

REVIEWS

Anthony Morigi, Danielle Schreve and Mark White (part 1), Gill Hey, Paul Garwood, Mark Robinson, Alistair Barclay and Philippa Bradley (part 2), *The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: Early Prehistory to 1500 BC* (Thames through Time series, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 32), Oxford University School of Archaeology for Oxford Archaeology (Oxford, 2011). Pp. xxvi + 522. Approx. 300 illustrations, many in colour. £34.99. ISBN 978-0-9549627-8-4.

This is the third volume to be published of Oxford Archaeology's four-volume synthesis of the archaeology of the Thames valley funded by English Heritage. (For reviews of previous volumes see *Oxoniensia*, 75 (2010), pp. 229–32.) Chronologically the first volume, it covers by far the longest time-span and is also the most wide-ranging geographically. As the title and authorship indicate, it falls into two parts – indeed, they can almost be seen as two volumes bound as one.

Part 1 synthesises a wide range of evidence from southern England to explain major geographical changes in the course and catchment of the Thames. The story starts *c.*750,000 years ago, when the headwaters of the river were in the Midlands or Wales and it flowed through East Anglia into a different North Sea. It ends with the river's more familiar modern course. It also includes the arrival and disappearance of different species of hominins, setting each one in its contemporaneous environment. Chapter 1 usefully explains methods of investigation, which will be valuable for readers who are unfamiliar with the techniques of Pleistocene geology and Palaeolithic archaeology. The rest of the part is presented chronologically, with each chapter based on the major episodes for which material survives within the framework of geological change, rather than on archaeologically defined periods. Chapter 1 also covers the middle Pleistocene, from the appearance of the first hominins in Britain *c.*700,000 years ago to the first stratified occurrence of Palaeolithic artefacts in the Thames valley *c.*400,000 years ago. Chapters 2 to 4 focus on the Hoxnian, Purfleet and Aveyley interglacials, set in the context of the river's changing course and the evolution of its terraces during adjacent cold stages. Chapter 5 similarly covers the Ipswichian interglacial and the late Pleistocene when archaeological material is lacking. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the final cold stage and transition to the Holocene and the associated Upper Palaeolithic archaeology.

The chapters synthesise considerable amounts of information and also highlight areas where interpretation has proved difficult, notably the correlation of the complex terracing of Pleistocene river deposits from the upper, middle and lower Thames with the evidence of global climate fluctuations. Channel deposits are especially valuable repositories of biological and sedimentary remains which allow the contemporaneous environment to be reconstructed, a few also containing stone tools and flakes. Important channel deposits for the Oxfordshire Thames include early warm- and cold-stage examples at Sugworth and Caversham (the latter *c.*400,000 years ago); later warm-stage examples at Wolvercote and Stanton Harcourt (respectively *c.*350,000 and 250,000 years ago); and two later cold-period channels at Cassington (*c.*130,000 years ago) and Farmoor (at the end of the Devensian glaciation *c.*12,400 to 10,400 cal. BC). While most attention is rightly paid to in situ material from channels, the value of surface finds and redeposited artefacts from the gravel is also evident, reflecting the geography of activity and technological and cultural developments.

For the Upper Palaeolithic, when modern humans first appeared, evidence is sparse in the upper Thames valley. Occasional chance finds crop up in excavations on the first terrace and

floodplain, though at Gatehampton Farm, Goring, a more significant assemblage of typical 'long blade' flints was recovered with an associated pollen sequence. They indicate a possible kill/butchery site in open sub-arctic conditions at an ideal location for hunting large animals at the head of the Goring Gap.

Part 2, covering the Holocene from the early Mesolithic to early Bronze Age, starts at chapter 8, which introduces investigation techniques and the chronological framework. Thereafter the treatment is a mixture of thematic and chronological chapters. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages, but the mixture makes it somewhat confusing as to where topics are covered.

Chapter 9 provides a useful overview of environmental development, covering floodplain creation, hydrology, vegetational succession and origins of agriculture, drawing on evidence of sedimentary sequences, beetles, snails, pollen and other plant remains. Chapter 10 then reverts to the chronological approach, examining the Mesolithic period. The traditional division of activity areas into 'base camps' in valleys and 'hunting sites' on surrounding hills is discarded in favour of a more complex pattern of 'lifeways' based on current appreciation of ethnographic evidence of hunter-gatherer societies. At a more detailed level, there is now clearer understanding of Mesolithic use of tree-throw holes, pits, middens and the deposition of objects in watery places, all of which have resonances in the Neolithic, alongside adaptations in transhumant modes of living.

Chapter 11, covering '...The Creation of New Worlds' by Neolithic people, begins with the assertion that 'a fundamental shift occurred in lifestyles in the period between 4000 and 3500 cal. BC'. But the succeeding discussion shows that understanding of this transition remains poor. The shortage of well-dated remains attributable to the very late Mesolithic is the great difficulty, and as with other transitions, some cultural activities survived alongside new ways of living and technological innovations. The rest of the chapter concerns Neolithic domestic life, and usefully synthesises evidence of pits, middens and structures. Most striking is the accumulating evidence for early Neolithic buildings as defined by post holes or beamslots. Chapter 13 pursues the story through the early Bronze Age, which perhaps might have been included in chapter 11 to show more seamlessly when, whether and how fast different aspects of life changed. Trajectories of change were more complicated and variable than conventional period divisions would allow.

Chapters 12, 14 and 15 present a wealth of material on funerary and ceremonial monuments and on ritual, cosmological and funerary practices. Together they reveal a striking diversity of monuments, burials in and around them, and other ritualistic practices. Recent programmes of dating chambered tombs and causewayed enclosures, reported in chapter 12, have shown that both were surprisingly short-lived. This substantially alters previous assumptions about when and how such monuments were created and used – seemingly over only a very few generations (if that). The implication is that their construction was socially all-important. In the longer run, their significance was as a legacy of sacred or ancestral features defining special places in the landscape, rather than continuity of their original ceremonial or funerary use.

The discussion of 'Ritual, Ceremony and Cosmology' in chapter 14 seeks to tackle head-on the thorny issue of how archaeology can shed light on the mindsets of prehistoric peoples. The chapter concludes that 'ritual, ceremony and cosmography should be seen as pervasive aspects of cultural life throughout the Neolithic and early Bronze Age.' It usefully shows how traditions persisted or changed in different aspects of life across different periods, though arguably some of the more detailed coverage of the theme might have been better incorporated into other chapters dealing with different topics to allow a little more discussion of how different attitudes to life and society persisted or altered.

Chapter 15 gives a valuable new overview of the treatment of the dead as revealed in the increasingly diverse range of funerary practices and burial places throughout the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. For example, in the earlier Neolithic there are now several examples of cremations and of single and multiple burials in 'flat' graves; and the detailed C14 dating of human remains from chambered tombs indicates that people were interred as complete bodies

and their bones only subsequently rearranged when later burials followed. The review of Beaker burials also presents a useful new synthesis.

