# REVIEWS

## A REVIEW OF SOME OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S MILLENNIUM HISTORIES

Whilst the Dome is currently the unfortunate symbol of the nation's lukewarm millennium celebrations, the recent outpouring of parish histories may well be a more enduring record of our collective achievements up to the year 2000. The size and quality of the millennium histories of Buckinghamshire parishes vary enormously. There has evidently been some competition amongst parishes to produce the most attractive volume, but any attempt to make a small Buckinghamshire village into the hub of the universe was doomed to failure. Indeed, those books which received millennium grants, or subsidies from a parish council, may appear more prestigious, but their contribution to our real understanding of the communities concerned is not always superior. In selecting a few titles for specific mention, the reviewer must necessarily overlook many worthy books. Those singled out below, however, have an unusual approach, or a particular appeal, which may give them a readership beyond their parish boundaries.

One of the most imaginative of the millennium books relates to the village of Brill, and is entitled *Brillennium, 1,000 years in the life of a Buckinghamshire village*. It is a handsome volume of 175 pages, in landscape double-column format, which gives scope to the designer to lay out the text and photographs in a very fresh way. It contains excellent reproductions of early maps of the village and a full-colour reproduction of Speed's 1610 Map of Buckinghamshire. There are 24 chapters, each contributed by a different local resident. The squire writes about lords of the manor, the vicar about the church, the licensee about the pubs and a policeman about the village's connection with the Great Train Robbery. Two of the key chapters, those on the Civil War and on the landscape of the village, come from respected local historians now deceased, Freddy Bateson and Mark Waghorn. The book is hardback with a dust jacket (ISBN 09536850 0 4).

Another lavish production is *Stoke Poges, a Buckinghamshire village through 1,000 years*, compiled by the well-known local historian and chairman of the parish council, Lionel Rigby. The 150-page book is professionally produced by Phillimore and Co., and includes many full-colour reproductions of maps and coloured prints. Indeed it is the number and variety of maps which make this book so useful. Where practical the original map has been accurately reprinted, but where a detail or a clarification served the author's purpose better, a well-drawn copy has been included. The enclosure of the parish is particularly well explained. The poet Thomas Gray is naturally prominent, but the bulk of the work is a thorough landscape history of a south Bucks parish. This hardback book is published by Phillimore and Co. at £14.99 (ISBN 1 86077 131 9).

One can imagine the keen debate within the Naphill Millennium Committee before they settled on the title of their history, *Naphill and Walters Ash: looking back at village life in celebration of the second millennium*. Their modest large-format paperback runs to 98 pages and crams in a great deal of information, cleverly arranged in varying-sized blocks of text, each with an eye-catching heading and thumb-nail illustration. The result is somewhat reminiscent of a geography textbook and none the worse for that. The Committee chose as their author an established authority on the village, Rex Leaver, who has produced a very succinct history, well illustrated with his own maps and diagrams.

Another book published with modest means is Gail Kelly and Clive Dobbs's *Granborough, Celebration of the Millennium*. This is a very happy combination of academic history and personal recollection. That the book has such vigour may be due to the special enthusiasm with which Gail Kelly, an American by birth, conducted the interviews with local residents. The family photographs the interviewees contributed have been reproduced very effectively and laid out in an unpretentious but appealing fashion. The book is a large-size paperback with an excellent reproduction of a local painting on the cover. It received the support of

Granborough Parish Council and came out in November 2000 (ISBN 0 9539607 0 6).

