

## REVIEWS

Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ORS, 67 (2010). Pp. xii + 193. 120 maps. £35. ISBN 978-0-902509-68-9. Paperback, £20. ISBN 978-0-902509-63-4.

The Oxfordshire Record Society is to be congratulated on producing this superb and much-needed historical atlas. Indeed it is surprising that it has taken until now for a historical atlas of this exceptionally interesting county to be produced. One would always like maps to be larger than it is economical to produce them, but here the editors, Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, have achieved a reasonable compromise in the format. The atlas is 28 cm from top to bottom and 21 cm wide, and most entries comprise a two-page spread with explanatory text on one side and a full-sized illustrative map of the county on the other. This provides space for maps of an adequate size. Some have as many as nine shades. There are seventy-four separate entries contributed by forty-two authors. Their knowledge and expertise are extensive and impressive. The editors have done an excellent job in marshalling and controlling this vast mass of material.

The atlas is based on the old county of Oxfordshire before its 1974 enlargement, and the chronological spread ranges from palaeolithic archaeological sites to conditions in the late twentieth century. The atlas begins with two large and useful maps showing ecclesiastical parishes c.1850 and modern civil parishes in 1933. This is particularly useful for historians working in periods before the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, which set up County Councils and separated ecclesiastical from civil parishes. Many early documents refer to places in ecclesiastical parishes which no longer appear on modern maps, causing confusion. So Chris Gilliam's entry on 'Local Government in the 19th and 20th Centuries' is very useful.

There are five entries on geology and pre-Roman and Roman sites, about twenty-five on the medieval period up to c.1500, and a further fifteen or so on the period to c.1800. The remainder (some thirty or so) deal with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although the chronological periods sometimes overlap, as in James Bond's essay on 'Towns 1700–1900: Nodality, Growth and Decay'. All entries also have notes and suggestions for further reading.

There is a good balance between political, religious, economic, and social subject matter. A brief selection of entries will illustrate this. Articles include 'Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement' by Anne Dodd, 'Communications and Urban Origins before 1066' by John Blair, 'Domesday Landholdings and Settlement' by Mark Page, 'Religious Houses' by James Bond, 'University and College Properties before 1500' by Ralph Evans, 'Oxford before 1800' by Alan Crossley, 'Civil War 1642–1649' by Kate Tiller, 'Country Houses, 1500–1815' by Geoffrey Tyack, 'Railways' by Barrie Trinder, 'Parliamentary Representation' by Philip Salmon, 'Population Change 1801–1901' by James Nash, 'The Motor Industry' by Malcolm Graham, and 'Town and Country Planning in the 20th Century' by Liam Tiller. This list only gives a flavour of the rich mixture of subjects contained in the atlas.

One curiosity of the atlas is that there is no map showing the creation of the county with its strange wiggly land boundaries. This of course is because there is little information on this subject. In fact it is not known for certain when the county was created. It seems to have been c.1006, towards the end of the reign of the unfortunate Æthelred II (the 'redeless', 978–1016), but it might have been as early as the reign of Edward the Elder (899–924). The Thames made an obvious, although not convenient, southern boundary, since the towns of Reading, Wallingford and Abingdon on the south bank, which influenced the county, were left out. The highly irregular boundaries with Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire were possibly based on the boundaries of earlier lordships, although no one knows.

Oxford itself was not an ancient tribal and Roman centre like *Verulamium*/St Albans or Cirencester, but originated as a minster centre of the early eighth century situated by a ford across the Thames. A fortified *burh* was added c.880. Oxford's central position at the heart of various

routes running north and south, and east and west along the Thames, is well shown in John Blair's entry on 'Communications and Urban Origins before 1066', and in Anne Dodd's entry on 'Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement'. This centrality enabled the later county to develop as an administrative unit around it.

Selecting specific entries for comment is always an invidious process, and a reviewer will follow his own particular interests. The map of Roman settlement by Paul Booth usefully locates the sites of villas and illustrates the importance of ancient trackways and Roman roads, though urban sites were less significant with only Dorchester becoming a modern survivor, and only as a minor settlement. Anne Dodd's map of 'Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement' between c.450 and 650 sets the scene for the profound and lasting change brought about by Germanic settlers who moved into the region with a new language and culture, which is still reflected in our present place-names. The map shows how the early settlers were attracted to the Thames and Cherwell valleys, where soils were relatively easy to cultivate, and were shy of the Cotswold and Chiltern hills.

Mark Page's entries on 'Domesday Landholdings and Settlement' and 'Domesday Landscape and Land Use' reveal details of the county in 1086, at the time of King William I's wonderfully detailed survey of England. The locations of royal, church, and lay manors are shown as well as agricultural development. The second map shows that many settlements on the uplands of the north and the Chilterns were considered to be under-supplied with plough teams, and hence capable of further development. Just over half the recorded population were 'villeins' (farmers with subsistence-sized farms of 15 to 30 acres) and about 30 per cent were 'bordars' (small holders with a few acres, and thus partly dependent on work on the lords' demesne farms). Surprisingly 15 per cent of the recorded population were still slaves (higher than the national average), although slavery was in decline nationally.

Robert Peberdy's map of late-medieval communications shows how far towns and routeways had developed by c.1500, and indicates the emerging importance of small towns such as Banbury, Chipping Norton, Burford, and Henley-on-Thames, all on major routes leading to London. Simon Townley's maps of the relative wealth and population of the county in 1334 and 1524 show detailed variations throughout the county, with the Thames valley and Oxford as the wealthiest area at both dates, and the Chilterns remaining the least. Alan Crossley's long and detailed entry on 'Oxford before 1800' is particularly fascinating as he includes three detailed maps of the city in 1279, 1578, and 1794. By 1578, sixteen colleges and several halls had emerged and by 1794 there was dense development within the city centre and through the suburbs, and the New Road had been cut through the castle walls to allow better access from the west.

There are three maps showing the development of the county's agriculture. Mark Page maps the varying farming regions in the era before parliamentary enclosures and indicates how improvements in open-field farming, such as the introduction of new rotations and the sowing of grass such as sainfoin for grazing on some strips, delayed enclosures in some parishes well into the nineteenth century. Keith Parry maps the enclosure process by period and shows that even though enclosures were numerous in their peak period (1785–1835), many Oxfordshire parishes were not enclosed until after 1835. Kate Tiller discusses agriculture's fortunes between 1750 and 1970 and shows that although farming was prosperous in the mid-nineteenth century this did not last, and Oxfordshire suffered like the rest of Britain between 1880 and 1914 when cheap imports of food undercut the county's farmers. Both world wars caused a revival; the first stalled after 1918 but the second was permanent after 1945 when government support was maintained.

Barrie Trinder's maps of railways c.1864 and in 1923 reveal how they spread until most places were on or near a railway, but they suffered in the Beeching cuts of the 1960s. However, a welcome revival is now underway. James Nash's three maps of population change and migration between 1801 and 1901 show how population rose between 1801 and 1851, as in the rest of the country, but then declined *relatively* because Oxfordshire's largely rural economy could not absorb rapid population growth like the industrial counties of the midlands or the north. The towns, however,

and particularly Oxford, continued to grow. There was, of course, one major exception to modern Oxfordshire's largely agricultural condition: the motor industry. Malcolm Graham's map not only shows the spread of William Morris's works at Cowley and the distribution of workers' homes but also the less familiar story of the occurrence of specialist motor sports centres, such as Ascari cars in Banbury and Aston Martin in Bloxham.

