

BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Brandon, *The North Downs*, Phillimore, 2005, price £25.00. Hardback, xvi + 288 pp, 140 monochrome illus + 30 colour plates. ISBN 1 86077 353 2

A new book by Peter Brandon must always be counted an ‘event’ by those of us who have long admired and been inspired by his deep love, based on a profound understanding, of the land of south-east England, and its evolution through millennia of man’s utilisation of its varied resources. This book, written in his familiar lyrical yet concise style, with paragraphs packed with fact after fact, is the last of a trilogy: *The South Downs* (1998) was written as part of an ultimately successful plea for National Park status whilst *The Weald of Kent and Sussex* (2003) inexplicably omitted this county.

The treatment is very much that of a historical geographer and input from archaeology is sparse, indeed, the Palaeolithic to Romano-British periods are covered in twelve pages and the Anglo-Saxon in a further ten. In assigning north–south tracks into the Weald to the Romano-British period or earlier he is following Chris Taylor but even so, some justification would be useful. In addition, the assertion that the Guildford/Godalming area represents ‘the cradle of the county’ might raise the eyebrows of those living in Southwark or Kingston.

For the later periods, however, Brandon is at his considerable best. His handling of the medieval period is that of an academic with a light touch although a Kentish bias is notable. His use of individual biographies, in this case the Cobhams of Cobham near Chatham and Starborough near Lingfield in Surrey, illuminates the general with the particular. Two post-medieval Surrey families receive a chapter each. That on the Evelyns concentrates not on the well known diarist, but on John Evelyn, his grandson (1681–1763). The necessity of repairing the depredations wrought to the trees of his Wotton estate by industrialisation in the Tillingbourne valley and the Great Storm of 1703 became a matter of familial honour, a requirement well met. The Bray family, whose association with Shere remains unbroken after more than 500 years, is used to exemplify estate management from the 18th century and, particularly, in the context of the agricultural decline of the centuries since.

This decline is contrasted with the inspiration afforded by the North Downs and Surrey Hills scenery to painters, writers and poets as they constructed their rural idylls far removed from the life of a dispossessed farm labourer. The book ends with concern over the spread of London, creeping suburbanisation and loss of rural amenities. ‘Tranquillity is also a disappearing commodity in an overcrowded, noisy, traffic-filled, work-slewed Britain’. Yet, also with hope that reform of the Common Agricultural Policy might allow farmers to care for the environment instead of simply maximising food production from their land.

JUDIE ENGLISH

John Gurney, *Brave Community: the Digger Movement in the English Revolution*, Manchester University Press, 2007, price £55. Hardback, xiii + 236 pp. ISBN 9 780719 061028

Gerrard Winstanley and Diggers, or ‘True Levellers’ as they were also known, have been the subject of many books and much speculation. Winstanley has been championed by many who have claimed him for their cause whether they are left-wing politicians, religious pacifists or the green movement. Christopher Hill is probably the best remembered historian for bringing Winstanley and the Diggers to the wider public. However, much of what has been written has concerned Winstanley himself and then a great deal of this has been of a somewhat speculative nature given the few facts that are known about him. He is believed to have been

born in Wigan in 1609 but there is a good deal of uncertainty about his later life although historians like James Alsop and Richard T Vann have made important discoveries (Alsop 2000; Vann 1965, 133–6).

While considerable focus has been given to Winstanley as the leader of one of the most remarkable of the radical groups to emerge during the English Revolution, little attention has been paid to other members of the group or the social history of the community from which they emerged. Now John Gurney, in this the first full-length, modern study of the Diggers, establishes the local origins of the movement and sets out to examine pre-Civil War social relations and social tensions in the parishes of Cobham and Walton-on-Thames – from where significant numbers of the Diggers came – and the impact of civil war on those communities.

Gurney's book is a development of a paper published in 1994 (Gurney 1994, 775–802). It is a meticulously researched, scholarly and well-presented book which provides a clear understanding of the background to the Digger movement within the parishes of Cobham and Walton. It provides a detailed account of the Surrey Digger settlements and of local reactions to Winstanley and his followers. Gurney's book has achieved an extremely high standard for local histories of this sort and must rank alongside similar studies such as Eamon Duffy's acclaimed *The Voices of Morebath*.