Chapter 16, spanning the whole period covered by part 2, concludes the volume with a discussion of the procurement, production and exchange of material objects. It includes wider inferences about social and cosmological meanings attached to people's material culture, organized by the materials from which objects were made, how they were made, what they were used for and how they were exchanged.

In common with other volumes in the series, this book is well presented and provides excellent value given the copious colour illustrations throughout. Helpful multiple-page spreads highlight key sites and issues. The text is technical but generally well written, with part 2 perhaps being more accessible to the non-specialist than part 1. Mistakes are rare but not entirely absent. For example, on pp. 315–16 it is misleading to claim that Gravelly Guy was in a 'patch of clearance'; Sidlings Copse is not 'on Otmoor'; and the main period of clearance there *was* in the third millennium BC, dated by two almost identical C14 dates centring on c.2200 cal. BC. On p. 395, it is possible that the small oval ring ditch at Mount Farm in which the early Neolithic burial was located was in fact associated with the adjacent Beaker burial. Typological errors are also rare, but the odd mistake occurs in captions. For example, Fig. 16.6, called 'bone tools', actually shows an antler point and a flint axe, while Fig. 16.10 does not identify one of the examples of flint arrowheads embedded in a human vertebra. Within the sweep of the volume such errors are very few and mostly insignificant.

Overall this volume is magisterial in scope and authority, synthesising a vast wealth of material in a fresh and coherent manner. It is essential reading for everyone engaged in studying or investigating the early prehistory of the Thames valley. It offers lessons for development-led archaeology about the crucial importance of looking beyond the most obvious monuments, both in the spaces that are investigated and to recover more ephemeral but nonetheless crucial evidence of the rich diversity of how people led their lives, engaged in ceremony, and commemorated their dead. It also illustrates the value of rigorous scientific dating, including the cumulative value of dating particular types of deposit, which still needs to become more routine. Although this volume uses conventional period divisions, like others in the series it clearly demonstrates how these convenient chronological pigeonholes often obscure much more complex and interesting trajectories of change.

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Paul Cullen, Richard Jones and David N. Parsons, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* (Explorations in Local and Regional History, 4) University of Hertfordshire Press (Hatfield, 2011). Pp. xviii + 224. Numerous illustrations, maps and tables. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-902806-82-2.

Heythrop, Tythrop and Thrupp are Oxfordshire's only claims to inclusion as village place-names in *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* although minor names such as Cokethorpe (Park) bolster the count a little. This is indicative of a real distribution of the terms *thorp* and *throp* which is discussed in this innovative study. It is an important contribution to a recent and very welcome trend that brings together place-name specialists, represented here by Paul Cullen and David Parsons, with archaeologists and landscape historians, a trend in which Richard Jones has been an active force. *Thorps* has benefited overall from Jones's experience of the Whittlewood Project, which has broadened our understanding of the development of medieval settlements – and turned some cherished beliefs about village formation on their head. But it rests equally on the mainstay of the greatly respected study of English place-names: establishing a corpus of names for a particular element and mapping their distribution. *Thorp* and *throp* are treated as essentially the same element, their different spellings being attributable to regional dialectical

differences, while a trip to the wilder shores of place-name study examines the occurrence of the term in the Old English glosses.

The chronology of the emergence of *thorp* as a place-name element is an important part of the argument. Names containing it, or consisting of it, date largely from the tenth century or later. None can be dated before c.850. Crucial too is their location: they are overwhelmingly more common in the Danelaw, but they are found well outside it too, so it was evidently a term that made sense to Scandinavians and English alike. Although the authors want to preserve the association of *thorp* with dependence, as made by previous studies, they do not believe that *thorps* simply represent the expansion of existing settlements. Nor do they consider them as part of a move to cultivate marginal land. Far from it: they appear to have been small settlements laid out over open fields – presumably what was considered the best arable. They were firmly part of plough culture, and of a plough culture that could employ heavy capital equipment in terms of traction and implements, for they seem to have been laid out without much regard to drainage. This arable context is a particularly interesting suggestion in view of the fact that Cullen and Jones have suggested elsewhere that the *-by* element in place-names, which has an inverse distributional relationship with *thorp*, seems to denote dispersed farms engaged in arable farming's exact opposite: animal husbandry. Valuably, archaeology can reveal something of the morphology of *thorps*: they were small, and they were frequently related by name and location to a nearby village, but they were not simply expansions of the village: they were deliberately laid out very often in two rows along a single street, and although some have grown and changed many have retained that simple layout. They look planned rather than organic.

The seemingly deliberate establishment of a new kind of place, with a new kind of name (or perhaps an old term used in a new way), must be important. A stimulating chapter suggests context and motive. As to context: in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, the parts of the Danelaw that have the heaviest concentrations of Scandinavian place-names, *thorps* overwhelmingly have Scandinavian personal names as their first element. So there must have been 'a convergence of naming-practice, if not settlement-development, between English- and Norse-speaking communities after the arrival of the latter' (p. 139). However, it was farming practice rather than ethnicity that mattered: *thorps* cluster where heavy soils offered good rewards for intensified arable production, and they map very consistently with the 'central province' areas which became the heartland of 'classical' open-field farming. The distribution of *thorps* also echoes areas where heavy labour services from tenants with standard holdings came to support large arable demesnes. The authors argue for a reorganization of settlement and the laying out of standard holdings as part of this evolution. This would chime with the idea of a 'Great Reorganization' advanced some years ago by T. Brown and G. Foard. It also places this kind of open-field farming firmly among the current 'top-down' explanations of its origins.

The parts of this very interesting book that link the chronology, distribution and morphology of *thorps* so successfully seem to me to be stronger than those that propose them as a key to the chronology of open-field farming. It may be that the authors' search for early documentary evidence of open fields, which they rightly prefer to the broad-brush distributions based on retrospective evidence which predominate in the secondary literature, may have led to an over-interpretation of the slight documentary evidence. Thus the first occurrence of a *thorp* in a document, a reference in a charter to an unlocated *Upðrope* of 869 (pp. 83–4, 145–6), is taken to be indicative of open-field farming. Their 'simplest explanatory model', that open-field farming, already established, was taken up by Scandinavian settlers, seems more convincing.

A very welcome result of this project has been to disentangle debates over nucleation from debates over open-field agriculture: *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* shows that village and common fields need not have gone together like a horse and carriage. *Thorps* may have been part of the reorganization of large estates into units on which worker-tenants were established

– but this explanation sends us back to the large numbers of Danelaw *thorps* which seem to belong to, or to be named after, an individual, and not one of particularly high status. Do we have a significant ‘Danelaw difference’ here? It is characteristic of the lively approach of its authors that important and stimulating questions like this are still being raised in the final pages of this complex and subtle body of interdisciplinary work.

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K.S.B. Keats-Rohan and D.R. Roffe (eds.), *The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (BAR BS, 494), Archaeopress (Oxford, 2009). Pp. viii + 102. B&w illustrations. Paperback, £28. ISBN 978-1-4073-0537-0.

