

# RICHARD RAWLINSON AND THE PUBLICATION OF AUBREY'S NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF SURREY?

BY

BRIAN ENRIGHT

TOWARDS the end of 1718 Edmund Curll published a five-volume work entitled *The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey, begun in the year 1673 by John Aubrey . . . and continued to the present Time*. Richard Rawlinson, the non-juring bishop and owner of the vast manuscript collections now bearing his name in the Bodleian, had, since 1714, co-operated with the notoriously unscrupulous publisher in issuing a series of county and cathedral histories based on the work of earlier antiquaries; later, in an autobiographical sketch, he admitted having a part in the publication of Aubrey's *Surrey*,<sup>1</sup> while in 1730 Thomas Hearne incisively reminded his friend:

Many years since I have your Ed. of Mr Aubrey's *Surrey* . . . I have the printed Advertisement, in wch you are mentioned as the Editor.<sup>2</sup>

Nobody doubted the value of Aubrey's work or the desirability of preserving it in print. John Evelyn was delighted with his friend's collections:

Sir, With incredible Satisfaction I have perus'd your *Natural History of Surrey*, &c. and greatly admire both your Industry in undertaking so profitable a Work, and your Judgment in the several Observations which you have made. It is so useful a Piece, and so obliging, that I cannot sufficiently applaud it.<sup>3</sup>

His praise was re-echoed by Manning and Bray who referred to Aubrey's labours "whereby many monumental inscriptions have been preserved, which have been since destroyed,"<sup>4</sup> while Aubrey's latest biographer spoke of "the very creditable collection of information, suitable to form the basis of a county history, and com-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Rawl. J. 4<sup>o</sup>, I, f. 345v. The main title-page of the work was dated 1719 but Curll was notorious for his habit of post-dating his publications, and the subsidiary title-pages are dated 1718 when the book was originally advertised. R. Straus, *The Unspeakable Curll*, 1927, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Rawl. Letters 32, f. 79, Feb. 28, 1730. William Brome wrote in 1740: "I fancy you had a great hand in it. Is it so?" MS. Rawl. Letters 31, f. 396. Richard Gough ascribed the edition to Rawlinson, *British Topography*, ii, p. 262, as did Manning and Bray, *The History and Antiquities of . . . Surrey*, 1814 iii, p. 685.

<sup>3</sup> Aubrey's *Surrey*, i, signature A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Manning and Bray, *Surrey*, iii, p. 685.

parable in method to Ashmole's *History and Antiquities of Berkshire*." <sup>1</sup> It was Rawlinson's attempt to use Aubrey's notes as the nucleus for a county history that evoked so much severe criticism. Powell continued:

It was printed in 1718-19 by Curll, with Dr. Richard Rawlinson's memoir. . . . Rawlinson made many minor, but wholly unnecessary, emendations in Aubrey's text. <sup>2</sup>

Hearne at the same time as he attacked the interpolations in Ashmole's *Berkshire* remarked that "the same Injustice is shew'd to . . . Mr. Aubrey in his *Antiq. of Surrey*." <sup>3</sup>

Rawlinson anticipated such criticism, explaining in the introduction:

The Work it self was printed from an Original MS. in the Possession of a private Gentleman, and collated with another preserved in the ASHMOLEAN MUSÆUM in *Oxford*, both wrote with the Author's own Hand, and both huddled together in a very confused and immethodical Order. <sup>4</sup>

Many of the "minor emendations" causing so much complaint may well have been better readings in the first manuscript which cannot now be traced, while some were corrections; Aubrey's "copies are by no means exact" <sup>5</sup> and Rawlinson later referred to the Collections as being "revised" and "corrected." <sup>6</sup> Aubrey himself remarked on the disorder of his notes:

The Papers are like Sybillina Folia. I shall not take the Pains to digest them in better Order, (which would require the Drudgery of another Transcribing) and I now set Things down tumultuarly, as if tumbled out of a Sack, as they come to my Hand, mixing Antiquities and Natural Things together, as I have here done them. They will be of some Use to such as love Antiquities or Natural History. <sup>7</sup>

Rawlinson was not unaware of the value of printing Aubrey's notes as they stood, experimenting in the first volume, "but upon more mature Consideration, it was thought proper to revise carefully these valuable Notes, reduce them into a more regular Method." A century later another scholar confronted with the task of publishing Aubrey's collections for Wiltshire tackled the problem in much the same way as Rawlinson, rearranging the notes completely in the hope that he was doing what Aubrey "potuit, si non prius ipse periisset." <sup>8</sup> Rawlinson omitted Aubrey's delightful maps and his finely blazoned coats-of-arms, but supplied a background to the

<sup>1</sup> A. Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends*, 1948, p. 279. The edition of Ashmole's *Berkshire* (1719) was another product of the Rawlinson-Curll alliance.

