

Reviews

It must be clearly understood that all statements or opinions in reviews are those of the respective authors, not of the Society or of the Editor.

Robin Holgate, *Neolithic Settlement of the Thames Basin*. B.A.R. British Ser. 194, 1988. Pp. xiii, 392; 10 text tables, 32 gazetteer tables, 36 figures, 57 maps. Price £24.00.

This is Robin Holgate's PhD thesis, which he successfully defended in 1987. He now deserves the highest praise for quick publication, setting a standard from which most of us fall miserably short; and praise only a little lower for a concise and plainly written text almost free from jargon (*trajectory* makes only a fleeting appearance, *strategy* I suppose is venial, *task-specific* is a mouthful but at least descriptive). Happily the illustrations match the text in clarity, although the lettering is in places strongly reduced. Moreover, many prehistorians should welcome with delighted astonishment a down-to-earth book in which second-hand sociology has no part and which is firmly based (in its background of physical geography) on material culture. Ethnography is only brought in briefly to illustrate a reasonable conclusion that those who went barefoot or in slender footwear are unlikely to have left sharp-edged objects on their living floors.

Holgate gives prime attention to flint assemblages, recognising with common-sense and unusual insight that 'the study of neolithic domestic activity in southern Britain is essentially the study of flintwork largely derived from the ploughsoil' (p. 33). Some of the data adduced in this direction come from his own fieldwork and research in museum records, but much of this evidence and that from excavation derive from the published and unpublished activities of others (including Steve Ford among the fieldworkers). Being the only study to attempt to draw together the complete range of evidence and research concerning the later mesolithic and neolithic of the Thames Basin, deploying detailed gazetteers and maps and a bibliography of more than 600 entries, it is likely to qualify as a standard work. It therefore deserves close critical attention – although much of the interpretation accords generally with received wisdom.

Holgate recognises a later mesolithic settlement pattern, c. 5000–c. 3200 bc, of upland and flood-plain short-stay camps and of valley base-camps on so-called forest margins adjacent to rivers – a pattern probably becoming somewhat displaced upslope in the Middle and Lower Thames catchment areas by a rising water-table. Good-quality flint was procured to produce a blade industry, essentially of geometric microliths and tranche axes.

In the earlier neolithic, c. 3200–c. 2700 bc, settlement patterns varied somewhat throughout the Basin, consisting essentially of probably dispersed homesteads devoted to intensive horticulture and minor cattle-herding in a generally upland wooded environment. In the Upper Thames and Kennet catchment areas, chambered tombs (including presumably long-barrows) are taken to have been the core-monuments of settled areas, with causewayed enclosures peripheral centres for exchange. Throughout this system, outlying sites were devoted to specialised functions (although Tables 3 and 7 can list only three of these 'task-specific' sites). Other elements in the surviving

material culture include so-called 'plain bowl' pottery and a blade-like flint industry from similar raw material to the mesolithic, including a broad range of new types, conspicuously leaf-shaped arrowheads replacing microliths and ground thick-butted axes replacing tranche axes.

Essentially the later neolithic, *c.* 2700–*c.* 2100 bc, sees greater filling-in of the landscape, especially downslope, with settlement on a more permanent basis, in an infield-outfield system of plough agriculture with herds of cattle and especially pigs. Poor-quality flint was widely used in an industry no longer blade-like and knapped in a more casual manner with hard hammers, producing a somewhat changed implement range, including well-made pieces such as ground-edged knives, transverse and lozenge-shaped arrowheads and ground thin-butted axes. Peterborough and Grooved wares replaced 'plain bowl' pottery. Cursuses, henges, round and shorter long-barrows were prominent monuments.

Holgate also supplies a useful short summary of developments in regions of north-west continental Europe during approximately the same time-span, without finding close parallels to the trend of settlement he sees in southern England; but this is not surprising since by the start of his earlier neolithic period mixed farming was fully mature in north-west Europe, having been established there *c.* 4600 bc and been adapted to a very wide range of environments.

