

Reviews

The Victoria History of the County of Oxford. Volume 3. The University of Oxford. Edited by the late Reverend H. E. Salter and Mrs. M. D. Lobel. Published for the University of London Institute of Historical Research by the Oxford University Press, 1954. Pp. xx+382; 39 plates, 34 plans and folders. Price £4 4s.

This Oxford volume has been in preparation for twenty years, and it was well worth waiting for. It is a great boon to have, between one set of covers, an authoritative history of the University and of all the colleges. To these are added, for good measure, a valuable account of the medieval grammar schools and well-documented histories of the more important University buildings. The illustrations include most of the essential Loggans and a very interesting selection of prints and drawings, the artists of these last including, most appropriately, two historians well-known to Oxford, Anthony Wood and Professor Helen Cam. Oxford's debt to Dr. Salter is apparent throughout the text and Mrs. Lobel is to be congratulated on completing the edition of so profuse a mass of material, a task made more difficult by the necessity of keeping up to date a number of articles which have been in page-proof since before the war.

The history of the University, as one would expect from its author, is a skilfully integrated narrative with many interesting sidelights. It is noted, for instance, that when the faculty of Arts wished to express an opinion, known to be injudicious, on the divorce of Henry VIII, the Chancellor addressed a stern letter to the University 'written in English so that nothing should be otherwise interpreted'. Leicester followed this precedent. As Chancellor he wrote in English and left no doubt of his meaning, but in the curricula and teaching of the University the use of English was not admitted until in the eighteenth century the statutes of Hertford stipulated that undergraduates should write a weekly essay in English 'that the Youth of the Society may learn to write and speak their own Language readily and properly'. But Oxford has always been versatile. In the early seventeenth century, when Latin was still the universal language of scholarship and of all University exercises, when Bodley would not willingly admit English books into his newly-founded library, the translators of the Authorized Version were meeting in Rainolds's lodging in Corpus, and 'there (it is said) perfected the work'. The account of Corpus in this volume quotes a most interesting letter from Archbishop Whitgift to Cecil proposing that Cole, the President of Corpus, should be transferred to the Lincoln deanery which Rainolds held, and that Rainolds should be brought back to Oxford. 'I have of long time endeavoured to place Dr. Reinolds in Oxford, and the rather because he is employed in writing against the Jesuits and other our adversaries . . . The exchange is greatly for the benefit of the Church, and for God's and her Majesty's service.' Whitgift was in this case completely justified and there could be no clearer illustration of the importance attached to Oxford as a spear-head of the reformed and militant church in the reign of Elizabeth. A hundred years later college appointments might be used for quite different ends. In St. John's, for instance, after the Restoration, the obligations on fellows to reside in Oxford were, it seems, dispensed with by 'bishop's letters', an interesting parallel to the 'Chancel-

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lor's letters' which at the same period fill the Register of Convocation with a steady stream of dispensations from statutory requirements for degrees. The use of bishop's letters enabled Dr. Sherard to hold a college fellowship with emoluments from 1685 to 1703 while he studied botany in the Near East. A rapid survey of the accounts of other colleges has failed to reveal any other travelling fellowship comparable with this.

The accounts of the colleges vary in emphasis, as indeed they must, in accordance with their age and size, and the survival of their records. As one writer remarks, the history of a college as a house of learning may be 'not much more than a string of considerable names'. There are great names here in plenty, but apart from these we are shown how much is to be learnt from other, less obvious, sources. The rise of humanism in the University can be studied not only from a list of names of great teachers but also from the inventories of books in All Souls where by 1500 the Latin humanists were shelved 'in the last desk' in the library. The collection of scientific and philosophical books received by Brasenose from a mid-eighteenth-century Principal shows that Oxford remained a home of learning even when it seemed to have forgotten how to teach. And how illuminating is the brief comment that Wadham College is 'probably the only one to have portraits of both William III and George I', a clear proof of unrepentant Whiggery.