<sup>2</sup> Powell, *John Aubrey*, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> *Collections* (O.H.S.), vii, p. 265, Aug. 5, 1721.

<sup>4</sup> Aubrey, *Surrey*, i, p. ii. The manuscript in the Ashmolean is now in the Bodleian (MS. Aubrey, 4) and boasts to be no more than a fair copy.

<sup>5</sup> Manning and Bray, *Surrey*, iii, p. 685.

<sup>6</sup> *The English Topographer*, p. 229.

<sup>7</sup> Aubrey, *Surrey*, i, signature A8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> J. E. Jackson's edition, *Wiltshire, The Topographical Collections of John Aubrey*, 1862, p. viii.

book by including Ogilby's and Evelyn's letters to the antiquary, and a short Memoir of the author, the obscurity of whose "retired Life, (for he always affected a *Literatum Otium*) has made it very difficult to procure many Materials concerning him." Rawlinson was the first to admit the shortcomings of the biography which Powell points out,<sup>1</sup> but pleaded:

My Reader must . . . acquiesce in the Account following, till hereafter a *Third Volume* of the *Athenæ Oxonienses*, in the Hands of a learned Divine, supply us with one more exact.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of volume five Rawlinson's hand can be seen again adding an extract from the Bodleian *Valor*<sup>3</sup> used so exhaustively in his cathedral histories. In addition to the print of Aubrey and the map of Surrey dedicated to Sir John Fellowes, he adorned the last volume with "eight plates of beautiful fragments of statues and bas-reliefs" which "Aubrey lost sight of."<sup>4</sup> In July 1718 Hearne had noted:

A great many imperfect Statues of the Lord Arundel's were not removed into Northamptonshire, but are now remaining in the Gardens, near Lambeth, being judged to be useless, but there are many things to be learned from them, and, for that reason, Draughts of them are now taking by my Friends, Thomas Rawlinson, Esq., and his Brother, Mr. Rich<sup>d</sup> Rawlinson.<sup>5</sup>

Rawlinson's editorial duties had they ended here would indeed have been slight, but "upon more mature Consideration" he decided to

re-survey the whole County, as is very plainly perceivable by the Editors bringing down this Account to his own Time, to the very last Year; yet is this done in such a Manner as that Mr Aubrey's Materials are entirely preserved.

Here Rawlinson revealed the attitude of the 18th-century antiquary to the works of his predecessors. When he published the manuscript histories of the Elizabethan and Jacobean antiquaries, Rawlinson made no attempt to modernize their works, sufficient time having elapsed for him to realize that interpolation would be heretical. His technique with the works of the late 17th-century antiquaries was quite different, as for him the chasm between the study of antiquity then and in his own time which appears so plainly to modern scholars did not exist. There were many who could remember Dugdale and Wood, Aubrey and Ashmole, and important as Rawlinson realized their lives to have been it seemed only logical to attempt to complete works which they had been unable to finish before presenting them to the 18th-century public. Rawlinson was not primarily publishing material for a better

<sup>1</sup> Powell, *John Aubrey*, pp. 115, 244.

<sup>2</sup> Aubrey, *Surrey*, i, p. ii. Rawlinson referred to Tanner who hesitated before publishing the materials for a third volume of the *Athenæ Oxonienses* which Wood had left him.

<sup>3</sup> MS. e. Mus. 21.

<sup>4</sup> R. Gough, *British Topography*, ii, p. 130 n.

<sup>5</sup> *Collections*, vi, p. 207.



DR. RICHARD RAWLINSON, 1690-1755.

understanding of Aubrey, but rather an up-to-date history of Surrey, using the latter's collections as an authoritative basis. There was no question of deceit; it was obvious to any careful reader of the introduction to the 1719 edition of Aubrey's *Surrey* that he could not have included epitaphs dating from after his death, though Rawlinson might have avoided much criticism had he indicated editorial interpolations whenever they appeared.

