

REVIEWS

The Jezreelites. By R. A. Baldwin. 8 × 5. Pp. 112. 5 Plates.
The Lambarde Press, 1962, 12s. 6d.

The Sixth Trumpeter. By P. G. Rogers. 8½ × 5½. Pp. ix + 154.
4 Plates and a map. OUP, 1963. 25s.

The story of the human race is cluttered with accounts of the rise and fall of prophets true and false and in this respect the history of Kent is no exception. We recall the early sixteenth-century machinations of Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid, while less than a hundred years has passed since the religious sect known as the New and Latter House of Israel first arose to impinge upon the lives of credulous Gillingham folk. The story of this movement is a strange and in many ways pathetic one.

It is unusual for a reviewer to be called upon to comment at one time on the work of two authors each dealing with the same subject. However this situation has arisen through the publication, within a few months of each other, of the two books noted above.

Both authors are members of our Society and will be known to readers of local county history. Mr. Baldwin, a life-long resident in Gillingham, has contributed to *Archæologia Cantiana*, to the press of the Medway towns, and is the author of a history of the Jubilee Methodist Church, Gillingham. He is also the Society's local secretary for that area.

In his youth Mr. Rogers spent some years in Gillingham and is the author of *Battle in Bossenden Wood: The Strange Story of Sir William Courteney*.

The central figure of the Jezreelite movement was the forceful but reticent James Rowland White (if in fact that was his correct name) who because of his real or assumed religious beliefs adopted the alias James Jershom Jezreel and so provided a descriptive title for his followers.

White's tenets derived from the Fifth Monarchy Men of the Cromwellian period and the century-later, Devonshire-born prophetess, Joanna Southcott who attracted a large following and at the age of 64 suffered a false pregnancy but died before the supposedly near advent-date of the expected Shiloh.

A Yorkshireman John Wroe carried on and extended the Christian Israelite doctrines which Joanna Southcott had preached, introducing

certain strict rules to which his followers had to submit, particularly growing their hair and beards long. While the movement was mainly concentrated in the north of England there were small Kentish groups at Chatham, Maidstone and Gravesend.

The Southcott-Wroe beliefs were kept alive in the nineteenth century by the Chatham group which in 1875 was headed by a certain Mr. and Mrs. Head. One evening a private of the 60th Rifles then stationed in the town knocked at their door, 'inquiring the way to salvation'. As a result of this visit Private White was duly enrolled as a member of the New House of Israel, a fateful decision on the part of the local followers. Within a few weeks, on Christmas Day to be exact, the new recruit announced that he was the 'Messenger of the Lord' and their new leader. As trustees of the funds of the group the Heads were understandably furious and promptly expelled the upstart. But their action was too late. White had already alienated the sympathy of the remaining eighteen members from their two leaders. Among the number were two young sisters, Clarissa Ester and Elizabeth, daughters of another follower, Edward Rogers, who worked in the dockyard.

From this point the authors of the two books under review tell the story with remarkably small variation in detail, the result of much painstaking research in, one concludes, very much the same fields—local and American newspaper files, and personal memories of the characters and events, as recounted by elderly local people.

Shortly after announcing his leadership Private White went to India with his regiment where he put in five years of somewhat unsatisfactory service. During this time he wrote his book, the *Flying Roll* which was destined to play such an important part in the life and finances of the movement and kept in touch with the Gillingham circle by correspondence.

Then in 1881, following his discharge from the army, he returned to England to resume his leadership of the followers in Kent. Within a few weeks of his arrival he married Clarissa Ester Rogers and the stage was set for the spectacular rise and eventual fall of the Gillingham Jezreelites.

To enlarge in any detail on the subsequent story of the years which followed would spoil the enjoyment of readers of the two books. Many of us no doubt will remember the gaunt ruin known as Jezreel's Tower which, until demolished in 1961, was a prominent landmark on the top of Chatham Hill. For years this empty shell had stood as a monument to the man who through his personality, showmanship, business acumen and perhaps sincerity of belief, collected adherents to and money for his cause both in this country and America. Early death robbed him of ultimate success and his young wife, of lowly birth but insatiable

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vanity, who took on the leadership, was quite unfitted to cope with the many problems which arose. As 'Queen Ester', driving in her carriage through the streets of the Medway Towns and pursuing a life of luxury at 'Woodlands House', she attempted but failed to revive a waning cause. Her sudden death in July 1888 at the early age of 28 was another serious blow for the Jezreel sect which by 1905 had dwindled to some thirty active members. Then once again a new leader appeared on the scene, the American Michael Kenfor Mills, who adopted the title 'Prince Michael' and claimed to be the new 'Messenger' or 'Trumpeter'. For the following sixteen eventful and difficult years the 'Prince' ruled the New and Latter House of Israel until his death in 1922. 'Only a few curious onlookers attended' the funeral.

To all intents and purposes this was the end of a movement which in its heyday attracted into its ranks a considerable number of God-fearing, mainly working-class folk. These had contributed all their worldly belongings to the cause and thereafter had been maintained, howbeit often sparingly, out of the accumulated funds belonging to the sect. Many were employed in running, or working for, the various Jezreel businesses carried on in the town.

