

Books

Alsted: Excavation of a Thirteenth-Fourteenth Century Sub-Manor House with its Ironworks in Netherne Wood, Merstham, Surrey, by Lesley L. Ketteringham. *Research Volume of the Surrey Archaeological Society*. Price £1.50 plus postage (21p) from The Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford.

THIS REPORT deals with the excavation of what was probably the sub-manor of Alstead. Three areas were excavated: Site 1, thought to be a gate house, was dated to c.1250-1270, Site 2, the main buildings, is divided into two periods, Period 1 c.1250-1270 consists of a small rectangular building, probably the hall, and a raised rectangular area of clay and pebbles, possibly a platform for a timber building. There was no dating evidence from this platform so it may be earlier. In Period 2, c.1270-1350, the Period 1 hall was demolished and replaced by an aisled hall, solar block and kitchen. The kitchen was later incorporated into the hall and a detached kitchen constructed to the north of the hall at the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th. Site 3 was the industrial area, also sub-divided. Periods 1A and B are contemporary with Site 2 and Period 1 and consist of iron smelting and forging and copper alloy working hearths. Period 2 consisted of a probable charcoal burning area and in Period 2 Intermediate what appears to be a small tile kiln was constructed. In Period 2B, c.1270-1340, a small house was built, perhaps for a smith, and a furnace constructed. There was a hiatus until Period 3A c.1395-1405 when a second possible tile kiln was constructed with a clay puddling tank. In Period 3B also c.1395-1405 a, so far, unique forge was built with associated stables (?), shed, etc. The site was then abandoned.

There is a useful pottery report although a few of the drawings could be clearer and more detail is needed in the identification and description of the tempering material. G. C. Dunning describes a North French jug from Site 2 Period 1, although the stratigraphical position is ambiguous and could equally date from early Period 2. This slightly later date would not be incompatible. An East Surrey copy of this type of jug from London is also discussed.

Appendices deal with stone mortars, coal, an attached ventilator finial with a discussion of the type, iron and copper alloy objects including a unique Trebuchet-type coin balance dated c.1250-1270, etc. There is a short historical summary and

a report on a number of unstratified flints, the majority of which appear to be Mesolithic.

This is a well written and useful report, well laid out and bound, and above all, relatively cheap. A number of unique features of this site including the forge from Site 3 make this report of more than local significance. It is curious, however, that the field notes and plans are deposited in one place and the finds in another. It is essential that they are not divorced. (See Nicholas Thomas's comments on this point in the C.B.A.'s *Archaeology in Britain 1975-76* especially p.47).

ROBERT LANCASTER

(1). **Walk Round Waltham Abbey (Monastery and Town)** by Dr Ken Bascombe with drawings by John Bentley and map by Peter Huggins. 29 pence.

(2). **Legend of the Miraculous Cross of Waltham** by Dinah Dean. 29 pence.

(3). **King Harold's Town** by John Camp and Dinah Dean. 34 pence.

All post free from R. C. Gray, Esq (Waltham Abbey Hist. Soc.) 64 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BS.

(1) The *Walk Round* is a popular example of the current fashion for "town trails," yet it is scholarly showing clearly that there is much to be seen in the town of Waltham Abbey beside the great fane and its precincts. The author set out to indicate at least in outline how the history of the town is reflected in its surviving buildings, though there are special difficulties in dating timber-framed buildings especially when they are fully occupied. Dr. Bascombe tells me that in the last two years, since he completed the text of the pamphlet, in at least three cases evidence from deliberate investigation or revealed in major redecoration would require dating revision. The old house in which the Society set up its "Do It Yourself" museum, a highly commended project well worth a visit, is now considered to be very probably the oldest in the town. It is No. 41 Sun Street, and has an interesting jettied front. The house is now known to be basically fifteenth century, No. 39 having been a seventeenth century addition to it. No. 2 Church Street set down as possibly fifteenth century is now more closely dated as about 1600 while No. 3 Church Street, next door, is put at about 1500.

