

Reviews

A History of Thame. By J. Howard Brown, B.Sc. (Lond.) and William Guest, M.A. (Oxon.). F. H. Castle & Co. Ltd., Thame, 1935. pp. xvi+286; 34 half-tone illustrations; one map. No price stated.

The first reaction of the present reviewer to the sight of this goodly volume was one of hope that it might contain the answers to some problems of local history that had so far baffled inquiry. Whose is the third figure on the tomb of Richard and Sybil Quatermain? What marriage is commemorated by the impalement on the single shield remaining on the tomb? Whose is the vairy coat on the west front of Rycote Chapel? What truth is there in the story, *a priori* improbable, that Thame Church was built by Lincoln masons?

In expectation of finding these references in an Index of Places, Persons and Things the book was opened first at the back: there is no index at all. The table of contents at the front might list the genealogical trees from which the clues sought for could be obtained: there are no genealogical trees. It was time to turn to the Preface.

There is an apology for the absence of a bibliography (really inexcusable, and the more so since authorities are but casually cited) but none for the omission of an index; and the explanation of the lack of genealogies seems to be that the writers prefer to 'give prominence in this History to the market and to farming.'

'Their talk is of bullocks'; and the questions to which they are prepared to supply answers are those of Justice Shallow, 'How a good yoke of oxen at Stamford Fair? How a score of ewes now?' rather than the problems of the herald and genealogist.

Heraldry indeed they tend to avoid—perhaps wisely, for of the armory of the Quatermain tomb, on which three coats remain, they say there is only one, and that one they blazon incorrectly. Of the second armoured figure on the same tomb they tell us that 'it is not a son, but probably Richard Fowler, born 1466, godson and great-nephew of Richard Quatermain.' But the incomplete date on the tomb shows that it was made and set up between 1460 and 1469, the time Richard Fowler was born. It is therefore most probable that the Quatermains had a son who died young, soon after 1460, and that the tomb was then prepared in readiness for the parents, a space being left after the X of the date MCCCCLX so that the remaining numerals could be filled in when their time came. As often happened, their executors failed to do it.

The authors appear to suppose that an altar tomb contains the body of the defunct in its chest-like interior, for they speak of Sir John Clerk lying 'in' an altar tomb, instead of beneath it. The Middle Ages were much less insanitary than is popularly supposed.

Economic history is now the fashion; and the authors are undoubtedly right in their belief that local studies form the best approach to it, as, indeed, to all history. From this point of view their book is an admirable one. It provides a competent outline of the history of English agriculture, and illustrates it by local examples; it uses the

REVIEWS

development of house-building in the district as an index of social amelioration; and, avoiding the besetting weakness of most local histories, it is not content to dwell in the past alone but provides future historians with the facts of present-day conditions, and ends prophetically with an attempt to forecast the future.

E.A.G.L.

Sir Henry Lee : an Elizabethan portrait. By E. K. Chambers. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1936. Pp. xii+328; 5 plates. 15s.

Sir Edmund Chambers has given a very vivid and detailed portrait of one of the many seekers for fame and fortune at the court of Queen Elizabeth, and it is interesting to compare the career of Sir Henry Lee with those of several others who appear in the book: he does not seem to have been specially amiable or specially able, but in the end he came off better than many of his fellows: this may have been due to luck in part, but in part it may be ascribed to a common-sense which kept him from aiming at objects beyond his range and powers. His appointment as Ranger of Woodstock brought him into Oxfordshire, and the evidence collected by Sir Edmund Chambers from a considerable mass of records shows the process of building up the Ditchley estate, diversified by interludes such as the entertainment of the Queen and quarrels with tenants or neighbours: in the result we have an illuminating chapter added to the history of the county under the Tudors.

J.G.M.

The following monographs, articles, and notes on subjects of local interest have appeared since the last volume of *Oxoniensia* :—

Chambers, Sir Edmund, *Eynsham under the Monks.* (Oxfordshire Record Society XVIII).

Salter, Rev. H. E., *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, vi. (Oxford Historical Society, CI).

Antiquaries Journal, XVII, 294 ff., 'An adulterine castle on Faringdon Clump, Berkshire,' pt. II, by E. T. Leeds.

Berkshire Archaeological Journal, XL, 20 ff., 'An analysis and list of Berkshire barrows,' pt. I, addenda, pt. II, list, by L. V. Grinsell. [This includes an analysis and list of the ring-ditches revealed on Major Allen's air-photographs of Berkshire sites]; 63 ff. and 176 ff., 'Coats of Arms in Berkshire Churches,' ctd., by P. S. Spokes; 94 ff., 'Church building and restoration in north Berkshire in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries,' by G. W. B. Huntingford; 115 ff., 'The 14th century painted ceiling at St. Helen's Church, Abingdon,' by A. E. Preston; 146 ff., 'The navigation of the Thames and Kennet, 1600-1750,' by T. S. Willan; 157 ff., 'The ancient earthworks of north Berkshire,' by G. W. B. Huntingford; 207 ff., 'A noted case of witchcraft at North Moreton, Berkshire, in the early 17th century,' by C. L'Estrange.

Id., XLI, 33 ff., 'Notes on recent antiquarian discoveries in Berkshire,' by F. M. Underhill; 42 ff., 'Coats of Arms in Berkshire Churches,' ctd., by P. S. Spokes.

REVIEWS

- Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions*, LVIII, 37 ff., 'Stone implements of Warwickshire,' by F. W. Shotton. [This includes some from Long Compton and other villages bordering on Oxfordshire].
- Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions*, LVIII, 65 ff., 'The ancient woodland of Gloucestershire,' by G. B. Grundy; 157 ff., 'Iron Age pottery and Saxon burials at Andoversford,' by H. E. Donovan and G. C. Dunning. [With reference to others in the Cotswold district]; 171 ff., 'The peculiar jurisdiction of Bibury,' by Rev. A. L. Browne.
- Buckinghamshire Records*, XIII, 228 ff., 'A mediæval sword from Saunderton,' by J. F. Head.
- Newbury District Field Club Transactions*, VII, no. 4, 211 ff., 'Romano-British pottery kilns between Compton and Aldworth, Berkshire,' by Brig.-Gen. W. K. Hardy.
- Numismatic Chronicle*, 1936, 316 ff., 'Three Roman coin-hoards,' by C. H. V. Sutherland. [No. 2, Compton Cowdown, Berkshire, no. 3, Long Wittenham, Berkshire].
- Oxfordshire Archaeological Society Report*, 1936, 93 ff., 'Architectural notes on the 1936 excursion (East Hendred, Childrey Church, Compton Beauchamp, Ashdown Park),' by T. Lawrence Dale; 97 ff., 'The swan-marks of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire,' by N. F. Ticehurst; 131 ff., 'The Rev. J. Thorley of Chipping Norton,' by Rev. H. E. Salter; 133 ff., 'Versions of the Mummers' Play,' by W. Bradbrooke. [Giving the Sutton Courtenay version].
- Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, n.s. III (1937), 43 ff., 'An Early Iron Age site at Southcote, Reading,' by C. M. Piggott and W. A. Seaby; 159 ff., 'The Beaker-folk in the Cotswolds,' by E. M. Clifford; 163 ff., 'A beaker from Bourton-on-the-Water,' by G. C. Dunning.