

BOOK REVIEWS

Roy Martin Haines (ed), *The Register of John de Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, 1323–1333*, Surrey Record Society vols 42 & 43, 2010–2011, price £25. Hardback, xxxiv + 904 pp. ISBN 978 0 902978 17 1 (vol 42) and 978 0 902978 18 8 (vol 43)

Medieval bishops' registers are a rich source for national, ecclesiastical and local historians. They contain a wealth of information relating to the running of England's dioceses, from royal writs and papal injunctions to matters concerning individual churches and priests. The diocese of Winchester covered the counties of Hampshire (including the Isle of Wight) and Surrey, and stretched from Christchurch in the south-west to Southwark on the south bank of the Thames in London. Surrey's proximity to the capital meant that successive bishops were frequent visitors to the county, where they and their entourages were accommodated in the episcopal residences at Farnham, Esher and Southwark. John de Stratford's register provides us with a very clear impression of his itinerary, and suggests that he spent relatively little time beyond the boundaries of the diocese although, as an important statesman, he attended parliaments and ecclesiastical assemblies, and occasionally travelled overseas.

John de Stratford was bishop of Winchester from 1323 to 1333, a fraught and troubled period in national political life, which was notable above all for the traumatic deposition and murder of Edward II. Roy Martin Haines has written biographies both of the king and of Bishop Stratford, who became archbishop of Canterbury in 1333, and is thus an ideal editor and translator of the bishop's Winchester register. The register is divided into seven parts. Volume I covers the first two: the general register, which records the execution of various licences and mandates, and a register of institutions, admitting priests to vacant churches in the diocese. Volume II begins by listing the names of the priests ordained during Stratford's episcopate, and is followed by a brief collection of legal responses, the visitation of a number of religious houses, matters relating to the temporalities (or possessions) of the bishopric, and finally a substantial collection of royal writs. All are clearly laid out and easy to use in a well-produced and attractive edition by Surrey Record Society. Full indexes guide the reader to individual people, places and subjects, although a poor map on p xxx is inaccurate and misleading.

Historians of Surrey and its parishes will find plenty to interest them in this edition. Among the cases that caught my eye was that of a reluctant tithes-payer in Cobham, who was to be 'induced' by the archdeacon or his official to give Cobham's rector the correct tithes of brushwood of oak and alder (no 494). Disputes over tithes must have been common in medieval England, although most were probably dealt with at a local level without the intervention of the bishop. Certainly Stratford's register suggests that the Cobham parishioner was unusually recalcitrant and that extreme measures were needed to deal with him. Another common feature of medieval life was the damaging and distressing effect of local gossip. In 1327 the bishop's office learned of the unfortunate case of Adam le Gate of Farnham. He had been 'maliciously and evilly defamed' among the town's respectable people by 'some malevolent persons', who imputed to him certain serious crimes, including fornication and adultery with a young girl. As a result, Adam's position in society had been greatly harmed and his 'reputation considerably blackened'. Having been cleared of these crimes before the vicar-general, Adam's defamers were to be excommunicated in Farnham parish church and its dependant chapels, and those culpable were to appear before the bishop in Winchester (no 265).

Medieval bishops played a significant part in the dispensation of justice, as another case from Farnham demonstrates. A clerk had been found guilty by the secular authorities of burglary and delivered to the bishop's prison 'in accordance with the custom and liberty

of the English church'. The dean of Guildford was ordered to investigate the matter, to 'enquire diligently' about the clerk's appearance, reputation and behaviour, and to hear anyone wishing to accuse or bring objections against him (nos 259–60). Unfortunately, as so often when dealing with medieval sources, the outcome of the case is not recorded. Criminous clerks were usually handed over by the secular to the ecclesiastical authorities for punishment, but the king could demand the appearance of a priest to answer for his worldly crimes. The rector of a Guildford church, for example, was wanted for attacking the bishop of Salisbury's court at Artington 'with a large number of armed men', while Nicholas Horn was in trouble for reportedly poaching hares at Abinger (nos 1781, 1818).

