Reviews

The Origin of English Place-Names. By P. H. Reaney. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, x, pp. 277. Price 32*s*.

English Place Names. By K. Cameron. Batsford, 1961, pp. 256. Price 30*s*.

These two books are incomparably the best popular accounts which have yet appeared of the origins of English place-names. Dr. Reaney's is, in my opinion, the better book; it reveals (as is natural, in view of the greater age and experience of the author) a more mature and better digested grasp of the whole subject, and since its contents are more unexpected it is of greater interest to the specialist. Its only weak section is an Introductory Chapter in which the author pursues a number of private arguments with people who have differed from him about individual derivations. Most of the opinions he is at such pains to refute were really not worth repeating, and there is no obvious need for a toponymist of Dr. Reaney's standing to go on arguing about such names as Yeavering, Brightlingsea and Walthamstow until he has convinced every journalist and every local historian with a bee in his bonnet. It is a pity that this somewhat arid section was put at the beginning of a very good book. Dr. Cameron's account, while frankly dull to the specialist, may well be useful to the general reader wanting a first introduction to the subject; his explanations are on the whole simpler than Dr. Reaney's, and he mentions more names.

It is not easy to write coherent prose about place-names, as the fragmentary nature of the subject makes it in some ways more suitable to treatment in dictionaries. This difficulty has been overcome successfully in both these books, and much care and effort has obviously been devoted to the arrangement of names in different categories. Both authors have a chapter on methods, one of the few aspects of the subject on which there is no disagreement among serious students. Dr. Cameron then adopts a chronological framework, beginning with his brief account of Celtic names, then going on to the earliest English names, and to Scandinavian and French names, before particularizing about various aspects of the subject, such as Place-Names and Archaeology. Dr. Reaney also has chapters on Celtic, Scandinavian and French names, but covers more of the general mass of the material before he comes to these clearly defined categories. There is little to choose between the two schemes, but Dr. Cameron's perhaps involves more repetition. Both books end with chapters on street and field-names, but neither includes any real discussion of names in Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries, although this is one of the most fascinating aspects of the study.

The greater part of both these books consists of a careful and accurate account of the material set out in the county surveys of the English Place-Name Society, presented in the light of historical interpretations made by such scholars as the late Sir Allen Mawer, Sir Frank Stenton, Professor E. Ekwall, Professor Bruce Dickins and Professor A. H. Smith. This was clearly the intention of both authors, and the

books are successful in fulfilling this aim. In my own opinion, however, they give a disappointing, indeed a disturbing, impression of the present state of English place-name studies. The authors belong to different generations, Dr. Reaney having contributed to the English Place-Name Society's series in the nineteen-thirties, while Dr. Cameron took up the study after the war, and his *Place-Names of Derbyshire* is the last county survey to be published. It is not surprising to find as the basis of Dr. Reaney's book ideas and interpretations which have been current for thirty years or more, but it is disturbing to find that Dr. Cameron does not differ from him in any important particular. Has the subject really stood still for thirty years, all the fresh evidence collected in that time serving merely to illustrate the theories of the pioneers? This query does not imply any lack of respect for the opinions in question. The work of the first generation of place-name scholars is not likely to be equalled by any later generation; but large areas of the subject remain virtually unexplored as far as their historical significance is concerned, and there is infinite scope for fresh discoveries in the collation of material from different counties. The prevailing opinions are now adequately available in print, and it is perhaps legitimate to hope that future authors will concentrate on trying to advance the study beyond its present stage of development, rather than on telling the same story again. Some of the avenues which might profitably be explored are easily discernible from these two books.

There are three types of early place-name which are of outstanding historical importance: those which indicate that some of the Romano-British population survived the English invasions, those which are considered to refer to the earliest English settlements, and those which refer to the heathen religion of the Anglo-Saxons. Names of the first type are accorded a comparatively long and very interesting discussion by Dr. Reaney (pp. 66-97) and a briefer survey (pp. 33-46) by Dr. Cameron. Both authors acknowledge the fundamental contribution to this subject made by Professor K. H. Jackson,[1] and both reproduce Professor Jackson's map showing rivers with Celtic names. This map is naturally unexceptionable, but it is too blunt an instrument with which to attack such an interesting subject as the evidence for British survival. For a proper estimate of this, it would be necessary to draw regional maps on a fairly large scale, marking all the names Professor Jackson is prepared to accept as Celtic, those which seem likely to be pre-Celtic, and those (like Comberton and some instances of Walton) which refer to communities of Britons. Detailed maps of this kind would cause more undulations in the lines Professor Jackson draws between his four areas of greater and lesser survival. In Worcestershire, for instance, there is a group of Celtic names in the Vale of Evesham, and this area would hardly, on a detailed map, be put in the same category as Warwickshire, where Celtic names are extremely rare, though both fall into Professor Jackson's Area II.

