



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

REVIEWS

Old Days in the Kent Hop Gardens. By Mary Lewis. Pp. 60. 1 fig. and 15 plates. Published by West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes. Second edition 1981. Price by post £1.30.

The first edition of this booklet has been out-of-print for many years. It originated in 1961 when the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes inaugurated an essay competition on the subject of hops. In Mrs. Lewis's capable hands the submitted material was fashioned into something which became almost a best-seller and has now been reprinted, with additions, because of repeated demands for it.

It is thoroughly nostalgic and depends largely on the memories of hop-pickers many of whom were old ladies of over 70 or 80 years. It does not pretend to be learned, but it is astonishing how much may be gleaned from its pages. For instance, Mrs. Vidgen of Loose informs us that 'the farmer would supply each of his workmen with a bottle of diarrhoea mixture and another (with mixture) for rubbing in the hair for head lice'. Add to this information the fact that in neighbouring East Farleigh churchyard there is a memorial to 43 strangers, all hop-pickers (41 of them Irish Catholics) who died of cholera in 1849 and a glimpse is obtained of the nauseous conditions then prevailing.

John Cannon has supplied a new chapter on 'The Hop Garden Today'. The present reviewer recalls that in his youth in the 1920s the goods yard of Woolwich Arsenal railway station used in September to be crowded with hop-pickers pushing and shoving to enter the several special trains in the sidings. Now the hop-picking machine has obliterated this typical scene. 'The oasthouses themselves have taken on a new look — new freshly-painted windows have appeared, providing everything from the much sought-after house with a difference, to a practical building for manufacturing English tea-cakes'.

REVIEWS

Wye Local History. Volume ii, number 1. Edited by H.F. Wickings and A.M. Paterson. Published by Wye Historical Society, c/o 27 Chequers Park, Wye, Spring 1981. Pp. 18, 4 figs., 1 plan. 40p.

In spite of the Depression some of our local societies still, in the tradition of older institutions such as the Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society (shades of Frank Elliston-Erwood), produce journals which contain research work worthy of preservation. This Wye production contains four papers — one, of local interest, about Wye's early history as a royal manor given to Battle Abbey by William after the Norman Conquest; the second is like unto it and is the second part (1930–80) of the story of Wye Cricket Club. With Doctor Paul Burnham's article we enter a national field of interest even though he only deals with the local watermills and windmills. He admits his indebtedness to Coles Finch but the value of the paper depends on additions made through the author's interest in geology and the environment.

Finally there is John (E.W.) Parkin's description of Crundale House written in the style we have come to appreciate in *Archaeologia Cantiana*. The house, formerly in the possession of Jane Austen's family, is aisled and contains archaic lap dovetails and foot-square aisle posts. It is dated to the early thirteenth century and it is claimed that it is unique in the County and 'perhaps the oldest and most interesting house in Kent.'

L.R.A. GROVE