

## ACQUISITIONS, 1932

Amongst the additions to the Museum during the year were the following:—

## FLINT IMPLEMENTS

*Donor or Source.*

11 palaeolithic implements from the gravel, Burnham ..... Mr. W. F. Haycock

## OTHER IMPLEMENTS

Hoard of 18 bronze palstaves found at a depth of 2 feet near Slough. They are presumed to have been the stock of a dealer, as all were perfect when buried. They vary from 5½ to 6½ ins. in length; only one has the remains of a loop, now broken. They probably date from c. 1200 B.C. ....

Deposited by  
Slough Trading  
Estate

Horn pick of unusual form, found at Walton Street, Aylesbury; probably of late Roman date .....

Dr. T. G. Parrott

Saxon spear head, found at Holman's Bridge, Aylesbury .....

Dunstable  
Museum

## TRADE TOKENS

Issued by J. Tomes, Ivinghoe .....	Exchanged
"    "    J. Inns, Shenley .....	Purchased
"    "    Thos. Barcombe, Colnbrook ....	"
"    "    Widow Homes           "    .....	"
"    "    Saml. Mills           "    .....	"
"    "    Edmd. Slocombe       "    .....	"

## DEEDS

42 relating to Colnbrook and Wycombe ...	Mrs. A. U. Oppenheimer
94   "    "    Brill, Shabbington and Caversfield .....	Mr. J. A. Sanford
36   "    "    Singleborough (Great Hor- wood) .....	Messrs. Wade, Gery & Bracken- bury

## VARIOUS

Amongst several interesting deposits from Miss E. A. White, of Chesham, is a bassoon formerly used at Hawridge Church. It bears a remarkable inscription as follows: "I hear some men hate music, Let them shew what else the angels do. Then those who do despise such sacred mirth  
Are neither fit for heaven nor for earth."

## ANNUAL EXCURSION

23 JUNE, 1932

The Annual Excursion was directed to the north of the county and the fine day produced a large number, quite 150 persons attending, amongst whom were Sir James and Lady Berry, the Revs. R. Bale, F. J. Winterton, C. K. Hulton, F. W. Bennitt, Colonel Bernard, Major Timmis, Major Kentish, Sir Charles Stewart-Wilson, Captain Stewart-Liberty, Lady Bennett, Dr. Leonard West, Dr. Morley Davies, Miss Tatham, Mr. A. Macdonald, etc.

## WHADDON CHURCH

The first place visited was Whaddon Church, where Mr. C. Rouse explained the development of the 12th century church by the additions of the N. aisle, c. 1190, and of the S. aisle, c. 1200; whilst the mid-14th century produced the N. chapel and the W. tower. The columns of the N. arcade, with their carved capitals, were pointed out. The monuments in the N. chapel to Serjeant Pigott (1519) and to Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton (1593) were noticed, as well as some interesting fittings, such as the bracket, with grotesque head, for raising the font-cover, and the alms-shovels of oak, dated 1643. The mural paintings of Thomas à Beckett on the wall of the chancel discovered in 1854 but since covered again, were mentioned. They were described and illustrated in the *Records*, vol. III., pp. 270-3, but it was hoped that means would be found of again bringing to light such extremely interesting historical figures.

Members then moved on to Whaddon Hall, where the following paper was read:—

“The story of that great tract of forest-land known as Whaddon Chace itself would make a long tale in which the most important incident to archæologists perhaps is the discovery in 1849 of 400 gold coins which can only be described as “Ancient British.” Some are in our museum at Aylesbury, and it will be remembered that none have any inscription—most have a rude figure of a horse upon them.

Again, almost due E. of the house is a large entrenchment, enclosing some 11 acres, which marks the site of the small Benedictine Priory of Snelshall. It was never more than a cell, a matter of six monks with the prior; of this nothing whatever remains above ground.