On the general question of maps, it may be noted that the illustrations to Dr. Cameron's book, while decorative, have little value in relation to the subject. Six out of eight are reproductions of early maps, which are a very minor source of place-name spellings. The crying need of English place-name studies is for detailed distribution maps of areas more historically significant than counties; and the failure to provide any new maps in a lavishly produced book is a missed opportunity, especially to be regretted as the maps for *The Place-Names of Derbyshire* were

[1] In *Language and History in Early Britain*, Edinburgh 1953.

so beautifully drawn. Some distribution maps were provided in A. H. Smith's *English Place-Name Elements*,[2] but they were badly printed and the scale far too small for serious study.

English names consisting of a personal name and the suffix *-ingas* are said in both these books to belong to the earliest period of the settlement in Britain. Here serious exception must be taken to the statements by Cameron (p. 71) that ' archaeological evidence in the main supports that of the place-names in -ings and -ingham ' and Reaney (p. 110) that ' in general they agree very well with the archaeological evidence '. Such phrases as ' in the main ' and ' in general ' have been used for a long time time now to gloss over the serious discrepancies in the evidence of *-ingas* names and that of archaeology concerning the location of the earliest English settlements. Here again, we need detailed and up-to-date distribution maps of the two types of evidence. Dr. Cameron provides no map of *-ingas* names, and Dr. Reaney reproduces a map published in 1936,[3] which naturally requires revision. Even from this map, however, it is evident that there are areas, notably the upper and middle Thames valley, the Cambridge region, and the valley of the Warwickshire Avon, where abundant heathen cemeteries are almost unsupported by *-ingas* names, and other areas, notably west Sussex and Essex, which abound in *-ingas* names but have produced very few heathen burials. Dr. J. N. L. Myres, who compiled this map and others even more telling, was moved to try to explain some of the discrepancies,[4] but his article on this subject has been largely ignored, and the challenge has not been taken up by archaeologists or toponymists. Neither Cameron nor Reaney shows a clear awareness of the archaeological evidence, and one statement of Cameron's suggests serious misunderstanding of it. He gives details of *-ingas* and *-inghām* names in Surrey and then says (p. 67) ' further to the west such names decrease in number, as we should expect '. As north Berkshire was the scene of some of the earliest English settlements in the country we should expect nothing of the kind, and one must protest at the implied picture of an Anglo-Saxon conquest proceeding smoothly from east to west. Obviously a review is no place for a discussion of this problem, but I suspect myself that it may be necessary to modify the tenet of faith which considers *-ingas* to refer to groups of settlers just arrived from the Continent. Dr. Reaney (p. 106) credits the *Rēadingas* of Reading with occupying a territory seven miles wide. He is probably thinking of the *Sunningas* of Sonning, who occupied a large area of east Berkshire, and there is further confusion about the position of Sonning on p. 128.

Place-names which refer to Anglo-Saxon paganism have been brilliantly discussed by Sir Frank Stenton, and his views are summarized adequately in both these books, though a reproduction of his map[5] would have been welcome, as some of the places are extremely hard to locate, and their distribution pattern is of considerable interest. Dr. Cameron says (p. 119) that these names do not occur in districts which were formerly heavily wooded, and this is misleading, as one of the most striking concentrations in the country is in well wooded territory round Farnham in Surrey, and the commonest second element in such names is *lēah*,

[2] English Place-Name Society, XXV, XXVI, 1956.

[3] From *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, R. G. Collingwood and J. N. L. Myres, Oxford 1936.

[4] *Antiquity*, IX (1935), 455-64.

