

REVIEWS

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: A PORTRAIT IN COLOUR

Andy Williams and Jean Archer

79 pp.

Newbury, Berkshire, Countryside Books, 1994

ISBN 1 85306 278 2, hardback (£14.95)

JOURNEYS INTO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: A COLLECTION OF INK DRAWINGS

Anthony Mackay

115 pp.

Dunstable, Bedfordshire, The Book Castle, 1998

ISBN 1 871199 14 X, hardback (£20.00)

WISH YOU WERE HERE ... WINSLOW (OLD POSTCARDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS)

Robert Cook

128 pp.

Buckingham, The Barracuda Collection from

Quotes Ltd

ISBN 0 86023 631 5, paperback (£4.99)

WISH YOU WERE HERE ... BUCKINGHAM (OLD POSTCARDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS)

Clive Birch

128 pp.

Buckingham, The Barracuda Collection from

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ISBN 0 86023 638 7, paperback (£4.99)

There are many purely illustrative books on the history of the County and four recently published examples are reviewed here.

The text of *Buckinghamshire: a portrait in colour* is by Jean Archer, a former Town Mayor of Amersham and author of several books on the local history of the County. Andy Williams is a professional photographer. The book is divided into the Thames Valley, Chilterns, Vale of Aylesbury and North Bucks. There is a brief historical introduction followed by descriptions accompanying the full page photographs, the emphasis being on the literary or historical figures connected with each place. The coloured photographs are views taken

through the seasons and although mainly of the picturesque, do include some modern developments such as Watermead in Aylesbury and the Shopping Centre at Milton Keynes as well as one photograph of the Dunton Brothers' Brickworks at Ley Hill.

The author and illustrator of *Journeys into Buckinghamshire* Anthony Mackay is a professional architect and this is apparent from his immaculate black and white ink drawings, many of which are full page. The book is divided into the Ouse Valley, Milton Keynes and Buckingham; Vale of Aylesbury; and Chilterns to Thames and covers many of the same locations as *Buckinghamshire: a portrait in colour*. With the exception of an illustration of the High and Over houses at Amersham the author has concentrated on the picturesque. Again there is a general historical introduction and notes with each illustration with an emphasis more on local history rather than personalities.

Sir Francis Dashwood in his foreword to *Journeys into Buckinghamshire* hopes that the book will stimulate interest in the County and encourage exploration (a statement which may be applied to both books). However, they cannot be used as guide books as their format (A4 landscape) fits them for the coffee table rather than the pocket. In addition whilst they provide us with a snapshot of Buckinghamshire in the 1990s, they are very selective in what they cover. Books of this genre are very pleasing to the eye, but I would like to see more recording for posterity of the everyday, but no less significant, scenes of Buckinghamshire life.

The two books in the *Wish you were here* series, in contrast to those above, illustrate all aspects of life in the towns chosen. Clive Birch, the author of *Buckingham*, has lived in the County for over 40 years and is a founder-Chairman of the Buckingham Heritage Trust and the Old Gaol Museum. He has collected illustrations of Buckingham and surrounding villages covering a period from the 1900s to the mid 1930s on all aspects of life during

that time. Robert Cook, author of *Winslow*, a former teacher and civil servant, was born and still lives in the town. His collection concentrates on the town itself, covering the period from the 1970s to the present day. Like *Buckingham* all aspects are covered but the author goes further and includes pictures of vandalism, drunkenness and traffic accidents – scenes from everyday life in fact.

These books are just two of the many in the *Wish you were here* series and as such are good background material and should not be overlooked by local historians.

Diana Gulland

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE GLEBE TERRIERS

1578–1640

Michael Reed (ed)

xxviii + 295 pp.

Buckinghamshire Record Society, vol. 30, 1997
ISBN 0 901198 30 7 (£25.00)

This volume continues the series of Buckinghamshire Record Society hardback monographs. It is a welcome addition to a type of record, glebe terriers, available in all County Record Offices acting as Diocesan Record Offices but very much under-used. They are an important class of document, describing '... all glebes, lands, meadows, gardens, orchards, houses, stocks, implements and portions of tithes... ' belonging to the benefice of each parish, and they provide abundant information about buildings, agriculture and society.

They were first ordered to be made by Archbishop Parker in 1571, so that they should be 'a perpetual memory' of the property of each parish. They continue the early sixteenth-century monastic practice of demanding terriers from major tenants every three years, and for the same purpose – to prevent alienation of land and rights.

