

## REVIEWS.

### ROCHESTER BRIDGE.

*Rochester Bridge: 1387-1856. A History of its early times compiled from the Wardens' Accounts by M. Janet Becker, with a Foreword by S. C. Ratcliff, M.A., Secretary of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. London. Constable & Co. Ltd. 1930. Price 10s.*

THE Wardens and Commonalty of the New Bridge of Rochester in the County of Kent, to give them their official title, are fortunate in possessing a large collection of documents relating to the history of Rochester Bridge, commencing shortly after the construction of the "Newe Bridge" of stone by Sir Robert Knolles and Sir John Cobham in 1387, and extending with fair completeness to the present time. These documents consist of title deeds, maps, terriers, registers, and in particular the accounts of the rents of the lands from time to time belonging to the bridge (known as the "Estates proper,") and of the expenditure on the bridge for keeping it in repair.

On the building of the Bridge Chamber on Rochester Esplanade in 1879, the opportunity was taken of providing a suitable muniment room, to which these documents were transferred and arranged under the careful supervision of our venerated member, Mr. A. A. Arnold, then Bridge Clerk,<sup>1</sup> and about the same time the ruins of the Bridge Chapel adjacent were disencumbered of the modern accretions and disfigurements which then almost hid them from view.

From time to time various extracts from these documents have been made and published by Dr. Thorpe and other eminent antiquaries, and the pages of *Archæologia*

<sup>1</sup> A valuable paper on "Rochester Bridge in A.D. 1561" contributed by Mr. Arnold will be found in *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. xvii, p. 212, and another on "Quarry House on Frindsbury Hill" (part of the Bridge Estates,) on p. 169 of the same volume.

*Cantiana* contain many references to them; but until lately no systematic attempt at their transcription appears to have been attempted. Within the last few years, however, Miss Becker has, upon the instructions of the Bridge Wardens, made a complete transcript of the early Account Rolls, 75 in number, relating to the Bridge and its Estates, covering with hardly any exceptions the period from December, 1398 (only 11 years after the construction of the "Newe Bridge") to December, 1479. In continuation of her work, Miss Becker has now written the above volume, giving in a clear and interesting manner a short History of Rochester Bridge from the date of its erection to that of its unfortunately necessary demolition in 1856.

The bridge which preceded the "Newe Bridge" dated from very ancient times. It was on the line of the present High Street, some little way below its successor, and was a structure chiefly of timber, needing constant repair. The cost of repair was borne by a levy on certain "contributory parishes" on or near the river Medway, each parish or group of parishes being under obligation by well-defined custom to supply a definite quantity of beams, planks, nails, stone, and other materials, and to keep in repair the arch or arches, pier or piers, allotted by custom to it or them. This system being found to work unsatisfactorily, the founders of the new bridge presented a petition to the King for leave to obtain land as an endowment to provide for future repairs, the contributory parishes remaining liable in case of need. This was granted, and Miss Becker describes how by degrees the "Estates proper" were acquired by the Bridge Wardens for this purpose. The list is headed by a gift by Sir John Cobham of the Manor of Rose Court in the Isle of Grain, and comprises other lands in East Tilbury, Eastwick in the Hundred of Hoo, Langdon Manor in Faversham, Nashenden near Rochester, Dartford, Frindsbury, Little Delce in Rochester and a property in the Parish of St. Andrew Undershaft in the City of London. It is interesting to learn that with few exceptions the above still remain the property of the Bridge Wardens.

An account is also given of the Bridge Chapel, founded by Sir John Cobham, and erected at the same time as or shortly after the New Bridge of stone, where prayers were to be said daily by three Chaplains for the founders and benefactors of the Bridge. Other chapters are devoted to the income of the Bridge, which, at any rate during the period under consideration, namely the first century from its erection, when the Bridge probably required but little to be spent on it, appears under the careful management of the Wardens to have been adequate for the purpose; the acquisition of the necessary materials, to which much care and forethought was given; the actual work of maintenance; the election of the Wardens, who at a later date became a corporate body having a Common Seal, and finally the demolition of the "Newe Bridge" which had become inconvenient and in want of repair and was succeeded in 1856 by a bridge of iron upon the line of the original bridge of early date. Its destruction though necessary will always remain a matter of profound regret to those who are interested in the ancient bridges of the country, of which it was one of the best known examples.

Miss Becker has brought to her task a lively enthusiasm, a trained method, and a gift of picturesque description, which make this book not only historically valuable but also pleasant reading to all who are interested in the manners and customs of the period which it especially covers. It is sincerely to be hoped that the Bridge Wardens may see their way to encourage the transcription of further portions of the numerous and highly interesting documents of which they have the charge, and possibly the publication in extenso of the transcripts already made and of others to follow.

