

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

**Surrey Quarter Sessions Records : Order Book and Sessions Rolls, 1659-1661 and 1661-1663.** Edited by Dorothy L. Powell and Hilary Jenkinson, F.S.A. Surrey Record Society, Nos. XXXV (226 + xxvi pages, March 1934) and XXXVI (371 + viii pages, March 1935) : and Surrey County Council, Records and Ancient Monuments Committee, vols. VI and VII. 5s. each.

It has not been the practice of this Society to review in detail the publications of its daughter organization : but this departure from precedent may be justified by the fact that these two volumes are published in the first instance by the Surrey County Council, who own the copyright. The Record Society's volume is, in fact, issued to its members in the same way as its first publication, the *Register of John de Pontissara*, was issued in conjunction with the Canterbury and York Society, and the general *Guide to Surrey Records* is issued in similar co-operation with the Records Committee of the Surrey County Council.

The County Council's volumes are issued in a format which as a piece of book production does not challenge comparison with the Record Society's work : but it has a handy and compact shape, which many people may find more convenient.

Quarter Sessions records do not begin as early in Surrey as in Staffordshire and some other counties : but the earlier ones where they exist are much less extensive, and there are few if any counties which have such ample Quarter Sessions records for the late seventeenth century.

These two volumes print the first surviving *Order Book* for Surrey Quarter Sessions (1659-63) and the relevant *Sessions Rolls*, which begin in 1661. These two series are complementary, the *Sessions Rolls* being more in the nature of Original Files of the actual documents produced in court, while the *Order Book* is the official register of business done, and includes the multifarious administrative business of the justices, as well as their judicial work, which is the main concern of the *Sessions Roll*. In any particular judicial case, the nature of the offence is more fully specified in the *Sessions Rolls*, while information as to the action taken must usually be sought in the *Order Book*. The editors have transcribed the *Order Book* in full, and given a summary

calendar of the contents of the *Sessions Rolls*, preceded by specimens, transcribed in full, of the various classes of *Writs*, *Presentments*, *Recognizances*, and *Lists*, which make up these files. The very full and interesting Introduction not only details the contents of the *Order Book* and *Rolls*, but also describes the current procedure at Quarter Sessions, based on a text-book written just at this time for the guidance of Clerks of Assizes and of the Peace. This anonymous manual, now rather rare, was first published in 1660 as "*The Office of Clerk of the Assizes*" and reappeared in 1676 with the additional heading "*together with the Office of Clerk of the Peace.*" Like most text-books, it depicts a rather more perfect procedure than that which is embodied in our documents, which are less complete than they ought to be. The *Process Books* for Surrey do not begin till 1671, while the valuable *Lists* which the Clerk was supposed to deliver at the end of the Sessions to the *Custos Rotulorum*, enumerating the names of persons acquitted, or alternatively, to be transported, sent to a House of Correction, fined, or imprisoned, do not exist at this date for Surrey, nor, so far as is known, for any other county.

On the whole, however, considering the very extensive nature of the Clerk's duties as specified in this manual, they appear to have been very creditably carried out: the numeration of the Presentments and Recognizances (a duty supposed to be performed by the Clerk while the Justices dined) has been completely done, and agrees with the numeration of the corresponding entries in the *Order Book*. Four valuable appendices give lists of the justices sitting at this period, lists of offences and punishments, and of professions and trades mentioned: also of the principal abbreviations found in the documents. As many of these are capable of more than one extension, and most of them occur with considerable frequency, they have been left unextended.

The most frequent offences related to non-repair or obstruction of highways, or encroachments on highways or common land. Next to this type of offence, assault and the infringement of apprenticeship laws are the most usual. Theft and forcible entry are comparatively rare. These figures are taken from two Sessions only, but there is no reason to suppose that the proportions would be very different if the later *Sessions Rolls* were included.

The Sessions at this date were held at various places in no very exact rotation. Of the sixteen sessions covered by the first *Order Book*, four each were held at Kingston and Croydon, three at Reigate, two each at Guildford and Dorking, and one (adjourned from Kingston) at Southwark.

