

REVIEWS

The People of Chesham. Their Births, Marriages and Deaths 1637-1730. Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society, pp. 424. Barracuda Books, 1984.

The Chess Valley Archaeological Society are to be congratulated on the production of this transcription of their town's Church Registers. That some hero has faced the daunting task of preparing an index enormously multiplies its usefulness. It has been meticulously edited and is obviously the fruit of much dedicated hard work. In fact it admirably provides the long hoped-for sequel to the first volume of the Register by J. W. Garrett-Pegge published in 1904. It will, I am sure, prove to be an essential reference for students of Buckinghamshire family history and an important contribution to the history of Chesham itself.

L.M.H.

Drawings of Stowe by John Claude Nattes. Buckinghamshire County Council & Stowe School, 1983.

This handsome oblong paperback, 60 x 85, with fifty-one full-page plates, a complete catalogue and an introduction, has been compiled by George Clarke, Second Master at Stowe School and its historian, and Christopher Gowing, Curator of the County Museum. It is a worthy record of one of the Museum's most important acquisitions of the last few years. Nattes made 105 drawings of the buildings and grounds of Stowe between 1805 and 1809, the majority in wash but some in chalk; their main importance is in the date when they were drawn. For nearly a century from 1720 the great house and even greater landscape

park had been continually developed and altered; by 1800 it was complete, its trees mature, the temples, obelisks and other park buildings all built and the main house complete as we see it today. So Nattes' drawings give us a complete record of this great ensemble at its peak. Apart from their importance they have charm and evoke nostalgia for this magical man-made landscape. And it is fair to say that despite the addition of so many school buildings and the loss of many of the original monuments, a great deal of the magic can still be experienced in a walk round the grounds today.

The purchase of the drawings, which cost £40,000, was a co-operative effort. The Museum dug deep into its slender resources, substantial grants came from the Victoria & Albert Museum and the National Heritage Fund, and these together with generous donations from Old Stoics were sufficient to acquire this notable addition for the county where it properly belongs.

E.V.

Buckinghamshire Contributions for Ireland, 1642 and Richard Grenville's Military Accounts, 1642-1645. *Ed. John Wilson with an Introduction by Dr. John Morrill, pp. 171.* Bucks Record Society No. 21, 1983.

In 1965 a notebook of Richard Grenville, High Sheriff of Bucks from 1641 until December 1643, was included in the volume of Ship Money papers edited for the Bucks Record Society by Carol Bonsey and the late J. G. Jenkins. Grenville now reappears in the latest volume of the Society, consisting primarily of

documents compiled by him or which undoubtedly passed through his hands and which are now preserved among the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers at the Public Record Office.

The bulk of the volume is devoted to the accounts of the county's contributions for Ireland in early 1642, the raising of funds and forces for the suppression of the rebellion there being one of the few causes to attract bipartisan support as the political situation rapidly deteriorated in England itself. Indeed, the legislation for a scheme for voluntary loans or gifts received Charles' assent only a matter of weeks before he left his capital. It is perhaps a measure of how wide support proved that a majority of the population appear to have been willing to contribute although, as Dr. Morrill's clear introduction wryly notes, they were not willing to give very much. The total sum realised from the 8,000 or so men and women listed in the surviving returns for Bucks amounted to only £1,098.12s.10¹/₂d., although this was generous by the standards of other counties.

As a source, the returns under the legislation of January 1642 (16 Charles I, c. 30) have been generally neglected by historians, but it is particularly valuable to have such a listing where, as in Bucks, the Protestation returns are so fragmentary. It would appear from the latter returns, at least eight of which were administered by churchwardens and overseers simultaneously with the Contribution, that the Contribution lists for Bucks are restricted to ratepaying householders. There is, however, no indication of status or wealth. The returns have survived for 132 parishes, being almost complete for the three hundreds of Aylesbury, Cottesloe and Newport; partially complete for Ashendon and Buckingham; fragmentary for Burnham; and non-existent for Desborough and Stoke. Yet they still represent 'one of the most complete listings of inhabitants to survive' prior to the hearth-tax returns and, for this reason alone, this volume will be a major source for genealogists.

