

Reviews

The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Oxfordshire, vol. I. Edited by L. F. Salzman. Oxford University Press: published for the University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1939. Pp. xiv + 497; 30 plates; 47 figs.; 7 maps. £3 3s.

Volume I of this History (hereafter cited as *VCH*) follows volume II after 32 years. Its range is wide—from the first beginning of the earth until the coming of institutions by which it could be studied—from Oxfordshire 'Geology' to Oxfordshire 'Education.'

Nearly a third of the volume deals with epochs of man in which recorded history is either absent or ancillary to the archaeological record; and though chapters on Domesday Book and Political History are most important, the reviewers have thought it best to confine discussion to topics where they can comment as well as learn.

Not that there is not interesting and entertaining matter for the non-specialist elsewhere. Indeed the biologists and botanists permit themselves a sprightlier pen than the students of Man. The diffusion of *Senecio Squalidus* makes fascinating reading (p. 51), and there is the strange tale of the Caraway Seed and the Licensed House (p. 52); while the historian can enjoy saving Dr. Plot from the censure of a scientist: Lillingstone Lovel was an Oxfordshire enclave when Plot wrote (p. 192, n. 1).

W. J. Arkell on the Geology (pp. 1-26) and G. C. Druce on the Botany—revised by A. G. Tansley—(pp. 27-55) touch the archaeologist nearer. Arkell's chapter is about as good as it could possibly be: the general picture is of a series of sedimentary rocks running NE.-SW. and tilted towards the NW, so that the outcropping strata become broadly speaking, older as one goes north-westwards across them. The important fact to the archaeologist is the alternation of the uplands with the plains of Gault (Chalgrove region), Oxford Clay (Lechlade-Arncliffe), and Lower Lias (mainly in Warwickshire and Worcestershire).

Druce and Tansley remind us that the plains bear heavy forest under natural conditions, but they hold the firm conviction that the uplands too were originally, though doubtless less densely, wooded (beech and ash). Thus we are prepared to find prehistoric man attracted to the gravels of the Thames valley, painfully climbing the hills, and still more painfully clearing the dense vegetation of the plains.

This is already apparent in K. S. Sandford's description (pp. 223-237) of ages when great geological changes accompany the human record. He elucidates the Pleistocene movements with skill, but seems less interested in the archaeologist's wants. His ice-movements need correlation with the Penckian succession, and his classification of flints might be more precise than 'Upper and Middle Palaeolithic.'

Oxfordshire is a more than usually meaningless unit to prehistorians, who find their type-sites across its borders; but for a 'University County' its prehistoric record is curiously patchy (*Oxoniensis* clearly supplies a want!). No scientific excavation of a pre-Roman barrow, for instance, was available for record here. E. T. Leeds, who is entrusted with the section 'Neolithic to Bronze Age' (pp. 238-251) grapples efficiently with the material; and one sees Oxfordshire, as so often in its history, influenced not a

REVIEWS

little by cultures of the 'Highland Zone.' One would have liked a plan of the Rollright group of megaliths. 'A detailed account,' we are told, 'is almost superfluous' (p. 240): 'quite superfluous' would have been more honest, for none is given. Yet detailed summaries and plans are just what the *VCH* is for.

So complex are problems of the Iron Age all over Britain that one turns eagerly to H. N. Savory's account (pp. 251-266). But the treatment is curiously archaic. Savory will only have an Iron Age A of progressively degenerating situliform pots, with B influence at a late date (c. 50 B.C., p. 256), and in his general picture Oxfordshire B influences are simply those of the Glastonbury lake-village culture, so that nothing is done, for instance, to remove the difficulties suggested in the Mount Farm report (*Oxoniensia*, II, 12,—a reference missed in the inventory). Moreover the decision to leave Grim's Dyke to the earthworks section of 1907 is deplorably (and inconsistently—for 'Camps' appear in the inventory and on the map) doctrinaire. From the narrative few would guess correctly (for they would have to guess) which way it faced! Harden's very attractive theories (*Oxoniensia*, II, 92) receive no discussion. Nor are the details of the Iron Age picture always correct. 'West of the Thames Valley'—as an area in which coins of Cunobeline and his house are absent—is a strange geographical expression, and if, as the context seems to imply, it means west of the line Cherwell-Goring, what of the coins of Cunobeline from Asthall and of Epaticcus from Brize Norton, duly recorded in the inventory? The bronze axle-cap from Goring and the bone implement from 'near Beckley' need a cross-reference to the inventory (where the latter is listed under Elsfeld). Round Castle is in the inventory but not on the map: Sarsden has a symbol on the map for 'Iron Age weapons, bronzes, coins, etc.' but there are no such things in the inventory.