[5] From *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, XXIII, 1941.

which suggests that a woodland setting was felt to be particularly appropriate to heathen worship. On p. 118 Dr. Reaney describes *Besinga hearh*, ' heathen temple of the *Besingas* ', as the site of a heathen temple given by the king of Wessex for the foundation of the monastery at Farnham. *Besinga hearh* is the place at which the Farnham foundation charter was drawn up, but there is nothing in the charter to suggest that it was the site of the monastery, and we cannot even be sure that it was in Surrey.

Some of the common elements for which a list of meanings is given in both these books would obviously repay detailed study. Such words as *hamm* and *healh*, for instance, can hardly have possessed all the meanings assigned to them at the same time, and both authors admit that it is impossible to be precise in one's translation of a name involving such words. A study of all the names in the country containing *hamm*[6] seemed to me to enable tentative conclusions to be drawn about the sense development of that element, and similar studies for *healh* and for some habitation terms, particularly *wīc*, would almost certainly render more precise definitions possible. Such studies were not, of course, to be expected in these books, but comparison of the definition of some common elements with those given in Mawer's *Chief Elements in English Place-Names*, which was published in 1924, suggests that more progress should have been made in the intervening years.

Finally, a few minor points may be noted. On p. 115 Dr. Reaney takes *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* to task for not quoting *Banesinga villa* among the forms of Bensington. This form should have been mentioned but it has much less authority than Reaney (and Ekwall) accord it, as the Abingdon charter in which it occurs among the signatures is a medieval forgery. It is probably a fanciful Latinization of the name, and does not constitute evidence for an etymology ' farm of *Benesa's* people ' rather than ' *Benesa's* farm '. Dr. Cameron (p. 166) cites Britwell in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire as containing the word *beorht*, ' bright ', an etymology inconsistent with the forms, and on p. 112 he makes the extraordinary statement that Ashbury and Blewbury (both in Berkshire) ' owe their names to the presence of a neighbouring Neolithic long barrow '. Slips of this last kind are, however, inevitable in books of this scope, and the general standard of accuracy of both authors rouses great admiration. My criticisms are directed not so much at them as at the present state of the subject ; it does seem unnaturally static.

M. GELLING.

The Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels. By Joan R. Clarke. Oxford : Ashmolean Museum, 1961. Pp. 16, with four plates and one coloured plate. Price 2*s*.

This guide remains the best and most authoritative account of these two outstanding examples of Anglo-Saxon jewellery. The second edition contains some short additions to the text, together with an additional photograph and a bibliography. The principal contribution to the study of the Alfred Jewel to appear during the 13 years since the first issue of the guide has been Professor Talbot Rice's suggestion that the enamel figure is derived from the Ascent of Alexander motif. Mrs. Clarke, in view of the late date of the surviving Byzantine examples of this motif and of the specifically Christian setting of the earlier Insular figures, including that on the Jewel itself, is rightly sceptical of this connection. The problems remain

[6] *Namn och Bygd*, 1961.

unsolved; the identity of the figure is still obscure and the function of the jewel uncertain. In the latter connection we may agree that the aestel theory requires more proof. The form of the jewel suggests that it was mounted on a staff and ' while it is most unlikely to have been . . . carried into battle ', it could have been used on a ceremonial staff like the banner or tufa carried before Edwin (Bede, Hist. Eccl., II, 16). The find spot near Athelney in Somerset makes it tempting to connect the Jewel with the workshops of the near-by abbey at Glastonbury, where glass furnaces and other workshops of the late 9th or 10th century have recently been found.

C. A. RALEGH RADFORD.

Otmoor and its Seven Towns. By M. G. Hobson and K. L. Price. 1961. Pp. 48. Price 6*s*.

Otmoor lies some 5 miles north of Oxford and for centuries preserved its rural remoteness, gaining for itself a reputation for uniqueness and for its inhabitants one of eccentricity. Its character was determined by the moor, flat and low-lying and about 4 miles square, around which these seven villages grew up. Although it has now lost much of its interest, the moor at one time provided a unique habitat for birds and plants. To a large extent it determined the economy of the surrounding villages, while its inclosure in the 19th century provoked some of the most spectacular riots seen in Oxfordshire, and its final appearance, as the authors of this pamphlet tell us, suggested the chessboard in *Alice Through the Looking-glass* to Lewis Carroll.