No complete record of a perambulation of Surrey has survived but in May 1717 Hearne, referring to the collections for the edition, informed Rawlinson that "some Memoirs of your intended Tour will be acceptable."<sup>1</sup> Fragments of manuscript accounts reveal Richard Rawlinson, accompanied by his elder brother Thomas, the famous bibliophile, and Curll<sup>2</sup> travelling through Surrey between April and September of 1717, not continuously as they were to do in 1718 in Oxfordshire, but for a few days or a week at a time, returning to London to digest what had been gathered.

| DETAILS OF THE PERAMBULATION |   |   |                                 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1717                         | Charges to be allowed in my perambulation of Surrey churches. | Account of the Times I visited the places mentioned in this first Volume. | Surveyed the Churches of        |
|                              | <i>MS. Rawl. D.1194, ff. 18, 19</i>                           | <i>S Rawl. 58 End paper</i>   | <i>MS. Rawl. D.1054, f. 157</i> |
| Apr. 12.                     | Sett out.   |   |                                 |
|                              | Battersea.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Putney.   | 0.1.0.  | ..                              |
| 13.                          | Barnes.   | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Mortlak.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Petersham.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Kingston.   | 0.1.0.  | ..                              |
|                              | Malden.   | 0.1.0.  | ..                              |
|                              | Tooting.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 21.                          | Eshur.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Cobham.   | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 22.                          | Ripley Chapell  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Guildford 2 churches.   | 0.1.0.  | ..                              |
|                              | Godalming.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Chidingford.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 26.                          | Farnham.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 27.                          | Egham.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 28.                          | Richmond.   | 0.1.0.  | ..                              |
|                              | Clapham.  | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| May ?                        | Camberwell.   | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
| 28.                          | Stretham.   | 0.0.6.  | ..                              |
|                              | Mycham.   | 0.0.6.  |                                 |
|                              | Sutton.   | 0.0.6.  |                                 |
|                              | (but dated May 30)  |   |                                 |

<sup>1</sup> MS. Rawl. Letters 111, f. 46, May 31, 1718.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Abell mentioned his visiting Farley though R. Straus, *op. cit.*, makes no mention of the trip.



|          |                             |                          |    |                          |
|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Aug. 17. | Mestham.                    | 0.0.6.                   | .. | 0.3.6.                   |
|          | Gatton.                     | 0.1.0.                   |    |                          |
|          | Chaldon.                    | 0.0.3.                   |    |                          |
|          |                             | <i>MS. Rawl. D.1194,</i> |    | <i>MS. Rawl. D.1194,</i> |
|          |                             | <i>f. 22</i>             |    | <i>ff. 18, 19</i>        |
| Sep. 21. | Kingston.                   | 0.3.2.                   |    |                          |
|          | Hampton Ferry<br>and Gates. | 0.0.6.                   |    |                          |
|          | Weybridge<br>Church.        | 0.1.2.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Byfleet Ch.                 | 0.0.2.                   |    |                          |
|          | Wisley.                     | ??                       | .. |                          |
|          | Ripley.                     | 0.6.6.                   |    |                          |
| Sep. 22. | Occham Ch.                  | 0.1.0.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Purford.                    | ??                       |    |                          |
|          | Woking.                     | ??                       |    |                          |
|          | Guildford.                  | 0.4.0.                   |    |                          |
|          | Puttenham.                  | 0.0.8.                   | .. |                          |
| Sep. 23. | Farnham.                    | 0.7.8.                   |    |                          |
|          | Sele Ch.                    | 0.1.0.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Elsted Ch.                  | 0.0.3.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Frensham.                   | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Thursley Ch.                | 0.0.3.                   | .. |                          |
| Sep. 24. | Haslemere.                  | 0.8.6.                   |    |                          |
|          | Haslemere Ch.               | 0.1.0.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Hameldon Ch.                | 0.0.4.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Hascomb Ch.                 | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Bramley Ch.                 | 0.0.2.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Wonish &<br>Shalford Ch.    | 0.1.0.                   | .. |                          |
| Sep. 25. | Guildford.                  | 0.9.10.                  |    |                          |
|          | Chilworth.                  | ??                       |    |                          |
|          | Cranley.                    | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Ewhurst.                    | 0.0.3.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Okewood.                    | 0.0.4.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Ockley.                     | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Dorking.                    | 0.8.0.                   |    |                          |
| Sep. 26. | Mekylham Ch.                | 0.0.9.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Hedley Ch.                  | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Reigate.                    | ??                       |    |                          |
|          | Blechingly.                 | ??                       |    |                          |
| Sep. 27. | Godstone.                   | 0.2.10.                  |    |                          |
|          | Limpsfield Ch.              | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Limpsfield Supper.          | 0.6.6.                   |    |                          |
|          | Titsey.                     | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Tatsfield.                  | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Coulsdon.                   | 0.0.6.                   | .. |                          |
|          | Croydon.                    | ??                       |    |                          |