The millennium book which stands head and shoulders above the rest is Ken and Margaret Morley's *Wingrave, a Rothschild village in the Vale*. Few parishes were as lucky as Wingrave in having resident historians nearing the completion of a major piece of research just at the time the community was prepared to support an ambitious publication. Their book follows on chronologically from *The Great Upheaval*, their detailed but very accessible account of the enclosure of Wingrave in 1798. The new book therefore deals with the 19th and 20th centuries and particularly with the period when the village lived in the huge shadow cast by the Rothschilds of Mentmore. The book deals painstakingly with every aspect of social life and the changes to the village landscape. The writers do not assume the reader has a prior understanding of English history and therefore take the trouble to explain each piece of national legislation or economic pressure which brought about change in Wingrave. The key issues of local history are addressed and the conclusions the authors came to fully explained. The book is therefore an object lesson in how to compile a parish history and will have a readership far beyond the Vale of Aylesbury. *Wingrave, a Rothschild village in the Vale* was published in November 1999 and extends to 309 pages. It is lavishly illustrated, has notes on the sources used for each chapter, and has a detailed index. It is published in hardback, with a pleasing book jacket, by The Book Castle, Dunstable, at £25.00 (ISBN 1871199 99 9).

Other millennium books worthy of mention include:

*Adstock through the ages*, by Chris Smith. Adstock Parochial Church Council, 2000.

*Images of Grendon Underwood and Kingswood*, compiled by Barry Houghton. Grendon Underwood and Kingswood Millennium Committee, 2000.

*Padbury through the years*. Padbury Parish Council, 1999.

*Taplow at the millennium, a photographic record of Taplow parish during the 20th century*, compiled by Alistair Forsyth and Karl Lawrence. Taplow Parish Council, 2000

*Julian Hunt*

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF GREATER LONDON: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR HUMAN PRESENCE IN THE AREA NOW COVERED BY GREATER LONDON

MoLAS monograph

*xiv + 329 pp., 13 maps in folder*

*Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2000*

*ISBN 1 901992 15 2, paperback* (£26.00)

The publication of *The Archaeology of Greater London* marks the culmination of a ten-year project by the Museum of London Archaeology Service and English Heritage to 'bring together and to synthesise existing information about the archaeology of the Greater London area, and to assess the importance of London's archaeological resource in a regional, national and, where appropriate, international context'. The aim is to advance academic understanding of, and interest in, the archaeology of the area and provide a better framework for archaeological responses to future development threats. The result is a book of considerable importance not just to the archaeology of Greater London itself but to the understanding of the City's wider hinterland and its influence upon the world.

*The Archaeology of Greater London* is very much a collaborative exercise with 28 listed contributors, of whom 15 are its authors. It consists of ten chapters each written by one or more specialists, beginning with landscape and environment and then progressing by conventional period divisions from the Lower Palaeolithic to the post-medieval. Each period chapter follows a similar format with sections headed Introduction and background; Past work and the nature of the evidence; The archaeological evidence; and Conclusions; each with sub-headings and illustrations appropriate to the particular period. Whilst effective this format does give rise to some repetition. With the exception of the landscape and post-medieval chapters, each is accompanied by a distribution map and gazetteer of significant sites. The maps show a wide range of site and find locations extracted from the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record against a geological background. Although a wide range of symbols is used to differentiate specific site and find types, the basis of this classification is not always as helpful as one might expect – for example, the Iron Age map distinguishes finds of swords, helmets, adze caches,

coin and metalwork hoards but has a single symbol for dyke, earthwork, hillfort and ring ditch. An omission is a map, or more helpfully a transparent overlay, providing generalised information on the pattern of modern development and land use, which has so conditioned the recognition and survival (or otherwise) of archaeological deposits.

It is not possible to effectively summarise the great breadth of the material covered in a short review article nor, in such an obviously carefully researched book, does it seem appropriate to pick out particular chapters for mention above others. The bare bones of London's story are well known: although there is much evidence for human occupation and settlement in the London area throughout prehistory, the first town was founded by the Romans in c. AD 50 and rapidly developed into the province's main administrative centre and an important trading port. London seems to have been largely abandoned in the early Saxon period until a trading settlement (*Lundenwic)* was established on the Strand in the late 6th century. By the mid-9th century, perhaps in response to Viking raids, the focus of settlement had shifted back into the walled City. From then until the mid-14th century population growth was sustained and the city came to dominate the economy of south-east England. Thereafter, London's wealth and importance were such that it rapidly overcame setbacks such as the Black Death and Great Fire to become a 'world city', the hub of the British Empire.

