

## Reviews

C. J. Young, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxfordshire Region*. Pp. 391+84 figures. British Archaeological Reports 43, Oxford, 1979. £8.00.

It is about a decade since the importance of the Oxfordshire kilns in the supply of pottery in late Roman Britain became more widely recognised. Despite the publication of kiln wasters from 1922 onwards, the synthetic work of Heywood Sumner on New Forest pottery distracted attention from a serious study of the Oxfordshire kilns, whose products superficially resemble those of the New Forest.

The lasting value of Dr. Young's book rests in the detailed classification and *corpus* of the products, the most important of which are the white wares, which include *mortaria* and 'parchment' vessels, and the oxidised wares, which cover the well-known white, red and brown-slipped forms (Chs. 5-11). This section will be invaluable to field and museum workers in the southern half of England and Wales, where Oxford pottery commonly occurs. A Chapter (12) follows on the reduced, grey ware products which are of local significance only. Two synthetic sections, one on the kilns (Chs. 2-3) and the other on the history of the industry put the *corpus* of types in a wider context.

The kiln section owes much to the results of the large area-excavations conducted by Dr. Young at the Churchill site. The poverty of ancillary buildings and equipment, though rich in comparison with other Romano-British kiln sites, is an important reminder to us of the low level of facilities and investment required for potting, even with an industry with as large an output as the Oxfordshire kilns. The organisation of the industry arouses speculation; was each workshop independent or were they all owned by one or two land-owners? Were ownership and management different in the fourth-century from the second-century? The tendency for kilns to specialise, although partly a function of the clays, may also reflect the hand of overall management.

The catalogues of types are invaluable, but they reveal the usual weaknesses and problems inherent in pottery typologies. Derived from such incomplete evidence as sherds, the construction of typologies is difficult, and there is always a tendency to select only certain features as diagnostic of change. In some cases it is difficult to see whether some of the fine distinctions that Dr. Young adopts will be useable. Some of the divisions do not have functional or chronological significance, though the author is careful to remind us of the limited nature of the dating evidence. The assessment of typological and decorative change will remain a problem until variation is more formally and objectively assessed. Distinctions, too, between fine and coarse wares, often based only on colour, should be re-assessed in other ways, perhaps in terms of time spent on making each vessel.

Although all the kilns in the Oxford region are included, it is doubtful whether they all should be seen as part of one evolving industry. The earliest kilns are unexceptional and similar examples occur generally across southern Britain. Pottery-making in the Oxford area only starts to have a regional significance in the second-century with the production of, for example, stamped *mortaria*. Between c. 180 and c. 240 a recession is argued for these kilns, although the evidence is slight. The fourth-century was the high-point, when the potters commanded their greatest market with the red-slipped as well as the white-ware range. The discussion is supported by a number of distribution maps which are included in each section of the type series. Lacking a quantified basis, these appear repetitive, and the impression they give of the market for Oxford wares is at variance with the discussion of distribution (pp. 234-5, 238) which reinforces the quantified analysis in *Oxoniensia*, xxxix, 26-33. The success of the kilns surely rests on their centrality—Cirencester, Gloucester and the Cotswolds on one side, Verulamium and London on the other.

This is an invaluable work, but, at the price, unnecessarily long. More than one quarter is taken up with lists which could either have been condensed by reduction or

omitted altogether. For a reference work that will be in heavy use, any measures to improve the binding or reduce the strain on it, by cutting length, would have been welcome.

M. G. FULFORD

*Domesday Book: Oxfordshire.* Edited by John Morris. Phillimore, 1978. Library Edition £5; Limp Edition £2.50.

For most places in Oxfordshire, or indeed in any county, Domesday Book is the starting point for any parish history, but it is a source which, until now, has not been readily accessible. The translation published in the *Victoria History of Oxfordshire* vol. I, is usually available only in libraries, and the only Latin texts, that published by the Record Commission in 1783 and the Ordnance Survey facsimile published in 1862, are available only in major libraries such as the Bodleian. Phillimore are therefore to be congratulated on producing a text and translation at a price within the reach of the average student.