The organization and scope of teaching in the University is an obscure subject, particularly from the sixteenth century, when the colleges began to usurp functions formerly exercised by the University, to the nineteenth, when the enquiries of the Commissioners throw more light on current practice. The forms and standards varied greatly in different colleges, but we can see the growth of college teaching in Exeter, first in the early sixteenth-century practice of paying outsiders for lectures in college, and then in the detailed provisions for college teaching incorporated in the 1566 statutes which the College owed to Sir William Petre. There were, rather surprisingly, written examinations for Oriel fellowships in 1696, but twenty years later other considerations intrude and a Provost of Oriel was explaining that 'In all elections . . . I shall have a particular regard to men's Principles and Loyalty as well as their Learning'. This was an attitude which goes far to explain the acerbities of Hearne and the decay of learning, but another cause of the University's fall from grace in the early eighteenth century is suggested in the article on Balliol, 'the widening gap between the studies prescribed by the University curriculum and the intellectual interests of the age'. Balliol, of course, provides the best example of the nineteenth-century renaissance in college teaching and its wonderful record since the mastership of Parsons is brought to a fitting close in this volume with the reminder that the Regius Professorship of Modern History has been held by an unbroken succession of Balliol men since 1904. One turns back, almost with relief, to the middle ages when, in 1325, the proctors of Balliol very properly intervened to prevent members of the college aspiring to take higher degrees.

As the building concerned is likely to occupy public attention in the near future one minor correction may be permitted here. Suggestions are offered (p. 53) that the statue of Charles II in classical armour on the north face of the Sheldonian Theatre might have been the work of William Townesend or possibly of William Bird. The University Theatre accounts clearly give the right answer: in 1735-6 a sum of £120 was 'Paid Mr. Cheere for K. Charles the II statue'.

I. G. PHILIP.

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The Place-Names of Oxfordshire. By Margaret Gelling, based on material collected by Doris May Stenton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Part I, 1953, liii+244 pp. Part II, 1954, 272 pp. (English Place-Name Society, volumes XXIII and XXIV). Price 30s. each Part.

For some parts of the country systematic place-name study has proved invaluable in the piecing together of Dark Age history. That cannot be claimed for Oxfordshire. As Mrs. Gelling, the author of these, the latest, volumes in the series of publications of the English Place-Name Society, says: 'The great majority of Oxfordshire place-names, probably bestowed by gradual expansion and land clearance . . . are not in any way remarkable.' Nevertheless, we have cause to be grateful to Mrs. Gelling for this painstaking study of the place-names of the county, and to Lady Stenton for the very large part which she played in collecting the material upon which the study is based.

Nearly all Oxfordshire place-names, as might be expected, are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The pre-English element is very small, although, as in other parts of the country where the place-names are predominantly English, several rivers have retained names of Celtic or possibly pre-Celtic origin—Glyme, Thame, Thames and Windrush, for example, and Bladene, an earlier name of the Evenlode. There are very few names of French derivation, save for those where a manorial holder's name has been added, like Ascot d'Oyley, Minster Lovell and Stanton Harcourt, and place-names in which a Scandinavian personal name is compounded with an English suffix are no more numerous.

Perhaps the main point of interest about Oxfordshire names is the way in which they reflect, albeit somewhat obscurely, the two-fold settlement, Saxon and Anglian, of the district that now constitutes the county. In most areas the Saxon and Anglian dialect seem to be intermixed, although in one area Mrs. Gelling thinks that the place-names indicate a dialectal boundary running north and south between Burford and Bampton, and she suggests that Anglian influence may have been more marked along the western border of the county, perhaps connoting a strong Anglian element amongst the Hwicce (whose name is preserved in Wychwood).

English names of early types are quite rare; *-ing* names are represented only once, or possibly twice, the suffix *ham* occurs certainly on only six occasions and the two or three examples of heathen names are not free from doubt. Of the few English names that can be regarded as of a comparatively early date, a rather high proportion lie along the Thames and along the Icknield Way, but the place-name evidence adds little to the archaeological and literary evidence to enable us to determine which (if either) of these was the main route by which the early West Saxons reached their homes.