There are many facets of this book which will interest the student of Buckinghamshire's archaeology since the modern boundaries of Greater London are of course entirely arbitrary with respect to pre-medieval archaeology, whilst in the medieval and post-medieval periods the City greatly influenced the county's economy and landscape. By chance, one of the most important Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic sites in Britain has been found adjacent to the county boundary at Three Ways Wharf, Uxbridge, whilst other discoveries in the area indicate that the alluvial deposits of the Lower Colne Valley preserve an exceptional buried land surface from the late glacial/early post-glacial period. Overall, our understanding of prehistoric periods in the Greater London area is severely hampered by the destruction or obscuring of remains by modern development. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there was considerable occupation along the Thames Valley in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages comparable to that seen upstream, for example at Dorney Rowing Lake in Buckinghamshire. Curiously, the Iron Age seems sparsely represented and it is suggested that the area became a 'liminal' zone between different cultural traditions – this is an idea which could be examined against generally better preserved evidence in Buckinghamshire. South Buckinghamshire may have come within the hinterland of Roman Londinium; indeed it is suggested that the need for pasture and woodland may explain the apparent near absence of rural settlement in areas such as the Colne Valley, although lack of archaeological investigation may also be a factor. Medieval London's influence came to stretch across the whole of the county – the Thames was important for river traffic whilst the Chilterns supplied timber and other goods and the economic development of our towns was stunted. The general issue of the provisioning of the metropolis and its influence on the economy and landscape of Buckinghamshire represents a fertile area for linked archaeological and historical study.

In conclusion, *The Archaeology of Great London* is no coffee table book but will prove an invaluable reference work for the study of London and its hinterland for many years to come. It is to be hoped that, with English Heritage support, a comparable volume can in future be produced for the Middle Thames counties, including Buckinghamshire.

*Alexander (Sandy) Kidd*

DATCHET PAST
Janet Kennish
*xiv + 130 pp., 118 illustrations*
*Phillimore and Co., 1999*
*ISBN 1 86077 103 3* (£14.95)

Datchet was transferred in 1974 from Buckinghamshire to Berkshire, which has now itself been administratively extinguished and replaced by unitary boroughs and districts, but it is with historic counties that our Society and kindred bodies are concerned, and Janet Kennish is the latest of a line of local historians who have recounted the story of this parish on the Bucks riverside. Her roots are there, she taught in its primary school for twenty years, and her present work is comprehensive, reliable, attractively illustrated and mapped, and well indexed.

The history of Datchet has been governed by three factors: its location on the Thames, by which it has repeatedly been flooded; its proximity to Windsor, which has made it a royal village; and its accessibility from London, which has attracted many notable residents and more recently a host of commuters, though it has retained its identity and exhibits continuity as well as change. Its prehistory may well require fuller treatment in another edition, in view of impressive but still preliminary findings by the local fieldwalking group, especially at the important Southlea site, a rare and interesting prehistoric landscape on an island of slightly higher ground. The parish church and village centre are located on another such island.

The place-name Datchet is recognised as certainly Celtic, but is too readily dismissed as without descriptive meaning, Like its namesake Decetia in Gaul, now Décize in France, it probably means 'the finest of woods'. Though not recorded until a lawsuit in 990, this name or rather description would have been picked up from Romano-British peasants by uncomprehending Middle Saxons near the end of the sixth century. The woods would have been mainly in Fulmer, well back from the Thames, but the names Riding Court and Running Groves imply woodland on or much nearer the river.

Datchet was held before 1066 by two brothers in equal shares, but with different overlords. With value halved by the disruption of the Conquest, the Conqueror granted the manor to Giles de Pinkeni, from Picquigny. When the Pinkney family forfeited it for treason, Edward III granted it to the Despensers, who already held the adjoining Ditton, where they built a castle and also a chapel, which survived the Reformation and was later endowed and rebuilt. In 1335 they secured a fair, but without a market this lasted for only a century; as it was on the patronal festival of the Assumption, it would in any case have been lost or transferred soon afterwards by the Sunday Fairs Act, as that feast was a red-letter day.