In her introduction Kate Tiller invites suggestions for other topics which might be mapped in a future edition. One worth considering is landownership, which was a significant source of social and political power. In a recent study (*Oxoniensia*, 70 (2005), pp. 27–49) all owners of estates of over 2,000 acres in Oxfordshire c.1880 were listed with their residences, and this could be schematically mapped without difficulty.

Any review of such a meaty and nourishing volume as this atlas can only give a partial and incomplete picture. For a full appreciation of its riches readers must study the original.

MICHAEL HAVINDEN, University of Exeter

Andrew Hutt, Paul Goodenough, and Valerine Pyne, *Living in the Iron Age in and around Berkshire*, *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 78 (2009). Pp. 194. Approx. 80 b&w illustrations, 13 maps, 5 colour plates. Paperback, £15 (plus £2.50 p&xp in UK). Available from Mrs C. Petts, 71 The Causeway, Steventon, Oxon., OX13 6SQ. Journal ISSN 0309–3093.

This special issue of the *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* is both a discussion and a gazetteer of Iron Age material; it often treads a fine balance between the two similar, but also disparate, approaches. Its authors have spent nearly five years compiling a synthesis from excavation reports and more general papers. The work manages to compact a vast amount of information into some 118 pages of text (excluding the references and coloured illustrations) and does so with a simplicity that makes the Iron Age extremely approachable. The chapters connect well with each other, and archaeologists of all types will find material of interest. The study area comprises post-1974 Berkshire and adjacent areas to the north, south, and east. It thus includes the Vale of the White Horse, now in Oxfordshire, and south Oxfordshire.

Without a doubt, more studies like this are needed. Such a synthesis enables material items, site types, and social and cultural indicators to be considered in perspective, something this book aims to do and to some extent achieves. Nonetheless, the volume leaves one with some exasperation. It sometimes seems unfinished and at times does not entirely 'fit together'. In part this results from the surprising lack of consideration of some key publications and discussions, such as Gill Hey's article on the upper Thames valley in C. Haselgrove et al. (eds.), *The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond* (2007). Another surprising omission is B. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (1984). Moreover too many of the discussions are simply regurgitations of points already made elsewhere, making this publication far more of a gazetteer than a discussion. Ideally the priorities should have been reversed. Half the delight of prehistoric studies is that interpretation can be based on many approaches; it is never the case that one approach is always right. Yet here the authors too often accept a particular line. In fact the material provides scope for alternatives. More wide-ranging discussions would have added greater depth.

A final observation perhaps best sums up the mixed messages presented by this book. Mistakes are numerous and frequent: for example the OAHS is acknowledged as the 'Oxfordshire Archaeological and Historical Society'; pictures are sometimes copied badly; and references are often incomplete or incorrect. But as the book was produced on a 'shoestring' some errors might be expected as little editorial support can be provided in the circumstances. Thus it almost becomes a defining publication as archaeologists attempt to tread a fine balance between books being affordable to the general public through tight budgeting and inexpensive printing and a

desire to achieve the highest standards which would require thorough copy editing and smart, expensive printing. Overall this book can be seen as a success of the former against the shortfalls of the latter.

This book is definitely worth persevering with as it provides a useful and comprehensive account of its region. The chapters are well organized and the illustrations add to the discussion. The colour maps at the back notably provide effective overall perspectives for studying distributions of sites and finds across different landscapes and geological deposits. Overall this is a welcome addition to the literature.

ALEX LANG, Nottingham

Warwick Rodwell, *Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire: The Archaeology and Architecture of a Cathedral, Monastery and Parish Church*, Oxbow Books (Oxford, 2009). Pp. xii + 220. 222 b&w illustrations, 47 colour plates. £38. ISBN 978-1-84217-388-6.

Dorchester Abbey is a strange place: it can seem almost barn-like at first, yet its east end contains a remarkable collection of monuments, sculpture and glass, and the building's odd plan suggests a structure with a complex story.

The church attracted scholarly attention from the seventeenth century. But much was not understood, a tantalizing situation given the building's unusual history. Dorchester was a Roman town, and the site of a cathedral from as early as c.635; the founding bishop, Birinus, was later acclaimed a saint. The seat of the see was moved to Lincoln at a date between 1072 and 1075, leaving behind a college of secular canons. By c.1140 the church had become an Augustinian monastery, only to be reduced to parochial status in 1536. One might read this as nearly a millennium of gradual decline, yet the building's earliest stylistically datable features are late twelfth century. How, then, can the building's many oddities be understood? In what ways, if at all, are they related to its history?

Professor Warwick Rodwell, author of *The Archaeology of the English Church* and many other works, is the ideal person to address such questions. He examined the church as part of a major programme of conservation. The rich pictorial record he found has enabled this volume to be copiously illustrated. The result is an authoritative and attractive work, and unless more intrusive investigation becomes possible this will surely remain the definitive account of Dorchester Abbey. Its many insights are based on impeccable standards of observation and analysis, backed up by copious citations. The book's only drawbacks are ones that perhaps reflect its origins as an archaeological report: for example, discussions of history and context are sometimes thin. Rodwell acknowledges that the former is outside his intention; much the same could also be said of the latter, though here the weakness is more serious as it sometimes affects his assessment of the building.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is a chronological account of the church and its precinct. The second is effectively a detailed inventory. The book's key conclusions are presented in part one, which means that much of the second part will be of narrower interest, but it does allow Rodwell to analyse some areas in greater detail, such as the fine carvings on the buttresses of the south chancel aisle.

Some of Rodwell's most important observations are contained in his account of the uncertain relationship between the site of the church and the Roman town. He points out that the two apparently competing options – a location outside a rectangular urban settlement, and one within a more irregularly enclosed area – are not mutually exclusive, given that the former proposed plan may be a late Roman defensive consolidation of an earlier, larger one. He also notes that the church sits on a natural eminence above the main settlement, and reveals evidence that might suggest that a temple and/or mausoleum once stood on the site.

The most significant of Rodwell's new observations relate to the Anglo-Saxon cathedral. He reveals the traces of an arch of this era within the oldest stonework in the building, and even, impressively, offers a reconstruction. He also identifies extensive sections of walling that may be associated with Remigius, the first Norman bishop. Remigius is said to have begun rebuilding Dorchester Cathedral prior to his move 150 miles northwards, and Rodwell argues that much of the current church's 'footprint' is the result, perhaps completed by the canons after the move. This would make Dorchester arguably the first post-Conquest rebuilt cathedral in England. A fuller contextual discussion might have added to Rodwell's analysis here. Between the 1070s and the 1110s, every English cathedral was remade as a mature Romanesque church on a grand scale; yet, as Rodwell demonstrates, Dorchester's cruciform, aisleless plan was more like that of Norman collegiate churches. So this phase either results from a brief period when the extent of Norman architectural ambition had yet to emerge, or (and this seems at least as likely) the rebuild postdates the relocation of the see, and Dorchester is the work of a community of priests creating an up-to-date collegiate church which was deliberately *not* cathedral-like in scale.

For all subsequent structural phases there is stylistic evidence. Rodwell points out the key developments: much later twelfth-century rebuilding, associated with the creation of a mid-ranking Augustinian house; and then, starting in the earlier thirteenth century, well over a hundred years in which there was restless improvement and addition. The intent was apparently to create ever-grander settings for the shrine of St Birinus, the revival of whose cult can be traced in (for example) 1224 and c.1320. Little more was then done to the church until the seventeenth century when works included the rebuilding of the tower of what was now a parish church. By 1844 flat ceilings cut across some of Dorchester's most interesting medieval remains. Victorian restoration projects included a design by George Gilbert Scott (sadly unillustrated here) for a *redos* that was never completed.

