

# REVIEWS

Neil Christie and Oliver Creighton, with Matt Edgeworth and Helena Hamerow, *Transforming Townscapes: From Burh to Borough: The Archaeology of Wallingford, AD 800–1400*, Society for Medieval Archaeology (Monograph 35, London, 2013). Pp. xiv + 476. About 315 b&w illustrations, 30 colour plates. Paperback. £45. ISBN 978-1-909662-09-4.

Sometime c.900 Wallingford was chosen as the site for one of thirty-one permanently garrisoned *burhs* (from Old English, meaning ‘strongholds’), which were designed to defend the kingdom of the West Saxons against Danish advances. In the text known as the Burghal Hidage – which names these sites and indicates the size of forces based at them – Wallingford is identified as one of the largest and most important. Even today substantial sections of a former circuit of earthen ramparts attest to its original status. The military purposes of these strongholds were twofold. Firstly, they formed bulwarks astride the major routes into Wessex – a characteristic clearly evident from Wallingford’s Thames-side position. Secondly, they facilitated defence by the newly organised West Saxon army. Wessex was defended by a strategy of defence-in-depth which was based on the deployment of standing forces at key locations, and was capable of repulsing simultaneous Viking threats on different fronts. At the beginning, this military strategy based on *burhs* may not have borne much relation to existing networks of administration, trade, or judicial authority, which typically were widely dispersed through the landscape. But in the longer run, many *burhs* developed a full range of central-place functions and became towns. It is this transition at Wallingford, from military hard-point to urban centre, which this book aims to explore. It also seeks to set ‘Wallingford’s urban sequence within the context of developments elsewhere in medieval Britain and Europe’ (p. xiii).

The book is an outcome of the ‘*Burh to Borough*’ research project which ran from 2008 to 2010 and was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Based on collaboration by the universities of Exeter, Leicester and Oxford, English Heritage, and local stakeholders, it was a model of ‘community archaeology’: it provided involvement for local volunteers, students, societies and experts in various fields. The resulting publication is a thorough account of medieval urban development which establishes Wallingford as one of the best researched of all English towns. Using the town as a ‘laboratory’, the authors have also sought to address important questions about medieval urban development. What is the archaeological evidence for urbanisation? What are the timings of both urban growth and decay (by the later sixteenth century Wallingford had been reduced to the status of a middling county town)? Can archaeology help to explain the success or failure of power centres over the long term?

Covering such a broad canvas, the study requires detailed analyses to provide depth; thankfully several are provided. Records of earlier excavations – notably of the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery south of the town, and of the ramparts, gate and suburbs to the north – have been re-examined and re-presented to modern standards. Alongside these are descriptions of new fieldwork, comprising extensive geophysical surveys, open-area excavations, and an ambitious programme of backyard test-pitting. Combined with specialist reports on standing buildings, place-names, written sources, coins, ceramics and bioarchaeological evidence, the volume provides a hugely impressive collection of empirical data that will surely endure the vagaries of academic theorising.

That is not to say that the book makes no contribution to theory; rather, it offers important observations. The study ably contextualises the pre-urban evidence for the settlement and cemetery (pp. 45–65). The fieldwork on, and discussion of, intra-mural open spaces yield a significant advance in the understanding of early towns, as does the examination of different spatial scales and relative speeds of urban development. In some ways it is the carefully

identified negative evidence that is most interesting in this regard. When St Martin's church was founded in the late tenth century near the centre of the *burh*, it seems there was still little pressure on urban space (p. 396). Also significant is the evidence of material culture, the levels of which even in the eleventh century look paltry in comparison with those from eighth-century *wics* or even monastic sites.

Despite these valuable contributions, it is regrettable that the authors did not more explicitly address the central questions underlying the project and reflect on its successes and failures. Although the study contextualises the trajectory of Wallingford's urban development, this would have benefited from greater comparison with other towns, particularly ones in the Danelaw. Moreover, though some attempt is made to appreciate Wallingford within its hinterland, this is mostly focused on particular sites rather than the totality of the hinterland. The authors never fully acknowledge that one reason why the archaeological evidence for Wallingford's urban development 'remains fleeting' (p. 406) is that the study of urbanisation requires a landscape rather than a site-specific approach. What was the effect of urbanisation on systems of administration and justice? How did centralised economic structures alter the landscape, material culture and settlements of the hinterland? These seem to be crucial questions, and if they could be answered, they would add force to the evidence examined in Wallingford. Without fully addressing them, the trajectory promised in the title, 'from *Burh* to Borough', remains tantalisingly out of sight.

STUART BROOKES, UCL Institute of Archaeology

Catherine Barrington-Ward, *St Giles' Church, Oxford: An Illustrated Guide*, PCC of St Giles Church, Oxford (Oxford, 2014). Pp. 56. 22 colour, 14 b&w illustrations. Paperback. £5 (plus £1.50 p&p in UK). Available from: The Benefice Secretary, 10 Woodstock Rd, Oxford, OX2 6HT. Lydia Carr, Russell Dewhurst and Martin Henig (eds.), *Binsey: Oxford's Holy Place – Its Saint, Village, and People*, Archaeopress (Oxford, 2014). Pp. x + 148. 23 b&w illustrations, 11 colour plates, 11 maps. Paperback. £20. ISBN 978-1-905739-84-4.

More than twenty parish churches and chapels stood in and around medieval Oxford. Many of them are still there, albeit often rebuilt and sometimes on new sites. The presence of some is remembered in the city's districts through names such as St Clement's, St Ebbe's, St Aldate's, and of course the once-suburban, long, wide thoroughfare outside the city's north gate: St Giles. Appropriately enough, Giles is associated with the edge of things. Tradition links him with woodland and solitude, and the popularity of his cult reflected his standing as a saint who protected the sick, marginalised, lonely and fearful. Both topographical associations are symbolised in his veneration at sites alongside medieval urban approaches and outside gates, where churches could serve both the residents of suburbs and travellers at the start and finish of journeys. As Derek Keene pointed out in 1975, this is typified at Oxford where the church of St Giles occupies a site between two converging roads that merge into a broad space where carts might wait to enter the city or pay toll, and drovers and shepherds could wait with their animals.

The late Catherine Barrington-Ward's *St Giles' Church, Oxford* tells the story of the building and of the evolution of worship within it. Modestly subtitled *An Illustrated Guide*, it is actually something more than this. It is indeed well illustrated, and the text includes a useful survey of the building and its contents, but about half of the work – and in some ways the richer half – is given to a survey of changing use, devotion and artistic values between the Reformation and present. This includes an insightful account of the area's Laudian associations in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a particularly vital discussion of changes in the parish and its churchmanship after 1800 and during the twentieth century. A list of primary sources, bibliography and glossary are among the further qualities of what is in effect a short book rather than a church guide.

