

REVIEWS

Subsidy Roll for the County of Buckingham, Annq 1524. Edited by Professor A. C. Chibnall and A. Vere Woodman (Buckinghamshire Record Society (Sidney Press), 1950). Being Vol. VIII issued for the year 1944. 10×6 inches, xvi+96 pp. Price not given; obtainable from the Hon. Sec., Bucks. Record Society, Twitchells End, Jordans.

This further volume in the Record Society's series is a worthy follower of the preceding ones. It has not, perhaps, the general interest of some former productions, such as the Quaker Minute Book of 1669-90, or the Episcopal Visitation Book for the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1662; nor the wider value of the Missenden Cartulary or the Calendar of Records in our own Museum. But then, it is not the business of a learned Society to be 'popular' in its publications. And this volume provides much useful information by transcribing a set of documents not normally available in such an easy form as the Editors have now given us. As Mr. Jenkins says in his Foreword: 'Taxation records have not in general been a popular field of investigation,' as being 'a type of record more than commonly indigestible.' But, as he also observes, 'their importance for the economic historian and the genealogist is undeniable.'

Our members Professor Chibnall and Mr. Woodman, in a valuable Introduction, explain the purpose, scope, method of assessment, and many other details of the documents. They contain 'the names and assessments of the inhabitants of the County of Buckingham who paid the lay subsidy granted to King Henry VIII in the fifteenth year of his reign to carry on the wars with France and Scotland.' These rolls, as far as Buckinghamshire is concerned, provide the only full lists of names and assessments since 1332 up to 1524. The Editors trace the development of systems of taxation and the varying results they produced—nearly always, as to-day, falling short of ever-increasing State requirements. We complain of the crushing burden of Government extortions now; but this volume shows that in proportion to the different standard of values, our predecessors of the 16th century suffered almost as much. The details show that in 1524 Buckinghamshire was not a rich county, being mainly agrarian, the wealthy merchants being found only in the boroughs, in contrast to such a county as, for example, Suffolk.

For the Three Hundreds of Chiltern, the documents are in good order; and the Editors transcribe the Schedule, with names of commissioners, etc., in full. In the detailed lists for the towns and villages themselves, it is interesting to note the names of families then or shortly to become prominent, and many names still surviving in the same places to-day—thus in Chalfont St. Giles we have Russells, Butterfields, Timberlakes, Groves, Grimdsales; and in Denham the Peckhams, Durdents (giving their name to the Manor of Denham Durdent, otherwise the Savoy), and Richard Morton, ancestor of a long line of Mortons of Denham. In fact, bleak as these lists of names and amounts may seem, they come to life when clothed with the texture of local history. We must be grateful to the two careful Editors for their painstaking labour.

E. C. R.

The Little Guide to Buckinghamshire, revised by R. L. P. Jowitt and E. Clive Rouse, F.S.A. (London: Methuen & Batsford. Price 7s. 6d.)

The justification, indeed the necessity, for revising the excellent work of the late Mr. E. S. Roscoe, in the light of discoveries and research since it first appeared, is well made out by the present revisers in their Preface. As it is clearly impossible to epitomize the full story of the county in a small volume for the pocket, they had to exercise considerable

selection, and omit things from nearly every parish which others might have chosen. An expert in mural paintings, such as Mr. Rouse is, saw to it that they were not forgotten, and we can be grateful for the care with which they are noted. Other objects in the churches are not overlooked, though they seem to have passed over bells, and the Michael de Wymbis examples at Bradenham and Lee deserved mention, as bells well over six hundred years old are not common. One is sorry, too, that they touch on Bletchley without naming the Rev. W. Cole, whose *Blecheley Diary* has delighted us since 1931, when Miss Waddell printed it. To visit North Marston and not speak of the strange character John Camden Neild, and Queen Victoria's window to him, as grateful legatee, is surprising.

But it is ungrateful work to speak of omissions; what matters more is consistency: thus at Iver and at Ivinghoe the implements which they call 'thatch-hooks' are mentioned, but they are also, or used to be, at Hanslope, and fine specimens at that; they are not named at p. 105. The Rev. John Mason is properly recorded at Stantonbury, but not at Water Stratford, where his visions attracted large, and almost riotous, crowds.

Under Frieth, its pronunciation, 'Freeth,' is indicated; it might be useful in a future issue to add 'Wernel' for Worminghall, 'Mednem' for Medmenham, 'Wandon' for Wavendon, 'Luggersell' for Ludgershall, 'Ethrup' for Eythorpe, and to hint that the second 'h' in Chesham is silent.

Where a parish has a double-barrelled name, its origin is usually given, but not under Aston Clinton, which the Clinton family only held for about sixty years (1193-1252). It is noticed that the Editors retain the 'd' in Grandborough, although it was deleted by the Post Office and the Railway many years ago; its retention disguises the 'Grene' in the name.

The preliminary matter contains a long account of the Flora, by the late Dr. George Claridge Druce; his work is not at hand at the moment, but on pp. 13 and 14 'Shalbourn' is named; presumably Shalstone was intended. On p. 43 J. K. Fowler's amusing gossip is, as usual, wrongly cited; its title is 'Echoes of Old County Life.'

The illustrations are admirable, many of the subjects are important, and all appear to the best advantage.

The bibliography is good, but as it appears under authors' names, it might be referred to under the parishes. Under Penn, Mr. J. G. Jenkins's excellent book is named, but such books as Miss Block's *Iver*, the Rev. A. H. Plaisted's *Medmenham*, and Mr. F. Bull's *Newport Pagnell*, should be referred to under the respective places. Further, the Rev. S. Hilton's *Story of Haversham*, 1937, should be recorded: it contains original work.

The revisers hint that their work may introduce the county to some who do not know it, at the same time it cannot fail to be valuable to those who do.