The range of terriers selected for publication here is the earliest in each parish series; in effect this means that each place has one or two terriers in the volume, rarely three. It is a sensible selection, as there would have been little purpose in full publication of repetitive later terriers. It would, however, have been useful to have had comment on any unusual or significant item recorded in terriers of subsequent years. Later terriers sometimes state the

number of yardlands (open-field farms) that the glebe represents, so amplifying the early data. Many places were enclosed privately after 1640, and this is normally obvious from the change in the format of glebe-terrier entry, even in the absence of explicit statements such as the name of the encloser or reference to a Chancery Decree. Glebe terriers are important sources of such enclosure information, not otherwise conveniently available.

The terriers transcribed are those of the archdeaconry of Buckingham, then in the diocese of Lincoln, formerly at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and now at the Buckinghamshire County Record Office in Aylesbury. There are 146 published in this volume, which is arranged in parish alphabetical order, each with the County Record Office reference at the end. At Lincoln, there are 260 additional terriers for Buckinghamshire that fill in gaps for some parishes that are not represented in the published material. Whilst publication of some of these would have been too great a task for the present volume, it would have been useful to add the parish names and references to the list given on pp. xxv–xxvi.

The book has a good introduction conveniently divided into sections titled: the parsonage, the glebe, and place-names. Most parsonage houses were built of timber and, surprisingly, brick is not mentioned. In a few cases the kitchen still followed the medieval practice of being in a detached building. Associated farm buildings, brew-houses, etc, are described. Most places had glebe, and when it was open-field the terriers provide detailed information on the field-structure. Professor Maurice Beresford studied the terriers for this purpose in articles published in *Records of Buckinghamshire*, XV, pt 5 (1951–52), pp.283–98, and XVI, pt 5 (1953–54), pp.14–23. Much of county north of the Chilterns was open, but most of the Chilterns were enclosed, and there was more woodland. The terriers abound with place-names and some of these are discussed.

The volume is well-produced and has a glossary and indexes of persons and places. It is a worthy addition to those counties that have already published glebe terriers (Berkshire [1995], Cornwall [1974] and Warwickshire [1955]) and provides essential data for a great variety of studies.

David Hall

RECOLLECTIONS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Ian Toplis, George Clarke, Ian Beckett and Hugh Hanley (eds)

194 pp.

Buckinghamshire Record Society, vol. 31, 1998

ISBN 0 901198 32 3, hardback (£25)

ISBN 0 901198 33 1, paperback (£7.50)

This book is much easier to read than the normal, more austere and learned publications of this Society; all four contributions incorporate new material and three of them make lively reading.

Sir George Gilbert Scott's reminiscences of his childhood at Gawcott appeared in his posthumous Autobiography but his son, the editor of that volume, reduced the text, which Dr Toplis here reproduces in full. His account of what was still a very primitive village is revealing, especially when the family make their annual visit to Stowe, then at the height of its glory, and picnic at the Temple of Concord. 'I can well recollect the gratification afforded by the hard boiled eggs etc., eaten beneath the unwonted shade of a Classic Temple', says the future great Gothic architect and adds, 'Stowe was really a very fine place though gimcrack'. A particular delight are the nine drawings Scott made as a young man of some Bucks churches, for we know how his first discovery of Hillesden and Chetwode influenced his whole future career.

Elizabeth George was the daughter of the senior tenant-farmer on the Stowe estate. Her Journal gives a new insight into the life at the mansion in the years just before the great crash in 1848; despite looming bankruptcy, entertainment continued on a wildly extravagant scale. Two occasions are vividly described – the coming-of-age of the second Duke's son and the visit of the Queen and Prince Albert. In both cases the Georges were asked to put up guests who could not be accommodated in the mansion and Elizabeth's comments on them and the entertainments are surprisingly shrewd and critical; they show too the enormous charm and friendliness of the Duke despite his incompetence as a great landowner.

Owen Wethered's reminiscences of the foundation and early history of the Bucks Volunteers is of value in an area where records are scanty. His racy, if overlong, narrative is amusing and his account (p. 164) of trying to march his company from

Stowe to Buckingham after they had consumed an inordinate quantity of the Duke of Buckingham's port is indeed a highlight.

In one way or another Stowe appears frequently and this reflects the way the Grenville family dominated the County for so much of the nineteenth century.

E.V.

A TALE OF TWO BRIDGES: SEARCHING FOR GOD IN NEWPORT PAGNELL

Marilyn Lewis

120 pp., 8 figs., loose-leaf in ring-binder

Published privately, 1999

Obtainable from: Mrs M. Lewis, The New Rectory, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, MK16 8AB (£9.00)

Since 1992 Marilyn Lewis has produced four books on different aspects of religious life in Newport Pagnell. All of them have involved considerable research, often using very limited materials, and in each of them she has provided a wider background of the issues involved.

