

REVIEWS

Duncan W. Wright, *'Middle Saxon' Settlement and Society*, Archaeopress Publishing (Oxford, 2015). Pp. vi + 206. 6 tables, about 99 maps and other figs. Paperback, £35. ISBN 978-1-78491-125-6. George Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2015). Pp. xvi + 302. 5 maps, 4 figs. £65. ISBN 978-0-19-871-791-1.

These two books seek in their own ways to assess the formation of England during the second half of the first millennium AD. Though taking different forms of evidence, and concentrating on different centuries, both describe the chronological development of the social, economic and administrative structures that would become the kingdom of England. For archaeologist Wright, key changes are to be identified in the patterns of the settled landscape during the seventh to ninth centuries; historian Molyneaux focuses instead on aspects of administrative organisation in the ninth to eleventh centuries. Both are detailed and readable accounts that help to contextualize Oxfordshire in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

Molyneaux's more maximalist interpretation of the English 'state' – defined in terms of strong centralized government and administrative institutions, military provision, taxation and territorial coherence – concentrates largely on the tenth century, when there is also a corresponding upsurge of written information about administrative organisation. In Wright's view, this focus on late Anglo-Saxon developments glosses over significant changes occurring in the preceding centuries, visible particularly in the archaeological evidence. It was through the seventh to ninth centuries, Wright argues, that distinctive forms of more permanent land-use and settlement patterns came into being; that local identities linked to places can be recognized; and when more intensive forms of surplus production emerged. Whilst Molyneaux is surely correct in seeing a coherent English state only relatively late in the story, it is in Wright's account that one sees how these institutions emerged from social changes taking place within local communities. This is a more minimalist version of 'state' to set alongside that outlined by Molyneaux.

The seventh to tenth centuries were certainly a time of significant change. Wright's summary of the field archaeology from five counties, including modern Oxfordshire, demonstrates considerable dynamism in the English countryside during the period. Oxfordshire examples highlight this tendency. In the case of Yarnton (Wright, pp. 66–9), the move to a more structured settlement character took place in several chronological steps. During the late seventh or early eighth century a shift from transient dispersed farmsteads took place, comprising a geographical move and a fundamental change in the settlement's character: the result was a more formal, compact organisation and 'village-like' morphology. Significantly, however, this development did not lead to permanent establishment. The settlement continued to shift during the later Anglo-Saxon period, only eventually assuming its present-day location after the Norman Conquest. In the case of Wantage (Wright, pp. 62–5), development took place in a single step, in which seemingly transient early Anglo-Saxon activity was succeeded in the eighth century by more permanent élite settlement around the core of what became the historical town. In yet other cases, such as Dorchester-on-Thames (Wright, pp. 55–7), semi-permanent settlement appears to have been continuous throughout the first millennium.

Though Wright effectively makes the case for a range of settlement changes taking place, it is a shame that he largely fails to consider the additional evidence of field systems, which similarly underwent sequential change over the period, sometimes in tandem, and sometimes out of step, with developments in settlement. Nevertheless, what emerges from his analysis is a picture of increasing permanence and structure in settlement as a continuum

of change from the seventh to twelfth centuries. What is less clear is what was driving these changes. Despite their different concerns, both Wright and Molyneaux see the more 'rigorous establishment of royal and ecclesiastical power' (Wright, p. 40) as major catalysts of social change. In places Wright even talks about secular and ecclesiastical élites and their archaeological signatures, but one would have liked to learn more about these. How were they complicit in the reshaping of the countryside? What was the interplay between élite and peasant agencies?

By contrast, it could not be said that élites are ignored in Molyneaux's account, in which he effectively debunks the idea that England as a unified entity was ever an inevitability. Instead, he argues that a series of reforms by successive West Saxon kings during the tenth century, largely designed to solidify their insecure power base, shifted rule by force to rule based on the 'relatively standardized administrative apparatus of the so-called "Anglo-Saxon state"' (Molyneaux, *blurb*). Amongst these reforms was the definition of shires (and of their subdivisions known as hundreds or wapentakes) as administrative entities, amongst them Oxfordshire. The hundreds were the system by which assets were assessed and taxes collected, where oaths were extracted from all free adults of these districts, maybe even where military obligations were reinforced: in a very real sense, they embedded royal domination in the localities. In creating these territorial units West Saxon kings put in place mechanisms for policing and dispute settlement, enabling prosperity, but also wealth extraction, in support of the secular and ecclesiastical edifices of the state.

Despite their differences, the two books in some ways complement each other. What most impresses me in Wright's book is something not stated outright but implied: that incremental changes in the settled landscape over the seventh to ninth centuries resulted in new forms of land ownership and peasant dependence which formed the foundations of the aristocratic class of the High Middle Ages. It was these new landed social relations that enabled the emergence of a more administratively coherent state over the course of the tenth century, as discussed by Molyneaux. This same evidence should perhaps warn archaeologists and historians against seeing too much innovation taking place in the later tenth century. It is likely that the increasing stability of the settled landscape over the middle Anglo-Saxon period was accompanied by new forms of territorial identity and social inequality, which in turn influenced the shape of administrative structures in the later English kingdom.

If Wright's book reminds us of the long time-scale required to contextualize social transformations in the early medieval period, it is ultimately Molyneaux's that draws the broader conclusions. The formation of an English kingdom, he concludes, was in a comparative context 'neither typical, nor exceptional' (Molyneaux, p. 234): similar developments occurred also in other polities around the edges of Latin Europe, in northern Spain, Hungary and Scandinavia. It remains to be seen whether the settlement archaeology of Asturias is comparable with that of Oxfordshire.

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Emilie Amt (ed.), *The Latin Cartulary of Godstow Abbey* (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, ns 52), Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2014). Pp. xlv + 504. £100. ISBN 978-0-19-726558-1.

Godstow abbey was a small but rich community of Benedictine nuns (numbering seventeen in 1445) located near Wolvercote, a couple of miles north of Oxford. The date of its foundation is not known for certain, but Emilie Amt suggests that it was c.1115, somewhat earlier than the traditional date of 1133. An Anglo-Norman verse (item no. 2 in the present edition) describes its establishment by the English heiress and knightly widow Ediva of Winchester – with the encouragement and assistance of Henry I, who did not live long enough to witness the dedication of its church in 1139.

Godstow's Latin cartulary, compiled in 1403–4 by the prioress Alice of Eaton, considered by Amt to be the manuscript's scribe (and therefore the only female scribe of a cartulary in England), includes several hundred charters recording gifts to the nunnery, mostly of land or other property scattered across eighteen counties from Dorset to Yorkshire, but focused on Oxfordshire and Oxford. Many of those charters also appear in a Middle English translation of the cartulary, written in the 1460s, which was published by the Early English Text Society in 1905–11 (and which edition is now freely available to download from the internet).

