

## REVIEWS

THE HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF PENN. By J. Gilbert Jenkins. London: St. Catherine Press. 7s. 6d. (9 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins. by 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins.).

This handsome volume of 210 pages, with linocut illustrations and a map for end-paper, is a welcome addition to our single parochial histories. It may fairly be compared with the late W. H. Ward and Miss Block's *History of Iwer*, and exhibits a similar amount of careful work amongst original documents. The subject was not altogether promising, for the Penn-Curzon-Howe family has not a very extensive association with the parish, whilst the connection between the parish, that family, and the founder of Pennsylvania is regarded by Mr. Jenkins, as by most sound historians, to be "not proven."

The comparison with the *History of Iwer* has been made; one regrets that this book has followed the same chronological arrangement; according to this convention the reader looks at the parish in the Middle Ages, in Tudor times, in the 17th century, and in the 18th century and later. The intention is excellent, the design is evidently to exhibit progress or development; in fact, one does not get it but has the uncomfortable experience of pursuing the story of manor, or of Church in a series of kangaroo-like hops across the chapters. To finish with grumbles Mr. Jenkins has followed the objectionable plan (all too fashionable in these days), of putting his authorities at the end; this would not be so bad if he had associated the page-number with the reference, but as it is each chapter has a series of sub-sections, although they are not given on each opening of the text. To take an example at random, one finds on page 83 a long extract from John Knox's sermon at Amersham (one is not sure what it has to do with Penn, so Mr. Jenkins assumes that "many of the parishioners must have attended")

the service; one can only say that the assumption is unwarrantable, and history is not to be so written), this extract begins with a "superior,"<sup>8</sup> and when one wishes to know what it means one has to hunt back and find that one is reading the second section of the third chapter, and then hunt again amongst the "Authorities" until one finds it on page 186. That sort of thing annoys any student and the dissembling of scholarship which relegates documentation to the end of the book will not, one fears, convert the book into a "best seller."

It deserves to be one, for it is full, accurate, and well-balanced; the association of Burke with the School for French émigrés is well set out; Shrimpton, the highwayman, is not overlooked; and Sir George Grove (whose family had a long association with the parish), is duly recorded. One is rather sorry that Mr. Jenkins ignores the residence of John Liston, the comedian of a century ago, since we know that he went there annually to a cottage "westward of the church and on the northern side of the road."

Mr. Jenkins quotes (on page 96) from a "curious and mysterious document" proceeding from the Duchy of Lancaster, and even hints that it may be "spurious." To comfort him he may be assured that it was seen and approved entirely by the Public Record Office, and that the signature upon it is that of the particular Gerrard who acted for the Duchy at the time; it has been presented to our Society and is now in our Muniment Room.

Mr. Jenkins is probably wise in calling a "tradition" the association of Queen Anne with the "charming old house to the south of the churchyard"; one used to be told that the excellent specimen of gazebo which it contains was built for her to look across to Windsor Castle. One can only say that it deserves to be true, it so faithfully reflects the elevation of the site.

The author's closing note is one of regret for the changed and changing character of the parish which has "converted Penn to some extent into a dormitory for City workers"; since the publication of the book an

announcement has been made which foreshadows further 'building development,' and these changes, however regrettable, add to the value of such a careful record as Mr. Jenkins has given us.

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING REPORT, by  
W. R. Davidge, published by Bucks County  
Council. Price 10s. 6d.

The dimensions of this volume (12 by 9¼ inches) have presumably been governed by a desire for room in which coloured maps (1 inch to 1 mile) may be accommodated, the diagrammatic maps which occupy a page are marred by a minute script lettering (see that on "Land Utilization" on p. 5). The volume will be a worry to bibliographers since it appears to have no title-page and no place or date of publication. Apart from the absence of an index and a few minor misprints, this can close the list of grumbles against the exterior of a work which bears evidence of the greatest care and thoroughness, and should, as Sir Leonard West says in his Foreword, aid "in preserving beauty and avoiding ugliness."

The main idea behind the whole Report is clearly one on which our Society has no concern,—the Report is a far-seeing view towards the Future, whilst we are concerned only with the Past. Not that the County Planning Advisory Committee is indifferent to Ancient Monuments, on the contrary the fifth chapter concerns itself with "Open Spaces," and gives a section to "Reservations adjoining ancient sites." In this is included a schedule of ancient monuments, which really seems to have been compiled in a haphazard way; that each of us would supplement it largely is to be expected, but it includes some things which surprise one, such as Dinton Castle, which has no interest whatever, and is grotesquely absurd even as a sham ruin. One grieves to see that the Cholesbury earthwork should still be called a "Danish Camp"; and it is unkind to call the

best preserved example of domestic building belonging to the 14th century, "Manor House remains, Creslow." Why the Manor House, North Crawley, should be included and Gayhurst and Chicheley be omitted in the same Rural District is a mystery. So is the inclusion of Medmenham Abbey, which contains probably no original work earlier than the 17th century, and the omission of Burrow Farm, Hambleden, in the same Rural District.

To argue these matters must to some extent be a matter of taste, and therefore is idle; but if the Committee had consulted this Society the Schedule would have been very different.

On the whole the most encouraging chapter perhaps is the third, which deals with "Road proposals"; it has so often happened that the making of a road has disclosed objects of interest that one is almost reconciled to the loss of a winding lane. One is relieved to find that the Upper Icknield Way at all events is to be respected. (p.62).