Rodwell makes several important observations concerning these later phases. The enormous, primitive former crossing arches have long bewildered observers. They are here persuasively dated to the twelfth century, and Rodwell audaciously argues that they once contained a two-storey architectural composition. He also notes the later relocation and reinstatement of such features as the buttress at the south-west corner of the nave: such 'curation' of older pieces of fabric is increasingly being revealed.

The building's artistic high-point comprises the south-eastern chancel chapel of c.1290–1300 and new eastern bay of c.1330–40, work that is virtually a textbook of Decorated design at its most adventurous. Here Rodwell finally establishes that the blocking of the central light of the east window by a buttress took place after the window was built. Here again more contextual material could have been provided, pointing to the sculpted mullions in the Lady chapel at St Alban's Abbey, for example, rather than to distant Barton-upon-Humber, as a comparator for Dorchester's famous carved window tracery; or exploring stylistic links with St Augustine's, Bristol, and other 'experimental' west-country buildings, most obvious in the piscina-and-door ensemble in Dorchester's south-eastern chapels. This last feature has always looked to me to be secondary to the chapel.

In one area here, however, Rodwell's contextual knowledge is crucial. His discussion of the gallery over the south-eastern chapels, and the unusual original arrangement he reconstructs of crypt, raised altar and gallery at the east end of the south nave aisle, have important comparators, for example at Cirencester, Lichfield, and Bristol. Rodwell's work is throwing valuable light on these important and easily overlooked features.

Rodwell also draws together current knowledge of the wall paintings, monuments, lead font, bells, lapidary collection, and in-situ sculpture, concentrating most on what has not received detailed study elsewhere. He surveys the surviving evidence for the precinct, demonstrating that the evidence supports general comparison with other Augustinian houses.

In many respects Dorchester Abbey is a 'one-off', but it also occupies an institutional and architectural middle ground between the parish church and the spectacular 'great church'.

From Rewley Abbey to Bicester Priory, there might have been at least a dozen such buildings in Oxfordshire alone. How many other equally remarkable buildings, then, once peppered the landscape?

JON CANNON, University of Bristol

Philip Page, Kate Atherton, and Alan Hardy, with numerous other contributors, *Barentin's Manor: Excavations of the Moated Manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire, 1976–9*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 24 (2005). Pp. xviii + 198. Numerous illustrations. £19.95. ISBN 0–947816–623.

This is a late review of a work published in 2005 which reports on an ‘old-fashioned rescue dig’ undertaken over twenty-five years earlier. *Barentin's Manor* nevertheless deserves notice despite the delays. Its subject, the medieval manor house at Harding's Field in Chalgrove, remains one of the most fully excavated moated complexes in England. For a long period it was the main residence of a prominent knightly family, the Barentins, and the buildings and objects uncovered reveal much about the changing lifestyle and aspirations of the English gentry from the mid thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries. Although the report is based on fieldwork and excavation of the late 1970s, the text and illustrations prepared afterwards were thoroughly revised and expanded before final publication. Despite some limitations imposed by the nature of the original work, there is much here to inform present-day researchers interested in the houses and material culture of medieval lords, the development of rural settlements, and contemporary industries and trade networks.

John Blair's fine historical introduction sets out the manorial history, the documentary evidence for building work, and the periods when the Barentins were resident. Chalgrove was a single ten-hide estate in 1086, but after a long period in Crown hands and in the short-term possession of a series of royal servants it was permanently alienated and divided into two manors in the early thirteenth century. Historical and archaeological evidence show that the moat, a glazed main hall, and associated structures were established at Harding's Field in the 1250s, replacing earlier buildings. This was probably the work of Drew Barentin I (d. 1264 or 1265), a successful royal servant who acquired land in the Channel Islands. Drew, who was seneschal of Gascony from 1247, was no doubt eager to build a substantial house at Chalgrove, which was probably his main English property. He may well have been spurred on by the building campaign of John de Plessis (d. 1263), a royal intimate and latterly earl of Warwick, who seems to have built a fine house on his portion of Chalgrove manor c.1240. The latter house was described in 1336 but remains unexcavated; its site is probably next to the surviving fifteenth-century Chalgrove Manor in the north-west of the village. Both men benefited from royal gifts of timber from nearby forests, which provided some of the building materials, but their lives challenge the old idea that the knightly class was in financial ‘crisis’ in the thirteenth century, a suggestion which David Carpenter systematically contested in 1980 using Oxfordshire evidence.

The excavation report shows that the Barentin house at Harding's Field was greatly extended and improved c.1300–30, in line with more regular lordly occupation and rising expectations of domestic comfort. The major development was provision of a cross-wing with private chambers and service rooms. Larger farm buildings were also constructed (pp. 34–52). This building work and the ‘family mausoleum’ created in the parish church suggest that the Barentins, like others of their class, by then firmly identified themselves with a single main place of residence. Further work carried out in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century included the creation of a probable stone chapel, and of a walled garden and covered walkway behind the main hall (pp. 52–6). However, in 1415 Reynold Barentin inherited his wealthy uncle's grand house at nearby Little Haseley, and this became the family's main residence by the mid fifteenth century. The lure of higher-status accommodation proved stronger than any attachment to an established seat which

was not that architecturally elaborate and was by then rather cramped and old-fashioned, with domestic and farm buildings close together within the confines of the moat. Subsequent financial problems forced the Barentins to sell their Chalgrove property in the 1480s and the moated house was demolished.

The small finds, bone assemblage, and environmental evidence from the site add to our knowledge of gentry material culture and of the local economy and landscape. Most of the ordinary pottery was produced in the region and was probably purchased at Abingdon, Wallingford, and Henley-on-Thames. By the fourteenth century there was also a substantial amount of fine tableware in the house, including Brill/Boarstall wares, Surrey wares, and rare French imports. The latter two types, like the imported glass found here, probably came up the Thames from London. Wider connections are likewise suggested by some coin finds, including a double mite of Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy. Personal piety is tantalizingly represented by a twelfth- or thirteenth-century enamelled figure of a saint, probably made in Limoges; it most likely belonged to a shrine or reliquary, but coming from a demolition context it cannot be connected even with a particular building. Leisure interests are reflected in two fourteenth- to fifteenth-century gaming pieces (one of which was found in the hall) and arrowheads of a similar date, including at least one of the broad-headed type used for hunting. Concerns to provide security and privacy and to keep documents safe are shown by the presence of keys, locks, and casket fittings. Quotidian activities are seen in tools and evidence of leather- and metal-working. Bone finds support documentary evidence that the manor was chiefly geared towards arable production, though, as one would expect, pastoral farming probably became more important after the Black Death. The local landscape seems to have been mainly open and unwooded, and the venison consumed here would have come largely from fallow deer kept in enclosed parks, perhaps including one at Great Haseley. The firewood was apparently supplied from Chiltern beech woods, and it is noteworthy that even in the late Middle Ages it was mostly in the form of loppings from felled standards or badly managed beech scrub, rather than from well-managed coppices.

