

REVIEWS

A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Buckinghamshire, 1259–1307, with an Appendix 1179–1259. Ed. Anita Travers, pp. xvi+153, cloth. Buckinghamshire Record Society No 25, 1989. ISBN 0 900198 24 2. £16.00 incl. p&p from the Hon. Sec., County Record Office, County Offices, Aylesbury.

The ‘fines’ printed in this volume are ‘final concords’, agreements reached in the course of disputes over land, enrolled in the records of the Court of Common Pleas. The disputes were nearly always fictitious; the fact that the agreements formed part of the court records made them a simple and effective way of recording conveyances and establishing title. It is as conveying instruments that these documents should be understood.

The agreement was written out three times on a piece of vellum: once parallel to each side and once across the bottom. The skin was then cut into three parts, using a zig-zag or wavy cut to ensure that in case of dispute any part could be matched against the others. The third part, that written across the foot, was lodged in the court records, and very many survive in the Public Record Office.

In later fines, the descriptions of the land conveyed became perfunctory; acreages are given in round, and very approximate, figures; the consideration bears little relation to the facts. These tendencies are already detectable in the period covered by this volume, but there is much of great value for historians, and the BRS and Dr Travers deserve our gratitude for making it accessible. Dr Travers’s introduction

is lucid and scholarly, and explains much that is obscure (though more might have been said about the various classes of action). Her translation is next door to impeccable, and when we find, for example, *tenuerunt* translated as ‘they hold’ (No. 7), we do not suspect such a fine Latinist of a blunder, but of being the victim of a misprint. In fact, though, since misprints are commendably hard to find, this may be a deliberate attempt to avoid confusion: to have used the past historic could have given the impression that the tenure in question was a thing of the past. If that is the case, it may be suggest ‘they have held’ would have allowed continuing tenure to be understood, without doing violence to the text.

The documents have much to tell us about free tenures and renders, and the operation of the land market. There are clues to the economic status of people who appear in other classes of record, and occasional light on genealogy. In a few cases diet is illuminated: the consideration for a grant of land to a religious house might be board and lodging for the grantor’s lifetime, with the items carefully specified (Nos. 102, 166).

Sometimes it is possible to identify the actual piece of land, from field and other minor place names. But here, unfortunately, a note of caution must be sounded. The transcription is not impeccable, and place-name scholars would be well advised to check the MS before basing any conclusions on the spellings. A random check in just two files has produced ‘Dustelberwe’ for ‘Dustleberwe’ (No. 13), ‘Medmenham’ for ‘Medmeham’ (No. 4), ‘Folmersham’

for 'Felmersham' (No. 527) and 'Evre' for 'Evere' (No. 559).

Place-names are not the only casualties. 'Duredene' is not a variant form of the surname borne by the lords of Denham Durdent, but an error in transcription. 'Anabel' (623) is 'Amabil' in the MS; and 'Wygam' de Wallingford should of course be 'Wygan'. These are not typographical errors, for such would be evenly distributed through the text, not confined to names.

It must also be noticed as a shortcoming that the fines for that part of Bucks, between Amersham and Beaconsfield, that formerly lay in Herts, have been omitted (apart from two from the 'Divers Counties' files). Since both parties were invariably people who either lived in Bucks or had substantial interests there, this leaves a significant gap in the picture. And since an almost complete list of these fines exists in the PRO (IND 17148), the omission is particularly disappointing.

The blemishes noted may somewhat limit the usefulness of the volume, but only for a minority. Most students will be able to use it with confidence as a primary source, and will gain much from it.

J.C.T.

Haddenham Quaker History 1660-1870. Walter Rose, pp. 68, 10 plates, map. Beechtree Press, Wellington, New Zealand, 1988. ISBN 0 473 00595 6, ISSN 0113 5449. £5 +£1 p & p from Friends Book Centre, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

This small booklet published at the other end of the world may startle the unwary reader into an uncomfortable feeling of time-warp. In appearance and typography it is of recent vintage but the contents bear few traces of modern scholarship for they were gathered in the early years of the century and, except for occasional notes and amendments, have lain dormant since they left the author's pen in 1916. To praise the author for his achievements or to suggest that parts of his work might have been better ordered can have little present relevance since

Walter Rose died some thirty years ago. Nevertheless we may rightly express our gratitude to his daughter, Elsie Rose, for making the manuscript available and to the New Zealand Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends for its publication. But why New Zealand and why hidden so long? Perhaps this was because it is essentially a very personal document, recounting the support given by the Rose family in maintaining the Quaker cause in Haddenham from the end of the seventeenth century; previously the meeting had been upheld by the Belsons, at whose house in 1660 Thomas Ellwood attended but 'found little satisfaction there'. In the following century the Rose family home at Fort End was the place of meeting, where it continued with declining support until the changed fortunes and altered allegiances of its principal adherents caused its eventual extinction. One glimmer of Quaker attachment remained with a related branch of the Ricketts family, who a century ago commenced a new life in New Zealand where the flame of service again burned brightly; from their concern for their spiritual ancestry the present publication derives.