Her latest book continues with these themes but because it is written to tie up 'a number of loose ends' from her research over ten years there are difficulties in producing an adequate review of the whole. Sometimes it is not very clear for which class of reader this was intended. Almost it seems that there should have been two publications, not one. Sadly also, the use of a ring binder is not conducive to the permanence of this work.

Six themes have been covered in this book ranging from the medieval hospitals of Newport Pagnell to the history of the Nonconformist Academy in that town. Bound up with these are detailed accounts of leprosy, the rule of St Augustine, the rituals of the Easter sepulchre and Arminianism. The final chapter 'Bridging the Ages' is completely different, as it is devoted entirely to the author's personal exploration of the relationship between Christianity and history.

Despite this dichotomy there is much here of value to members of this society. Although too slight to be true biographies, the life and times of Thomas Whalley of Lathbury and Francis Presse, the Rector of Moulsoe, are outlined in some detail.

However, probably the most important section is the chapter on Mr Bull's academy, which, like Sutcliffe's academy in Olney, had such a great influence on nonconformity in the region.

Here there are more materials but in some ways it was a pity that she was not able to expand her theme more widely to consider its influence on the local villages in greater depth. Fenny Stratford Baptist chapel for example was opened with a sermon by Mr Bull in 1805 and four of his students supplied it regularly in the following year.

In her preface Mrs Lewis does say that this is probably her last book in this series but, even if she adds no more, these four contributions to Newport Pagnell's religious history will be of considerable interest and help to future historians of that town.

The three previous books in the series are *The Chantry and Parish Gilds of Medieval Newport Pagnell* (1992) and *Tickford Priory: A Benedictine Tragedy* (1993) both out of print, and *John Gibbs: A Newport Pagnell Puritan, 1627-1699* (1995) (£8.65).

Edward Legg

THE HISTORY OF PENN WOOD

Miles Green

52 pp., 28 figs. (8 in colour, 12 maps), paperback
Published privately for Friends of Penn Wood,
1999 (unpriced)

Penn Wood (436 acres, 177 hectares), the largest ancient woodland in the Chilterns, is a precious relic of Wycombe Heath, which at the turn of the first Christian millennium occupied the plateau between High Wycombe, the Missendens, Amersham and Beaconsfield. Ploughing up to grow cereals in common fields began before the Norman Conquest and reduced the area of the Heath to some 4,000 acres of woodpasture, on which rights of common pasture were shared by seven parishes (but, in the four which contained manorial boroughs, including the failed borough of Great Missenden, only by the extra-burghal Forrens).

North of the Amersham-Wycombe main road there were fewer trees on the Heath and small encroachments were tolerated by the lords to meet the demand for cottages, hovels and garden plots. After this area of infertile land was finally enclosed

in 1855 under an Act of 1845, much of it was built over, until what was left was safeguarded by its inclusion in the Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. South of the main road (turnpiked in 1768, but perhaps of Roman origin) the strong seigneurial control exercised by the Curzons of Penn, who owned the soil and the trees, ensured that the old coppiced woodland was managed in order to provide 'tallwood' for London's fires and then standard timber for local industry from high, closely-planted trees. One pollarded beech has survived (Fig. 5), impressive, though not as 'Surprizing large' as that in Fig. 14, which also adorns the cover, as it did that of *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 36 (1994).

In 1851, anticipating the imminent Inclosure Award, Earl Howe brought in some 170 woodmen, through whose felling one could for a time see Holmer Green from Penn Street; but enough remained to justify Penn Wood's current designation as semi-natural Ancient Woodland.

The dispossessed peasantry of the hamlets which had grown up all round the Heath regarded the Inclosure with furious resentment and repeatedly tore down the fences, until they were deterred by some exemplary terms of imprisonment. 'Order' was restored by 1865, just as the fight which saved Berkhamsted Common was beginning. If the parliamentary enclosure of Wycombe Heath had been delayed until then, it might not have occurred at all.