Among the sanctions available to medieval bishops, excommunication was one of the most potent. In 1329, Stratford used its threat to stamp out the custom of distributing unconsecrated bread at the time of the Easter celebration of Mass. The archdeacon of Surrey was told that this 'abomination' was performed among those gathered in the county's churches and burial grounds 'where they are seated as though in a tavern ... with noisome clamour and congestion' (no 446). The bishop's absolution was the only remedy for those suffering excommunication. In 1332 Richard de Havering was absolved for his part in a disturbance in the church of Ash, which caused it to be 'for a long time polluted by the spilling of blood' (no 706). The proper direction and conduct of parish churches and their priests was Bishop Stratford's constant concern. In 1330 he visited Waverley Abbey to ensure that the monks' appropriation of Wanborough church was legitimate (no 514), and a priest was instituted to the vacant vicarage at the presentation of the abbot and convent (no 1049). At Witley, the bishop intervened to ensure that the ruined church was rebuilt, the rector of Ashtead was given a year's leave from the parish to further his studies, while the rector of Ewell's will was proved and declared lawful (nos 254, 411, 608–9). Hundreds of similar examples could be given.

Wealthy laymen were sometimes given permission to celebrate divine service in private oratories built at their manors, as at Frensham and Oxted (nos 144, 721). The motives that lay behind these requests are rarely given, but probably included enhancement of social status, distance from the parish church, and dislike of the priest or other parishioners. Neglect of parish churches was another possible factor, which the bishop sought to address. At Leatherhead, the rector was admonished because he 'notoriously left the church unattended, abandoning it as though derelict' (no 207), while the vicar of Kingston's income was augmented to ensure that he was able to fulfil his duties in a sufficient and appropriate manner (no 1054). These examples give a sense of the types of information to be found in Stratford's register, but do little to convey its sheer variety and range. The editor and publishers are to be thanked for making the original Latin manuscript (kept at Hampshire Record Office) easily accessible to present and future historians.

MARK PAGE

Tony Dyson, Mark Samuel, Alison Steele and Susan M Wright, *The Cluniac Priory and Abbey of St Saviour, Bermondsey, Surrey: excavations 1984–95*, MOLA monograph 50, 2011, price £27. Hardback, x + 297pp, 189 mono and colour illus. ISBN 978 1 901992 96 0

This report has been a long time coming, since it is basically a report of the excavations in the 1980s by the Department for Greater London Archaeology. It has both benefitted and suffered from this delay: it has benefitted because it was possible to incorporate some of the results of later excavations, especially those by Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) in Bermondsey Square, but it suffered because, apparently at a late stage the dating of the phases was altered but the pottery evidence was not re-evaluated (see Blackmore & Pearce 2011, 71).

The most disappointing result of the excavations was the absence of any feature of middle-Saxon date; some pottery and other finds that date or could date to the middle-Saxon period were recovered but, with one possible exception, all were *ex situ*. There is only one documentary reference to middle-Saxon Bermondsey, so it may have been short-lived; there is no reason why it should have been on the site of the later monastery, although locational factors would suggest that it lay in that general area. The one reference refers to the abbot of Peterborough also being abbot of Bermondsey, which suggests a monastic establishment of some sort, even though the report suggests it was the middle-Saxon minster that I have suggested lay at Lambeth (Dawson 2001).

Slightly more evidence was found for Saxo-Norman settlement in the form of ditches and pits, and the report suggests that the northernmost of these surrounded a minster that would have lain under the later abbey church. However, since nearly everybody accepts that the late Saxon minster was at Southwark (Dawson 2000) this is unlikely. Some sort of estate centre would fit better, in which case the early chapel would be the parish church provided by the local lord (in this case the king). This is also the period when Bermondsey Priory was founded, although the exact date has always been problematic. The Domesday Book entry clearly shows there was no monastery in 1086, so the earlier grant by Alwyn Child of 1082 – according to the Bermondsey Annals – must be an erroneous date (many of the Annals' dates are wrong, even its date for Domesday Book). Therefore there can really be no doubt that the monastery was founded in the early years of William II's reign, and 1088 would be a likely date if William, who had by then established himself in England, had felt the need to consolidate his position with acts of generosity (it was probably then that he gave Lambeth to Rochester). It is also stated that the western part of Southwark, Dulwich and other places were originally part of Bermondsey manor, but I know of no evidence for this and it cannot be true for Southwark after c900, when the burgh was created. It is also implied that William II gave Bermondsey the hide of Southwark, Dulwich etc, but these are usually believed to be grants by Henry I, William's brother and successor.