From 2008 to 2010 the town of Wallingford was the subject of an ambitious in-depth archaeological research programme, ‘The Wallingford *Burh* to Borough Project’, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and drew together collaborators from the universities of Exeter, Leicester and Oxford, English Heritage and local stakeholders. Amongst its varied aims the project sought to explore the origins and development of the Anglo-Saxon centre, the effects of Norman impositions and urban remodelling, and the material impact of late-medieval urban economic decline. This programme of work will certainly do much to reinvigorate our understanding of Wallingford as a pre-eminent medieval town, and will surely establish its archaeology as an important case-study of urban development.

Wallingford is certainly an apt choice for exploring such concerns. In the early tenth-century document known as the Burghal Hidage, Wallingford appears – alongside Winchester – as the largest military ‘hard-point’ in the cordon of defences around Wessex; in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was the site of a powerful royal castle. For both of these phases there are visible archaeological remains. The surviving late Anglo-Saxon defensive bank-and-ditch is sufficiently extensive to be perambulated, whilst the medieval castle remains a substantial earthwork. Importantly, however, the town also retains large undeveloped open spaces which permit the archaeological investigation of medieval developments.

This slim book comprises mainly papers delivered at a conference in 2008 on ‘The Origins of Wallingford: A Reassessment’. It was hosted by the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society as a contribution to the ‘*Burh* to Borough’ project with the aim of enabling ‘a formal coming together of academic expertise on Wallingford’s past’ (p. v). It was published remarkably soon after the event and includes additional material, such as a contribution by Matt Edgeworth and a comprehensive Wallingford bibliography.

Broadly speaking, the volume effectively sets out, in eight contributions, the state of knowledge on the pre-Conquest ‘origins’ of Wallingford. Unsurprisingly, given that the conference was held at the start of the ‘*Burh* to Borough’ project, the evidence from written and historical geographical sources is considered in greater detail than archaeological evidence. Papers by Judy Dewey, David Roffe and Katharine Keats-Rohan establish the administrative complexity of medieval Wallingford, examining respectively the evidence from parish boundaries, Domesday Book and the Norman honor. The many interesting themes here include Wallingford’s role in the exertion of political control over Berkshire and southern Oxfordshire (pp. 43–5, 61–3). Indeed, it is striking that royal initiatives emerge so clearly, a point that is elaborated by Keats-Rohan who locates the origins of the Norman honor in the estates of one of Edward the Confessor’s stallers, Wigod of Wallingford.

Archaeological contributions, by contrast, stick closely to the volume’s central concern, focusing mainly on the early and mid Anglo-Saxon ‘origins’ of Wallingford rather than its late Anglo-Saxon and Norman heyday. This is certainly an area to which archaeology has much to contribute, and it is creditable that space is given to the prehistoric and Roman context (by Paul Booth) as well as early Anglo-Saxon evidence (by Helena Hamerow and Susan Westlake, and

Judy Dewey). Contributions here provide the detailed local and regional evidence by which the pattern and form of Anglo-Saxon rural settlement in the Wallingford region can be assessed. But they do not consider how the Wallingford case-study can address larger problems, such as why some places developed into towns and others did not, or the military, economic and political conditions that brought about these developments.

In the final two contributions (by Oliver Creighton and others, and Matt Edgeworth) the volume explores themes that have emerged in recent discussions of burghal developments, including the spatial arrangements of properties, buildings and streets, the role of open spaces, and the long chronology by which burhs acquired their characteristic features – an idea that has gained momentum from excavations in, for example, Winchester and Bedford, the latter by Edgeworth himself. Unfortunately some other current themes are not pursued to the same depth, such as the use of palaeoenvironmental evidence to understand relationships between town and country. The contributors also neglect the role that strongholds played in wider landscapes of civil defence. What do the contributors make, for example, of Jeremy Haslam's thesis explicitly linking the origins of Wallingford with King Alfred's policies of 878–9 (published in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13 (2006), pp. 121–53)?

Indeed, given Wallingford's obvious military functions in the tenth century, surprisingly little is said about its role in the defence of Wessex and the 'conquest' of the Danelaw. Part of its importance is likely to derive from its strategic location on the crossing of several major communication routes between West Saxon, Mercian and Danish lands. An important contribution from the study of local topography is the location of the ford over the Thames: it was slightly north of the town on the alignment of Shillingford Road and Watery Lane (pp. 82–3). South of the town, both this route and the Thames pass via the Goring Gap through the Chilterns. To appreciate fully why Wallingford emerged – at least for a short period – as the pre-eminent centre on this stretch of the Thames requires an understanding of its role as part of a wider landscape of settlement. Paul Booth makes this point at the beginning of the volume, but it later fades from view.

The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford succeeds in outlining the current state of knowledge about the town's early history and the research agendas of the 'Burh to Borough' project. But it is not, and does not attempt to be, the final word on medieval Wallingford. It is hoped that further such stimulating volumes will soon be published.

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Simon Walker (ed.), with supplementary material by Julian Munby, *Building Accounts of All Souls College, Oxford, 1438–1443* (OHS, ns 42), The Boydell Press for OHS (Woodbridge, 2010). Pp. xxxii + 396. 4 b&w plates, 3 plans. £35. ISBN 978-0-904107-22-7.

The paper building accounts for All Souls, covering the period from 1438 to 1443, provide a rare overview of the early stages of a college's construction, from the preparation of the foundations to initial occupation. The editor claims that these accounts, which lack only a few folios, are also the most comprehensive for any building in medieval Oxford. Designated as All Souls MS 401, they consist of 106 folios, and this volume constitutes the first full edition of the manuscript, a labour that was undertaken by Simon Walker and, after his death in 2004, completed by Julian Munby, who has also devised five informative appendices relating to aspects of the medieval college. The college was founded by Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, with Henry VI incorporated as co-founder. The foundation year is generally accepted as 1437, although the founder's charter was not issued until 1438.

By their very nature, building accounts lack a convenient narrative and a composite view has to be constructed from the myriad of individual entries. In this case, the picture that emerges is fairly intelligible and rounded. As may be expected, many of the entries are

concerned with building materials, especially varieties of stone and timber, the latter being mainly oak but supplemented with smaller quantities of ash and elm. Most of the timber was purchased from woods within easy reach of Oxford, although handsome gifts of oaks were not uncommon. The many varieties of stone were sourced principally from Headington and Taynton, while special stone was transported from more distant places. Of considerable interest is the light that the accounts shed on iron, which was mainly brought from London with lesser amounts purchased locally. Apart from small items such as nails, keys and hinges, a lot of ironwork was manufactured in a smithy established in Oxford. Strikingly, it is recorded (p. 95) that 93 pounds of iron went into the making of a frame for a single chapel window.