The text of the new edition is that of the Record Commission edition, reproduced photographically. As the brief introduction points out, it is an excellent text, and to have made and set in type a complete new transcript would have been 'astronomically expensive', but its use does face the student who wishes to use the Latin text with the problem of deciphering the special record type used, and it seems a pity that no key has been provided to the elaborate contractions and abbreviations. The translation into 'ordinary modern English' is, on the whole, readable and accurate, but in some places it seems misleading. For example, the use of 'tribute' to translate 'gablum' might suggest that it was a payment imposed by a conqueror rather than a rent to the lord of the land, and to translate 'annona' simply as 'corn' rather than 'corn-rent' alters the sense of the document. The translation of 'firma' clearly presents problems, but 'revenue' seems rather too wide a sense for a word which normally means a fixed rent. The decision not to use such terms as villein, bordar, and demesne (for 'villani', 'bordarii', and 'dominium') may make the text less intimidating to the non-specialist, but anyone wishing to investigate further into medieval manorial history will have to understand the terms, so their omission from this translation is of questionable value, particularly as the use of the word 'smallholders' to translate 'bordarii' might suggest that they were superior to the 'villani', which they were not. However, the problem is not serious, as the reader who perseveres to the last page of the book will find these and other technical terms explained.

The notes are useful, giving additional information about places and persons, and explaining the rarer, untranslated, technical terms. The note at 18,1 (for some reason the book is not paginated) on measurements is, perhaps inevitably, an over-simplification of a complex subject; to suggest that Domesday acres and perches were generally equivalent to the modern statute acre or perch, as the note appears to do, is again misleading. The note on the 'Gadre' hundreds at 1,1 is not very convincing, and the later manorial history of Stoke Talmage (given in *Victoria History of Oxfordshire*, viii, 200) seems to confirm the identification of the Stoke in the 'Second Gadre Hundred' with that Stoke (as in *Victoria History of Oxfordshire*, i, 416) rather than with Stoke Lyne as here (29,21).

The index, which covers only the text and not the notes, is somewhat difficult to find, as it is not at the end of the book but five pages from the end, sandwiched between the Notes on the text and the section on Systems of Reference to Domesday Book.

JANET COOPER

*Village Education in Nineteenth-Century Oxfordshire; The Whitchurch School Log Book (1868-93) and other documents.* Edited by Pamela Horn. The Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol. liv, 1979.

This most interesting volume gives a vivid account of the development of rural education in Oxfordshire, based on visitation returns and Parliamentary reports, as well as a full transcript of Whitchurch school log book, and extracts from the school accounts for the

years 1829, 1838, 1853, 1868 and 1873. The village of Whitchurch was chosen for this study as being typical in size and in the occupations and trades of its inhabitants. The log books themselves are also typical of many that survive from that time and are presumably exactly the kind of record envisaged by H.M. Inspectors, who, in their instructions to head-teachers in the Revised Code of Regulations for 1862, ordered them to refrain from "all reflections and opinions of a general character", and merely to specify ordinary progress, to record dates of withdrawals, appointments, admissions and illnesses, and to include in their logs summaries of Inspectors' reports.

In spite of the dryness of such a formula, it is possible to become involved in the day to day running of this school, to recognize the problem families, sympathise with the conditions under which untrained and inexperienced teachers tried to work, appreciate the looming importance of the yearly examinations for both staff and pupils, and be moved by the ever present threat of sickness and death. The four head-teachers who kept this log succeed in conveying all this to the modern reader. In particular something of the nature of Mr. Winchester, headmaster from 1878 to 1914, emerges even without the aid of the brief portrait by his ex-pupil, Mrs. Margaret Wilkes, given us in the introduction. There is no doubt for instance, about his exasperation with the failure of the school attendance committee to prosecute parents of persistent absentees or to insist on compliance with their own bye-laws in the standards required for school-leaving.

Dr. Horn has provided an excellent frame for this document. In her introduction she gives a brief account of the state of education in the county, from the time of Bishop Secker's visitation of 1738 through the period of educational reform of the early nineteenth-century to the Education Acts of the 1870s and 1880s. She shows the emergence of the village school from dependance on the generosity and energy of the local clergy and squire to the status of an institution funded by the ratepayer. The jealousies and disputes between religious denominations are examined, and, in particular, the universal suspicion and dread that the words 'School Board' conjured up in the minds of managers of church-controlled schools are shown to have been almost needless.

Dr. Horn also gives useful accounts of teachers' training colleges and teaching methods, the effects of agricultural demands on school attendance, and the limitations of the curriculum. Her notes explain the local application of Acts passed at Westminster. There are tables of salaries, examination requirements, and grants systems, and lists of other school log books held by the county and city. A slightly misleading entry in the latter refers to 'Oxford Girls British, 1874-1921'; this school ceased to use that name in 1881 and was known thereafter as the Central Girls' School. There are also Visitors' Minute books for the earlier years of this school, from 1834-1874, which might have been included in the list since, with the log books, they provide the longest continuous record in the county. The indexes of persons, places and subjects are full and accurate. This is a most valuable book for all those who are interested in nineteenth-century elementary education.

