

Reviews

It should be understood that all statements and opinions in reviews are those of the respective authors, not of the Society or Editor.

Jack Howard-Drake (ed.), *Oxford Church Courts: Depositions 1570-1574*. Oxon. C.C. Dept. of Leisure and Arts, 1993. Pp. iii + 102. Ibid. *1581-1586* (1994. Pp. vi + 69). Ibid. *1589-1593* (1997. Pp. vii + 94). All available from Oxon. County Libraries and Oxon. Archives, price £3.95 (£4.50 incl. p. + p.)

The late Professor Geoffrey Elton considered church court records as 'among the more strikingly repulsive of all relics of the past. Only young scholars, still enthusiastic, physically strong, and possessed of a sound digestion, are advised to tackle these materials.' (*England 1200-1640: Sources of History*, 105.) I hope that Jack Howard-Drake will not think it indelicate if I observe that he has proved the great man comprehensively wrong in one of these desiderata, though right enough in matters of strength, digestion and enthusiasm. Anyone who has used church court records will concur with Elton's description of the physical condition and appalling handwriting. Those of us who, though younger, are more delicate of stomach or weaker in enthusiasm will breathe a sigh of relief that Mr Howard-Drake is continuing his self-imposed task of calendaring the records. For, as Elton also noted, they 'illuminate the history of church and people in ways that no other sources can. They take one to the realities.'

Since this Journal carried a review of *Oxford Church Courts 1542-1550* in 1992 (*Oxoniensia*, lvii), Mr Howard-Drake has produced three further volumes covering the years 1570-4, 1581-6, and 1589-93 which are the subject of this review. Editing policy has remained constant, i.e. to provide an indexed calendar of depositions made in the Archdeacon's Court, or, in the case of the last volume, in the Vicar-General's Court. The editor modestly describes his calendars as guides to the records. They are much more than that, providing not only the outline of a case but witness lists, a judicious selection of detail, and an indication of what further material can be found in the full depositions. For many people most of the time, the calendar will suffice. Anyone who needs to investigate further will note with gratitude that full transcripts (by Joan Howard-Drake) have been deposited in Oxfordshire Archives, interleaved with photocopies of the originals.

Comments made in the review of the first volume hold good for the three later volumes and are not repeated in detail here. The bulk of the cases still fall within one of four categories: tithes and offerings, testamentary, matrimonial, and defamation. It is noteworthy that as will-making increased in the 16th century, so did the inevitable concomitant litigation: there were only seven testamentary cases 1542-50, but thirty-five (25% of the total) 1589-93.

Defamation cases are, happily, as full of lively detail as before. The latest volume begins with an alleged claim by Richard Coles of Swinbrook that there were 'not above three honest women in the parish ... and he would not even swear for his own mother' (1589-93, p. 1). As always in such cases, one has that rare sensation of actually hearing the deponents' voices. Much abuse, then as now, was unimaginative and repetitive, but there are flashes of malicious wit: Jane Catesby's assault on the reputation of Edith Busby includes the memorable suggestion that 'if the orchard could speak, it would say somewhat' (1570-4, p. 33).

The calendars provide a rich source of material for social, economic, ecclesiastical and

family historians. Thus, the witness lists, which include many mini-biographies of those appearing, seem to confirm current orthodoxy as to the high degree of personal mobility in the 16th century. The details of the cases include material relating *inter alia* to courtship and marriage customs, to types and values of crops and livestock, employment, markets and fairs, and church fabric. Much of it, while intensely local, even personal and intimate, has a wider significance, helping to fill out and even occasionally to challenge our perceptions of 16th-century society. There are descriptions in 1589 and 1591 of parish boundaries in Oxford, valuable in themselves, but including the startling remark that a particular property must have been in St. Peter-le-Bailey parish because the parish clerk carried holy water to each house in the parish, including that one, every Sunday (1589-93, pp. 11-12, 37, 40). That is a remarkably late occurrence of such a practice, and in a parish soon to be noted for puritan sympathies.

These volumes represent excellent value for money. Funds raised from sales will contribute to the cost of financing further editions which are already being prepared. The Howard-Drakes, and Oxfordshire Archives, which has managed to maintain its enlightened policy of support despite the damaging cuts it has sustained, are to be congratulated and thanked for their considerable, consistent and, we hope, continuing achievement.

CHRISTOPHER DAY

Frank Broomhead, *The Book Illustrations of Orlando Jewitt*, The Private Libraries Association, 1995. Pp. xvi + 256, 99 ill. 69 plates. Price £45.00 (£22.50 to PLA Members).