The accounts reveal that the construction work was co-ordinated by a supervisor, initially John Druell, later Roger Keyes, who was to be elevated to the college's wardenship. The supervisor's chief functions were to ensure the retention of an adequate workforce, the size of which expanded or contracted according to circumstances, and to facilitate a steady stream of materials and money so that the building work might proceed without loss of momentum, an objective that seems to have been satisfactorily achieved. Although much is known about categories of medieval craftsmen from other sources, these accounts yield significant supplementary data. It is no surprise that masons, carpenters, sawyers, stonecutters, daubers and smiths all figure prominently along with their differential wage rates. Of particular interest are the payments to specialist woodcarvers, glaziers, and also to John Massingham and assistants for the decorative statuary work in the chapel and probably for the statues of Henry VI and Chichele that were originally placed above the college gate. For his expertise Massingham was paid the unusually high rate of 4s. 8d. a week in addition to board and lodging. As between labour costs and those for materials, the former generally exceeded the latter.

Even more data might have been culled from a lost *Liber parcellarum*, a paper book of daily expenses from which MS 401 was compiled, and to which there are several tantalising references in the extant accounts. It would clearly have been a raw complementary source of considerable value. Nonetheless, from the surviving accounts the editor has estimated that the total expenditure on construction came to about £4,400 by 1443 (p. xxviii), the year of the archbishop's death, a figure that was presumably less than that required for the building of near contemporary Oxford colleges such as New College or Magdalen, although accurate comparable costs are unavailable.

In the built-up areas of medieval Oxford the site for a college could seldom be purchased in its entirety and its acquisition usually involved numerous small and often complex transactions. The first of the five appendices lists the acquisitions for the site of All Souls between 1437 and 1444 (p. 360) and provides a discussion of each property, utilizing the findings of other authorities. The second appendix itemizes the masons and carpenters who were employed in the building work and were identified by Eric Gee and John Harvey. The remaining appendices comprise a survey of the college buildings and a view of college furnishings compiled from an inventory of 1585.

These early building accounts have been meticulously edited, and the illuminating introduction by Simon Walker provides a convenient pathway through the sometimes opaque nature of the entries. A glossary of the fifteenth-century specialist vocabulary used for the construction process would have been of benefit to the reader and have added value to the edition. When taken in conjunction with the fifteenth-century bursars' books and the incomplete series of bursars' accounts of uncertain dating, there can be no doubt that the construction accounts form a substantial and important component of the pre-1500 archive of All Souls.

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Andrew Hegarty, *A Biographical Register of St John's College, Oxford, 1555–1660* (OHS, ns 43), The Boydell Press for OHS (Woodbridge, 2011). Pp. lxxxiii + 559. £45. ISBN 978-0-904107-24-1.

Given the federal nature of Oxford University, its history is in many ways that of the colleges understood collectively. Individual college histories in turn depend on the type of data contained in the present volume under review. This *Biographical Register*, covering the first hundred years of St John's College, constitutes a remarkable achievement on the part of the author Andrew Hegarty, who has clearly laboured long and hard. The result is a veritable treasure house of information. The history of St John's, founded in 1555, mirrors some of the salient changes of the period in question. Although our understanding of developments at both Oxford and Cambridge has advanced greatly since the pioneering days of Lawrence Stone, many uncertainties remain, not least as regards the make-up of the university community. Broadly speaking Hegarty supports Stone's account of growing student numbers, as against the sceptics, while highlighting the problem of under-recording at university level. Thus numerous non-foundations at St John's never matriculated and their existence can only be discovered from the college's records. These extra bodies include those who did not plan to graduate, as well as a shadowy group of 'poor scholars', numbering twenty or more by the early seventeenth century, who remain scarcely visible even at the college level.

Numbers apart, however, the early years of St John's College provide some fascinating clues regarding the origins of the phenomenon we know as 'Laudianism' – that counter-reforming religious movement that came of age under Charles I. It has long been assumed that the 'conservative' ethos of St John's, a Marian Catholic foundation, is likely to have contributed to the intellectual formation of the young William Laud who matriculated from there in 1589, his tutor John Buckeridge being another Johnian who had matriculated in 1581. But what emerges from Hegarty's work is that Catholic influences lingered much longer at the college than has often been assumed, apparently involving Buckeridge's two immediate predecessors as president, Francis Willis (1577–90) and Ralph Hutchinson (1590–1606), and the circles within which the Jesuit Edmund Campion moved after his departure from St John's c.1570. (Campion had been ordained deacon in 1569 by Bishop Richard Cheyney of Gloucester, the 'most conservative of contemporary Church of England bishops', p. 29.)

Much new evidence has emerged from the surviving correspondence of Henry Russell of Little Malvern, Worcestershire, a sometime fellow of St John's and probable Catholic throughout, who left Oxford c.1580. Russell, Willis and Hutchinson were bound together by a complicated nexus of social and familial relationships in which Willis's wife Katherine looks to have played a key role. (The first husband of Katherine Willis, Nicholas Woodson, was among those who had attempted to reconvert the imprisoned Archbishop Cranmer to Roman Catholicism at Oxford in 1556.) It also turns out that Laud's appointment in 1603 as chaplain to Charles Blount, earl of Devonshire, which is often seen as a countervailing religious factor, was part of a much more widespread college connection. The predecessor of Laud as chaplain to Devonshire was another fellow of St John's, Richard Latewar, while the earl's illegitimate son Mountjoy Blount was admitted to the college as a non-founder in 1607. Despite some ostensible puritan links it may well be that Devonshire finally broke with the 'godly' in the wake of his notorious affair with Penelope Rich – mother of Mountjoy Blount. All of which suggests very interesting possibilities for further research.

This *Biographical Register* additionally sheds light on some of the unresolved questions concerning the nature of the university curriculum and the extent to which it was open to new ideas. Here Hegarty concludes that St John's 'made a very respectable contribution to English medicine in this period'. It is also the case, however, that those pursuing medical studies tended to be the most au fait with 'science' in general. As early as 1580 the college created a readership in philosophy. Among the holders was John Edwardes, who c.1621 presented the college library with a copy of the *Astronomia nova* by Kepler. A medical man, Edwardes was appointed

Sedleian professor of natural philosophy at Oxford in 1636. On the other hand an earlier holder of the college philosophy readership was Christopher Wren, father of the famous architect. A future cleric, Wren senior was a candidate for the astronomy professorship at Gresham College in 1613. In the same year (something missed by Hegarty) Wren can be found using a telescope at St John's in the company of his pupil William Heyricke. Some four years later Wren was to conduct an acoustical experiment in the whispering gallery of Gloucester Cathedral, together with William Juxon and the newly appointed dean, William Laud. Wren subsequently recorded this experiment in his copy of Francis Bacon's *Sylva sylvarum* (1631). None of which provides much support for the old argument that puritanism and science went hand in hand.