That very little beyond the family connection is to be discovered of *Haddenham Quaker History* is hardly surprising, for a small society patronized by a single family, without any distinct meeting-house beyond a room set aside for the purpose, leaves few tangible traces. The little private burial ground alone remained visible until a few years ago: ignominiously sold in 1850, repurchased by Walter Rose in 1935 but never placed in a secure trust, it and the bones it contained have since been swept away. On another site nearby, reset in a meandering rustic wall, are a few modern tablets recorded (with eight errors of transcription) at the end of this booklet, and a stone inscribed 'site of old Quaker burial ground' which no longer fulfils the uncompromising ideals of the 'Friends of Truth'. Mercifully Walter Rose did not live to write the final 'Ichabod' over the resting place of his ancestors, but he has done them and the memory of their achievements in the village community of Haddenham an immense service.

Christopher Stell

Roman and Belgic Pottery from Excavations in Milton Keynes 1972–82. P. T. Marney, pp. xi+197, 53 text figs. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Series Monograph No. 2, 1989. £15.

This report of 197 pages is just one page less than its accompanying Monograph No. 1, containing reports on the relevant excavations, fieldwork and other finds. The size is daunting—this is a very detailed report. The results of this decade of fieldwork have been reasonably published, at £20 for the two monographs, although the binding of No. 1 is flimsy and one copy missed several vital pages.

Roman Milton Keynes reported on six excavations and 21 minor sites and watching briefs. Since pottery provides essential dating, reports to substantiate the interpretation of these 27 sites are required. Faced, however, with so many sites of disparate archaeological value, many only fragments of larger sites, the choice lies between publishing substantive data for sites, which should be available in the archive, and a synthesis of present knowledge to form the basis for future research. The latter option was chosen, and only three of the six main excavations are represented by pottery groups in this report, the provenances of some of which are difficult to identify in the excavation monograph. This tends to divorce the pottery from the site and other finds, which is worrying, and anyone wishing to examine a site, such as the Bancroft villa, ceramically will have to consult the archive; a statement of quantities from individual sites would have been useful. The importance and accessibility of the primary data in the archive is therefore crucial.

17 groups from ten sites are reported, and the pottery from the first to mid second-century kilns at Caldecotte, the subject of a forthcoming site report, is also included. The groups have been selected as well-stratified assemblages to reflect dated phases in the Roman period, from the early/mid first century to the late fourth/early fifth century. The only quantification is sherd count, which shows that 75% of the pottery came from first to second-century groups, with second to third and third-century groups

and the fourth century being meagrely represented at 13% and 12% respectively. The title, stressing the term 'Belgic', is well chosen. Clearly it is limited by the imbalance of dated groups, presenting a detailed account of the earlier Roman period of considerable interest. Despite the small samples, the analysis of pottery from the later Roman period is reasoned, although more excavated material would be helpful.

The report divides into an initial publication of the groups and an examination of the individual fabrics or fabric groups from all sites in Milton Keynes, containing a wealth of information, fully illustrated and including thin-section analysis results. This major section deals with local (including the Caldecotte kilns) and regional wares, vessels from further afield, mortaria, fine wares including lead-glazed vessels, and concludes with reports on the samian, including some unusual Argonne or Spanish sherds, and finally the notably few amphorae.

Appendix 1, 21 pages, describes 100 fabrics, excluding mortaria described earlier, but including imported and non-local wares, which could have been less detailed. This is perhaps overly comprehensive, detailing all variations of basic fabrics, some of which occurred as single sherds.

The single quantification measure will make the report difficult to use comparatively with other sites; while some groups are very small, there appear to be good samples for the early Roman period. Further quantified data probably exists in the archive, but this is not clearly stated. The separation of the kiln products from the structural report is regrettable although, with the bias to the early Roman period, their absence would have left a 'black hole'.

Some of the detail in this report could be viewed as archive rather than publication material, and economies could have been made to allow space to publish basic data on the pottery from all sites, including quantities, as a guide to their potential usefulness. While the size, specialist nature and separation of this report

from the excavation monograph may further divorce excavation and pottery specialists, which is a matter for concern, this has to be weighed against the value of the information and synthesis it presents.

No archaeologist dealing with this area should be without this report. It is a valuable well-researched contribution to the archaeology of the area, upon which future reports will undoubtedly build, and the author and contributors are to be congratulated.

Margaret J. Darling

The Wigg Family. Ed. Lewis Kirby. Phillimore, 1989. £15.

Part I of this volume reprints in full *The Wiggs of Mentmore*, by Gerald and Elizabeth Elvey, first published by Barracuda Books in 1984. Part II, *The Wiggs of Beaufort*, by Harold de Lorme and others, carries on the family story from the arrival of Richard Wigg in Carolina, where his name first appears in the records in 1705-6, to the present.

The book is attractively produced and lavishly illustrated in black and white and colour.

H.A.H.