Thus the Roman experts (Miss M. V. Taylor and D. B. Harden, pp. 267-345) are deprived of a clear picture of Iron Age C, on which to base their narrative. The Roman inventory is magnificent (what card-indexing it must have needed!) and the article is interesting, though not without some disputable statements. Many will still be sceptical of a pre-Roman Akeman Street (Corinium, incidentally, *pace* Baddeley, is not pre-Roman, and the Grim's Dyke excavation is not cogent, for there is a parallel at Lexden); and Alchester *did*, if the map and facts of p. 283 are right, 'expand beyond its walls.' It may be doubted, too, whether the Towcester-Silchester 'north-south' road is really one unit. The northern sector seems to align with the Frilford-Besselsleigh stretch; Plot's 'traces near Noke' may be the intervening link, and the unexplained bend of the Dorchester road as it leaves Alchester might be really its deviation from this line. The distinction drawn between the villages of the Thames and Cherwell valleys, and the villa zone (which is an appendage of the Cotswolds) is vital, but that virtual newcomer to *Siedlungsgeschichte* the native Romano-British *Einzelhof*, the knowledge of which we owe to the late Major Allen, deserved a mention in the introduction and a special symbol on the map.

In the Anglo-Saxon section (pp. 346-72) E. T. Leeds again takes up the story, and the bulk of his account consists of a careful and admirable summary of the more important cemeteries and the other known remains of this age in the county. He is not responsible for the unfortunate fact that the county boundary along the Thames makes this account read rather like one side of a telephone conversation, of which the other and perhaps more informative side has to be sought in Berkshire. On its other frontiers Oxfordshire, as he rightly points out, has boundaries giving it a reasonable geographical coherence,

REVIEWS

for they include the basins of the greater part of the principal tributaries on the left bank of the upper Thames. But the necessary omission of the north Berkshire sites (except, fortunately, from the map on which most of them are shown¹) masks the interesting fact that with the exception of the well known objects from Dorchester, and an isolated pot here published from Osney,² most of the earliest Saxon material from the upper Thames comes from the right bank of the river rather than the left. Reading, Long Wittenham, Abingdon, Sutton Courtenay, and Frilford have all produced objects of an earlier flavour than those from such Oxfordshire cemeteries as Cuddesdon, Wheatley, Kingsey, and Chadlington. This may of course be nothing but coincidence.

Leeds prefaces his description of the cemeteries with a résumé of the evidence as he sees it for the date and direction of the invading movement which first brought a Saxon population to the upper Thames. There will be natural disappointment that this account should underline in such an uncompromising way the supposed contradiction between the archaeological and the literary evidence which has been stressed in his earlier works on the subject. He does not mention the view, which many historians and archaeologists alike accept, that the West Saxon annals in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle tell a story not so much incompatible with the archaeological evidence as complementary to it. And it is doubly unfortunate that Leeds' summary of this story should contain slips (it is not 'closely associated with the name of Arthur' (p. 346) who does not appear in the Annals at all; and 'Porta' (? Port) and Natanleod are men not places in the Chronicle), which might suggest (quite wrongly) that he has not studied the Chronicle with the attention which it obviously deserves. It is in any case surely time that an effort was made to get away from the unreal deadlock of this supposed conflict between history and archaeology and to realise that both can and must play their part in unravelling the tangled origins of Wessex.

