

## Reviews

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

A.D. Mills, *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. xxxi + 388, 2 maps. Price £12.95.

This, the latest in a series of place-name dictionaries in recent years, examines the meaning and origin of about 12,000 of the most important English place-names. No hint as to its potential audience is given, although it seems likely to be the interested layman who wants a quick reference to origins, rather than the local historian who would naturally go to the county volumes of the English Place-Name Society (if available).

There is a useful twenty-page introduction to what is both a fascinating study and a minefield for the unwary. It covers the chronology of place-names – not such a straightforward topic as it was once thought to be; types of name – folk, habitative and topographical; and the wider background, both the historical and geographical contexts, which are increasingly seen as critical to the understanding of many names. There is a short list of place-name elements at the end (pp. 379–85), along with a short bibliography. Mr. Mills has taken the modern (i.e. post-1974) counties as his basis, although this departs from the practice of the Place-Name Society which adheres to the traditional framework. Given the current fad for reorganising local government and impending changes which may abolish certain counties (the Metropolitan counties having lasted for only half a generation), it would probably have been better not to effect this change, nor to employ abbreviations for shire names which differ from those of the EPNS.

How best to assess the content of a dictionary? Definitions per pound (weight or cost)? Is my home town/village/suburb covered? In this case comparison with Eilert Ekwall's *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th. ed. O.U.P., 1960; in print at £21.95) is inevitable, since that has hitherto been the standard reference in this area. A random check of names beginning with 'A' and 'H' in the (present) county of Oxfordshire produces the following results:

	Mills	Ekwall
A	17	26
H	26	36

This difference is principally caused by Ekwall discussing relatively minor names – usually from Anglo-Saxon charters – where they provide useful illustrations of certain elements, which are discussed at some length throughout the text, whereas users of Mills would need to refer to the two volumes on place-name elements by A.H. Smith, or indeed to Ekwall, for this information.

In order to provide a consumer test of Mr. Mills' dictionary, a random selection of

villages across Oxfordshire was taken, and compared with Ekwall and with Margaret Gelling's two volumes, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* (1953).

- Horley:* MILLS – 1 spelling; probably 'woodland clearing in a horn-shaped piece of land', OE *horn*, *lēah*.  
EKWALL – 4 sp.; 'lēah in a horn or tongue of land', between two streams, cf. Hornton.  
GELLING – as Ekwall.
- Hornton:* MILLS – 1 sp.; 'farmstead near the horn-shaped piece of land'.  
EKWALL – 3 sp.; 'tūn of the Horley people'. GELLING – as Ekwall.  
The divergence of definition here arises from the element *-ing-*, which Mills sees as a connecting particle and Ekwall as denoting a folk name *Horningas*, derived from their position between two streams.
- Swerford:* MILLS – 2 sp.; 'ford by a col or neck of land', OE *sweora*, *ford*.  
EKWALL – 3 sp.; same definition. GELLING – as Ekwall.
- Kirtlington:* MILLS – 2 sp.; 'estate associated with \*Cyrtla'.  
EKWALL – 5 sp.; 'tūn of Cyrtla's people'. GELLING – as Mills.  
The problem here is the same as for Hornton, and to some extent reflects the changes in attitude to *-ing* names which have occurred since 1960.
- Asthall:* MILLS – 1 sp.; 'east nook(s) of land', OE *ēast*, *h(e)alh*.  
EKWALL – 3 sp.; same. GELLING – same.  
Mills fails to explain that early spellings of the name indicate plural.
- Hinksey:* MILLS – 1 sp.; 'island/well-watered land of Hengest/stallion', OE *hengest*, *īeg*.  
EKWALL – 3 sp.; 'Hengest/stallion island'. GELLING – same, but says context favours horse.  
The problem of personal names which are also common nouns is nicely illustrated here.
- Charney Bassett:* MILLS – 2 sp.; 'Island on a river called Cern (Celtic)', second element manorial.  
EKWALL – 6 sp.; same. GELLING points out that Cern is not another name for the Ock, but probably relates to a stream flowing from the Downs.
- Berrick Salome:* MILLS – 2 sp.; 'barley farm' or 'outlying part of an estate', OE *bere-wīc* with manorial affix *de Suleham*.  
EKWALL – 2 sp.; see *berewīc* and Britwell Salome. Sulham is in Berks. GELLING – as Ekwall.