Another area that is closely bound up with Oxford's sense of itself is the strange waterland to the west, bounded and threaded by the Thames, the Seacourt Stream and the Swift Ditch. One of the things we learn from *Binsey: Oxford's Holy Place* is how many-layered this district is: a place of romance and remaking, a former retreat for Christ Church, an area of quietude in the midst of clamour, and a home of eccentricity – it lies for instance on the Berkshire side of the Thames yet in the jurisdiction of the city of Oxford, its church is extra-parochial, and whereas most parishes elect two churchwardens Binsey has 'coped for most of its history with only one'. Among the church's incumbents, Arthur Mallinson is remembered for the stuffed owls he placed in the roof of the church to deter bats.

The book is an anthology of essays on medieval, literary, cultural and local history. In 'The Legends of St Frideswide' (reprinted from *Oxoniensia*, vol. 52, 1987) John Blair edits and compares the two twelfth-century versions of St Frideswide's *Vita*, considers their historical context, and examines the enigma of Frideswide's counterpart Ste Fréwisse, in the French village of Bomy. In a second section (with Maureen Mellor, also derived from *Oxoniensia* (vol. 53, 1988)) Blair examines and interprets the sub-oval earthwork enclosure that is associated with St Margaret's chapel. Martin Henig contextualises St Frideswide's, Binsey, in time and area, and reflects upon it as sacred space. Lydia Carr looks at pilgrims and pilgrimage. Russell Dewhurst considers Binsey's clergy and patterns of service. Carl Boardman introduces us to Binsey families and life as revealed through parish registers. Julian Munby contributes a substantial piece (with evocative photographs) on Binsey's landscape. There are explorations of the intricacies and harmonics of Binsey's literary associations from Edward Wakeling (on Binsey and Lewis Carroll), Beatrice and Peter Groves (on Gerard Manley Hopkins and 'Binsey Poplars'), and two fine poems by Nigel Speight with which the book opens.

For those for whom Binsey is primarily to do with a riverside pub, Mark Davies's discussion of 'The Perch and its Predecessors' introduces us to bygone diversions such as bull and badger baiting, and to the Perch as a rendezvous for gambling undergraduates who entered their dogs in contests for killing rats or shooting pigeons. Davies's survey includes one of the book's most atmospheric references (of many): a diary note made by C.S. Lewis on 22 November 1922, which was 'gloomy and fogged', when he and his friend Alfred Jenkin cycled out to the Perch because the 'place ... would underline the mood of the day'. In later years Lewis often visited the Perch. (One wonders if in his discussions there with friends he ever reflected that the legend of St Frideswide's shunning of a royal suitor has features in common with the Hiberno-Welsh legend of St Melangell.) *Binsey: Oxford's Holy Place* is a rich mix which anyone with an interest in Oxford or place and cultural history will read and re-read with pleasure.

RICHARD MORRIS, University of Huddersfield

John Maddicott, *Founders and Fellowship: The Early History of Exeter College, Oxford, 1314–1592*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2014). Pp. xxii + 353. 2 maps, 23 colour plates. £75. ISBN 978-0-19-968951-4.

Though published to celebrate the seven hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Exeter College, this monograph is very far from being a conventional institutional history. Rather than following the college's fortunes from its beginnings until the present day, as might have been anticipated, the author has confined himself to the college's first three centuries, which has resulted in a study of considerable scholarly depth.

The college owed its existence and ultimate survival to two benefactors, a medieval bishop and a Tudor civil servant. From an obscure family in a remote north Devon parish, Walter de Stapeldon made his way to Oxford c.1277. A decade or so later, having completed the arts course, he acquired a canonry in Exeter Cathedral and deputised for a time for the bishop, before going back to the university to study for a doctorate in civil law. In 1306 he was elected bishop of Exeter and in the same year dispatched by the crown on an embassy to France. From

then until his murder by a London mob in 1326, he divided his time between his diocese and acting as treasurer to Edward II, and in the process became a very rich man. He lavished part of his wealth upon Exeter Cathedral – furnishing the newly completed choir and giving generously to the building of the nave – and part on improving the education of the clergy of his diocese.

In 1314 Stapeldon purchased a hall in Oxford to accommodate a priest chaplain and twelve fellows, eight from Devon and four from Cornwall. Very unusually he required the fellows to confine themselves to the arts course and to relinquish their fellowships once they had performed their teaching obligations as newly graduated MAs. He then expected them to serve the church in the Exeter diocese. For their maintenance he gave the tithes of the Cornish living of Gwinear, which were to be administered in perpetuity on their behalf by the dean and chapter of Exeter Cathedral. Stapeldon supplemented this meagre endowment in 1320 with the advowson of Long Wittenham in Berkshire, to support two more fellows who were similarly restricted to the arts course but drawn from Salisbury diocese in which Long Wittenham lay. Stapeldon decreed that these young scholars should elect annually one of their number as their rector. His chief duty was to produce an account of the hall's finances, which under favourable circumstances amounted to between £40 and £50 a year.

Apart from a papal relaxation of 1405, which permitted a fellow to stay on occasionally to work for a higher degree in theology, Stapeldon's statutes determined the life of the college for the next two and a half centuries. Throughout this time the fellowship duly maintained the stipulated complement of fellows from the West Country, who, where their careers can be traced, often subsequently took up livings in the Exeter diocese. A donation by local well-wishers in 1478 of the presentation to the Cornish living of Menheniot together with a fixed payment of £20 a year from tithes somewhat improved the college's precarious financial position.

With its modest endowment, Exeter College was ill equipped to deal with periods of inflation, and several times it only managed to remain solvent by dispatching its fellows into the country to save on their commons. Then early in Elizabeth's reign, just after the college had weathered one of the worst financial crises in its history, a second major benefactor unexpectedly appeared: Sir William Petre. Like Stapeldon a Devon man and Oxford graduate in civil law, Petre had gained some of his wealth from involvement in the dissolution of the monasteries before being appointed a secretary of the privy council in the last years of Henry VIII, a post he retained under Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth. Perhaps inspired by the example of his friend Sir Thomas Pope, who had founded Trinity College a decade earlier, Petre offered in 1566 to fund seven additional fellowships at Exeter College, this time with no geographical prescription, on the condition that the college accepted new statutes. Amongst much else they radically enhanced the powers of the rectorship, which now became a reasonably salaried permanent office. On the acceptance of his conditions, Petre granted the college the rectories of Kidlington, Yarnton, South Newington and Merton, all in Oxfordshire, to which he added a little later two mills in Kidlington and some small properties in Oxford itself.