The present volume nevertheless provides information not found in Godstow's 'English Register', and Amt offers her readers an exemplary edition of the Latin text. Of most significance is the inclusion of charter witness lists and the names of other individuals, which often allow the many undated charters to be assigned to a particular period, and in some cases to correct the dating given in the EETS edition. An example is the gift to the abbey of the tiny Oxfordshire church of Easington, which the earlier edition dated c.1165. Mention of Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, in the Latin cartulary (no. 31), however, places the grant before the bishop's death in 1148. Among the witnesses to another Easington charter (no. 148) is the earliest known priest at the neighbouring church of Warpsgrove, while the appearance of a vicar at Chalgrove, more than a century before a vicarage was formally ordained there, suggests an earlier and probably temporary arrangement by the mostly absentee rectors. (All three places appear in the recently published *VCH Oxon.*, vol. 18.)

The excellent presentation of the text is not, unfortunately, reflected in the thoroughness of the index, and in particular of the subject index. At only five pages, for a text of well over 400 pages, it frequently falls short of the standards expected of the prestigious series of which the book forms part, and which were established by some of its predecessor volumes (see, for example, the detailed subject index published in 2006 in N.E. Stacy's *Charters and Customals of Shaftesbury Abbey, 1089–1216*). Omissions include any reference to customary labour services, such as the great reaping service (*magnum bederip*) which a townsman in St Giles's parish in Oxford owed to the abbey each autumn in the 1260s (no. 470). Occupations such as tanner and tawyer are listed in the subject index, but the references to them are incomplete (for example the tanner mentioned in no. 477 and the tawyer in no. 548). Unsurprisingly, given the amount of urban property Godstow abbey held in Oxford, shops are among the commercial buildings included in the index (shambles are another). Among those omitted, however, are selds and stalls (both of them types of booth from which goods and services were sold in market places or in other commercial areas of a town), such as the seld that Robert Niger the smith held near All Saints church in Oxford (no. 509), and the seld with a stall in front and a cellar below worth 18s. a year in the late thirteenth century (no. 525).

These failures of the index are not insignificant, and will considerably reduce the usefulness of the volume for researchers pursuing a particular theme. Historians interested in fishing will no doubt be pleased that the subject index lists not only fishponds, but also fish, fishermen, and fisheries, though they may regret the omission of a reference to the fishponds at Woodstock (no. 755). Likewise, the mill at 'Cumbe' (no. 780) is not included among the large number of other references to mills in the subject index, appearing instead under the place-name. In terms of thoroughness, the index of persons and places is far superior to the subject index, although even this has omissions, such as a reference to Canterbury cathedral priory's Oxfordshire manor of Newington (no. 552).

While the casual user of this book may be misled into inadvertently overlooking examples of a particular subject, or even place, more committed readers of the text will find plenty of previously unpublished information, clearly presented, to reward their efforts. Certainly as a historian working on Oxfordshire's VCH, I can say with some confidence that this volume will supplant the earlier EETS edition as the principal source of reference for Godstow abbey's estate in the county.

MARK PAGE, Victoria County History of Oxfordshire

Alan Bott, *Merton College: A Longer History of the Buildings and Furnishings*, Merton College (Oxford, 2016). Pp. xviii + 188. About 350 colour, 175 b&w illustrations. £25 (plus £5 p&p in UK). Available from: Development Office, Merton College, Oxford, OX4 1XZ.

Alan Bott's interest in the buildings of Merton College goes back, as he tells us in this comprehensive and profusely illustrated volume, to his undergraduate years, when he helped one of his tutors, Roger Highfield, to arrange an exhibition of the college's manuscripts. Later, in the intervals of a successful business career, he began exploring the history of the buildings, bringing out a succession of carefully researched booklets and articles in the college journal, *Postmaster*. In 1993 he wrote a short history and guidebook which remains a model of its kind: scholarly, concise and well illustrated. The present volume is an expansion of this publication, chronicling the college's long and complex architectural history in exhaustive but not exhausting detail. Bott is an engaging and well-informed companion as we explore the quadrangles, his narrative enlivened by anecdotes of student misdemeanours and of famous visitors such as Tsar Alexander I of Russia, whose gift of a Siberian jasper vase can be seen in the north transept of the chapel. He is sensitive to the poetic appeal of a foundation which has numbered T.S. Eliot and J.R.R. Tolkien among its members; as we finish our tour of the buildings, we are left in the garden with one of the purplest passages from Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* echoing in our ears and in our imagination.

Merton, as is well known, is one of the three oldest Oxford collegiate foundations, all dating from the thirteenth century. Its architectural interest derives primarily from the fact that it is the only one of the three to retain its original buildings, and in this it is unique not only in England but in Europe. Nothing survives from the Sorbonne, the first secular (as opposed to monastic) college of the University of Paris; and the Collegio di Spagna – the first surviving college at Bologna – dates from 1365–7, well after Merton's first buildings went up. The history of the site and of the first buildings draws upon earlier publications such as Highfield's *The Early Rolls of Merton College, Oxford* (OHS, 1964), but a useful appendix, incorporating research by Robert Peberdy, shows how an extensive row of long, narrow tenements between Merton Street and the city wall was gradually acquired, starting in 1266–8. The piecemeal nature of the college's construction comes over clearly; there was no single precedent for what a thirteenth-century academic college should look like, and in many ways the Front Quadrangle, with its gatehouse, hall and lodgings for the warden, still retains a domestic character. But Merton differed from contemporaneous houses in the scale and magnificence of its chapel, described here in meticulous detail with due attention to its sculptural enrichments, its remarkably complete collection of stained glass of the 1290s, and its monuments. New lodgings for the fellows followed to the south of the chapel in the early fourteenth century, their four sides comprising what has been known since the nineteenth century as Mob Quad; it was completed in the 1370s and incorporates Oxford's oldest college library. The most important later addition to the medieval core was the Fellows' Quadrangle of 1609–10, the first Oxford quadrangle to be built of three storeys throughout, and the first with a 'Tower of the Orders', reflecting the classical interests of the warden, Sir Henry Savile, and subsequently echoed at Wadham and at the Schools Quadrangle of the Bodleian.

