



A GUIDE TO

# DERBY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS booklet is intended as a Guide to the nature and variety of the collections in this Museum and Art Gallery and a picture book of a few of the many attractive and interesting things to be found within its walls. Obviously the objects depicted and described herein are but a tiny fraction of the whole but this Guide will help to save the time of the visitor enabling him quickly and easily to ascertain what he will see in the various exhibition galleries. These now run through two buildings; on three floors in the new extension and on the first floor in the old building which is shared with the Public Libraries. A plan is included at the end of this booklet. It is not possible nor, indeed, desirable, that the whole of the collections should be on view at one time. Reserve collections of paintings and drawings, pottery and porcelain, insects, fossils and minerals, coins and medals etc., can be seen on application. In addition to the permanent collections a continuous calendar of loan exhibitions are held throughout the year and series of lectures and concerts in the winter months.

Like many similar institutions which are now a municipal undertaking, the Derby Museum and Art Gallery owes its origin to the enthusiasm of private learned Societies. In 1836 the Derby Town and County Museum and Natural History Society was inaugurated and had a Museum in two rooms of the newly-opened Town and County Library in Full Street. In 1840 the Museum was moved to the Athenaeum and in 1859 to a spacious mansion in the Wardwick, the Natural History Society section dropped out and the Museum absorbed the Derby Philosophical Society which the famous Dr. Erasmus Darwin had founded in 1788.

Soon the Museum and Library were amalgamated under the one roof with the name of Derby Town and County Museum and Library although the Committees functioned independently for some years. After an offer to the town to take over the Museum had been turned down in 1856 the Library and Museum was formally opened as a public institution in October 1871. Removing all fees and subscriptions greatly increased the use of both Library and Museum and after the old mansion had been demolished the existing building was erected at the expense of Michael Thomas Bass, M.P. for Derby who opened the building on 28th June, 1879. Four years later an Art Gallery was added to this gift and in 1916 two further art galleries (as well as an extension to the Public Library) were opened, paid for partly out of public subscriptions. In 1944 the late Mr. Alfred Goodey bequeathed a sum of money to the town towards the cost of an extension to the Museum and Art Gallery and in 1962/3 a three-storey building was erected and this was opened on 30th June, 1964.