Finally Hegarty in his introduction draws attention to a number of Shakespearian connections. Among other things it would appear that William Shakespeare acquired his grammar-school education at the hand of a St John's College graduate, Thomas Jenkins. This in turn links with a tradition of both play-writing and performance at the college, as well as music. Many of the foregoing themes come together in the career of Sir William Paddy. A distinguished medical practitioner and ally of Laud, Paddy had graduated from St John's in 1573, when the original choir establishment created by the founder Sir Thomas White was still in existence. Fifty years later Paddy was to re-endow this, lack of funds having led during the interim to its demise. There exists indeed a wealth of rewarding material in this volume, and Dr Hegarty is to be heartily congratulated on bringing it to fruition.

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Manfred Brod, *Abingdon in Context: Small-Town Politics in Early Modern England*, Fastprint Publishing (Peterborough, 2010). Pp. xviii + 234. Paperback, £10. ISBN 978-184426-888-7.

The transformation of local history in the late twentieth century, together with the lively debate about the fortunes of Tudor and Stuart towns, has produced an impressive array of urban studies charting the rise and decline of county and market towns throughout the British Isles. Manfred Brod's *Abingdon in Context* is an excellent example of the genre. It provides a detailed and scholarly account of the political development of the former Berkshire (now Oxfordshire) town, yet the study is positioned securely within the wider contexts of national and regional events and trends and current historical research. The achievement and renegotiation of urban autonomy are examined chronologically, during the period from the accession of Edward VI to the flight of James II, in a series of thematic chapters which emphasize the impact of intellectual movements, personal ambitions, religious beliefs, local factionalism, political allegiances, and the Stuart and Cromwellian drives to centralize political power before, during and after the Civil Wars. The book clearly illustrates, *inter alia*, the difficulties faced by Tudor and Stuart governments in seeking to exert royal authority and dictate policy to towns and cities, and the often divergent interests of county and urban élites.

Abingdon's medieval prominence owed much to the rise of the great Benedictine monastery that sprawled alongside the River Thames and jealously guarded its seigneurial authority over the town. By the sixteenth century, leading townsmen had gained considerable control over town affairs, but were constrained to use a charitable institution, the Fraternity of the Holy Cross, as a proto-corporation. In consequence, argues Brod, it was the Edwardian depredation of the chantries rather than the Henrician dissolution of the monasteries that drove the town to pursue the increasingly common but expensive expedient of securing chartered status. This happened only after it had negotiated the foundation of a new charity, Christ's Hospital, to hold and administer properties previously owned by the fraternity and to undertake its non-religious functions. The town charter, granted three years later, in 1556, established a formal governmental structure with twelve capital burgesses, including the mayor, assisted by sixteen or more secondary burgesses, an arrangement that survived largely unchanged until the

nineteenth century. The leading families of Abingdon dominated the membership of both institutions, and during the following eight decades they tightened their oligarchic control over the town and its property portfolio. Relations between them were never harmonious and, despite the best efforts of municipal idealists such as Francis Little, were punctuated by power struggles, charges of malpractice and disputes over religious traditionalism and radicalism. Brod draws upon John Richardson's *In Honour of Abingdon* (1641) to illustrate the religious divisions within the élite and the town as England slid into civil war.

The years of conflict between king and Parliament were a period of trauma for front-line towns. Abingdon remained nominally self-governing but the corporation was purged several times and townsmen endured reigns of terror imposed by both Royalist and Parliamentary military governors. The garrisoning of troops from London in the town in 1644 encouraged the spread and intensity of religious radicalism and the growth of dissent. The Restoration saw Abingdon, like other towns, lose the political independence it had secured with its first charter a century earlier. The Crown exerted control over appointments and subjected government of the town to the authority of the county gentry. By the time of the Glorious Revolution, writes Brod, the opportunity for local initiative had ceased and the town had become no 'more than a small cog in a great political machine'.

Whilst generously acknowledging his debt to earlier local historians, Brod utilizes new sources and derives significant new insights from the evidence. He pieces together Sir John Mason's role in the procurement of Abingdon's first charter and explores the rise of oligarchy. He highlights the relationship between urban, county and courtly élites and traces the interaction between the town and local gentry and the self-serving interventions made by successive noble patrons. He explores the emergence and manifestation of religious radicalism in both town and corporation. Throughout, Brod actively seeks to record the role of prominent Abingdonians in the history of the town, and the inclusion of a detailed mini-dictionary of local biography is a valuable addition to the study.

Abingdon in Context amply and elegantly achieves its purpose of tracing the political evolution of early modern Abingdon and its complex and shifting relationships with county and central government, but it touches only briefly upon the social and economic changes that facilitated and shaped them. Whilst the book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of why and how the government of early modern towns changed, the general reader might have welcomed slightly more coverage of the town's social and economic fabric and of the composition of the urban community. This is only a small quibble and does not detract from the many merits and achievement of the book.

CHRISTINE JACKSON, Kellogg College, Oxford

Simon Townley (ed.), *A History of the County of Oxford*, vol. 16, *Henley-on-Thames and Environs* (Victoria History of the Counties of England series), Boydell and Brewer (Woodbridge, 2011). Pp. xiv + 375. 17 colour plates, 59 b&w photos and drawings, 20 maps and plans, 5 tables. £95. ISBN 978-1-904356-38-7.

Thanks largely to its County Council and independent Victoria County History Trust, the providers of most of the funds for its county 'VCH', Oxfordshire remains a prominent leader among counties that continue to publish a VCH series. In other parts of England support is often flagging, with reductions in staffing and output of volumes; and in some counties work has recently ceased with series left incomplete. The new Oxfordshire volume attains the high standards of scholarship expected from the VCH's 'big red books', as they are affectionately known, while at the same time entering into the modern spirit of relaxing the old restrictions on style and allowing the authors to range more widely and express their own interpretations of the evidence that they have gathered so laboriously. This is a splendid volume which provides

a readable and convincing account of the history of Henley-on-Thames and of the four surrounding rural parishes of Bix, Harpsden, Rotherfield Greys and Rotherfield Peppard. It includes excellent maps and illustrations.

Vol. 16 is arranged in the traditional manner of the VCH, with the usual sections on prehistory and settlement, the descent of manors, religion, education, housing, local government and so on, and it is impeccably referenced for future researchers. But in keeping with the best of modern VCH volumes, it also captures the essential character of places and shows how they developed over time.