These *VCH* articles on Early Man should fulfil three conditions. (1) They must be complete bibliographically; our volume does fulfil this condition. (2) They must epitomize detailed reports and to some extent render their consultation superfluous; our volume does this, though rather unevenly. (3) They should not be completely parochial; the material should be assessed in its relation to the general picture of British cultures, so that local prehistorians can get a hint of problems needing solution by them, and workers in other periods can be assisted by prehistory to understand the geographical controls of subsequent events in the county. *VCH* articles, should, in a word, be palatable to the general reader. Here we admit to a certain disappointment. It is significant that until the Iron Age no one ventures on even the most approximate date. The Roman experts have succeeded best in complying with this condition, but with better briefing from the prehistorians they might have succeeded better still.

Printing and make-up are excellent; but the proof-readers of the University Press might have spared us the sight of 'Neolithic' in the Table of Contents.

C. E. STEVENS.
J. N. L. MYRES.

¹ Not, however, the Wallingford cemetery.

² There is also the early pot from Souldern on the upper Cherwell (p. 355) of which a cast, not mentioned here, is in the University Museum of Archaeology and of Ethnology at Cambridge.

REVIEWS

An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England. London; H.M. Stationery Office, 1939. Pp. 244; 217 plates; plans; 1 map. £1 1s.

GENERAL

The production of this work on Oxford is an outstanding event even in the life of a Royal Commission that by its largesse has made us cease to wonder at the number and beauty of the volumes which it produces. Its appearance coincides with the completion by Mr. A. W. Clapham, the gifted Secretary and Editor of the Commission, of his twenty-fifth year of service, and the event could not have been more appropriate if it had been a studied instead of a fortuitous tribute to his signal powers of architectural analysis and appraisal. For Oxford must surely be, in many ways, the most important single area with which the English Commission has or will have to deal. The city will always remain an incredible mine of the builder's and the craftsman's art, and it would seem an impossible task to compress into one volume a precise account of everything that it contains.

To readers who are not familiar with the Commission's technique it is necessary to point out that the volume is essentially a survey and an inventory, as described on its dust-cover. The inventory is descriptive only in so far as it is necessary to define the character and fix the date of the items. No words are wasted, everything is subservient to clarity of expression and ease of reference. The deeper significance of things themselves and the delight which they impart are however cleverly conveyed by a descriptive preface and by the lavish photographs with which the book is interleaved. It is by means of the latter that the art is wisely left to speak for itself. The survey in the technical sense is no less complete than the inventory, and this combination of general conspectus, detailed inventory, architectural plans and ample illustrations, together with glossary, index and other aids to reference, make the work as complete for its purpose as it well could be.

The work of the Commission has covered an immense amount of material which may not be generally known, and yet is full of value in providing evidence for the history of English architecture and craftsmanship. To take one example, there has, before this volume, been no attempt to make a full survey of 'perhaps the most complete and consecutive series of glass paintings' which can be found in a single English town, from the 13th to the end of the 18th century. 'The early work is of fine quality, but it is 'in regard to the glass of the 17th and 18th centuries that Oxford stands alone.' Both the quantity and interest of this renaissance glass are remarkable, and there are between forty and fifty illustrations covering the mediaeval and post-mediaeval periods in this volume.

A word should be said, moreover, regarding the survival of mediaeval forms well into the 17th century. The Commission points out that, although this is very marked at Oxford, it is part of the traditional view that died so hard in England that ecclesiastical and semi-ecclesiastical building should have some Gothic flavour. Hence the odd attempts at traceried windows and other quasi-Gothic features which merge so pleasantly into the framework of Elizabethan and even later colleges, and hence the continued popularity of fan-vaulting in stone or plaster which persisted almost to the professional architects' revival of Gothic in the 18th century. These survivals were not a sign of a lifeless conservatism—Oxford could be in the van whenever she wished,—but that an architectural atmosphere had been created which was part and parcel of the collegiate life, an atmosphere not lightly to be dispersed.

WALTER H. GODFREY.

