

REVIEWS

THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, HIGH WYCOMBE, 1562 TO 1962.

by L. J. Ashford and C. M. Haworth. Bucks. Free Press, High Wycombe; 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 126 pp. and four plates; 10s. 6d.

The schools of ancient foundation within the County of Buckingham are so overshadowed by the great Royal foundation of Eton that a little individual history of one that has just celebrated its four hundredth anniversary, though probably existing in some religious form associated with the Hospital of St. John the Baptist long before that, is very welcome.

In spite of its high-sounding title, the Royal Grammar School at Wycombe was "for over 300 years the less favoured part of a charitable trust". And, as the authors show, from sources such as the Trust Records, Governors' Minute Books, Borough records, etc., it was not until 1902, when public funds became available, that any real expansion and modernisation came about. With the notorious indifference of the Borough to the care and preservation of its ancient buildings, the old school, shown in a most interesting photograph of 1875 in Plate 1, was swept away. It is just possible that the Gothic doorway shown, so out of keeping with all the rest, was actually part of the old Hospital, the ruins of which are themselves now threatened with the re-building of the Technical Institute, now that the school itself has moved to the top of Amersham Hill. The authors do not seem to have consulted the plan on p. 648, Vol. III, of Lipscomb's History of Bucks., 1847, which makes this clear. Inevitably in a work of this sort, rather too much emphasis has been placed on domestic matters, of quite recent date, with lists of scholarship awards and assistant masters, whereas no Appendix List of Headmasters is given. But the book is a useful contribution. And one may hope that similar detailed studies may one day be done for Dr. Challoner's School at Amersham, Borlase's School at Marlow and elsewhere, before their buildings disappear completely, to supplement the information in the Victoria County History's valuable section on Buckinghamshire schools. And we must not forget that our own Museum premises occupy the Aylesbury Grammar School buildings of 1718-37.

E.C.R.

THE AYLESBURY RAILWAY

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S RAILWAY

by E. J. S. Gadsden. Bledlow Press, 1962; 5s. 0s., 7s. 6s.

The inauguration and eclipse of some Buckinghamshire railway enterprises are detailed in these two monographs published recently.

In 1836, in order to connect Aylesbury with the recently opened London-Birmingham Railway, the Aylesbury Railway Co. was formed, the chief promoters being Mr. George Carrington of Missenden Abbey and Sir Henry Verney of Claydon. The line, running from the High Street to Cheddington, was opened in 1839. It was an immediate financial success and continued as a private concern until 1846, when it was sold to the London and Birmingham Railway.

With the opening of a station on the other side of the town by the G.W.R. providing a direct and rather shorter route to London, the decline of the Cheddington line began and in February 1953 the last passenger train left the High Street station after over a hundred year's service.

Arising out of the success of this enterprise, the Duke of Buckingham promoted a network of railway systems in the Vale of Aylesbury between the years 1850 and 1869. One section followed another in fairly rapid succession: Bletchley to Buckingham, Claydon to Oxford, Aylesbury to Claydon and Quainton to Brill.

Their successful life was comparatively short, and with the advent of local bus services and, more recently, economies by the railway companies one by one the stations were closed to passenger traffic until only Quainton Road remained and between many once-busy spots grass tracks have replaced railway lines.

The history of these local enterprises and the vision of the major promoters something that might well be forgotten, though only of the fairly recent past, and these monographs with their maps and photographs are a very welcome addition to the history of the economic life of the country.

B.G.P.