

REVIEWS

The Record Interpreter. By C. Trice Martin, 9½ × 5½ in. xv + 464 pp. Kohler & Coombes, Dorking, 1976. £6.00.

The opportunities for historical research expanded rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Public Record Office provided a vast sea of documentation which, if still largely uncharted, was becoming steadily more accessible. This source was supplemented by the facilities of the greater libraries and increasingly by the publications of the Historical MSS. Commission. Nevertheless, the would-be student faced with original material was largely without books providing guidance and interpretation of the palaeography and calligraphy which he met. Literature in these fields was either foreign or was inadequate in scholarship.

It was at this point in time that Charles Trice Martin, one time assistant keeper of Public Records, began to fill the vacuum first by reprinting in 1879, with extensive additions, Andrew Wright's *Court Hand Restored*, originally published in 1773, and then in 1892 following it with *The Record Interpreter*. As the author himself acknowledged, the latter book arose out of the work necessitated by the former and the result was a unique *vade mecum* for the scholar using medieval sources. The book comprised lists of medieval Latin words and names; lists of Latin and French abbreviations in common use in medieval manuscripts; and, in the introduction, a brief attempt to standardize and systematize the pattern of palaeographic contraction and suspension as used in British medieval documents.

Inevitably, one questions the validity of a reprint in 1976 for over the years fresh books have appeared and deeper research has been carried out. The study of palaeography in Britain was transformed by Johnson and Jenkinson's *Court Hand* (1915) and since then numerous studies, both general and highly specialist, have carried the subject into new areas. So, too, the word lists supplied by Trice Martin were largely superseded in 1934 when Baxter and Johnson issued their *Medieval Latin Word List* and even more so by the new edition of that work expanded by R. E. Latham (1965). In these respects *The Record Interpreter* is no longer the pioneer and unique resource it once was.

Nevertheless this reprint must be welcomed. No book in this particular field is comprehensive and the searcher finds special features and help in each volume he examines. Trice Martin's work is simple to use, its lists of Latin forms of place and personal names remain valid and nothing comparable with his lists of abbreviations has been published in

this country. Without *The Record Interpreter* all who work among British medieval sources would be immeasurably the poorer.

F. HULL

Christ's Glorious Church. The Story of Canterbury Cathedral. By Derek Ingram Hill, 21.5 × 13.5 cm. Pp. xii + 116, 8 pls. S.P.C.K., London, 1976. £1.95.

This is a popular and 'readable' history, shaped, as far as possible, by the existing fabric of the Metropolitan church and its contents, not by the see, nor by the chapter and its estates, but to some degree by the personalities, clerical and architectural, that in turn shaped the church. It is very good from the fifteenth century onwards, as Canterbury progressively recedes from the political and architectural centre and becomes more like an Oxford college, a process which the author, with Thomas Cranmer, wishes had been even more perfected. The Elizabethan and Caroline chapter was colourful, cosmopolitan and genuinely learned: over the last three centuries decline, on balance, wins over revival, and the record is padded with dreary royal 'non-events'. In the central Middle Ages it is a little less sure. I would dispute whether any time in the fourteenth century, or even c. 1300, was the 'Golden Age of the Monastery', though it was certainly an age of good management. A great Benedictine house was already an antiquated and over-privileged corporation, adjusting itself to change with difficulty, in a manner that might be typified by the barbarous treatment of the golden door to the 'Martyrdom', the *only* processional door from the cloister, and not 'Decorated', but gloriously 'E.E.'. The place of St. Thomas and his cult is, if anything, under-emphasized, and the importance of William of Sens's choir, though by far the most splendid thing at Canterbury, possibly over-emphasized: it was not trying to be 'Gothic', but a more classical Romanesque, and St. Augustine's, as we now know, was doing the same to their choir, after *their* fire, some years earlier.