He rejects recession and favours a combination of concentration and exploitation of new land to explain the later neolithic southern English settlement pattern; but he is cautious in other challenging or controversial questions. For example, he is somewhat non-committal over the elm decline (and makes surprisingly no reference to Oliver Rackham's views in discussing the environment), and non-committal in questions of a pioneering earliest neolithic or of colonisation versus acculturation – where, on a point of detail, he seems to make too little of the continuity of the so-called multidenticulates, and where he does not consider a much profounder question as to how far the basis of the initial neolithic settlement system was not intensive horticulture at all but collecting supplemented by grain and livestock production. He is silent too on the implications of the contrasting exploitation of deer in the mesolithic and neolithic.

Turning to more fundamental criticism, it is deplorable that an account of the neolithic published in 1988 should be set in a radiocarbon chronology which all must recognise as seriously unrealistic. Understandably the drafting of this thesis was overtaken by the high-precision calibration schemes of 1986, but the 1982 consensus data already gave a sound basis for subdividing the British neolithic into calendric spans of quarter-millennia, which would have given the reader a truer picture and might have induced the author to modify his interpretation.

Serious doubts are raised too about the treatment of the flint assemblages, on which much of the interpretation of settlement patterns depends. Holgate eschews metrical analysis (we are not told why), which means that the reader has no way of assessing possibilities for the bias which inevitably resides in making comparisons between assemblages of all kinds, especially in interpreting surface collections however systematically made. Moreover, in the case of the more than 80 excavated sites which provided an analytical base, we are frankly told that 'limited time and resources prevented a first-hand study of the flintwork itself' (p. 43). As to the surface assemblages (Table 4. Domestic sites of neolithic date. All known neolithic domestic sites.), we are reminded that 'it is difficult to separate out later neolithic debitage from Bronze Age debitage' (p. 70, fn 12), which must raise doubts as to what intensity of later neolithic settlement these sites represent. Indeed, of 83 domestic sites listed in the table no less than 40 yielded barbed and tanged arrowheads, which on 9 sites outnumbered transverse arrowheads.

Other questions arise as to how significant is Holgate's separation between earlier and later neolithic. He overstates his case in asserting that 'flint working techniques changed dramatically at the start of the later neolithic period' (p. 70) – thus presumably *c.* 2700 bc. Certainly a roughly struck industry on pebble flint was post 2722±49 bc (BM – 1405) at North Stoke, but it was culturally indeterminate and on fortuitously available material. Of the 6 closed contexts in the Thames Basin used in tables 5.3–5.6 to illustrate later neolithic flint technology, Barton Court Farm, Blewbury and West Kennet Avenue were associated with Grooved ware, like pits yielding similar material at Cassington and Sutton Courtenay and like sites beyond the Thames Basin such as Storey's Bar Road, listed in table 5.1 – to all of which a date *c.* 2000 bc would be appropriate, as at Barton Court Farm. The remaining three contexts in tables 5.3–5.6, Mount Farm, Holloway Lane and Well Garden Farm, yielded definitely or tentatively identified Peterborough ware and were thus possibly earlier (from *c.* 2500 bc?), but are hardly diagnostic since they only produced one core between them – whereas the well-provided Arretton Down (table 5.1), likewise in Peterborough ware association, was beaker period and probably later than any of the Grooved ware-associated sites quoted above.

Likewise, first dated appearances for some artefacts held characteristic of the later neolithic do not strongly suggest sudden or extensive changes *c.* 2700 bc: ground-edged knife (Radley: 2560±60 bc, BM – 2392), lozenge-shaped arrowhead and ? thin-butted axe (Dorchester cursis: 2560±100bc, BM – 2443, Cp entries, table 31). And conversely, the best date for the Abingdon causewayed enclosure was 2510±140 bc, BM – 355 (2760±135, BM – 352 and 2500±145 bc, BM – 354 being somewhat less satisfactory) and a similar range applied at Orsett, suggesting the possibility of substantial survival of the earlier neolithic industry post 2700 bc.