Coming to the Manor we have a long and full story which can only be touched upon: at the time of Domesday it had been granted to Walter Gifford, and formed one of the 48 manors which he held in Bucks; he was created Earl of Buckingham. After the death of his son, who left no heir, the manor passed to a whole string of high-sounding Norman names. There was a separate "Giffard's Manor" wrapped up with the Chace which in the late 15th century belonged to the Pigotts—Thomas Pigott died in 1519 and is commemorated by the elaborate tomb of Purbeck marble in the N. chapel of the church. Thomas Pigott's son (of the same name) became the first of that long line of Pigotts who still, one is glad to remember, reign at Doddershall. This Giffard's Manor in Whaddon afterwards passed to Lord Grey de Wilton, and the other tomb in the N. chapel of the church is believed to be that of Arthur, 14th Lord Grey de Wilton.

Returning to the chief Manor of Whaddon, and jumping to 1616, we find it granted by James I. to the favourite Villiers, who was made Lord Whaddon in that year and Duke of Buckingham in 1623. After the death of the second Duke "in the worst inn's worst room" in 1687 the much-mortgaged estate was sold to Thomas Willis and James Selby.

Thomas Willis was son of the famous doctor, and father of the still more famous antiquary, whom we of Bucks have reason to revere profoundly—Browne Willis, who lived here 56 years, dying in 1760. Selby had a son, Thomas James Selby, who died in 1772. You will see his portrait in the inner hall presently, and he counts for much here, leaving as he did a curious will to the effect, that, if his right and lawful heir was not forthcoming, Whaddon should pass to his friend William Lowndes, who was great-grandson of the famous Secretary to the Treasury in the reign



of Queen Anne, and lived at Winslow in the house which was finished in 1701. The claimants to be lawful heirs of T. J. Selby were many, and the story of the law-suits is a long one. The Lowndes rights were not admitted until 1783; our host to-day represents the fifth generation of Selby-Lowndes owners.

We must now go back to the Willis and Selby acquisition of the property. The old Gifford house had been added to considerably by Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, whom we mentioned just now; he pulled down his house of Waterhall, Bletchley, and brought the materials here, making a great hall of 50 feet long, etc. By an unfortunate arrangement between Willis and Selby, a large part of the old house, including Lord Grey's additions, was pulled down. When Browne Willis came of age in 1704 he bought back Selby's share and saved what was left, partly rebuilding the destroyed portion. Of this old house we have an account by Hearne of his visit to Browne Willis in 1716, and we have the illustration reproduced by Lipscomb. It seems clear that part at least of the ancient house was then remaining; to-day there is nothing whatever.

Besides many objects of great beauty and interest, which we will notice as we come to them, you will find within some of the portraits of people whom I have mentioned; others will be found relating to that other, but very important line of Col. Lowndes's descent, by which he appears as the representative of the Montacute, the Poles, and the Barringtons. We are glad to think that the Committee of Privileges has admitted his claim to the barony of Montacute, and we hope that the time will not be long before we can address him by the title to which he has effectually proved his right."

Members then entered the house and, apart from its fine details in strict Palladian taste, were much interested in such objects as the Winslow market standard bushel measure made of gun-metal, and dated 1641, and a very thick leather helmet worn by the keepers of Whaddon Chase. Furniture of various kinds was found for almost every decade from 1670 to

1810, some of the chairs of early Georgian date being particularly fine. A tall clock, with marqueterie case, bore the Royal Arms, and was a gift from Queen Anne to "Ways and Means" Lowndes, of whom there was a portrait, by Phillips. Other Lowndes portraits were by Sir T. Lawrence and Sir G. Kneller; the grandson of the Secretary, by his marriage with Essex Shales, acquired many Barrington portraits (it was this marriage which brought the peerage rights to the family). Among them were several of the 16th century, such as the Countess of Salisbury, beheaded in 1541. The first Lowndes to own Whaddon married Mary Goosetrey of Great Missenden, and this alliance introduced portraits of Sir Wm. Fleetwood, Recorder of London, died 1594; and Sir Thos. and Lady Hoby; the last two fine portraits by Dobson. Two of the Barrington portraits are by Sir P. Lely. Colonel Selby-Lowndes' own room is filled with a remarkable collection of prints and paintings of old sportsmen, and other hunting trophies.