Petre's donation saved the college financially, but in the short term proved something of an equivocal blessing. Just as Elizabeth's government was re-establishing Protestantism in the university, Petre, until his death in 1572, nominated fellows who were open Catholics or religious conservatives at best, and Exeter gained the unwelcome reputation of being one of the most Catholic colleges in Oxford. It was only on the appointment of a committed Protestant rector in the person of Thomas Glasier by Petre's heir in 1578 that the college's future was secured.

Based primarily on Exeter College's own archives, *Founders and Fellowship* ranges widely over the political, religious and economic history of the medieval and early modern periods. In so doing it makes a valuable contribution to both the early history of Oxford University and to the history of higher education in general.

CLAIRE CROSS, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York

Anthony Geraghty, *The Sheldonian Theatre: Architecture and Learning in Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, Yale University Press (London, 2013). Pp. x + 160. 65 colour and b&w illustrations. £35. ISBN 978-0-300-19504-0. Martin Kemp, *The Chapel of Trinity College, Oxford*, Scala Arts and Heritage Publishers (London, 2014). Pp. 88. 64 illustrations, most in colour. Paperback. £12.95. ISBN 978-1-85759-824-7.

At the formal opening of the Sheldonian Theatre on 9 July 1669, Robert South, Oxford University's public orator, caused controversy by attacking not just Oliver Cromwell and 1650s republicanism, but also nonconformity, comprehension of dissenters and the new science of the 1660s, while defending the theatre itself, its patron Archbishop Gilbert Sheldon and its architect Christopher Wren, as well as monarchy and episcopacy. In his marvellous and absorbing study, Anthony Geraghty demonstrates that the Sheldonian Theatre, as both project and object, is best understood in the broad context of intellectual life and politics of mid-seventeenth-century Oxford.

The project's origins go back to the late 1620s and 1630s, to the time of that great reforming chancellor of Oxford and archbishop William Laud (d. 1645), who wished to remove the secular activities of the university from the sacred precincts of St Mary's church. He built a Convocation House in 1634–6, but it was left to his followers in the 1660s, restored to power and influence following the upheavals of civil war and regicide, to construct a theatre to accommodate the annual Act (the ceremony at the end of the academic year). It was initiated by Laud's friend the new chancellor Clarendon, financed by Laud's follower Archbishop Sheldon, and designed by Wren, a scion of an impeccably royalist and Anglican family. But the Sheldonian Theatre was much more than a monument to the deceased archbishop, since it reaffirmed the Laudian social vision of order, place and discipline which may have been necessary in the 1630s but which to Clarendon and Sheldon were imperative in the 1660s in order to rebuild their fragmented society after the depredations of the interregnum.

Geraghty argues convincingly that South's 1669 attack on the new science was a response to the implications of the writings of Thomas Sprat and Joseph Glanvill, which seemed to diminish the traditional university curriculum and elevate the new philosophy; the Sheldonian's ceiling can itself be read as a visual riposte to such critics as South, since it celebrated the indispensable value of an encyclopaedic or complete circle of learning, as well as depicting the expulsion of Cromwellian vices of ignorance and envy. Geraghty also has new insights into Wren and the design itself. He shows that Wren's interest in architecture reflected its academic respectability: though not on the curriculum, it was part of mathematics – in fact applied geometry – and as such was placed amongst the circle of learning on the painted ceiling. He notes that many of Wren's early projects had their origins before the 1660s, not just the Sheldonian but also repairs to old St Paul's cathedral in London (originally restored by Laud in the 1630s), or the chapel of Pembroke College, Cambridge – built to fulfil a vow taken by Wren's imprisoned uncle Matthew Wren, bishop of Ely, in the 1650s.

Wren had no obvious precedent in England to draw on for an academic theatre, and it seems he was influenced by contemporary theatre design; the interior as built was close to the temporary Act auditorium which had been erected annually in St Mary's church from 1565 onwards, although, crucially, it was made 'U'-shaped rather than rectangular. He was certainly restricted by 'the limits of a private purse', namely that of Sheldon, who footed the bill. (It is not explained why there was no appeal for funds for this university project, as had been conducted in the 1610s for the Schools Quadrangle.) Geraghty also challenges the conventional view that Wren drew on the 'empiricism' of his scientific method in his designs. In a famous passage, John Summerson described the seemingly unprecedented exterior of the Sheldonian, which looks like a combination of basement and attic, as 'a man with his trousers pulled up to his chin and his hat pulled over his nose'; but Geraghty proves that such a façade was a norm in French architecture of the day. The 'Roman' aspects of the design were intended to be witty, learned and playful, much like aspects of the annual Act: the awning and cords in the ceiling

painting allude to open-air Roman theatres, while *fasces*, Roman symbols of authority, project from the proctors' rostra. Geraghty's book, with its perceptive investigation of politics and culture, and lavish illustrations, is simply architectural history at its best.

If the Sheldonian was the first classical building in Oxford, the first chapel in this style was erected at Trinity College in 1691–4, and is the subject of Martin Kemp's splendid and beautifully illustrated study. Its three chapters give us a detailed tour of the exterior and interior, examine its design and execution (usefully printing several letters from the archives), and celebrate its rich carving and painting. An appendix by Emma Percy describes the stained glass installed in the 1860s–80s. Ralph Bathurst is the central figure in this volume. As president of Trinity from 1664 to 1704, Bathurst expanded and modernized the college's buildings, above all the chapel. Its architect is unknown, but we can trace something of its evolution by comparing the engraved design sent out to potential benefactors in 1691 with the executed building, and by considering advice on the exterior and the tower staircase submitted by Wren once work was well underway. Kemp rejects the attribution to Henry Aldrich, dean of Christ Church, on stylistic grounds, since he was a committed Palladian, and instead plausibly proposes Bathurst himself, who possessed long experience in overseeing building projects in an age when the 'amateur' or gentleman architect flourished.

Certainly for the interior, Kemp sees a single controlling mind – Bathurst again – 'brilliantly' integrating the remarkable carving (with five types of wood) and painting, in a way common abroad but relatively unknown in English churches. Thus, for example, the evangelists on the screen direct the viewer's eye towards Pierre Berchet's *Christ in Glory* on the ceiling. The central panel of the altarpiece, apparently vacant, is actually a wooden starburst of walnut veneer, accompanied by intricate geometrical shapes, which encourages the worshipper to reflect on the 'intricate order of God's creation'. Time has dimmed the vivid colour of this starburst and the golden light around Christ in Berchet's painting. The author might have mentioned that the alcoves at the east end have sash windows, possibly the earliest in Oxford, while the college chapel itself could have been profitably compared to the great country house chapels of the period, including those at Belton and Chatsworth. But this slim volume powerfully demonstrates just what a gem the college chapel is.

