

BOOK REVIEWS

Alan Bott, *The Parish Church of Saint Mary, Chiddingfold*, 2009, price £7.00. Softback, 96 pp, 35 monochrome illus + 31 colour plates. No ISBN. Available from the church.

To the guides that he has already written for the parish churches of Compton, Godalming, Dunsfold and other villages in south-west Surrey, Alan Bott has now added one to St Mary's, Chiddingfold. The volume stands as a more than worthy successor to those that have gone before. It is richly illustrated and handsomely produced, covering every aspect of the church's history and architecture.

Chiddingfold church may at first appear a somewhat unlikely subject for Mr Bott's kind of very scholarly, in-depth treatment. Although it is picturesque in its setting by the side of the village green, it suffered badly from Henry Woodyer's restoration in the 1860s, and outwardly wears an inescapably Victorian air. As Mr Bott shows, however, it is not without significant historic and architectural interest. Its chief adornment is a superb 13th century chancel paid for by the patrons of the living, the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury, while its lofty late medieval nave bears eloquent testimony to the affluence of the many glassmakers in the parish. Perhaps the most eye-catching features of the church are the extraordinary elongated pillars of that nave. Mr Bott assigns these to the 15th century, which may be right. However, similar pillars, dating from the later 14th century, are found in other churches in southern England, and an earlier date is at least possible.

There is disappointingly little in Chiddingfold church to detain the student of monuments and other fittings. Mr Bott catalogues in detail the numerous 19th and early 20th century wall tablets to members of the local gentry and their families, now mostly gathered in the side aisles. Of perhaps greater interest, however, are the two external tomb recesses tucked under the wall of the south aisle, which may have accommodated the graves of 13th or 14th century vicars. It is especially disappointing that in this, of all churches, right in the heart of glass-making country, virtually all the medieval glass in the windows should have gone (some fragments are assembled in the west window of the south aisle). By resort to antiquarian sources, however, Mr Bott is able to say a little about the heraldic glass which was once a feature of the chancel windows. As recorded by John Aubrey in the 1670s, there were originally present the arms of: Eleanor of Castile, England and France Ancient, Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, Hugh Despenser the Younger, and the Bohuns of Midhurst. This rich array of royal and aristocratic heraldry is altogether surprising in a church that had no direct connections with any of those represented. One possibility is that its purpose was to honour those associated with the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury rather than, more locally, with the church of Chiddingfold.

The book concludes with an amusing account of the church's failed attempt in the 1980s to secure planning permission for a westward extension to the vestry. Among those who objected to the scheme was none other than Dr Arnold Taylor, at one time Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments and, unfortunately for the church, a resident of the parish. Extracts from his eloquent twelve-page letter of Evidence are printed here.

NIGEL SAUL

Julian Bowsher and Pat Miller, *The Rose and the Globe – playhouses of Shakespeare’s Bankside, Southwark: excavations 1988–91*, Museum of London Archaeology, Monograph 48, 2009, price £26.00. Hardback, xv + 275 pp, numerous plans, line drawings, tables and photographs. ISBN 978 1 901992 85 4

This publication is a report on the excavation of the Rose and Globe ‘theatres’ in 1988–91. At its launch, Simon Thurley, the Chief Executive of English Heritage, joked that it had taken twenty years to appear and although that might seem a long time for some members of the audience, to archaeologists it was nothing. It is good to see earlier but important excavations in Southwark being published; the report on the excavations of Edward III’s house at Rotherhithe and Sir John Fastolf’s house in Southwark appeared at almost the same time.

This statement emphasised that there were two audiences for the report: the archaeological and the theatrical. Thespians had played a large part in the somewhat traumatic events at the Rose excavation when some stood in the way of the machines in an attempt to prevent the development. The excavation is important not only for what it told us about Tudor theatres but also because of the change it brought about in archaeology, leading to PPG 16 and the growth of commercial archaeology.

However, the authors would not call the Rose and Globe ‘theatres’ but rather ‘playhouses’, which they define as open-air ‘theatres’ with a central courtyard for the groundlings surrounded by two or three storeys of galleries with seats as opposed to indoor theatres, which is a useful distinction. This form appears to be a peculiarly English idea and there are no examples on the Continent except in Poland, where they are due to English influence; it also had a brief life of no more than 70 years (apart from conscious revivals).