There is little in these documents to show any dislocation in

local administration on the return of Charles II. Some of the justices named in the earlier part of the *Order Book* disappear after the Restoration, and Henry Byne succeeded John Launder as Clerk of the Peace in the middle of 1660. The order (p. 41) for the delivery by Launder of the *Sessions Rolls* was probably not carried out, as the earliest surviving Roll is for Easter 1661 (though the first two Rolls of Byne's own clerkship are thus also unaccounted for). The most noticeable change (as in many of the Public Records) is the reintroduction of Latin, though of a distinctly canine type. The Clerk's question to the Jury, "You are content the Court shall amend Form and false Latin, altering no matter of Substance?" seems never to have been acted upon. The Latin is frequently ungrammatical and in the presentments frequently followed by English words from which it is translated, e.g. (Vol. VII, p. 257) "pravi periculosi et seditiosi sectarii Anglice wicked dangerous and seditious sectaryes et perfides persone Anglice disloyall persons": while the hybrid abbreviation C<sup>d</sup> for *Hundredum* is typical of the period.

After the Restoration the justices became increasingly concerned with the enforcement of laws against Dissenters, and the *Sessions Rolls* show frequent indictments of persons assembled "colore exercendi act' Religios' adoracionis" other than that prescribed by law, and occasional religious disturbances may be noticed, such as the riot in Farnham Church in April 1661 (p. 127), and the smashing of the glass in Reigate Church in January 1661 (p. 129). The editors infer that the repetition of apparently futile Writs against numerous persons (who never actually appeared or were punished) merely formed a check on religious or political suspects.

Much of the *Order Book* is of course taken up with administrative business, such as the appointment of constables and other officers, the maintenance of the "Goale" and House of Correction at Southwark, the repair of roads and bridges, the issue of licences to Haglers and Badgers (*i.e.* authorized hawkers) and the issue of briefs to authorize charitable collections on behalf of sufferers from fire and other misfortunes. One such authorized charity was the repair, estimated at £400, of Oakwood chapel in Wotton, whose congregation consisted of poor men liable for the repair of their own parish churches.

Another subject which engaged the justices' attention was the subdivision of houses by the admission of "subtenentes Anglice inmates," that frequent cause of slum conditions in our own time, against which merely negative and repressive measures proved then, as now, ineffective.

The Index, which is essential to the understanding of the rela-

tions between the *Order Book* and *Sessions Rolls*, is very well arranged, with Surrey Parishes in large capitals, and Surrey Justices in italics. Incidentally one nice problem for an indexer left unsolved in Vol. VI, finds a neat solution in Vol. VII: the problem of John Doe and Richard Roe (or Doo and Roo as they appear here). It is useful to know to what extent these worthies appear, as their presence may indicate how far legal routine has become stereotyped: but the indexer naturally feels some compunction in letting them appear as actual people. The fact that John Doo appears occasionally without his colleague allows the indexer to say "Doo Jo., 84, 227, 293: mainpernor with Richard Roo *passim*": and to provide under Roo, a mere cross-reference.

The foregoing summary may suffice to show that the Surrey Record Society has, not for the first time, produced a volume which may fairly claim to be a model for other local Societies, and the Records and Ancient Monuments Committee of the County Council are very much to be congratulated on the steps they have taken to give it a wider circulation.

R. L. A.

**Royal Croydon.** By Ronald Bannerman, F.S.A.Scot. Croydon Times Ltd., Croydon, 1934.

The title of this little book is misleading as Croydon has never been a royal borough and it can hardly be claimed that the somewhat scattered associations of the town with royalty which Captain Bannerman has here been at pains to gather together justify its present use. However that be, we have here a great amount of rather out-of-the-way information which should serve to make the residents of this dormitory town more interested in their surroundings. The contents of the book are conveniently summarized on the cover as historical worthies, kings, queens, conspirators, cardinals, archbishops, Croydon belles and Croydons of the World. The information on this last head includes besides Croydon Hill in Somerset and Croydon in Cambridgeshire, Croydons in New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the United States even down to a Croydon Hotel in New York! The book is plentifully illustrated, including a few views of the old town which are of interest. It would have been possible, no doubt, to have found more satisfactory originals for many of the portraits of former kings and queens, and it is difficult to see exactly what purpose such an illustration as the snapshot labelled "near Croydon, New Hampshire," opposite p. 16, is intended to serve. The little work is evidently aimed at obtaining a popular sale, but we fail to find any indication of its price on it.

M. S. G.