As in the perambulation of Oxfordshire and Middlesex Richard Rawlinson was most active having prepared himself by reading thoroughly manuscript and printed materials relating to the county before he travelled,<sup>1</sup> making sure by his industrious transcriptions that the fees for consulting parish registers were not wasted, and undertaking the main editorial duties, crossing out the accounts of

<sup>1</sup> See his extracts from Dugdale's *Baronage* and Tanner's *Notitia* in MS. Rawl. D. 1194, f. 23, and his article on Surrey in *The English Topographer*, p. 229 *seq.*

Malden, Ewell and Sutton<sup>1</sup> once they had been inserted in their proper place for printing. But his elder brother, Thomas, who had been educated at Cheam made copious extracts from the parish registers,<sup>2</sup> and indulged in friendly rivalry with Richard to capture inaccessible inscriptions, noting curiously at Chilworth: "Bells cast abt 60 years ago. I could not read ye Inscriptions for feare of Danger to my Tenemt of Clay."<sup>3</sup> He paused in his labours struck with the beauty of Banstead, pronouncing it to be "a Good Place . . . for a Poet."<sup>4</sup>

Despite Hearne's wishes that the "Design upon Surrey goes on successfully"<sup>5</sup> and John Hare's presentation of a manuscript account of Addington,<sup>6</sup> nearly all of which Rawlinson printed, Richard realized that it was impossible to compile an up-to-date history without recruiting local support. For the Oxfordshire and Middlesex histories he issued a printed query as a cheap and convenient method of acquiring reliable information in a digestible form. Although no such papers for Surrey survive, some sort of stereotyped application,<sup>7</sup> either in print or manuscript must have been circulated, for as with the companion histories several replies directed to Curll can now be found among Rawlinson's collections. Joseph Abell, vicar of Farley, sent all the information he possessed upon the Atwood family:

Since I saw you I have been very industrious in getting the Original Parchments belonging to Warlingha[m] & Chelsha[m] search'd; what I send you now is a true & faithful Copy of what relates to y<sup>e</sup> vicarige of Warlingham w<sup>th</sup> the Chappel of Chelsha[m] annex'd. . . You must necessarily come this way again. You shal be welcome to me. Couldson Ch. seems to have somewhat worth yr view. Titsey contains y<sup>e</sup> Family of ye Greshams where are abundance of monuments in a Chancel belonging to yt Family. My most humble service to ye Gentleman [Richard Rawlinson], who was w<sup>th</sup> you, his Name I have slipt. If you have any thing more than ordinary amusing or instructive in Town, prithe send it to y<sup>r</sup> Friend & Serv<sup>t</sup>, Jos. Abell.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Rawl. D. 682, f. 85.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Rawl. C. 791. Here Thomas Rawlinson would meet an old college friend, George Pickerne who, Richard noted, "is the present worthy Rector, to whom we are obliged for his generous Permission to make the foregoing extracts." Aubrey's *Surrey*, v, p. 393. Thomas's writing mingled with that of his brother's in transcribing parish registers. MS. Rawl. D.1194, f. 5. Thomas lent his transcripts of epitaphs (MS. Rawl. C. 800) to Hearne who copied them. (MSS. Hearne's Diaries 53, pp. 231-44; 80, pp. 98, 172.)

<sup>3</sup> MS. Rawl. C. 800, f. 115v.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 91v. The description is in Thomas Rawlinson's hand and not that of Richard as stated in H. Lambert, "Return of Conventicles in Surrey" in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, xxxii, 1919, p. 154; nor are Aubrey's collections for Surrey to be found among the Rawlinson collections. See note 4, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> MS. Rawl. Letters 111, f. 61v, Jan. 7, 1718, and later blotted out.

<sup>6</sup> MS. Rawl. C. 946.

<sup>7</sup> The query had a dual purpose in seeking information and advertising for subscriptions. See MS. Rawl. D. 1194, f. 37v. For the text of the printed query issued for Oxfordshire and Middlesex see F. N. Davis's edition of *Parochial Collections made by Anthony a Wood and Richard Rawlinson*, Oxford Record Society, 1929, iii, p. 368.