On the Saxon age, the book is quite inadequate, and the only plea can be that hardly anything of it is now visible. Nothing between Bede and Dunstan, yet Wulfred, who defied kings and ruled almost as a prince-bishop in Kent, was surely among the most formidable of prelates, and the abiding wealth of the house goes back to the Saxons, himself and Queen Ediva among them. The list of archbishops needs some revision: we now know that Plegmund died in 922 or 923, as the Chronicle says, while the nominees between Oda and Dunstan have as much right to inclusion as Feologild or Reginald fitzJocelyn. The Norman font (or well-head?) at St. Martin's was certainly not used for Ethelbert's baptism. Finally, one misses a mention of manuscripts (save when removed to Cambridge) or of medieval music: perhaps there is little of

the latter, but no history of, say, Bury St. Edmunds or St. Albans could omit either.

S. E. RIGOLD

A History of Gravesend. By James Benson, revised and edited by Robert H. Hiscock. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ in. Pp. 159, 16 plates, 24 figs. Phillimore, Chichester, 1976. £3.75.

James Benson, a London journalist who died in 1972 at the age of ninety-four, lived all his life in Northfleet and Gravesend in the local history of which he took a serious and sustained interest. His research in local archives added much to proper knowledge, and his regular articles in the *Gravesend Reporter* over a long period encouraged the activities of the Gravesend Historical Society, his most generous bequest to the Society having made possible the publication of this book which is based on his work. It is not truly an historian's history of Gravesend, but as its sub-title indicates rather an historical perambulation. Our Chairman of Council has ably edited and thoroughly revised the whole of the Benson papers, taking careful note of the extensive building demolition during the last twenty years, adding a full and welcome chapter on Northfleet and a selective bibliography to assist further reading, while our Member, Mr. A. F. Allen has written an Appendix on the story of the Gravesend Piers and the bankruptcy of the Corporation, little of which can be generally known.

The book is not intended, as was Robert Pocock's in 1797, to record 'Every Event from the Norman Conquest to the Present Time', the historical oddities published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and elsewhere, or such tourists' descriptive perambulations as Elizabeth Brabazon's *Month at Gravesend* in 1863. Rather in four well-planned parts it describes in detail the various districts and their streets, with notes of the important and interesting buildings present and past, much of historical associations and (perhaps rather too little) of the inhabitants, but wherever possible the names of architects and builders. The influence of the Thames on transport and various industries was such that Gravesend developed as the out-port of the City of London. This growth, with notes of the nationally famous passengers on the 'Long Ferry' to and from London, is especially well described.

It is good to know that the Chantry, Gravesend's earliest existing building still with some of its late thirteenth-century roof-timbers is now properly preserved, and that possible masonry of Edward III's manor-house and chapel (1362-68) some of which was destroyed in West Street in 1948 has recently been located again.

Many of the line illustrations (e.g. figs. 1, 4, 6, 10-12) are from R. P. Cruden's *History of Gravesend and the Port of London*, 1843, and the

source should have been noted, though the captions now given certainly add to their value.

Those of us who once knew Gravesend as our home will give this excellent little book a special welcome.

RONALD JESSUP

The Indents of Lost Monumental Brasses in Kent – Parts I and II. By A. G. Sadler. Both 8 × 6½ in., pp. 88 + numerous line drawings. 1975 and 1976.

It is generally appreciated that only a proportion of all the ancient monumental brasses originally laid down in our churches has survived to the present day. Many have vanished without trace or record as a result of religious iconoclasm in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while more recent losses have occurred through theft or neglect. Often brasses were torn from their slabs for the sake of the valuable metal, leaving only the recessed outlines of the effigies in the stone. These indents, where they survive, are most worthy of record and study for they provide indications of the form of the missing brasses, and with the aid of documentary evidence it is often still possible to discover the identity of the persons commemorated.