The picture is thus not one of dramatic change, but rather of one set interleaving with the other; and it may be that the later neolithic industry as Holgate defines it was not fully developed or prevalent until *c.* 2000 bc. The consistent association of a more casual style of primary flint-knapping with Grooved ware may perhaps suggest that it is best explained not as resulting from any changes in 'work schedule' (p. 127) through altered farming practices, but from abundant supply – from flint-mine dumps for example.

As for agricultural innovations, use of the plough (to clear perennial weeds ?) and fencing techniques are associated at South Street, Avebury with pottery which can only seriously be described as 'plain bowl', in a context which suggests that possibly early in the second quarter of the 3rd millennium bc the earlier neolithic subsistence economy had moved on from intensive horticulture or collecting to something approaching the infield-outfield system Holgate claims for the later neolithic.

It seems plausible in any case that the pattern may have been a complex one of different specialisation or stages of development at regional or even micro-regional level. Holgate recognises this as far as the distributions of the monuments are concerned; but even in the upper part of the Thames Basin any conception of chambered tombs as 'core monuments' seems dubious. Both chambered tombs and causewayed enclosures during their periods of use are likely to have been eccentric to the settled areas in a pattern more complex than Holgate suggests.

Finally, the admirable speed at which this book has been produced has been at the expense (perhaps not surprisingly) of a number of uncorrected typing slips, bibliographical errors and ambiguities in the gazetteers, which might confuse the novice reader.

Steven Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*. Leicester University Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 300; figures, maps. Price £35.00 (paperback £14.95).

"What is Truth?", said Jestling Pilate . . . For James Campbell, who has given more thought to the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms than most, 'Jestling Pilate is the Patron Saint of these Studies'. A better candidate yet might be John Wyndham. There are just four relatively certain facts in the 5th- and 6th-century history of what would one day be England. First, the language of most people changed, then or not long afterwards, from something like Welsh to something like Dutch. Second, a significant proportion of society took to cremating their dead and burying the ashes in pots, or interring them with more or less imposing grave 'furniture'. Third, much or all of Britain was controlled, when the light of documentary evidence first flickers across the scene, by individuals called *rex* in Latin and *cuning* or *ri* in vernaculars. Fourth, and above all, the standard of living in lowland Britain nosedived: manufacturers of household goods forgot how to make pots on a wheel. The fate of one-time *Britannia* between 400 and 600 was catastrophe such as modern imaginations scarcely envisage without resort to Triffids, Chrysalids or Waking Krakens.

In the circumstances, the most important thing about this book is the fact that it was written at all. The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms have tended, since Chadwick's great book of 1907, to be relegated to over-bold archaeological syntheses, or hesitant (if often perceptive) introductory chapters in textbooks. It is, as one of the contributors to this volume notes, rather shocking that the whole issue of *Stammesbildung* has barely been raised in England. For Dr. Bassett to have enticed so many off a fence which has long been the wise scholar's preferred habitat is a great achievement. The result is a set of essays which nearly always satisfy, and usually convince.

Dr. Bassett introduces the collection with a chapter on general problems, which is also an important new study of the much-studied Hwicce. Drawing in part on recent research into early minster churches, Bassett gives new body to the wraith-like *regiones* that have long haunted the subject. There follow two very important papers on the wider context. Dr. Thomas Charles-Edwards, in a masterpiece of lucidity, discusses the resources and dynastic politics of early Irish kings. The first of two major lessons here is the critical difference between hospitality dues and tribute-payment: when prime fillet is served off the fire, it at least gives a host temporary access to the patronage of his otherwise unwelcome royal guest; but when provided 'on the hoof', its breeder has no perceived return on his investment. Secondly, a crucial difference between early English and early Irish kings is that English conquests were put in charge of men who, however royal their blood, were not called 'kings'; whereas Irishmen applied royal titles to any subordinate. This is why there were so very many more Irish kingdoms, and why, by English standards, they look so tiny.