Just as interesting as the evidence from the moated complex itself is the way in which the division of the manor in the early thirteenth century apparently affected the layout of the village. Limited wider archaeological evidence suggests that in the late Anglo-Saxon period the focus of settlement was around the church, in the south of the village, with the earliest manorial site probably at Harding's Field, a little to the north. Both church and manor were somewhat detached from the High Street, where most houses were located in the nineteenth century. Blair plausibly suggests that these were the main areas of settlement in the early thirteenth century, and that the reorganization of Chalgrove manor as two equal, self-contained manors c.1233 led to the creation of a new axis of settlement along Mill Lane and around Chalgrove Manor in the north-west. Besides this initial and most important division, the sub-division of the de Plessis manor in the late Middle Ages may have resulted in the creation of subsidiary manor houses and settlement foci. It would be fascinating to test these ideas and find out more about the long-term development of what seems to have been a locally important late Anglo-Saxon settlement (which had as many as five mills). This could be attempted through further historical and archaeological investigation, including test pitting in the modern settlement. Future work will be made easier by the careful analysis of cartographic and buildings evidence in this volume (which also highlights settlement shift in the sixteenth to twentieth centuries), and by the extensive researches of the Chalgrove Local History Group.

As the authors acknowledge, a team with more time and funds excavating the site today would do many things differently. They would avoid the clumsy machine-stripping of the topsoil which damaged some structures (p. 159) and prevented a full interpretation of the abandonment of the complex (p. 56). They would also broaden the focus from the investigation of the main buildings to incorporate peripheral areas (including rubbish dumps), and use a greater range of techniques to recover information, including geophysics, fieldwalking, and metal-detecting. Ideally, they would try to use these approaches and other tools such as GIS to understand the site in its wider

settlement and landscape context. Nonetheless, the excavation and final, well-illustrated report represent a considerable achievement, especially given the original limited resources and the many hands involved in eventually compiling this publication.

STEPHEN MILESON, St Edmund Hall, Oxford

John Fox, *The King's Smuggler: Jane Whorwood, Secret Agent to Charles I*, The History Press (Stroud, 2010). Pp. 224. 15 b&w plates. £20. ISBN 978-0-7524-5001-8.

Seventeenth-century convention expected women to be quiet and obedient. The English Civil War saw the emergence of the 'masculine' spirited woman. Women gained a voice – petitioning, preaching, prophesying. Some wrote manuscript memoirs. Others manipulated society's perceptions of their weakness to perform secret actions which influenced the course of events. The latter kind included the courier Jane Lane, female 'mercury' sellers of newsbook propaganda, and agents such as the Scot Jane Whorwood. Jane, by the nature of her activities, has remained an enigmatic footnote in history. John Fox, local historian and teacher at Cherwell School in Oxford, became fascinated with her because of her association with Holton Park, east of Oxford.

With great mastery of the historical evidence, Fox tells Jane Whorwood's singular story from her early life at Charles I's court, through war-time adventures, to her sad decline. Each chapter is more extraordinary than the previous one. Historians of the early Stuarts are well aware of James I's lavish favours towards his Scottish favourites. Charles I, on the other hand, has been depicted as antagonistic towards his native kingdom, not even bothering to be crowned there until eight years into his reign. Nevertheless, as Fox ably demonstrates, Charles's Scottish courtiers, living in London's 'little Edinburgh', remained close to him. Charles's personal loyalty was reciprocated during the Civil War when members of this Scottish elite, including Jane, remained 'the most loyal' to the imprisoned king while their opponents approached the grim necessity of executing him.

In documenting Jane's hasty marriage of convenience to the under-age Brome Whorwood, heir to Holton Park, as Brome's father lay dying, Fox reveals the length to which gentry families could go to avoid estates falling into the clutches of the Court of Wards, before its abolition by the Long Parliament. It was while living at Holton that Jane began her career in royalist espionage. But as no details about her gold-smuggling activities survive, Fox indulges a tendency shown throughout the book towards excessive digression, and his descriptions here of the activities of John Milton and the Verneys seem more distracting than enlightening. Similarly, available details of the marriage between Bridget Cromwell and Henry Ireton at Holton in 1646 are slim, and as elsewhere in the book Fox's narrative relies too much on conjecture. For example, he imagines a minister discussing forms of the marriage service with the army chaplain William Dell 'over a shared pipe of Virginia', and least credibly of all envisages Bridget Cromwell poring over Whorwood genealogy charts. Throughout the book Fox exhibits a preference for the glib, clever, but sometimes misleadingly forthright phrase in preference to careful exposition which would have made the book more meaningful to the general reader.

Thanks to better evidence, Jane's attempts to help rescue Charles I from Carisbrooke Castle are better served. Fox describes their ciphered correspondence in great, if still somewhat elaborate, detail. The traditional picture of the heroic royal martyr going with Christ-like dignity to his execution becomes in Fox's account that of a 'frightened king', seemingly devoid of reality as he believes, right to the end, that he can still be rescued. Some of Fox's arguments here are controversial: for example, while previous historiography has emphasized Charles's uxoriousness to a fault, Fox instead constructs an affair between Jane and the king on the basis of one ambiguous letter and the unreliable evidence of the astrologer William Lilly. Likewise his discussion of political events after 1647 fails to do justice to the genuine desire of many Parliamentarians, faced with the prospect of army diktat, to reach a settlement with the king.

The final section of Fox's book is the best, narrating in harrowing detail taken from Chancery records Jane's estrangement from her 'whiggish' husband during the 1650s. The very public subjection of the formerly feisty Jane to years of physical violence by the adulterous Brome demonstrates all too vividly the often disastrous consequences of a marriage market in which human beings were treated like commodities and which enabled husbands to treat their wives in any way they desired, short of killing them.

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John Banbury, Robert Edwards, and Elizabeth Poskitt (eds.), *Woodstock and the Royal Park: Nine Hundred Years of History*, Woodstock and the Royal Park 900 Years Association with Chris Andrew Publications (Oxford, 2010). Pp. xviii + 150. 22 colour and 79 b&w illustrations. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-906725-40-2. Patricia D. Crutch, *Close Families of Old Woodstock: The Story of Spittle House Close 1566-2000*, The Wychwood Press (Charlbury, 2009). Pp. 116. 13 b&w illustrations. Paperback, £9.99. ISBN 978-1-902279-39-8.

It seems reasonably certain that in 1110 Henry I enclosed the royal park at Woodstock, where a manor house also stood, with a stone wall seven miles in circumference (creating therefore an enclosure smaller than the present park at Blenheim Palace). Peter Jay, mayor of Woodstock in 2009, realized that the 900th anniversary of this event would occur in 2010. With support from the duke of Marlborough, and from the whole community of the town, a festival year was planned and carried out. Its many imaginative initiatives included the planting of 900 trees within Blenheim Park to form a community woodland, and preparation of *Woodstock and the Royal Park*. Four editors took on the latter task and within little more than a year produced a handsome work of 150 pages. John Banbury, Robert Edwards, and Elizabeth Poskitt edited the text and Tim Nutt the illustrations. The book was designed by Bob Elliott and Chris Andrews, with Andrews also acting as publisher. Colour plates and many black-and-white illustrations, including pleasing and clear maps provided by local artist Brenda Cripps, carry the text forward, and the whole book is easy to read – and excellent value, with profits going to local charities. The editors and authors have drawn on expertise in the town, works of local historians, memories of older inhabitants whose families have lived in Woodstock for generations, and in the chapter on the Civil War work by students at the Marlborough School. The duke of Marlborough provided a foreword. The editors explain in a note the varying names used for the park in its 900-year history. This is useful as many visitors to Woodstock have little or no idea of the long history of what is now known as Blenheim Park.