The site chosen for the medieval planned town of Henley was in south-east Oxfordshire near the borders with Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The town was separated from much of its own county by the Chiltern Hills, but stood on a sheltered bend of the River Thames from where profitable trade was conducted with London, 65 miles (104 km) away downriver or about 38 miles (61 km) by road. The London connection has been of fundamental importance to Henley's fortunes throughout its history. A definite date for the establishment of the town cannot be given, but circumstantial evidence points to a foundation by King Henry II in the 1170s. The new town was sited at an existing cross-roads on the western bank of the Thames and a new stone bridge across the river was erected about the same time. A wedge-shaped market place, surrounded by typical medieval burgage plots, was laid out up the slope to the west of the cross-roads, in a speculative enterprise that was mirrored by kings, bishops, barons and minor lords all over the country. The earliest documentary record for Henley is the grant of an annual fair sometime between 1199 and 1204, when the town was already flourishing. Several extensions, some planned and others more spontaneous, were made during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as is shown on p. 32 on a conjectural plan of the town as it appeared c.1400. Before the Black Death, Henley contained around 200–300 houses and a population of 1,000–1,500. The wealthy élites that dominated England's leading medieval towns were absent here, but this successful, medium-sized town was run by a merchant guild, which by the end of the thirteenth century formed a leading group of probably less than a fifth of the adult male population; they consisted of merchants, traders, shopkeepers and the better-off craftsmen. A royal charter of 1568 reconstituted the guild as a closed corporation.

The new town flourished because it was the most important point for the collection and trans-shipment of grain to London and one of several loading places for wood that was destined for use as fuel in the capital city. Henley's river trades were at first dominated by London merchants, but after the Black Death of 1348–9 they were taken over by locally based men. Property charters and guild records suggest that plague mortality during 1348–9 may have been as high as 64 per cent, with a further fall of up to 29 per cent in the plague of 1361–2, but by the time of the 1377 poll tax the population had recovered to about 670–800 and by 1524 it had reached about 1,000.

The growing wealth of local families through trade with London is reflected in the quality of the town's surviving architecture. Henley retains a substantial number of high-quality late-medieval timber-framed buildings, many of them hidden behind later façades, including some with crown-post roofs dating from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These have been investigated and analysed to the high standards that we have come to expect of a VCH team. Good examples survive which show that the town's most typical medieval timber frames were arranged in large rectangular panels with arch bracing between posts and plates. Brick was available in the district by the early fifteenth century, and in Henley its first known substantial use was in 1530–1 at the White Hart, one of the increasing number of inns in the main streets.

Henley remained relatively small but moderately prosperous in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Malting and brewing became the town's chief industries, and in 1673 Richard Blome noted the 'very considerable' corn trade. But the physical limits of the town remained largely unchanged, and in the 1690s a series of paintings by the Flemish landscape artist Jan Siberechts depicted a densely built settlement that was still dominated by close-packed and mostly timber-

framed buildings, many of them with multiple gables to the street, although by then the use of brick and new classical styles, copied from London, were beginning to change the visual character of the town.

In the eighteenth century Henley flourished not only through its river trade but with an increasing amount of coaching traffic which stopped there on the road to London. The town became an important service centre, with public buildings, inns and shops and a large number of Georgian and stucco buildings adorning its main streets. In 1722 a new charter of incorporation was obtained and in 1781 the Henley Bridge Act not only led to the erection of a fine new stone bridge across the Thames but to wide-ranging improvements to the approach roads and to the waterfront, with street widening and street lighting, the clearance of encroachments from the market place, and the building of a new town hall. In the early nineteenth century a rapidly growing number of poor immigrants from the surrounding rural areas were accommodated in cramped cottage yards, then from the 1820s onwards in terraced houses to the west and south of the town centre. Most maltings, brewhouses and craft workshops stood on back plots. Nearly forty maltings, alongside brewhouses and craft workshops, were erected between 1600 and 1850, most of them small-scale, while storehouses and granaries spread along the waterfront. Henley had the air of a busy commercial centre and thoroughfare town.

This workaday character began to change in Victorian times. The annual summer rowing regatta started in 1839, with the expressed intention of bolstering the town's economy by attracting wealthy patrons. The opening of a branch railway line in 1857 and improvements to the service at the end of the nineteenth century made the town more accessible to visitors and attracted a large number of professionals, retired military men and other wealthy individuals. By the end of Victoria's reign Henley had become a fashionable river resort and dormitory town of a kind not found elsewhere in Oxfordshire, one that looked to London rather than to the county town even more than it had in the past.

The most dramatic changes, however, occurred in the twentieth century, especially from c.1970, when Henley and its surrounding countryside became one of the most affluent areas in the country. High-earning professionals, wealthy retired people and those with private fortunes converted town properties and rural farmhouses and barns into desirable residences. The opening of the M4 motorway provided another quick link to London. The pace and scale of social change were unprecedented.

The second half of the volume is devoted to the detailed history of the four rural parishes, a thinly settled area with scattered farms and hamlets set amongst steep slopes, woodland and small fields. A very old landscape pattern is still visible here, despite the changes over the centuries. Woodland covered over a third of the area in 1600, but only 17 per cent by the 1840s, before it began to spread again in the late nineteenth century. In the Middle Ages this rural district was not a rich area and the farming output was limited to 'sheep-corn' husbandry, with an emphasis on grazing and wood production. But a long period of relative agricultural prosperity, based on growing demand for grain and wood from London, began in the Elizabethan period, when many local tenants ran farms that were considerably larger than the county average. Farming remained the mainstay until the second half of the twentieth century, when it declined rapidly and property prices rose sharply. But, as in the town itself, this modern affluence has preserved and enhanced many of the best features of the ancient landscape, particularly the buildings.

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Kate Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851* (Berkshire Record Society, 14), 2010. Pp. lx + 134. Tables, maps, b&w illustrations. Paperback, £25 (plus £2.50 p&p in UK). ISBN 0-9548716-4-2. Available from: Berkshire Record Society, c/o Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6AF.

This publication containing the Berkshire section of the famous 1851 Census of Religious Worship is a welcome addition to volumes that have already appeared for the whole of Wales (edited by Ieuan Gwynedd Jones) and English counties such as Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (the last also produced by this editor). Very ably edited by Kate Tiller, it supplies information for each place of worship in what has become standard editorial form, closely following the nature of the original returns. This involves such matters as the denomination concerned, the numbers of free and 'other' sittings, attendances at three times during Census Sunday (30 March 1851), the average numbers of attendances over recent months, the numbers of Sunday scholars, Anglican sources of income, and related information such as when a church or chapel was consecrated or constructed if that occurred after 1800, plus any observations by the local informant. In other words, and as other publications have stressed, this source is invaluable as evidence for Victorian places of worship and their congregations, and for local, county or comparative religious history. Nothing before or since can match the 1851 religious census. And when it is well indexed, as in this volume (by people, place and occupations), it becomes a most helpful source for many further genealogical and historical topics.

Four hundred and thirty-four places of worship are covered in the Berkshire returns. Kate Tiller contextualizes them expertly in her lengthy editorial introduction. She explains how the census was conducted, and discusses the problems that historians encounter when analysing the returns. These issues are especially salient with regard to attendance figures, given problems of overlapping attendance at different service times during the day, making it hard to calculate the attendants rather than the attendances. Even so, at least a third of Berkshire people apparently did not attend a church or chapel on Census Sunday. The editor also explains the denominational coverage. Primitive Methodism was surprisingly strong, a consequence of the 1830–1 Swing unrest and the adherence by large numbers of agricultural workers. The new poor law and high incidence of poverty had accentuated disillusion with the religious establishment, and encouraged a shift to this populist and often radicalized form of Methodism. Nevertheless, with its 202 churches, the Church of England dominated the returns, followed by the Wesleyan Methodists (69 places of worship), the Primitives (53 places), the combined Baptists (44 places), the Independents (36 places), and then the other denominations. There were only 6 Roman Catholic places of worship. The other main break-away forms of Methodism were rare in Berkshire, compared with more northern or western regions of England and Wales. The recently formed Wesleyan Reformers, for example, do not appear in the county.

