

## Reviews

*Discovering Archaeology in England and Wales*  
by James Dyer. (Shire Publications, 1969,  
4s. 6d.).

IN 80 pages with 31 photographs our previous editor has successfully managed to give a succinct introduction to the archaeology of England and Wales, designed essentially for the layman. The professional will however find something that is new for him as well. For this book, unlike many, gives prominence to Bedfordshire and the surrounding area, yet without forgetting its title. The plates include many objects in Bedford Museum, and these will be new to many. How many archaeologists have ever visited Bedford Museum?

Yet it is for the layman this book is designed and he would do well to heed the remarks about irresponsible and ill-conducted excavations. It is better to look and to learn, to be fascinated by the past and its monuments, than to destroy.

We trust James Dyer's book will reach a wide audience; and anticipate with pleasure the regional volumes we are informed that will follow it.

D.H.K.

*Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* by the  
Viatores. (London, Victor Gollancz, 1964.  
Pp 526, pls 16, 139 maps. 70s.)

THE publication of this book in 1964 changed the south-east Midlands from a region in which little was known of the Roman roads into one of the most fully surveyed and published areas of Britain. In this respect it remains almost unique; here, almost for the first time, were recorded not merely the major roads, but a host of minor ones, often little more than tracks, of a type which we knew must have existed but which had never been studied in detail before. A measure of the success of the Viatores' work can be seen if one compares the edition of I. D. Margary's *Roman Roads in Britain* published before the appearance of this book with that published after. The Viatores were all amateur archaeologists or students, and in this they have continued the long line of amateur fieldworkers who have done so much to establish the Roman road system of Britain. In combining their work for publication they have set an example which could be followed with great profit by many other fieldworkers.

As the title of the book indicates the area covered is the south-east Midlands, a rather nebulous region, which the Viatores define as Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, west Hertfordshire and

south Northamptonshire, and which they suggest can be equated with the territory of the Catuvellauni. Each road or route is described separately, with a general map showing its course, and a series of detailed maps, based on the O.S. 2½ in. series, covering the detailed route. All the routes are numbered on a system based on that used by Margary in his *Roman Roads*. The Viatores each tended to cover a separate area; Bedfordshire being largely the work of D. E. Johnston and R. W. Bagshawe, and the authorship of each section is indicated by the use of the author's initials.

It is impossible to discuss the routes in detail in a short review, but it should be pointed out that the value of the work varies considerably from section to section. On a number of occasions the authors have been too ready to accept dubious evidence for the course of a road, and the routes generally lack the confirmation of excavated sections, without which they are hypotheses and not certainties. In reading the book one feels rather too often that the writers were not sufficiently critical of their evidence, nor fully aware of the possibilities of alternative explanations: Roman roads are not the only monuments met with in the field. The ultimate value of this book is likely to lie in its being an inducement to further work (to which it will be a very great aid), rather than as a finalised piece of research in itself.

W. H. MANNING

*Eight Thousand Years—A Kempston History*,  
edited by H. A. Carnell, T. Booth and H. G.  
Tibbutt. (Published by Kempston Urban  
District Council, Pp 118, pls VIII. 21s. hard  
cover; 8s. 6d. paper.)

'EIGHT THOUSAND YEARS—A KEMPSTON HISTORY' was produced in 1966 under the auspices of the Urban District Council who felt the need for a comprehensive and accurate guide to the story of Kempston from earliest times up to the present day. The Council are to be congratulated on their initiative and achievement.

The opening chapter on the geology and archaeology of Kempston is by Mr F. W. Kuhlicke, Curator of Bedford Museum, authoritative as always. In the following chapters Miss Patricia Bell of the County Record Office has produced material of considerable human interest, notably on the administration of parish charities.

Shorter essays deal with Kempston since Waterloo, Schools, The Barracks and Grange Camp, the

history of all denominations in Kempston, Architecture in Kempston, Kempston Urban District, Business and Industry. With some ten authors, some lack of integration in material and style is inevitable. Detailed work on subjects of wide interest, for example, the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, out of place in a work like this, have still to be written. Maps of Kempston in its various stages of growth might have been helpful.