The first four chapters provide a clear account of the park from its beginnings in Norman times to the end of the seventeenth century. Readers will find these chapters especially useful in understanding the royal origins of the park and the palace. The details provided and maps will enable visitors – and Woodstock and the park are above all places for walkers – to understand the location of the royal palace and the foundation of the town in the twelfth century. The remaining chapters bring together detailed material on trades and crafts in the town, and on the natural history of the park, with colour photographs helping to illustrate the latter part. The chapters on the coming of the Churchills and the end of the 'rotten borough' bring the story to the twentieth century. The book ends with a welcome study of the 'demesne villages' around the park – Bladon, Hensington, Combe, Hanborough, Stonesfield, Hordley, Wootton, and Old Woodstock.

The editors have ensured that readers can extend their particular interests with provision of a lengthy bibliography and index, although, wisely, the editors have not included footnotes. This is a worthy and popular addition to the many books on Woodstock history of which the authors have made extensive and excellent use. The reviewer understands that the book is going into a second edition.

A different perspective on Woodstock's history is provided by Patricia Crutch, a leading local and family historian in Woodstock (and contributor to *Woodstock and the Royal Park*). Her family have lived in Old Woodstock for some generations. Whereas her previous publications have involved sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Woodstock people and events, this new book deals with her own family and its predecessors, starting in 1566. She has used documentary evidence, some from her own family archives, to trace the history of Spittle House Close to the present day. The story is well told, and the use of original material is impressive. Family trees are provided for each chapter, making clear the inter-relationships between the many families described; and photographs from the mid nineteenth century onwards, and a plan of the close in 1858, provide more information. A full bibliography and index of persons provide additional excellent material for family and local historians.

MARY HODGES, Oxford

Simon Townsend and Jeremy Gibson, *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, Banbury Historical Society, 30 (2007). Pp. 128. Numerous colour and b&w illustrations and maps. £15 (plus £3 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-900129-28-5. Available from: Banbury Historical Society, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Rd, Banbury, Oxon., OX16 2PQ.

Banbury has a remarkable tradition of writing in local history which goes back to the time of one of the greatest of its historians, Alfred Beesley (1800–47). The Banbury Historical Society was founded over fifty years ago, in 1957, and this volume is the thirtieth in its 'record series'. It is a very attractive volume mostly of full-colour pictures of historical and topographical interest showing the town as it was before the late twentieth century. The artists represented include John Buckler, George Clarke, John Malchair, William Matthison, and Thomas Rowlandson. The star artist is undoubtedly Maurice Draper who set himself to paint watercolours in the mid twentieth century of many of the town's buildings, especially ones threatened with destruction. The present collection largely ignores the suburbs of Neithrop and Grimsbury; it also omits other areas of the Society's interest in neighbouring counties. Photography is excluded which is a pity since the camera might have been used to demonstrate scenarios 'then and now'. The pictures are accompanied by an entertaining but also scholarly text which indicates where each can be found and also whether it has been previously published.

So what emerges from this gallery of pictures of 'old Banbury'? The first thing one notes is that the town has changed radically since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reason for this is that, as the authors wryly admit, 'Banburians love *demolishing* things, but sometimes replace them' (p. 13). Among the buildings that are no more but live again in these pages are the first three town halls and the medieval church. The last was demolished in 1790, with gunpowder being used to bring it down. It was replaced by an ugly classical successor which still presides over the town centre. Other buildings include Christ Church in South Banbury, which was built in 1853 and went in 1970, and the medieval cross, famed in the nursery rhyme, which was pulled down in 1600 and replaced in 1859. The castle was demolished after the Civil War siege, the Banbury Cake Shop was shamefully removed as recently as 1968. The bars have all gone.

So what did the old town look like? The first thing that strikes one is the eerie emptiness of the streets. Its agricultural connections are recalled by the cows shown emerging from the High Street; a flock of sheep appears in Horse Fair. A number of pictures indicate the unimpeded movement of genteel traffic. In an otherwise empty street a carriage pauses outside the offices of the *Banbury Advertiser* among strolling gentry. But while the pictures may be short of people, they also illustrate the enduring love of dogs by the English: they pop up on nearly every page.

A second point is the sheer multiplicity of crafts and services provided for and by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century townsfolk. Businesses included Needles offering fish and chips (demolished in 1961), a maker of lollipops and rhubarb tarts (p. 41), the seed stores, Ludwig's

Fancy Goods, and the original Banbury Cake Shop. The town was distinguished by its ancient inns and hostleries (Three Tuns, White Lion, Red Lion, Reindeer, Catherine Wheel, and Unicorn). Gas was introduced in 1833, and the main works were closed in 1958.

One attractive technique used throughout the book is to accompany the general views with enlarged portions of the same illustrating some interesting point. A number of the pictures set the authors off in telling some amusing anecdote. Robert Vivers was involved in the Battle of Edgehill and accused of being 'one of the first that ran' (p. 68). There was a vicar who climbed into a sort of cockloft to escape an enraged mob; it failed to bear his weight and he fell through, happening then to bestride a joist – he sat with his legs dangling. Then there was Thomas Taylor who took out a patent for a saddle inflated with wind, similar in principle to a bicycle wheel, and donated one of his products to the monarch; despite its failure he continued to display the royal arms. Ann Peregrine was captured by pirates and taken to the kingdom of Pomunkey, ending up in Banbury churchyard. In some cases the artists cannot be relied on to have portrayed reality. For example, there is an entirely imaginary scene of the opening of Banbury Cross in 1859.

Altogether this is a delightful volume which provides an invaluable visual commentary on the history of a midland town.

JOHN STEANE, Oxford

Alan Rosevear, *Turnpike Roads to Banbury*, Banbury Historical Society, 31 (2010). Pp. x + 214. Numerous colour illustrations and maps. £15 (plus £3 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-900129-29-2. Available from: Banbury Historical Society, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Rd, Banbury, Oxon., OX16 2PQ.

This book is an impressively detailed study of the turnpike roads in and around Banbury, enlarged from a previously published work. The coverage seems to be all turnpike trusts which came within about ten miles of Banbury itself. The trusts' own records are patchy, but the author has made good use of other sources, especially newspapers.

The book begins by examining the pre-turnpike road network, including prehistoric, Roman, and medieval roads and those shown on seventeenth-century maps, quoting part of Daniel Defoe's famous diatribe against roads on clay soils in the midlands. There follows a general description of the turnpike system and of its development in the Banbury area, the first turnpike trust at Banbury itself being created in 1744. The heart of the book is a section on each of the twelve or so trusts, describing its roads and administration, toll collection, and sometimes finances. These sections make clear that the roads covered by the trusts and their internal 'districts' changed over the years. The next chapter looks a little more closely at finance, personnel, and toll collection. The remaining chapters examine stage coaches and carriers of the Banbury area, competition from canals and railways, and the winding up of the trusts in the 1870s. The book is extremely well-indexed with maps and illustrations, especially newspaper advertisements, and there are excellent indexes, covering personal names, occupations, places, trusts, and transport undertakings (but not subjects).

The book is particularly strong on toll collection. Most toll gates were leased out by the 1780s (increasingly in the nineteenth century to professional toll collectors), and several long-running series are provided showing the income from leasing individual gates – material previously collected only for the roads of the West Riding and Staffordshire. It is also strong on the personnel, with extensive lists of toll collectors, surveyors, and trustees (especially the last). Unlike most studies of turnpikes, it deals with some of the users of turnpike roads – carriers and stage coaches – though little is said about how their services improved as a result of the better roads created by the trusts.

