

## THE MUSEUM

THE main event in 1966 was undoubtedly the opening of the new Natural History Gallery by Lady Barlow on 25th April to coincide with National Nature Week. Six cases are designed to show the animals and plants which occur in some habitats typical of the county, namely beechwood, canal bank, downland, garden, hedgerow and reservoir, in an attempt to demonstrate the ecological approach to natural history. Two other cases show animal tracks and signs and the changing fauna of the county respectively. An aquarium illustrating the fresh water life found in local ponds and canals will be added in 1967. A small geology gallery has a display of the rocks found in the county, showing their distribution and economic uses, and a selection of local fossils.

The Museum did not arrange a temporary exhibition of its own this year, but instead mounted a display at the 100th Bucks County Show in the grounds of Hartwell House. This formed part of a special attraction, "Farming through the Ages", which consisted of a display of larger farm equipment, organised by the Show Committee, outside a marquee 60 ft. x 40 ft. in which the Museum exhibited smaller items. Smocks, old agricultural tools, shooting and trapping equipment, and photographs of machinery and farming practices were displayed on stands and fittings

around the sides, and dairy and domestic farmhouse equipment in the centre. This was most successful, as at times there were over 100 people in the marquee, and it is estimated that at least 2,000 people passed through between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. when it was open. The exhibitions in the Museum comprised three borrowed from the Victoria and Albert Museum, the annual exhibition of the Aylesbury Art Society, and an exhibition of paintings by the Bucks Federation of Women's Institutes.

In addition to the usual visits to archaeological sites, the Museum carried out a third season of excavation, with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Public Building and Works, on the site of the deserted medieval village of Caldecote, Aylesbury, from 18th July to 12th August. It is hoped that a report on the excavations will be published in 1968.

Amongst the accessions must be mentioned some early 18th century wall paintings from a house at Beaconsfield, which were removed on their walls with great difficulty by members of the Beaconsfield and District Historical Society, with the assistance of staff from Hall Barn Estates, Ltd. The problems can be appreciated by the fact that one of the walls is estimated to weigh  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Also an important group of agricultural tools and implements was given by J. R. Faulkner and Son from a farm at Ludgershall.

In planning the new geological display it was found that there was an absence of rock specimens and also those illustrating economic geology. Rock samples have, therefore, been collected from a number of sites, and samples illustrating cement and brick manufacture obtained from undertakings in the county.

In September Miss J. E. McLachlan took up the post of Technical Assistant, which will enable archaeological and other material to be treated on the premises, and eventually a photographic department is to be established.

The number of visitors was 22,374, compared with 21,758 in 1965.

C.N.G.