

## REVIEWS

*The Brudenells of Deene*, by Joan Wake, XVI + 516 pp., 35 plates, map and pedigree.  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Cassell & Co. Ltd., 21s. net.

This book though not exclusively, or even principally, about Buckinghamshire is nevertheless of value and interest for our County because of the early connections of the Brudenells with Buckinghamshire.

Early branches of this remarkable Midland family were seated at Raans Manor in Amersham and had formerly tombs and monuments in the Church. Others had associations with the Bulstrodes at Hedgerley, and Bulstrode itself, and Shardeloes, or had property in Coleshill, Chalfont St. Peter, Wendover and Stoke Mandeville.

An interesting note is that in 1384, Edmund Brudenell, a Justice of the King's Bench, described by Miss Wake as "Edmund Antiquissimus" to differentiate him from many later Edmund Brudenells, was sent to Aylesbury to inspect a bridge on the highway between the town and the suburb of Walton. His report resulted in a grant to the Bailiffs and townspeople of the bridge tolls for three years to pay for the necessary repairs.

As one would expect from one of Miss Wake's scholarship and learning, the book is extremely well and thoroughly documented, and the references concerning Buckinghamshire would repay further search from our County's point of view which does not concern her particular context.

The rest of the book deals with the family and its Northamptonshire seat at Deene over a period of some 400 years to the present time, and makes fascinating reading.

E. C. R.

*The Cartulary of Snelshall Priory.* Edited by J. G. Jenkins (Buckinghamshire Record Society—Sidney Press—1952) being Vol. 9 issued for the year 1945. 10 × 6 inches, XIII + 74 pp. Half-tone frontis. Price not given. Obtainable from Hon. Sec., Bucks Record Society, Twitchells End, Jordans.

This is a useful addition to the monastic records of the county now made available in a convenient form, and transcribed and commented upon with Mr. Jenkins' usual skill and scholarship.

The history of the manuscript concerned, now in the British Museum (Add. MS. 37068) is an extraordinary one. In this case the parchment survived; but it makes one shudder to think of the thousands of cases where even more valuable material has perished. It came to light in a mass of derelict manuscripts under tons of straw, in a loft over the stables at Whaddon Hall. Lord Cottesloe, a past President of this Society, saw these papers when a young man in 1886. Even after he had drawn attention to them, it was not until 1905 that the cartulary, at any rate, found its way to the British Museum.

The early history of Snelshall had always been something of a mystery; and Mr. Jenkins' study of the cartulary, coupled with Mr. H. M. Colvin's book on the Premonstratensian Order in England (*The White Canons in England*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1951) give reasonable ground for the existence of a house in the twelfth century, and that of the Premonstratensian order subject to Lavendon, and not Benedictine, which it became after Lavendon had abandoned their rights in 1232. Mr. Jenkins refers to Sheahan's account of Whaddon Parish, and expresses the view that there might possibly have been both a small Premonstratensian house at Snelshall, and a Benedictine hermitage at Codimor, a hitherto unidentified monastic site. The records of benefactions and other details connected with Snelshall, Tattenhoe and Codimor, and other places among the Priory's very limited orbit and property, bring to life some of those strange deserted places in north Bucks which have such an eerie fascination.

Mr. Jenkins has summarised most of the charters in English, printing in Latin the more important documents or those exhibiting some peculiarity, with an English précis. In this case the method is perfectly adequate and satisfactory, but one can imagine instances where it might prove somewhat too arbitrary.

E. C. R.

*The Dragon of Whaddon: Life of Browne Willis*, by J. G. Jenkins. XVII + 255 pp., 10 illustrations and a map. (The Bucks Free Press, 1953, 15s.)

Mr. Jenkins puts us in his debt once more with a very readable account of that odd character Browne Willis, the Antiquary of Whaddon,\* of whom one had previously only gleaned a somewhat one-sided view from Cole's *Bletchley Diary*. (Cole was incumbent of this living of which Willis was the patron.)

Willis now appears as a very considerable benefactor to the County in the architectural and restoration work he undertook. He was mainly responsible for the restoration of Buckingham Church and that of Bletchley—his work there now, alas, almost entirely swept away. And, of course, the Fenny Stratford Chapel with its remarkable roof with arms of the donors towards the cost of the work, was entirely his venture, to say nothing of the Fenny Poppers.

He was one of that enthusiastic band of early-eighteenth-century amateur antiquaries who laid the foundation of our great antiquarian tradition and societies, being the friend of Hearne and Stukeley.

Mr. Jenkins discusses his reputation as scholar and antiquary, but, one feels, does not arrive at any really satisfactory estimate. Willis was, of course, subject, as everyone was, to Hearne's criticisms; and while there is no doubt that much of his work was superficial, hurried and careless (he suffered from an indolent and temperamental amanuensis), he nevertheless did a great deal of useful research and recording. It should be remembered that the identification of the Ingylton tomb at Thornton, a few years back, was made possible entirely thanks to Willis's careful records and description of the Church and monuments in his *History of the Town and Hundred of Buckingham*, 1755.

One cannot help feeling that Mr. Jenkins has printed an excessive number of the letters to Dr. Charlett, many of which have little interest or value; while a selection of the letters in our own collection at Aylesbury might have yielded much more interesting local information.

The book is a valuable addition to our knowledge of Buckinghamshire worthies and their contribution to our county's history. It is nicely produced, and the illustrations are well selected.

E. C. R.

*All Saints, Wing, Bucks. A Short Account of the Church*. By A. Vere Woodman, F.S.A. 20 pp., plan and 8 plates, 1953. 2s.

It is always a pleasure to welcome a really good Church guide. What Mr. Davis did for Little Missenden, our member Mr. Woodman has done for Wing, which is one of the most important churches in the county. The dated plan is most useful, and there is an architectural summary. But, as one would expect from a distinguished archivist like Mr. Woodman, his interest is chiefly in the personalities and monuments of the church and its history. It is surprising that he makes no mention of the registers, and the Churchwardens' accounts which are amongst the most complete and important in the country, covering the whole period of the Reformation as they do. The illustrations are admirable, and it is to be hoped that the sales of this excellent guide will help towards the elucidation of some of the Saxon features recently exposed, as mentioned elsewhere.

E. C. R.

*List of Ancient Monuments in England and Wales.* London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1953. 5s. net.

This is a paper-covered work of 147 cyclostyled pages with a useful Introductory Note. Some 50 monuments are scheduled in Buckinghamshire, of which more than half are earthworks of one sort or another, mostly sections of Grim's Ditch. Amongst the buildings are the Chapel at Bradwell Abbey, and the ruins of St. John Baptist's Hospital at High Wycombe. The attention of the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments has been drawn to the condition of these two items. At Bradwell a large patch of tiles is off the roof, and at Wycombe the ruins are being used as a convenient rubbish tip, while the chalk (clunch) piers are being steadily worn away by the parking of bicycles belonging to the students of the Technical School. It is doubtful if anything will be done as the Ministry has no power to compel the owner of a scheduled monument to spend money on its upkeep or repair. But if sufficient people write and complain about these and any other cases that come to their notice, it might have some cumulative effect.

Mention may be made here of a useful reprint from Vol. 64, Part 1 (1953), pages 1-9, of the Proceedings of the Geologists' Association. It is a paper by our member Dr. A. Morley Davies, F.G.S., and Mr. Arnold H. J. Baines, entitled "A Preliminary Survey of the Sarsen and Puddingstone Blocks of the Chilterns". The nature, size and distribution of these stones is discussed and there is a half-tone illustration and a map, as well as a comprehensive bibliography.