It would appear from the Foreword of Mr. Ratcliff that, with the exception of the Accounts of the Bridge House Estates in London, he has not been able to find any continuous series of the mediæval history of bridge construction and maintenance other than that contained in the Accounts of the Rochester Bridge Wardens which have

been under consideration. For this and other reasons we shall look forward with interest to any further publications on the subject, and are most grateful to Miss Becker for what she has given us.

The book is well illustrated and of excellent type and appearance.

F.H.D.

#### DOVER PRIORY.

*Dover Priory : a History of the Priory of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Martin of the New Work. By Charles Reginald Haines. Cambridge University Press. 1930.*

DOVER PRIORY was founded in 1131 by charter of Henry I which granted the church of St. Martin in Dover for the institution there of an order of canons regular. The grant was confirmed shortly after its date by a bull of Pope Innocent II. A site was secured just outside the town at the point where the road to Folkestone diverged from the road to London. Archbishop Corbeil at once set to work to build a monastery, and by the autumn of 1136 the buildings were ready for partial occupation. The King put the royal quarries at Caen at the archbishop's disposal, and the existing remains show that this concession was largely used. The buildings were completed three or four years later by Archbishop Theobald and dedicated in 1160. In 1201 the monastery was burnt; it was repaired and in 1231 was added to; it was pillaged by the French in 1295, was substantially repaired in 1482-87 and was finally demolished at the Dissolution in 1538-39. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the southern portion of the site was built over and the Priory railway station was constructed on the western side. A great part of the remaining land was secured in 1871 and later by the Council of Dover College, and a well-known public school has found an appropriate home in the place where a "Grammar Schole" had until the Dissolution formed a part of the Priory establishment.

The property and revenues of the canons of Dover Priory were provided by the suppression of earlier foundations. About the year 619 King Eadbald of Kent had instituted in the Castle of Dover a community of secular canons in connection with the old church of St. Mary the Virgin in the castle. King Wihtred at the end of the seventh century built the old church of St. Martin on and near the present market place of Dover and transferred to this church the secular canons established by Eadbald in the castle. At the instance of Archbishop Corbeil these secular canons were suppressed by Henry I in 1131 and their endowment transferred to the canons regular of Dover Priory.

The history of Dover Priory makes lamentable reading. It never realised the hopes of Archbishop Corbeil, it gained no reputation for holiness or dignity or good works, and it spent its substance in intrigue and litigation. The trouble arose at the very beginning of its life and resulted from an ambiguity in its foundation charter. The grant was made to the "Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church of Christ which is in Canterbury," but goes on to use terms which confine the control to the Archbishop alone. The prior and chapter of Christ Church interpreted the charter as a royal gift to the Church of Canterbury, and stoutly (it might be said, ferociously) maintained their claim that the Church of Dover must acknowledge the Canterbury church as mother and ruler. No prior was to be appointed who was not a Canterbury monk, and every monk must make his profession at Canterbury. On the other hand the Dover monks firmly and obstinately clung to the view that they owed obedience to the Archbishop alone. Every weapon was made use of by both sides; appeals to the King, to the Pope, to the Archbishop, to the Courts, excommunication and other forms of molestation, efforts to influence judges. After a struggle of over two centuries victory finally rested with Canterbury. In the words of Dr. Haines (who warmly espouses the cause of his priory): "This sordid and lamentable quarrel lasted till the longer purse and the stronger

personnel of the Canterbury monks prevailed, and the little priory of Dover, browbeaten and impoverished by its powerful and unnatural stepmother, was goaded into submission and became a mere cell or tributary appanage of Christ Church." The truth is that neither side comes out of the contest with any credit and both displayed an appalling lack of Christian charity and even of common-sense.

The work of bringing together in accessible form the scattered references relating to Dover Priory needed doing and has been carried out with great industry by Dr. Haines. The book is a mine of information and will be of great value to local historians in the future and also to students of monasticism in general. The quarrel with Christ Church is related at length and a first-hand investigation of the Priory site and buildings has been well carried out. Much light has been thrown on the possessions and revenues of the Priory and a valuable appendix contains the "computus" of Prior Thomas Lenham for the year 1530-31. The numerous illustrations are well chosen and well reproduced and there is a sufficient index.

Dr. Haines belongs to the school of Dr. Coulton (who contributes a foreword), and his sturdy protestantism is in constant evidence. It is outside our scope to express any opinion on his views but it may be said that his account of monastic life is unsympathetic and depressing.