The de Molyns family acquired the manor but forfeited it to Edward IV, and the Crown retained it from 1472 to 1631. The author has made good use of the court rolls, and rightly regards their almost unbroken sequence as a rich resource. An excellent feature of her work is a full account of the houses erected or occupied by the more prosperous residents, whilst not ignoring the sharp contrast between them and the other end of the social scale. Among the most colourful characters was Robert Barker, printer to James I and therefore of the Authorised Version. He was ruined when his 'Wicked Bible' omitted 'not' from the seventh commandment. While in a debtors' prison he designated trustees to manage what became the Bridge House Trust. The bridge is not the former bridge across the river, the only one (above London) to have been lost, enabling the Prince Consort to make most of the Home Park completely private. The bridge which the Trustees supported crossed a small stream, which they eventually culverted so as to create the pleasant Green at the village centre, to remain unbuilt on for ever.

Enclosure came late to Datchet, and the years between the Act in 1810 and the final award in 1834 are the darkest period of its history, when it was 'Black Datchet', notorious for destitution and violence. Its Victorian recovery was signalised by the erection of a school and a Baptist chapel, the rebuilding of the parish church and the provision of model cottages: these are illustrated by early photographs and William Corden's paintings. After the railway arrived, new houses were built for aspiring families, until there were 'six Sirs in our village'. Over half the book deals with the past two centuries, and makes effective use not only of written sources but also of traditions and oral memories, especially of the two world wars; but one lady in her 108th year could still recall Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee party for six thousand children from around Windsor. Among more permanent memorials of the Queen's two Jubilees are the village cross on the Green and the drinking fountain.

In 1894 the vestry was displaced by an elected parish council, whose minutes are a valuable source for the whole twentieth century. The council and the parish church contended for the management of the Barker Trust. After many years of dispute, not recounted in detail, its funds, now augmented by the sale of land for housing, were divided, two-fifths for church repairs, three-fifths for the general benefit of the inhabitants.

Unlike many parish histories, this one deals fully with very recent changes: the effects of the motorway, the Queen Mother reservoir, the saving of much of the Marshfield for recreation, the new chapel, the new secondary school, the fine Datchet Hall with the youth club, library and Randolph medical centre nearby and, no less necessarily, a

sewerage scheme. A highly significant Development Plan surely owed much to Fred Pooley's legendary foresight. New housing in and around what had once been Datchet Common has inherited that name. Two ancient manorial centres, Ditton Park and Riding Court, have been rescued from decay by computer companies. Unhappily, the village is still plagued by traffic despite the Windsor relief road. Yet it remains attractive, and Janet Kennish has served its lively community well.

*A. H. J. Baines*

SOCIABILITY AND POWER IN LATE-STUART ENGLAND: THE CULTURAL WORLDS OF THE VERNEYS 1660-1720
Susan E. Whyman
*xiv + 287 pp., 22 plates*
*Oxford University Press, 1999*
*ISBN 0 19 820719 0* (£45)

It has been said that it is almost impossible to write about seventeenth-century social history without referring to the Verney papers. While this is less true today than it may have been fifty years ago, the sheer size and range of the archive which Sir Harry Verney found when he inherited the Claydon estate in 1826 makes it hard to ignore. The correspondence of Sir Ralph Verney (1613-1696), knight and baronet, alone amounts to over 30,000 items and it would appear that collectively this Buckinghamshire gentry family created the largest continuous collection of personal papers for the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in England and perhaps in Europe.

Access to the papers has been a gradual process. The public was first introduced to their contents through the pages of the *Verney Memoirs,* published between 1892 and 1899, a skilfully edited and highly readable selection of extracts and summaries in narrative form, which traced the family fortunes to the end of the seventeenth century. The *Memoirs* deservedly became a classic of their kind and remain an important source in their own right. They were supplemented in 1930 by an edition of selected eighteenth-century letters. Then in the 1950s the original correspondence, which had been rearranged in chronological order by the editors of the *Memoirs,* was opened up to scholars through the medium of microfilm, copies of which were deposited in the Buckinghamshire Record Office and in other repositories in England and the U. S. A. Finally in 1987 on the initiative of the present Sir Ralph Verney the Claydon House Trust was set up to care for the whole Verney archive, thereby opening the way to the appointment of a professionally qualified archivist to arrange, list and store the mass of unmicrofilmed estate deeds and other papers dating back to the Middle Ages, as well as the huge quantity of nineteenth-century papers and correspondence. The resulting catalogue, which runs to over 850 pages, can now be consulted in the Buckinghamshire Record Office and at the National Register of Archives in London.