After these comments, it only remains to be grateful for a pleasant and interesting book, whose ease of reading belies the number of hard facts it contains.

ANN SMALLRIDGE

*The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough* by Nikolas Pevsner. (Penguin Books, 1968, £1 15s. 0d.).

PROFESSOR PEVSNER'S magisterial single-handed survey of the Buildings of England has with its thirty-fourth volume reached Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough. For once Bedfordshire has escaped the position of being the first county of a series, because of its position in the alphabetical list of English Counties. But there is a serious complaint to be levelled at this work. The reorganisation of English counties transferred the Soke of Peterborough from Northamptonshire to a joint county of Huntingdon and Peterborough. The Soke had already received attention in 1961 in the *Northamptonshire* volume of the series. The result is that when the illustrations are looked at one finds 49 for Bedfordshire, 39 for Huntingdon and 17 for the Soke. The 17 plates illustrating the Soke are all reprints for the *Northamptonshire* volume. The result for Bedfordshire is some peculiar omissions. Is not Clapham as representative as Barnack of pre-Conquest church towers? One looks in vain for an illustration of the Chalgrave Church wall paintings. Longthorpe Tower is thought to suffice. And why, might we ask, is there no illustration of the surviving fragment of the manor house built on the site of Warden Abbey? Surely its fine Elizabethan chimney deserved a plate?

These comments, which can be multiplied, may seem excessively parochial, but this reviewer feels that Bedfordshire would have been better served by a volume to itself and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough by a further volume. While it may not be possible to illustrate everything, a fairer representation of the two counties could have been achieved by two volumes each of 200 pages and 60 plates.

Like the other volumes of the series, there is an introduction to the Prehistoric and Roman remains

of the area. The two counties are given a separate prehistory, but the Roman section is less than a page for both counties. Would not separate treatment, bearing in mind the importance of the Nene valley potteries, have been more suitable? Mr Simpson's separate prehistories are both useful concepts, but one item on Bedfordshire must be corrected. It is stated (p 34) that no undoubted burial of a Catuvellaunian chieftain is known from Bedfordshire. What about the two Standfordbury burials? and while we are on the archaeological, could a plea be made for the inclusion in future volumes and reprints of old volumes for a note on the Anglo-Saxon remains of each county? In Bedfordshire the large cemeteries at least deserved mention as did those at Woodston for the Nene area.

On architectural matters, there does seem to be an unfortunate bias against nineteenth century restorations of churches. This does seem, to me at least, the only explanation why none of the major churches of Bedford are illustrated. Indeed, Bedford for illustrations comes off badly: only three—the old Town Hall, the High School for Girls, and the Swan Hotel. Huntingdon gets only one, and Peterborough has to make do with the five allotted to the Cathedral.

Professor Pevsner's book will for a long time remain a standard work of reference for the architecture of the county. It embodies the result of careful and considered judgement of a large scale undertaking. As such it must be welcomed. It has, unfortunately, some peculiar statements and omissions in the text. The Swan Hotel has part of the wall of Bedford Castle built into its structure, but, like the Danish earthworks of the county, this is not mentioned, though the prehistoric and Roman sites are described in the catalogue. Warden Abbey is treated to a strange dismissal in 13 lines, yet *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* 2 would have answered Professor Pevsner's doubts about the context of the surviving fragment. Similarly our volume 3 should have underlined the local, if not the national, importance of Someries Castle. Thomas Rotheram, the builder of part of the building, was a figure of national importance in the fifteenth century and is to be remembered as a builder of brick buildings.

In bibliographical matters, it is surprising to find neither the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* nor *A Bedfordshire Bibliography* and its *Supplement* mentioned. Any future edition by Professor Pevsner should include these in however brief the bibliography. Perhaps we may hope too for a volume devoted to Bedfordshire alone.

D.H.K.