Two past members of our Society were notable pioneers in recording Kentish indents, though neither covered the whole field: Ralph Griffin published in 1914 *Some Indents of Lost Brasses*, and R. H. D'Elboux produced a series of articles in *Arch. Cant.*, from 1947 to 1952 under the general title of 'Some Kentish Indents'. Building upon these foundations, and aided also by the work of – among others – Thomas Fisher and T. E. Sedgwick, Mr. Sadler has now produced in two parts a comprehensive illustrated catalogue of Kentish indents. Part I refers to places with the initials A to Q and Part II R to Z. The territory covered is in accordance with recent boundary changes, so the example from Lesnes Abbey – now in Greater London – published by Elliston-Erwood in *Arch. Cant.*, lxvi (1953) is not included; but there are over 150 others – many of great interest and not previously recorded. Most are illustrated by very clear outline drawings from the author's own dabbings and the accompanying notes are scholarly and informative. Only slabs where no remnants of the brass survive have been listed and this has unfortunately ruled out two important examples at Barham which show that the associated effigies, now fixed to the wall, were originally canopied – a fact of which Griffin, who published the brasses in *Arch. Cant.*, xi (1928), was obviously unaware.

These two volumes are a most valuable addition to the literature of Kentish archaeology and the author is to be congratulated on such painstaking research, as well as the clear way in which the accumulated

REVIEWS

evidence has been published. Copies are obtainable from Mr. Sadler at 224, Goring Way, Ferring-on-Sea, Worthing, Sussex. The price to K.A.S. members is 98p, for each part, plus 16p postage.

P. J. TESTER

Roman Roads. By Raymond Chevallier (translated by N. H. Field). 9¾ × 7¼ in. Pp. 272, 10 pls. and 30 figs. Batsford, London, 1976. £9.50.

One of Batsford's Studies in Archaeology, with a foreword for its English edition by Professor A. L. F. Rivet, this imposing volume by 'one of the leading international authorities' on Roman roads has come as a book which will prove of immense value not only to specialists in its field but also to all students of Roman history and archaeology. For the Romano-British specialist, so long relying mainly on Margary's well known works, *Roman Roads* will provide a means of quick reference to several aspects of its subject, such as the documentary and archaeological evidence, the road system in the various provinces of the Roman empire, its function and the conditions of life on the roads. Apart from its many obvious merits, this volume is provided with an extensive bibliography on books and papers published on the Continent, which are not always either known or easily accessible to Romano-British specialists.

Roman Roads is well illustrated by many plates and text figures, though there is some unevenness in the latter which is inevitable in a work containing illustrations from many different sources and requiring new titles for its English translation. In places, too, this book reads as a translation, with French spelling of place-names occasionally defeating the printer (but Pennocrucrum, *sic*, twice, should have been spotted); however, all this is of little significance when compared with the need for such a work of reference which M. Chevallier so amply fills.

A. P. DETSICAS

The Jutish Forest: a Study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1380 A.D.

By K. P. Witney. 8½ in. × 5¼ in. Pp. xvi + 339, 28 maps. Athlone Press, London, 1976. £10.00.

This is undoubtedly an important book. Mr. Witney's thesis, crudely summarized, is this: the lathes of Kent are coeval with the Jutish settlement itself; originally, there were probably twelve, although by the time of *Domesday Book* the number of recognized lathes was seven; each lathe was based on a royal vill, of which all but two were situated to the north of, or beneath the scarp of, the North Downs; appendant to each lathe was an area in the Weald, used as a common swine pasture by the men of the lathe, the King having his own separate lathal pastures

located in the northern fringe of the Weald, the part most easily accessible; the drove-ways from each lathe to its swine pastures largely followed the lines of the Roman roads and tracks associated with the Wealden iron-industry; in the Middle Ages the lathal common pastures became transmuted into Wealden dens appurtenant to upland manors or, where the land was suitable for arable farming, into new settlements.

This in part is the thesis propounded more than forty years ago in *Pre-Feudal England: The Jutes* by J. E. A. Jolliffe, to whom Mr. Witney pays handsome tribute. In a characteristically trenchant and erudite review of Jolliffe's book in volume XLV of *Archaeologia Cantiana* Gordon Ward criticized his idiosyncratic handling of arithmetic which enabled him to show that each lathe was a unit of eighty sulungs and also he faulted Jolliffe's disregard of the topographical element. Mr. Witney, introducing various modifications, makes the arithmetical presentation of the theory much more plausible, but it is, in particular, his understanding of the topography of the county that reinforces the argument. Suspension of disbelief, at best partial after Jolliffe, is almost complete after Witney.