Next comes Dr. Edward James, whose wit sparkles like Dr. Charles-Edwards' crystal clarity. Not for the first time, Dr. James contrives to set before the monoglot English most of what they should know about continental history as researched over the last thirty years; and, as usual, he adds his own penetrating comments. What it amounts to is that four distinct (or overlapping) types of polity came to life in the sub-Roman West: (i) 'tribal' kings: grounds for spinal shivers, but useful for the *reges* of Tacitus' *Germania*, and the *kleinkönige* (once witheringly shown the door by Michael Wallace-Hadrill) of modern Germanists; (ii) *Heerkönige*, warband *duces* who, with or without 'royal blood', created strong nexuses of power beside or within Roman frontiers; (iii), not easily separated from (ii), Roman officials of 'barbarian' origin, who almost imperceptibly exchanged the title *magister militum*, giving command of ever-more barbarized

'legions', for *rex*, so much more relevant to 'Roman' or 'German', 'barbarian' or provincial, soldier or civilian, all scrambling to find some sort of authority somewhere; and (iv) 'Roman kings', the indigenous warlords whom one could expect to erupt out of this seething society, and who would correspond (though neither Dr. James, nor anyone else in this book, says so) to Ambrosius Aurelianus, Cerdic or even Arthur.

So, by the time one has penetrated fifty pages into this book, one has encountered four possible blueprints for an early Anglo-Saxon kingdom: the *regio*, that may or may not be royally ruled itself; the dialectic of centre and periphery in the exercise of power; 'tribal' rule, kingship where executive commands are relatively less significant than other social functions; and varieties of military power, *parvenu* or legitimist, exploiting the relationship of wealthy warlord and well-equipped warrior that was the seedbed of 'feudalism' and many of humanity's other troubles. If this exciting book has a general fault, it is that these initial insights too rarely recur in the case-studies that follow. Dr. Basset might have circulated the first three papers to other contributors, inviting additional comment; he could have added a short summary, to draw the threads back into a more perceptible pattern; he should at least have inserted more cross-referencing footnotes. It should not be necessary to use the Index in order to locate the plethora of contrasting views on where to place the *Noxgaga* and *Ohtgaga* of the so-called *Tribal Hidage*.

Nevertheless, the case-studies have much to offer. A splendid paper by Professor Brooks on Kent shows not only how it may have come into existence but also how and why the relevant historical evidence is so jumbled. If his Mercian essay is less compelling, that may be because Welsh poetry is yet more jumbled than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Historia Brittonum*. Barbara Yorke shows better than anyone before (which, given the competition, is saying a lot) what sense can be made of the early history of Wessex once the 'early' *Chronicle* annals are treated with the disrespect they have long deserved. John Blair combines the *regio* evidence of which he is a modern pioneer with texts hitherto given the sort of attention usually reserved for blocked and noisome drains, to come up with a late 7th-century peripheral dynasty. David Dumville, in a magisterial study of the south-east Midlands, shows just how much can be done by even the cagiest approach to evidence. If, like Brooks on Mercia, Dumville on Northumbria leaves a less satisfying aftertaste, that may be because northern evidence is so much richer, and it is correspondingly so much more tiresome to be warned against over-indulgence. Keith Bailey uses the *regio* to outline early historic Middlesex without getting sucked into London's great maw, a major and almost unprecedented achievement in itself. Martin Welch on Sussex and Bruce Eagles on Lindsey do their stuff with the archaeology where they are acknowledged experts; both in different ways make a case for the sort of 'early settlement by treaty' which is now going out of intellectual fashion. Dr. Margaret Gelling deploys the place-name expertise one has come to take for granted from her, to trace early West Mercian history. More of a surprise, because so far almost unheralded, is Dr. Kate Pretty's 'Defining the *Magonsete*', a model of interdisciplinary strategy in exceptionally tough terrain. Neither least nor last is Professor Martin Carver's East Anglia: the only paper, Dr. James's apart, which exploits new continental research; and one revealing the unusual metabolism that allows him to digest 'New' Archaeology without at once succumbing to bouts of nauseous jargon.