Quoting a local observer Mr. Baldwin records, 'whatever opinion we hold as regards the doctrinal views and religious curiosities we have learned to respect them as worthy citizens who lead a good life, act honourably in their dealings with their fellows . . . Everyone had confidence in them.'

If the mysterious James Rowland White had lived to a greater age the authors of these two books might have had a very different story to tell. Each has produced a most readable narrative after much painstaking research. However there remains one regret; this is that so much individual labour should have been expended in reaching the same end. But then how can one historian know that some fellow worker is not similarly engaged upon his chosen subject, as has happened in this case?

R.H.G.

The Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral. By the Rev. D. Ingram Hill, M.A. Friends of Canterbury Cathedral [1963], 3s. 6d.

The visitor who comes to Canterbury with a desire to study the ancient glass intelligently but who would be bored by elaborate and detailed descriptions will find this little book ideally suited to his purpose. After the few minutes of preparation recommended in the Introduction he can take the book round the church and find an adequate explanation of any window which interests him, written *con amore* and not without an occasional touch of humour.

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This enthusiasm is not confined to the twelfth and thirteenth century glass which most people think of as most characteristic of Canterbury, but extends to the very interesting later work and even to the controversial modern windows of Erwin Bossanyi. These the author characterizes as 'glorious', but it is no secret that very different views have been expressed by some of those who have seen them.

A further valuable feature of Mr. Ingram Hill's work is that recent important changes and additions made to the ancient glass are duly noted, and in this respect earlier and more detailed publications are already out of date. No less welcome is the list of Bible references to the stories illustrated in the glass.

The book has paper covers but is well produced, with a number of good illustrations (one in colour) and a plan of the Cathedral showing the location of the windows described. But why, oh! why, is it not sewn, but fastened together with beastly wire staples, which sooner or later always rust and stain the pages?

C.R.C.

A Guide to Dartford Parish Church of the Holy Trinity. By G. H. Porteus. 7½ × 5. Pp. 36 with 4 plates and a plan. *Dartford*, 1962. 2s.

Church guide-books vary greatly in quality and it is pleasing to find that Dartford is now well served in this respect. Mr. Porteus has taken trouble to ensure the accuracy of his information and, in particular, his description of the architectural development shows an appreciation of finer points rarely found in publications of this kind.

In 1918 the Rev. F. V. Baker's account of the church was published by the Dartford and District Antiquarian Society with an excellent historical plan drawn by Robert Marchant, A.R.I.B.A., and the producers of the new booklet have rendered a valuable service by reprinting this plan on a folder inside the back cover.

The plates include an interesting view of the chancel arch as it was before Blomfield's drastic alteration in 1862. There are other photographs showing the post-Reformation font and pulpit, and the canopied brass of 1402 commemorating Richard Martyn and his wife.

With regard to this brass, the illustration has obviously been taken from a small reproduction which hangs in the church, and this in turn seems to have been made from a rubbing done when the brass was lying loose in the priests' chamber, as noted by Griffin and Stephenson in 1921, and before it was relaid in its original slab shortly after. Consequently, part of the marginal inscription and the sinister shaft of the canopy are shown bent outward in a way which detracts from the balance of the composition. One may regret that the opportunity

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was not taken to reproduce Waller's drawing in *Arch. Cant.*, XVIII showing the beard and other finely engraved facial details of the male effigy that do not appear in a normal heelball rubbing.

This is, however, a small criticism of a generally sound piece of work and it is to be hoped that this guide will set a standard to be followed by other local churches.

P.J.T.

Old Days in the Kent Hop Gardens. West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes. 5s.

'The good and kindly hop' has played no small part in the history of our country, banishing the nutmeg and cedar, cinnamon and clove from homely spiced ale and changing it into beer, 'bright beer bittered only with English hops'.

So much Kentish history, too, is enshrined in hop gardens, not only in the cultivation of hops, but in the story of many generations of men and women who contribute to the picture. 'History' seems such an impersonal word, but how it comes to life, a living, vivid, vigorous thing when it becomes 'local' history, as this book will show.

At a time when much village history is vanishing with the destruction of old and loved landmarks, the loss of parish records, and the loss of living memories, the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes is to be congratulated on arranging an enterprising essay competition on 'Old Days in the Hop Gardens'. It brought a rewarding response which led to this publication.

The essays themselves, written with naive humour and a warm humanity, are full of lively recollections, of colourful descriptions of long and hard work, of the wagons, the babies and billycans, laughter and singing, pole pullers, the lollie man, smoked tea, gay caravan-loads of gypsies, the army of hop-pickers from the East End of London, traditions, the sayings, and not least, at the end of the season, the spending of well-earned money.

This wealth of fascinating detail provides an invaluable record of hop-picking days, which could have been gleaned from no other source than the memories of an older generation, and a record that would have been lost for all time were it not for these essays. It illustrates, too, what a storehouse of local history lurks in the minds of older people, whose memories are veritable custodians of the past.

