and official bodies. Observers were invited from Departments of the County Council interested, certain University Departments undertaking projects in the area, and the Consultant Planners of the Corporation. Two Advisory Sub-Committees for Natural History and Archæology respectively were appointed to draw up detailed plans of the work that was required and the methods to be adopted in carrying it out. Professor W. F. Grimes was elected Chairman of the Committee.

C.N.G.