The more recent history of the buildings provides an interesting commentary on the vicissitudes of taste. Sir Christopher Wren restored the chapel's interior in 1671–3, but in 1848–52 William Butterfield swept away his work, substituting new stalls, a new floor and a new boarded ceiling with paintings by J. Hungerford Pollen – recently restored and well illustrated here. But some craftsmanship of the Wren period survives in unexpected places; for example, the pulpit now graces St Peter and St Paul church, Botley, built in 1957–8. In 1960 Wren's wooden screen – or what was left of it – was dragged out of storage and reinstalled in Merton chapel one bay to the west of its original position. Butterfield's Grove Building, south of the chapel, fared less well. It went up in 1862–4, but its stark 'high Victorian' elevations – shown here in a little-known contemporary photograph – offended later generations, and

when Max Beerbohm revisited the college in 1934 he was met by 'a site that gladdened me . . . Merton had timorously, gloriously knocked off the whole of Butterfield's top storey and had hidden the rest of his work' (there was then no Victorian Society to complain). Bott writes well about these and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interventions: the remodelling of the gatehouse and Merton Street façade by Edward Blore, the successive transformations of the hall by James Wyatt and George Gilbert Scott, and the replacement of the former St Alban Hall, to the east of the older college buildings, by Basil Champneys. He is tactful enough to draw a veil over some of the college's more recent examples of architectural patronage, such as the banal Holywell Buildings (1995) and the recently remodelled Warden's Lodgings at the eastern end of Merton Street; he could, though, have done more justice to the elegant Finlay Building (2004), cleverly squeezed in behind a stone-built medieval house on the north side of the street, and it would have been worth giving the name of the architects (Allies and Morrison). Due credit, though, is given in an appendix to the splendid new Dobson organ of 2013, with its spectacular Gothic case, which has transformed and enlivened the chapel's west end.

Bott's book is a work of antiquarian scholarship, and is none the worse for that. There are no footnotes, and the design is a little eccentric, with captions that are not always easy to relate to the pictures they describe. But these are minor quibbles. The facts are carefully researched, and are set out clearly in lucid prose supported by well-chosen illustrations, most of them previously unpublished. This is a handsome book which anyone interested in Oxford's architecture should read, and to which its readers will return again and again.

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Sue Simpson, *Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611): Elizabethan Courtier*, Ashgate Publishing (Farnham, 2014). Pp. xii + 244. 23 colour, 2 b&w illustrations. £95. ISBN 978-1-4724-3739-6.

The Henry Lee presented by Sue Simpson's 'biography' was a senior member of a gentry kindred who became a second-level figure in the court-centred political world of Elizabeth I, below the nobility and occupants of great offices of state. He achieved renown among contemporaries, and in history, by contributing prominently to the cult of Elizabeth and thereby to the vibrant artistic culture of the first Elizabethan age.

As a young man, Henry Lee was driven to seek status at court probably by influences from his immediate family background, particularly from his mother's family, the Wyatts of Kent. His maternal grandfather Sir Henry Wyatt, for example, had been a councillor and executor of Henry VII and councillor of Henry VIII. Lee was also impelled in the same direction by an early connection with William, Lord Paget, who from modest origin attained high royal offices. In 1549, following his father's death, Henry Lee became a ward of Paget, who was comptroller of the royal household (of Edward VI) and chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; in 1550, aged about seventeen, Lee married Paget's second daughter, Anne. In 1553 he was knighted on the day after Queen Mary's coronation as an associate of Paget, who had deftly supported Mary's accession. But the association inhibited progress after the accession of Queen Elizabeth: like Paget, Lee was soon disregarded. During the 1560s he patiently acquired experiences and cultivated connections that created the possibility of re-attracting royal favour. He developed friendships with Elizabeth's favourite Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, and with her chief minister Sir William Cecil. During travels on the Continent in 1568–9 he supplied Cecil with invaluable information, and soon afterwards helped to subdue the Northern Rebellion. By 1570 Lee had won some favour with the queen. Probably in that year he inaugurated an additional annual tournament in Elizabeth's honour, held at Whitehall on her accession day (17 November), at which he acted as her tournament champion (*not* as 'queen's champion', which was a different position). Historians have long regarded Lee as a leading post-medieval reviver of chivalry. In 1573 Lee helped to capture Edinburgh Castle, and reported on the action

in person to the queen. It helped his ambitions that he was physically attractive. He received various gifts and rewards, including the post of master of the armoury (held 1580–1611).

Henry Lee's quest for political and social advancement also directed him to involvement in royal interests in Oxfordshire, perhaps fixing on the county because of its proximity to his Buckinghamshire country home (at Quarrendon, near Aylesbury). He started to establish himself in the county in 1570 when he bought reversionary leases of Spelsbury and Shipton-under-Wychwood manors. But he gained a stronger foothold in 1571 when he became administrator of the royal manor of Woodstock by purchasing the patent of appointment as steward which had been granted in 1570 to the courtier and poet Edward Dyer for his lifetime. Lee thereby gained responsibility for hospitality during royal visits. His position was reinforced in 1573 when Elizabeth granted him a reversionary lease of the stewardship, effectively the office for life (continuing after Dyer's life, if Dyer predeceased Lee). Lee occupied High Lodge near Woodstock manor house, and in 1583 also bought nearby Ditchley manor which was retained by relatives until 1933. Ditchley manor house became his principal residence. Henry Lee also obtained other lands in and around Charlbury. He thus became both an important royal officer in Oxfordshire and a member of its gentry society.

A book about Henry Lee is therefore of interest to students of Oxfordshire history, especially as he remained steward of Woodstock manor for almost forty years. Simpson gives attention to Lee's official provincial activities. Lee was responsible for maintaining Woodstock manor's principal buildings and for relations with tenants. He also managed Woodstock park, sustaining a large herd of deer. Elizabeth's presence was of central importance, though she probably disappointed Lee in making only four visitations (1572, 1574, 1575, 1592). For these occasions Lee seems to have commissioned and sometimes written masques and poems. During the last visit, he received the queen at Ditchley where he provided entertainment focused on the enormous portrait of Elizabeth which he had commissioned from the Flemish painter Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (the famous 'Ditchley Portrait', now in the National Portrait Gallery). Ditchley was also the home from the mid 1590s of Lee's mistress, Anne Vavasour, with whom he had an illegitimate son. In his old age, Lee hosted visits to Woodstock and Ditchley by James I. However, Simpson's treatment of Lee and Woodstock creates unease about coverage and accuracy. Strangely there is only one citation of Alan Crossley's substantial and meticulous account of Woodstock manor, park and town in *VCH Oxon.*, vol. 12 (on p. 66, referring erroneously to vol. 4), and Simpson confusingly refers to Lee acquiring the stewardship in 1571 (p. 25), 'around 1571' (p. 123), and in 1572 (pp. 45, 63). She also refers to the 1573 grant as conveying the offices of 'steward' and 'lieutenant' (p. 67), whereas according to Crossley they were alternative titles (p. 433).