While Gurney firmly establishes the importance of Winstanley and the Diggers on the national scene, his book also strongly roots the whole episode in the locality where the events took place. By bringing together wills, probate inventories, manorial records and other primary sources Gurney has, for the first time, brought to life those involved at the local level on what was both an ideological and a physical struggle. It is particularly helpful to see the Digger episode in the context of earlier protracted landlord-tenant conflicts both in Cobham and elsewhere. Local historians in particular will particularly appreciate the extensive use of endnotes and all important references which will provide a valuable resource for further studies both of the Digger episode and the people and places in Surrey who were involved. This is an important book both at a national level and for anyone seeking to understand the place of Surrey and its people in the turbulent times of the mid-17th century.

Without wishing to detract from the scholarly research and presentation of this valuable study, and at the risk of ending on a negative note, it is unfortunate that a book such as this, which will become a standard text for students both of macro and micro history, should be priced at the prohibitively high figure of £55.

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Alan Bott, *A Guide to the Parish Churches of Peper Harow and Shackleford, Surrey*, 2007, price £7. Softback, 136 pp, illus. No ISBN. Available from Shackleford church and Godalming Museum.

Peper Harow and Shackleford are an interesting pair of churches for the architectural historian. Peper Harow, although structurally mostly medieval and preserving some details from that period, is primarily of interest for the work undertaken by Pugin for the fifth Viscount Midleton in the 1840s. Shackleford was newly built in 1865 by George Gilbert Scott for Revd Archdall Buttemer who became its first incumbent. Although Shackleford is quite impressive, Alan Bott rightly devotes the greater part of his book to Peper Harow. He describes and elucidates the remains of medieval work and alludes to the probability of some alterations being by one or other of the men – ‘Capability’ Brown, Chambers and Wyatt –

who worked on the house and its grounds in the 18th century. Major work was evidently carried out around 1826, including a new west tower, an east window which survived Pugin and seems to have been accepted as his by Nairn and Pevsner, and apparently an almost complete internal repewing and refitting. The book contains over 200 illustrations, more than 30 of them in colour, and one of its delights is the inclusion of sketches, water-colours and prints between about 1800 and 1859, and especially the 1820s work of the Hassells and Cracklow. These illustrations, sometimes mutually inconsistent, enable readers to interpret the probable changes in the external appearance of the church for ourselves. Both Pugin and Viscount Middleton were troubled men. Their relationship when Pugin was working on the estate and church was not easy, and the lengthy extracts from Pugin's letters possess both architectural and human interest. Alan Bott describes his work in detail and places it in the context of contemporary developments in faith – a word we may reasonably use in an architectural as well as a religious context, especially in the light of Pugin's chilling comment, excusable only by Pugin's own sufferings, when the Viscount committed suicide: 'That unhappy man, Lord Middleton, has at last destroyed himself. I gave up all hopes of him when he put up the old pews in the new aisle I built for him. I thought he would come to a miserable end.' Further work was projected by Arthur Blomfield in 1875, but the work that was carried out in 1877 was by T G Jackson. There is a detailed description of the fittings and decoration of the church. Pugin's decoration and fittings are of special importance, but memorials from the 15th century onwards are described in detail and almost every item is illustrated, so that we can gain an excellent impression of the church and a fine inventory of its contents. In particular there are detailed descriptions of the heraldry. There is inevitably less to note at Shackleford but there is a detailed survey of the naturalistic but symbolic carved flora.