This book is an immense credit to all who made it: editor, publisher and contributors. It is a monument in early English studies that neither should nor will be forgotten. Yet three last comments must be made, two relatively particular, one very general, and all no doubt ill-graced. *One*: a final surprise *bouquet* in this book is David Dumville's discovery and publication of a new Latin text of the *Tribal Hidage*. Dr. Dumville, as one would expect of the Caesar's Wife of this methodology, is very careful

in the necessarily copious use he makes of the document. But that is not true of all other contributors. Let it be said, loud and clear, once and for all: *that the Tribal Hidage is a tax-or tribute-list is an assumption, not a fact*. Whether or not one finds it a reasonable assumption depends on whether or not one accepts Sir Frank Stenton's logic: 'its great age, to which much of its obscurity was due, shows that it must have been intended to serve some practical purpose'. Stenton's mind was formed in the heyday of Sir James Frazer, and Sir Henry Maine. One would hope that more has since been learnt of 'primitive' mentalities; and, to say the least, it barely supports a presupposition that things are first put in writing for 'practical' reasons. Even if the *Tribal Hidage* were in fact what (thanks to a miraculously preserved text) the *Burghal Hidage* is demonstrably – a fiscal assessment – that would not prove that the anticipated levies were enforced once, let alone regularly. *Two*: modern archaeologists have, with great pains, at last taught historians to stop affixing ethnic labels (or almost any other kind of label) to particular patterns of burial. It is thus a shock to find that some *archaeologists* in this book talk breezily of 'Anglo-Saxon' or even 'Germanic' cemeteries. As this historian understands it, the phrase 'Anglo-Saxon burial' now has nothing but the tautological sense that it was the kind of burial laid down by the people who lived in the south-eastern parts of these islands in the 5th and 6th century; while 'Germanic burial' is about as useful as phrase a 'Victorian values'. If I am finally to slough off the bad habits of my intellectual youth, I need to be set a better example by my would-be mentors.

Third, there is one subject that pre-occupied Chadwick in 1907, which is barely mentioned here: Migration. Tacitly anyway, this book colludes with current archaeological disbelief in 'Invasion Hypotheses' for early English history. We may no longer think that large numbers of English-speakers ever crossed the North Sea. If not, we cannot evade the fact that no greater challenge has ever been mounted to the austere principles with which philologists founded their discipline a century and a half ago. Philologists have their sins like the rest of us. But they may fairly claim that their game is one with rational and intelligible rules, rules yet to be undermined by other disciplines. Archaeologists, by contrast (and again to their credit), have thrashed about to get a better grip on their maddeningly elusive evidence. Bluntly, the linguistic indicators that 'Dark Age' Britain experienced relatively massive migration are still stronger than the archaeological indicators that it did not. If philologists yet await the call of 'Game, Set and Match', they remain at least a set and four games up. They continue to look unbeatable.

What Dr. Bassett, Professor Brooks and the ever more productive 'Leicester University Press' have achieved by this collection is a New Birth for the sort of study that used to be entitled, 'The Jutes March on London'. They of all people do not need telling that these are early days in what ought to be a lusty life. But this really must be the last as well as the first book on the subject where it is not a central issue that the origins of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms coincided with the foundation of the English language.

PATRICK WORMALD

Howard Colvin and J.S.G. Simmons, *All Souls College. An Oxford College and its Buildings*. Oxford University Press, 1989. Pp. x, 97; 60 illustrations. Price £17.50.

Those who crammed into the Old Library of All Souls in the Summer of 1986 to listen to the Chichele Lectures on the buildings of the College will be delighted to see them in print, with the bonus of the most thorough footnote references, as well as a good range of

very informative illustrations. The first two chapters are by Colvin and deal with the original foundation and the early 18th-century Hawksmoor addition of the North Quadrangle. In the final chapter Simmons covers building activity up to the present day.