One omission from the report is any discussion about where this building type might have originated; it is usually attributed to dramatic performances in inn yards, but this would not explain why they are polygonal rather than rectangular. I do wonder whether its origins might lie in bullrings; not the bullrings for entertainment that seem to arise at much the same time and are closely connected to playhouses, at least on Bankside, but bullrings for baiting bulls before slaughter, because it was, rather strangely, believed that this would make their meat more tender. Many towns had these, as shown by their survival as place names (eg Birmingham and Ludlow) and there was one at the south end of Borough High Street in Southwark, but little seems to be known about them – although the name ‘ring’ suggests that they were round or polygonal.

Although the Globe is much more famous than the Rose, the excavations at the Rose were far more important than those of the Globe because of the restricted nature of the latter, although the work on the Globe site did produce evidence for an external stair turret, a feature that did not occur at the Rose. The Rose excavations showed that it was a polygonal building with the stage to the north and that it had been rebuilt in 1592, only five years after its erection. This rebuilding, which turned it into a rather peculiar shape, was probably to improve sight lines for the galleries nearest the stage and make certain alterations to the stage area. The building seems to have fallen out of use *c.* 1603–6. The alterations are particularly interesting since the building accounts for them survive in the Henslowe Papers at Dulwich College.

The report is basically divided into three parts: the feature descriptions, a discussion, and the finds reports. However, a commendable effort has been made to incorporate the evidence of the finds into the first section, although this has had the unfortunate result that the illustrations of the finds can appear in either section.

Besides the comparatively well-preserved foundations of the playhouse (although they did suffer from the erection of Southbridge House in 1957), the Rose is also notable for the amount of finds, particularly items of wood and clothing, which do not usually survive. It was difficult to be sure how many of these related to the playhouse itself or were general debris from the surrounding area (for example material from some industrial processes that cannot be associated with the playhouse). One type that can is the pottery money box in Surrey White

Ware, of which the site produced more examples than all other sites combined, so they clearly performed some specific function in the playhouse. The authors suggest that the 'gatherers', who collected the entrance fees, used them, but I am not entirely convinced about that. If they had, one would have expected them to be found in one place, the counting house or some such, where the gatherers emptied them and gave the money to the owner or his agent, but they seem to be randomly distributed over the site.

Another striking find was large numbers of glass beads that appear to have come off clothing, possibly that worn by the actors but also possibly that worn by the audience. Rather worryingly, nearly all the glass beads were found as a by-product of sieving for biological material rather than in the excavation itself.

One puzzle is the finding of delftware kiln waste stratified in contexts of the first decade of the 17th century, since the earliest documentary evidence for the manufacture of delftware in Southwark does not occur before 1612 and the earliest sites are some way from the Rose.

There are a number of very minor errors that it falls to the reviewer to point out. The Hope playhouse lay north-west not north-east of the Rose (p 19); a group of animal bones from a bedding trench A(434) is discussed on p 32 but none of the bedding trenches shown on figure 13 has this number (it should presumably be 435 since this was the only one excavated); A411 and A414 on figure 50 should be B411 and B414; on p 86 there are two references to figure 6 but that does not show the features alluded to. Maiden Lane is said to go to St George's Fields (p 87) but it goes nowhere near them; the property that Richard Lyons owned (p 14) was the Boar's Head, west of the Rose not the Lion and Ram to its east; the western boundary of the Brend property, on which the Globe was built, is more complex than shown on figure 9 since, on the Park Street frontage, it did not extend west of the line of Rose Alley and west of this were two gardens. The Brend property extended westward to the south of the first of these and possibly of the second, and it may have projected south of the 'Park Ditch' since one of the fields to its south abutted east onto it. The gully (C339) lay south-east of the Globe not to the west (p 128).