The supporting evidence is drawn from a variety of sources: place-names, charters, *Domesday Book* and *Domesday Monachorum*, feet of fines and *inquisitiones post-mortem*, monastic cartularies and chronicles, and manorial records, for example. The reconstruction of Dark Age history involves backward extrapolation – from the known, or nearly known, to the unknown – an exercise that calls for imagination and inevitably imports risk of error. A few of Mr. Witney's points, which are not essential to his argument, seem to me open to question, and no doubt over the years some modifications will be required. Some obscurities and uncertainties in our knowledge of Dark Age Kent are bound to persist in the absence of contemporary written records, but given the nature of the evidence available Mr. Witney is entitled to end his proof with a Q.E.D.

The evidence, indeed, has been available for a long time. The book contains little new factual information: all that was necessary was that someone with Mr. Witney's catholicity of interest, breadth of reading, ability to see connexions, and patience should be prepared to spend twenty-five years in putting the bricks together to create this imposing edifice. In history, reinterpretation may be at least as important as establishing a new fact or two. Mr. Witney's is a substantial achievement for which we must be grateful.

FRANK JESSUP

The Teston Story. By Joan Severn, 8 × 6 in. Pp. 76, 14 plates + 3 maps. Rufus Fay Publications, Teston, 1975. £1.75.

When Cobbett rode between Maidstone and Mereworth in 1823, he declared it to be the finest seven miles of country he had ever seen in

England, although he made only passing reference to the village of Teston through which his journey lay. Other writers have likewise failed to do justice to the place, and it is, therefore, gratifying that a collection of notes on the history of 'Teeson' has at last been published. The author admits that the pages may seem over full of names and dates, and one might wish that the material had been more systematically arranged in some sections, but here for the first time has been brought together a wealth of information about the village and particularly its past inhabitants.

It is claimed that although Teston today can boast only a church, a village hall, a club, two shops and a handful of old houses, it has as proud a history as any large town, and the author attempts to justify this bold statement by fairly inundating us with facts about the former owners of Barham Court, local baronets, naval associations and, of course, the church and the river. Which brings us to Teston bridge – surely the best known feature of the place – with its stone arches spanning the Medway. We learn that the centre arch was rebuilt at the end of the eighteenth century for the improvement of river navigation and three other arches were rebuilt in 1830.

Extracts from the school log book between 1863 and 1905 are a mine of interest. At the present day when so much debate is in progress concerning the standard of education in our schools compared with earlier times, we may reflect on the record of events in 1892 when on 6th January an inspector called at Teston school and was subjected to insulting language by the headmaster who was in a state of drunken incapability. The school was thrown into turmoil until the rector and managers arrived to eject the headmaster and send the children home.

The book is well printed with clear illustrations. Of these, the maps redrawn from originals for purposes of publication are particularly interesting and helpful. There is a bibliography and a very full index.

P. J. TESTER

The archaeological Study of Churches. By P. Addyman and R. Morris (eds) (CBA Research Report no. 13). 29.5 × 21 cm. Pp. viii + 80, 13 pls., 20 figs. Council for British Archaeology, London, 1976. £4.50.

If you require a model for 'developed' disorder in petty administration look around you. Some diocesan advisory committees have (at last!) an archaeological adviser; some, including both in Kent, have, in effect, half of one; some have none, nor even an architect; and some ecclesiastical authorities have, by statute, no need of advice. Only last year, as one editor notes in this book, the Dean and Chapter of Ripon mutilated St. Wilfrid's crypt, surely one of the most precious monuments in western Christendom, to facilitate the viewing of a few bits of dull plate,

unconnected with the minster. No power in the land could stop them, and don't say 'It can't happen here'. The depleted chapters of today are fortunate if they include one or two scholars, and they are not the only bodies to be 'pressurized' into allowing vandalism and bad taste in order to sell gewgaws to the gaping mob. St. Autolycus has landed on these shores. At the sometimes embarrassing 'receiving end' of a vociferous archaeological public, I can only be grateful for its support, and this book is the *compte rendu* of two conferences, which it called into being, to clamour for something nearer the situation in Denmark and the Netherlands, in parts of Germany and, with reservations, and at select monuments, in France. I can testify that the gatherings were rousing and international: *Dieu le veult* (we trust): *Mammon ne le veult pas* (undoubtedly)!