This is an unambitious but pleasantly-produced pamphlet. The authors have based their account mainly on 19th century antiquarians, the B.B.C. script of *Otmoor* and local information. They list some of the flowers and birds once typical of the moor and relate its effect on the health of man and beast in the moor-evil and ague. A transcript of the moorcourt for 1647 illustrates the intercommoning rights of the seven villages, and there is a brief account of the Otmoor riots, based partly on pamphlets in the Bodleian. Most of the book, however, is devoted to giving under each village some of the curiosities of its history, as well as a list of field names, mainly those in Gelling and Stenton, *Place-names of Oxfordshire*, but also a few gleaned locally. Perhaps the most original contribution lies in the recording of some local crafts and traditions which survived into the 20th century, i.e. the account of waggon-making in Charlton, details of thatching, and of relics of old farming implements, the account of the dressing of the Mayday cross and of a Mayday song, and, in view of the modern outcry, of the gipsy encampments and names.

This pamphlet will please most of all the local inhabitant or the visitor who is not looking either for a guide book or history but wishes to know something of the past customs and oddities of the area. As by-passes and roads encroach and Otmoor becomes a dormitory for dons, its character has inevitably changed and an effort to record it is welcome.

MARJORIE JONES.

The Young Mr. Wesley. By V. H. H. Green. Edward Arnold, 1961. Pp. viii+342. Price 35*s*.

John Wesley went up to Christ Church as a Scholar in 1720 and obtained his Bachelor's degree in 1724. He became a Fellow of Lincoln in 1726 and a tutor in 1729. Although he retained his fellowship until 1751, when he contracted his

unfortunate marriage with Molly Vazeille (the D.N.B. calls her Mary) and was compelled by the College statutes to resign, his active connexion with Oxford and his College virtually ended in 1735 when he sailed for Georgia. The history of the fifteen years from 1720 to 1735 forms the major portion of Dr. Green's very detailed account of Wesley's early life. Dr. Green has made full use of Wesley's Oxford diaries, preserved in the Methodist Book Room, including a fifth volume which has only recently come to light, and has had the advantage of free access to the archives of Lincoln College. The opening chapters deal with the intellectual background, the Oxford background and the home background. The confused picture of Oxford religion and politics of the early 18th century is briefly summarized in seventeen pages and Dr. Green has wisely avoided wider discussion of these subjects here since the political scene, in particular, has received the fullest possible treatment in W. R. Ward's recent book *Georgian Oxford, University politics in the 18th century*. The remaining chapters are based mainly on Wesley's Diary and Letters, and upon his own and his brother Charles's Journals. Much background detail has been culled from Hearne's *Collectanea*, to which all historians of Oxford of this period must inevitably turn.

Christ Church in 1720 was, as now, a large and prosperous college, but Wesley was always short of money and often had to borrow. Nevertheless, he was fond of society and made many friends there. No information is available about the exact nature of his studies or of his day-to-day life as an undergraduate and it is not until 1725, when he was ordained and started keeping a diary, that the picture begins to fill out. His life at Lincoln College, however, is fully documented. His friends, his work, his visits to Epworth and elsewhere, are described in the greatest detail. He continued to enjoy the social life and did not scorn the amusements which came his way—dining, dancing, card-playing, music and even a glass of wine in his own and other senior common rooms. Wesley liked Oxford and it suited him. He quite openly preferred it to Epworth to which his father and brother attempted in vain to persuade him to return. During much of his first three years as a Fellow, however, he was more often absent from Oxford than in residence there and it was not until November 1729 that he returned as a college tutor to stay for a protracted period. He returned not unwillingly to the place which afforded a greater opportunity for his pastoral as well as his scholarly work and where the Holy Club, founded by his brother Charles and William Morgan at Christ Church, was already in being. The Club was at first nothing more than a group meeting for the study and development of the higher religious life. Its aim was chiefly to search for the right means of attaining holiness by methodical means—regularity of worship, system in study and prayer, and persistence in right living before the world. The more practical side of helping those less fortunate was not forgotten and was particularly evident in the work of prison-visiting. All was not plain-sailing, for the Club came in for much criticism and its activities were highly suspect in most University circles but in spite of this it prospered and from it sprang the great body of people called Methodists.

