

REVIEWS

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, Annual Report and List of Accessions 1979.

Early Charters of Great and Little Kimble AR 147/79, now DX/681.

It is observable from our earliest records that by the early thirteenth century there was a widespread scatter of Welshmen holding land here. Some of these migrations may have been directly due to the Welsh Wars, and the land the migrants acquired may have represented ransoms, or shares in them.

A holding of a virgate in Kimble is traceable in the hands of a Welshman called Owen back to the early years of the thirteenth century, and in process of time it descended to his grandson William son of Richard Owen, who, in the 'fifties, is found living in dignity in the hamlet of Kimblewick, of which he was evidently the chief ornament.

We find him at this time, selling two smallish parcels of his land to his countryman John le Waleys, who had married the eldest heiress of Humfrey le Dun, one of the two lords of Little Kimble. There would be nothing remarkable about these sales if they stood alone, but they were followed up many years later by further, and more substantial sales to the same buyer.

The charters that record these transactions have in part survived. In the autumn of 1979 they appeared in Sotheby's Sale Catalogue, and during an exciting period Mr. Hanley went into action in order to get together, from a few public bodies, the considerable sum needed to purchase them.

Taken in conjunction with the great collection of Kimble charters preserved in the Missenden Cartulary, these are documents of considerable interest. None of the neighbouring villages along the Icknield Way has a comparable bulk of medieval material. The Kimbles were typical of these fissiparous vills, which in early times occasionally split like slabs of slate, longitudinally. Some of William Owen's land lay in Little Kimble, a wafer of territory so long and thin that it is hard to see how it can ever have had an independent existence. It is to be hoped that the availability of these charters will stimulate a study of the medieval topography of the two villages, and of other villages that lay athwart the Icknield Way.

Comments on items in the long list of other accessions can only depend on one's own personal tastes. Among the ecclesiastical items is a run of churchwardens' accounts from Ludgershall, commencing in 1565 and continuing, with *interregnum* gaps, into the nineteenth century.

Mr. Wilfred King has deposited some interesting papers dealing with that fascinating curiosity the Coprolite Industry.

Miss E. M. Rose has deposited the family papers of which Walter Rose made such delightful and skilful use. This reviewer can testify that the Rose family were established freeholders in Haddenham at least as early as the second half of the thirteenth century.

G. R. E.

TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS by John Bailey: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire Historic Buildings Research Group. 32 pp. £1.50.

This is an interesting and worthwhile booklet and Mr. Bailey is to be congratulated. As a serious document from his survey group it must however be treated with some caution. It could not be regarded as a scientific contribution to the study of timber framed buildings in the three counties covered, namely Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, rather its appeal will be more to the general reader for whom little is available on this subject on a local basis.

For the specialist however too many questions require answers. To say it was possible to reconstruct a whole building without more indication of how much was extant and how much reconstruction or conjecture raises question marks. Pecking in the conjecture and missing members on a more consistent basis would have made this a more valuable document.

The text is useful to the general reader and usually quite clear although the section on the complex subject of joints would probably not illumine those new to the subject.

The drawings are good and clear although the habit of shading the underside of braces in the isometric view from above is visually rather disturbing and there are perspective problems here and there. I should point out that the cruck at Stewkley (fig. 3) had ogee blades, not single curve ones. In Buckinghamshire the commonest cruck type is one that terminates just above the collar and I would suggest that at Ivy Farm, Stanbridge (fig. 34a) was of this type. Blackwell Hall Farm (figs. 50 to 53) is a more complex building than implied and appears to me to involve an older hall, remodelled and extended with crosswings of perhaps two periods, a century separating the various phases. This is a point Mr. Bailey does not make and is a crucial one – virtually all hall and crosswing houses I have

examined, including Wealden ones, have turned out to have been constructed in phases. Often they started only as a hall house, what Mr. Bailey calls the single cell type (p. 21), with a cross wing or an extra bay added later.

However these are small criticisms and it is to be hoped that this booklet stimulates interest in the subject, leading to more recording of framed buildings. A full physical record combined with documentary research, such as probate inventories where a great deal of work also remains to be done, would greatly increase our knowledge of the higher levels of medieval and sub-medieval peasant society. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bailey continues his work and that this interim report is supplemented by more detailed and documented case studies and articles.