Dr Whyman's book is one of several in-depth studies, published and unpublished, based on the Verney correspondence which were made possible by the availability of the microfilm (in this case at Princeton University) and it also utilises the recently catalogued material at Claydon House. It examines the changing way of life of an extended upper gentry family over several generations. But as its title implies, this is less a family saga than an anthropological case study which focuses on cultural values, everyday rituals and modes of social interaction. In a sense the principal protagonist is London, the great metropolis of some half a million inhabitants, which from the Restoration onwards increasingly dominated the social and economic life of the whole kingdom. London acted as a magnet on those members of the landed classes who could afford to visit it whether for business or for pleasure and the Verneys were no exception. By the 1690s even the elderly Sir Ralph Verney, in some respects the epitome of the country squire, was spending up to nine months annually in the capital and several of his close female relations were permanently resident there.

John (later Sir John) Verney, Sir Ralph's younger son, is a special case in having spent many years as a successful London merchant before inheriting the Claydon estate and the baronetcy in 1696. This makes him, in the author's words, 'an ideal lens for observing a society as it adapted to change' under the influence of a more commercial ethos. Accordingly, the period between 1692, when John knew that he would inherit, and his death in 1717 forms the core of the book. Part 1 describes and comments on the overlapping city and country worlds of Sir Ralph and his son in three, chronologically arranged, chapters, and in the process explores the social net-

works of each in some detail. The account of the rural community centred on Claydon in Chapter 1 seems disproportionately brief, but the deep symbolism of the traditional gifts of venison bestowed by Sir Ralph on his friends and relations is well brought out. In Part 2 the response to London is analysed in three thematic chapters. The first of these examines new forms of peculiarly London sociability and in particular the evolution of the private coach as the status symbol of a less restricted notion of gentility as well as the indispensable adjunct to the obligatory courtesy visit - a fashion of which the rules were framed and interpreted by women. The remaining two chapters deal respectively with the marriage market and the involvement of the Verneys in Buckinghamshire politics and electioneering. The latter chapter, which traces the emergence of highly competitive party politics, leading to a shift of power from the localities to the centre, is likely to be of particular interest to local readers.

Underpinning Dr Whyman's analyses is a series of linked computer databases incorporating an index of selected subjects mentioned in the 7,018 letters covering the years 1692-1717, the contents of which are summarised in tabular form in one of the appendices. From the table it can be seen that of the 79 subjects listed the five with the highest totals of references are: finances (684); marriage (656); elections (570); visiting (429); and servants (426). Other subject headings include: Whig/Tory conflict (249); religion (152); love (57); Bath (56); and prayer (56). Estate administration and business transactions were excluded from the study. Also included in the appendices are a biographical guide to the Verneys and their correspondents and summary notes on the Buckinghamshire politicians and events cited in the final chapter.

In a study of this complexity it is inevitable that some loose ends remain. One wonders, for example, to what extent John Verney's lifestyle was affected by his elevation to the (Irish) peerage as Viscount Fermanagh in 1703. Also it is hardly helpful to be told in the concluding section that the Verneys survived because they 'knew who they were'. Nevertheless this is a most impressive piece of research, which is both well written and packed with fascinating insights, and it should appeal to the general reader as well as the specialist.

*Hugh Hanley*

THOMAS HICKMAN'S CHARITY, AYLESBURY: A TERCENTENARY HISTORY 1698 – 1998
Hugh Hanley
*119 pp., 52 illustrations (10 in colour)*
*Oxford, 2000*
*ISBN 0 904920 39 9*

(Obtainable from: Square Edge Bookshop, 38 Kingsbury, Aylesbury, £9.95)

Here is local history at its best. Very well researched and clearly written, it is a valuable addition to Aylesbury's history. And it is an account of a remarkable success story.

