

REVIEWS

THE SHERIFFS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, by Elliott Viney, High Sheriff for the County, 1964. 8½ × 4½ in., 148 pp., with a Frontispiece, 5 plates in colour and 40 in black and white, and decorative end-papers. Aylesbury, Hazell Watson & Viney, 1965.

This admirable book by the Society's Hon. Secretary and Hon. Joint-Editor was published to mark the end of the author's term of office as High Sheriff. It is a splendid production, with a scholarly introduction discussing the history of the office of Sheriff as a whole, and with particular reference to Buckinghamshire: there follows a complete list of the Sheriffs, as so far ascertainable, and biographical and historical notes on individuals, with many pedigrees. There are several Appendices illustrating various legal aspects of the office and its ramifications, and one very depressing section on the homes of the nineteenth-century Sheriffs. This shows that, out of 68 houses considered, only six are still lived in today by descendants of the same family. Only sixteen others are still occupied as private houses: of the remainder, ten or a dozen have been demolished altogether, the balance being flats, offices, laboratories, homes of various kinds, etc. It would be difficult to find a more telling example of the social revolution of our times.

A further interesting point that emerges (on which Mr. Viney does not comment) is the change in emphasis in the areas from which the Sheriffs have been drawn over the centuries. In the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the preponderance was overwhelmingly in the North (3 or 4 to 1). By the sixteenth century, more Sheriffs were being appointed from the South, but the North of the County still provided most. The balance was almost equal in the seventeenth century, with six more from the South than from the North; and from then on representation of the South steadily increases until in the present century it is almost 4 to 1. This represents in a most interesting way the change in feudal and local conditions, the ownership and use of land, the increase of industry and the influence of London.

The illustrations are sumptuous and very well annotated. They range in scope from brass rubbings to miniatures, monumental sculpture, portraits and photographs.

It is clear that the author has brought an antiquarian distinction as well as an up-to-date efficiency and traditional pomp and hospitality to his office. The furnishings of the javelins and the armorial banners on the trumpets have been revived.

The book is not on public sale, having been privately printed. But Mr. Viney will be pleased to send a copy to those who send him a cheque or postal order for £1 made out in favour of the Bucks. Historic Churches Trust.

E.C.R.

A HISTORY OF CHALFONT ST. PETER AND GERRARDS CROSS, by G. C. Edmonds. 8 × 5½ in., 70 pp., 8 half-tone plates and a map. Published by the Blandford Press, London, for the Rev. G. C. Edmonds. 10s. 6d. net. (There is a cheaper edition in paper covers.)

This modest volume, too scholarly and well written in its small way to be classed as a guide book, is a valuable introduction to an area whose antiquity and interest is all but submerged by the flood of suburbia. The author (Congregational Minister in Gerrards Cross) traces the history and development of both parishes from the earliest times—Chalfont an ancient one, containing several manors; Gerrards Cross an upstart carved out of half a dozen others in 1859 and 1895. The connexions of Chalfont with Missenden Abbey and the former greatness of Bulstrode are both dealt with; and notable characters, the Brudenells, Whappelodes, Drurys, Churchills, Portlands, Jeffreys, Hibberts, Mayne Reid and others, all find their place. The story is brought up to date with mention of modern institutions.

The illustrations are excellent, the old prints of Bulstrode and Chalfont Park and the photograph of a group of workmen at St. James's Church in 1859 being especially useful. While a view of the High Street at Chalfont St. Peter in 1904 serves to show what we have lost in this once picturesque and charming village, now little better than a desert.

E.C.R.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF HIGH WYCOMBE, *an illustrated Guide to the fabric and its history*, by Herbert Green. 56 pp., 19 plates, plans, etc. The Church Publishers, Ramsgate. 2s. 6d.

It is always a pleasure to welcome a good church guide; and Mr. Green has produced an authoritative one, dealing with the structure and its history, with promise of a further part to cover the contents, monuments, fittings, etc. One cannot go all the way with the author in his re-constructions of the building or plans of its development. But he does point out many small features bearing on this that might easily escape a less observant person. Moreover, he produces much documentary evidence not brought together before. Inevitably in a church guide, a good deal of space is given up to recent works: but future historians will no doubt be grateful for this in time to come. Mr. Green has presented a fully annotated copy of his guide to the Society's Museum, which is of great value.

E.C.R.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. GILES, CHALFONT ST. GILES, by H. Adams Clarke. 7½ × 5 in., 40 pp., 5 plates and plans, paper covers. 1s. This is a useful abridgement of Mr. Clarke's larger history of the church, which was reviewed in *Records of Bucks.*, Vol. XVII, Part I, p. 89, and is available in the church to help church funds. Really good and authoritative guides are greatly appreciated by visitors and residents; and one could wish that many other churches would follow suit, even if it is only to copy out and paste on a board a summary of the architectural features and fittings readily available in the Royal Commission's volumes, or the Victoria County History.

THE MUSEUM

At the very end of the year the Museum took possession of Church House. It is hoped that by the end of 1965 it will prove possible to open a Natural History Gallery on the ground floor and a small Geological Gallery will be provided later in an adjoining room. In addition, space will be available for a more adequate workshop and also for a laboratory for the conservation of the Museum's specimens.

At Easter the Museum undertook its first excavation, when nearly three weeks were spent excavating on the site of the deserted medieval village of Caldecote, Aylesbury.

A considerable amount of time was spent in the late summer and early autumn on the recording of a group of half-timbered buildings which were demolished in the Silver Street area of Aylesbury. A number of fifteenth to seventeenth-century structures were photographed and drawn with the help of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The front of a fifteenth-century building, which was found hidden between two shops, was kindly dismantled by the Aylesbury Borough Council and has been stored in the Museum in the hope that it might be eventually possible to re-erect it.

As usual, a number of visits were paid to archaeological sites in the County and a number of interesting finds were made. Details of these will be found in the Archaeological Notes.

Botanical specimens have been collected to form the basis of a herbarium which is, as far as is known, the first one to be created for this County. Geological and other natural history specimens have also been collected and it is hoped to make the museum collections of this type of material more representative.

A new display relating to the palæolithic and mesolithic periods was prepared and also a case relating to flint working. The resiting of the cases containing these has made available greater space for the display of the other prehistoric collections, and the reorganisation of these is in progress.

The Museum, with the help of Mr. Henry Trivick, organised an exhibition by four artists—James Fitton, Henry Trivick, Carel Weight and Marek Zulawski—which provided a type of exhibition not normally seen in Aylesbury. In addition, the Aylesbury Art Society and the Wendover Art Society held their annual exhibitions in the Museum, and the County Art Organiser arranged one of art from Buckinghamshire Secondary Schools.

The number of visitors was 22,075, compared with 19,929 in 1963.