Tiller describes the attempts to reform the Church of England and the tensions within different 'parties' of the Established Church, for this was a critical time for internal controversies. She also explains the local geography of denominations, providing some useful maps. The incidence of 'old dissenters' showed continuity from the seventeenth century. Methodism is found to have been strong in west Berkshire, in parishes where old dissent was weak or absent, thus confirming hypotheses of mutual adjustment to prior dissenting strengths. Indeed, east–west contrasts are shown to have been a striking feature of Berkshire religious history. Tiller adds chronological depth to the growth of nonconformity, looking at the numbers of meeting-house registrations since 1750, and the dates of erection of nonconformist chapels. The Church of England is found to have been very dominant in Sunday school provision and education: 65 per cent of Anglican churches had Sunday scholars, compared with only 33 per cent of Nonconformist places of worship. This counters historiographical arguments that nonconformists played the key role in Sunday school

education. Many other features of the returns are analysed here, making use of indexes of attendance and percentage share measures for each denomination, providing overall a wide-ranging assessment of religion in Berkshire at the time.

The discussion in this volume supplements and broadens Kate Tiller's work on Berkshire dissenters which appeared as a chapter entitled 'Chapel People in 1851: The Example of Berkshire' in the Chapels Society's *Chapels and Chapel People* (2010). Given the fine editorial and source-based work reviewed here, she is to be congratulated on a major contribution to Berkshire history and a valuable addition to publications on mid-Victorian religion.

K.D.M. SNELL, Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester

Laura Schwartz, *A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's 1886–2011*, Profile Books (London, 2011). Pp. xii + 260. 8 b&w plates. Paperback, £17.99. ISBN 978-1-84668-515-6.

As Pauline Adams recounts in her magnificent history of Somerville (1996), by about 1930 the hierarchy of women's colleges at Oxford had become firmly – if offensively – clear: 'Lady Margaret Hall for Ladies, St Hugh's for Girls, St Hilda's for Wenches, Somerville for Women.' The language and assumptions that underpin this categorisation now sound extraordinarily dated; and with the admission of men to the last women's college, St Hilda's, in 2008, the notion of separate institutions for separate sexes will also doubtless soon seem a similar matter of historical curiosity. Laura Schwartz has thus written her history of St Hugh's at a fascinating moment: a point when the idea of women's colleges remains alive in popular memory but is also receding as formerly feminine foundations lose their distinctive mission and become indistinguishable from other Oxford colleges.

St Hugh's is an especially interesting example of the type. Founded in 1886 and intended for poorer students who could not afford the more expensive and exclusive Lady Margaret Hall, it was also doubly marginal: it lacked the cachet of the older foundations and from 1916 was distant from the centre of town. The dramatis personae with whom Schwartz has to grapple are also compelling. They include notably the second principal, Eleanor Jourdain, who famously believed that she and her close friend Charlotte Moberly, the first principal, had encountered the ghost of Marie Antoinette at Versailles. She notoriously dropped dead in 1924 in the middle of a row about her sacking of the historian Cecilia Ady, whom she had previously described as 'mia cara Cecilia' and her 'Baby Don'. In taking the story of St Hugh's up to the present day, *A Serious Endeavour* also goes further than most previous histories of the former women's colleges in being forced to explore the implications of going mixed – as St Hugh's did as long ago as 1987.

Laura Schwartz, a historian of radical feminism, is well-equipped to tell this tale. Indeed, her book must be one of the most original histories of an Oxford college now available. Determined to analyse the development of St Hugh's through the lens of some of the most avant-garde approaches to social history, she has written a book which – almost uniquely – tells us as much about domestic staff as it does about dons, and which foregrounds gender theory, using it as a way of exploring women's experiences in a men's university. The result is a remarkable volume with some notable strengths as well as some serious weaknesses. It certainly deserves serious attention, not least because of the freshness of its approach.

The strengths of Schwartz's work are several. Her decision to use St Hugh's as a testing ground for her own interesting ideas about the history of feminism certainly saves this study from the sort of parochialism that often attends collegiate histories. Her reflections on the writing of institutional history as an insider are also intriguing – and she makes some important methodological points about the advantages and disadvantages of this position. Schwartz likewise offers some intriguing reflections on the ambiguities that have attended the college's

decision to go mixed. St Hugh's now has a majority of male undergraduates and less than a quarter of its fellows are female. This might be seen as a sign of failure, evidence that the college's original mission has been betrayed. But as the author ruefully observes, this situation perhaps perversely reflects the achievement of its founders' aims: they, after all, were always 'motivated far more by a desire to be accepted into the academic establishment than by a critique of the status quo' (p. 180).

Nonetheless, the book's strengths are matched by weaknesses. Some are minor – though the college's historian should surely know, for example, that the medievalist Marjorie Reeves was a fellow of St Anne's, not St Hugh's. More significant are conclusions reached without a clear sense of the college's context. The book's arguments very rarely take account of life within other institutions, especially the strangely homosocial world of the men's colleges in the early twentieth century. As a result, the author is inclined to see St Hugh's as stranger and more atypical than it actually was. For a book that seeks to tell the story of a 'place' rather than just 'a staging post in the life of a single type of St Hugh's member' (p. 17), it also seems peculiar that Laura Schwartz should take so little interest in the college's built environment and grounds. Above all, the idiosyncratic focus of the text risks leaving the reader with little sense of the college's academic work; there is almost nothing here on the life of the mind, or even about which subjects were studied.

A Serious Endeavour is consequently a fascinating, but sometimes frustrating, read. Highly ambitious and intellectually sophisticated, it falls down on purely empirical grounds. Nonetheless, unlike most college histories – and especially the plenitude of coffee-table books being produced solely for alumni – this is a book that makes one think. It announces the arrival of a significant new writer and suggests themes that all future historians of Oxford will need to engage with.

WILLIAM WHYTE, St John's College, Oxford

Timothy Mowl, *The Historic Gardens of England: Oxfordshire*, Tempus Publishing (Stroud, 2007). Pp. 192. 24 colour and 86 b&w plates. Paperback, £17.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-4086-6. Tony Russell, *The Cotswolds' Finest Gardens*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2009). Pp. 160. 153 colour plates. £18.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-702-8.