The College was founded in 1438 by Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, to produce educated clergy and, through daily services, to be a sort of Lancastrian war memorial. New College, where Chichele had been a student, provided a model for statutes as well as buildings, even to cloisters (where the North Quadrangle now is) and a projected bell-tower. But there were problems over the site which allowed only a narrow quadrangle and this meant that the hall and chapel could not abut, as at New College, to form one range. The resulting lack of order, with the hall projecting north from the quad, was to irk the 18th-century Fellows. In fact both authors demonstrate the subversion of the original intentions for a learned and pious foundation by Fellows of increasingly aristocratic character, concerned more for their comfort and dignity and with keeping in architectural fashion.

Originally the forty Fellows were accommodated in twos or threes in shared rooms with small individual studies. This did not suit even by the 16th century, for in the *Typus Collegii* bird's-eye view of 1600 the familiar expedient of cocklofts are visible. The circumstances by which the North Quadrangle came into being during the first decades of the 18th century, with Dr. Clarke and Hawksmoor playing leading parts, are lucidly described, and Hawksmoor's explanation of designs submitted to the Fellows in 1714/15 is published as an appendix. He provided schemes for the total rebuilding of the college but urged the retention of good venerable buildings. In fact we owe the survival of the original quadrangle to Dr. Clarke who, angered at dissensions among the Fellows, diverted his money to the building of Worcester College. As a result All Souls is a college of instructive contrasts as well as relationships. Hawksmoor's quadrangle is twice the size of the earlier one, yet houses only 14 Fellows as against 40 in the smaller one, and it could be claimed that the 'yawning cavern' of Hawksmoor's Codrington Library was only out-matched by the Radcliffe Camera in the ratio of cubic space to books.

Colvin concludes his chapter by considering the nature of Hawksmoor's magnificent Gothic buildings, deciding to call them Baroque Gothic. He suggests we can appreciate them far better than any generation since they were completed, freed as we are from antiquarian inhibitions of the Gothic revival and with the example of post-Modernist rediscovery of half-forgotten architectural vocabularies.

The successive refurbishments of the College chapel, left in a sorry state after the Reformation, and the restoration and improvement of the High Street front in the 1820s form part of the final chapter by Simmons. Little more than 50 years separates the commissions to Isaac Fuller (1660s) and James Thornhill (1715/16) for paintings on the walls and roof of the chapel and, with the commissioning of an altarpiece from the internationally acclaimed Mengs in 1769, one senses an increasingly sophisticated Classical taste among the fellows and willingness to spend money to keep in fashion. It was perhaps the example of New College and Magdalen, who had already re-gothicised their chapels, which prompted the fellows to appoint first Clutton in 1871, then Scott in 1872 to do the same for All Souls.

This book puts together in the text and illustrations, or through references, the available information on the building activities of the college. There are still unsolved issues – why the site for the college was so restricted, what Isaac Fuller's chapel wall-painting looked like, why Clutton was dismissed. But this is an exemplary publication not only for its scholarship but because this is conveyed with style and wit. The book is a pleasure both for the serious student and for the casual reader.

CLARE TILBURY

Laurence Brockliss, Gerald Harriss and Angus Macintyre, *Magdalen College and the Crown. Essays for the Tercentenary of the Restoration of the College 1688*. Oxford: the Perpetua Press for the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, 1988. Pp. 106, 5 plates. Price £7.50 (from the Estates Bursary).