The wealth of detail in Dr. Green's book is sometimes rather overpowering and tends to obscure the picture. As he himself says in the preface, 'there is much that is dull and even tedious' and one cannot sometimes but agree. Nevertheless it is a most scholarly and meticulous work which adds a great deal to our knowledge of the young Wesley and, incidentally, to the history of Lincoln College. Moreover,

the book itself is well-produced, pleasing to the eye and almost free from misprints (there is one on page 40—' Sipthorp ' for ' Sibthorp ' and another on page 145, note 1—' Machray ' for ' Macray '). S. GILLAM.

English Stained Glass. Text by J. Baker. Introduction by H. Read. Photographs by A. Lammer. Thames & Hudson, 1960. Pp. 244 + 136 plates. Price £5 5*s*.

This is a book of some importance to the English antiquary interested in medieval art—well produced and informative.

Mr. Baker's text deals with the history, manufacture and design of stained glass in England and, in a small degree, with importations from the Continent. He writes on the materials, technique and methods used in the making of a window; he has included a highly important section on the preservation and faking of windows, particularly noting what has gone on at Canterbury. There is a section on the sources of design both of figure and heraldic subjects. The author has adopted in his presentation the classification of the detailed descriptions of examples which Nelson used in ' Ancient Glass in England ' and refers to them as 12th century, Byzantine; 13th century, Early Gothic; 14th century, Middle Gothic; 15th century, Late Gothic and 16th century, Renaissance. The text is illustrated by 33 colour plates (mainly 9 in. by 8 in.) and 103 in black and white (mainly 10¾ in. by 9 in.) of photographs taken by Mr. Alfred Lammer. These show the details in much enlargement; on the whole they are very satisfactory and are a great improvement on the illustrations provided in the past but some indication of the actual size of the originals ought to have been given. The groups of windows are listed under the general headings of Grisaille, Figure or Subject and Canopy windows, single Figures on quarries and Jesse windows.

Mr. Baker says that the study of the glass itself is more important than that of historical data which latter has hitherto been followed by some investigators. He disregards to a considerable extent documentary evidence and seems to arrive at generalizations which may not be acceptable to some readers, particularly in his remarks on the sources of design. The author says that his text is a comprehensive survey of English glass but there are omissions which makes one doubt this contention. For instance, no mention can be found of the 14th century windows in New College chapel and very little of the York windows or of the Jesse glasss at Lowick and Dorchester, or of the sacrament windows at Crudwell and Buckland, to mention examples in our own district. On the credit side, however, the colour blocks have reproduced the actual depth and tone of the glass very much better than any hitherto seen by your reviewer and the black and white illustrations are indeed good. To take local examples, the colour of the East Hagbourne Nativity has been caught perfectly and so, to a lesser degree, that of Mamesfield in Merton chapel. The Fairford mouth of hell is good. The reproduction of two lights of the Hillesden St. Nicholas window is not so happy for the really brassy yellows of the gold have become much too brownish and the reds too dull in tone. Of the local examples in black and white there are good plates of the glass at Waterperry and Yarnton, and of the fragment of the horse's head in Merton library. The Marsh Baldon 14th century St. Anne, with the fine drawing of the hands, has been presented in a way hitherto never seen. This piece has affinity with that in the Latin Chapel of the Cathedral which is not mentioned. Mr. Baker has unfortunately not appreciated all the facts in relation to the removal of the Jesse window from Winchester College

chapel and the copies substituted by Betton and Evans and says it was sold for use in a 'mortuary chapel', meaning presumably the small part which went to the aisle of the church in Ettington Park and from which it has now returned to Winchester; he might have mentioned Le Couteur's account of the wanderings of this glass and the remarks of the Rector of Lincoln.

The section on the preservation of glass contains much good and sound advice and should be studied by all who are in charge of the maintenance and repair of churches. Would that the methods here put forward were universally adopted.

There is no index to the text which is inexcusable and that of the plates is incomplete. The bibliography is adequate but no detailed references to periodicals is given. There will be some who may say that this book is nothing more or less than another annotated picture book of stained glass; they would be wrong for Thames and Hudson have acquired much merit in the production of these fine colour plates alone. We are very nearly there in adequate colour block-making and the great advance which the publishers have here shown in aiding the proper study of English stained glass is truly remarkable. With the text expanded somewhat and affording more extensive discussion of the details of the individual examples how much more profitable a book it would have been. P. S. SPOKES.