There are seven post-Saxon phases – the last six of which relate to the monastery. The first, for which a date in the second half of the 11th century is given, contains a chapel that is identified as the church mentioned in Domesday Book as being new, so it would have been constructed in the early 1080s or perhaps the late 1070s; however, too much weight should not be placed on the word 'new' in the Middle Ages. The report suggests that the external appearance was simple, yet Domesday Book describes it as beautiful, and a piece of figural sculpture was found in a later context that probably derives from it. This must have been built by William I as lord of the manor and implies that the manorial buildings would be close to it.

Period 4 is the first with monastic buildings, and is dated 1100–1150, although no evidence is given for this and it always seems problematic with monastic sites as to how quickly the monks erected stone buildings. However, there are few examples where pre-stone buildings that the monks might have occupied have been identified, and that also applies here. In any case, the whole assemblage of claustral buildings was present during this period (though the western range was not within the excavated area), and apart from the earlier chapel, there were none to the east of the cloister. This was, however, where much of the later development took place – first, in the late 12th century with the construction of the infirmary complex and an extension to the chapel and later even more buildings, leading by the late 14th–15th centuries to the creation of a second cloister. Although this would usually be for the infirmary, here that has disappeared (though some of the buildings could surely be for infirmary purposes even if they do have the appearance of domestic buildings).

It is in the later periods that the pottery dating diverges most from that assigned to the building phases. For example, period M7 has pottery dating to the 11th–12th centuries but a building date of 1250–1330, and likewise period M8 is dated 1330–1430 but has pottery dating to the 12th–13th centuries. It is difficult to judge between these because the basis for the dating of the building phases is not given. On the pottery evidence, many of the

alterations in this eastern part of the precinct would have taken place when the documentary evidence suggests that the monastery was in financial trouble. However, much – perhaps most – trading was done on credit, so debts were often owed without implying that financial problems were involved.

The report includes a substantial discussion of the precinct boundaries. This had been blighted by an article written by A R Martin, who reconstructed much of the monastery from remains described by Buckler, which is sound but included a plan of the precinct that has since been repeatedly reproduced, although clearly wrong. The documentary record is often ambiguous or misleading. For example, a draft for a grant of 1544/5 (TNA: E 318/18/880) granted tenements and gardens within the churchyard and precinct of Bermondsey Abbey, but some of the property certainly lay outside the precinct since one includes 2 acres in Long Lane. The western boundary clearly lies along Bermondsey Street, and the southern boundary either along Grange Road or Grange Walk. A wall was found near the west end of Grange Road, which is interpreted here as the precinct boundary and seems a good candidate. In the 16th century the documents mention a garden in the angle of Grange Road and Bermondsey Street, which was outside the walls of the monastery and would mean the precinct wall was further north; the wall found was of an early type so perhaps the precinct boundary was moved north at some point. On the north, the boundary probably lay near the north side of the church. In 1552 there was a 1 acre meadow here, which abutted south on the new wall towards Thomas Pope's mansion (TNA: C 54/478 27); although this meadow and the tenements to the north and east belonged to Bermondsey, they probably lay outside the precinct.

This is the earliest known reference to Pope's house, which occupied the site of the claustral buildings of the monastery after the Dissolution. This northern wall is discussed and illustrated (it has interesting patterns, some with clearly religious meaning) in the report and given a date before 1530s; however, it must be post-Dissolution, as the description of it as new in 1552 implies. Pope's house is rather a puzzle since the Popes only briefly owned the site (1541–55), and according to Pope's biography in *DNB* he left Bermondsey in 1547 to live in Clerkenwell. It has always been famous, at least locally, but does not appear to be a very grand house on Buckler's drawings.

There are very few minor errors: on p 225 there is a reference to Cheam ware being produced at Farnborough Hill, which should be Coarse Border ware; on fig 158 P45 is said to be a Raeren bottle but in the text (p 227) it is said to be probably from Aachen, which is probably correct. Open area 9 has been duplicated, which leads to some confusion on p 240, where glass finds are said to come from open area 6 and open area 9 in period P1. However, in that period open area 9 is the same as open area 6 in the medieval periods, and the glass is said to come from north of the monastic church, which is not possible (it may mean the early chapel).

There are many interesting finds, especially those that can be associated with monastic life – such as the styli, book mounts, a metal figure of Christ crucified from a cross, and a lead grille (though it is not stated what religious function this performed). The recovery from the reredorter of a number of pottery and glass urinals is interesting and there seems an obvious connection, but the report interprets them as evidence for collection of urine for tanning.