REVIEWS

THE HERALDRY

It has always been the weakness of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments that it has not included among the distinguished archaeologists composing it a specialist in heraldic studies. Lacking this qualification themselves the Commissioners failed to secure it in making appointments to their staff. And the result has been that, from the outset, heraldic memorials, though nominally one of the objects of the surveys, were treated as matters of minor interest and seldom or never adequately recorded. Yet, since a monument is literally a reminder, coats of arms, which exist for that purpose alone, might seem to have more claim on the Commissioner's notice than even the architectural details with which their Reports are so minutely concerned. Moreover, since shields of arms are personal memorials, they have a more human appeal than architectural minutiae. It may interest some people to learn that the old Warden's Lodgings at All Souls 'is of two storeys with attics, is ashlar faced and has square-headed windows with moulded reveals and labels,' though most of those likely to be interested could note these things for themselves; but it would interest many more to know what the shield in the spandrel of the gateway was meant to tell us, who benefited his successors by adding this building to the college? The surveyors cannot inform us; but if they had recorded the blazon they would have given the readers of their Report the means of supplying their deficiencies. Their failure to do so in so many instances is not merely annoying to all those to whom this is something more than a picture-book, but deprives their successors of possible information to remedy such defects in a second edition.

Even when they are able to recognise a shield, the surveyors are usually content to give merely the family name without any attempt to identify the particular member of it commemorated. Thus at Iffley, where the shield of John de la Pole remains in a south window as a memorial of his gift of the glass for the new windows inserted in the late 15th century, they record merely 'the arms of de la Pole', though the impalement might with the slightest inquiry have told them the individual concerned. Brief as it is, their statement is misleading as well as inadequate; for the arms of de la Pole are a fesse between three leopard's faces, and here there are six, arranged in unusual fashion, two and one above and below the fesse. Whether it is a mistake of the glass-maker or a variety of the arms is a question of much interest to the herald; but no one reading this Report would be aware that the question existed.

So among the arms in the Divinity School there are several coats which, whether by accident or design, vary considerably from their usual forms. The arms of Lincoln Diocese for example, have here a castle in chief instead of Our Lady and Child; a fretty coat impaling the leopards of England must be intended, as the surveyors suggest, for James, Lord Audley, who married Elinor Holland, but they give no hint of the doubtless accidental omission of the bordure of Holland which has hitherto prevented identification of the shield.

Merely to say 'Holland' is to leave the reader in doubt whether the arms are the old coat of a lion on a flowered field or the later one of Woodstock. But this is their almost uniform practice: they say simply 'arms of Smith, Brown or Jones' as if each of these names had not half a hundred coats ascribed to it. Their record, which should have enabled posterity to restore the shields when time or chance shall have obliterated them, will thus be useless for that purpose. Already the need has arisen. In this Long Vacation of 1940 an Oxford college, finding it expedient to repaint the arms on its chapel ceiling, called in a house-decorator to begin the work. When it was nearing completion

REVIEWS

it was pointed out that his colour scheme, however decorative, included tinctures and charges unknown in heraldry. The problem then presented itself, how to recover the obliterated blazons. The Commission's Report, so far from helping, further darkened counsel by recording arms which had never been there.

It is particularly unfortunate that Oxford should have suffered this neglect because nowhere in England is there at once such a wealth of heraldry, and so little knowledge of it. A college lately decided to remedy the omission of the original builders of a tomb, reported to be that of their founder, by embellishing it with shields of arms. Although the historian of the church in question had shown that the founder was in all probability a cadet of a great Norfolk house whose arms are recorded on contemporary evidence, the college on no evidence at all selected the coat of a Warwickshire family of small squires and differenced it with the border added by a younger son who married an Oxfordshire heiress a century after the founder's death. Another college, more fortunate, numbered among its kitchen staff a student of the subject, so that on the death of the Warden they were able to put out a hatchment bearing a passable version of the arms of a 16th century Dean of Salisbury of the same name. It is regrettable that this Report should do so little to stir the prevailing indifference.

The truth, unfortunately, is that the surveyors of the Monuments Commission, mainly professional architects, have got into the habit of dealing with architecture as if they were writing for artful pupils of that profession and with heraldry as if they were dishing it up for the man in the street. The tendency is patent, beyond all denial, to anyone who will glance through the illustrations in this present volume; there is scarcely an heraldic picture among them; and where by mere accident a shield of arms occurs in some architectural photograph it is almost invariably out of focus so that the coat is indecipherable.

It is devoutly to be hoped that one of the existing vacancies on the Commission may be filled by the appointment of an heraldic expert who will direct the attention of his colleagues to the long-standing deficiencies in this otherwise admirable series of Reports.

