

**Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum
for Thirteen Months, ending November 30th,
1904.**

THE Report for last year covered a period of ten months ; the present Report, thirteen months. This irregularity is due to the fact that the *Proceedings* are not always published in the same month of the year, and this Report is carried down to as late a date as possible.

As will be seen by the following pages, the acquisitions to the Museum have been very numerous, and it will be observed that the "Walter Collection" has been added to by Mr. Hensleigh Walter, of Stoke-under-Ham. The most important donation received this year is the choice collection of archaeological remains from South Somerset, so generously presented by the collector, Dr. Hugh Norris, one of the Society's local secretaries, and brother-in-law of Dr. W. W. Walter. Naturally the "Norris Collection" will be exhibited in the same room as the larger "Walter Collection;" and as the former has only recently arrived at the Museum it will not be possible to give a detailed description of it in this volume.

The re-labelling of Museum specimens has taken up a large proportion of the Curator's time this year; and many hours have been occupied in ascertaining and recovering the history, name of donor, and date of acquisition of many objects in the Museum which were either not ticketed at all, or if so, insufficiently. This has entailed much search in the early volumes of the *Proceedings*. The proper re-labelling of the various collections is not only an arduous task, but is, inevitably, a slow one, and the want of a small printing-press and type-

writer is greatly felt, rapid advancement being only obtainable thereby. Both, or either, could be manipulated by a lad trained to the work.

Owing to the Society's deficit, only one new case has been ordered this year, viz., for the "Norris Collection;" but in course of time several will be required for the valuable collections of Savage Arts, when additional space is available for the proper exhibition of this popular and instructive section of Museum exhibits.

Since the publication of the last Report the Norman Keep, in which the Archæological collections, Pottery, and some of the Ethnographical collections are exhibited, has received most attention during the year, and the room now contains several distinct series, more or less completed. These series have been enumerated to a sufficient extent in the Annual Report (see p. 3). The Pottery series is being dealt with in some detail, and the classification, dating, and labelling of the following sections have been completed so far:—Bronze Age, Late-Celtic, Roman and Romano-British, Greek and Etruscan, Norman and Mediæval. Examples of later date are being ticketed individually, after which they will be arranged in chronological sequence, as far as the cases will allow.

In the Great Hall, which is primarily the Natural History gallery, various archæological and ethnographical series have unavoidably been introduced for want of space elsewhere. This has been done only of necessity, but is most undesirable. In this room, the Glastonbury Lake Village relics of 1904 have been temporarily exhibited. Here also a case has been devoted to "Human Form in Art," and to "Head-Gear." The large stage which was erected for the purposes of the opening ceremony in 1902 has been much reduced in size, it being desirable to retain a small stage for the purposes of lectures. This end of the Hall has therefore much improved in general appearance, and cases of extinct mammalia previously blocked are now accessible for inspection.

Three weeks of the Curator's time have been expended in conducting the Glastonbury Lake Village excavations conjointly with Mr. Arthur Bulleid (see Part II, pp. 68-93); and one week has been spent in carrying out the explorations at Small Down Camp, near Evercreech (see Part II, pp. 32-49).

In the Library Department this year the Rev. E. H. Bates and myself have been through all the books in the general Library, with a result that like works have been brought together to a greater extent, and several dozens of useless, undesirable and duplicate volumes have been eliminated, and shelved in one of the "Stock Rooms." Several periodicals have been bound, and a few important books have been rebound.

The heating apparatus throughout the Museum has been found, on the whole, to work satisfactorily; and specimens and books are no longer deteriorating on account of climatical changes.

In order that the Museum may be rendered more useful and accessible for students residing in the neighbourhood, the Committee has resolved to issue season tickets (not transferable) for admission to the Museum at 3s. 6d. per annum.

The total number of visitors from January 1st to November 30th, 1904, has been 6980, including 983 visits from members.

The increase in the visitors to the Museum during the current year is not great, but the number of ordinary visitors has been much about the same as last year, although the number of visitors to the town of Taunton during the Summer was below the average. The increase in 1904, shown in the accompanying table is due to (1) slightly larger attendance on Thursday afternoons owing to the reduction of the admission fee, and (2) the fact that the Museum has been visited by more schools than heretofore. The reduction in the admission on Thursday's (Taunton early closing day) shows, however, a loss of at least £1 in the amount of Thursday fees when compared with 1903.

VISITORS TO TAUNTON CASTLE.

	1901		1902		1903		1904	
	Visitors.	Members included.	Visitors.	Members included.	Visitors.	Members included.	Visitors.	Members included.
January ...	252	89	298	89	338	86	549	102
February ...	289	126	302	107	306	94	348	90
March ...	306	132	440	103	344	85	480	84
April ...	477	111	437	103	558	82	881	86
May ...	390	87	659	262	438	78	596	88
June ...	329	65	474	70	555	102	503	86
July ...	451	61	655	127	554	85	645	89
August ...	1022	65	1336	86	1422	106	1221	84
September ...	583	82	769	81	921	101	798	91
October ...	385	68	492	76	564	97	523	86
November ...	274	77	451	100	458	103	426	87
December ...	329	80	383	71	386	99	—	—
	5047	943	6696	1275	6844	1118	—	—
INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	6 per cent.		33 per cent. <i>Coronation year.</i>		2 per cent.		8 per cent. <i>Approximate</i>	

On comparing the accompanying form with that published last year (*Proceedings*, XLIX, i, 53), it will be observed that an error was made in the totals (not in the money received) rendered to me for May, June and July, 1902. This has, however, been rectified and I have checked all the figures; so that this table, with the additions for 1904, has been re-published to replace the incorrect table referred to. The result shows a gradual increase in the number of visitors during the last four years.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

November 30th, 1904.