Mr Bott provides social background for the later period, including a nice account of services at Peper Harow in 1909. This should nevertheless be seen as an architectural history. The small amount of non-architectural history is less satisfactory. The list of rectors of Peper Harow is based on that of Manning. Owen Manning was rector of Peper Harow and an excellent scholar, but in listing his predecessors he was handicapped by Bishop Edington's register of institutions having been lost. Since his time it has reappeared, was edited in Hampshire Record Series in 1986 and provides us with the names of five rectors between 1349 and 1360 which are lacking in the list in the present volume. The description of the parish in Bishop Willis's 1725 visitation is taken from the summary of the returns in *Surrey Archaeological Collections* vol 39 rather than from the Surrey Record Society edition which also includes Bishop North's 1788 visitation. More significantly the 1851 Religious Census modifies the impression we may receive that Peper Harow church only served its tiny parish. Although the population of the parish was only 129 souls, the 220 seats in the post-Pugin church held 100 adults and 34 Sunday scholars on the morning of 30 March 1851. The explanation is found in the vicar of Godalming's return: 'a district (containing 800 people) of this parish regularly attend the parish church of Peper Harow'. Viscount Middleton was building not only for himself and his dependants but for a considerable part of the population of his larger neighbour.

It would be wrong to end on a critical note. There are few histories of the architecture of our parish churches which can compare in scale or attractiveness with this and Mr Bott's other histories of south-west Surrey churches. The book is attractively written for the general reader and its thoroughness and the comprehensiveness of the descriptions, together with the wealth of illustration, make it essential for the expert. What is more, since publication Mr Bott's work has acquired additional importance. On Christmas Eve 2007, Peper Harow church suffered severe damage from a fire. The detailed inventory and photographic record that are provided here will form an essential record for the work of conservation, repair and restoration that will be necessary. Those responsible for other churches should note that such a record, whether or not it can be published, is an essential part of good stewardship of their building.

Gavin Smith, *Surrey Place-names*, Heart of Albion Press, Loughborough, 2005, price £6.95. Softback, xii + 130pp, 6 plates, 8 maps. ISBN 1 872883 84 2

Our member Gavin Smith, who flew several controversial kites in the Society's *Bulletin* two or three years ago, has now published this accessible paperback. Much of the book consists of an entertainingly presented introduction to place-names and etymology but interwoven with this are many of the author's more controversial ideas presented, in the main, without caveat. Several of the ideas introduced to Society members through the *Bulletin* essays are here combined to present a highly revisionist position for popular consumption.

The author describes himself as a geographer and so it may not be unfair to continue this review with a quotation from the measured preamble to an essay by Della Hooke (1995, 26). Dr Hooke is a highly regarded historical geographer who has spent much of her working life interpreting Anglo-Saxon charters, and she writes:

The study of place-names has always been an exact discipline, requiring knowledge and experience, but the relationship of place-names to settlement and landscape studies has often been something of a free-for-all with, at times, very strange conclusions being drawn. But perhaps this is as it should be: it should be possible to throw out new ideas and test hypotheses if advances in understanding are to be made – *providing there is an attempt to submit these to rigorous academic appraisal.* (My italics)

Gavin Smith certainly does not fight shy of strange conclusions but it can surely be questioned whether to mix them with well-established 'wisdom' in a popular book is a good way to submit his ideas to 'rigorous academic appraisal'. The reader has to know a reasonable amount about the topic before he will be able to sort the new from the established, let alone to judge its merit. Not all the new can stand up to appraisal but not every reader will realise this.

The passage already quoted from Della Hooke is followed by a paragraph break, and then continues: 'Perhaps the most obvious change over the last few decades has been the loss of confidence in place-names being able to tell us very much about the date and nature of the [first] settlements themselves.

Gordon Copley, in a slightly earlier study (1986, 1), had already concluded: 'Whatever the place-name now associated with an early site, there must be great uncertainty in most instances whether [or not] it is the original name'.

Della Hooke went further still: 'the present settlement name is probably only rarely that of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlement' and 'place-names tell us little that is reliable about dating'. Sadly, Gavin Smith fails to heed these warnings.

The dyed-in-the-wool place-names expert would probably go further still and point to the great technical difficulties involved. The incredible complexities surrounding endings in *-ing* or *-ingas*, for example, should be enough to prevent any but the absolute expert from saying another word about these place-names for many years to come. We can all, perhaps, grasp John Dodgson's seminal 1966 paper, but many of the subsequent publications require a mite more expertise to understand (see, for example, Richard Coates' 1997 paper and the references therein). However, Gavin Smith (2003 and the work under review) pays no heed and dives into 'the semantics of *-ingas*', wishing us to interpret names in *-ing*, *-ingas* in a whole new way. A new way that, along with his reassessment of place-names in two or three other elements, would increase substantially Surrey's population of pagan temples as well as minsters and other early churches.