There are articles on law, or lack of it, in various lands, on documentation (by Lawrence Butler and Dorothy Owen), and on certain excavations, of which the most remarkable, because in an unpromising and impeded building, was by Warwick Rodwell, who shows that excavation is still an art as much as a science or a 'drill', despite some ponderous methodological contributions. What is perhaps missing, and even more relevant to the archaeology of churches than to that of houses or any other field, is the pressing need for recording at each and every opportunity, and for the co-ordination of records, such as those which some Victorian restorers undoubtedly made and which are inaccessible.

S. E. RIGOLD

Newnham in Kent. By W. T. Berry. 10 × 8 in. Pp. 31, a map and 8 line drawings. The Faversham Society, 1976. No price.

Since its foundation in 1962, the Faversham Society has promoted the publication of a dozen monographs on aspects of local history, this account of Newnham being among its latest. Its typewritten pages are modest in presentation but admirable in content, not least for the author's own illustrations which convey a clear impression of the place to those who are not acquainted with it. The church and manor house are described in detail together with other buildings and the families who have occupied them. Included among other topics are the schools, shops, parish administration and an account of a calamitous fire in 1844.

The Foreword by Dr. R. H. Cooke assures the reader that 'future historians can with perfect confidence quote from this monograph secure in the knowledge of impeccable research'. Unfortunately, the opening sentence of the first section informs us that 'behind Newnham's George Inn, a tribe of Early Britons constructed a camp or defence which is marked on modern Ordnance Survey maps as a Motte & Bailey'. An accompanying description leaves no doubt that it was in fact a castle-

work thrown up a thousand years after the 'Early Britons' had passed from the scene.

P. J. TESTER

The Roman Forts of the Saxon Shore. By Stephen Johnson. 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 6 in. Pp. 172, 20 pls. and 64 figs. Paul Elek, London, 1976. £7.50.

This is the second volume of the publishers' series of books on archaeology and anthropology and a welcome addition to the literature of Roman Britain. The author discusses the background of the Saxon shore forts in Britain and on the Continent in the light of the *Notitia dignitatum* and on the evidence of recent archaeological work, the publication of some of which is long overdue, and the Carausian episode as preludes to the central theme of his book, which is mainly the dating and the purpose of these fortifications.

Johnson argues that the Saxon Shore forts, except for the early Reculver and Brancaster and the late Pevensey and Portchester, were built at the latest under Probus and placed under Carausius only on his appointment as commander of the *Classis britannica*, against the interpretation proposed several years ago (D. A. White, *Litus saxonicum*, Wisconsin, 1961) that these forts were constructed by the usurper Carausius as his own defensive line in anticipation of the attempt by Maximian to recover Roman Britain (pp. 103 ff., esp. p. 103). In support of his own interpretation, Johnson suggests that the Continental Saxon Shore forts were built at about the same time as the walls of Gaulish towns in the aftermath of the Germanic invasions in A.D. 276 (pp. 114–5), and that in Britain, on the evidence of similarities of planning and construction (pp. 100–1), the forts at Dover, Richborough and elsewhere were built at about the same time as the walls of Canterbury, dated to c. A.D. 270. Moreover, Johnson sees the 'construction of the new forts in Britain and on the Continental Channel coast . . . as a continuation of the defensive policy started half a century earlier with the construction of Reculver and Brancaster' (p. 107); his discussion of the chronology of these forts carries more conviction than White's theory.