Like many turnpike studies, the book is least informative about what the trusts did to their roads. This is no doubt partly because the trusts' own records, where they survive, tend to be relatively uninformative on this aspect; but the scattered information which is provided suggests

that more could have been said about the obtaining of road materials, construction of new stretches of road, reduction of gradients, and the building or rebuilding of bridges. There are many views of tollhouses and milestones, but none of bridges or of the roads themselves. It would also have been good to see the Banbury area's trusts compared with trusts elsewhere. The standard works on turnpikes by William Albert and Eric Pawson (1972 and 1977 respectively) are not in the list of sources, and only limited use has been made of the Parliamentary Papers which provide systematic information on trusts' finances in 1821 and 1834–8.

Nevertheless, anyone investigating roads and transport in the south midlands will have reason to be grateful for this book. It can be surprisingly difficult to ascertain even the most basic facts about turnpikes, such as when a particular road was first turnpiked. This volume provides that information and much more, and will be a valuable resource.

DORIAN GERHOLD, University of Roehampton

Geoffrey Tyack, Simon Bradley, and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Berkshire* (The Buildings of England series), Yale University Press (London, 2010). Pp. xx + 812. 123 colour plates, maps, and plans. £35. ISBN 978-0-300-12662-4.

Revising a book is somewhat like restoring a building – and all the more so when the first edition is rightly regarded as a classic. In recent years, the different ways in which a work of reference might be updated has been brilliantly exemplified in two great Oxford projects. For the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, only complete revision will do. When the new edition comes out, it will look wholly new – everything will have been rewritten. For the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, by contrast, the ideal was organic development, with every subject from the first edition included within the new version. In some cases, this has meant that the nineteenth-century words of the original *Dictionary of National Biography* have been almost perfectly preserved alongside entirely new entries.

The question for those charged with producing a new 'Pevsner', therefore, is which model to adopt? Should they start from the beginning again, and write a wholly new piece of work, or should they seek to preserve the words – and the attitudes – of the first edition? 'The Buildings of England' is an undeniably successful series: a monument to the brilliance and determination of a world-class historian. Yet recent writings on Nikolaus Pevsner have tended to challenge many of his findings and even to cast a shadow over the man himself. Historians have long regretted the fact that he privileged visual analysis over archival research – something that led to frequent misdatings and occasional misunderstandings. They are now also more aware of the ways in which his own ideological assumptions shaped his analysis. His belief in a sort of Hegelian 'Spirit of the Age' led him to condemn or ignore work that he saw as running against the *Zeitgeist*. For writers like Timothy Mowl, indeed, his influence on architectural history and architectural practice was consequently nothing but disastrous. The current interest in Pevsner's German background – with his apparent flirtation with Nazi politics in the early 1930s – has only added spice to this debate.

*Berkshire* by Geoffrey Tyack and Simon Bradley thus comes at an important moment in the development of 'The Buildings of England' series, and the authors' response to these questions is, quite simply, magnificent. This book has all of the virtues of the first edition – and almost none of its vices. (Like the first edition, it covers the historical county, including the area that was transferred to Oxfordshire in 1974.) The only bad thing that could be said about it is that it is now at least three times the size of the original volume; and, even then, one has to admit that this is because its coverage is much broader and deeper than that of the first version. Pevsner, writing his 1966 edition in the aftermath of his wife's death, was perhaps understandably underwhelmed by Berkshire: a county, as he put it, 'which offers to the traveller ... but few thrills – none in fact in architecture except for Windsor Castle.' Tyack and Bradley, by contrast, find much to enthuse

about. Whilst Pevsner had little time for Victorian churches, this edition celebrates Berkshire as one of the best counties in England in which to explore them. Where Pevsner expressed disappointment with the scale of country-house building, Tyack brilliantly reveals the hidden delights that can be found throughout the county.

None of this means, however, that Nikolaus Pevsner himself has been lost. His tone and many of his own words have been preserved within the new edition. Sometimes he is quoted, as with the Technical College at Reading (now part of Thames Valley University): ‘terrible, in the tamest squared-up Georgian between the wars.’ Sometimes, his phraseology can be discerned beneath a rewritten entry. In many cases, Tyack and Bradley are willing to be just as forthright as the man himself. It is the modern edition that describes the 1960s extension to Ripon Hall on Boar’s Hill (now a branch of the Open University) as ‘stunningly insensitive ... lumpish’, but it has the ring of the Master about it. Moreover, the account of Windsor Castle by Steven Brindle and Tim Tatton-Brown combines all the authority and conviction of Pevsner’s own description with the benefits of forty-years’ worth of further research. Indeed, the book would be worth buying for these eighty pages alone.

Entirely rightly, then, the new Pevsner *Berkshire* is a subtle and sensitive piece of restoration. What could be preserved has been – and readers will enjoy encountering chunks of Pevsner’s distinctive prose and devastating criticisms. But the book is also a testament to modern research and contemporary architectural history. Its research is more sure, its datings more exact, and its coverage more comprehensive than those of the original edition. Tyack’s and Bradley’s *Berkshire* is both authentic Pevsner – and much more. It is, in short, a triumph: an essential read for any serious local historian as well as an invaluable companion for every visitor to the county.

WILLIAM WHYTE, St John’s College, Oxford

J.R.L. Allen, *Late Churches and Chapels in Berkshire: A Geological Perspective from the Late Eighteenth Century to the First World War*, BAR BS, 432 (2007). Pp. xii + 162. 10 b&w plates; numerous plans, tables and maps. Paperback, £36. ISBN 978-1-4073-0037-5.

This volume, although in places somewhat technical, is a welcome and largely successful attempt to do what building historians dream of: to locate the source of building materials. Here the quest has focused on a range of dated buildings in historic Berkshire. Although it concentrates on churches and chapels from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth, it points the way for further research on earlier periods and for secular buildings.

Allen begins by reviewing various approaches to his subject – architectural surveys such as ‘The Buildings of England’, detailed building or local area studies, and those focused on individual stone types. He draws particular attention to the role of recycling, especially important in religious contexts where the work of earlier periods is often given prominence in later reorderings. A section on Berkshire’s transport history provides a valuable context for the sourcing of non-local materials. The background surveys conclude with a brief overview of developments within the church (as broadly defined to include nonconformity), including the early nineteenth-century Commissioners’ churches and those of the later Oxford Movement.

The ways in which stone is used are categorized, including an attempt to standardize the diverse terminologies for shape, treatment (rubble, ashlar), and method of laying (random, coursed, etc.). Mortar is not discussed in depth – a pity, since the transition from lime to cement is so crucial to the conservation problems of historic places of worship today.

The book is subtitled ‘A Geological Perspective’, and as such the bulk of the volume comprises sections on each of the ten main rock systems represented in Berkshire churches. Of course Berkshire is not notable for good building stone, and so some stones (Carboniferous limestone, Pennant sandstone, some of the Lower Greensand and Portland/Purbeck stone) were transported

from outside the historic county, where the main local varieties for church building, apart from the ubiquitous flint, were the Corallian sandstones and limestones. But because of the importance of brick – particularly for the nonconformists – this material is also discussed (as fired clay), although it is perhaps a subject worthy of a separate study.

Each section describes the geology of a stone, distribution of its use in the county, construction style, and individual churches and chapels that use the material, and ends with a discussion (perhaps better described as a summary/conclusion). There are location maps, histograms showing by decade the total numbers of buildings and those of the selected material, and charts of lithometric data (length against thickness of stones). Churches and details of their stonework are illustrated with black-and-white photographs. The book concludes with chapters on the use of stone in external decoration and a 'Concluding Synthesis'. The former bring in more 'foreign' stones such as the New Red sandstones of Mansfield and Uttoxeter. The synthesis brings together conclusions on the sources of stone, and on transport and use, but also notes the evidence for architects, contractors, and building costs and practices in surviving documents such as building specifications and accounts. It is here that the lithometric data – perhaps the most arcane material in the book – are discussed to show that some proportions (for example the Golden Section) were deliberately employed in a number of churches.