Gavin Smith is undoubtedly right to believe that geographers and local historians should not be excluded from place-name discussions. Whatever the problems of dating, it is undeniable that settlement, landscape and place-names do interact. Della Hooke, Anne Coles and Margaret Gelling (to name but three well-thought-of linguist-geographers) fully appreciate this and have frequently demonstrated it. However, the English Place-name

Society's 1934 volume on Surrey hardly attempted a geographical interpretation and there is certainly room for such an approach, although the wisdom of confining it by county boundaries must be challenged. The long-standing studies of names in *-denn* and the recent studies of names in *-falod* (Chatwin & Gardiner 2005) make this clear.

One might also wonder whether the Anglo-Saxon peasants who coined the names (or the possibly French clerk who later wrote them down) understood the grammar of Old English as well as do Professor Coates and his colleagues and predecessors. Did 6th century Anglo-Saxon farmers really understand the finer points of the dative case? How, one wonders, would a 21st century clerk transcribe unfamiliar place-names spoken in Estuary English?

Gavin Smith rarely makes carefully argued suggestions. He makes bold assertions, lots of them, without really stating his case. For example, he takes Professor Coates' interpretation of Leatherhead as a Celtic name, as do we all, but instantly the settlement becomes a Romano-British survival and an early market town to boot. The name is the name of the ford, the route using the ford was the boundary between two pre-Conquest manors and, as John Blair has argued convincingly, the town of Leatherhead was a plantation of the manorial lords on their mutual boundary well after the Conquest, probably in the 13th century. Gavin Smith substitutes an alternative hypothesis without attempting a critique of John Blair's well-argued one. There may be a good case for some, at least, of Gavin Smith's radical reappraisals but the reader will seldom find one here.

This is not the place to attempt to deconstruct Gavin Smith's many controversial assertions but it must be pointed out that the labourer in this particular vineyard has to be even more careful than most to avoid circular arguments. He also has to avoid the trap of slipping from 'possibly' in an early text, to 'probably' in the middle text and on to accepting a proposition as fact in the closing paragraph. I am not convinced that Gavin Smith has done either with enough rigour. As a result, many of his cheekier suggestions do not stack up. As Jane Austen wrote, 'what Marianne and her mother conjectured one moment, they believed the next – that with them, to wish was to hope, and to hope was to expect' (*Sense and Sensibility*, Vol 1, ch 4).

In addition, there are irritating minor lapses (and some not-so-minor) on far too many pages. For example, on p 75 it is stated that St Mary's priory, Southwark, became Surrey's cathedral in 1540, whereas, in fact, Southwark priory became parochial at the Dissolution and did not achieve cathedral status until 1897. On figure 2, a displaced Crutchfield, near Horley, is mapped as the central place for Reigate hundred: this thesis is repeated in the text at pp 60 and 66. In fact, Reigate (named in Domesday Book as *Cherchefelle* – thought to be a corruption of *Crechesfeld*) was undoubtedly the 'central place' for the hundred and the name can be traced (a trifle uncertainly) through to the 17th century attached to some minor properties (Hooper 1945, 21–2). The name does not actually appear in Horley parish (and then, perhaps inevitably, as a personal name) until 1332, at the same time as its last observed occurrence as a personal name in the vicinity of Reigate itself: it would seem at least possible that the name's presence in Horley is the result of medieval migration or assarting and no evidence at all for the use of the place-name there in Anglo-Saxon times. These examples will have to stand for what could be a long list. There are also odd omissions: on p 61 and elsewhere, the Romano-Celtic temple at Titsey is said to stand close to a source of the river Eden, ignoring the river Darent that also rises nearby: according to the 1:25,000 OS map, the temple site lies on the watershed between the two river sources – which could increase its significance. There are also misprints which one would normally be quick to excuse – but as one or two concern place-names in a book about place-names (Pewsey for Pewley on p 44, etc) charity is not so easy.