The Society then took the road to Newport Pagnell and had lunch at "The Swan."

#### NORTH CRAWLEY

The first place to be visited after lunch was the church of North Crawley, with its unusual dedication to St. Firmin. Here Mr. F. Bull, F.S.A., called attention to the S. arcade, of the 13th century, with stiff-leaved foliage on the capitals of the columns. The chancel, built by Peter of Guildford, c. 1295, has the unusual distinction of being so described in an inscription below the outside sill of the E. window; the unusually fine roofs with the carved figures below the tie-beams were commented upon. Above all, the rood-screen, with its 16 panels, painted with figures of saints and prophets (all of the late 15th century) was particularly described; members having in mind the President's recent address upon the iconography of our county. The early 16th century seating, some with linen panelling, and the brass to the late 16th century rector, John Garbrand, were noticed.

#### WESTON UNDERWOOD

From here the Society went to Weston Underwood; time did not allow much attention to the base of the

15th century village cross, or the famous 17th century house which formed Cowper's home from 1786 until 1795. At the church Mr. Bull drew attention to the many fittings of interest: the brass to Lady Throckmorton (1571) and the communion rails and table of the 17th century. Above all, the famous glass of c. 1380 in the E. window was explained, with its panels filled with figures of Saints: Peter, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Lawrence, and Paul, the ascending figure of Christ, and censing angels.

#### GAYHURST HOUSE

The last place to be visited was Gayhurst, where the church was examined—an interesting example of the classical Renaissance style prevalent when it was rebuilt (1724-1728) by George Wright, then the owner of Gayhurst. He bequeathed money for this purpose and for the erection of a monument by Roubiliac to his father, Sir Nathan Wright, Keeper of the Great Seal to William III. and Queen Anne. The happy preservation of the original woodwork added much to the impressive effect of this truly classical building.

Members then passed on to the mansion where the following paper was read:—

At the time of the Domesday the name was Gateherst (from gat and hyrst, or "goats' wood"), less than a century later the Pipe Rolls spelt it "Gaherst," and by 1290 the "Inquisitiones post mortem" were spelling it "Gothurst"; there is therefore ample precedent for several versions; we will elect to follow the modern pronunciation: "Ga'urst."

The property was held by Robert Nowers at the time of Domesday and continued with his descendants until the death of Sir John de Nowers in 1396, when it passed to the Nevills, Sir Robert Nevill having married Joan Nowers. The last of the Nevills are very important in considering the house.

The earliest part of the existing house is the S.W. wing of the present structure; this may be placed at 1520; in the cellar are two doorways with moulded jambs and four-centred openings in square heads. These cannot be conveniently examined now, but a



very similar one leads into a very large walled garden just beyond the stables; as an example of a 16th century garden with original walls it is very well worth examining, covering, as it does, more than an acre.

Some of the windows in this early wing retain what may well be their original casements; and a door which came from that wing is now placed in the "Digby room" upstairs; it has been refurbished up a little, as becomes a bedroom door, but is made of vertical and horizontal oak boards thickly studded with square-headed nails; it retains some of its original furniture. Another feature of this wing is the original newel staircase; the steps are all made of solid oak, but being worn to a dangerous extent it has been necessary to cover both risers and treads with boards; some of the original steps are still uncovered at the very top. Several doorways and one or two battened doors in the attics of this wing are also of the 16th century.

It is now necessary to return for a moment to the last of the Nevills—Francis. On his death in 1581 the property passed to his sister Mary, who was then Mrs. Christopher Slingsby. By an earlier marriage she had a son—William Mulsho, and a settlement was made upon him by the Slingsbys. To prevent any question of title arising a patent was granted at this time by Queen Elizabeth conferring on Sir Francis Drake (among other things), the reversion to the manor of Gayhurst should it become forfeited to the Crown. On the following day a deed was executed between Sir F. Drake and William Mulsho which sold this reversion, and thereby secured the title beyond dispute.