KENNETH FINCHAM, University of Kent

Tim Jordan, *Cotswold Stone Barns*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2011). Pp. 96. 212 colour and b&w illustrations. Paperback. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-0181-6. Tim Jordan and Lionel Walrond, *The Cotswold House*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2014). Pp. 192. About 320 colour illustrations. £20. ISBN 978-1-4456-0840-2.

These two recent books from Amberley Publishing are well-illustrated, accessible introductions to much of the vernacular architecture of the Cotswolds. *Cotswold Stone Barns* is a companion to Tim Jordan's *Cotswold Barns* published in 2006, while *The Cotswold House* is a joint venture with veteran buildings researcher Lionel Walrond. Though the latter work is idiosyncratic in its approach, it is valuable for insights into some distinctive vernacular features of the region.

*Cotswold Stone Barns* is described as a 'pictorial essay', which is accurate; but it could also be taken as a paean for a lost world. Jordan, however, seems reluctant to regret the loss of traditional barns, perhaps because according to the blurb of the other volume he lives in a converted barn himself. Thus in discussing field barns he stresses the problems involved in saving such buildings rather than offering solutions. And although almost a quarter of the book compares barns before and after conversion he makes few judgements about what is good or bad. The excellent photographs (unfortunately mostly exteriors), however, will enable the thoughtful reader to make up his or her own mind. While this book attempts to fill some gaps in his earlier one (see my review in *Oxoniensia*, vol. 71, 2006, pp. 514–16), it does not pretend to be an academic treatise: there are no footnotes, bibliography or index, and the

text is a series of extended captions. There is much useful information, but the treatment is superficial – no building was apparently studied in depth, and the Cotswold barn could have been considered in its farmstead context, and how this changed. This is particularly important as other farm buildings are mentioned, as are the multiple uses and alterations of barns.

*The Cotswold House* consists of discursive chapters each followed by a pictorial essay similar in style to the barns book. It has a bibliography and a (thin) index. However, the captions to the (unnumbered) photographs sometimes repeat or even contradict chapter text. For example the text (p. 62) states that Horton Court (Glos.) was built in 1521 incorporating a Norman hall of c.1140, while the caption to a phased plan dates the hall to 1185, and the sixteenth-century work is shown to be additional to two periods of building in the fifteenth century. But the main problem with this way of organising the book – presumably the result of the dual authorship – is that the illustrations are not tied into the text. So, to whom is this book addressed? Obviously owners of houses in the Cotswolds, and perhaps visitors as well, but while the reader is assumed to know little about the course of English social history, and is given a one-page ‘Ladybird’ summary from the Normans to the Victorians, elsewhere technical terms such as copyhold, lights, purlin and smoke bay are used but not defined.

One aim of the book is to define a ‘Cotswold style’ of house building. The geographical extent of the Cotswolds varies between almost every book about the area (and indeed differs slightly between the two reviewed here). The authors expand its area into the vales of Severn and White Horse, partly to capture an important group of medieval barns. The task of then pinning down the characteristics of an area’s vernacular building style poses a fundamental problem: one cannot assume that just because one has defined a geographical area, even one based on geology, that the buildings must therefore have a distinctive style. Not only does one need to show that buildings outside the chosen area do not share these characteristics, but one must not fall into the trap of geological determinism – similar building materials do not necessarily result in similar architecture. In the end Jordan and Walrond admit that their photographs show that there is no single ‘Cotswold style’ but a collection of features from which builders could choose: hood moulds, gabled dormers, flared chimney caps, ball finials, elliptical gable windows and timber lintels.

There are also important issues of chronology and social status. Despite an attempt to set Cotswold houses against a chronology of social history, the chapter on ‘Historical Elements of an Evolving Cotswold Style’ rambles through building materials and external decorative treatments. These are followed by plan forms, which include some measured drawings with no apparent relationship to the text or statement as to whether the buildings illustrated are typical of a given place or time. A photograph of one of these, a ‘yeoman’s farmhouse’ in Temple Guiting (Glos.), appears later in the chapter, but its relationship to the plan is not immediately obvious and both photograph and plan raise so many questions of date and interpretation that the reader is left to wonder why this was chosen as an example. Indeed the authors themselves are confused. The plan (p. 38) indicates a fourteenth-century core which was altered and extended c.1600, but the caption to the photograph (p. 42) refers to it as ‘undoubtedly a fine early sixteenth-century Tudor building’ – a period completely missing from the plan.

Nevertheless, *The Cotswold House* does contain some valuable insights and testable theories about the development of the area’s houses. There is, for example, a detailed description of a genuinely local sixteenth- or seventeenth-century form, the extended collar truss. The authors also stress the continual changes in the dynamics of individual families within wider demographic trends, and hence that while the needs of a ‘typical’ nuclear family may be useful in understanding how a ‘standard’ house might have worked, the presence of elderly widows, grown-up children, unmarried sisters, and so on, all need to be allowed for when interpreting specific buildings.

On the other hand, there are errors, misunderstandings and shortcomings. The treatment of cruck-framed buildings seems to ignore the vast literature on the subject, notably the latest distribution maps published in *Vernacular Architecture* and elsewhere. Church houses were

not built to brew ale (p. 66) but to hold church ales (fundraising feasts). At some points the authors even give up on their task. Thus pp. 82–3 are a montage of townscapes with the opt-out comment ‘all interpretation is left to the reader at this juncture’. Such superficiality is an abandonment of responsibility. For example, however closely one looks at the photograph at the bottom left of p. 82 (of 162 The Hill, Burford) the reader will not learn that its roof timbers date from 1459, and that despite the apparently seventeenth-century façade it was heavily restored in the early twentieth century by Emslie Horniman. Its bay window (referred to on p. 139) was one of the twentieth-century creations. The section on internal features is thin. For example, staircases are treated in two pages of illustrations (most of which show stone newel stairs). There is also a recommendation that the reader should look at Linda Hall’s ‘little’ book. The publication referred to, *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300–1900* (Countryside Books, Newbury, 2005), may be slim but is in fact the most useful volume ever written for understanding the features of vernacular houses. Finally, there are some annoying typographical errors; for example, Evenload for Evenlode (p. 43) and Western (p. 132) for Weston (p. 145 and elsewhere). *The Cotswold House* ends with a plea for more research. This is certainly needed.

DAVID CLARK, Oxford

Richard Dudding, *Early Modern Radley: People, Land and Buildings, 1547–1768*, Radley History Club (Radley, 2014). Pp. vi + 144. 45 b&w illustrations. Paperback. £12 (plus £2.50 p&xp in UK). ISBN 978-0-9568632-3-2. Available from the author at 46/48 Lower Radley, Abingdon, Oxon., OX14 3AY.