There are a number of slips in the early part of the book. Eanswith (p. 24) was not a sister of Eadbald but a daughter. She was the first abbess of the nunnery of Folkestone, but it was not founded by her but by her father. On p. 29 there is mention of a "quittance from Alfred of Dover." This document was a grant of property in Dover to Christ Church, and the grantor was not a man Alfred but Aelfled, a woman. In 844 a dispute arose as to the will of one Oswulf under which Christ Church benefited. Dr. Haines says (p. 28): "the will was disputed by one of his descendants and a conference of the parties interested was held upon it. . . . The result however is not recorded." No one of these

statements is accurate. The will was not disputed by Oswulf's descendants but by one Aethelwulf who claimed that his father Aethelheah had purchased the property. There was no conference but a trial, and the result is recorded, i.e. that the provisions of Oswulf's will were to hold good. The Domesday record is dealt with in an unsatisfactory way. Alnod Cild appears as "Alnod (the son of Cilt)." Cild or Cilt is of course a title of dignity conferred on members of a royal house and Alnod Cild was probably a son of Earl Godwin and younger brother of King Harold. On p. 36 the Domesday "car." has been wrongly extended as *carucata*, a measure of land, instead of *caruca*, a plough team. On the same page certain lands of the Canons of St. Martin are twice stated to be scheduled under Rochester, and the statement recurs on p. 403. This is not the case. What has happened is that lands in the cities of Canterbury and Rochester have been sandwiched in between different items of the possessions of St. Martin. Dr. Haines has compiled (p. 34) from the Domesday entries a list of the pre-conquest canons. In several instances Domesday does not give the actual name of the T. R. E. holder but says "pater ipsius tenuit." Dr. Haines makes the curious assumption in these cases that the father bore the same (Christian) name as the son, and fills up his list accordingly. The author is not entirely a trustworthy guide for the early records but is more reliable among the post-conquest documents with which his book is mainly concerned.

F.W.H.

#### A NEW COUNTY GUIDE.

*Kent*, by S. E. Winbolt, M.A., with illustrations from photographs by Winifred Ward. *Bell's Pocket Guides. English Counties.* 1930.

The first thing to be noticed in this attractive pocket guide is the generous supply of exquisite pictures which, besides being a lesson to any amateur photographer, are admirably illustrative of the text.

The next is the most valuable and interesting introduction of twenty-two pages, which treats the county from its geological, historical, architectural and industrial aspects. This introduction manifests the expert knowledge of the author in many fields, and his enthusiastic affection for the county of Kent. It is much more suggestive than exhaustive. Very much is indeed omitted, but Mr. Winbolt almost disarms criticism in this respect, by admitting that the book is "frankly selective." The claim that things are to be treated in due proportion is well carried out; the work never becomes a mere catalogue.

In the detailed description of the villages, which are grouped under eight regions, a great deal of knowledge is comfortably packed in a way which shows the qualifications of the author for his task. The reader who has lived long in the county will certainly miss places and historical personages which are dear to him, or perhaps connected with his hobbies. Where, he may ask, is the beautiful church of Westwell, which nestles below the Pilgrim's Way? Where is Egerton, perched high above the Weald? Where is Aldington, with its Rector Erasmus, or Court-at-Street Chapel with its associations with Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent? Where are the sedilia of Woodnesborough, or the windows of Upper Hardres?

For a second edition the accounts of Saxon work in the county will need some revision. For instance, "long and short" work is mentioned as occurring at St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe and at Fordwich. At the former place there is certainly none, though there are traces of what may be Saxon work, while the north-east quoin of Fordwich has probably been rebuilt. This indeed may be "long and short work" re-used, but it would not be definite enough to satisfy Professor Baldwin Brown. There is no clear instance in Kent of a quoin of this character. Further, it is doubtful if any living Kentish antiquary ascribes a Saxon date to the parish church at Lyminge, as distinct from the early basilica to the south of it. Mr. Winbolt has followed Canon Jenkins in stating that the Chancel and South wall of the nave are



the "undoubted work of St. Dunstan," but nothing is said to carry conviction. Again, Mr. Winbolt must be mistaken in assigning two different dates to the *ornamentation* of the font at St. Martin's, Canterbury, whatever the date of the original font may be, if it once was plain. He says: "The scroll work of the two bottom tiers is Saxon, but of the upper tier, Norman." All the ornamentation is of the 12th century, and the interlacing strapwork in particular may be paralleled as Canon Livett has pointed out, in the Norman window at Sutton, and on the impost of the Chancel arch at East Langdon.

On p. xxv. "Lower Halsted" is a misprint for Lower Halstow. Wingham has no *Norman* sedilia; though they have rounded arches, the date is plainly thirteenth century. Elham with its abundant whitewash and with the loving care lavished upon it, cannot fairly be described by the writer as a gloomy Church.

A few corrections would make this valuable book still more valuable.

A.H.C.