Historians of Oxfordshire will also regret that Simpson displays only cursory interest in Henry Lee's roles outside the bounds of Woodstock and Ditchley manors. This is disappointing because various brief or incidental references in her book suggest significant connections and lines of research. Lee was formally a presence in Woodstock borough (or 'New Woodstock') from 1580 as high steward, and he probably also controlled the town's selection of MPs, but these influences are unexamined. (Simpson is incorrect in claiming on p. 134 that Lee was responsible for Woodstock receiving a parliamentary seat. Crossley records, on p. 400, that it sent two MPs from 1553 onwards.) Simpson mentions that Lee promoted the marriage of his niece Elizabeth Symonds with Lawrence Tanfield of Burford Priory (p. 156), but does not probe Lee's social and political relationship with Tanfield, an ambitious lawyer who served as a Woodstock MP. Lee also seems to have developed a relationship with St John's College in Oxford, where his brother Cromwell Lee was a fellow and from which he leased land (pp. 127, 155). Simpson mentions (p. 193) that leading Oxfordshire families were represented at Lee's funeral at Quarrendon, but their possible links with Lee are left uninvestigated.

As a high-status local royal officer who was connected with senior court figures, Sir Henry Lee occupied a strategic and potentially influential position between Oxfordshire and the

court. His ability to act as a patron for Oxfordshire and Oxford people and corporations gave him power within the county; one suspects that he possessed similar influence in Buckinghamshire. Although Sue Simpson's book is based on extensive research in numerous sources, and illuminates important aspects of Elizabethan culture and politics, it unfortunately treats 'the local' as a sideline to 'the national'. Both worlds, and their dynamic interconnection through Sir Henry Lee, require examination if Henry Lee's life is to be fully understood.

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Antony Buxton, *Domestic Culture in Early Modern England* (Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Social History series), The Boydell Press (Woodbridge, 2015). Pp. xx + 302. About 100 b&w illustrations, 43 tables. £75. ISBN 978-1-78327-041-5.

Antony Buxton's book is a revised version of his doctoral thesis which was undertaken at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education. Its professed intention is to examine how the material environment of the household influenced people's habitual activities and values, focusing especially on the south Oxfordshire town of Thame. The core data are 188 seventeenth-century Thame probate inventories from the Oxford archdeaconry court. As the author notes, these materials probably represent about a fifth of the overall adult population of the town, since those with goods worth less than £5 were generally excluded from probate, along with married women (whose assets passed to their husbands). Because he wanted to focus on 'middling' inhabitants, Buxton chose not to include 101 wills and inventories from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury covering mainly the wealthiest segment of Thame society, including gentlemen and more affluent yeomen and tradesmen.

The introduction examines theories of domesticity, while chapter 1 provides contextual information on Thame and its economy. There is little discussion of the inventories, and more details of the spread of dates and numbers of individuals of particular status or occupation would have been welcome. Chapter 2 presents a general view of social relations within the early modern household and briefly reproduces findings from a couple of surveys of surviving contemporary Thame houses carried out by others. Chapter 3 deals with provisioning and the processing of foodstuffs, with evidence from Thame supplemented by contemporary descriptions such as that by Gervase Markham (d. 1637). Chapters 4 and 5 describe furnishings and domestic items and assess their distribution across status groups in the town. Chapter 6 is about the 'practice' of domestic culture in Thame and the uses made of the various rooms named in inventories. A final chapter describes certain households in more detail.

Buxton's book will be useful to historians of family life and design history. He appreciates the complexity of domesticity and eschews simplistic functionalist explanations for plan changes or the evolving use of rooms. His expertise in the conservation of historic furniture gives credibility to his appreciation of how objects were made and used. However, it must be said that the study does not wholly satisfy, not least because its aims and scope are not fully clear. The title suggests a national study covering a broad range of social groups, rather than the study of a single town. More seriously, it is not clear how far the Thame probate evidence as presented really advances debates and interpretations. Many theories are recited and Buxton is clearly alive to larger considerations such as those around the 'great rebuilding' thesis, originally proposed by W.G. Hoskins in 1953, and the implications of plan-form change for social relations, including the development of ideas of comfort and privacy. Yet much of Buxton's material is descriptive in character, and there is often a lack of close chronological definition and focus on change during the early-modern period (which is vaguely defined anyway). The broader conclusions often appear to rest on other studies rather than on the Thame inventories. Some of the findings that are derived from the probate sample are already well known, such as the general increase in numbers of rooms in the later seventeenth century. More use could perhaps have been made of M.A. Havinden's data

on later sixteenth-century Oxfordshire inventories (published in ORS, vol. 44) in order to appreciate longer-term changes.

Most fundamentally, understanding the relationship between material context, behaviour and values requires engagement with a wider range of material evidence. Inventories and furniture only take us so far. In this study, the buildings themselves are almost totally neglected: new survey work would certainly have yielded fresh insights into the developing use of houses. Likewise much more needs to be known about the setting of houses within the town. The author stresses the importance of links between households, yet early modern Thame is represented by a single late nineteenth-century map. This is a missed opportunity because changes in the spatial relationship between houses, streets and public buildings are likely to have reflected and reinforced changes in practices, attitudes and social relationships. The material environment of particular neighbourhoods could be reconstructed at least in part through a combination of documents, archaeological evidence and topographical study. Such an exercise could reveal important differences in the layout and surroundings of the homesteads of richer and poorer people and the implications for their perceptions, as well as the ways in which individuals altered houses to showcase their wealth and influence the experience of visitors to their homes. Finally, documents other than probate lists – for example, church court depositions – are required to bring us a greater sense of contemporary sensibilities: in other words, how early-modern people used houses, gardens, yards and their surroundings, and the contemporary norms of appropriate behaviour by particular sorts of people in a given setting.

STEPHEN MILESON, *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire*

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.

Burford is a richly historic small town. Its ecclesiastical history is also rich – unsurprisingly, given its fine parish church, dating from the twelfth century and dominating the lower town, and Burford's proximity to Oxford, for so long at the heart of English religious developments. In this book, Raymond Moody seeks to explore around a millennium of Burford's religious history using a variety of sources: surviving church records, administrative and financial documentation, archaeological and architectural evidence, manuscript and published reminiscences, and oral recollections. Though primarily concerned with the parish church, he also investigates post-Reformation Roman Catholicism and Protestant Dissenters – Baptists, Methodists, Plymouth Brethren and Quakers. The task is therefore a considerable one. Moody mostly tackles it by progressing chronologically, first providing the background of each period's national and ecclesiastical developments and then focusing on Burford itself and significant individuals – above all, the vicars and curates. Generally, this framework proves effective.