On p 90, a wharf is defined as a 'raised area of reclaimed land', but it is really the revetted edge of a ditch or the revetment itself. On p 110 it is stated that wood was sawn where it was felled, but there is ample evidence of wood being sawn at the Bridge House in Southwark. It is interesting that, in the accounts for the 1592 rebuilding, payments to a thatcher occur on all its pages, although one would expect the thatcher to appear at the end when the playhouse was being roofed – and how does this fit in with the archaeological evidence for roof tiles? Putting square brackets around context numbers, especially since the site letters (A, B etc) were outside the brackets, seems unnecessary and I found it a little confusing to the eye.

The report also provides a discussion of the medieval background for Bankside, suggesting that the area was reclaimed from the Thames in two stages: first the section between the Park Ditch and Maiden Lane, and then that between Maiden Lane and Bankside, about which I have grave doubts. It also repeats a common idea that the bishop of Winchester originally owned all the land in his manor and that where it belongs to other people he must have alienated it. There is really no evidence for this and it seems most unlikely. In fact, the process seems to go the other way; for example the Bell and the Barge, which lay just west of the Rose, was owned in the 15th century and later by the bishop and is sometimes said to be a relic of the earlier universal ownership, but in fact these were acquired before *c* 1351 (for the Barge) from John Payn and by 1366 (for the Bell) from Robert Tyghler. What the bishop acquired from Bermondsey Priory in the mid-12th century was the manorial lordship, and it is quite likely that this included no direct ownership of any land there.

It should perhaps be pointed out, since it seems to be widely misunderstood, that the new Globe, which rather presumptuously calls itself Shakespeare's, is not on the site of the original Globe but is in fact nearer to the Rose than the Globe.

Generally, the report may well have benefited from its delay as it enabled the results of the Globe excavations to be incorporated. It is a well-illustrated and comprehensive account

of this briefly flourishing form of 'theatre', which it approaches from a number of different angles. The report is an essential addition to the bookshelf of anyone with even a passing interest in the Shakespearean period and it should sell well in Germany and America as well as in Britain, even to those who do not believe that Shakespeare wrote the plays. MOLA are now publishing their reports in hardback and although this may prolong their useful life, with reports of this length it does add considerable weight, so that they are rather uncomfortable to hold when reading. Whether it makes them more expensive, I do not know.

GRAHAM DAWSON

Phil Jones, *Roman and Medieval Staines: the development of the town*, SpoilHeap Publications Monograph 2, 2010, price £25.00. Softback, xxiii + 404 pp, 251 figs, 41 tables. ISBN 978 0 955884 61 0 (Available from Surrey County Archaeological Unit, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND, £30 (inc p&p), cheques payable to Surrey County Council)

This important book provides long-awaited reports on a number of excavations undertaken in Staines from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s – ie the period before the advent of PPG16. Together, these sites provide much of the basis for our understanding of the Roman and medieval town, though it should be noted that this reviewer's expertise lies firmly in the former period and so little will be said of the post-Roman aspects of the reports.

The volume presents separate accounts of six excavations, each with selected associated specialist reports. These are preceded by an overview chapter in which the results of the individual excavations are pulled together to present a narrative of the prehistoric background to Staines, and the development of the Roman and medieval towns. This also takes account of some more recent work including, most importantly, excavations carried out by Wessex Archaeology from 1997 to 2000, published in the *Collections* in 2004.

The overview is particularly useful (and its value enhanced by the employment of colour in a number of the illustrations, confined to this chapter) because most of the reported excavations were quite limited in extent and their contributions to the understanding of the town's development are not always instantly recognisable from the individual narratives. The rather minimal style of illustration of some of the latter also sometimes inhibits rapid comprehension, and the site narratives tend to refer to features or deposits without giving the context numbers, which would enable them to be located easily on the relevant plan. The specialist reports vary hugely in scope, comprehensiveness and the extent of illustration (brooches are favoured; buckles, much more rare in Roman Britain, are not), and also in date – a number of them were clearly prepared a long time ago and some have not been updated prior to publication, presumably as a result of economic constraints. Reporting of animal bone is generally minimal (in part a consequence of poor preservation of assemblages) and no environmental evidence is presented. That appropriate samples were not taken in the 1970s is perhaps unsurprising, by the late 1980s however, this is a serious and disappointing omission. A rare reference to cereal species in the overview (p 26) is based on the Wessex Archaeology work. The lack of environmental evidence is the more unfortunate since the relationship between successive phases of settlement and the river, which such evidence might have illuminated, is so important. One would have liked to know more about these aspects, and the mechanics of, and detailed evidence for, episodes of erosion by flooding (the most detailed description of one of these in a Roman context occurs right at the end of the volume, on p 373).