There is no essential difference between the definitions in the two dictionaries, and apart from the greatly increased array of spellings given in the EPNS county volumes, the average user gains little advantage by using the latter. Such variations as there are between Mills and Ekwall reflect developments in the study of names, and users would be well advised to follow up the references given by the former on p. 388.

In conclusion, Mr. Mills' dictionary may be recommended as a handy-sized and very clearly printed *vade mecum* for anybody interested in quickly discovering the meaning of an English place-name (other than purely local ones). For a hardback book in these inflationary times it is reasonably priced and makes a useful addition to the reference shelf or glove compartment.

KEITH BAILEY

*The Oxfordshire Domesday* (Alecto County Edition). Alecto Historical Editions, London, 1987–90. 3 vols. and map (Introduction and translation, pp. viii + 50 + 16 unpaginated; *Domesday Book Studies*, pp. x + 179; Facsimiles and Map). Price £150.

Long before it came to be regarded as a text for scholarly study the importance of Domesday Book as a public record made its accessibility to the public a matter of importance. It remained a working record open to citation and consultation by members of the public or their legal representatives until the 19th century. From the late 13th century it was possible for enquirers to obtain certified copies of extracts, but Domesday did not appear as a printed text until Abraham Farley at government expense produced

his superb edition in a newly devised type for Parliament in 1783, which the Record Commission republished in four volumes between 1811 and 1816 with an introduction and indexes by Sir Henry Ellis. The first reproduction of the manuscript itself was similarly a publicly funded enterprise. W.E. Gladstone, no less, proposed that the photographic expertise of the Ordnance Survey should be put to work on the public records and the result was the facsimile edition of 1861–1863, issued in county volumes. The Victoria County History began to commission translations at the end of the 19th century and these appeared in the early volumes for each county. By the 1970s interest in local history had widened enormously and work on local records was being undertaken by a host of people who needed, and deserved, accessible sources. For the radical historian John Morris it was something of a crusade to make available for 'all interested readers, both specialists and others ... important texts which should be available but are not'. He launched the Phillimore edition of Great and Little Domesday and Exon. Domesday (along with other medieval texts), with translation and reproduction of Farley's text in paperback and cheap hardback, a widely-used edition which is now complete and to which index volumes will shortly appear.

By Domesday's ninth centenary year, 1986, we had moved from the era of public funding into the era of the joint venture of public and commercial enterprise, and from the era of cheap books to that of very expensive ones. The Public Record Office disbound Great and Little Domesday for conservation and repair and invited Alecto Historical Editions to photograph the first before rebinding. Their superb facsimiles, gathered in their original quires, are now published under the general editorial direction of Dr. Ann Williams and Robert Erskine in the following three editions:

(1) The Library Edition in four boxed sets, two of facsimiles and two of translation, and thirty three county maps with Domesday information on landholders superimposed on the 3 mile:1 inch Ordnance Survey.

(2) The County edition, consisting of three volumes for each county, one of facsimiles and maps, one containing an introductory essay, bibliography, indexes and translation, the third a volume of *Domesday Book Studies*, common to both editions. County map.

(3) A third luxurious 'Penny' Edition, accompanied by the most shameless hype, is doubtless aimed at the book collectors' market.

Four volumes of indices of names, places and subjects are being produced at the University of Santa Barbara, and will follow.

(The Library Edition and the introduction and translation volumes of the County Edition will be kept on open shelves in Selden End of Duke Humfrey in the Bodleian Library.)

These very different manifestations of Domesday, of the 18th, 19th and late 20th centuries, prompt initial comparisons from the user's point of view. As to coverage of the original text, of the Alecto and the Phillimore editions the Phillimore is the only one to reproduce the text of Little and Exon. Domesday. As to ease of use, this is too difficult to judge. Once one has grasped the conventions used on a rather overcrowded page, it is surprisingly easy to find the person, the place, or the landholding one wants in the Phillimore edition, thanks to its heavy printing of the information rubricated in the original manuscript, part of Domesday's own effective system of finding devices. The more discreet printing of the Alecto may make this kind of quest harder than in the Phillimore, as may its practice of referring one to the relevant folio rather than the particular entry.