On 25 October 1688 town and gown celebrated with bells, bonfires, and 'a great deal to drink' the restoration of President John Hough, 33 Fellows and 24 Demies to their places in Magdalen College. It was a year to the day since James II had forced Bishop Samuel Parker of Oxford on the college in place of the deprived Hough. And it was just eleven days before William of Orange landed at Torbay and set in train the 'Glorious Revolution'. The struggle between James and Magdalen College in 1687-88 was a milestone on the nation's path towards revolution. The bicentenary of this *cause célèbre* was commemorated by J.R. Bloxam and other Fellows of Magdalen in a splendid volume of documents on *Magdalen College and James II* published by the Oxford Historical Society; and now the tercentenary has been marked by the college's present History Fellows in three polished and informative essays. Gerald Harriss describes the relations between the Crown and the college from its foundation in 1458 until the reign of Charles II; Angus Macintyre tells the story of the crisis of 1687-88; and Laurence Brockliss sketches what is known of the President and Fellows 'intruded' into the college by James II. All of the essays contain valuable information, and some of the material drawn from the Magdalen archive is not in print elsewhere. Not the least of the services performed by this volume is that the three viewpoints allow the reader to see just how difficult it is (and was) to work out what James II was up to.

We are now often told that James II sought only to put his religion on the same footing as that of the Church of England – but that is not how it seemed to contemporaries. There was, as Dr. Harriss shows, nothing new about the Crown and its ministers pulling strings to influence appointments in this wealthy and prestigious institution. Although the statutes required that the President should have been a Fellow of the college, or of New College, even that requirement could be evaded. Indeed, the college revelled in its close royal connections: Prince Henry matriculated into it in 1605, and Magdalen was the most generous of the Oxford colleges in contributing funds to Charles I in 1643. After the Restoration, royal meddling at Magdalen became more blatant with the increasing use of royal mandates for Fellowships – a development which deserves further exploration in the long-awaited 17th-century volume of the *History of the University*. James II, however, interfered in a far more heavy-handed and offensive manner than any of his predecessors.

James knew that his religion could not gain a fair hearing unless he had established a Roman Catholic presence in the universities, but to do this he would need to go against the law of the land which excluded Catholics from any office. In 1686 he had already dispensed the Master of University College and the Dean of Christ Church from the penalties of the anti-Catholic laws, and so when the Presidency of Magdalen became vacant in March 1687, he moved swiftly to appoint Anthony Farmer, a 'reputed papist'. But the Fellows were quicker. Once their candidate, Hough, had been installed, the crux of the dispute became the king's power to deprive him of his office. For, as with any other cleric or don, Hough's office was his freehold: as one observer commented on his deprivation, 'in its consequence it affects every man's Property in England'. This was a threat which all Protestant Englishmen could appreciate. Many of them also saw the force of the argument advanced by the Fellows who had followed Hough out of the college, that their oath of obedience to the college statutes could not allow them to condone such interference in the appointment of the President. The king had offended

against law, property and conscience, and of course against religion. 'We have a religion to defend,' Hough told William Penn, 'and I suppose that you yourself would think us Knaves if we should tamely give it up.' If Magdalen fell to the papists as University and Christ Church had, 'in a short time they will have the rest'.

Here we come to one of the most important insights offered by this book. From the viewpoint of the ejected President and Fellows, as presented by Dr. Macintyre, there was indeed a Catholic plot to establish Oxford as a Roman Catholic seminary. But from the Catholic perspective the enterprise looked rather different. Farmer, dogged by a murky past and sordid allegations, was a hopeless Catholic candidate; Hough was finally replaced by Parker, a politically pliant, albeit ailing, Anglican, who died in March 1688; and only then could Bonaventure Giffard, his successor, turn the college over to Roman rites and Catholic education. Dr. Brockliss's essay reveals that the intruded Fellows were a mixed bunch, many of them mere fellow-travellers or political clients reaping their rewards, while the highly educated graduates of Douai or St. Omer, who might spearhead Catholic evangelism, were no more than half the intake. It may be, as Dr. Brockliss suggests, that James had 'no consistent religious policy with regard to Magdalen at all', but as these essays taken together show, this does not matter, since it looked and felt as though he had. In the final analysis, James triumphed over Magdalen: the restoration of Hough and the others was due to events outside the University which form no part of the story told here. But for a moment Magdalen had been the symbol of a set of national values under threat from a narrow-minded, autocratic, zealot.

