

REVIEW

Shardeloes Papers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Edited by G. Eland, F.S.A. (Oxford University Press, 15s.)

The appearance of this important work is very welcome, as it puts on permanent record a considerable number of facts about one of the great houses of Bucks. and its remarkable collection of family papers. We are fortunate in this county in having several outstanding series of family letters and documents. The Verney collection at Claydon is unique; although a great deal has been published, there is still rich treasure there to be unearthed. Mr. Eland put us all in his debt some years ago with his masterly editing of the Purefoy Letters, largely relating to Shalstone. Now he has given us the Shardeloes Papers, which are different in many respects from either of the other collections. As Mr. Eland himself says in his preface: ". . . Unlike many family papers, there are very few letters; those that remain are not of a social or personal kind. . . ." But there are, nevertheless, many that shed an interesting light on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century manners and customs.

A good deal of material from the Shardeloes muniments has appeared in the last three numbers of the *Records*, and one cannot help a little regretting this somewhat promiscuous or piecemeal publication and the fact that, in spite of nearly half a ton of documents having been examined, annotated, and transcribed over a period of some ten years (as Mr. Eland himself tells us), we have no calendar of the whole collection, and consequently little idea of what material is available to the serious student of detail. Mr. Eland, like Jack Horner, has extracted from this pie a large number of admirable plums which make excellent eating; for that we are very grateful, to say nothing of the sauce of his inimitable style which gives the whole such piquancy.

The book is arranged on a subject-matter basis, and includes such things as Domestic Comforts, the Church, the Civil War, Education, and so on. To many, the most interesting section will be that on the building of the present house, and one could have wished that this chapter had not been reduced to such slender proportions. The bills of craftsmen concerned, and costs of various

work, are of intense interest: yet the only indication we get of many of these is in a short caption beneath the photographs of various objects. This, however, is carping criticism of what is essentially a valuable, scholarly, and above all eminently readable account of an invaluable collection of papers.

E. C. R.

SHORT NOTICES OF BOOKS

No notice has yet appeared in the *Records* of Walter Rose's *The Village Carpenter* (Cambridge University Press, 10s. 6d., illustrated with 32 photographs by M. Wiedling), which was published some years ago. It is an admirable account of village craftsmanship, with considerable technical detail, and as Sir W. Beach Thomas wrote in the *Observer*: "You know England and the English much the better for reading it." It reflects the pride in good work which used to be the criterion of English craftsmanship; and it ought to be an inspiration to those of the present generation.

A second book by the same author appeared in 1942, and has been several times reprinted—*Good Neighbours* (Cambridge University Press, 10s. 6d., with drawings by John Hookham). This is simply, as its title states, "Some recollections of an English village and its people." Everyone knows that Mr. Rose's village is Haddenham; and he, whose grandfather remembered the enclosures, has some very interesting and enlightening things to say of old village people and ways. In particular, the methods he describes of working the local building materials, wickert and thatch, are of extreme value. A simple and charming book, of more than local Buckinghamshire interest.

Several recent pamphlets should also be noticed. One bears the name of Walter Rose—the title, *Little Booklets on Haddenham Village—Fifty Years Ago*. Its price is 1s. 6d.; it is undated and bears no printer's or

publisher's name. Much interesting and quaint material is here gathered together.

A booklet on *Old Wendover* by Elizabeth Holland, a reprint of lecture given in 1944 (Hunt, Barnard & Co., 2s. 6d.), is chiefly valuable for its collection of old photographs of the town, and for notes of more recent events and people liable otherwise to go unrecorded. Efforts like these, however humble, are generally of some value, and are to be encouraged.

Milton's Cottage: the History of a House, by D. G. Law (privately printed and published by Mrs. Law, Chalfont St. Giles, 2s.), is an interesting attempt to reconstruct the history of the cottage, and to tell it by means of a number of scenes, fanciful but based on facts, full references for which are given at the end of each chapter. (The Society appoints a Trustee to the Milton Cottage Trust.)

The work of two Buckinghamshire poets should be noticed. The first is *Mere England*, by J. H. B. Peel, whose lyric qualities in writing of the Chilterns and other parts of Bucks. have been highly praised, and his work compared with that of W. H. Davies. The second is a small collection of poems *From the Chilterns*, by Theodora Roscoe (published by the Ruislip Press, Ickenham, 2s. 6d.). Mrs. Roscoe is a daughter of the late E. S. Roscoe who wrote the original *Buckinghamshire* volume of Methuen's Little Guide Series: *Buckinghamshire Sketches, Between Thames and Chilterns*, and other books.

A sumptuous *Guide to the Church of St. John the Baptist, Little Missenden*, with a coloured plan and a superb set of photographs, has been published by the vicar, the Rev. W. H. Davis (1946, 3s.). While it has now been proved beyond doubt, largely through the vicar's own research, that the core of the walls is Saxon, as evidenced by the presence of re-used Roman tiles in the abaci and jambs of the chancel arch, the fanciful reconstruction of the Saxon plan and its development from the *porticus*-type building mostly found in the Kent region is, we feel, a little far-fetched. One may hope that eventually Mr. Davis will be able to publish a fuller account embodying the results of his invaluable researches into registers, churchwardens' accounts, and other documents, and give us a list of churchwardens, sextons, and other details.