Different editions adopt a different layout of individual entries, and this turns out to

be surprisingly important. The Victoria County History translations, following Farley's edition, respect as he did the layout of the manuscript, as does Alecto. The layout of the Phillimore is somewhat tendentious, seeming to suggest a division, not justified by the manuscript, between information about the demesne and information about an implied physical village community, with its woodland, mills and meadows. This is very much in tune with the conceptual framework shown by the Phillimore translation (though it is only fair to point out that words are translated differently in different county volumes). Phillimore's Domesday Oxfordshire, for instance, is an England of villages, of villagers and smallholders (for *villani* and *bordarii*). There were unequivocally slaves (*servi*). By contrast F.M. Stenton's Oxfordshire, in his Domesday translation for the Victoria County History, was a considerably more manorialised place, where serfdom had replaced slavery ('serfs' for *servi*) and the largest group among the manorial population were villeins (*villani*). The Alecto translation is based on that of the Victoria County History, but cautiously refrains from translating some terms at all, giving us instead Anglicizations of what were presumably in the original Latinised Norman-French terms, thus 'villans' and 'bordars'. If this neutrality may baffle anyone hot for certainties in 11th-century England, it is still surely the right line to take, least likely to mislead or to date as historical debate goes on. Any translations which are at all problematical or controversial are fully explained in the 'Notes to the translation' and more fully still in the special subject essays in the *Domesday Studies* volume. One may not agree with the views underlying particular interpretations but one can see what they are.

Dr. John Blair's excellent Introduction to the Oxfordshire volume of the Alecto Domesday goes far beyond a narrow analysis of the text, and far beyond the 11th century, to give a broad account of the region between the Anglo-Saxon settlement and 1086. Regions, rather, for he is able to show how disparate were the settler peoples in what was only very late to be welded into an entity called 'Oxfordshire'. Over this heterogeneous society Mercia and Wessex in turn established hegemony. 'Central places' mattered. Blair traces the growth of the network of minister churches well furnished with estates – a particularly skilful achievement in view of Oxfordshire Domesday's omission of information about churches – and of royal centres such as Benson, Bampton, Kirtlington and Oxford itself, established as a fortified centre under Alfred's son-in-law and his daughter the Lady of the Mercians in what was still Mercian territory. Oxfordshire Domesday does not give information about hundreds, but these have been reconstructed and, as with each county volume, a separate article describes the internal divisions of the county.

Physical features and the constraints imposed by the land itself figure more prominently in Blair's Oxfordshire than in Stenton's more 'feudal' account, for since Stenton's time a great deal has been written and dug. But we have not yet reached the point at which very much can yet be said about living and farming in the 11th century: 'As with field systems, so with settlements: the illusion of immemorial villages has gone, and no coherent model has yet replaced it'. High standards of production and editing combined with scholarly caution when it comes to interpretation are the hallmarks of this lavish enterprise.

ROSAMOND FAITH

Janet Cooper (ed.), *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*. Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 56, 1989. Pp. xxii + 231. Price £12 to non-members, including p.&p.

The general eyre, essentially the king's bench on circuit, was a product of the legal reforms of Henry II's reign, and made going to law in the royal courts an attainable prospect for a very large section of the population. The eyre was also an invaluable opportunity for the Crown to carry out on its own behalf enquiries which would otherwise have been enormously expensive, much as today a space shuttle may carry a wide variety of scientific enquiry. The general eyre eventually sank under the weight of its own usefulness, and its constituent functions became hived off into special commissions, courts and enquiries. Its heyday was the 13th century, so the rolls of 1241, the earliest surviving for Oxfordshire and which Dr. Cooper has edited, show the system in full working order. Her useful introduction analyses the kind of people who mainly constituted the clientele of the eyre, and the kind of case they brought to it.

The eyre was evidently a boon to widows, whose actions of dower to retain a third of their late husbands' land constitute 126 out of about 680 pleas where the action can be identified. Cases where a woman's dowry had been maladministered or disposed of contrary to her wishes by her husband during his lifetime, while she was *femme couverte* and unable to gainsay him, are also found. Widows were among the large general class of litigants who held modest amounts of land by free tenure: actions over property in land brought by the principal Henrician innovations, the writs of novel disseisin and mort d'ancestor, constitute the next largest class of business, and most involve small holdings, not large estates. It was worth going to law by these processes, which brought success to fourteen, and an acceptable agreement to twenty-nine, of the fifty-two cases brought by writ of novel disseisin. As well as reversing wrongful occupations of land the court was an invaluable place to establish and register title, important at a time when a highly active land-market had brought into being immensely complicated 'portfolios' of small freeholds. To this end the ancient procedure to determine right by writ of right continued to be popular, cases of warranty of charter were common, and it was worth the expense of going to court to have the substance of the judgement or agreement registered among its records. The eyre seems to have been of only moderate use to landlords at loggerheads with their tenants, being principally the last resort of the landlord hoping to extract by the writ of customs and services the elusive services of ploughing and reaping odd acres owed him by his free tenants [443].