He added an apologia:

These things I send to you upon the acct. of my earnestness in preserving any thing worthy to be transmitted to posterity. I may have several Things by me, which you would rejoyce to see if [you] come away.<sup>1</sup>

Some months later he sent another curious letter:

I can't deny the Receiving of yrs, dated Dec<sup>r</sup> the 18th, but had forgot from that Time to this; for sending my Coat the next day to ye Taylor's & the Lett<sup>r</sup> in the Pocket & having no occasion to put it presently on again; I knew as little of yr Lett<sup>r</sup> as if I never had rec<sup>d</sup> it, but hope my Answer will come timely enough, at least so that the omission may be rectify'd by having the S<sup>r</sup>name inserted among the Addenda. I find you write my little Place Farley, whereas we comonly spell it Farleigh. . . I shal be w<sup>th</sup> you in a small time & am, w<sup>th</sup> service to M<sup>r</sup> Rawlinson. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Swift, the incumbent of Puttenham, was co-operative:

I should be glad to offer any helps yt lye wthin my knowledge towards y<sup>r</sup> Generous Design of Diverting ye Publick w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>r</sup> entertaining Remarks. . . . I wish y<sup>r</sup> Labours a gratefull Reception from ye world.<sup>3</sup>

While Rawlinson's former tutor, Edward Morse, sent extracts from Gatton parish register:

This is all that I can find in Our Register relating to the family of the Copleys. The reason why you find so little mention made of baptisms or Marriages, is, I suppose, upon account of their Religion. I beg your excuse for not sending this sooner.<sup>4</sup>

From Godstone, William Jones replied:

According to y<sup>r</sup> Desire I went to Hourne and writ ye Inscriptions on ye Monuments in ye Ch. wch I have here sent you & would willingly know of y<sup>e</sup> receipt of ym & likewise an acct of ye Design wch I apprehend to be of very great Service.<sup>5</sup>

The most curious reply came from John Banastre of Chilworth who criticized the literary value of the inscriptions he copied:

I have but just now seen yr Lett<sup>r</sup> or else I shou'd sooner have answer'd it & told you how sorry I am that I cannot assist you in so ingenious a design, as well as publick Good with my purse besides this insignificant frigid way. We have only two Inscriptions in our poor desolate Chappel. The first I transcrib'd for you with some pleasure; but the other, as it stands in an obscure place & brought me upon my knees, besides the use of my Spectacles, to find out some broken Letters; so the puns, especially of the latter part, nauseated me so, that I had much to do to eat my Dinner after. And, before I got from my Knees, I cou'd not but tacitly wish the poor Gent. a sweet Repose & an intrepid Resurrection; but at the same time told him; that if a Dryden or a Pope had had his place, they wou'd have broke their Tomb & until'd the Church to have got loose from such wicked Rhymes.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the publication of the book, which incorporated many of the suggestions made by local incumbents, an unnamed antiquary from the Cheam district sent Curll a page of corrections for

<sup>1</sup> MS. Rawl. D. 1194, f. 37, no date.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 38, Feb. 6, 1718.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 8, Oct. 1, 1717.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 7, Jan. 29, 1718.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 39, Aug. 23, 1717.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 34, Nov. 3, 1717. For the epitaphs referred to see Aubrey's *Surrey*, iv, pp. 54, 55.

that area.<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson was well aware of the shortcomings of the book, and hoping that the taste of the time would change and a second edition would be called for, he continually searched for mistakes, and inserted notes and cuttings even as late as 1752 to amplify what had already been written.<sup>2</sup> He called on other scholars for assistance. Thomas Rawlinson's unmistakable scrawl appears frequently in the margins of his brother's copy; Browne Willis sent extracts from the Rolls Chapel Returns,<sup>3</sup> and Peter Whalley gave details of monuments set up at Blechingley since the 1717 visitation.<sup>4</sup> Irritating as the book is to students of Aubrey, many scholars find the work useful.<sup>5</sup> Rawlinson was sufficiently proud of his work to present a copy to Thomas Rawlins in 1736<sup>6</sup> and another to Joseph Taylor of the Bridewell Hospital in 1751;<sup>7</sup> he felt obliged to indicate the importance of the work when he later described Salmon's *Antiquities of Surrey*: "The author owes much to the last-mentioned book, as he honestly acknowledges in his preface."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. Rawl. Letters 29, 82, no date.

<sup>2</sup> See his insertions in his own copy (8° Rawl. 58-62) about a fire in a powder mill, 1741-2 (i, facing p. 48), another in Croydon Church 1734-5 (ii, facing p. 31) and a note of a seal received in 1749 (v, p. 281).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, facing p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> MS. Rawl. B. 250, f. 74, Aug. 3, 1746.

<sup>5</sup> J. Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, ed. by J. E. Britton, 1847 p. viii; *Notes and Queries*, 1949, p. 379.

<sup>6</sup> MS. Ballard 2, f. 12v, Nov. 20, 1736.

<sup>7</sup> MS. Rawl. C. 811, f. 25.

<sup>8</sup> *The English Topographer* (8° Rawl. 707) facing p. 229.