

Report of the Curator of Taunton Castle Museum for the Year ended December 31st, 1915.

TWO acquisitions of outstanding importance have enriched the Museum collections at Taunton Castle this year. Mr. Charles Tite, as already announced in the Annual Report of the Society, has presented his valuable collection of Somerset Trade Tokens of the XVII Century, which includes more than three-quarters of the types and varieties listed by Boyne and Williamson. Mr. Tite's donation will interest collectors of Somerset tokens, from the fact that Mr. H. Symonds and myself have written a paper, based to a large extent on the Taunton collection, on types and varieties of Somerset Tokens of the XVII Century not previously listed, and now published in the Society's *Proceedings*. The labelling, classification and arrangement of the Tite Collection of Tokens has occupied much time during the year.

The other acquisition referred to above is the Arthur Hull Collection, chiefly of local archæological and ethnographical specimens, which has been stored in a room adjoining the Town Hall at Chard since 1881. Mr. Hull bequeathed the collection to the Mayor and Corporation of Chard for the time being to form a nucleus for a museum in that town. The Society recently agreed to accept a large selection of the specimens as a deposit on loan for a minimum period of twenty-one years. At the time of writing the objects have arrived at Taunton and are being cleaned, repaired, catalogued and ticketed as opportunity occurs. Every specimen will be labelled as belonging to the Hull Collection, and will eventually be placed in the respective groups of objects in the Museum to which they belong. In due course an account of the collection will be published.

The largest and perhaps most interesting object in the collection is a Virginal of fine workmanship, inscribed with

the name of the maker, Charles Rewallin, of Exeter, 1675. Mr. H. A. Jeboult has placed on loan in the Museum a well preserved Harpsichord, bearing the inscription "Abraham et Josephus Kirckman. Londini fecerunt. 1790."

In addition, a considerable number of specimens have been obtained during the year. Both Dr. R. H. Walter and Mr. A. V. Cornish have deposited further collections of antiquities found on Ham Hill during the last two years; and Mr. W. R. Phelps has presented a hoard of over 400 Roman coins found in a crock (also presented) on Ham Hill many years ago, as stated in the Society's Annual Report. These coins have not yet been catalogued. The Roman fibulæ from Kilmersdon presented by Dr. A. Bulleid are of considerable interest. Many local ethnographical specimens and "bygones" have been acquired by presentation. The most interesting drawing received during the year is a plan of Taunton Castle and its precincts, showing the position of the inner and outer moats; this was the work of the late Mr. J. Houghton Spencer and was given by Mr. C. Tite.

The Coin Department, in addition to the series of XVII Century Trade Tokens above mentioned, has been enriched by a number of tokens from counties adjoining Somerset and several Somerset Medals presented by Mr. Tite. The Rev. W. T. Reeder has given several English silver coins and two of gold. From Mr. T. Beaven Clark about thirty Roman coins (in fine condition) have been received.

Several cases in the Great Hall have been re-arranged during the year; and the banner of the Barrington Club has been restored and hung (see *Proceedings*, LVIII, i, 110). The early printed books and illuminated manuscripts exhibited in the Coin Room have been re-arranged and re-labelled.

Certain sections of the Library have undergone re-arrangement, and Prebendary E. H. Bates Harbin has sorted some of the manuscripts in the strong-room. All the manuscript volumes of the Serel series have been permanently numbered; a separate calendar with index of these papers was prepared a few years ago, as previously reported. Mr. C. Tite has added some more volumes to his collection of Somerset books, and the cataloguing of them has been continued. Many

valuable books have been presented to the Library by Miss Charlotte Winch, and several useful volumes have been given by Bishop Cornish, Mr. T. W. Cowan, Miss L. M. Badcock and Mr. F. Whittingham. Mr. F. H. Knight, late postmaster of Taunton, has compiled an abstract of the names, occupations, etc., of 659 persons and of places named in seventy-six "discharges" relating to persons removed into the parish of Taunton St. James, 1652-1745.

The Botanical Section held its annual meeting at the Castle on February 9th, the Entomological Section on February 11th, and the Ornithological Section on February 18th. The Taunton Field Club held conversaciones for lectures on February 4th and March 18th, and an evening meeting on December 2nd, when Mr. H. A. Jeboult lectured on "Elizabethan Music," with vocal and instrumental illustrations.

Owing to the War my assistant, W. H. D. Bence, left the employ of the Society on October 23rd. His place was taken temporarily by a boy, J. Bulley, from October 30th to December 11th; and he was succeeded on December 15th by Mdlle. L. Bastiaensen, of Antwerp.

On account of these changes and consequent disorganization in routine work, Mrs. St. G. Gray has kindly rendered me considerable assistance during the year.

It is difficult to give the exact number of members of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society on December 31st, as a few of those on active service have discontinued their subscriptions temporarily, but the number is not far short of 900, including ten life members and two honorary members.

The following is a list of the monthly attendances of visitors to the Museum and Library for the year just completed:—

	No. of Members.	Total Visitors.		No. of Members.	Total Visitors.
Jan. ...	63	246	July ...	140	566
Feb. ...	98	263	Aug. ...	85	362
Mar. ...	130	380	Sept. ...	79	626
Apr. ..	71	491	Oct. ..	92	404
May ...	100	489	Nov. ...	91	268
June ...	108	437	Dec. ...	112	464
				1169	5496

The number of visitors during 1914 was 5458, including 1267 visits from members of the Society. It is satisfactory to note that the persons who paid for admission in 1915 exceeded those in 1914 by 136. Military and naval men have been admitted to the Museum during the War on payment of a fee of 2*d.* on any day in the week.

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