The finds reports are inevitably variable in quality. An emphasis on pottery reflects the author's area of expertise but also the fact that this is one of the most useful categories of material for illuminating the development of the town, given the physical constraints of some

of the sites from which it derived. Some readers may bemoan the excessive quantity of illustrations of Roman pottery, but not this one; the presentation of a large body of material, particularly from the Elmsleigh Centre excavations of 1975–8, is an important contribution to regional ceramic studies. It is unfortunate that at least basic quantification of the material by site phase is not presented in the printed volume, but these and other data are available in downloadable pdf format from the County Council website, and this is an extremely useful resource for study of the pottery. Lists of contexts also presented there are perhaps of less value in a wider context. More use might have been made of this format to present other supplementary finds information. The total absence of coin lists, for example, whether from the printed volume or the digital supplement, is a serious omission which is hard to understand.

The picture of Staines that emerges from the work presented here is of a settlement that presents some ambiguities of character in the Roman period. Notwithstanding the evidence for prehistoric activity in the area, its origins seem to lie in the early post-conquest period and the importance of the eponymous *pontes* was presumably paramount. There might have been early military activity in the area, but there is no good evidence for this within the town itself and it seems most unlikely that any military establishment occupied the ‘town island’. There is a heavy preponderance of evidence for activity in the early Roman period, and although the earliest phases are typically not dated much before cAD 70, sequences of development thereafter into the early to mid-2nd century are complex. Those of middle to late Roman date, where present, are sometimes truncated and/or – for reasons which are not altogether clear – characterised by the presence of high proportions of redeposited material, a characteristic that is used at the Elmsleigh Centre site to justify detailed consideration of the pottery from deposits dated up to cAD 120, but much more summary treatment for later groups. Despite issues of truncation of the later Roman deposits as a result of the subsequent digging of cellars and other features, there is an impression that late Roman activity was genuinely at a lower level than in the 1st and 2nd centuries. Why this should have been so is not explained in detail, but it suggests a relationship with a trajectory of settlement development observed more widely in the South East, not least in London, and one which contrasts with a more western trend, in which occupation levels in ‘small towns’ are sustained through much of the 4th century.

One of the biggest problems for Staines, a direct consequence of the restricted size of many of the excavation areas, is the complete lack of Roman building plans (even complete plans of individual rooms are scarce) and therefore of a sense of the place in terms of urban (or other) character. That the buildings were mostly of timber is clear, and they included occasional circular structures (less unusual in such a context than the comment on p 232 would suggest). Beyond this what any of them really looked like is unknown, although it is certain that hypocausted rooms, mosaic pavements and painted walls were all to be found within the settlement and a wide range of ceramic building material, including relatively unusual items such as roller stamped flue tiles and *tegulae mammatae*, was present in some quantities. Much more tantalising is a passing reference to a possible mill (p 41) at the County Sports site, which is never heard of again. It is certainly possible, and perhaps likely, that the settlement would have included a *mansio*. The discussion of this (again on p 41) could usefully have referenced the work of Ernest Black (1995), not least because this does seem to demonstrate that *mansiones* need not always have been of the familiar text-book courtyard plan. No obvious candidates are yet forthcoming, however.

The already relatively slight evidence for late Roman occupation is followed by even more minimal indications of Saxon activity. Dating of this is problematic as it is almost entirely dependent upon very small quantities of pottery. In the context of the Prudential site, it is speculated (p 356) that this material is likely to have dated earlier rather than later in the Saxon period in view of an absence of recognisable later Saxon wares. This might have been a general characteristic, but some of the features identified as Saxon, in particular the possible beamslots at the Percy Harrisons site, do not seem early Saxon in character, a point made

quite rightly on p 33. Possible Saxon flood defences ‘seem to have protected very little’ (*ibid*), but if so, why were they there at all, when the focus of Saxon occupation was probably at Binbury to the north? Have these features been correctly understood? Intensive activity only seems to have resumed on the town island after the Norman Conquest, and significant urban development from the late 12th century when the Thames was once more bridged.