One disappointment is the absence of any discussion of a drawing that purports to be the only representation of the medieval church, now only known from a photocopy (see Dawson 2002 for this and a brief discussion). It would have been interesting to know whether the archaeological evidence was thought to support or contradict this.

This is an impressive contribution to our knowledge of Bermondsey and of monastic houses generally. It is a pity that more is not known about Grimes' excavations, which are the only ones to have included large areas of the church. We look forward to the publication of the PCA excavations in Bermondsey Square, which did include some of the church.

References

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Graham Hayman, Phil Jones and Rob Poulton, *Settlement Sites and Sacred Offerings: Prehistoric and later archaeology in the Thames valley, near Chertsey*, SpoilHeap Publications, Monograph 4, 2012. Price £20. Softback, xvi + 203pp, multiple figures and tables + digital supplement. ISBN 978 0 9558846 4 1

Students of the middle Thames valley have been well served in recent years, with a string of major publications making available the results of fieldwork undertaken since the 1980s. These include Oxford Archaeology's *Thames through Time* series, Stuart Needham's Runnymede Bridge work, and Framework Archaeology's second Perry Oaks monograph. To these can now be added the present volume.

This comprises the fourth outing in a joint publishing venture of Archaeology South East (University College London) and Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Surrey County Council). The aim of the series, which was launched in 2008, is 'to provide a publication outlet for the results of archaeological investigation and research from across south-east England'. So far, all four of the resulting monographs have emanated from the second of the joint partners, and have dealt with sites in the north-western corner of the modern county of Surrey.

Settlement Sites and Sacred Offerings is a multi-author portmanteau publication that draws together the results of four separate but topographically and chronologically related projects undertaken in the Chertsey area between 1982 and 1996. Following an introductory Chapter 1 (Phil Jones and Rob Poulton), which provides the geological and topographical setting, a regional landscape narrative, and an excursus on rivers and ritual deposition, each of the four projects is afforded a separate chapter with supporting specialist reports. (Additional tabulated data are relegated to a digital supplement available on the Surrey County Council website).

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with a series of important and occasionally spectacular finds ('*Sacred Offerings*') recovered from relict river channels located during commercial mineral extraction at Abbey Meads, Chertsey in 1982 and 1985–6 (Phil Jones), and at Sheep Walk, Shepperton in 1986–7 (Rob Poulton). These include the now famous Chertsey Shield of Iron Age date from the former site, and from the latter a cache of five late Roman pewter plates, at least one of which belonged to 'Maltogenus', according to a graffito on the rim flange.

Chapters 4 and 5 outline the results of work on two important local settlement foci ('*Settlement Sites*'). Chapter 4 (Phil Jones) reports on an RCHME survey and the subsequent small-scale excavation carried out on St Ann's Hill, Chertsey during 1990, which confirmed the existence of earthworks (undated but presumed to be Iron Age), and of locally intensive EIA activity in the interior. Chapter 5 (Graham Hayman), the most substantial in the volume, sets out the results of a long campaign of excavations undertaken between 1989 and 1994 on the plough-reduced Bronze Age to Roman site at Thorpe Lea Nurseries near Egham.

The meat of the volume lies in chapters 2–5. Although recovered in less than ideal circumstances, the contextual data adduced for the various watery finds from Abbey Meads and Sheep Walk allow them to be better integrated into the wider inhabitation of the local flood plain landscape. Such observations also lead one to question how truly wet

'watery' actually was. Recent work, including that reported on here, is pointing to a range of depositional contexts for objects notionally recovered from rivers, but in reality encompassing the channels themselves, adjacent permanently, seasonally (or inter-tidally) 'dry' ground, mid-stream eyots, and sand- and point-bar deposits too. Moreover, this highlights just how nuanced (and often unfathomable) were the personal/communal motivations that underlay object deposition – even in the case of more recent and apparently more knowable examples, such as the series of 'killed' late medieval daggers thrown into the river from Paul's Stairs in the City, the Hindu objects left on the Thames foreshores, or the 'love locks' intermittently attached to London's Millennium Bridge. The (probably false) dichotomy between the sacred and the everyday is played out elsewhere in the volume too, as with the artefacts recovered from the various Iron Age and Roman waterholes excavated at Thorpe Lea Nurseries.

