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A HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF SHAW-CUM-DONNINGTON, by W. A. D. MORRIS, 163 pages with 33 illustrations including maps. 10s. 6d.

Not many villages have their own historian, but Shaw-cum-Donnington is fortunate in having one in Mr W. A. D. Morris, whose book on the history of the village has just been published. It is the work of many years of research, a labour of love, for as the author says—'This ancient parish is undergoing so many changes that it was necessary to put on record some of the interesting events and facts relating to it'.

Mr Morris is closely associated with the village as he was headmaster of the school from 1927 to 1947. The book is illustrated, mostly by the author, and makes a valuable record, especially as some of the buildings have been or will be, demolished and replaced by new. These 34 illustrations include four maps, one geological; also a botanical list of plants on Snelsmore Common. Donnington Castle figures a great deal and Mr Morris explains that the curtain walls were not so high as the Gate House, which is a later addition. He also, quite rightly, demolishes the legend of the tunnel from the Castle to Shaw House.

Indeed the cloak of Walter Money seems to have fallen on Mr Morris and he is to be congratulated on his attractive and valuable little book, full of interesting details and previously unpublished material of local history; and it is an example that might well be followed by other villages. The book is dedicated to the officers and members of the Newbury District Field Club and is reasonably priced at 10s. 6d. D. G. KAINES-THOMAS

LOWER PALAEOLITHIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRITAIN as represented by the Thames Valley, by JOHN WYMER, A.M.A., F.S.A.

429 pages, XXXVI plates, 110 figures and maps. John Baker 1968. 8 gns.

Mr Wymer has specialised in the Palaeolithic Period for many years and in this well-produced book he provides both a general discussion of Lower Palaeolithic industries and a comprehensive survey of Lower Palaeolithic sites in one very important geographical region, the Thames Valley. The first 77 pages give an introduction to the evidence available and its interpretation. There are chapters covering the use and manufacture of flint implements, the geology of the deposits in which they are found, a full account of the history of the discovery, and the typology of the Clactonian, Acheulian and Levalloisian industries. All are illustrated by line drawings of first-rate quality.

The central 285 pages consist of a gazetteer of sites in the Thames Valley from Lechlade to Northfleet. The Kennet Valley below Hungerford and the lower stretches of other tributary streams are included. The eleven geographical areas of the valley are dealt with in three sections; a description of the geology and geomorphology, a list of sites by parishes with the history of their discovery, and a summary of the conclusions to be drawn from the evidence.

The many figures of artifacts, superbly drawn by the author, are conveniently placed in the text. The plates are generally clear although the nature of the medium, black and white, at times makes it difficult to detect differences in layers. The finest map, in six colours, is of terraces and sites in Reading and Caversham. With the aid of this and the generous introduction to the geomorphology of this area, the reader can follow on the ground some of the dramatic changes which took place in the landscape during the Middle and Late Pleistocene Period. Other maps are in two colours and show the great advantage in clarity that comes from the use of more than one colour.

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The work of the author with the Berkshire Field Research Group in observation and cutting gravel sections is well recorded. This has been instrumental in finding evidence for an Early (?) Acheulian industry in the Ancient Channel at Highlands Farm, Henley, a proto-Levalloisian industry in Lynch Hill Terrace gravel at Butts Hill, Woodley, and an unusual industry which post-dates the Lynch Hill Terrace at Remenham. The artifacts from the filling of two solution hollows are figured in some detail, and their haphazard and inexperienced knapping leads to the suggestion 'that the industry is nothing more than a site where, because flint was so plentiful and thus of little value, the uninitiated were taken for instruction and practice.' The geological evidence suggests a date during the Gipping Glaciation for these crude artifacts. Although specimens of almost all Palaeolithic stone industries have been found in Reading there seems little hope of establishing their chronology as the original sequence has been hopelessly mixed by the succession of severe geological disturbances. It is only at rare sites such as Barnfield Pit, Swanscombe that industries are found stratified.

The summaries in the gazetteer are considered collectively in Chapter 7 and a general chronology is outlined. The probable relationship between the Pleistocene deposits and the stone industries is set out in a table on pages 390-3 and not on page 371 as stated. A brief survey of other Lower Palaeolithic sites in Britain is included and in the final chapter correlations are made between industries in Europe, Asia and Africa, time and evolution. An 18 page bibliography and indexes of subjects, sites, and persons are included.

Mr Wymer has recorded the evidence available and made some interpretations. New ideas and discoveries may change these interpretations, but his book will remain a permanent record of the evidence for Lower Palaeolithic man in this important region, and essential to all those with an interest in this very remote, but interesting period.

H. W. COPSEY

MAGNA CARTA IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES, by HERBERT BUTTERFIELD. *The Stenton Lecture* 1968. *University of Reading, n.p.*, 1969.

Sir Herbert Butterfield in the second Stenton Lecture develops some aspects of a theme which he adumbrated in 1931 in *The Whig Interpretation of History* and to which he gave further precision in *The Englishman and his History* in 1945. Past generations have tended to interpret history in accordance with the general outlook of their age, and have then used this interpretation in order to justify current politics. Of this double tendency Sir Herbert sees the historiography of Magna Carta as a supreme example. To many sixteenth century writers the charter had been a somewhat dubious affair, better ignored, since it had been extracted by force from an anointed king and had incidentally guaranteed the liberties of a popish church (the Shakespearean play *King John* does not mention Magna Carta at all). But then the attempts of James I to extract forced loans, to demand impositions, to set up monopolies and to imprison the recalcitrant, drove Sir Edward Coke and other lawyers in the House of Commons to seek in the past some legally unassailable guarantee of individual liberties. This they found in clause 39 of Magna Carta, which forbade imprisonment of a free man save after judgment by his peers or by the law of the land. The charter became almost overnight the great defence of English freedom, and the Petition of Right in 1628 was the climax of a movement beginning with efforts to carry a bill confirming clause 63 of Magna Carta.