All those who are familiar with the numerous books on Gothic architecture which came out between the 1820s and the 1860s will know and love the wood-engravings of Orlando Jewitt: often on a tiny scale, they combine exact information with a picturesque sense of atmosphere in a quite reasonable way. For many people, Jewitt's name was first brought to their attention by the delightful little book by Harry Carter, charmingly produced and published in 1962 by the Oxford University Press. Frank Broomhead's book is much more substantial, providing a full and detailed bibliographical study of Jewitt's book illustrations. It too is very handsomely produced, though it lacks the colour which enlivened Carter's book. It is regrettable that Broomhead, unlike Carter, does not reproduce any of Jewitt's original drawings, of which 'a number' survive in the John Johnson Collection.

Broomhead combines his bibliographical study with an account of Jewitt's life. This is detailed and helpful, but some questions remain unanswered. Why did his restless and variously talented father call him 'Orlando'? Was he an admirer of Ariosto? It comes as a surprise, in the checklist of Jewitt's marvellous bookplates, to find his antiquarian brother Llewellynn (and why the mis-spelt Welsh name?) using a coat of arms 'used by some Jewitt families' (p. 179). One would like to know at what point the family became armigerous.

Members of the O.A.H.S. will have seen Frank Broomhead's article 'Orlando Jewitt: Wood Engraver to the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture' in *Oxoniensia*, lxi (1996), 369-78. This showed how much we owe to his work. Due to his close connection with John Henry Parker, who had a very high opinion of Jewitt's architectural accuracy, he moved to Headington in 1838, and remained there until 1857. Some correspondence of 1839 (quoted on p. 49), relating to the illustrations for Alfred Beesley's *History of Banbury*, shows Parker playing a distinctly odd, and apparently none too honourable, game. Broomhead gives interesting evidence about Jewitt's business activities, doing his best to elucidate what Carter called 'the distasteful admission that "Orlando Jewitt" was a firm'.

The ordinary reader (as opposed to the bibliographical expert) would have been helped by more background information on the status of wood-engraving as a method of book

illustration, at a period when rapid change was tending to render it obsolete. Some help is given, such as the brief statement on p. 138 that 'until the 1880s wood engraving was the commonest method of illustrating books', and the interesting references to Jewitt's use of photographs as an aid in his task (pp. 77, 93, 106-7), but more would have been welcome.

The proof-reading of the book is almost perfect, but it is a pity that the author did not get his Latin references checked: there are several inaccuracies. The same applies to Greek: the Reverend Charles Marriott's motto (p. 161) should be transcribed as 'Eti Mikron'. Presumably it comes from the Septuagint version of *Exodus* 17.4, 'And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me"' – a poignant motto for a Tractarian fearing persecution. The enormous checklist of illustrated books, running to 923 items, is a masterpiece: however, if there is an explanation of the asterisks which appear after some of the catalogue numbers, this reviewer has failed to find it.

The vast accumulation of scholarly detail makes reading the book rather arduous, but gives it inestimable value as a work of reference. It need hardly be said that the 168 illustrations are a source of infinite delight.

PETER HOWELL

Reginald H. Adams (ed.), with an introduction by Sir Howard Colvin, *Memorial Inscriptions in St. John's College Oxford*. Saint John Baptist College in the University of Oxford, 1996. Pp. 83, 15 plates. Price £6.00. Published concurrently by Oxford Historical Society, N.S. vol. xxxv.

In this enjoyable and scholarly book Reginald Adams has recorded the fifty inscribed memorials to former presidents, fellows, and undergraduates which still survive in the chapel and precincts of St. John's College. The memorials, which range from the 1570s to the 1970s, are catalogued in order of death-date, each entry providing a full transcription of the text, together with an English translation, a brief note of its current location, further biographical details of the subject, and a commentary on the inscription.