There is much here to interest readers. There were lollards at Burford, though when hounded they abjured their heresies. The account of Francis Knollis, vicar 1771–1826, and his ministry seems to accord with recent research emphasizing the strengths, rather than the weaknesses, of the Georgian Church of England (though Knollis's vigour apparently flagged in his last years). Alexander Dallas, curate 1826–8, showed staggering energy in repairing the church, rebuilding the almshouse, closing Burford's shops on Sundays, and more: '[w]hat would be for many men the work of a lifetime, he accomplished in less than two years' (p. 97). John Hugh Burgess, vicar 1860–71, introduced practices associated with the Oxford Movement, thereby courting unpopularity with some parishioners. The Victorian reconstruction of the church is charted – a reconstruction which provoked an angry tirade from William Morris: 'Here you [the vicar, William Anthony Cass] had a beautiful old church and you have completely

spoiled it' (p. 117). Sometimes, of course, the evidence gives out: for this reason, Moody is unable to recover, for instance, the local reactions to the sixteenth-century changes in religion in the way that Eamon Duffy did so movingly when writing about the Devonshire parish of Morebath (in *The Voices of Morebath*, 2001).

Moody treats significant figures in his study with conspicuous courtesy. William Lenthall, speaker of the House of Commons during the Long Parliament, purchased Burford Priory and the manor in 1637, and was buried in a vault in the parish church, the tomb's inscription being only *Vermis sum* ('I am a worm'; Psalm 22:6). Those words, Moody notes, 'may be conventional Puritan humility, or may reflect a genuine dissatisfaction with the part he had played in life' (p. 51); but the late Hugh Trevor-Roper accurately, if ungenerously, commented: it was 'an epitaph, it has been observed, whose humility should not blind us to its essential truth'. Likewise, Moody notes the generous benefactions to the parish church of J. Meade Falkner, antiquary, novelist and, incongruously, for decades a dominating figure in the massive Armstrongs armaments firm (chairman 1915–20). Falkner, who died in 1932, loved Burford; his ashes are buried under his brother's 'bale' tomb. But while describing Falkner's coat of arms in one of the church's windows (illustrated on p. 131), Moody passes over the detail that those arms are almost the same as those of the villain (seemingly a murderer) in Falkner's novel *The Nebuly Coat* – a weird, almost sinister, token of Falkner's complex, troubling character. This restraint, almost gentleness, is a marked characteristic of this book. And it is very much Moody's book: the use of 'I' is frequent throughout. But the author's presence and, indeed, personality are not intrusive: instead they enhance the study. It is interesting to observe the author wrestling with the surviving, sometimes patchy or less-than-satisfactory, evidence. Equally, the town's recent history is animated by the author's reminiscences and accounts of individuals whom he has personally known (Moody has lived at Burford since 1960). Here this book is not just an account of, but also a source for, Burford's history.

COLIN HAYDON, Winchester

Jeremy Catto (ed.), *Oriel College: A History*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2013). Pp. xx + 847. About 120 b&w illustrations, 12 colour plates, 10 plans, 6 maps. £85. ISBN 978-0-19-959572-3.

This substantial volume sets a new standard for college histories in its comprehensive account of a community now approaching the seven hundredth anniversary of its foundation. Chronological chapters place its history within the context of Oxford University and the wider world, while further thematic sections cover subjects as various as muniments, buildings, estates, investments, sport and the college's contribution to science. The chapters on the foundation and early history, by Jeremy Catto, must have been the most difficult to write, based as they are on *disjecta membra*.

The founder of St Mary's College (known as 'Oriel' after La Oriole, a property on the corner of what are now Oriel Square and Merton Street), Adam de Brome, was unusual in not being a bishop or a nobleman. A clerk of Chancery, he intended his foundation to be a nursery of public servants. From an early date logic was an Oriel speciality, and perhaps clear thinking was one of the skills which graduates were meant to take with them from college to court. During its first four centuries, however, as a smallish institution with limited resources Oriel kept a low profile. In the early modern period, the transition from the old religion to the new following the Reformation was a gradual process. The future Cardinal William Allen, leader of the English Counter-Reformation (fellow, 1550–63), and the Puritan William Prynne (commoner, 1616–21), represent the extent of the process.

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the fellows were too preoccupied by internal broils and bitterly disputed elections to take much interest in the world outside. The undergraduate intake became socially more exclusive, and there was little in the syllabus to

stimulate the intellect. The philosopher Joseph Butler, who matriculated in 1739, complained that he had 'to mis-spend so much time in attending frivolous lectures and unintelligible disputations'. The raising of academic standards at the college and in the university as a whole was the work of the two successive great provosts John Eveleigh (1781–1814) and Edward Coplestone (1814–28) during whose reign Oriel was the intellectual engine-room of the university. Eveleigh was the architect of the honours system of public examination, while Coplestone was the pioneer of the modern Oxford tutorial. Yet the reformed syllabus, though demanding, was still narrowly restricted to Greek, Latin and mathematics. It is peculiar that candidates for ordination (who before 1850 constituted the majority of undergraduates) proceeded to their curacies with no formal training for the ministry, and more steeped in pagan than in Christian history and literature.

In his chapter 'A House Divided', Peter Nockles gives an expert and even-handed account of the process whereby Oriel became a battleground between Noetics (the liberal intellectuals who believed in the 'march of mind') and Tractarians (those who, like J.H. Newman, looked to the past for moral and spiritual inspiration) – though perhaps he underestimates the part played by personal antipathy in Newman's campaign against the broad churchman R.D. Hampden ('the most lucre-loving, earthly-minded, unlovely person one ever set eyes on'). The difference between the two parties was one of temperament as well as of principle. In his chapter 'From Oriel to Oliver Twist', Simon Skinner shows how the two parties at Oriel were also divided in their economic and social thinking. He describes the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, drafted by the arch-Noetic Richard Whately and his former pupil Nassau Senior, as 'covered in Oriel's fingerprints'. The Act's distinction between deserving and undeserving poor, and its introduction of deterrent workhouses in order to discourage a dependency culture (to use the current term), provoked a powerful critique by another fellow of Oriel, Thomas Mozley, who conducted a sustained attack on the substitution of economic theory for Christian charity. As Simon Skinner puts it: 'In its intellectual influence Oriel before 1850 is comparable with Balliol after that date, but Balliol was associated with a single ethos, whereas Oriel, remarkably, nourished two increasingly diverse and antithetical schools of thought'.

The next battle was fought over university reform, and Ernest Nicholson examines the role of Edward Hawkins (provost 1828–82) in obstructing its advance. Otherwise Oriel followed the mainstream. Competitive sport (which has a chapter to itself) became the rage among undergraduates. In 1842 a college eight was 'head of the river' for the first time – an event described in Thomas Hughes' semi-autobiographical novel *Tom Brown at Oxford*. An Oriel man, and the son and brother of Oriel men, Hughes advocated a Christian ethic of sport as a character-forming preparation for the good life. It was to have an influence far beyond the university.