In general arrangement these two volumes follow the lines of previous publications of the English Place-Name Society and show the same standard of careful scholarship. The absence of distribution maps is disappointing, but is due not to editorial shortcomings, but to lack of significant data for, as Mrs. Gelling says: 'A study of the distribution of the elements used does not bring out any very striking facts.' A useful geological map accompanies the first two sections of the Introduction by Dr. W. J. Arkell on the Geological Background and the Influence of Geology on Settlement. Field and minor names are dealt with fairly fully and yield such pleasant conceits as Cold Comfort Farm, Greedy Guts, Lousy Lot, Sweet Pot and Spiteful Yards.

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A comparison of the prices of these volumes with that of the Society's pre-war publications—for instance, the volume on Essex published in 1935 when 760 pages plus maps cost 25s.—is a disagreeable reminder that, as regards increase in price, books must now be put in the same category as beer and cigarettes.

FRANK W. JESSUP.

A History of the City of Oxford. By Ruth Fasnacht. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1954. Pp. xviii+234. 13 plates. Price 21s.

Inevitably, the city of Oxford, like the county of which it is the capital, has been overshadowed by the university that flourishes in its midst. As Mrs. Fasnacht says in her Preface, 'While the University is very conscious of its history and traditions, and a great many books have been written about them, our civic memories and our civic pride are much less'. It is with the object of awakening these memories and kindling this pride in the ordinary citizen that Mrs. Fasnacht has compiled the present *History*: it will not be her fault if her laudable aim is not achieved.

For this is an admirable book, a model of its kind. Although making no pretensions to original investigation, the author has, as her publishers claim, made full and scholarly use of the researches of the past fifty years, and in particular of that quarry of information the fine series of published Council records which we owe to the enthusiasm of Dr. Salter and Miss Hobson. There is a short but adequate Bibliography, designed to stimulate further study, and each chapter has references appended. The illustrations are of excellent quality and well chosen.

Mrs. Fasnacht follows the fortunes of Oxford from its Saxon beginnings, which are handled with commendable caution, right down to the present-day problems of industry and planning, which are realistically treated, without sentiment yet with sensitiveness. It is this quality of unsentimentality combined with sympathetic imagination which makes the fascinating story that Mrs. Fasnacht has to tell, so readable. Unlike Anthony Wood, she does not allow partisanship to mar her work. One of her main themes is necessarily the intricate relations existing between 'town and gown' through the course of nearly eight centuries. But while emphasizing the humiliations suffered by the former from such phenomena of the past as 'privileged persons' and 'noctivagation'—far more galling to the average citizen than the spectacular annual penance on St. Scholastica's Day—Mrs. Fasnacht deplores the mentality which, in contrast to the enterprise of Leicester, could carry on 'into the eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth, the psychology of the walled town'. It was this clinging to an outmoded economy which, by a bitter irony, forced the city, though chafing beneath the autocratic rule of the university, to become increasingly dependent upon it, with the result that, until the fortuitous advent of Morris Motors in the 1920s, Oxford languished alarmingly, a victim of the twin diseases of poverty and unemployment.

To many readers perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book will be those dealing with that least familiar period of Oxford's history, the two centuries following the Restoration of 1660. Especially 'nostalgic' is the chapter on 'Roads, Bridges and the Coaching Age', and none can fail to be grateful to Mrs. Fasnacht for introducing them to the reminiscences of the guard William Bazand. The coaching era is notably well served by the four coloured plates reproduced from Ackermann.

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In conclusion, among some minor inaccuracies noticed by the present writer, a few may be mentioned. Charles I did not pay his first visit to Oxford in 1629 (p. 93) but in 1625, and he had come before as Prince: he left the city in 1645 not on 3 June (p. 121) but on 7 May: John Gutch did not do his work under the auspices of the Oxford Historical Society (p. 217): and Hearne's *Collections* are in 11 not 15 volumes (p. 218); the number is correctly given on p. 221. Such slips will readily be corrected in the second edition of a book which bears on its title-page our city's motto *Fortis est Veritas*.
M. R. TOYNBEE.

History of the Bodleian Library, 1845-1945. By Sir Edmund Craster, Bodley's Librarian 1931-45. Pp. xii+372, 11 plates, 3 text figs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. Price £2 2s.