As for the purpose of the whole system, Johnson interprets the forts on the eastern seaboard of Britain and on both sides of the Channel as a defensive *limes*, covering the northern approaches to both Britain and Gaul and having its pivot in the Straits of Dover, against the ever-present and increasing danger of piratical Saxon raids (pp. 126 ff., and Fig. 70), and bases his argument, in general, on the location of most of the Saxon Shore forts on or near river estuaries, i.e. at the very places from which Saxon raiders might be expected to advance further inland. Johnson plausibly argues that Carausius, having inherited a defensive system

against the Saxons, used it in his own defence against the forces of Rome; according to the author, Carausius' superior naval strength and experience and his command of the Channel ports and their hinterland would have obliged Maximian to build his own fleet inland, on the Rhine and the Moselle, and attempt his recovery of Britain through the northern approaches, using the very route of the Saxon raiders and meeting defeat in the hands of Carausius lying in wait for just such an attack (pp. 130–1): it was not until Maximian changed his tactics and attacked on land that the Carausian defences were outflanked, with the fall of Boulogne in A.D. 293 and the consequent opening up of the Channel.

Johnson's study of the Saxon Shore forts, 'a new, overall concept . . . as a frontier line' (p. 2), is persuasively argued and most stimulating; however details of future excavation at selected sites may affect this new approach, it certainly commands and deserves much more serious consideration at present than White's interpretation.

The book is well illustrated by many plates and text-figures which, if they succeed in nothing else, at least assemble together in one volume much material scattered in several publications. Occasionally, Johnson shows a penchant for the unusual (*petit appareil*, for the squared blocks of masonry typical of military construction; 'Gallic' instead of 'Gaulish' is particularly quaint used in association with samian, p. 137), which strikes an individualistic note; however, such idiosyncrasies apart, few printer's errors were noticed ('less forts', *sic*, p. 70) in this well-produced book, though one marvels at the looseness of expression (p. 82), 'the line of the Roman walls followed the later medieval circuit'.

A. P. DETSICA:3

The Memorial Inscriptions of the Nonconformist Burial Ground in Wincheap, Canterbury. By Duncan W. Harrington, with a plan by Richard A. Jones. 11½ × 8¼ in. Pp. 36. Kent Family History Society, 1976. £1.00.

The Kent Family History Society has, with its first Record Publication, begun where the Kent Archaeological Society's Record Branch left off following the death in 1923 of Leland L. Duncan.

Tombstones, sadly, have a far shorter life-span, exposed as they are to the elements, than even paper documents, and it is for this reason that their accurate transcription is vital. Mr. Harrington, having first cleared the overgrown vegetation, has copied all the legible inscriptions, which date from 1849 to 1938, and has carried through to completion what Mr. Duncan would have described as 'a dull, somewhat laborious and distinctly messy job'. What he did not undertake was to collate the transcriptions with the registers, which do not survive, or to record in

detail the nature of the stone used for each monument, which is of little value for gravestones as late as these. He does include an informative preface, and Mr. Jones' plan which serves to suggest, by the proximity of graves, relationships for which there may be little evidence besides.

That the advent of a family history society should be welcomed by archaeological and record societies is apparent when one sees how, when all three exist together, they can all flourish and, indeed, complement each other's work.

W. E. CHURCH

Otford in Kent. A History. By Dennis Clarke and Anthony Stoyel. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. Pp. xiv + 297. 16 pls. and 19 figs. Otford and District Historical Society, 1975. £5.00.

The history of a single community does not make sense by itself. The conquests and revolutions, the rise and fall of economic systems, the changes in social customs and organization which we study as part of national history, all changed the lives of the inhabitants of the smallest localities, and we can only understand the past of our own village if we know the wider history of which it forms a part.

The great virtue of *Otford in Kent* is that everything that happened in Otford is seen in its context. This cannot have been an easy task for the story stretches all the way from the Iron Age and beyond (there is a passing mention of the inhabitants of the rock shelters at Oldbury Hill) to the opening in 1973 of the new bridge over the Darent which replaced the one washed away in the floods of 1968. The necessary background is almost the whole human history of England! Yet the effort involved has been well worth while.