The village of Radley, near Abingdon, is blessed with an active History Club which has collected an archive of transcribed documents relating to the history of the parish. Richard Dudding has used this material, as well as documents in the Berkshire Record Office and elsewhere, and surveys of surviving houses, to examine the people, land and buildings of Radley in the ‘early modern’ period of the mid sixteenth to mid eighteenth centuries. Describing the village modestly as ‘a pretty ordinary place in which nothing of great note happened’, he looks closely at questions of social structure and landholding, and demonstrates that even the smallest place has a history that can throw light on what happened elsewhere. Dudding sees the early modern period as the age of the yeoman farmer who worked with his fellow villagers to cultivate open fields and manage commons. Radley had no formal enclosure act, but by the later eighteenth century the commons had disappeared, landholdings were consolidated, and the yeoman families once prominent in the village had all been replaced by tenant farmers. This book seeks to document, describe, and where possible to explain these changes.

Changes in the distribution of land lie at the heart of Dudding’s account, which is based on three surveys: of 1547, 1633 and 1768. The first, drawn up by the king’s surveyor Roger Amyce after the dissolution of Abingdon Abbey, hints at recent amalgamation of holdings and the existence of derelict buildings, perhaps due to late medieval depopulation. The survey does not cover freehold land but much was held by copyhold in parcels of 20 to 100 acres of scattered strips. In 1560 the manor of Radley was bought by the Stonhouse family, who as resident lords farmed their own demesne land and set about increasing their estate by taking back land from tenants and purchasing more. When they did grant new tenancies the tenures were leasehold rather than copyhold, and the land was often consolidated into compact parcels. The terrier of 1633 is the most detailed survey of the three, showing the location of each family’s land. Here Dudding’s local knowledge is invaluable and in an appendix he maps Radley’s fields, meadows and pastures at this date with their traditional names. The terrier shows land still being farmed in open fields, many more copyhold tenancies than leaseholds, and little change in the size of the commons. The third survey covers only the Stonhouse family’s estate in 1768 but it seems that the enclosure of the parish was now complete. Much of the former demesne was now

parkland and woodland around the family's grand mansion (built in 1727, now part of Radley College), with the rest of the parish divided between seven large tenanted farms. Dudding suggests that enclosure had been well under way by the end of the seventeenth century, citing an agreement of 1704 between Sir John Stonhouse and his manorial tenants to move the commons and adjust common rights. The topic of enclosure is hotly debated by historians and this detailed and carefully argued work will provide data to add to other parish studies. Works such as *Enclosure and the Yeoman* by R.C. Allen (1992) provide a wider context and we can see how far Radley's experience conformed to a general pattern. Historians have also pointed out that surveys show the ownership of land but not necessarily who farmed it; subtenancy was very common, and a family might sublet parts of their own holding and rent other land better suited to their needs.

The book also looks at the people of early modern Radley, a community of about 250. Aiming to 'build a picture of what made the village tick', a chapter examines topics such as occupations, gender and family, literacy, borrowing, prices, marriage networks and more, though multiple topics and subheadings create a rather disjointed effect. Comparison with other small rural communities would have added perspective: did early modern Radley resemble the community portrayed in *Tudor and Stuart Shrivenham* by Joan Dils and Deirdre Schwartz (2004), for example?

The third major topic addressed in this book is buildings, and here Dudding is able to draw on surveys of Radley's surviving medieval and early modern houses, some of which have been dated by dendrochronology. An excellent discussion of local buildings in the context of the 'great rebuilding' thesis concludes that both the original chronology and social analysis proposed by Hoskins need flexible interpretation to fit the Radley evidence. Probate inventories and the hearth tax are skilfully deployed to describe house interiors and living standards. Dudding observes that 'an Abingdonian pauper [with more than one hearth] lived a warmer life than a Radley yeoman' – although his unusually broad definition of a 'yeoman' might have something to do with that.

The book is attractively produced with a spacious layout and a useful selection of maps and illustrations. The author provides lists of sources, a bibliography, a glossary and an index. This account of Radley can be recommended to anyone interested in the early modern fortunes of rural Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Similar studies of other parishes would be welcome.

ADRIENNE ROSEN, Kellogg College, Oxford

Hannah Jones (ed.), *The Life and Times of a Charlbury Quaker: The Journals of William Jones, 1784–1818* (Oxfordshire Record Society, 69). Pp. xviii + 370. £25 (plus £3.15 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-902509-78-8. Available from: The Secretary, Oxfordshire Record Society, 67 Hill Crescent, Finstock, Oxon., OX7 3BT.

As a dissenting community of worshippers, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are fairly well known as they wrote numerous tracts, petitioned government for greater civil liberties, and championed noble causes such as the abolition of slavery and penal reform to name but two. Indeed, collectively these men and women were often at the forefront of reform movements from the mid seventeenth century onwards. Yet there is still much to learn about Friends and their activities, in their meetings as well as in their interactions with the wider community. The public face of Quakerism can be better understood from material that was issued mainly from their central organisational hub, the London Yearly Meeting and associated meetings in London. Increasingly, however, with further investigations into regional meetings a deeper knowledge of the Society and its membership is emerging. And the publication of correspondence, commonplace books and diaries has begun to flesh out the experiences of individual Quakers, their code of conduct, and their attitudes and responses to the world around them.

The journals of William Jones, a Charlbury Quaker, painstakingly edited by Hannah Jones for the Oxfordshire Record Society, add to the rich body of work that is now available about the Friends. In a foreword, William Whyte, the series editor, notes that William Jones is ‘a rather unlovable diarist’ as well as ‘a frustrating one’. Indeed, as with many other religious diarists from the eighteenth century, this man was a stern critic of prevailing social and cultural norms, while his advice was often ignored. Whyte draws attention to the fact that the ambiguities in his entries and his indifference towards current events have, until now, caused his journals to be largely overlooked (p. v). This splendid volume nevertheless provides the reader with the opportunity to reflect on William Jones’s religious journey, in both physical and spiritual aspects, and on the expansive nature of Quakerism, including transatlantic links and the frequent visits of American Quakers to Charlbury.

The edited journals are elucidated with a short but incisive Introduction of eight pages, a useful map of William Jones’s travels, and a *Dramatis Personae*. It is possibly a shortcoming that in this introductory section Hannah Jones does not discuss William Jones’s principal observations, but this does not detract from the volume itself, and three indexes help the reader to pinpoint certain themes. In the Introduction the editor offers a biographical sketch of William Jones and an explanation of his decision to keep journals (ten in all) — Jones claimed it was ‘Beneficial to my Minde’ to record these experiences (p. vii). Hannah Jones also considers the structure and importance of the journals, and appropriately locates them in the ‘wider tradition of Quaker “journalling”’ (pp. xii–xiv). She also reflects on the themes in the journals (pp. viii–xii), drawing particular attention to the significant role of female Quakers in the meetings.