By the device of the presenting jury the eyre court made use of the ancient local system of tithing and hundred to bring crime before the royal justices. Dr. Cooper is able to show how in this respect, as in so many others, the Angevin judicial system, sophisticated as it was in so many ways, was hamstrung by the lack of simple policing powers. Homicide, theft and breach of the peace were all thriving in Oxfordshire in 1241, but it was difficult to get offenders to court and to enforce its judgements once they were there: most of those accused of reported crimes, which included sixty cases of homicide, simply fled or sought sanctuary – a service which even quite small churches like Glympton were able and willing to provide [841]. Thirty-two Crown pleas ended in acquittal, very many in outlawry, only three in hangings. William of York, the chief justice on the south-eastern circuit, was no Judge Jeffreys. As for small crimes and breaches of the peace, the petty offenders of the 13th century will surely have got a more impartial hearing from the eyre judges than their predecessors had from the shire court, or their successors did from the local justices of the peace who were to take over this business in the 14th century.

It has of course to be borne in mind when using the eyre rolls that they only represent

a part of the legal business in which the people of Oxfordshire were engaged in 1241. Other jurisdictions claimed their share: the long arm of the bishop of Lincoln, for instance, plucked out for the attention of the ecclesiastical court [787] a case worthy of Inspector Morse, the chancellor had cognizance of cases involving scholars, and the borough courts of much urban business (although the Feteplace family of Oxford are represented by four cases). Tenants in manors of ancient demesne had their business recast in the form appropriate to the courts of those manors [442, 485] or referred back to them, and cases concerning unfree tenancies had long before been excluded from the royal courts: the manorial courts were the proper place for these. Some cases were lifted straight into king's bench by the writ *pone*.

For the local historian Dr. Cooper's indexes of people and places will be invaluable, as will her clear and readable translation and introduction. However, the reader is left to struggle unaided with some untranslated words, particularly names of writs, and a few terms which are obscure even in English. Some of these do not matter but some, like 'he put himself upon the country' (appealed for decision by a jury), and *replevin* (bail), do. The practice adopted by the indexes of many legal works of grouping all the actions together in order of the name of the writ by which they were initiated, and dealing with the outcomes of cases in similar fashion, is a more useful one than the purely alphabetical approach of the subject index here. And on a small point of translation, can the euphemism 'to sleep with', so redolent of the 20th century, really have been current in the 13th?

ROSAMOND FAITH

Jack Howard-Drake (ed.), *Oxford Church Courts: Depositions 1542-50*. Oxon. C.C. Dept. of Leisure and Arts, 1992. Pp. ix + 44. Available from County Libraries and from Oxon. Archives, price £3.95. Add 50p. (£1 overseas) if ordered by post.

The small size of this well-produced booklet belies the importance of the work itself and what it might lead to. It is a calendar of the earliest of eighteen volumes of depositions made in the church courts between c. 1542 and 1649. Internal evidence suggests that the starting date should actually be in the 1530s: an allegation about the sexual misconduct of the abbot of Osney presumably predates that abbey's suppression in 1539. Jack Howard-Drake and the County Council's Department of Leisure and Arts are to be congratulated on their enterprise in launching what is hoped will be a series calendaring all eighteen volumes. Unless others can be persuaded to help with the task of transcription, however, the series is likely to be a long time in the making.

It would scarcely have been possible to choose a more useful body of material from the County Archives. The value of ecclesiastical records has long been known to local historians at least, and they are increasingly published and studied. But the Oxfordshire material is used relatively little because, although it is now gathered together in one place (Oxon. County Archives) and cared for and catalogued, it is unindexed and uncalendared. *Oxford Church Courts* and, one hopes, its successors will change all that. What it reveals may surprise and should delight those who have not yet had the good fortune to spend time in the jostling company of farmers, shopkeepers, labourers, and clerics who bring an almost palpable sense of their world to the 20th-century reader. Here is Sir Midelton of Magdalen Hall scrambling, it is alleged, in the nick of time from Mistress Butler's bed and house. Here is John Knapp of Whitchurch, accused of the not very subtle trick of soaking his wool before taking it to be weighed for tithe. Sex and



money were ever preoccupations of the church and the law. Who could be unmoved, even at a distance of 450 years, by the tragi-comic predicament of Henry Tanner of Upper Heyford, mortally stricken with plague and forced to declare his dying wishes to witnesses listening for safety's sake outside the window?