Civil war, commonwealth troubles and the restoration of monarchy, however, produced a quite different doctrine. Sir Henry Spelman and, still more, the historian Robert Brady, insisted that Magna Carta had been a document drawn up by feudal barons to protect their own quite narrow interests; it had never been intended to be of much advantage to the ordinary freeman. This view (a 'Tory' view as against Coke's 'Whig' view) did not last long.

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The Revolution of 1688 seems to have defeated it, and subsequent historians, writing in the Whig tradition, went back to the teaching of the Puritan lawyers. Not until a Glasgow lecturer, William McKechnie, published a careful and learned commentary on Magna Carta in 1905 did historians conclude that Spelman and Brady had had the substance of the matter: the great Charter was essentially a feudal document; though it was also, as the Tories had failed to appreciate, a contractual document setting limits to the free exercise of monarchical power.

Sir Herbert shows very clearly the damage current political bias can do to historical research; he no less clearly indicates that all established historical orthodoxies, prejudiced or unprejudiced, stand in need of continuing re-examination. No historian is infallible, and one day we can be quite sure that even McKechnie will be seen to have missed some very important points. The second Stenton lecture, although on an apparently highly specialised topic, thus has relevance for all those interested in the writing and appreciation of history.

MAURICE BOND

READING ABBEY, by BRIAN R. KEMP. *An introduction to the history of the Abbey*, 56 pages, 6 illustrations and a cover designed by Claus C. Henning. Published by Reading Museum and Art Gallery, 1968. price 2s. 6d.

This well-printed and concise booklet is a fresh study of the history of the foundation of what became one of the 10 most wealthy Benedictine houses in England. The work is divided into 8 chapters which deal with the Abbey's foundation and endowment, its privileges, financial difficulties in the 13th century, biographical details of the Abbots and finally the death of the last Abbot and the end of the monastery. There is a list of lands and churches belonging to the Abbey and a bibliography. An excellent feature is the printing of footnotes and references at the end of each chapter, a feature which could be adopted to advantage more generally.

Reading was pre-eminently a Royal Abbey and the details of gifts and grants from the time of Henry I onwards are impressive. The munificence of the Royal family in the 12th century accounted for the greater part of the monastic possessions, but gifts from nobles and other laymen were made to gain the prayers of the monks which were felt to be especially effective and beneficial. One type of grant was made in conjunction with the burial of the donors or their relatives in the Abbey.

The Abbey's foundation Charter gave it the right of having a mint at Reading, but its coins were struck in London until after 1338 when halfpennies of Edward III appeared with 'Villa Radingy' and an escallop in one quarter of the reverse. The Abbey's other privileges were judicial with its own gaols at Reading and Leominster and gallows and ducking stools in its manors. The Abbot and monks became Lords of the Manors of Reading and Leominster and part of the Hundred of Hoo in Kent.

The booklet is a bargain at the price and we look forward to more in the series.

F. M. UNDERHILL

THE CRAFT AND DESIGN OF MONUMENTAL BRASSES, by HENRY H. TRIVICK, 152 pages, some 300 illustrations including many in colour: folio, John Baker, Pall Mall, London, 1969, price 10 gns.

Mr Trivick is an artist and lithographer whose work is well known through many local and national exhibitions. He has lectured to our Society on memorial brasses which are again popular through the revived interest in rubbing. He reminds us of the very considerable literature on the subject but he takes a fresh look at the originals through the eye of an engraver and artist and he claims to be the first to reproduce the figures as a positive 'off the top of the brass' as opposed to the more usual 'negative' reproduction through rubbing with heel ball which results in a black and white image. Many of Mr Trivick's figures are shown in gold with the incised lines blackened,

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this was how the engravers intended their memorials to be seen. No other method except direct photography can reproduce fine detail of engraving so exactly.

The author has devoted a lifetime to his subject, travelling widely in our own country also far beyond the British Isles to obtain examples of some of the finest continental examples with little known plates from Poland, Germany, Belgium, France and Portugal. The later foreign figures show a feeling and perfection in execution which is absent from English examples of the 16th and 17th centuries. However it is in our earlier memorials like those at Stoke d'Abernon and Chartham which have such a simplicity of line suggesting graceful movement that is so masterly.

Mr Trivick contends as one who has spent

years drawing facial features, that many English memorials were intended as actual portraits of the deceased. We have so few painted portraits before the 16th century that this proposal opens a new line of enquiry to both art and local history. Living as he does in South Bucks, Mr Trivick for his English examples has drawn largely from the surrounding district and he includes reproductions of many splendid plates from our own County as well as from the Oxford College Chapels and further afield. He gives a description of his own methods or rubbing, including the technique of 'dabbing'. There is a full bibliography, County lists of surviving brasses and an index. Altogether a finely produced work with an artist's criticism of the medieval and later engraver's art.

F. M. UNDERHILL