Hannah Jones’s transcript exposes life’s daily routines, especially rites of passage, consumption of food and drink, employment in the region, weather patterns, fairs, wildlife, and flora and fauna. Unpleasant aspects of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Oxfordshire are also recorded, such as poor harvests and grinding poverty, and occasional reports of crime and drunkenness, disease and injuries, including (p. 343) reference to an acquaintance who was bitten by a dog. (One wonders why Quakers always seem to get bitten.) William Jones was also concerned about financial misfortune: ‘I think some people having so much Paper as passeth for Money, it leadeth to high mindedness and Pride, and to be off their gard, so as not to act Prudently’ (p. 324). There are in fact references to important public matters (despite Whyte’s observation), such as the war with France and public attitudes to it: ‘hearing the bells ring I understood it was to signify a rejoicing on account of menny of the French People been slain by the English, it grieved me much to think that People should rejoice at the Destruction of their fellow Mortals’ (p. 290). The volume is therefore an excellent and vibrant commentary on William Jones’s life and on the attitudes of the wider Quaker community.

As a final comment, it is worthwhile to bear in mind the reflection of William Jones in the opening section of his journal (p. 2) where he affirms that it is good for parents to

learn their Children to read when yound which my Father did me He used to have me  
Read two or three Chapters in a day by him when at Work which was of great use to me to  
keep me out of Harms way and to Instruct my Minde in good thus by having good Parents  
I was more Preserved from the Evels snares and Temptations of the World than menny  
Children.

But Jones also recognised his own weaknesses: ‘I was strongly a dicted to Play and get out without my Parents leave and so neglect[ed] my duty to them’ (pp. 2–3). Though modern readers may not share William Jones’s moral earnestness, they will find his cautionary tales to be as vivid now as when they were penned over two hundred years ago.

RICHARD C. ALLEN, University of South Wales

Malcolm Graham, *Oxford in the Great War* (Your Towns and Cities in the Great War series), Pen and Sword Military (Barnsley, 2014). Pp. 176. About 90 b&w illustrations. Paperback. £12.99. ISBN 9781783462971. Jane Cotter, *Oxfordshire: Remembering 1914–18* (Great War Britain series), The History Press (Stroud, 2014). Pp. 160. About 90 b&w illustrations. Paperback. £12.99. ISBN 978-0-7509-5389-4.

Both of these books have been published in national series commemorating the First World War. *Oxford in the Great War* is one of about sixty titles that describe the war's impact on local communities. Published by a Barnsley based company, the series covers predominantly urban places. *Oxfordshire: Remembering 1914–18* belongs to a smaller 'Great War Britain' series, consisting of sixteen titles on various cities, towns and counties, and is based on collaboration with the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock.

*Oxford* claims to cater for military and social historians, while *Oxfordshire* describes itself as 'highly accessible'. In truth both books are aimed at a non-specialist readership, which is not to say that they are facile or superficial. Both authors have been diligent in their research, using newspapers, letters, diaries, photographs, parish magazines and contemporary printed pamphlets, though Graham's work is the more thorough and scholarly. He lists three pages of manuscript sources (Cotter lists none), and his bibliography runs to four pages (Cotter's to two). Graham provides an index, Cotter unfortunately does not. Neither work has footnotes, though both authors indicate the sources of quotations or assertions. The books are arranged thematically and follow the same lines, covering the outbreak of war, recruitment and its impact, the experiences of local regiments at the front, social and economic consequences in the home communities, and the aftermath. Each book has six chapters, the headings of three being identical ('Outbreak of War', 'Work of War' and 'Coming Home'). The chief difference, of course, is that Cotter's book covers the whole of Oxfordshire (the historical county) whereas Graham's is restricted to Oxford. There is inevitably a contrast between length and depth, Cotter being allowed 160 pages for the county, Graham 176 for the city alone.

Both books contain about ninety illustrations, which are well chosen and frequently arresting. But neither is simply a collection of pictures strung together by captions; they are illustrated histories in which images are integral – sometimes text and image are cleverly integrated. Cotter has drawn on collections in the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, while Graham has relied mainly on the Oxfordshire History Centre collections. Many images are reproduced here for the first time. Unfortunately some of the images in *Oxfordshire* are accompanied by cryptic references. The reader who does not already know that 'LC' means 'Library of Congress' will not be enlightened here (I guessed and Googled). More worryingly, the publisher has chosen to under-print each page with an 'antique' look, presumably to convey the impression of a manuscript rescued from the trenches. The result is a pronounced vignette effect that has rendered some text and images almost indecipherable; several page numbers have disappeared altogether. The cleaner, more conventional production of *Oxford* was the better choice.

Although neither book is a straight military history, both authors describe succinctly and well the service of local forces (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, Oxfordshire Yeomanry or Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars) on the Western Front and in Italy, Mesopotamia, Salonika and Serbia. Graham takes a chronological approach, recording the involvement of local regiments across all fronts. Cotter deals with each major engagement in turn, making much use of personal testimony. The 'Ox and Bucks' lost 5,878 men, the Oxfordshire Yeomanry 150. Around twelve per cent of those from all countries serving in the war were killed, but for university men, many of them inexperienced junior officers, the figure was over eighteen per cent. The movement to set up shrines and memorials to the fallen has attracted much attention from historians lately, and this story is well told by both authors.

The greater, and more original, part of both books deals with the impact of war at home. Inevitably they cover much the same themes but with some different approaches. Both are good

on changing public attitudes towards German residents (or people with Germanic surnames) and non-combatants. Graham points out that, ironically, Anglo-German relations involving Oxford University were exceptionally strong when war broke out: the majority of honorary degree recipients at Encaenia in 1914 were German. When it came to enlisting, Graham sees no evidence of class distinctions. Cotter, however, claims that attitudes to enlistment reflected class divisions within society as a whole. Neither author pursues this potentially significant theme. Graham is particularly interesting on the role played by Oxford academics in medical, especially orthopaedic, and scientific advances promoted by the war. Both have memorable accounts of refugees' experiences in Oxfordshire – Graham includes a remarkable photograph of about a hundred Serbian boys housed at Wycliffe Hall.