There is much more to the depositions than errant clerics, cuckolded husbands, and squabbling tithe-payers. Tithe disputes, for instance, can be an irreplaceable source of information about landholding, farming practice, and local custom. The calendar tells us in the very first tithe case what was the local custom in Cornwell, Chastleton, and Long Compton, and what was the market price of ewes and lambs. It also tells us that if we go to the original we may expect to find details of ownership, sales, overwintering, and the branding of lambs. From the matrimonial cases there emerges a clearer idea of what the marriage contract meant to couples in the mid 16th century, sealed less by solemnization in church, a subsequent and secondary ritual, than by plighting troth, clasping hands, and exchanging kisses and tokens. It is even possible from some disputes to obtain details of fluctuating property prices in Oxford.

It could be argued that the simplest and quickest way of rendering accessible the whole series of depositions would have been to produce indexes of names, places, and subjects. It would be a pointless argument, simply because there is no-one willing to do it. Jack Howard-Drake has chosen rather to list the names of those involved in cases as parties or witnesses and – a decision likely to be welcomed by family historians in particular – of those referred to in passing; to summarize each case; and to indicate what additional information may be found in the original. It may be a slower method, but it has the advantage of making readily available as much information as many readers are likely to want. Those wishing to consult the originals (and it should be stressed that *Church Courts* is more a guide than a transcript) will find that Mr. Howard-Drake has generously deposited his fairly full transcripts, interleaved with photocopies of the originals, in the County Archives. *Church Courts* includes a good short introduction, indexes of persons, places, and subjects, and a useful list of all the deposition books and their shelfmarks. Its publication is to be very warmly welcomed.

CHRISTOPHER DAY

A.P. Jenkins (ed.) *The Correspondence of Bishop Secker*. Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 57, 1991. Pp. xxxv + 336. Price £20 to non-members, including p.&p.

Thomas Secker, an ex-dissenter sneered at by Horace Walpole and sniffed at by C.J. Abbey ('a good industrious and conscientious man, but of no striking ability'), is receiving further dubious accolades in our own day on the strength of having left substantial archives, in the publication first of the fruits of his visitation, then of his autobiography, now of his correspondence as bishop of Oxford; and there are hints of yet more to come. The present volume, admirably edited by A.P. Jenkins, consists of the small beer of a diocesan's in-tray during his Oxford years, a period later described by Secker as one in which he had 'not much work on [his] hands'. Three hundred and fourteen pages of correspondence over a period of a dozen years, though little by comparison with the great activists of 18th-century religion at home and abroad, do not entirely bear this out, and have a certain interest in showing how what even Abbey admitted to be an 'industrious and conscientious' bishop spent his time. The effect here is much the same as all those histories of universities written by registrars from the material accumulated in their departments. Secker was like a conscientious registrar

who knows that in some measure the health of the institution he serves depends on the proper and just enforcement of the rules. He harried non-residents and incumbents who did not appear at his visitations; he hounded churchwardens; he did his best to license all the curates so that he would be in no doubt on whom to pin responsibility for every parish; and he fought a long-running (and inconclusive) series of skirmishes with Oxford colleges, especially Lincoln College, whose fellows put loyalty to the college well ahead of loyalty to the parishes they nominally served or to the wider interests of the Church as embodied in the bishop. As the Rector of Lincoln put it lucidly: 'I find a great indisposition to a personal appearance of the minister in any act of submission but to the college'. He helped to augment poor livings, and pressed for the decent maintenance of church property. His visitation articles were better designed than many. He even disseminated religious tracts. All this activity had as much to do with the real ends of the Church as that of the registrar has to do with the ends of a university, that is to say, something but not a great deal. It may have a bearing upon apologies for episcopacy, but does not help much towards a judgement of Secker. There is a tiny ripple here of Jacobitism; nothing at all about Methodism. Secker must have known much more about both than his diocesan correspondence reveals. Equally, only one correspondent, William Freind, rector of Witney, writes with humour; the Oxfordshire clergy could never have been as strait-laced or as grovelling as they appear here. Nevertheless this correspondence reflects one side of 18th-century life.