Immaculately produced, with some excellent illustrations – including Roubiliac's bas-relief of Hough before the commissioners from the President's tomb in Worcester cathedral – this book deserves a wide readership. Rather fittingly, all proceeds from its sale are to go to the restoration of the College's buildings.

JOHN SPURR

Baptism and Burial Registers of Banbury, Oxfordshire. Part Four 1813–1838, transcribed by R.C. Couzens, edited by J.S.W. Gibson. Banbury Historical Society, Volume 22, 1988. Pp. xv, 224, 2 maps, 2 illustrations. Copies obtainable from the Society, c/o Banbury Museum, 8 Horsefair, Banbury.

This is the eighth, and final, volume in an ambitious project by the Banbury Historical Society to publish the surviving registers of St. Mary's parish, which until the 1850s covered the town and borough of Banbury and surrounding hamlets in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. The project has taken almost 30 years to complete. The resulting volumes span 1558–1838 and represent a rich store of raw material for all those interested in Banbury, in Oxfordshire towns and in primary market towns in general. Banbury Historical Society, and in particular Jeremy Gibson, who has sustained and guided the work, are to be congratulated on its completion.

This last volume is based on a transcript by the late R.C. Couzens. It is a fitting memorial to his efforts, and emphasises again the great usefulness to genealogists, local historians and general historians of reliable and accessible transcriptions of significant sources. The register entries trigger a multitude of questions and can yield many potential answers.

The present volume offers the contents of the baptismal and burial registers of St. Mary's from the start of the printed format, introduced as a result of the Rose Act of 1812, to the end of the baptismal register in use at the time of the introduction of civil registration in 1837. The transcription has been 'enhanced' by the incorporation of

additional entries from Congregational, Quaker, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Methodist records. From the registers themselves we have a wealth of occupational detail (of the fathers of those baptised), the places of residence of those buried and baptised (down to the street or court or yard), and ages at death (although seldom the causes of death). The volume is well-equipped with indexes, of surnames, occupations and place-names (although only the first occurrence of those frequently mentioned is listed). Additional information is added from monumental inscriptions (insofar as churchyard clearance, tidying and wear of stones allows), wills and the Overthorpe Roman Catholic registers. The volume appears in economical, if eye-straining, reproduced typescript with some interesting, if muddy, illustrations.

The sources and their treatment are succinctly and clearly explained in the introduction. This keeps thoughts on interpretation, questions and possible answers to a minimum. The user of the volume is left with much on which to reflect. The impact of the reforming 1830s is there in the changes of street and lane names after the Lighting and Paving Act of 1835. The parish workhouse is replaced by the Union Workhouse. How many, and who, were born and died in that controversial new setting during the years following 1834? Does the balance of baptisms and burials recorded here account for the town's expansion at this time, from a population of 4,449 in 1811 to 7,241 in 1841, or are there marked influxes of outsiders? Was Banbury untroubled by crises of mortality in these years which saw agricultural depressions and epidemics? One can see answers, collective and individual, in the entries, as for example in the cholera year of 1832, with four deaths attributed to 'spasmodic cholera' during the summer. The fear of incoming infection can be imagined when John Knight died aged 30, 'in a boat on the canal' that September. The pattern of occupations is also revealing: of a town with still-surviving industries like plush, but with great economic diversity. Some 250 specialist or uncommon occupations are listed in the registers, a valuable precursor of the detailed census enumerators' returns. This economic diversity was the basis of Banbury's prosperity and magnetic attraction for a wide surrounding area, so that the young Joseph Ashby, having journeyed nine long and tiring miles from Tysoe in Warwickshire in one of the hundreds of carriers' carts which converged on the town, was astonished and excited to find a place which he felt must be like Novgorod and its great fair of which he had read. Nineteenth-century Banbury has been well-served by printed histories, but here is material for continuing thought and analysis. It deserves to be welcomed, and well-used.

KATE TILLER