This corpus of inscriptions will be welcomed by all who have an interest in funerary monuments as a valuable record of a specific genre: the scholar monument. As Sir Howard Colvin observes in his introduction to the book, the verses and epitaphs collected here were devised by, and for, a community who habitually read, wrote, and sometimes conversed in, Latin. The inscriptions they composed in remembrance of their deceased fellows were often the occasion of verbal ingenuity and learned display. The reader's appreciation of these literary exercises is greatly enhanced by Mr Adams's commentaries in which he reveals the, sometimes obscure, biblical and classical sources and allusions on which their composers drew. The chronological arrangement of the catalogue also encourages a consideration of changing stylistic fashions and conventions. Verbal conceits are more evident in the earlier works, as for example in the memorial to Edward Sparke (d. 1675), whose name and musical accomplishments provided the theme for a particularly elegant inscription, or in the punning epigram above the kneeling figure of Richard Case (d. 1600) '*casus in occasum vergit, vivitque sepultus*' ('Case inclines to his setting and lives in his grave'). By the 19th century the inscriptions become more restrained, and complex classical allusion recedes in favour of more direct affirmations of Christian virtues. The first memorials composed in English appear in the early 20th century.

Much useful information is contained with Mr Adams's notes. In addition to biographical accounts we find other important details such as the cost of a particular brass, explanations of unusual abbreviations or usages, and cross-references to related portraits and memorials. A good example of this is provided by his commentary on the monument to the antiquary Richard Rawlinson (d. 1755). This black marble urn contains Rawlinson's heart, a rare revival

in England of a pre-Reformation burial practice. We learn from the notes that Rawlinson himself stipulated this form in his will, perhaps, it is suggested, inspired by the example of some Jacobite sympathisers earlier in the century who chose this form for their own burial. His body was interred in St. Giles' church and Mr Adams reproduces the text of the coffin plate devised by Rawlinson (a copy of which is in the Bodleian Library) and explains its complex interweaving of themes from Virgil, Horace, St. Paul and the inscription on the temple of Delphi.

The primary concern of the catalogue is, of course, with the inscriptions themselves, but some attention is given to the design of the monuments of which, in many cases, text formed only one component. Brief descriptions of the memorials are given, as are the names of sculptors, designers and letter-cutters, where known. Fifteen black-and-white plates usefully illustrate some of the more elaborate monuments, but some readers may well wish for more detailed physical descriptions of the works, particularly in matters of scale.

All readers will, however, appreciate the attention which has been given to questions of physical location. Sir Howard Colvin's introduction provides a concise history of burial practice in the college and of the successive refittings of the chapel which necessitated the removal or resiting of many monuments, most radically in 1843 when many were relocated to the Baylie Chapel. As students of church monuments will know, this tendency of memorials to 'migrate' can inhibit a full appraisal of their significance and they will applaud Mr Adams's decision to include, as an appendix, a note of the location of monuments prior to the 1843 restoration, found in a bursar's memorandum book in the college archives.

In addition to these personal memorials, a number of other inscriptions within the college grounds are recorded, notably a painted board on the buttery staircase commemorating, in Latin, the work of the Ministry of Food and its occupation of the college during the Second World War.

Mr Adams and Sir Howard Colvin are to be thanked for this most interesting work. An important resource for students of funerary verse, of collegiate history, and of memorial sculpture, it will also engage the general reader who will find much to enjoy in the individual inscriptions. Not least will it be enjoyed by those who have a personal connection with the college and who will know more intimately these monuments to past members of their society.

LOUISE DURNING

Publications Received:

It is hoped that reviews of a number of these works will appear in the next issue of *Oxoniensia*.

John Broad and Richard Hoyle (eds.), *Bernwood, The Life and Afterlife of a Forest*. University of Central Lancashire, Harris Paper 2, 1997. Pp. xvi + 126, 8 plates, 9 tables, 9 maps. Available from the publishers, price £9.95, incl. p+p.

Peter C. Beauchamp (ed.), *The Oxfordshire Muster Rolls 1539, 1542, 1569*. The Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 60, 1996. Pp. xxxvii + 126.

Ann Natalie Hansen, *Oxford Goldsmiths Before 1800*. At The Sign of the Cock, Columbus, Ohio, 1996. Pp. ix + 164, 8 plates. Price £35.00.

S.J. Lobb and P.J. Rose, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*. Wessex Archaeology Report no. 9, 1996. Pp. vii + 138, many figures and tables, microfiche. Price £20.00.

John M. Fletcher and Christopher Upton (eds.), *The Domestic Accounts of Merton College, Oxford, 1482-1494*. Oxford Historical Society, N.S. vol. xxxiv, 1996. Pp. xx + 616. Available to non-members from the Hon. Treasurer, price £28.00 + £1.00 p+p.

Alan Crossley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England. Oxfordshire, Volume Thirteen: Bampton Hundred (Part One), including the market town of Bampton*. Oxford University Press for the University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1996. Pp. 234, 20 pages of plates, 23 text illustrations. Price £70.00.