E. A. GREENING LAMBORN.

THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

It is probably difficult for the casual reader to realise what an enormous amount of work this volume has involved. There was nothing in existence for Oxford comparable to Willis and Clark's *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*. Only in a few instances had the architectural history of individual colleges been worked out in monographs; often there was not even in existence an accurate plan. All these defects had to be made good by the surveyors themselves before a uniform survey could be produced, and it is one of the most satisfactory features of the book that we have here for the first time dated plans of all the colleges brought together in one volume. Some of the dating is necessarily conjectural and some may need correction; it is, for instance, not clear on the Oriel plan why the chimney-stacks on the south side of the front quad and the west side of the Carter building have been marked as though they were later insertions or additions.

The volume consists of a preface, giving a kind of historical introduction (the notes on craftsmen and artists, pp. xxiv ff., are particularly welcome), followed by a detailed description (including interior fittings) of the University buildings and colleges, of the churches, and of nearly 250 houses. It is a real tragedy that the terms imposed upon the Commission, however generously stretched, as they are here, exclude some of the most important buildings in Oxford, such as the Radcliffe Camera and the Library

REVIEWS

of Christ Church; the glaring absurdity of such a limitation in this, perhaps the most conspicuous example in all England, would surely have justified an official revision of the Commission's terms, so as to include at least a selection of 18th century buildings after 1715.

The domestic architecture is inevitably overshadowed by the richness of the colleges, but this survey is very welcome, especially as it reveals so much that is little known, like Nos. 13 and 14, Pembroke Street, as well as giving well known examples like the Old Palace and Kemp Hall. It is to be hoped that this description of them may help to save the houses themselves from destruction.

The descriptions of the fittings in college rooms would have been more useful if the precise number of room and staircase had been given. The combined plates bringing together several examples of certain features, such as staircases, plaster ceilings, fireplaces, or monuments, are particularly attractive and instructing. There is something very edifying about the two illustrations at the bottom of plate 49, of the lobby in the Chancellor's Court and the lobby in No. 13, Pembroke Street, side by side, showing the same style and standard of craftsmanship applied to public and private buildings; here is none of the modern architect's painful striving to 'rise to occasion' in a public building; it is just pure architecture breathing household laws. One thing is very clearly borne out here, and that is that the 17th century is the predominating century in Oxford.

In dealing with a place so rich in documentary evidence, it is unfortunate that the format of the Royal Commission's volumes precludes the giving of any references or authorities in footnotes. One wishes too, that the excellent general preface could have been expanded; if another of the Commission's volumes can allot twenty pages (with footnotes) to prehistoric and Roman Westmorland, the development of the collegiate plan and style deserves more than some half a dozen pages (pp. xviii-xxiv). A more detailed explanation of the general principles underlying the development of the college plan and its component parts would have made the main part of the book, the description of the particular colleges, more easy to follow and use; it would have sent the reader on a profitable treasure-hunt through the plans. For instance, the evolution of the college rooms is as interesting as the evolution of the college chapel or the library, owing to the light it throws on the habits, status, numbers, and so forth, of the occupants; it can be traced continuously from the middle ages to the present day. Again, the college staircase has a history of its own, as it changes from the straight steep stair of the mediaeval period (a marked contrast to contemporary newels) to the new types of stair demanded by three- or even four-storied buildings. Indeed the social and constitutional history of colleges is well illustrated in their architectural features. This is true also, for instance, of the gradual development of the lodgings provided for heads of colleges, with the increasing demands for space added or taken in from adjacent buildings; it is a very interesting parallel to the growth of the abbot's house in mediaeval monasteries. It would have been valuable if the plans or descriptions in this volume had indicated which parts of such lodgings were original and which were additions.

These and other similar points might have been touched on a little more in the preface, but it would be unreasonable to expect to have them worked out fully in this volume, owing to considerations of space and cost. It is in fact a tribute to the real value of this book that a perusal of its plans and descriptions should suggest so many desiderata and open up so many vistas; for it is one of the tests of a good book, that it should leave the reader unsatisfied and eager to find out and work out more.¹

W. A. PANTIN.

¹[It had been hoped to include also a reasoned account of the photographs in this volume from the technical standpoint by Mr. S. M. Collins, but this portion of the review has been unavoidably held over. EDD.]