The short Chapter 4 on the St Ann's Hill site provides compelling evidence for the early use of this spot, and poses questions as to the likely function of the enclosed hilltop within the regional landscape. Here, it is suggested (p 73) that St Ann's Hill 'may have replaced the riverside complex of Petters/Runnymede as the major settlement of the district at an early stage in the Iron Age'. Be this as it may, the local availability of iron-bearing limonite ores is likely to have been what attracted later prehistoric and Roman settlement to the area. And, notwithstanding the generally low quantities of slag and metalworking waste actually recovered from the extensive excavations at Thorpe Lea Nurseries (p 173), Phil Jones (Chapter 1) is surely right to stress their potentially regional significance.

The excavations at Thorpe Lea Nurseries, reported on in Chapter 5, provide evidence of a landscape development sequence by now familiar along the Thames valley: an initial hunter-gatherer presence succeeded by local clearance episodes, the latter eventually culminating in the establishment of co-axial field systems in the early/mid Bronze Age with (? hedged) boundaries that exerted an influence down to the Roman period. At Thorpe Lea the accompanying Bronze Age settlement pattern is initially open and dispersed, becomes increasingly aggregated in the Iron Age, and is ultimately enclosed during the Roman period (if not earlier), though – four-post structures apart – later truncation has removed much of the evidence for actual buildings (see below). A sequence of waterholes hints at the importance of stockraising to the local community from at least the Iron Age, and these also trapped large assemblages of ecofacts and artefacts.

The various classes of finds from Thorpe Lea have their own stories to tell. The ceramic assemblage is large, and ranges from Bronze Age to Roman in date. Most notable perhaps is the regionally important MBA Deverel-Rimbury material recovered from several of the linear ditches that make up the early field system. This contains an interesting group of globular urns alongside the bucket urns so familiar from local flat-grave cemeteries. The ceramic report also includes an ambitious first attempt to define a prehistoric fabric series for the region (pp 117–19), though, as with any such attempt, vessel form needs to be taken into account too. The discussion of the artefacts recovered from the waterholes is balanced and judicious and (rightly) makes allowance for a spectrum of motivations ranging from the spiritual to the quotidian (pp 192–3). The evidence for skinning dogs from the Iron Age and Roman phases is a case in point (p 176), and mirrors finds elsewhere. For while there may have been a ritual element to the eventual disposal of the skeletal elements, it could have been the suppleness of the dog leather that was of primary and more immediately practical value to the local community – as indeed it was in later periods with the production of fine dog-skin gloves.

There are other surprises too, such as the presence of coriander and the head of a honeybee (p 184) from the fill of mid-Roman waterhole 1948. Furthermore, woodworm beetles from the same context indicate the infestation of structural timbers as at Perry Oaks, near Heathrow, and are 'very much appropriate to a Roman settlement with timber buildings' (p 183) – even if more direct structural evidence is scanty. Contemporary features interpreted as beam-slots lie adjacent (eg fig 5.19, contexts 370, 1988), and this reviewer wondered whether the series of narrow, shallow ditches a few metres to the south (eg fig 19,

contexts 330, 462, 527, 533, etc) could also be interpreted as the foundations of a range of rectilinear timber buildings rather than merely the 'drainage gullies and barriers' around working areas (p 192). Interpreted thus, the more substantial ditches adjacent (fig 5.19, contexts 328, 367, 599) could be seen as a means of channelling eaves' run-off away towards enclosure ditch 1008.

Inevitably in a volume of this sort there are occasional editorial lapses: for example 'Boyne Hill' should be read as Boyn Hill throughout Chapter 1, and Caesar's Camp, Heathrow was excavated in the 1940s, not the 1960s (p 12). Furthermore, the paper binding looks to be a potential weakness, as the cover of this reviewer's copy is already separating from the contents. Perhaps a hardback option might be worth exploring for future titles in the series? It would be churlish to dwell on such quibbles, however, because the volume contains much of interest, the writing is lucid, and Giles Pattison's design work is clean and uncluttered (an honourable mention too for the eye-catching cover photograph with its striking colour separation). The illustrations throughout are of a high standard, and occasionally works of art in their own right (eg David Williams' fine drawing of the Iron Age sword and scabbard mounts, fig 3.6). Finally, a deserved pat on the back for English Heritage, for sticking with the publication project and funding it through to completion.

In making a wealth of detailed evidence available and using it to offer new insights into the regional settlement pattern, *Settlement Sites and Sacred Offerings* more than adds up to the sum of its parts, thus maintaining the high standards set by previous publications in the series. Future titles are awaited with keen anticipation.

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