Oriel was the alma mater of Walter Raleigh (1554–1618) and Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902), but in his chapter 'Oriel and the Wider World' Alexander Morrison contends that their education at the college had little influence on their intellectual development. In the nineteenth century, however, an ever-increasing number of Oriel graduates proceeded to imperial and colonial service. No one had more influence on their formation than Lancelot Phelps (1853–1936), successively undergraduate, fellow, tutor and provost of Oriel and the university's most popular lecturer in political economy, who taught most of these future administrators. Phelps was one of the greatest (if not the greatest) Oriel men of his time. His vast correspondence with alumni in far-flung corners of the globe affords a unique insight into the mentality and network of empire. Both Morrison and John Stevenson (in his evocative 'The College Community, 1905–1950') pay eloquent and long-overdue tribute to Phelps's selfless dedication and colossal industry. As his obituary in the *Oriel Record* put it: 'it is hardly too much to say that for generation after generation of Orielenses, Phelps was the college'. Elected provost just before the outbreak of World War I, 'he kept up a voluminous correspondence with Oriel men on all fronts, and had the unenviable task of writing letters of condolence to relatives of those who died'. Nor was his paternalism confined to the college. An Oxford city councillor, he was the

mainstay of the Oxford Cottage Improvement Society. On the national stage he served on the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1905–9. True to the Noetic tradition, he combined personal charity with an obstinate adherence to the deterrent workhouse regime.

Social historians will find much of interest in the chapter on the college estates by the late Ralph Evans and John Dunbabin, based on what they describe as an extremely rich archival deposit. A cluster of these holdings was to be found in the Oxford area, at Cowley, Littlemore, Stanton St John, Boarstall, Dean and Chalford. Oriel's connection with the land was broken by the college's decision in 1919 to sell the majority of these properties to ease postwar financial pressures. This was only part of a widespread deluge of land sales: according to the *Estates Gazette*, quoted by John Stevenson, by 1921 around a quarter of England had been sold – the largest and most rapid transfer of land since the dissolution of the monasteries.

Though the excellence of the text of *Oriel College* has unfortunately not been matched by the reproduction quality of its black-and-white illustrations, the editor and his contributors have produced a monumental history of value far beyond the college walls.

MARTIN MURPHY, Oxford

Nina Morgan and Philip Powell, *The Geology of Oxford Gravestones*, Geologica Press (Chadlington, 2015). Pp. x + 140. About 400 illustrations, most in colour. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-910158-53-1.

This attractive, evangelical publication seeks to convert readers to an appreciation of geology by describing accessible rock specimens in the form of gravestones. In so doing, its authors have also produced an entry point to interesting, if little considered, aspects of Oxford's history. The geologists Nina Morgan and Philip Powell have selected six of the modern city's cemeteries, and from each have chosen between twelve and twenty-two monuments to exemplify its range of rock types. Collectively the six sets of monuments (totalling almost a hundred monuments) represent most eras within geological time. Each cemetery is accorded a chapter, and each monument is presented separately according to a format: the monument is described, and then the composition of its rock type; there then follows a description of the rock as it appears through an eye glass. The rock descriptions are surprisingly vivid and appetising. For example, the texture of Portland Stone is compared to 'Kendal Mint Cake', a kind of marble is likened to 'caster sugar', and the texture of Headington Stone is characterized as 'like flapjacks'. Each monument is also illustrated with several photographs. The photography is excellent throughout, a testimony to the great skills of Mike Tomlinson. The chosen monuments in each cemetery are arranged in a topographical sequence and shown on a map. So the book can be used as a guidebook 'in the field'. The authors have included a thirteen-page illustrated glossary which conveys considerable basic geological information.

The book's six cemeteries represent the distinctive facilities provided for burials at different times in Oxford's history. The churchyard of St Thomas the Martyr was formed in the twelfth century as the burial ground for a suburban parish, though it is now quite central; it contains monuments from at least the seventeenth century. The churchyard of St Andrew's, Headington, is similarly of medieval origin, though it once served a village rather than, as now, a suburb. Holywell cemetery and St Sepulchre's (north of Jericho) are two of three cemeteries that were created in 1847 – in preference to a general cemetery – to supply additional burial space for Oxford's main historical parishes. (The third was at Osenev.) The later Victorian churchyard of SS Mary and John church in East Oxford, used from 1876 and recently restored, appears to have revived the older concept of a parish burial ground, associated with the parish church, while the near-contemporaneous Headington Municipal Cemetery was originally a non-denominational cemetery.

The cemeteries' gravestones can be interpreted as evidence for changing economic structures, especially of transport; they also indicate the differing social composition of areas

within Oxford. The earliest monuments discussed in the book are of limestone and date from the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The stone is of relatively local origin. For example, a 1680s plaque in the wall of St Thomas's church is made of stone from the Burford area, and stone used for nearby monuments is thought to have come from North Leigh. These places presumably represent part of Oxford's ordinary stone-supply area until the late eighteenth century, from which stone was imported by road and river. St Thomas's and St Andrew's graveyards also include Banbury Ironstone gravestones of the early nineteenth century, presumably reflecting the opening of the canal from Banbury in 1789–90. During the later nineteenth century, stone was imported from distant parts of Britain, including Dorset, Cornwall, Wales and the Aberdeen area. The repertory of Oxford's monumental masons was extended even farther in the twentieth century with stone from Norway, Finland and Italy.

Holywell cemetery is undoubtedly Oxford's 'cultural cemetery', as it contains the remains of such figures as the composer John Stainer, the writer Kenneth Grahame, and the poet John William Burgon, remembered for his description of Petra (A rose-red city – 'half as old as Time'). Notable intellectuals are prominent at St Sepulchre's, such as the influential master of Balliol College Benjamin Jowett. In other cemeteries featured in the book, most of the deceased are little more than names, although at Headington Municipal Cemetery the showman Bill Hebborn retains prominence in death thanks to a large gravestone engraved with a splendid old-fashioned carousel. *The Geology of Oxford Gravestones* provides a fascinating introduction to the commemoration of the Oxford dead, and makes one hope that someone will produce a comprehensive historical, artistic and theological guide to all of Oxford's churchyards and cemeteries. Meanwhile, informative websites are available for St Sepulchre's cemetery and SS Mary and John churchyard.

R.B. PEBERDY, Oxford

David Bebbington, *Mister Brownrigg's Boys: Magdalen College School and the Great War*, Pen and Sword Military (Barnsley, 2014). Pp. xviii + 385. About 140 b&w illustrations. £30. ISBN 978-1-78346-299-5. 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.