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Martin Biddle, *Nonsuch Palace: the Material Culture of a Noble Restoration Household*, Oxbow Monograph 79, 2005, price £70. Hardback 544 + xxiv pp. 241 figs inc 12 colour pl. ISBN 1 900188 34 1

Nonsuch Palace, between Ewell and Cheam, was the most magnificent and extravagantly decorated of Henry VIII's building works. Ablaze with gilded slate and plaster reliefs of classical subjects, truly there was none such. However, Henry died without seeing it completed, and it was rarely visited by royalty. Charles II gave it to a mistress and it was demolished in 1688.

The site was excavated by Martin Biddle in 1959–60. Among the finds were architectural fragments from the building itself and domestic material that had been sealed in pits at the time of the demolition. The architectural finds will form the first volume, but work on these is still continuing. This is actually the second volume, though published first. In it, the domestic finds are published.

There may be disappointment in store for Tudor specialists, however. The palace seems to have been thoroughly cleared of its earlier material. The bulk of the finds dates from the Earl of Berkeley's occupation as Keeper of Nonsuch from 1660 to 1688. It was he that purchased the palace from the Countess of Castlemaine and then demolished it. That being said, the glass and ceramics form a treasury of closely datable material for the student of the period. It is particularly interesting to compare these finds with those from deposit of c 1714 in Tunsgate, excavated by Guildford Museum. These suggest that a Guildford inn had a material culture little, if at all, inferior to an élite household of a generation earlier.

The high quality of this publication and the thorough and scholarly treatment of its subject will ensure that it will become a standard reference work for the period.

MATTHEW ALEXANDER

Alan Bott, *The Parish Churches of Dunsfold and Hascombe*, 2006, price £7. Softback, 152 pp, 47 monochrome illus + 33 colour plates, 2 plans. No ISBN. Available from the churches and Godalming Museum

This handsome book is a good example of what is achievable with modern printing capability. This has made possible the large number of illustrations, many in colour, and including examples from the Hassell drawings in the Minet Library, reproduced in colour for the first time. Alan Bott was fortunate in the wide range of sources that he was able to use, and he has produced more than a guide. Here we have an historical account of the development of the churches, pleasantly anecdotal, showing not only how the buildings took their present form, but the style of parish life that they house.

Surrey is not noted for its ecclesiastical architecture, and many small, restored or rebuilt churches may not seem worth visiting. But often there is more than first impressions might

suggest. Certainly Dunsfold and Hascombe are both of exceptional interest and to the discerning would rank high in any county. They are very different from one another in many ways, but since April 2001 the rectories have been a united benefice. It is worth noting that both churches are kept open in the daytime.

At Dunsfold the remote influence of Westminster Abbey has often been claimed for the Geometrical style windows. Early woodwork is a major feature, especially the old seats in the nave. Although they have now been dated to the early 15th century instead of the 13th, they are a significant survival. The early post-Reformation communion table has been put back into place, and stands unadorned, as it was intended to be when not in use. Structurally, the timbers of the 13th century porch, and the door, are notable. A very unusual feature is found in the sluice holes, for sweeping out the water when the floor was washed.

At Hascombe, the south porch is all that remains from the medieval church, where it was on the north side. The present building (1863–4) was designed by the Guildford architect Henry Woodyer – revered here, as he is not at Dunsfold for his alterations there. The plain exterior is no preparation for the riot of decoration that fills the interior, for here the artistic influence of the successors to the Tractarian movement was received not only with conviction but with affluence – even whimsy – as seen in the Oxford skyline beneath Christ's coming in judgment.

The features of both churches are described in detail, and are amply illustrated, but often a little more could be given. Some further information about the Rectors would be interesting. For example, S L Ollard of Dunsfold was a well-known writer of ecclesiastical history, and J R G Neale became a bishop, now retired. Is it known what the absentee rectors did, and were any of the curates who did their work for them men of mark, then or later? Do the accounts reveal how much was raised for the *Codex Sinaiticus* appeal?

It is interesting to see the specifications of the pipe organs. Did the sadly discarded Dunsfold organ find a new home? Lists of silver vessels are more informative if the makers' marks are read. Local enquiry established that the Hascombe funeral smocks gave way to 'pin-stripes some time ago'.