Timothy Mowl, who used to teach the MA in Garden History at Bristol University, has so far written twelve county volumes in a series on 'Historic Gardens of England'. His ambitious project is supported financially by the Leverhulme Trust. He writes engagingly and well, apart from having a tiresome tendency to repeat bees in his bonnet. In his volume on Oxfordshire, which covers mainly the historical county but also some places included from 1974, he refers to 'the rape of Berkshire' and the pillaging of 'Berkshire's best estates' (in the introduction twice and also on p. 28). His survey consists of detailed studies, the preparation of which included personal visits but not fieldwork.

Mowl's coverage starts with the garden at Blenheim associated with Fair Rosamund, mistress of Henry II. This was a maze of watery features probably designed by Islamic master gardeners from the Norman royal court of Sicily. Other gardens with major water features can be found at the castles of Broughton, Hanwell and Shirburn. Mowl traces the intricate triple moats surrounding the house at Beckley, built c.1540 by Lord Williams of Thame. This contrasts with the Tackley pond garden, designed with military layout in mind, evidently an attempt to make separate ponds for different fish. Ascott Park near Stadhampton is given a romantic description. Recent archaeological work directed by Brian Dix needs to be noticed if the book goes into a second edition (see *Historic Gardens Review* (Dec. 2010–Jan. 2011)). Mowl also provides a perceptive guide to the complexities of the park and gardens of the Blenheim estate, which at different times employed the geniuses of Henry Wise, Charles Bridgeman and Sir John

Vanburgh. He castigates the outrageously dysfunctional approach to the house from the north across the great bridge. I recall rowing H.M. Colvin across the lake to examine the rooms within the drowned basement of the bridge. Much of its building material had come from the former medieval manor house, which was destroyed by the order of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough.

Mowl sees Oxfordshire as the birthplace of the English Arcadia. He has little time for the 'heavy unimaginative geometric' lines of the major landscapes of Ditchley and Shotover. Rousham inevitably receives his approval but his ultimate praises go to Friar Park near Henley-on-Thames, which he identifies as the greatest, most authentic Victorian garden in Britain. Its creator, Sir Frank Crisp, brought wit, scepticism, eclecticism and poetry to bear. There are ice caves and a scale model of the Matterhorn. Clearly Mowl has an appreciative eye for the eccentric. Robert Heber Percy's swimming pool at Faringdon House, guarded by giant stone wyverns and a Gothick tower on top of a ziggurat, also earns his acclaim.

The book includes a disappointing chapter on college gardens which ignores archaeological fieldwork carried out at Magdalen (reported in *Oxoniensia*, 63 (1998), pp. 91–105), Wadham and Merton. What else is missing? The parchmarks that provide evidence for earlier garden layouts at Stonor Park do not appear (see *Oxoniensia*, 59 (1994), pp. 449–70, and *Historic Gardens Review* (Dec. 2011–Jan. 2012), pp. 30–1). Coleshill House and its spectacular 1792 eye-catcher are left for another volume on Berkshire. The University Parks, an enlightened Victorian development, are missed out altogether (for this, see *Garden History*, 32 (2005), pp. 1–14). Books on gardens nowadays have a plethora of coloured plates. Mowl's book is no exception. The trouble here is that the images are 'washed out', as seen through a hazy blue filter. It is to be hoped that the publisher will put this right if there is another edition.

Tony Russell's book on *The Cotswolds' Finest Gardens* provides a guide to fifty gardens, all of which allow some public access. He claims that the essence of English gardens is that they are the product of the rain-bearing English weather. I would never have guessed this from his coloured photography, all taken, it seems, in the height of summer on sunny days when the flowers are out. One would have welcomed some illustration taken in other seasons. His comments are informative if somewhat effusive. He seems unaware of the importance that archaeological surveying has contributed to garden history, though such ignorance also extends to the Society of Antiquaries, which recently restored the garden at Kelmscott – William Morris's 'sweet old place' – without employing archaeological techniques. They would have identified former paths, bedding trenches and tree holes as well as plants (using pollen analysis).

These two books are, in a sense, complementary. While Mowl is conscious of the various historical layers within his Oxfordshire gardens, and has researched maps and other documentary sources in depth, Russell has given us an enthusiastic and valuable overview of gardens that can be visited within a wider region.

JOHN STEANE, Oxford

Other Publications Received

Jeremy Gibson (ed.) and Gwyn de Jong (trans.), *Oxfordshire Contributors to the Free and Voluntary Present to King Charles II, 1661*, Oxfordshire Family History Society (Stanton St John, 2012). Pp. 76. £5. ISBN 978-0-905863-21-4.

Jeremy Gibson (ed.), *Politics and Loyalty in Post-Revolution Oxfordshire: The '1690' County Parliamentary Poll; The Association Oath Rolls, 1695–6*, Oxfordshire Family History Society (Stanton St John, 2011). Pp. 80. £5.

Malcolm Graham and Laurence Waters, *Oxford Then and Now in Colour*, The History Press (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 96. 91 colour and b&w illustrations. £12.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-6340-7.

S.J.D. Green and Peregrine Horden (eds.), *All Souls and the Wider World*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2011). Pp. x + 326. £70. ISBN 978-0-19-959370-5.

Nancy Hood, *Fisher Row and the Watery Fringes of Oxford*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 96. 199 colour and b&w illustrations. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-0566-1.

Tim Jordan, *Cotswold Stone Barns*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 96. 212 colour and b&w illustrations. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-0181-6.

Raymond Moody, *Burford through Time*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2010). Pp. 96. 191 colour and b&w illustrations. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-659-5.

Helen Moore and Julian Reid (eds.), *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible*, Bodleian Library (Oxford, 2011). Pp. 208. 73 colour illustrations. Paperback, £19.99. ISBN 978-185124-349-5.

Shaun Morley (ed.), *Oxfordshire Friendly Societies, 1750–1918* (ORS, 68), 2011. Pp. xiv + 508. 18 plates. £25 (plus £3.15 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-902509-73-3. Available from: The Secretary, Oxfordshire Record Society, 67 Hill Crescent, Finstock, Oxon., OX7 3BT.

Mary Prior, *Fisher Row: Fishermen, Bargemen and Canal Boatmen in Oxford, 1500–1900*, Phillimore (Andover, 2011). Pp. xiv + 404. About 20 maps and plans, 9 b&w plates. Paperback reprint of 1982 edition. £17.99. ISBN 978-1-86077-652-6.

Christopher Sladen, *Oxfordshire Colony: Turners Court Farm School, Wallingford, 1911–1991*, AuthorHouse UK (Milton Keynes, 2011). Pp. xx + 306. 11 b&w photographs. £13.49. ISBN 978-1-4520-7729-1.

Paul Sullivan, *Oxford: A Pocket Miscellany*, The History Press (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 128. 138 b&w illustrations. £7.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-6026-0.

Liz Woolley, *Oxford's Working Past: Walking Tours of Victorian and Edwardian Industrial Buildings*, Huxley Scientific Press (Oxford, 2012). Pp. x + 35. 12 b&w photographs, 3 maps, 7 plans and drawings. £5. ISBN 978-0-9522671-7-1.