The author notes that between 1698 and 1719 Thomas Hickman, Henry Phillips and William Harding all founded charities in the town, all of which flourish today to a degree that would astonish them. Harding's foundation remains educational and Phillips refounded the Grammar School, which has just celebrated four hundred years. But Hickman's was different: although based on almshouses for the poor, it included unusual provision for the benefit of what we can call Founders Kin; so for a century or more the original cottages he built in Parsons Fee were often occupied by members of the family, who had certainly not been 'means-tested'. He also left the Charity his own house 1 Church Street, the former R. M. Adams house in the Market Square, and a 32-acre farm at Walton.

Like so many local charities it had its ups and downs. The Trustees always included a Hickman – several were surgeons in the eighteenth century – and the Reverend William Hickman was appointed a Trustee as late as 1867.

Inevitably the Charity Commissioners descended on Aylesbury in 1833. They found the total income to be £73 and the expenditure only twelve pounds; the surplus was distributed to the poor by Trustees and St Mary's churchwardens on New Year's Day. After some legal arguments a new deed was agreed, new Trustees appointed and the almshouses rebuilt by 1871. Just a century later a complete transformation occurred when the Walton farm – by then mainly allotments – was sold for development for just under a million pounds.

Since then the Trustees' policy has been to buy properties in the neighbourhood of the church and convert them into dwellings for mainly elderly

people. This has had a beneficial effect in maintaining much of the town's Conservation Area as dwellings (rather than offices) and has saved several houses of architectural distinction for posterity.

Hugh Hanley has recorded this story with his usual clarity and wit. The production is excellent with many relevant illustrations.

*E. V.*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IN THE 1760s AND 1820s: THE COUNTY MAPS OF JEFFERYS AND BRYANT
Reproduced in full colour and to their original scales with a foreword by Diana Gulland and an introduction by Paul Laxton
*Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Aylesbury, 2000*
*ISBN 0 949003 17 4* (£15)

This publication is a remarkable tribute to the entrepreneurial flair of Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, which has harnessed modern electronic scanning and colour printing technology to produce full-scale facsimiles of these two important maps of the county at a price that is little short of remarkable. The Society also displayed excellent judgement in commissioning Mr Paul Laxton of the University of Liverpool, the leading authority on English county maps, to write an introduction.

Both Jefferys and Bryant have a national reputation as mapmakers of large-scale (one inch to one mile or larger) maps of a number of English counties, published for subscribers, and full of topographic detail. As Paul Laxton tells us, Thomas Jefferys was the leading map publisher of the middle years of the eighteenth century (his map of Buckinghamshire was surveyed by Ainslie and Donald, 1766-8). As a county cartographer, Bryant was particularly prolific with maps of 13 counties to his name: 'his paper landscape covers nearly 30 per cent of England and a third of its shires'. Bryant published his map of Buckinghamshire (1824-5) at the larger scale of 1.5 inches to one mile which enables him to include remarkable detail with, for example, the landscape gardens and parks of his many estate-owning subscribers prominently displayed. Jefferys uses colour mainly to distinguish the various hundreds of the county but Bryant's more extensive colouring is used in more practical ways to aid cartographic communication, as, for example, in distinguishing clearly his three-fold classification of roads. Bryant also depicts parish boundaries, which makes his map a very useful index for modern historians.

The A3 bound-book format of these facsimiles is a very good compromise between legibility and portability. I can see it and its maps giving much pleasure to general readers with an interest in map views of Buckinghamshire around 200 years ago. Its pages of maps will also be quarried as sources of topographic information for use in many kinds of historical studies. The book also constitutes a comprehensive and easily-used reference work with which to identify the location of places and areas named in written documents. Diana Gulland's foreword asserts that making these maps permanently and widely available will be of great benefit to a wide range of researchers. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society has indeed served many interests by pursuing this excellent publishing venture.