REVIEWS

Notes on Archaeological Technique. Oxford, 1940; printed for the Oxford University Archaeological Society and obtainable at the Ashmolean Museum. $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$. Pp. 21 + 11 blank for notes. 9d.

The Oxford University Archaeological Society is to be congratulated on the production of this sane and serviceable little handbook. One of the chief difficulties of an undergraduate society is that its constantly changing membership may hamper the building up of a steady tradition of standard competence in such a practice as excavation, and a canonizing of the *mos maiorum* in handbook form is a good guarantee against having perhaps to start all over again the term after some able batch of performers has gone down *en masse*. The booklet is divided into short sections entitled Sites, Trenches, Tools and Equipment, Recording, Drawings, Pottery and Miscellaneous (with Bibliography). The practical rules for the field given under all these headings are without exception excellent—if they err at all, it is on the side of healthy rigour. The advantage of throwing up with and not against the prevailing wind might have been noticed on p. 6; both there (or on pp. 18–19) and under drawings something might have been added about the treatment of stone or clay structures and made floors: the marking of pottery should hardly be limited (p. 15) to pieces of 'restorable' pots—there may not be any; but apart from these there are few criticisms to make. From the list of equipment on p. 9 certain omissions may be noted. A short steel tape is indispensable for vertical and other close-range measuring; a good coiled-spring pattern can be got at Woolworth's. For the tidy clearance of deep pits and ditch-bottoms one often needs a galvanized pail. And on picks it might be added that in a confined space or for delicate work a smaller model than the ordinary navy's pick is of value; there is a light tool of this kind on sale, called somewhat cynically a gentleman's pick. When a supply of tins for finds are wanted the best hope is a confectioner, not a grocer (who charges); smokers should be pledged to keep their empties for small finds and soil samples. Finally, there can only be applause for the very clear initial definition of the Society's function as 'rescue-work,' in which 'it is necessary to obtain, as quickly and economically as possible, the maximum of *fact*.' The issue of this handbook (may it run through many editions!) is a good omen for continued success in this essential field, and one may hope that, as envisaged on p. 21, it may be supplemented in the future by similar books on photography, surveying, treatment of finds, and the drawing up and illustration of reports for publication.

C. F. C. HAWKES.

The Early History of St. John's College, Oxford. By the late W. H. Stevenson and the Rev. H. E. Salter. Oxford Historical Society, new series, vol. 1; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1939. Pp. xi + 548; 15 illustrations.

This, the first volume of a new series of the Oxford Historical Society's publications, is, as Dr. Salter's preface explains, in the main the work of the late W. H. Stevenson. At the time of his sudden death in 1924 this admirable scholar had been for some thirteen years collecting materials for the history of the College of which he had been since 1904 a Fellow; and these, with additions by Mr. A. J. Taylor and Mr. Geoffrey Baskerville, have been worked up, at the request of the College, by Dr. Salter, the person of all others most competent for such a task, into the very interesting book now before us. Five chapters are devoted to the origin and history of St. Bernard's College, Archbishop Chichele's foundation for Cistercian students at Oxford, while nine carry on down to the end of the sixteenth century the story of the house which, after the dissolution of the

REVIEWS

monasteries and consequently of the monastic colleges in the Universities, arose through the munificence of Sir Thomas White, citizen and Merchant Taylor of London, in honour of St. John Baptist, upon the site of St. Bernard's. Thirty-one appendices containing the text of relevant documents and a number of excellent plates and other illustrations enhance the value of a contribution to the history of the University of Oxford upon which Dr. Salter and the Oxford Historical Society are much to be congratulated.

A few notes made in the course of my reading of the volume may be added.

On p. 143, in the account of the 'Original Statutes,' written by John Bereblock, it is stated that 'on the front page is a picture of St. John and the Queen.' But surely the picture (a photograph of which is given) represents not 'St. John and the Queen,' but the Holy Trinity; the Father and the Son with imperial crowns, the Dove between them, and the Son bearing the banner of the Cross. The whole design is in accordance with the conventional fashion of picturing the three Persons of the Godhead, except for the beardless face of the Father. I have not seen the original, but the plate certainly suggests some interference with the head of the figure on the right, and it is possible that the illuminator hastily adapted a design originally intended for a Trinity, converting the figure of the Father into one of Queen Elizabeth by the removal of the beard, while leaving all the rest unchanged.