This report is undoubtedly of great value in drawing together a range of evidence from sites that have languished too long unreported (and, along the way, offering reinterpretations of some earlier published accounts – although where earlier conclusions are refuted it would have been helpful had the reasons for the changes in interpretation been presented in a little more detail). A work of this kind, the product of a long process of assembly of sometimes rather disparate material, can present significant editorial challenges, which have not always been met here. A list of such quibbles would be long and otiose, but parts of the pottery report for the Elmsleigh Centre, for example, have suffered particularly badly. Although less important than some of these errors, the frequent misuse of the plural form amphorae, mortaria (and sometimes *tegulae*) in contexts where the singular is meant is particularly irritating. References for some of the finds reports, including the Roman pottery, are rather out of date in places. As but one example, Betts *et al* 1997 is quoted as forthcoming on p 166. Key omissions include Brown (1994) on Harrold south midlands shell-tempered wares, which should have appeared on p 112. On the same page, since Alcester is in Warwickshire and does not lie anywhere near deposits of Inferior Oolite, one wonders if Alcester (Oxon) was meant. Either way, a reference would have been appropriate (perhaps Evans 2001?). The potential importance of Staines pottery assemblages for the study of products of a number of industries is referred to on p 86, but the emphasis on the early Roman assemblages of Staines limits the value of this publication in relation to the Oxford industry, for example.

It would be unfair to end on an unduly negative note – we are indebted to Phil Jones for the assembly of an important body of material. It is unfortunate that (presumably) limitations on resourcing have left this assembly incomplete in some parts, and inadequately edited. The same limitations have presumably had consequences for the character of the more general discussion; the focus of the volume is resolutely upon Staines itself – placing the Roman small town in a wider, regional context, which will benefit both the study of the town and inform understanding of its rural hinterland and beyond, is work that still has to be undertaken.

PAUL BOOTH

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Rob Poulton, *Excavations at Oatlands Palace 1968–73 and 1983–4*, SpoilHeap Publications Monograph 3, 2010, price £15.00. Softback, xviii + 180pp, numerous illustrations, end pocket with one plan and two colour plates, 11 tables. ISBN 978 0 955884 62 7 (Available from Surrey County Archaeological Unit, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND, £20 (inc p&p), cheques payable to Surrey County Council)

The Tudor Palaces of the London area have received much attention in the last half century or so, but much work still awaits publication: the ‘backlog’ report under review is thus a most welcome step forward. It was deeply grant-aided by English Heritage and may encourage

the much-needed publication of excavations at Nonsuch, Greenwich and Richmond, to name only sites south of the Thames. The once-promised English Heritage monograph on the archaeology of Hampton Court seems to have been abandoned: many of the results of work there have been published by Dr Thurley in his superb monograph (2003) and in minor papers elsewhere. But even so, there is still more to be published.

As the title of the present volume tells us, the excavations reported were carried out over a long period and under a variety of regimes. The site of the 15th century manor house and Tudor royal palace is largely overbuilt, albeit at a relatively low density, creating inevitable difficulties for the excavation organisers and resulting in a highly fragmented series of excavations. In 1968, when work began, there was no clear knowledge of precisely where the palace lay, of its development during the manorial period, or of the sequence of Henrician building (Cook 1969). This is no longer the case, even if there are still outstanding problems.

A small army of contributors has been involved in preparing the report over many years (including major inputs from Alan Cook, Sheila Richardson, Elizabeth Eames and Simon Thurley) and full praise must be accorded to Rob Poulton, head of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU), for exercising a complex editorial role. Alan Cook and Sheila Richardson had died before the volume went to press and the publication is dedicated to their memory. Sadly Elizabeth Eames, whose contribution was similarly important, died while the volume was in press.

The evidence is well set out in detail and well-illustrated. The book design and typography (by Giles Pattison) is well executed. By welcome contrast with some recent reports from other units, no illustrations are bled through the gutter and two larger sheets (the overall plan and the admirably reproduced 1559 view by Wyngaerde, plus a colour reconstruction of the main façade) have been conveniently placed in an end pocket. Some illustrations (Figs 74 and 76) have been printed facing the 'unconventional' way: unfortunate, but not serious.