*Roger Kain*
*University of Exeter*

THE STORY OF THE MET & GC LINE
Clive Foxell
*A5 format; 164 pp., 130 illustrations (7 in colour), 6 maps and diagrams; laminated cover*
*Published by the author, 2000*
*ISBN 0 9529184 2 0*

(Obtainable from: Chapter One Bookshop, Chesham, or The Bookshop, Amersham, for £12.95, or from Dr Clive Foxell, 4 Meades Lane, Chesham, HP5 1ND, for £14.45, including postage)

Extensive media coverage in recent years will have made members well aware that running a railway on which independent companies have to share track space is not easy. Dr Clive Foxell's latest book is a timely reminder that nothing is new and that similar frictions affected Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Middlesex a century ago.

The Metropolitan and Great Central Joint line was 48½ miles long from Harrow-on-the-Hill through Amersham and Aylesbury to Verney Junction, with branches to Chesham and Watford. Its Joint Committee came into being in 1906 to administer these lines which were being used by the two companies in its title; shadows of the

Committee exist even now in the operating arrangements between Chiltern Railways and London Underground.

The Joint Committee became necessary because of the ambitions of Sir Edward Watkin (chairman of what became the Great Central Railway) to link certain British and French lines to create a route carrying merchandise between the industrial heartland of England and the markets of Europe. Dr Foxell paints a fascinating picture of this Victorian workaholic, who also chaired the boards of the Metropolitan Railway, South Eastern Railway, and Channel Tunnel Company. (At various times he was also a director of the Great Eastern, Great Northern and Great Western Railways.) Unsurprisingly his health suffered under such a workload and, after a stroke in 1892, he was forced to resign all chairmanships in 1894 before his grand design had been completed.

The missing link in this design was the Great Central's London Extension which, between 1894 and 1899, was built (to a continental loading gauge) between that company's network in Nottinghamshire and a junction with the Metropolitan Railway at Quainton, north of Aylesbury. An agreement in 1890 between the two companies should have settled how the line from Quainton to London would be shared. Unfortunately Watkin's secretive and abrasive style of working had rubbed off on the general managers of the two companies. Harmony was just about maintained while Watkin ruled, but once he had resigned in 1894 the relationship fell apart and, by the time the new railway opened in 1899, the two companies were at loggerheads. Continuing friction was finally suppressed in 1905 by an Act of Parliament which set up the Joint Committee to run the disputed railway from the following year.

The first five chapters chronicle the events which created the need for the Joint Committee. After this comprehensive introduction Dr Foxell leads us through the strange history of a body in which, initially, distrust ran so high that the functions of the partners had to be changed every five years to enable each to keep its finger on the corporate pulse.

Thus from 1906 to 1911 the Met managed the line while the GCR kept the accounts; they then swapped roles for the next five years. Matters became even more complicated at Aylesbury, where the line from Princes Risborough brought in another Joint Committee (the GW and GC Joint) and the station became controlled by two Joint Committees which alternated management and accounting on a (roughly) four-yearly cycle. It is surprising that it took only from 1922 to 1924 for all involved to agree the plans for the rebuilding of Aylesbury station.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is that, in spite of such an organisational handicap, the Met and the Great Central managed to run remarkably efficient services. The GCR quickly built a reputation for the speed and comfort of its expresses. The Met, in contrast, started its 'Joint' life with antiquated and uncomfortable rolling stock but was soon shamed into re-equipping its passenger trains in order to compare more favourably with the GCR. The resulting 'Dreadnought' coaches became an important ingredient in the Met's campaign to persuade commuters to move out of London to its Metroland estates.

This is a lively, authoritative, and very readable account, backed up by informative appendices and spiced with the recollections of some of the people who worked for the Joint Committee. It is also spiced with some tantalisingly brief references to events beyond the Joint Lines. Two of these made this reviewer wonder how far Metroland might have spread and what would have happened to the Green Belt if the Met had agreed to High Wycombe's request for a branch line from Rickmansworth or had gone ahead with its own idea of extending the Watford branch to St Albans. We can only hope that Dr Foxell has not finished his researches.