The appearance of Sir Edmund Craster's important and authoritative *History* is an event which this journal, above all others, must record with pleasure and gratitude. No reader of *Oxoniensia*—indeed, no one who has ever had connexions with the University or the city or county of Oxford—can fail to find both interest and instruction in Sir Edmund's account of Bodley's development from the comparatively small and compact stage it had reached in 1845 up to its initial occupation of the great New Bodleian building in the 1940s, with all the growth and development that that implies.

For it is, in truth, an absorbing story and it is unfolded with clarity and charm, even when it deals with apparently intractable matters such as catalogues, book-stacks and systems of classification. To enhance the interest of the story and to mitigate its duller aspects, Sir Edmund has rightly emphasized throughout the character and attainments of the chief actors in the drama, and, as he tells his tale with obvious pleasure and *pietas* as well as with much dry humour, the reader is never wearied by the many and complicated details Sir Edmund has felt bound to include.

A history of the Bodleian, situated as it is amongst a complex of University buildings built for diverse purposes—the Schools, the Radcliffe Camera, the Old Ashmolean building, the Sheldonian and the Clarendon building—necessitates much discussion of those buildings themselves and their contemporary uses, for the Bodleian, with its constant need for expansion, has frequently cast longing eyes on space which it might obtain within them. Indeed, a great part of this book is concerned with plans, sometimes accepted, more often discarded, for expansion of book-stacks and reading-rooms into portions or the whole of Bodley's neighbours and friends. By 1845 all the rooms in the Schools Quadrangle except a few on the ground floor had been absorbed in Bodley, but Bodley had not spread wider than that. The Radcliffe Library still continued its existence independent of Bodley in the Camera, the Clarendon building, recently evacuated by the Press, was used as University offices and for a variety of other things and the Ashmolean building was still wholly used for its original purpose. During the next 100 years, (1) the Radcliffe Library was united to Bodley, its scientific books (the majority of its contents) moved to the Radcliffe Science Library in the University Museum and its building converted finally into an undergraduate reading-room; (2) the whole of the Schools Quadrangle was absorbed by Bodley after the building of the Examination Schools in High Street in the 1870s; and (3) the basement of the Sheldonian became a newspaper store in 1891 and that of the Ashmolean a book-stack in 1895. But, though the possibility existed more than once, Bodley never acquired any other portion of the

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Ashmolean building and the Clarendon building equally remained outside its orbit. These additions, though useful and necessary when they were made, did not provide really long-term relief, any more than did the underground book-store between the Camera and the Quadrangle, which came into use in 1912, so that after the First World War the situation had become so acute that the most drastic remedies were once more being discussed. How the situation was finally alleviated with the aid of the generous Rockefeller benefaction by the building of the New Bodleian (it is a pleasure to have Sir Edmund's blessing, p. 329, for the use of that name for it rather than the more cumbersome 'Bodleian Extension') is recent and more familiar history. Yet all will be grateful that this stage, which coincided with Sir Edmund's own wise tenure of the Librarianship, was not omitted from his story, for it is important that the facts should thus be clearly stated by one who was so largely responsible for its successful outcome.

This brief outline of Sir Edmund's tale can only hint at the wealth of detail and of fact his pages contain. His predecessors in the Librarianship—Bandinel, Coxe, Nicholson, Madan and Cowley—all emerge as living personalities, whose virtues are well recounted and whose failings and foibles (when they existed) are not withheld from view. So, too, do many of the other actors in the drama such as Max Muller, Acland and Jowett. Clashes of personality there existed in plenty and Sir Edmund never shirks telling of these when they occur, particularly those which affected the Librarian's relationship with his curators as a whole or individually. Though the stages in Bodley's growth and development are always uppermost in the reader's mind, the great changes and reorientation of activity within the University as a whole are also prominent, and any future historian of the University or of any of Bodley's sister institutions within the University will certainly derive much significant information about his own subject of research from this book. It could not, indeed, have been otherwise, in view of the close connexion a University Library must maintain with the development of its University as a whole; and in Bodley's case the situation has been accentuated by its central situation amongst the other University buildings and by the amount of rationalization that has had to be undertaken of library, museum and teaching functions between the various University institutions, new and old, during the last 100 years.