Very few slips have been found. The arcade below the windows in the Westminster Abbey chapter house is later than Romanesque (p 11). The third name of Captain Blacking, also a Guildford architect before he moved to Salisbury, was Randoll (pp 107 and 121). J A Pippet's second name was Aloysius (pp 109 and 115). Uriel appears in I Enoch, but not in Scripture (p 117). In the description of the Hascombe windows the Circumcision (St Luke 2, 21) is incorrectly included in the Lady Chapel series (p 113). In the chancel, lancet 4 should be described 'the end of the Temptation in the Wilderness' (St Mark 1, 13 and //s) and lancet 7 'the Last Judgment' (p 114). Comparing plates XXXa and 28 with 29, should we understand that the present east window was not the original one? In the description of the very rich altar plate at Hascombe, the 1910 ciborium (h) would better be called standing pyx, and the 1939 communion cup (l) a ciborium (p 125 and plate XXXI).

The main criticism of this book, however, must be its lack of normal editorial discipline. Reminiscent of Melchizedek King of Salem, it comes without title page or colophon – though some information appears at the foot of p 142. References in the text rather than in footnotes do not assist easy reading, and much page-turning is needed when the churches are visited. All illustrations are 'plates', with Roman numerals for colour and Arabic for black and white. Single numbers can refer bewilderingly to several small illustrations, extending over as many as three pages.

These limitations notwithstanding, this book does well to deal so thoroughly with two small but significant churches, and it also gives a comparative study of rural Anglicanism, as it developed in different ways.

Brian Taylor, *The Catholics of Sutton Park*, St Thomas's Trust, 2005, price £6.50. Softback, 191 pp, 10 plates + 11 line drawings. ISBN 0 9520140 7 6. Copies are also available from Vine Cottage, Sutton Park, Guildford GU4 7QN (£7.50 inc p&p, cheques payable to 'St Edward's Church')

Brian Taylor, who is, at the time of writing, priest in charge at Sutton Park, near Guildford, has assembled a learned team of contributors to provide a memorial not only to the Catholic Church at Sutton Park, but to the Catholic community there, which is of course far older. The fact that half the chapters are unattributed suggests that besides organising and editing the volume, he wrote much of it himself. The volume is witness to the fact that its cheerful claim that Sutton Park is a place where the Reformation never arrived is not quite true; nevertheless its story is in principle one of Catholic survival under gentry protection until such time as the community and the church-building promoted for it could take its place in a recognised parish system.

Brian Taylor was well known as a church historian before he became a Catholic priest and he can take pride in the book as a holding operation until a fully scientific campaign is launched. It is not the fault of editor or contributors that the materials they had to work with are rather thin. Archaeologists dug and dug, but if the truth be told did not find much, and the landed families in possession, either because of political apprehensiveness or for other reasons, did not leave much in the way of documentary evidence. So a good part of the book is devoted to the present church, its architecture and its appurtenances, many of which it is confessed are (happily) serviceable rather than distinguished. One of its most substantial possessions is a 15th century picture of the 'Deposition of Christ' by Pedro Francione. An elaborate examination and X-ray investigation concludes humorously that it was rapidly executed which 'would probably suggest an artist who was not at the top of his profession'.

An area into which the book does not venture is that of church policy, though it gives evidence of some false starts, and an ingenious willingness to use public transport instead of bricks and mortar. The next history of Sutton Park ought to go further into this area. It is a matter of gratitude therefore that the one occasion when Sutton Park entered fully into the public zone, as an early and important centre of Catholic religious broadcasting, elicits the liveliest contribution in the whole book by John Stapleton who was intimately involved in it all. Again humour creeps in. Having got over the difficulties of broadcasting services which were still in Latin, the church had to cope with television. Three of the then huge cameras on their 'dollies' were required, each of which must never be in the view of the others. The triumphant solution was to make one camera disappear as required into the sacristy; but would it go through the sacristy door? It was found that if the door were removed from its hinges it would just go through. On such small things do great events turn.

W R WARD