#### ALLHALLOWS, HOO.

*The Story of an Outpost Parish. Allhallows, Hoo, Kent.*  
By [the Rev.] F. J. Hammond, A.K.C., London,  
S.P.C.K. [N.D. 1928.]

In the preface the author tells how, together with the late Mr. Leland Duncan, he laboured unceasingly for twenty-one years at the history of Allhallows Parish. The volume, however, had not even begun to take shape before in 1923 Mr. Duncan died, leaving "a quantity of notes and letters, as well as a projected outline" for the work. Its title is of the popular order of indefiniteness. "An Outpost Parish" tells one nothing. The same description might apply equally well or ill to hundreds of other parishes throughout the country. It is a great misfortune that Mr. Leland Duncan's expert advice was not available to the end of the undertaking, for he could scarcely have counselled the production of

a parish history which, while it includes a picture of the village shop, neglects to include a ground plan of the village church. This omission is not compensated by the inclusion, commendable though it be, of two old views of the exterior and one of the interior of the Church, as it was before the devastating hand of restoration seized upon the building and made it trim and neat, but at the same time robbed it of the glamour of antiquity which it had hitherto possessed.

For the rest, the book contains an immense amount of valuable matter, not least of which are the extracts from the churchwardens' accounts in Chapter VI. Indeed this part of the work is so valuable that one cannot help regretting that the accounts have not been printed in full. It is a great opportunity lost. The churchwardens' book, ranging from 1555 to 1649, is the oldest of its kind in the Diocese of Rochester, and, in spite of unfortunate gaps in the original, "covers very nearly a century of parish life and local history." The utmost credit belongs to Mr. Hammond for rescuing such treasures as the churchwardens' and the overseers' accounts from neglect and decay, and for placing them in competent hands for repair and binding. The registers, which range from 1629 to 1795, have been equally well cared for, and bound in one volume, so that their preservation and usefulness is now assured. If Mr. Hammond had never done anything else beyond saving the parish documents from ruin, he would by this act alone have earned the gratitude of posterity.

A.V.

#### ANCIENT BRIDGES.

*The Ancient Bridges of the South of England.* By E. Jervoise, A.M.Inst.C.E., with an Introduction by C. R. Peers, C.B.E., M.A., P.S.A., &c., Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments. 1930. The Architectural Press, Westminster.

Of all archæological studies none is more important than the examination and chronicling of ancient bridges

with a view to their better understanding and preservation. For the claims of modern locomotion are such that all old bridges are liable to be threatened with removal, and unless the artist and antiquary be well equipped with facts and figures they stand a very poor chance of doing effectual work for the saving of any bridge when it becomes thus endangered. The fact is as strange as it is unfortunate that, among the many who genuinely admire and study ancient churches, castles and houses, comparatively few give their attention to ancient bridges. And yet the æsthetic and historic value of the latter is incalculable. How great an asset they constitute in the attractiveness of our country one can perhaps best appreciate if one pictures what England would be with all the old bridges demolished and only modern ones in their place.

The author has been engaged for four years and more in making a survey of the ancient bridges of England, and his volume under notice is to be regarded as the first instalment of the work, confining itself as it does to the bridges of the counties South of the Thames, and excluding Devon and Cornwall. In these pages, however, the reviewer may not deal with other than Kentish bridges of which the Medway can boast a magnificent array, and that in spite of the fact that our county has been robbed of its two principal old bridges, *viz.*, Rochester and Maidstone. The loss is the more to be regretted since both bridges had survived down to modern times, Rochester bridge until 1857 and Maidstone bridge until 1879.

The bridges of the Darent and the Stour are not to be compared with those of the Medway. The author is rightly enthusiastic in his admiration of Aylesford Bridge, which he calls "one of the most beautiful bridges in Kent," while that of East Farleigh he pronounces to be "certainly the finest bridge in the South of England" and "a perfect example of design and workmanship."

Two slight errors in the text may be noted. On p. 36 it is stated that "the timber bridge between East Barming and West Farleigh has evidently taken the place of one of

stone." This is not the case, the bridge at this point having always been of timber construction, notwithstanding its stone abutments. Again, from the way in which the writer refers to the "very unusual feature" of the small pointed arch at the South approach of East Farleigh Bridge, it is evident that he imagines the squinch arch to be original. As a matter of fact it was added by a well-known architect and surveyor, Mr. F. W. Ruck, of Maidstone. A side arch in a similar position, but actually ancient, occurs in the north country example of Barnard Castle Bridge.

The volume is illustrated with an abundance of half-tones from photographs. It is produced under the auspices of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and has further the imprimatur, in the shape of a preface, of the President of the Society of Antiquaries. No author could wish for a better guarantee of the soundness and importance of his work.

A.V.