Martin Andrew

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LANDSCAPE by Michael Reed: Hodder & Stoughton 1979, £8.95

One of the great beauties of Hodder and Stoughton's 'Making of the English Landscape' series is that the format allows each author to exploit his own strengths. Therefore although there are common strands in each volume, every author places a different emphasis on different periods and the importance of different development. Buckinghamshire has been particularly fortunate in its author, Michael Reed, an historian and archivist who rightly stresses the importance of the post-medieval period in the fashioning of the Buckinghamshire landscape we see today.

This is not to say that Mr. Reed neglects the earlier period, in fact one of the joys of this book is that it clearly has been thoroughly researched in every department. It is particularly pleasing to see the careful coverage of the Anglo-Saxon (or Migration) period — an area full of pitfalls for the unwary. We can no longer think in terms of hordes of Anglo-Saxon migrants moving into central England during the 5th and 6th centuries and completely replacing the existing indigenous population. There appears to have been considerably more continuity in native settlement and economy than previously recognised. It is also clear that a process of integration between the natives and the newcomers took place perhaps involving only a relatively small number of settlers.

The medieval section is adequately covered but perhaps a little more could have been made of the wealth of medieval earthworks that survive, particularly in the northern part of the county. The substantial chapters on post-medieval Buckinghamshire are first class, reflecting as they do the most important period in the fashioning of the landscape, that is — enclosure, emparking and more recently the impact of the commuter. One family in particular was responsible for reshaping much of the Buckinghamshire landscape, the Rothschilds, whose country houses at Waddesdon, Halton, Ascott and Mentmore instigated the parks and new model villages which had an impact, not solely of their own but in bringing about the almost garden quality of large areas of the Buckinghamshire landscape. I particularly enjoyed the reference to the eccentric bachelor Alfred Rothschild, who used to drive around his Halton estate in a carriage drawn by two zebras and who used to conduct his own orchestra in the Winter Gardens.

The impact of the railway too is well described and includes the story of the creation of Buckinghamshire's railway town, Wolverton. The book brings us right up to date and includes a section on the passing of the railways which had already started to decline before the last war as a result of competition from the motor car. This story emphasises the speed of landscape change brought about by modern technology, the impact of the railway age for all practical purposes only lasted a century and a half and yet made an enormous impact on the landscape. Indeed it is the speed of change which brings about the sharpest rebuke in the book and one which it is hoped the book itself will help remedy "Of all the generations which have contributed to the making of the Buckinghamshire landscape, that of the 1960s was probably the most selfish, the most conceited and the most short sighted".

The book is well illustrated with a considerable number of plans and photographs which have not appeared elsewhere, however the quality of the photographs might be questioned and Hodder's conventional cartography is beginning to look somewhat old fashioned. For instance some of the distribution maps published without relief and drainage tend to look bare. These are however, minor

quibbles. Michael Reed so obviously enjoys and understands the Buckinghamshire landscape, and he has made a scholarly and sympathetic contribution to the county's topographical literature.

Trevor Rowley

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CLAY TOBACCO-PIPES AND PIPEMAKERS by W. R. G. Moore: Northamptonshire Museums and Art Gallery 1980, 8¼ x 11¼ ins, 34 pp. 16 black and white illustrations and figures.

This booklet by the museum's Keeper of Archaeology is one more contribution to the growing number of regional surveys of clay pipes, but it is well above average and covers every aspect that one can reasonably expect. Setting tobacco smoking into context Mr. Moore briefly relates the growth and eventual decline of pipe making in Northamptonshire, and summarises those specific kiln sites and families whose involvement in the local industry is certain. He bases his dating on the fairly well-known typology of Adrian Oswald, and concludes the work with lists of initials and names found on pipes, together with the names of all those makers who can be identified from an exhaustive search of local documentary sources. Minor criticisms are the layout of two narrow (3¼ ins.) columns on a page of 8 ins., and the author's inability to decide whether to use imperial or metric units – eventually using both. On the other hand the drawings are exceptionally well done, and the work's local research seems extremely thorough. The booklet should be a valuable reference for post-Medieval excavations in Northamptonshire, and also in North Buckinghamshire, as well as being of general interest to the local historian.

George Lamb

BUCKS ARCHAEOLOGY FROM THE AIR by Denise Allen: Buckinghamshire County Museum 1979, 18pp 5 plates, 8 figures. 50p

This booklet gives an excellent and lucid account of the nature and value of the various types of archaeological evidence derived from aerial photography, and draws a number of examples from Buckinghamshire. It is clearly and neatly produced by the County Council's Central Printing Section and will be useful to teachers and pupils at introductory courses given by the WEA and others.