NOTES

STOKE POGES

WITHIN the last year, considerable work has been done at Stoke Poges Church. This includes the opening up of a blocked Norman window in the North Chancel Wall and the complete clearance of the Hasting's Chapel. This latter work makes a fine space; and the reset sixteenth- and seventeenth-century heraldic glass and rehung hatchments make an admirable decoration. One cannot, however, but regret the complete destruction of the gallery and other eighteenth-century features. A few of the barley-sugar balusters appear to have been used in the new organ case. The white-washing of the north tower had destroyed some vestiges of thirteenth-century wall-painting. Some of the decayed window jambs appear to have been replaced with cement, which is unfortunate, and much of the outside plaster has been stripped without adequate pointing of the sixteenth-century brickwork beneath.

LITTLE MISSENDEN

Extensive work has been carried out in the church over a number of years; and it is hoped in a future issue to summarize this and the discoveries that resulted.

AMERSHAM

Some fragments of carved stone behind the organ in Amersham Church are of interest. Several of these, including the capital of a small corner shaft, are of twelfth-century date, and give evidence of a Norman church not suspected or mentioned by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The Rev. Herbert Poole, F.S.A., on examining these fragments, has made the interesting suggestion—which has every appearance of probability—that two of them are part of an "Aylesbury-type" font of *circa* 1180. The interlacing pattern, leaves, and nailhead ornament, and the tops of three scallops or fluting from the bowl, are clearly closely akin to the example at Aylesbury itself or that at Great Kimble.

GREAT PEDNOR

Further extensive wall-painting of late-sixteenth-century date has been found at

Great Pednor Manor, near Chesham; and the series of texts round the frieze have been identified as coming from the metrical Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins. It is hoped to publish a full account later.

NORTH MARSTON

The organ, which formerly blocked up the whole of the east end of the south aisle, has been removed for repairs. On the intervention of members of this Society, the Parochial Church Council have agreed not to replace the organ in the same position, but to erect it on the west end of the aisle. The full beauty and depth of carving in the window, niches, squint, recess, piscina, and sill-course are now revealed after careful cleaning; and it seems certain that the work was done in connexion with the relics of Sir John Schorne (died 1314) in the first half of the fourteenth century. Some fragments of mediæval painting were found, as well as several layers of post-Reformation painting which it is hoped to preserve. Suggestions for the proper treatment of this end of the aisle, and its eventual return to a chapel, have been made to the Parochial Church Council.

THE SOCIETY

It would seem desirable that this Centenary Number should contain a brief record of recent important events in connexion with the Society and its Museum.

In April 1944, the Society lost an old friend and long-standing member in the death of Mrs. C. S. Baker of Ceely House, adjoining the Museum. Her daughter, who was then our Curator, offered the freehold of Ceely House and its grounds and outbuildings to the Society at terms which it was felt ought to be accepted (although the Society had no capital funds with which to pay for the premises), as space for the extension of the work of the Museum was badly needed. So the purchase was made as a venture of a faith, certain members lending sums free of interest for a time to cover the initial payments, while an increased grant from the Bucks. County Council has been of help in paying the interest on the inevitable mort-

gage. But no formal appeal for funds has yet been made to the Society or the County.

The next major item facing the Society's Council was the appointment of a permanent Curator to replace Mr. Hollis, who had died in 1941. It had been realized for some time that if the Society could provide a museum's service in connexion with the schools of the County, further help might be obtained from the Bucks. Education Authority, and it was decided that the new Curator should devote a part of his time to the work of assembling and distributing a series of cases of exhibits from the Museum for circulation to schools.

Mr. R. Cortney Sansome, F.S.A. (Scot.), has been appointed to the post of Curator and Schools Service Organizer.

He was previously Curator of the Museum at Peterborough, and has had experience of work in other museums which included the running of services to schools. He has been at Aylesbury since August 1, and Miss C. Baker continues with the Society as Archivist and Librarian.

CENTENARY MEETING .

A meeting of the Society was held on Saturday, November 22nd, 1947. Although originally planned to take place in the Council Chamber at the County Buildings, the response was so good that the meeting was transferred to Hazell's Hall, and on the day well over 150 members were present. After the Chairman of the Council, Canon Bale, had opened the proceedings with some brief remarks regarding the Society's Centenary, he introduced the lecturer, Mr. James Fisher the ornithologist. Mr. Fisher's lecture was on "The Birds of St. Kilda," and was illustrated with lantern slides, some of which were coloured. His complete mastery of the subject and his witty delivery excited general admiration, as was evident when questions continued for very nearly an hour after the lecture was finished and, but for the intervention of tea, might well have gone on for a further hour. This was unquestionably a most successful meeting to mark a great occasion, and the Organising Secretary, with the Curator and his assistants, must be congratulated.

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The Bucks Advertiser, now 111 years old, is owned by Richard and John Gibbs, the great-great-grandsons of the first Robert Gibbs of Aylesbury.

* * * *

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