R. T. Gunther,
A valuable collection of source materials relating to him is in
by the men at whom they were directed – the county gentry of England.
and naturalists alike. More important, as the several copies
natural history. Plot's work supplied a model, and remained a
specimens to his Museum.
therefore prepared to support Plot's perambulations and to send
participate in local projects such as he organized and were
of a wide range of country gentry who were willing, even eager,
lies in the way that his early work dove-tailed with the interests
of convivial disposition, bibulous and jovial, Plot's importance
on occasion arousing the ire of his colleagues, but nonetheless
1696 Plot died after suffering sufficiently greatly for the fact
had subscribed towards it. Like Plot's own hopes however, those
not be unconnected with the fact that a bevy of influential men
work on the
the Orangist succession. In January 1695 the office of Mowbray
Royal only to lose the post the following year in the wake of
Registrar of the Court of Chivalry. In 1688 he was made Historiographer
To some extent the move was successful.
in the last ten years of his life he concentrated more seriously
questionnaires and subscription proposals for them. Nonetheless
that he intended to write no more county histories, it is clear
offered no great promise of further advancement.
which also seems to have led to Plot's resignation from the Museum.
recorded by Thomas Hearne are to be believed, for not returning
might be found with Plot is ambition linked with greed. As a collector
Rather than credulity, the fault that
contrary to Catholicism and towards an older world view than the apparent
remark in an early nineteenth-century source. In reality he was
Plot has sometimes been accused of
philosophical, the explanations of the reasons of things longer,
which might be useful to others. Even so, the book is far more
of Plot's survey of England. It is a more mature and readable
was the completion of his
His major achievement during this period
was created), to house Ashmole's museum, a lecture hall and a chemical
exercise his explanatory skills. Between 1679 and 1683 an imposing
acquired practical skills such as elementary land-surveying and
study that Plot must have laid the foundation of the formidable
1671.
Plot entered Magdalen Hall on the 24th March 1658, matriculated
in the Old Ashmolean, the building that now houses the Museum
Professor of Chemistry, spent much of his working life
This year marks the 300th anniversary
out to record the natural history of England in all its variety.
and inventions, machines and models, paintings and drawings, are
could be exploited far more fully than hitherto. He has also understood
of the natural world, Plot has understood that natural products
England in order to record its curiosities of art and nature.
On the track between field and forest,
now and then he would stop, dismount even, to examine more closely
and flower for all and anything new, different and unusual. Every