Also by contrast with some recent reports by other units, there are good pottery and finds reports. The floor tiles are excellently described and discussed by Elizabeth Eames with reference to her own great catalogue (1980), but a tabular concordance would have been useful.

There are inevitably one or two minor errors and omissions, but fewer than can usually be found in this type of publication. In the series of period plans (Figs 129–137 and 139), while 'new' work is differentiated from 'retained', 'evidenced' is not differentiated from 'conjectured' – the information can be deduced from elsewhere in the volume, but it would have been helpful for this to have been made clear on these plans. In Figure 140 (map), Woking, Esher and Richmond Palaces appear misplaced. In Figure 141 (map), Esher and Woking Palaces are omitted.

Particularly valuable work on brick classification by the late Sheila Richardson is published here, thankfully in hard copy. This will be useful for others carrying out work on, or interpreting, similar sites and of use for those studying standing buildings. There is, indeed, a continuing need for a similar examination of the bricks used in selected standing buildings. Brick seems to have been used at Oatlands in the 15th century, but the claim (para 7.3.7) that brick was made a fashionable high-status building material by its use in Henry V's palace at Sheen (from 1414) and at Cardinal Beaufort's Manor of the More near Rickmansworth (from c 1427) may not stand too much examination. The authors of *Oatlands* are more likely to be correct, if internally contradictory, when a line or two later they follow John Goodall (2002) and attribute the greater influence on fashion to the next king's construction of Eton. While Henry V *may* have used brick when he began to rebuild Sheen Palace (*HKW* 2, 999; Schofield 1993, 126), it was not until between 1436 and 1439 that *quantities* of brick were firmly recorded in association with the site (*HKW* 2, 1000–01).

Across the Thames from Sheen was the vast Bridgetine nunnery of Syon, heavily endowed by Henry and erected as part of his 'Sheen project'. The nunnery was relocated between 1426 and 1431, using large quantities of possibly imported brick, at a new site adjacent to the present Syon House (*VCH Middlesex* 1, 184). Eton College (founded by Henry VI in 1440;

work started 1441); Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex (c 1440 on); Ralph, Lord Cromwell's great brick chamber tower at Tattershall, Lincolnshire (c 1430 x 50: possibly 1445–6) all saw much use of brick.

The volume appears at first sight to do pretty well 'what it says on the tin' and explains several of the lacunae disarmingly in section 1.3. But does it really say enough? The final chapter provides an extended discussion of the development of the manor house and palace: the story is complex and concentrated attention is reasonably demanded from the reader. It has long been known from the Wyngaerde and Gough illustrations that Oatlands was an unusual house and the excavation report amply confirms this. Almost every phase presents features that are arresting, but we are offered little comparative material along the way (including some that is offered without citation). For example, the eccentric relationship between the 15th century courtyard house (Building II) and the moat is certainly worth more discussion. One of the oddest of the excavated features would seem, at first sight, to be the 'tower house' in one corner of the moated island (Building III of c 1490–1505). However, it is really the authors' use of the label that is odd, rather than the building itself. 'Tower house' has a specialised meaning in northern Britain and Ireland, but virtually no meaning at all in southern Britain. Had the term 'chamber tower' been used and comparison drawn with possibly related buildings elsewhere (at, *inter alia*, Tattershall, Esher, Farnham and, perhaps, Richmond), some of the apparent oddity would have been removed. The possibly contemporary buildings at the other three corners of the moat, known more from the Gough drawing than from excavation, are more puzzling. Another turriform oddity demanding further discussion is the 'prospect tower' (1537–8) with its echoes of contemporary Nonsuch and earlier Caister. There are other features that could have been discussed further, but probably a line had to be drawn across the page and there is no doubt at all that the volume will provide material for debate well into the future.

The reader is told that additional material is available in a 'digital supplement' but it is far from obvious how access to the supplement may be obtained or whether hard copy is available. The supplement is indexed with the contents but the reader of any given section will only know if there is relevant supplementary material by remembering to check the contents list.

DENNIS TURNER

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