There are also valuable appendices. They include an extensive nine-page bibliography, and lists of all the churches in the study with stone type, date, architect, as well as the provider of the site and sponsor of the building.

The key value of the work is that the stones used in (almost) all the buildings within the scope of the study have been identified by type. For many of these, a source has been suggested, showing the importance of transport routes in the nineteenth century. Most of the sites were provided by local 'worthies', and the buildings were paid for by subscription. The architectural history of the churches is enhanced by an analysis of stylistic changes over the century, notably revealing a brief flowering of uncoursed stonework 1860–80 and a gradual move from smooth to rough stonework.

The British Archaeological Association and J.R.L. Allen are to be congratulated on this volume, which should be on the shelf of anyone interested in studying the churches and chapels of historic Berkshire. It is, however, a reference volume, possibly a field guide, rather than an easy read. It will also be invaluable to those interested in and responsible for the conservation and care of churches. Understanding the way a building has been made is fundamental to ensuring it is maintained and repaired appropriately for the future, and this book supplies that requirement.

For this reviewer there were, however, three areas in which he would have wished for more. The first is no one's fault: the revised 'Buildings of England' volume on *Berkshire* (2010) was unavailable when this report was written. Nikolaus Pevsner was not at his best in the first edition of 1966, and the architectural histories of some of the churches quoted in the text have now been revised and expanded. For example, Holy Trinity, Hatford (now a house), was built at the expense of the rector, George Burder James, not of the vicar, Revd Samuel Paynter, who converted the Norman church of St George in the village into his own mausoleum. The want of the 2010 'Pevsner' may also have contributed to omissions. The author admits that his coverage of nonconformity is incomplete, but I noticed one omission for the Church of England – Holy Trinity, Charlton (Wantage), a brick building mostly of 1904 by W.A.H. Masters, an architect not otherwise represented in the study.

Nothing is said about the use of stone inside the churches. This is a minor omission, but with no requirement to allow for weather resistance, decorative stonework could be employed within the church as style demanded and money allowed. In Christ Church, Reading, for example, Forest of Dean stone was used for the shafts of the arcade piers, while in St Paul's, Wokingham, the font is of Caen stone.

Lastly, there are instances where colour photographs would have made the text more accessible. This is particularly the case where a stone can be identified by a distinctive colour, such as Pennant sandstone.

Nevertheless, this book is a major contribution to the greater understanding of the religious

buildings of Berkshire in the long nineteenth century. It not only details the stone types and sources for most churches and chapels of the period; such a close study of the construction material provides many new insights into the minds of the architects and of their clients during this important period of religious building.

DAVID CLARK, Oxford

Adam Sisman, *Hugh Trevor-Roper: The Biography*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson (London, 2010). Pp. xviii + 598. 32 b&w plates. £25. ISBN 978-0-297-85214-8.

‘How would you like it, in prose or blank verse?’ was Hugh Trevor-Roper’s smart-alec response to another pupil’s plea for help with a Latin exercise at Charterhouse. What one schoolmaster warned might become a ‘fatal facility’ was already well-developed; yet Trevor-Roper’s self-confidence derived from abilities that were far from counterfeit. The subject himself was prone to marvel at this rich endowment, as well as revel in it. ‘I’m often astonished by the depth and extent of my learning’, he confided to a notebook during the war, then playfully added that, to avoid being submerged under this prodigious erudition, and in the interest of learning, he should ‘devote more time to beagling, foxhunting, drinking, fishing, shooting, talking’ or, if he must read, gorge on ‘Homer, Milton, Gibbon, who cannot harm the brain’. Well, he did all these things to the full, except, mercifully, the shooting bit – his dim sight had earned him the score of nil in an army trial – and for that he substituted vigorous walking. Being athletically incompetent, Trevor-Roper needed to be both physically resilient and mentally tough to maintain this regime, but the foxhunting ended in a broken back in 1948. He was by then a history don at Christ Church and, while that institution has always had a reputation for being grand, Trevor-Roper’s conduct excited hostility for its excess. This was the peak of his ‘Pleasure-Loper’ period, although he would never be shy about his persistent enjoyment of unscholarly pursuits.

In this impressive biography, both perceptive and sympathetic, Adam Sisman skilfully draws out the different sides of an exceptional historian. The life is unfolded chronologically, but the recurrence of certain characteristics is striking. Foremost is Trevor-Roper’s range as a historian. He was schooled as a classicist and continued as such at Oxford until he switched course to Modern History after a First in Mods. He had been alienated by what he supposed to be the narrowness and sterility of classical studies; and this test he carried over into a disdain for medieval history – at least for many of its Oxford practitioners, whom he likened to ‘nuns knitting’. The classics remained a solace, his copy of Horace inspiring his devotion during attendances at chapel as the beleaguered master of Peterhouse in the 1980s; his fluency was previously exhibited by carrying off the Hertford and Ireland prizes and exposing a howler in the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation* (1938), which pained its editor Maurice Bowra. This fierce competitive streak went unrewarded more than once: he was rejected for All Souls, and for tutorial fellowships at Univ., Wadham, and Magdalen, losing to A.J.P. Taylor in the last. He was also kept from the chair of Modern History in 1951 in preference to Bruce Wernham, a staggeringly inept appointment which he ascribed to the regius professor, ‘that village-idiot-turned-water-bailiff, Galbraith’.

What were Trevor-Roper’s claims for promotion then and for the Regius chair in 1957? Just before Galbraith retired he again blocked Trevor-Roper, this time from the Ford’s Lectureship, for which Trevor-Roper contemplated a series on ‘England and Spain, 1604–1660’. His proposal was symptomatic of an ever-broadening historical perspective and abiding intellectual curiosity which, paradoxically, were both a strength and a weakness of his intellectual make-up: strength because he had cosmopolitan versatility, and weakness because he was ever apt to be distracted. His detractors will forever finger-wag about his propensity to start projects and not to finish them, above all his failure to complete a *magnum opus*, prospectively called ‘The Great Rebellion’. Posthumous publications – especially *Europe’s Physician: The Various Life of Sir Theodore de Mayerne* (2006) and *History and the Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Essays* (2010) – edited by

former research students and colleagues, have enhanced his reputation without entirely answering the charge. Of course, his falling short was in part a measure of his ambitiousness in seeking to harmonize structural analysis with narrative, to interweave politics, economics, religion, science, social behaviour and cultural expression, and to 'study problems, not periods'. History is not neat, and Trevor-Roper was too aware of the loose ends: '[I] find that as I solve, or think that I solve, each minor problem, the unsolved problems get larger and more numerous as I approach.... Then, in despair, I suspend work.' Yet what he did achieve was, cumulatively, immense. His name was made by *Archbishop Laud* (1940). Strangely, this remained the only full-length book he published during his lifetime on early modern history; moreover, he would repudiate it later. Instead his genius was displayed as essayist and polemicist. In this form he made lasting contributions to several of the greatest historical controversies of his age: 'The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century'; the Weber/Tawney thesis on religion and the growth of capitalism; the rise of the gentry and decline of the aristocracy; the European Enlightenment; and Scotch nationalist mythology. Not only was his involvement conspicuous for piercing originality and daring imagination, it also fizzed with dazzling style and a ferocious animus against others' scholarly shortcomings. 'I have decided to liquidate [Lawrence] Stone', he disclosed to Bernard Berenson in 1953, having been shocked by his former pupil's shoddy research, ignorance and, as he thought, dishonesty. What shocked academe in turn was the unsparing cruelty of Trevor-Roper's argumentation. Pitilessness was deployed throughout his career, together with wit and elegance of composition. For students in Oxford during his magnificence he was a towering figure and, for all the starchiness of his insistence on their wearing gowns at his lectures, intellectually liberating.