The changing roles of women in all areas of life is one of the 'big' issues tackled by both authors. The Oxford story seems mainly to have been about women extending their presence in retail, schools, banks and offices, but also at Morris Motors where by 1917 thirty-three women were engaged in shell production. The county's story is rather more varied. Apart from the Women's Land Army (1,600-strong by 1916), there is a more interesting munitions story in Cotter's account of the Filling Factory at Overthorpe, Banbury. Over 500 women and nearly 1,000 men were employed there, working twelve-hour shifts. Women who handled Lyddite (picric acid) were known from their altered skin colour as 'Canaries', and their unfortunate newborn babies as 'Canary babies'. Cotter is also good on the contribution of children, who collected fruit for jam and horse chestnuts for cordite. During the war there was a prolonged unresolved argument about the wisdom of taking boys out of school to work on the land.

In the event of new editions, some changes might be made. How relevant is the detailed account of the pre-war city in *Oxford*? It is a well-known story, not least from Graham's own research and writing. *Oxfordshire* badly needs an index, and contains some curious errors, such as the confusion of registration districts with civic boundaries on p. 31, which appears to give Headington almost twice the population of Oxford. In general it would be helpful to learn more about how the region's experiences related to national patterns.

In a review of two such books, comparing and contrasting is inevitable. But their aims and approaches are sufficiently different, and the repetition of images so remarkably few, that it is easy to recommend both to anyone interested in the subject or in the area. Both books contain memorable treasures such as the delicious demand from Ruskin College (of all places) for a 'better class of refugee' than the Belgians they had previously been sent, or the description of a convalescent Robert Graves, in dressing gown and pyjamas, strolling down from Somerville to the Cadena Café in Cornmarket.

CHRIS DAY, Kellogg College, Oxford

Steven Parissien, *The Comfort of the Past: Building in Oxford and Beyond 1815–2015*, Paul Holberton publishing (London, 2015). Pp. 200. 107 colour, 29 b&w illustrations. £40. ISBN 978-1-907372-77-3.

Writing the history of Oxford's architecture is a rewarding but challenging task. Within a city of some 150,000 people, and above all inside and just outside the area encompassed by the medieval walls, there are as many beautiful and historically significant buildings as can be found in any European city of comparable size. And, in contrast to cities such as Bruges and Venice, the tally of notable buildings has increased over the past two hundred years and continues to do so today – as witness the recently remodelled interior of the Weston Library (formerly the despised New Bodleian) and the Blavatnik School of Government, currently taking shape on Walton Street. The challenge for historians is to make sense of this heterogeneous and often misunderstood assemblage of buildings, and to relate them to the wider aesthetic and cultural currents that have helped to shape even such a notoriously inward-looking place as Oxford.

Steven Parissien's beautifully produced and copiously illustrated book is partly a bicentenary tribute to the work of the Symm Group, formerly the building firm of Symm & Co. Its story began in 1815 when the stonemason and builder Daniel Evans undertook to build a new Wesleyan Methodist chapel in New Inn Hall Street to the designs of the Revd William Jenkins. Evans went on to build and live in a handsome row of ashlar-faced houses on the west side of St Giles – one of them now the Army recruiting office – and to carry out repair and refurbishing work at several colleges, notably Pembroke. His son-in-law Joshua Symm, another Methodist and Sunday school superintendent, later took over the business and built the present Wesley Memorial Church in 1877–8. (The old chapel lingered on as a school but was subsequently demolished.) Symm's firm continued to work in and around Oxford, and their works were listed in an appendix to Brian Law's *Building Oxford's Heritage*, a history of the firm published in 1998. Symm Group still flourishes, and its recent work has included a classically inspired chapel in the grounds of Culham Court, near Henley-on-Thames, the home of a wealthy Swiss financier (illustrated in the new book).

In what ways then does this book differ from its predecessor? In his foreword, the chief executive of Symm Group explains that it was commissioned to help 'understand why it is that many familiar buildings in Oxford look the way that they do'. This is indeed what Parissien, an experienced and talented architectural writer, has achieved. He sensibly concentrates less on the firm's history, which is ably recounted in Law's book, than on its buildings; readers unfamiliar with the history of Oxford's architecture since the early nineteenth century will learn much from it. The sequence of styles from Regency Neoclassicism to recent Post-Modernism and Classical revivalism is lucidly explained, and most of the period's well-known buildings are discussed and illustrated. They include the University Museum, Keble College, the 'Bridge of Sighs' at Hertford College, the entrance to Rhodes House, the infamous fan-shaped concrete tower of the Nuclear Physics building at the corner of Banbury Road and Keble Road. But, strangely, little is said about Wesley Memorial Church, or about St Catherine's College, surely Oxford's most significant late-twentieth-century building. Instead, Parissien brings to the fore the quiet virtues of little-known buildings, such as those of the Birmingham architects H.T. Buckland and W. Haywood at St Hugh's College, begun in 1913, or Sir Albert Richardson's Principal's Lodgings at St Hilda's (1954–5). The front of the dust jacket features the discreetly Neo-Tudor additions to that gastronomic mecca the Manoir aux Quat'Saisons at Great Milton, built by Symms between 1984 and 1998.

The book's underlying theme is best explained from its title, *The Comfort of the Past*. Oxford, Parissien argues, has repeatedly chosen local men to design its buildings and local firms to build them; and the legacy of earlier architecture has exerted a generally benign influence on the patrons of new buildings. There have been the occasional irruptions of alien styles such as the 'High Victorian' Gothic of the mid nineteenth century and the Brutalism of the 1960s and 1970s – the avant-garde architecture of the latter period is exemplified by James Stirling's conceptually exciting but functionally flawed Florey Building of 1968–70 for Queen's College (shown here in a full-page colour plate rising up behind badly maintained cement paving and an impenetrable iron fence). But Parissien's sympathies seem to lie more with later buildings such as Richard MacCormac's Garden Quadrangle at St John's (1993–4), Robert Adam's Sackler Library (2001), and Niall McLaughlin's Bishop Edward King Chapel (2011–13) at Cuddesdon theological college, one of the most inspiring Oxfordshire buildings of recent years. Parissien is also sensitive to the domestic charm of North Oxford, and shows a welcome sympathy for the restrained architecture of the former women's colleges, deftly demonstrating how Lady Margaret Hall has repeatedly defied fashion by opting for brick-built classicism, often of a Neo-Georgian variety – a preference still apparent in the new entrance from Norham Gardens.

There are unfortunately some inaccuracies and lapses of judgement. Gilbert Scott was not 'summarily dismissed' as architect at Exeter College: the work simply ran out after he had designed the spectacular chapel (begun in 1856, not 1854), a new library, the rector's lodgings,

and much of the frontage to Broad Street. T.G. Jackson (jauntily described as ‘a man you could invite to dinner – and be happy to invite back’) designed the former high school for boys in George Street – a good example of his personal brand of exuberant eclecticism and incoherent planning – but it is now the home of Oxford University’s History Faculty, not its Social Sciences Division. And the residential block facing St Giles to the north of the Front Quad at St John’s is by George Gilbert Scott junior, not his pupil Temple Moore (who designed Pusey House opposite). Parissien’s book does not, however, claim to be the last word on its subject, and it can be recommended, not least because of its superb photographs, to anyone who wishes to discover more about the buildings of a perennially fascinating and often surprising city.