It is clear the book owes much to the patient and devoted labour of the editor, Mrs. Mary Lewis, who has enhanced its interest and value with her chapter on the writers, diarists, poets and artists who found delight in delving into the story of Kentish hop gardens.

May this welcome addition to *Bibliotheca Cantiana* encourage many,

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who have an abiding affection for the Kentish scene, to recall everyday life and customs, strange and forgotten happenings in their own villages, and, before it is too late, record these memories, however simply, for future historians.

A.R.

- (1) *Romano-Gaulish Clay Figurines as Indications of the Mother-Goddess Cults in Britain.* By Frank Jenkins.
- (2) *Roman Barrows in Britain.* By Ronald Jessup.
(1) and (2) reprinted from *Collection Latomus, LVIII, Hommages à Albert Grenier*, Brussels, 1962.
- (3) *Figured Samian from Birdoswald.* By A. P. Detsicas. *Transactions Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, LXII NS (1962), 31-50.* 5 plates.
- (4) *Men of Kent before the Romans: Cantium in the Early Iron Age.* By Frank Jenkins. Canterbury Archaeological Society, 1962. 3s. 6d.

The attainment of international status by three of the Society's members is gratifying. Frank Jenkins and Ronald Jessup gained honour for themselves and for our Society by being invited to contribute to the Albert Grenier memorial volume. Professor Eric Birley specially asked A. P. Detsicas to make his interesting contribution to figured Samian studies. The papers further enhance their authors' reputations in the subjects which they have made very much their own.

Frank Jenkins' Canterbury publication is more domestic but like his other work shows a marked flair for simplification and essentials. I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone who wants an introduction to Early Iron Age times in our County.

L.R.A.G.

NOTES ON ARTICLES

Antiquity, Volume XXXVI, 1962.

- Page 10. The Neolithic in the Cambridgeshire Fens. J.G.D. Clark and H. Godwin.
24. The Iron Age in Northern Britain. A. L. F. Rivett.
102. A Consular Chronology of Dark Age Britain. P. K. Johnstone.
179. The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial. Sandra Glass.
293. The O.S. Map of S. Britain in the Iron Age.

NOTES ON ARTICLES

Volume XXXVII, 1963.

46. The Chiltern Grim's Ditch. James F. Dyer.
 116. The Wilsford Shaft. Paul Ashbee.
 130. Conference of Young Archæologists.

History, Volume XLVII, 1962.

- Page 42. Short Guide to Records.
 Rate Books. Ida Darlington.
 166. Poll Books. John Cannon.
 287. Probate Inventories. Francis W. Steer.

Volume XLVIII, 1963.

- Page 34. Estate Maps and Surveys. F. G. Emmison.
 181. Guardians' Minute Books. Jane M. Coleman.

KENT RECORDS

Copies of the following Kent Records volumes are available at the stated price from the Kent Archives Office, County Hall, Maidstone:

<i>Volume</i>	<i>£ s. d.</i>
III Sede Vacante Wills: a calendar of wills proved during vacancies in the Primacy, with an Appendix containing transcripts of archiepiscopal and other wills. <i>C. Eveleigh Woodruff, M.A.</i> , 1914.	7 6
IV Register of Hamo Hethe, Bishop of Rochester. Edited by <i>C. Johnson, M.A., F.S.A.</i> Parts 2, 8, 9, 10 each part	5 0
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VII East Kent Records: a calendar of some unpublished Deeds and Court Rolls in the Library of Lambeth Palace, with Appendices. <i>Irene J. Churchill, D.Phil., F.S.A.</i> , 1922	15 0
VIII Calendar of Institutions by the Chapter of Canterbury Sede Vacante. Edited by <i>C. Eveleigh Woodruff, M.A.</i> , with additions and notes by <i>Irene J. Churchill, D.Phil., F.S.A.</i> , 1924	10 0

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XV	Calendar of Kent Feet of Fines up to 1272: Parts I, II, III, and IV. <i>Ralph Griffin, F.S.A., Irene J. Churchill, D.Phil., F.S.A., and F. W. Hardman, LL.D., F.S.A.</i> ; Introduction and Index. <i>F. W. Jessup, M.A., LL.B., F.S.A.</i> , 1956 each part	1 0 0
XVI	Register of Daniel Rough, Common Clerk of New Romney. Transcribed and edited with an Introduction by <i>K. M. Elisabeth Murray, M.A., B.Litt., F.R. Hist.S.</i> , 1945	2 0 0
XVII	A 17th Century Miscellany, 1960	1 5 0

A small number of available copies are still in stock for the following:

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II	A Handbook to Kent Records. <i>Irene J. Churchill, D.Phil., F.S.A.</i> , 1914	12 6
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IX	Index of Wills proved in the Rochester Consistory Court, 1440-1561. <i>Leland L. Duncan, M.V.O., O.B.E., F.S.A.</i> , with an introductory note by <i>F. William Cock, M.A., F.S.A.</i> (unbound copies only).	10 0
XII	Kent Chantryes. <i>Arthur Hussey</i> , 1934.	12 6
XIII	Kent Keepers of the Peace, 1316-1317. <i>Bertha Haven Putnam, Ph.D.</i>	12 6

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