One comment is perhaps in order on the editorial policy underlying this useful volume. That policy is an archivist's rather than a historian's policy. Archivists love their papers (and are paid to do so); historians love using them (and are paid to do so). This volume aims to preserve as much as possible of the original character of the papers 'as typesetting costs permit'. It would, I think, have been better, and certainly cheaper, to admit that publishing these documents involves subjecting them to a process of light modernisation, and explain at the beginning what the limits of this were. But this is the view of one who loves documents not for themselves but for the uses to which they may be put.

W.R. WARD

Kate Tiller, *English Local History: An Introduction*. Alan Sutton, 1992. Pp. viii + 247; 142 illustrations. Price £16.99 (hardback), £12.99 (paperback).

The strengths of this book, deriving from Dr. Tiller's considerable experience of teaching newcomers to local history, are its provision of a useful outline of English history drawn with the needs of the local historian in mind, and its concentration on themes which are likely to prove attractive and fruitful to those contemplating future research. The argument is supported by a wide-ranging set of case studies which conveniently summarize important work by other scholars, and there are 142 illustrations, most of them well-chosen.

A first chapter briefly reviews such accessible printed sources as early itineraries, old county histories, the VCH, and old parish and town histories. There is sound advice about taking proper notes, and an injunction to get away from 'fusty antiquarian compilations of unconnected facts' by sticking to a 'shared agenda of questions' – questions which may be asked of all places, and are central to what Dr. Tiller describes as the 'new' local history. There are then four chronological chapters, incorporating not only the general historical outline and the case studies but also lists of sources and in



some instances fairly detailed analysis of sources. A final chapter discusses the value and method of recording places as they are now, and there is a commendably brief but useful bibliography.

The scope is ambitious and, leaving aside the illustrations, the book is not long, so it is perhaps not surprising to find unevenness of treatment. The author is clearly more at home in the Early Modern and Modern chapters and at times the outlines of Saxon and Medieval history become slightly breathless recitations. The treatment of feudal tenures is vague and sometimes (as in statements about *Quia Emptores*) misleading. Copyhold is mentioned but not explained, and although a charter and a fine are discussed and illustrated neither the text nor bibliography offer any basic guidance on land law, surely one of the commonest pitfalls for the beginner. Even so the Medieval chapter contains well-balanced discussions of Deserted Medieval Villages, of Lollardy, and of the development of royal courts and the magistracy.

Recurrent uncertainties over the extent to which this should be a 'how to do it' book particularly affect the treatment of sources. Probate inventories, censuses, parish registers, and even surviving hedgerows are thoroughly discussed, but other sources for which there is much less available guidance are merely listed. Thus we are told that the king's 'locally delivered justice' is recorded under General Eyres, Assizes, Goal (*sic*) Delivery, and Oyer and Terminer – but what does the beginner do next? The usefulness of the Pipe Rolls is emphasised, but with no hint that their interpretation is far from straightforward.

Undoubtedly, however, those who read this book through, rather than treating it as a manual, will benefit greatly: its cumulative effect is to leave a powerful message. They will see why the history of a particular place must be seen in a much wider economic and administrative context and constantly compared with other places. They will be impressed by the immense variety of local historical experience, for this book in its catholicity takes us through a long period of time and to many places, examining widely different themes. It is salutary indeed to range, within a few pages, from classic open-field villages like Cuxham to the sharply contrasting historical challenges presented by Delph or Esh Winning.

A few minor quibbles should be noted for any future edition. The statement on p. 19 that the VCH parish is now the civil parish is incorrect, although it is true that more recent volumes have taken a more flexible approach to treating the 'ancient parish'. On p. 214 there are references to photographs of Bolton and Gateshead which sound interesting but cannot be found. On p. 86 the caption to a poor photograph of the Tchure in Deddington seems to suggest that it was itself a burgage plot rather than an access passage; sad, too, that the opportunity was missed to explain that *tchure*, *tuer*, *chury* etc. was the Midland equivalent of the northern 'ginnel' which occurs elsewhere in the book. If the intention was to illustrate a typical burgage plot then there must be thousands of better examples.

In general the illustrations add greatly to the text as well as giving the book a pleasing appearance, but there are a few other odd choices: much is made of the 'great rebuilding' of England from the later 16th century, but it is illustrated expressly by a modest cottage in Hook Norton which (though doubtless of the period) has no visible dateable features, and a foliage-covered, reroofed, and evidently much-altered house in Yetminster. Reproducing original documents is difficult, and those on pp. 96 and 98 are too small to be informative.

ALAN CROSSLEY