(2) *The Legend of the Miraculous Cross of Waltham* is a paraphrase of a translation of the three MSS in the Manuscript Department of the

Reference Division of the British Library. They record the foundation of Waltham in Canute's reign and subsequent events down to the turmoils of the mid twelfth century: the reign of Stephen. Again it is a pioneer story since the work has never been available before in English. The Latin version was printed in about 1860 but even that is now a very rare book. A full and precise translation by Frank Baker of Harlow and Dr. Bascombe of Waltham Abbey is now being edited for publication. It will fill a greivous gap in mediaeval manuscripts available in printed translation.

(3) *King Harold's Town* was first produced in 1973 as a companion to the Exhibition by Waltham Abbey Historical Society in the Town Hall that August to illustrate the town's development up to about 1900. This edition has been revised to give a general outline of the history of the town with an extra chapter bringing it right up to date. It is quite distinct from the booklets on and guides to the Abbey Church of which there have been several and is the first concise readable history of the town and Abbey ever to have been put on sale.

E. LIONEL FEREDAY

City of London, Past and Present. A Pictorial Record of the City of London by J. K. Fisher. *Oxford Illustrated Press*. £3.25

THIS is a collection of some 52 pairs of photographs, each pair depicting the same City scene, and arranged to provide a comparison between the old and the new. The old photographs are generally of good quality, and were selected from the City of London Guildhall Library Collection, evidently with some care. Those of the present day are all quite recent, mainly being taken in the Autumn of 1975. There is a historical introduction, describing the somewhat chequered existence of the City, and this in itself is worth reading, as are the picture captions, which contain some entertaining snippets of information.

I found the whole book most interesting, not altogether because of my own associations with the City, and anyone who knows the Square Mile will find many points to ponder over. It was necessary to take some of the new photographs at week-ends because of modern-day traffic conditions, and this highlights the already crowded streets of the earlier period. I was reminded, too, that Christ's Hospital Bluecoat School was still in London in 1897, that Lowestoft trawlers came up to Billingsgate Market in 1890 and that there were quite sizeable sailing ships at the Tower in 1900. Altogether a most enjoyable book.

BOB ORTON

Shepherd's London by J. F. C. Phillips, *Cassell & Co.*, £5.95.

THE frontispiece tells you John Phillips will give pleasure as well as instruct. From a picturesquely overgrown and draped proscenium arch, your eye follows the artist's, out past his board to the busy Thames: the city skyline is dominated by St. Paul's and the Monument, masts are massed in the distance. It heralds, too, the agreeable design and clear layout of the book. The reproductions are big and bold enough to illustrate the author's discussion not only of their content but also of style, technique and signatures. Wherever possible, plates and text face each other.

The title was a niggling worry: should not the apostrophe be after the 's'? There were four Shepherds: George, Thomas Hosmer, George Sidney and Frederick Napoleon.

Reading the book, however, was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Explanations, facts, literary counterparts provide a delicious flow of stimulants.

Did you know that the first fuchsia noticed in England was observed on a Wapping window-sill by a nurseryman early in the 19th century? It had been brought back from the West Indies by a sailor. *Shepherd's London* is a skilful example of harvesting topographical information and social history from prints and drawings. Even the Corn Law comes in, thanks to one of many posters on a wall behind a vegetable seller at Clare Market, depicted by George. But should not the location of the market, south of Lincoln's Inn Fields, be given? The author does not claim to offer the complete works of the family; he does list the major institutions that own Shepherds.

It is gratifying that John Phillips throws light on the working methods of one group of people producing topographical part-works and tomes. And that he praises George Shepherd highly. George achieved beautiful compositions and renderings of light and shade, for instance Coade and Sealy's Manufactory (plate 7) and Bucklersbury (plate 5).

I tire sooner than does John Phillips of Thomas Hosmer Shepherd's repetitive arrangements and limited stock of staffage (those dogs!) Though even now amazingly little is known about their lives, the Shepherds offer human interest too. The story of George Sidney's decline, his frequent moves to ever less select addresses, each time leaving arrears in rates, is touching. Most pleasing of all is the modest, reliable style of the whole book, which creates an optimistic atmosphere. The author shares with his readers his delight in research and discovery.

An attractive, unpretentious, and reasonably priced book about a London that is no more.

JOAN POLLARD