Let it not be thought, moreover, that Sir Edmund's pages tell of nothing but books and manuscripts! Bodley was the first public picture-gallery in Britain and also possessed from the start not a few 'museum' objects, and many other such objects were housed by the University in precincts acquired by Bodley. We learn, therefore, part of the story of the Arundel and Pomfret marbles, of the University's 'collection of ancient muskets and halberds', of the Elliott collection of Indian weapons, of coins, of Egyptian ostraca and cuneiform tablets (it is interesting to learn that Sir Edmund has traced the use of the word 'cuneiform' back to Dr. Hyde in 1700), of models of classical buildings and casts of classical sculptures. Yet, of course, books and manuscripts are the main subject of the story. Bibliophiles and bibliographers will find many revealing details of Bodley's efforts to enlarge its collections of incunabula and rare books; historians and antiquarians will find an account of the many collections of archives and muniments that Bodley possesses, including especially, of course, diocesan and other manuscripts and topographical maps and prints of importance for Oxfordshire history; and students of language and literature will discover something of the wealth of books and other written material both

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printed and manuscript which it contains from all regions of the world, both ancient and modern.

The book also emphasizes the important role the Bodleian has played in the development of library practice and routine over the last hundred years. Bodley has often learnt from others, notably when Sir Edmund himself paid visits to foreign libraries in Europe and America before planning the New Bodleian, but Bodley and Bodley's staff have themselves played a leading role in developing modern methods of librarianship, and the story of Bodleian cataloguing and press-marks and of the staff and their duties from time to time will be of great interest to those who are coping with similar problems today in sister institutions. Though Sir Edmund only mentions it in passing, not a few librarians trained in Bodley have moved to posts in other places and in this way spread the influence of Bodley widely in Britain and elsewhere.

The story here unfolded could be enlarged in detail, but nothing of basic interest or importance that bears connexion with the theme of the book has been omitted. When so much has been provided it is perhaps churlish to ask for more, but appendices giving lists of Bodleian officers and curators with their dates of tenure and perhaps also a bibliography of official Bodleian publications might not have been amiss, and a chronological table summarizing the main stages in Bodley's development and expansion would have helped at least one reader in his study of this complicated, if fascinating, story.

D. B. HARDEN.

The Conquest of Wessex in the Sixth Century. By Gordon J. Copley. London, Phoenix House, 1954. Pp. 240; 12 plates, 10 text figures. Price 30s.

In this book Dr. Copley makes a gallant attempt to come nearer to the solution of the vexed problem of the early settlement of Wessex by gathering together all the evidence of Saxon literature, place-names and archaeology. Dividing Wessex into two parts, the Salisbury region, and the Abingdon region, Dr. Copley deals in detail with the topography, place-names and archaeology of each, including the evidence, both material and in place-names, for the survival of the native population, and their continued co-existence with the invaders.

This survey is followed by two chapters on the West Saxon king lists, an examination of the account of the invasion in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and a final summary of the events of the early settlement.

Here is a great deal of material usefully collected into one volume, including a list of Wessex cemeteries and burials, together with their references. The archaeological evidence, unfortunately, is least well presented, and appears to have been insufficiently studied and understood. The several inaccuracies that have been allowed to creep in add to this impression, e.g. Kidlington for Kiddington, and on fig. 8(b) a bone bead or spindle-whorl from Dorchester is described as a disc-brooch, while there seems to be considerable confusion between disc, annular and penannular brooches. Maps 6 and 10 show a Saxon cemetery at Islip, Oxon., which must surely be a slip for Islip, Northants. And surely the Victoria County Histories do not deserve quite so sweeping a censure as they receive at the beginning of Appendix B. Old-fashioned perhaps many of them are in the presentation of their evidence, but at least they include all the material available at the time of writing, and many illustrations of objects not previously published, and for many students they have been and still are the most complete and convenient sources of material.

JOAN R. KIRK.