On p. 240, l. 21, 'term' is presumably a misprint for 'tenn.'

On p. 348, l. 14, is recorded the gift to the College of a copy of 'St. Vincent of Beauvais'; one is led to ask when that industrious encyclopaedist was raised to the rank of a canonized saint.

On p. 368, l. 14, in the list of Fellows, occurs the name of 'Richard Acworthe.' More about this person, who belonged to a family to which the writer of this notice is allied, may be found in the *Pedigree of Acworth* (London; Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke 1905), pp. 4, 27.

CLEMENT C. J. WEBB.

Oxford Council Acts, 1665-1701. By M. G. Hobson. Oxford Historical Society, new series, vol. II; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1939. Pp. xlv + 394.

The first volume of *Oxford Council Acts* (1583-1626) appeared twelve years ago under the editorship of Dr. H. E. Salter. The second volume (1626-1665) was published in 1933 under the joint editorship of Dr. Salter and Miss Hobson. In this third volume Miss Hobson has successfully carried on Dr. Salter's method of summarising, and has contributed an interesting introduction enlivened with gleanings from the pages of Anthony Wood, Oxford's chief eyewitness and historian of most of the period under review. The Acts are of course mainly valuable for the information they give respecting municipal administration. Civic waters were not usually stirred very deeply by political events. They were, however, often considerably ruffled by internal breezes, and these provide many entertaining details for which the local historian will be grateful. The following are typical incidents. A controversy about the election of a town clerk led to the mayor and chamberlain being attacked by a party of citizens with blackened faces; citizens had to be restrained from interfering with the servants of the Duke of York while they were building a playhouse; and the county gaoler received a reprimand for disturbing citizens in the peaceful pursuit of fishing and for breaking their angles. The city was honoured during the period with three royal visits, and showed itself most punctilious about 'postures and habits.' In 1677 when a banquet was given to the Duke of Buckingham, the town clerk recorded the proceedings at length, and noted with satisfaction that

REVIEWS

'notwithstanding verry plenty of all sorts of wine the whole business was carried with such prudence and silence by all the Gent. that attended, that there was noe distraction or disturbance.' In these days we may well envy the regulation by which citizens were required, during the dark hours, to hang before their doors a lantern with lighted candle !
S. GIBSON.

Tusmore Papers. Edited by L. G. Wickham Legg. Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. xx (1939). Pp. 110.

Hearth Tax Returns, Oxfordshire, 1665. Edited by Maureen M. B. Weinstock. Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. xxi (1940). Pp. 264.

A local Record Society is faced with the ever-present problem of satisfying the claims of the learned and the popular reader. The first demands full and accurate transcriptions of rare Latin texts; the latter demands readable volumes of historical material predominantly local in interest and in English. Of these two volumes of the Oxfordshire Record Society, it may be said that *Tusmore Papers*, though not of purely local interest, will interest the popular reader and will be appreciated by the learned reader, and that the *Hearth Tax Returns* are a standard source for local history such as every County sooner or later hopes to see in print, even though the *Returns* themselves do not make up a particularly inspiring and attractive volume.

The *Tusmore* papers pretend to no kind of unity and are chiefly of interest as a sidelight on the manners and customs of the 18th century. The family of Fermor to whom the papers originally belonged lived at *Tusmore* (now the seat of Lord Bicester, the Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the County) in the 17th and 18th centuries and achieved popular fame through the lock of hair belonging to Arabella Fermor, immortalised by Pope in the *Rape of the Lock*. To students of history the family is chiefly of interest for its Catholic connexions. The papers are diverse in scope and include, for instance, letters from Mrs. Fitzherbert and Horace Walpole and letters concerning the origins of the South Oxford Hunt. In short, they are a pleasant, readable collection, carefully annotated by Mr. Wickham Legg, but it would be idle to pretend that they form the most valuable contribution of the Oxfordshire Record Society to the history of the County; indeed, many of them contain no more than an indirect reference to Oxfordshire itself. One may perhaps wonder why the Society found space to print the South Oxford Hunt papers, when these have already been printed by Blomfield and when so much else remains to be published before Oxfordshire can count itself well-provided in printed record-material.