Just because the context is so well brought out, the story never seems merely parochial. Even those who know little or nothing of Otford will be interested. I remember particularly the struggle among Elizabeth I's courtiers at the end of her reign to acquire the palace, which had been built early in the century by Archbishop Warham but was seized almost at once by the Crown in one of those 'exchanges' of ecclesiastical property dear to both Henry VIII and Elizabeth, which always seemed to work out to the disadvantage of the Church. The one person who had no chance of getting it back was the contemporary archbishop, John Whitgift, who complained in vain that 'he had never a house in Kent fit for him'. Elizabeth was not prepared to waste resources on the Church, and Otford palace went to the Sidneys, momentarily well-placed in the web of courtly intrigues. Or, to take a minor incident, the fate of the presumably drunken Sevenoaks labourer who in 1715 was rash enough to refuse to drink the health of King George. The justices, anxious to show their own loyalty to the Hanoverian succession, committed him to

the house of correction for a month, where we may imagine he had the chance to meditate on his folly. Finally, the comment of the parson of Otford who wrote in 1912, 'Everything tends to make life very exacting. Our forces are dissipated in every direction . . . and only young men are able to stand the stress . . . (of) positions of great responsibility . . . All these (pressures) are doubly increased by the easy way in which we are able to get about.' What would he say in 1977, were he to contemplate the age of motorways and supersonic air travel?

There is much else that one might mention; but these will at least illustrate the range and interest of this study. It shows what can be done by a local society and dedicated local historians. Would that others could follow their example!

BRUCE WEBSTER

Cuxton – A Kentish Village. By Derek Church. 8¼ × 5½ in. Pp. 177, with numerous photographs and other illustrations. A. J. Cassell, Sheerness, 1976. £2.80.

Cuxton lies on the main road running between Strood and the cement manufacturing district around Snodland, and has now unfortunately absorbed something of the characteristic ugliness of these neighbours. Until recently there were those alive who could remember the place before the modern blight afflicted it and their memories are preserved in words and pictures in this book by Mr. Church who himself grew up in Cuxton and holds it in obvious affection. He admits that it is not the most beautiful village in Kent and he deprecates the loss of the old Rectory and other buildings of interest, which have been swept away during his own lifetime. Much of his information has come from the recollections of old people who remembered the fields and farms as they were in the closing years of the Victorian age and passed on their knowledge to the author. It is not a conventional work of local history and deals mainly with the recent past, having about it a strongly nostalgic flavour.

The remote ages are not entirely forgotten, however, and we are told about the Palaeolithic implements from the Rectory garden, the medieval church, and Whorne's Place – the big house formerly lying between the road and the river. The author's professional skill as an architect is put to good use in presenting an excellent pictorial reconstruction of how this house must once have looked. One could wish that his talents had been used to supply other similar illustrations in place of some of the old photographs, which are of very varying quality and in some cases so poor that the only justification for including them must be that they record things that have now gone for ever.

REVIEWS

It is also to be regretted that the absence of careful editing has left irritating errors such as rendering the name of George Payne, the noted antiquary, as 'Paine' in two places, though it appears correctly in the Bibliography. We cannot unreservedly accept all we read about the open-field system in medieval Cuxton, nor wholeheartedly agree that Cucola's Stone, from which the place-name is derived, was a marker through which sighting-lines ran out across the country in accordance with the theories of Alfred Watkins advanced in his notorious work *The Old Straight Track*.

These things apart, the book is a useful contribution, particularly as a social commentary on the changes, which have occurred in little more than the life-span of Cuxton's oldest inhabitants.

P. J. TESTER

A Wealden Rector. By Anthony Cronk. 8½ × 5¼ in. Pp. 126, 8 pls. and 5 figs. Phillimore, Chichester, 1975. £4.25.

According to its sub-title, this little book deals with the life and times of William Marriott Smith-Marriott, a former rector of Horsmonden, and is 'a chronicle also of his rustic parishioners', to quote the author's preface. Mr. Cronk traces the life of his Wealden 'autocratic parson-squire' from his birth in London to his death in 'his great rambling home', with chapters devoted to the various momentous periods in the life of his rector, spanning a time of great social changes. Clearly, Mr. Cronk feels much sympathy for his subject, perhaps even affection tinged with some nostalgia, and has taken great pains in the research for this well documented book, though some historians may not entirely accept Mr. Cronk's method or the claims made for this book on its dust-jacket.

However, this is a well produced book, with a number of illustrations and a comprehensive index, deserving a place in Kent local history collections.

A. P. DETSICAS

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© Kent Archaeological Society August 2014