Two very different twentieth-century conflicts – the First World War (1914–18) and the Spanish Civil War (1936–9) – inspired, irrevocably altered and sometimes cruelly shortened the lives of many Oxfordshire men and women and of people connected with the county and Oxford. These meticulously researched accounts pay tribute to some participants. They are timely works. While *Mister Brownrigg's Boys* is one of a raft of publications produced to mark the centenary of the First World War, *No Other Way* was published in anticipation of the eightieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

The fifty 'Old Waynflètes' ('old boys' of Magdalen College School, or 'MCS') who died in the First World War are the focus of Bebbington's book. The majority were from well-off professional families which could afford the annual day-school fee of £18 8s., many resident in or near Oxford. Mr Brownrigg, the master of MCS from 1900 to 1930, looms large as a 'most loyal Magdalen servant'. Three opening chapters give thorough contextual information on MCS, the school cadet corps and the theatres of war in which the men fought. There follow biographical accounts which focus on the men's lives at school and on their experiences at war. A sense of innocence lost pervades the book. Enlarged black-and-white images from school photographs of sports teams and choirs illustrate brutal and often moving accounts of conflict and tragedy. Herbert Brereton, for example, aged twenty-two but pictured as a slight, fair-haired chorister, wrote in his last letter to his parents from the western front: 'do not on any account grieve for me, but be proud you were able to have a son to offer'. The author notes that

Joseph Leonard Milthorp Morton tied for first place in the junior high jump at the 1909 Sports Day and in the same year won the Repetition and Recitation prize for Form III. The discovery of such fine detail in the school's archives provides a fascinating window into middle-class school life in this period. In October 1917, west of Arras, Morton was hit twice by German machine-gun fire. He tried to rally members of a neighbouring company before succumbing to a third hit.

Overall Bebbington achieves his intention: to create 'a war memorial in its own right.' His book reads as a homage to those who died in the First World War. It is documented with great precision; plates include maps of burial grounds, tables of school attendance and an illustrated list of British campaign medals. But it is an uncritical account of the war, and Bebbington does not question the role of Britain and its allies in what was named the 'Great War', and the worthwhileness of the sacrifice made by MCS old boys, though he admits that 'the real horrors of the trenches . . . were concealed from the young boys at the school.'

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 when the national army, backed by the Catholic Church and the far-right Falangists, attempted to overthrow the democratically elected Popular Front government. There followed a brutal conflict between the rebels, supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and the Republic, armed by the Soviet Union and Mexico. It brought home, all too vividly, the threat of fascism in Europe, and has been widely considered as a prelude to the Second World War. Displays of solidarity with the Republican cause sprang up across the UK in what has become known as the 'Aid Spain Movement'. Oxford and Oxfordshire were no exceptions. They provided 31 of the 2,500 volunteers from the UK who fought for the Republic in the so-called International Brigades. These individuals and their experiences are described in *No Other Way*. Unlike the alumni of MCS, who were inspired by patriotism and encouraged by the state to 'sign up' (there is no indication in Bebbington's account that any Old Waynfletes were conscripted), volunteers in the Spanish Civil War defied the law to fight in a conflict in which their government wanted no part. (The British government signed a non-intervention pact with other European powers in 1937.) The account by Farman, Rose and Woolley takes a similar form to Bebbington's, opening with contextual chapters on the war itself, and on the political context in Oxfordshire, before turning to biographical information. This study does not however confine itself to individuals who lost their lives. It pays tribute to all the Oxfordshire or Oxford-connected men and women who went to Spain. Rather than examining the conflict through the prism of a particular institution, the volume explores the broader social and political contexts that are central to understanding the Spanish Civil War and the reaction it provoked.

In the 1930s the political landscape in Oxfordshire was changing, generating an active concern about international developments. New industry, most notably the Morris factory at Cowley, attracted trade unionists from elsewhere and the Labour Club grew in strength. Inspirational leaders such as Abe Lazarus made their mark, and in October 1938, following the Munich agreement, A.D. Lindsay (master of Balliol College) stood in a parliamentary by-election as an 'Independent Progressive', anti-appeasement candidate, considerably reducing the Tory majority. The legacy of the First World War also casts a long shadow in *No Other Way*. In 1933 the Oxford Union had carried the motion 'that this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country'. Such was the backdrop against which the 'Aid Spain Movement' developed. Men and women made stretchers for the injured, sent milk to orphaned children and raised money for food parcels. Some made the ultimate sacrifice. Crucially, this was not just a broadly based political movement including communists, socialists, the centre-left and select Tories, a true 'popular front', but one that drew in people from the whole social spectrum; it was also unusual in bringing together town and gown. Thora Silverthorne, a miner's daughter who became a nurse at the Radcliffe Infirmary, volunteered for the first British Medical Aid Unit which left for Spain on 23 August 1936. In 1990 'Red Silverthorne' unveiled a memorial to the six volunteers from Reading who died in Spain. The Carritt brothers, Anthony and Noel, stepson and son of a professor of philosophy at Oxford University, both volunteered and saw action at the battle of Brunete. Only Noel returned.

Both of these works examine the problems involved in archival research for the compilation of biographical accounts. This is especially relevant for *No Other Way* because no institutional source of records – as was available for Bebbington at MCS – exists for volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, who went to Spain clandestinely. Even the identities of some individuals discussed in *No Other Way* remain hazy – the authors appeal to readers with documents and memories to ‘keep them safe’ and ‘get in touch.’ The volume also has a commemorative purpose. For many years, in the shadow of the Cold War, it was difficult to pay tribute to volunteers in the Spanish Civil War because many were communists and socialists. *No Other Way* addresses this inadequacy with carefully contextualized and engrossing accounts of the individuals whose paths crossed at this juncture in twentieth-century history. But while the entries in Bebbington’s book can name the sites of monuments to the dead from MCS, we await a similar memorial to the brave men and women portrayed in *No Other Way*.

MEIRIAN JUMP, Marx Memorial Library, London

R.W. Johnson, *Look Back in Laughter: Oxford’s Postwar Golden Age*, Threshold Press (Newbury, 2015). Pp. xii + 260. 10 b&w, 4 colour plates. Paperback, £14.50. ISBN 978-1-903152-35-5.

This is – let it be allowed from the outset – a thoroughly enjoyable portmanteau memoir, which was written in South Africa while the author was wheelchair-bound and recuperating from a near-fatal illness. Composed ‘from memory and without research . . . [as] an act of self-therapy’ by a fine raconteur, it often gives the impression that no caution, nuance or consideration of strict relevance should be allowed to clutter the path of a good story. It is certainly not – nor in fairness does it ever make any such claim – a work of dispassionate history. There are just five footnotes, and in no sense does the work replace the relevant chapters in *Magdalen College, Oxford: A History* (2008), edited by L.W.B. Brockliss, in which this reviewer collaborated (reviewed in *Oxoniansia*, vol. 75, 2010, pp. 230–2). It does nonetheless complement them with the *partis-pris* panache of an observant and active participant.