In addition to a formidable stature in early modern historical studies, this Regius sported an almost equivalent eminence in twentieth-century history as the author of a small masterpiece and best-seller, *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947), an offshoot of his wartime intelligence work. This supplied him with a Bentley from the proceeds and for decades afterwards a profitable sideline as commentator on Nazi Germany and the Second World War; he was an influential critic too of Cold War politics and ideologies. To the joy of a multitude of adversaries, this expertise would apparently dry up when, under pressure of deadlines from the *Sunday Times's* owner and editorial team, and misled by *Stern's* assurances about their provenance and scientific verification, he overcame his own nagging doubts and pronounced the fake Hitler diaries as authentic. The damage to his credibility was disastrous, and it needed not just a thick skin but stoicism of character and belief in his fundamental quality of mind to recover from it. Ironically, in 1976 he had published a gem of a book about an earlier fraudster and fantasist, Sir Edmund Backhouse.

The common denominator of Trevor-Roper's work was the application of reason to dispel mystery and superstition. It made him an enemy of historical determinists, whether Marxist camp-followers or Toynbee-type egomaniacs, and a valiant fighter for toleration at the same time as being a scourge of the doctrinaire and deluded. Naturally, he was a steadfast anti-clerical in general and anti-Catholic in particular: one unfinished book, on which he lavished much thought, was on the (in his view) farce of the nineteenth-century Catholic revival in England, and he conducted a protracted war with the God squad, suspended only for the sake of politeness when he met the Pope in 1992. In this respect, Sisman acutely identifies Samuel Butler and Logan Pearsall Smith as formative influences on the young Trevor-Roper, to rank alongside the obvious Tacitus and Gibbon. The biography is chock-full of good things. Trevor-Roper's social mountaineering – epitomized by marriage to Earl Haig's daughter, Lady Alexandra, an expensive adornment who was quite unspoilt by education – provides a comic leitmotif. Other episodes also make for a riveting and at times sensational read: tension and tiffs with his security service chiefs during and after the war; spats with A.L. Rowse and Evelyn Waugh and tussles with Alan Taylor; his masquerade as Mercurius Oxoniensis; and relations with his various colleges – Christ Church, Merton, Oriel and, egregiously, Peterhouse. That he was too clever by half is cause to rejoice, not regret.

PHILIP WALLER, Merton College, Oxford

Marilyn Yurdan, *Oxfordshire Graves and Gravestones*, The History Press (Stroud, 2010). Pp. 128. 96 b&w plates. Paperback, £12.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-5257-9.

In the course of her latest book Marilyn Yurdan refers to the antiquary John Aubrey, whose grave is somewhere under St Mary Magdalen, Oxford, the exact location being lost. The image is appropriate: Aubrey was a retailer of fascinating quirks and oddities, and so is Marilyn Yurdan in this work. One can finish the book in a sitting, and it leaves the reader replete with snippets of information that can be dropped in conversation for months to come.

What the book is not, and makes no pretence of being, is a scholarly investigation of burial customs and grave effigies. The author provides a brief survey of burial-related matters from Anglo-Saxon times to the present as an introduction, to put the later chapters in context; but anyone who seeks a substantial treatment should turn to the work of Brian Kemp. Thereafter she looks at early, unmarked burials; burials inside and outside churches; the new cemeteries that sprang up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and finally (changing tack somewhat) various instances of early death. The final shift of emphasis highlights the problem of her subject: the difficulty of finding a consistent approach.

Is the book about famous people buried in Oxfordshire? Partly it is, and since the tombstones of the famous are unlikely to be as distinguished as those lying under them Marilyn Yurdan gives us background information about the individuals. This is interesting when it concerns their deaths and burials rather than their lives – such as the progress of Winston Churchill's coffin to Bladon or the reason for the burial of George Orwell at Sutton Courtenay when he lacked a connection with the place. Sometimes, however, the connection with her theme can be a little tenuous. For example, she provides a discussion of the activities of bodysnatchers even though no famous Oxfordshire inhabitant ever fell victim to them. There is also an investigation of the way in which burial rights were established in medieval Abingdon as a result of conflict between Abingdon Abbey and St Helen's church.

Sometimes the book is systematic: there is a nice overview of some of the major excavations that have revealed medieval and earlier burial plots, and also a handy guide to the emergence of the 'new' cemeteries of St Sepulchre, Holywell, and Osney, with a mention of the one everyone forgets – the burial ground of the Littlemore Asylum. It became so well forgotten that developers tried to run a road over it until the health archivist pointed out their sacrilege. A scattering of ghost stories is also thrown in (I had never come across the one featuring the composer Thomas Wood, and enjoyed encountering it), and some interesting local stories about particular tombstones, such as that of Emily Bryant at Stoke Lyne from which a controversial part of the inscription was quietly removed. Perhaps this supports something that Marilyn Yurdan herself observes: 'parish churchyards offer a wealth of interest and information'. Her book does not fall into neat categories, into carefully drawn conclusions and objective theses. Like Aubrey's *Brief Lives* it is something of a hotchpotch (though a copiously illustrated one), and also like Aubrey it invites you to jump in and enjoy. I suggest you do so.

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*Other Publications Received:*

Manfred Brod, *Abingdon in Context: Small-Town Politics in Early Modern England*, Fastprint Publishing (Peterborough, 2010). Pp. xviii + 234. Paperback, £10. ISBN 978-184426-888-7.

Paul Cullen, Richard Jones, and David N. Parsons, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* (Explorations in Local and Regional History, vol. 4), University of Hertfordshire Press (Hatfield, 2011). Pp. xviii + 224. Numerous illustrations, maps and tables. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-902806-82-2.

Anthony Morigi, Danielle Schreve, and Mark White (pt 1), Gill Hey, Paul Garwood, Mark Robinson, Alistair Barclay, and Philippa Bradley (pt 2), *The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: Early Prehistory to 1500 BC* (Thames through Time series), Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 32 (2011). Pp. xxvi + 522. Approx. 300 illustrations, many in colour. £34.99. ISBN 978-0-9549627-8-4.

Ann Spokes Symonds and Nigel Morgan, *The Origins of Oxford Street Names*, Robert Boyd Publications (Witney, 2010). Pp. 224. 155 b&w illustrations. Paperback, £11.95. ISBN 978-1-899536-99-3.

Kate Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851*, Berkshire Record Society, 14 (2010). Pp. lx + 134. Tables, maps, b&w illustrations. Paperback, £25 (plus £2.50 p&p in UK). Available from Berkshire Record Society, c/o Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6AF. ISBN 0-9548716-4-2.

Simon Walker (ed.), with supplementary material by Julian Munby, *Building Accounts of All Souls College, Oxford, 1438-1443*, OHS, ns, 42 (2010). Pp. xxxii + 396. 4 b&w plates, 3 plans. £35. ISBN 978-0-904107-22-7.

Marilyn Yurdan, *Oxfordshire Customs, Sports and Traditions*, The History Press (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 128. 186 b&w illustrations. Paperback, £12.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-5743-7.