The title, however, might lead a purchaser to expect more than will be found. There is no general account or discussion of the body of archaeological knowledge derived from air photography in Buckinghamshire, no lists of discoveries or attempts to classify their nature in different areas. Such a synoptic view may be impossible, in which case the purchaser might at least expect a nod, however regretful, in this direction and something of an explanation as to the reason. In short, the booklet as published could be said to promise more, and at a higher level, than it performs.

M.D.

THE LETTERS OF THOMAS HAYTON, Vicar of Long Crendon 1821 – 1887, edited by Joyce Donald: Buckinghamshire Record Society, Volume 20 (1979)

The Anglican clergy have proved some of our most valuable and perceptive observers of English rural life. Such notable names as Ralph Josselin, Gilbert White, James Woodforde and Francis Kilvert spring to hand. More generally conscientious local clergymen have shown a literate and wide-ranging involvement with their local communities, an involvement reflected in the formal and informal records of their parishes, on which we rely so much for local evidence and local colour. Thus it was with pleasurable anticipation that I turned to this volume of letters. One cannot expect to discover a Kilvert at every turn, yet still this collection must be accounted disappointing.

The reasons for this lie chiefly in the range of material offered and in the character of the man who produced it. The 223 items, mostly letters, reflect only incidentally on Long Crendon as a place and on its people, and are overwhelmingly formal in tone, addressed either to institutional bodies such as the Charity Commissioners and the Poor Law Commissioners or to individuals with whom

Hayton's relationship was at best formal. Thus his communications with his bishops are relieved only by occasional outbursts of resentment at his supposed ill treatment or lack of preferment. No editor can be blamed for the shortcomings of her subject's character but further discretion might usefully have been exercised over printing in full some of the most formal exchanges, especially since certain items are already listed as having been omitted. Instead it would have helped to give the more rounded picture hinted at in the introduction, which mentions for example housing conditions, needlemaking and farming in the village, if some amplifying material had been added. Here Mrs. Donald's own work on the locality would have been of great interest. Unfortunately she does not refer to this in her introduction. This seems the more desirable in that the collection is not in any case merely one of Hayton's letters but includes occasional replies, exchanges between other parties referring to Hayton, and newspaper extracts. The latter in particular could have enlivened and illuminated the account if used more fully, as for example where Hayton refers to a public meeting of some 300 people concerned with allegations by his arch rival, the dissenter Joseph Dodwell about the administration of the Dormer charity. Apparently Dodwell's proposal was 'so exciting' that Hayton 'felt it my duty to dissolve the meeting'. Would that we could have heard more of this confrontation as we do on another occasion when Hayton was charged with assault upon a Mr. Lupton of Thame. Then the reports of both the *Bucks Herald* and the *Aylesbury News* are quoted, a salutary example of the need to read all the local papers at this period, so different are their accounts.

It will be clear that Hayton's character is not a sympathetic one. Throughout his 66 years at Long Crendon he displayed a formidable chip on the shoulder, resentful of the 'favouritism' of the Anglican hierarchy and apparently getting on with neither his fellow clergy, nor the majority of his parishioners. He repeatedly refers to himself as 'one of the working clergy' without private means, and in the reforming mood of the period determined to reverse the pattern of absentee clerics, and starting from nothing to build a vicarage, repair the church, put the local charities to rights, start a school and combat dissent. His case provides a valuable reminder that the so-called classic Victorian village structure of squire, parson, tenant farmers and labourers was by no means the automatic norm. In Long Crendon there was no single, resident manorial lord, no established clerical authority, and a flourishing Nonconformity led by well-off and prominent local families. Since the parish remained a unit of secular local government Hayton had to cope with a Dissenter as Churchwarden. His plight is summed up by his reply to an episcopal visitation return, (another additional source occasionally included), that his ministry is impeded by 'The monopoly of the land by dissenters and the carelessness of farmers who show much practical infidelity'. The correspondence also gives some useful practical insights into the early years of the New Poor Law. However Hayton's view of life tended always to the egocentric and to conflicts of personalities, a fact which clouds the picture. He can be a 'radical' taking up a deserving individual case against authority, or a 'reactionary' in aggrieved defence of his own vicarial rights. Of his wife there is not a single mention in the letters. Of his social life there are two fleeting references to fishing and a court case alleging that he shot a hare on a local farmer's land.

One's final conclusion must be that this is a limited source. Do we therefore need such literal transcriptions? Could not a more rounded biographical account, exploiting related sources and Mrs. Donald's introductory material have been attempted? In these days of limited sources for local history publication this very impressive record series format can best be reserved for lasting and representative texts for the Buckinghamshire historian.

K. Tiller