It would be a pity if the significance of the other parts of this volume was altogether

missed since Grenville's military accounts receive no mention or explanation in the introduction to the volume. They were compiled, as were the papers relating to the Contribution, in 1647 and one suspects that they may date from that period when Grenville was called upon to explain other expenditure as Sheriff before the Accounts Committee at Amersham in the same year. There are two different kinds of accounts interspersed. Primarily, there are the accounts of raising and maintaining Grenville's own troops of 'Harquebuziers' (a contemporary term for Horse but misleading since the arquebus or matchlock musket was not carried) in Arthur Goodwin's regiment of Essex's army. From these there is much incidental information to be gleaned on the minutiae of Civil War military administration. It cost, for example, £140 to mount and equip Grenville himself; each trooper received a 'scarfe' (presumably a sash as a field recognition sign) at 10s. each; a trooper received 2s.6d. a day, and so on. The 60 men of Grenville's troop were also provided with mounts by local residents and the listing of those who provided horses as well as other equipment in 1642 is in itself useful in assessing the degree and location of Parliamentary support.

The other accounts recorded relate to the county's military forces as a whole and the Parliamentary garrison at Aylesbury, since Grenville was, with Thomas Tyrell, one of the few members of the pre-war elite who remained available for the defence and administration of the county in the early part of the war. Others were either serving with the army or at Westminster and, in their absence and that of Tyrell after January 1643, new men emerged through the medium of the County Committee. Many of the newcomers such as Thomas Lane, Christopher Eggleton and Thomas Theed also appear in the accounts, but mostly in the lowly militia commissions they initially held in 1642. Again, there are insights from this second form of accounts. One such area to be mentioned is the state of the Aylesbury garrison, reference being made to the loan negotiated by Parliament from the Haberdashers Company in March 1644 which enabled arrears of pay to be settled so that

troops could be persuaded to reinforce Gloucester. Similarly, money being sent into Oxford by Lady 'Antonie' in May 1644 is intercepted and employed for the repair of Aylesbury defences 'which ware in great decaye'.

Many other aspects of the war are illuminated in passing. Four of Grenville's troopers are killed in a minor skirmish at Padbury in July 1643 while an injured horse from the skirmish is 'lett runne in Quareden grounds' to convalesce. Another trooper deserts while others become prisoners at Farnham Castle. There is reference, too, to the weekly tax instituted in February 1643 and of the increasingly irksome practice of free quarter, which culminated in the county's petition to Parliament in 1647. Grenville's own men 'owe much for frequarters at severall places in Aylesbury, Bearton and elsewhere' but, as in other instances, Grenville is not entirely sure as 'most materiall papers concerning my troupe weare lost when I was taken prisoner.' In fact, Grenville, who had earlier been severely wounded during Goodwin's assault on Brill in January 1643, was only temporarily a prisoner before being exchanged in February 1645. This

particular feature of the conflict is also represented by the mention of 'Capteine Shilborne' being taken by the Royalists, Thomas Shelborne being only briefly held after his capture by the Hillesden garrison in February 1644.

Quite simply, the military accounts are a delight for their almost understated details. One more example must suffice. Included in the expenditure in October and November 1642 is £2.3s.0d. for scouts, one of whom was sent 'to Kinton the night after the battle was fought.' In view of the imminent danger in which the King's success at Edgehill (Kinton is inexplicably interpreted in the index as being Kinton in Herts and not Kineton on the edge of the battlefield) placed the County Committee at Aylesbury, that brief sentence conveys so much.

Thus, this volume of the Record Society series is of considerable interest at a number of levels and should rightfully appeal to a wider readership than might at first be apparent. In the circumstances it is perhaps unfortunate that the introduction, excellent as it is, should have been confined to the Contribution lists.

Ian Beckett