GEOFFREY TYACK, Kellogg College, Oxford

George Smith, Elizabeth Peretz and Teresa Smith, *Social Enquiry, Social Reform and Social Action: One Hundred Years of Barnett House*, University of Oxford Department of Social Policy and Intervention (Oxford, 2014). Pp. xiv + 346. 38 b&w, 9 colour illustrations. Paperback. £14.95. ISBN 978-0-9929333-0-2.

Founded in summer 1914, Barnett House in Broad Street, Oxford, was intended to combine a host of do-gooding endeavours. It was to house a library of materials relating to social investigation. It was to provide a headquarters for the Oxford adult education movement. It was to be a centre for the university settlement movement – that collection of communities started in city slums by improving late Victorians. And it was to be a place of education, activism and encouragement for all those within Oxford who wanted to ameliorate the conditions of the poor.

Over the years Barnett House has shed many of these responsibilities and has left its central location. It lost its library, and it never became the home for adult education – that became established at Rewley House in Wellington Square (now a nearby neighbour). The settlement movement was, as it turned out, already in decline; indeed it is poignant to note that Hull House in Chicago, one of the models for this Oxford experiment, went bankrupt and closed in 2012. Barnett House, it is true, continued to teach, to encourage, and to energise those who wish to help the socially disadvantaged. But it became just another part of Oxford University, and is not even called Barnett House any more: rather, it rejoices in a more precise, if prosaic, title as the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, which has retained ‘Barnett House’ as its address.

The history of Barnett House, then, is not one of unimpeded progress or a single-minded cleaving to a set of founding principles. It has changed and changed again, and very nearly closed several times. Established as almost the last gasp of late nineteenth-century moral reform, many of its founders would be appalled to see the massive state-sponsored systems of welfare that have since grown up. For them – as for Canon Samuel Barnett, after whom the House was named – the modern welfare state would have seemed as pernicious as the problems it is designed to alleviate.

Yet it is precisely this chameleon-like evolution, this story of an institution which has continually adapted to the surrounding environment, that makes the history of Barnett House so interesting. In this absorbing and wonderfully well-researched book George Smith, Elizabeth Peretz and Teresa Smith show that again and again Barnett House survived and thrived because of its flexibility, its ability to change. They also show how painful some of these changes were – and how close to disaster the institution sometimes found itself. Because Barnett House was successively reshaped by developments within Oxford University and beyond, this study offers insights into Oxford, British higher education, and social policy more generally. The authors each brilliantly relate these wider contexts to the specific case of Barnett House throughout, showing how general trends (such as the growth of central government,

the rise of university research funding) and specific events (for example, the foundation of the Oxfordshire Council of Social Service, the Colwell Report into child abuse) each helped to shape the work of this single institution. Drawing on real expertise in all of these fields, the authors have produced a volume that will be an education for almost all of its readers.

There is also room here for the contingent, the quirky, and for some sharp biographical portraits. We learn about the failed attempts to merge Barnett House with the newly founded Nuffield College as well as about the department's controversial abandonment of social work training. Key characters are also well-described: from the saintly, but far from uncomplaining, Christina Violet Butler, who trained generations of Barnett graduates, to A.H. Halsey, known to all as 'Chelly', who helped to put the place on the map, who defended the House from all comers, but who also quarrelled with his colleagues and may – it is hinted – have been over-dominant in the end. There are also glimpses of students, including those sent to Oxford by worried, middle-class parents who hoped that the social work there would be less alarming than that found in more urban, less leafy environments.

The authors' expertise and insights have been hard won: they are all insiders, and between them, indeed, must have racked up almost a century of work for Barnett House. This produces an unrivalled knowledge of the subject and its contexts – although there are hints that such participant-observer status did prove problematic at times. Two of them must have been involved in the 1990s in what seems to have been a sort of putsch against the head of the unit, and one actually replaced him as director. Their role in running the department also results in rather more emphasis on successive Research Assessment Exercises than most readers are likely to need. There is less, too, of the student perspective than might have been desirable; and less emphasis on day-to-day life inside Barnett House than an outsider might have produced.

Overall, however, this is a splendid book: a wonderfully rich and resonant study, which will be of interest to anyone to who wants to know more about Oxford or England in the twentieth century, as well as to those with a more particular preoccupation with Barnett House itself. As Sir Brian Harrison observes on the cover, it genuinely fills a gap in the literature. It is far more than a piece of piety. It is, rather, a work of serious and compelling scholarship.

WILLIAM WHYTE, St John's College, Oxford

#### *Other Publications Received:*

Emilie Amt (ed.), *The Latin Cartulary of Godstow Abbey* (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 32), Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2014). Pp. xlv + 504. £100. ISBN 978-0-19-726558-1.

Mark Bailey, *The Decline of Serfdom in Late Medieval England: From Bondage to Freedom*, The Boydell Press (Woodbridge, 2014). Pp. xii + 374. 5 maps, numerous graphs and tables. £60. ISBN 978-1-84383-890-6.

Chris Farman, Valery Rose and Liz Woolley, *No Other Way: Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War 1936–39*, International Brigade Memorial Trust (London, 2015). Pp. viii + 124. 64 b&w illustrations. Paperback. £5 (plus £3 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-1-910448-052. Available from: 6 Stonells Road, London, SW11 6HQ.

Jeremy Gibson (compiler), *Banbury and the Origins of the Coventry to Oxford Canal, 1768–1778*, Banbury Historical Society (Banbury, 2015). Pp. 20. Colour illustrations. Paperback. £2.50 (plus £1 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-900129-33-9. Available from: Banbury Historical Society, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, Oxon., OX16 2PQ.

Jeremy Gibson (ed.), with Introduction by Barrie Trinder, *An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher's Banbury Directory to Trades and Occupations 1832-1906*, Banbury Historical Society, 34 (Banbury, 2014). Pp. xxiv + 136. Includes a facsimile of the directory on DVD. £15 (plus £2 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-900129-32-2. Available from: Banbury Historical Society, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, Oxon., OX16 2PQ.

Raymond Moody, *Burford's Churches and Churchmen*, Hindsight of Burford (Burford, 2015). Pp. viii + 184. 38 illustrations. Paperback, £13.99 (plus £3 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-1-901010-19-0. Available from: The Madhatter Bookshop, 122 High Street, Burford, OX18 4JQ.