

Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for the Year

1902.

SINCE the last Report, a considerable amount of general progress has been effected, especially with regard to the "Walter Collection." Endeavours have been made to augment, as far as possible, the educational value of the specimens that have been dealt with.

An increasing interest in the Museum is manifest, and it is gratifying to be able to record that the attendance of visitors,—including members,—during the year has greatly exceeded anything previously recorded, the total reaching 7,444; an increase over 1901 of 47 per cent. The following is a Table of the number of visitors to Taunton Castle Museum during the last ten years :—

Year.	No. of Visitors.		Year.	No. of Visitors.
1893	5,539		1898	5,082
1894	5,317		1899	4,978
1895	4,964		1900	4,740
1896	4,610		1901	5,047
1897	5,236		1902	7,444

The greater part of the year has been occupied by work in connection with the large donation made in December, 1901, by Mr. W. W. Walter. Owing to the fact that arrangements were made for temporary assistance, etc., most of this work was accomplished before the Opening Ceremony, on May 21st. Every specimen—and there are some hundreds—was firstly cleaned, preservatives being applied and repairs effected where necessary. A large proportion of the objects have been ticketed in white oil-paint; others were written on in indelible ink :

neatly printed labels have been glued on to all fragments of pottery; and other specimens were found better adapted for 'tie-on' labels. The collection has been arranged in series as far as possible. Some of the cases were made at the expense of the Society, but others, of deal, forming part of the gift, were stained and varnished, and adapted to the sizes of the tables on which they were fixed and to the requirements of the collection. Full details of the contents and arrangement of the collection will be found in Part II, p. 24.

During the autumn all the new accessions—other than the "Walter Collection"—have been ticketed and put into their proper series; and, as will be seen on pp. 66—80, they far exceed in number the miscellaneous donations of previous years.

The objects comprising the "Stradling Collection," detailed on pp. 81—87, have been removed from the old glazed cases in which they have remained for thirty-five years, and separately ticketed in white oil-paint, the greater part filling gaps in the existing series in the Museum.

The "Monmouth Relics" have been brought together into one case, and some have been permanently ticketed. Photographs of the buckle, button, and Hispano-Moresque dish have been added since the removal of the originals by the owner (p. 81).

Other miscellaneous work has been effected in the Great Hall. The Egyptian shells, presented by Mr. E. Scarlett in 1901, have been shown in one case: in another, bones of the Moa (*Dinornis maximus*), the great extinct bird of New Zealand; to which series a photograph has been added, showing the relative sizes of Man and the Moa. The minerals from the Brendon Hills, Blue Anchor and the Quantocks, presented by Mr. Spencer G. Perceval in 1871, have been cleaned and re-arranged. The coal fossils from Writhlington, Radstock, Bath, have been cleaned and ticketed with small printed labels. The chalk fossils from Chard, presented by Mr. Northcote W. Spicer in 1862, have been identified and com-

mented upon, through the kindness of Mr. A. J. Jukes-Browne, F.G.S., and ticketed by the Curator.

In the Great Hall have also been exhibited, in a wall case, temporarily, the large gift of 'Elton Ware' from Sir Edmund H. Elton, Bart. (p. 78), and the donation of some fine work in Cornish marbles from Mr. F. T. J. Haynes (p. 79).

Considerable attention in the scientific world has just been drawn to the remains of the Cave Hyæna in Taunton Museum from the Somerset Caves, from the fact that many of the best specimens, covering nine plates, have been figured in Vol. lvi, 1902, of the Palæontographical Society.

In the Norman Keep a certain amount of re-arrangement has taken place, especially with regard to the series of calligraphy, coins, tokens, casts of the seals of the Kings and Queens of England, keys, charms and amulets. The ticketing of the Bronze implements series in white oil-paint, commenced in 1901, has been completed. All the implements of the Stone Age, including many recent additions (see pp. 66—70), have received like attention. As the Keep is about to be slightly repaired and repainted, something approaching permanent re-arrangement of the archaeological series will probably be effected during 1903.

Several of the Roman remains in this room and in the "Walter Collection" have been photographed by the Curator, and will be reproduced in two quarto plates in the forthcoming *Victoria History of Somerset*.

The Bronze Age cist from Culbone has been removed from the Entrance Hall, where it presented a somewhat incongruous appearance, to a well-lighted recess on the staircase; and the drinking-vessel and skeleton, forming part of the 'find,' have been exhibited in a case beside the cist and model. The Kewstoke reliquary is now shown in a glass shade on the Entrance Hall table.

Beyond the permanent ticketing of a few objects, time has not permitted of anything further being done in the Ethnographical Room.

Nothing very striking has been done in the Library, but as the long list of additions (pp. 88—97) indicates, a considerable amount of cataloguing has been necessary ; and some hundreds of volumes have been cut. The Manuscript Library Catalogue has been continued, but little progress has been made owing to a heavy year's work in connection with the Museum. Forty volumes of the publications of Societies have been bound, including fourteen volumes of the *Index Library* presented by Rev. F. W. Weaver.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

December 31st, 1902.