Those whose duty it is in Oxfordshire to produce records for the genealogical searcher are well aware of the difficulty of finding material for the 17th century. The 19th century is well served by the Registers of Electors and local directories; the 18th century relies mainly on Quarter Sessions Records and on the Land Tax Assessments; for earlier centuries there are the printed collections of deeds and cartularies; but for the 17th century there is very little material which can compare with these printed sources or with the 18th and 19th century records in ease of consultation. Manuscript collections in the Bodleian and the Diocesan Records are of some help, but they are not printed and are laborious to consult. The *Hearth Tax Returns* for 1665, now printed, help to fill this gap and will be appreciated to the full by genealogists, however little the general reader may be attracted by them except where they refer to his own locality. They will be used to advantage by local historians interested in problems of population, trades and

REVIEWS

professions and other matters of social and economic interest. The volume may be regarded as complementary to Dr. Salter's edition of the Oxford Hearth Tax (O.H.S. vol. LXXV). The editor has provided the volume with a valuable and interesting introduction.

H. M. WALTON.

Catalogue of the Plate of Magdalen College, Oxford. By E. Alfred Jones. Oxford University Press, 1940. Pp. xxii + 106; 7 plates. 31s. 6d.

It is pleasant to find that the war has not delayed the appearance of the fourth of Mr. Jones's catalogues of Oxford college plate. Magdalen can no longer claim to rank amongst the colleges richest in plate, for it appears to have had rather more than its fair share of misfortune. The Founder's mitre and crozier were spared at the Reformation, when the chapel plate was destroyed, and again in 1642, when the necessities of Charles I took a heavy toll of the silver of the University, but were sacrificed to Puritan zeal after the capitulation of Oxford in 1646. Nowadays we may regret the unaccommodating spirit of the college, and feel that the 'Cup of the Restored Fellows' was too dearly bought at the cost of works of art probably as fine as those preserved by New College and Corpus.

The greater part of the chapel plate was stolen in 1786 by one Miles Ward who was duly apprehended and hanged, but none of the booty was recovered. In 1631 the college had been more lucky when it got back a stolen 'college pot' which the Goldsmiths' Company had received from a Wadham undergraduate.

The earliest piece of plate now in the possession of the college is a chalice presented by the late Sir John Noble, Bart., in 1936. It is believed to have belonged to a church in Hampshire, and is notable for having a knot which differs from all of the five standard patterns known to have been used in this country at the end of the Middle Ages. The 'Founder's Cup' with bowl in the form of a melon, dates only from 1601 and is an example of one of the less happy German designs so popular in England at the time. The 'Cup of the Restored Fellows,' of 1660, closely resembles the 'Spanish Ambassador's Cup' at New College and is a good specimen of the simplest style of Charles II work. A verger's staff of the same date is a simpler version of the type found at Christ Church.

The more ordinary varieties of late 17th and of 18th century plate are well represented but it is curious to find that the earliest 'tun,' as the bulbous cups with two ring handles were called at Magdalen, only dates from 1718. A rarity amongst the later pieces is a wine-shade (for holding a claret bottle), made by John Emes in 1806.

Those familiar with Mr. Jones's catalogues are accustomed to find them admirably documented. For the present volume he has had no lack of material, thanks to the careful way in which the Magdalen bursars cherished their plate books, even after the pieces recorded had been consigned to the melting pot. The appendices give some excellent inventories and extracts from inventories, beginning with a list of the chapel plate in 1495.

It is interesting to note that the mark *rw* between a rosette and an annulet, found on a number of George II salts at Magdalen and other colleges, is now attributed to the Oxford silversmith John Wilkins.

The publishers have no reason to congratulate themselves on the illustrations. It is not merely that the supply is inadequate, but that an obsession for reproducing long-ways photographs across the page has resulted in the objects illustrated appearing quite unnecessarily small. The serious student will continue to use Moffatt and the little catalogue of the 1928 exhibition of college plate, whenever possible.

C. C. OMAN.