The fifth Earl Howe, the racing motorist, sold Penn Wood in 1940 to Ernest Cook, who loved it, opened it to the public each spring, and was commemorated by a monument there, which has however been moved elsewhere. The sixth Earl Howe was able to re-purchase the wood in 1967; he left it to his daughter, who in 1991 sold it to a company which forthwith sought permission to construct a golf-course therein. Following a local storm of protest (Figs. 21, 23), the Friends of Penn Wood organised themselves for a struggle, which was to last six years. The new owners argued that economic considerations necessitated the development and that the wood was modern, a beech plantation on poor soil intended to serve the chair industry, or alternatively that it was secondary woodland which had invaded the open heath as grazing declined. Against this, Miles Green, a native of Beaconsfield, leading Friend and local his-

torian, and now Clerk to Penn Parish Council, was able to establish that woodland on the site certainly went back to Domesday and probably to prehistoric times. He wrote a paper which convinced English Nature and collaborated with John Chenevix Trench in a definitive article on the history of Wycombe Heath, which appeared in the volume of *Records* already cited. His present work is a revised version of the former paper, incorporating some of the conclusions of the latter. Both concentrate on a purported charter of King Henry [the Fourth] which was cited in 1666 during an enquiry into the common rights on Wycombe Heath. What was alleged to be a transcript is a manifest forgery, but it incorporated genuine material which could not have been fabricated, particularly a clockwise perambulation with 15 boundary marks along the 12-mile perimeter of the Heath (described as Holmer Heath) as it existed about 1400. A statute of 1285 had provided for assarting on shared commons, but that date, assigned to the charter at p. 17 (Fig. 10), can hardly be supported, though the major changes on the north side had occurred much earlier, while on the Wycombe side encroachment seems to have been halted by an agreement (Fig. 7) made between 1203 and 1228, accepting existing enclosures but restraining new ones.

English Nature and the national amenity bodies were more readily persuaded of the antiquity and public importance of Penn Wood than were the planning authority, the Inspector and the Secretary of State. Each was at first minded to approve the proposed enabling development, but each was at length convinced that no management agreement would adequately safeguard the wood. Meanwhile, the owners were fined for illegal felling; they then threatened to sell off Penn Wood in small lots. The Friends, the Chiltern Society and the Woodland Trust launched an appeal for funds; a remarkable sum was soon pledged locally, and the National Lottery more than matched it. In April 1999 Penn Wood was conveyed to the Woodland Trust and permanently restored to the public (Fig. 24). Miles Green at once completed his monograph, which now appears, handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated, in celebration of this notable victory. It deals also with several related topics, including the probable origin of Penn Street, the rise and fall of its chair factory (once the largest in Europe), the use of the woods as a military training area, and the

excellent management of the neighbouring Common Wood. Within the limits of space and timing, the story could hardly have been better told, and succeeding generations will surely be grateful.

Arnold H. J. Baines

LADY ELGIVA: HER LIFE AND TIMES

Arnold H. J. Baines

36 pp., 6 figs.

Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society, 1999

ISBN 0 9516345 4 2, paperback (£3.75)

Most readers of the *Records* will know that Arnold Baines is one of the foremost scholars of the Anglo-Saxon period in the Society's history. And most will agree that it is not an 'easy' period, particularly because of the similarity of most names. In the genealogical table included in the booklet there are thirty-seven names, all but three of which begin with an E. Nor are the political changes of the Wessex Royal House in the ninth and tenth centuries always easy to understand.

So we should be grateful to Dr Baines for slightly relaxing his normal, deeply scholarly style to give us an attractive article on Lady Elgiva, who, by granting Chesham to the monks of Abingdon Abbey in 970, first put the town 'on the map'.

The booklet is beautifully produced with a particularly attractive cover in colour and should be acquired by anyone who wishes to distinguish between Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred, Ethelwald and many more of their kin.

E.V.

THE DIARY OF DANIEL BAKER 1690-1705

Miles Green and Pat Sharp (eds)

24pp., 4 halftones, 1 map

Graphink Litho, Penn (unpriced)

This book may be thought to be mistitled: it does not run from 1690 to 1705 but from 1686 to 1704; and it is not the diary but excerpts from the diary. They are not chosen at random but selected, by the diarist, to illustrate what he regards as God's 'mercies and signal deliverences'.

He may be thought singularly accident-prone, or a poor judge of horse flesh, for two of the episodes relate to a horse running away with him, or with his carriage. He was also apt to allow his children to play in ways that could endanger them; he regarded it as providential that his sons did not choke on the mouthfuls of farthings that a *sensible parent*, one might have thought, would not have allowed a child to put in its mouth (this too happened twice).

Perhaps he was not as neurotic as we might think in thanking God that they did not throw themselves out of the attic window (though it is fair to say that the window bars were rotten).

We may regret that the editors did not include entries relating to other parishes or houses; the entries relating to the Tylers Green house shed considerable light on domestic conditions.

J.C.T.