It was in Mulsho's day that great additions were made, turning the house into its present shape, on this, the S.E. front. In effect it became H-shaped, or, if we count in this porch, E-shape with the top and bottom lines prolonged: forming a courtyard both back and front.

Mulsho's daughter, Mary, married Sir Everard Digby, who was concerned in the Gunpowder Plot, and lost his head over it in 1606. His estate was not

forfeited for this as it was vested in his wife, and it was duly confirmed to his son, the famous Sir Kenelm Digby, who was born here in the year of his father's death, and lived until the Restoration (1665). In his earlier days he distinguished himself in the navy, and it is said that the badge which appears on the bases of these Doris pillars—consisting of three bolt-heads and a ring under a rope-sling—and on the bases of the pillars with pierced finials which adorn the garden is a sign of his right to moor his barge at the Royal Wharf. In the hall will be seen an opening with semi-circular arch flanked by Corinthian pilasters which bears his initials.

It may be noted in passing that this entrance bears roughly incised upon it in several places the significant date 1649, and some doubtful initials. Sir Kenelm's brother, Sir John, and his son (of his own name), were killed in the Royal cause and he himself was exiled after having been imprisoned. The year of the "Royal Martyrdom" has much significance at Gayhurst, therefore. Sir Kenelm's second son, John, succeeded him here, dying in 1673, and in 1704 his two sons-in-law obtained an Act of Parliament for the sale of the estate to George Wrighte, son of the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, whose monument by Roubiliac we have just seen in the church.

It was possibly George Wrighte who made the last additions to the house by filling up the wings on the other or N.W. side. There is some doubt when this was done, but the fact that the estate was sold by John Digby's daughters makes it improbable that they would have incurred this great expense. The evidence for a date before 1700 rests chiefly on the frieze of carved wood in the ballroom upstairs; as to which each may form his own judgment. Some of the interior panelling is certainly of this time, and a room covered with Chinese paintings on vellum belongs to the early Wrighte period. The present main staircase is part of the work carried out at this time.

The precise contour of the original house can be seen to perfection from the roof, where some dormer windows show the limit of the Nevill mansion.



The descendants of the Wrightes continued to hold Gayhurst until Lady Macdonald leased it to Lord Carrington, who unhappily called in the aid of an architect named Burgess; and he had neither sympathy nor understanding. He stripped off panelling and made bonfires with it, rebuilt fireplaces, exchanged an oak stair for a stone one, and was guilty of other enormities which the happier taste of our host (whose father acquired it just 50 years ago) has endeavoured to counteract.

It must be remembered that this was the abode of Catholics; in one of the gables was an oratory, with concealed passage leading from it. There are various "hiding places" in different parts of the house, some may be flues, and an "underground passage" from one of the cellars under the old wing leads towards the dove-cot and was almost certainly a sewer—a tunnel hewn in the solid rock and starting from the bottom of a short shaft.

Other passages "pass" round or through chimney-places and have been connected with the smoking of bacon or other unromantic purposes, but there was certainly a number of openings designed for concealment, of which the most remarkable is in one of the attics of the old wing, where in the slope of the roof the underneath of the tiles is visible on each side of some intermediate rafters. Adjoining them some laths are hinged to a door originally covered with tiles and appearing to form part of the roof. When this door is pressed back, however, a cavity is disclosed in which a man could easily conceal himself, contrived in the thickness of the rubble-built wall. It is impossible to show this to a large party.

Another thing which should be mentioned is that the approach to the house on this side originally had a flagged walk, flanked by a low wall, with strap-work carving. In the time of the Wrightes this was moved to the N.E. front and leads by steps to a lawn, which a sunk-fence separates from the park.

There is certainly no house in the north of the county which for its date and importance (both as a structure and from its associations) can in any way approach Gayhurst.