NESTA SELWYN

*Oxford As It Was.* By R. G. Neville and T. Sloggett. Hendon Publishing Co., 1979. Pp. 43. 66 illustrations. Price £1.95.

The demand for illustrated books on Oxford is seemingly insatiable. The latest, by Robert Neville and Tony Sloggett, forms part of a series on English towns by the Hendon Publishing Company. Concentrating more on town than gown, and covering mainly the period 1860-1914, the book has six subdivisions: the topography of the city centre; the university; suburbs; transport; industries; public events. There was a wealth of available material. The Taunt collection in the County Library is perhaps the best-known, but there are also the fine collections of the O.A.H.S. in the Ashmolean, and of Leyland Historic Vehicles at Cowley, all made use of by the authors, who have also taken pains to trace photographs in private hands. Remarkably, however, no use seems to have been made of the Bodleian Library's collections, ranking in size and importance with the Taunt collection. That omission, together with a determination to use material previously un-

published, has restricted the authors' scope, and it is perhaps significant that the book's merit lies more in its text than in its pictures.

The quality of photographic reproduction is, taken overall, poor, and in this Neville and Sloggett have been ill served by their printers. The request, for instance (at illus. no. 19), that the reader note a tricycle in the murky foreground of a dismal photograph of the Martyrs' Memorial is almost risible. One wonders, moreover, why certain photographs were chosen at all, unless on the grounds of novelty rather than intrinsic merit. Apart from the unfortunate Martyrs' Memorial, there is an odd choice of photograph of Magdalen Bridge and the Plain (no. 7), of which there are much better examples available. The picture's main interest lies in its inclusion, not commented on, of the row of shops demolished for Magdalen College's Waynflete Building (1960-1), an object lesson in how to spoil a commanding and critical corner site. Many of the other photographs, however, are fascinating and informative. That of George Street *c.* 1895 (no. 16) is excellent, showing, at the corner with Magdalen Street, the impressive but little-known 3-storeyed seventeenth-century house demolished soon after the picture was taken. The largest building in the photograph, the proud new Y.M.C.A. building (1891), is not commented on, but it was typical of the confident commercial buildings being constructed in Oxford at that time. The Y.M.C.A., together with Lucas's clothing factory (1890. Later the Co-op.), and the fire station (1896) accelerated the transformation of George Street that had begun with the extension of New Inn Hall Street into it in 1872, a development noted by another excellent picture, of New Inn Hall Street *c.* 1871 (no. 18).

Such photographs are of interest and value, and one might similarly mention the views of the south-west end of St. Giles's before redevelopment (no. 22), of the cottages in St. Aldate's and Holywell (nos. 26-7), of Quelch's tannery in St. Ebbe's *c.* 1860 (no. 48), of Morris Motors (nos. 53-5), and of Oxford's rural fringes (nos. 39-41). More such would have been welcome, and to accommodate them it might have been better to have omitted specific university photographs altogether. Of the nine rather ordinary college views chosen only one or two are of unusual interest, notably the view of the President's Garden in Magdalen (no. 31) prior to extensive rebuilding at the college in the 1880s.

The value of the accompanying text has already been mentioned. It recovers from a near-disastrous start when, in the first caption, Domesday Book is reassigned to 1087, St. Martin's is promoted to become the oldest recorded parish church in Oxford (St. Ebbe's was recorded *c.* 1005; archaeological evidence suggests that St. Peter-in-the-East was tenth-century), and Penniless Bench is given a dramatic new role as a centre for the administration of justice before being demolished ahead of its time. It is only fair to point out that that is untypical, and that, on the whole, the text is well-researched and informative. There are quibbles, of course. The method of identifying buildings by their present occupants, frequently businesses of questionable durability, will make identification increasingly difficult. Nor is there a consistent idea of the readership at which the book is aimed. Some references will only be understood by a well-informed native of the city; others, such as the solemn explanation of Eights Week, assume almost complete ignorance. Finally, may we please hear no more about the growth of North Oxford supposedly stemming from the university reforms of 1877 (no. 24).

Any genuine attempt to foster serious interest in the city is welcome, and *Oxford As It Was* is to be congratulated for that reason, but, given the obvious ability of the authors, one cannot help wondering if rather more could not have been accomplished with the materials available.

CHRIS DAY