Most of Johnson’s memoir is about Magdalen College and the author’s part – as student and don – in an alleged ‘Postwar Golden Age’, although chapter 10 is devoted to a peculiar coverage of ‘The Oxford Spies’ (a caution perhaps against acquiescing in a Cambridge monopoly), chapter 13 to the ‘cleaning up’ of the Rhodes Trust in the early twenty-first century (all but an appendage to chapter 12 covering Johnson’s role as senior bursar in cleaning up Magdalen’s finances and administration), and other portions to South African and French politics. Johnson’s profound love of Magdalen is manifest, despite everything. He was for decades a tutor in politics, teaching for Oxford’s ‘PPE’ school (politics, philosophy, economics, also known as ‘Modern Greats’). Ideologically he exhibits a typical Oxford PPE don’s leftish liberalism, veering at times to libertarian positions that are hard to place on the spectrum. But an unconscious elitism accompanies the ideology, not least in tales of placing pupils in high-level media careers at *The Economist* and elsewhere, and in the view that giving hours of time individually to less-than-brilliant pupils was a waste of time.

Johnson’s account of the enduring influence of the Magdalen political philosopher T.D. ‘Harry’ Weldon, even on those like himself who had never known him directly, is perceptive – offering clues as to how such powerful personal influences can jump generations at Oxford. As one of the founders of PPE at Oxford, Weldon rejoiced in destroying the values and beliefs with which young men went up to Magdalen, without offering anything substantive to put in their place; and there were fellows – such as C.S. Lewis – as well as former undergraduates interviewed for the *Magdalen History* who felt that his influence was almost wholly pernicious. Not so Johnson and his PPE colleagues. It is beyond dispute that Weldon created a team of tutors (who often in effect chose their successors), and also an enduring school, which were more than conventionally successful in Oxonian, national and international terms. Nonetheless, the author appears to place over-much weight – for

good or ill – on the personalities of a few men whilst the contributions of their often worthy colleagues are largely ignored.

Whether Johnson himself really experienced a ‘Golden Age’, or only a self-regarding ‘Silver Age’, may be open to dispute – but at times the reader suspects that Johnson is really nostalgic about the ultra-tolerant 1960s of his youth rather than the post-war Oxford PPE school. The apparently scintillating success of Oxford PPE is now breeding critics who have written, for example, of its creating ‘a robotic governing class.’ The author also seems to hold that the only undergraduate schools that were worth taking at Oxford, or at least at Magdalen College, in his time were PPE, modern history and law, for which the tuition at Magdalen was outstanding. He has little time for the sciences and even for some of the other humanities. One senses little breadth of sympathy, and small capacity for understanding the difficulties of others. Johnson’s pugilism did not endear him to all the fellows, and it is unsurprising that he was never a serious candidate for the presidency of Magdalen.

In many ways the core of Johnson’s book is the account of how he – as senior bursar – working with an equally un-English president, took a professionally tough approach to cleaning up Magdalen’s amateurish finances and administration in the late 1970s and set the college back on an even keel, after decades of neglect, maladministration and fraud. It makes for a lively story, illustrated with a wealth of anecdote and circumstantial detail. The reader encounters a peculiarly corrupt institution, yet one might have expected a tutor in politics to offer a wider perspective. Much has been published about the culture of ‘perks’ prevalent in corporate life, and that of ‘benefits’ equally to the fore in post-war ‘welfare-statism.’ Such cultures develop icons and peculiar codes as well as value-systems, networks of patronage, and rewards for those who do not rock the boat. Fellows and college employees alike at Magdalen who had benefited from perks often felt genuinely wounded by those who sought to remove them all at once, especially when there had been a tacit understanding that they were in some manner a recompense for poor official remuneration in an age of austerity and high taxation. Johnson was, by his own detailed account given here, one of the engineers of Oxford University’s refusal to give Mrs Thatcher an honorary degree in 1985, on account of what he styles her ‘philistinism.’ Ironically, some Magdalen college servants who suffered the senior bursar’s doubtless necessary cleaning-up campaign thought his policies quite simply ‘Thatcherite.’ Looking at the whole Magdalen affair from outside, this reader at least senses parallels with the painful culture-shocks that are now prevalent in modern corporate life at large: rationalisation; downsizing; bureaucratisation in hiring and firing; client re-orientation; bonus reduction; etc. Magdalen was surely just one among many British institutions in the era that painfully came to terms with modern social and economic conditions.

A.J. HEGARTY, London

Other Publications Received:

Sally Badham, *Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the Dead in the Late-Medieval English Parish*, Shaun Tyas (Donington, Lincs., 2015). Pp. x + 278. 188 plates, most in colour. £39.95. ISBN 978-1-907730-47-4.

P.S. Barnwell, Geoffrey Tyack and William Whyte (eds.), *Sir George Gilbert Scott, 1811–1878* (Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment, 3), Shaun Tyas (Donington, Lincs., 2014). Pp. viii + 248. 84 b&w illustrations. £40. ISBN 978-1-907730-37-5.

John Barratt, *Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War 1642–1646*, Helion and Company (Solihull, 2015). Pp. 222. 67 b&w illustrations, including 6 maps. £25. ISBN 978-1-910294-58-1.

R.H. Darwall-Smith (ed.), *Early Records of University College, Oxford* (OHS, ns 46), The Boydell Press for OHS (Woodbridge, 2015). Pp. xxvi + 414. £35. ISBN 978-0-904107-27-2.

Martin J. Elson, *The Richardsons at Chastleton*, Choir Press (Gloucester, 2016). Pp. xii + 92. 48 illustrations, most b&w. Paperback, £9.99 (plus £2 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-1-910864-34-0. Available from the author at 26 Little Lees, Charlbury, Oxon., OX7 3HB.

Dave Richardson, *Oxford Pubs*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2015). Pp. 76 colour, 12 b&w illustrations. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-4728-9.

Andrew Sargent, *Secret Oxford*, Amberley Publishing (Stroud, 2016). Pp. 96. 105 colour illustrations. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-4782-1.

Gavin Stamp, *Gothic for the Steam Age: An Illustrated Biography of George Gilbert Scott*, Aurum Press (London, 2015). Pp. 208. 132 b&w, 101 colour illustrations. £30. ISBN 978-1-78131-124-0.

Sabina Sutherland (ed.), *The Church Inspection Notebook of Archdeacon James Randall, 1855–1873, and other Records* (Berkshire Record Society, 21), 2015. Pp. xlviii + 262. Paperback, £25 (plus £2.50 p&p in UK). ISBN 978-0-9573937-2-1. Available from: Berkshire Record Society, c/o Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6AF.

Richard Wheeler, *Oxford Stained Glass: Twenty Postcards*, Fircone Books (King's Sutton, 2015). £7.99 (inc. UK VAT). ISBN 978-1-907700-07-1.