*Peter Gulland*

SIR ALBERT RICHARDSON 1880 – 1964
Alan Powers (ed.), Simon Houfe and John Wilton-Ely
*96 pp., 115 illustrations, paperback*
*London, Heinz Gallery, 1999*
*ISBN 1 872911 95 1* (unpriced)

Many readers will remember Sir Albert Richardson as the flamboyant and controversial President of the Royal Academy between 1954 and 1958. Elected when the Modern Movement, in the wake of the Festival of Britain, had become the almost universal inspiration for the architects of the day, Richardson was looked upon by many in his profession either as the leader of a dwin-

dling band who produced outdated architecture or as an irrelevance with an amusing style of lecturing.

In reality Richardson's life's work was to convey the very serious message that architecture should evolve from the best elements of the past. By his teaching, writing and buildings, he showed how classical architecture, which he felt reached its peak in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was a sound basis for modern architectural design. He believed that by surrounding himself with fine objects from this period, he could understand the motivation behind the production of such objects, and that they would inspire him in his own work. But by taking this immersion in the past to the extent of enacting scenes in the costumes of the period, he created the unfortunate reputation of being something of a joke figure.

The well-deserved rehabilitation of Richardson has taken a long time to emerge. In 1980, his grandson, Simon Houfe, published an excellent personal biography of him, but it was not until 1999, thirty-five years after his death, that a study of Richardson's architecture has been produced. This is a hundred-page paperback with contributions from four authors. Inevitably it can hardly do full justice to the sheer volume and diversity of Richardson's output, which ranged from council housing schemes to cathedral clocks.

The book *Sir Albert Richardson 1880 – 1964* was published by the Royal Institute of British Architects to accompany a small exhibition of Richardson's work as the last event at their drawings collection gallery at Portman Square. The Institute has now passed its amazing collection of architects' drawings to the Victoria and Albert Museum for safe keeping. However, in spite of receiving the Institute's highest honour, the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture, in 1947, Richardson was not an Institute man, and it is not surprising that most of his drawings have been deposited, fortunately as it has transpired, by his family at the Bedfordshire County Record Office near to his home at Ampthill.

The three main divisions of the book reflect the principal themes of Richardson's career. Professor Wilton-Ely demonstrates the real depth of Richardson's knowledge of classical architecture, and how over fifty years of writing, lectures and public statements, he never ceased to propound the fundamental principles and humanity of the style. Central to this was his career as a teacher, which started in 1898 and culminated in 1919, when he was appointed Professor of Architecture at University College, London, a post which he held for nearly thirty years. His flamboyant lecturing style was both amusing and immensely stimulating, as was his writing, and eight pages towards the end of the book contain an impressive list of his publications, which includes fourteen books and numerous articles.

Simon Houfe charts his grandfather's quest for the beautiful surroundings to provide both inspiration for his work and considerable personal pleasure. Richardson was not interested in the shoddy, but was discriminating in his collecting, which ranged from fine works of art to well-made objects from the everyday life of Georgian England. After a half-hearted attempt to move to the Red House in Wendover, he acquired the beautiful Avenue House in Ampthill in 1919, where he stayed for the rest of his life, during which time he filled it with fine examples of Georgian taste.

The last and longest portion of the book is a critical study of Richardson's architecture by the historian of twentieth-century architecture, Dr Alan Powers. Although Richardson was always faithful to the fundamentals of classical architecture, his works covered a wide spectrum from his delightful addition to Trinity House on Tower Hill in 1950 to the magisterial *Financial Times* building of 1955 in Cannon Street. But even here he could not resist the temptation to make the building pink to match the famous colour of the newspaper. He was not afraid to use new techniques and materials where appropriate, and to design his buildings to suit the modern needs of his present-day clients. Another list at the end of the book is a catalogue of Richardson's architectural work, including his houses at Wendover. Unfortunately the various designs that he produced for an abortive village hall, or town hall, as he calls it, at Wendover are not mentioned, as these, coupled with his houses there, are an example in Buckinghamshire of the range of his work over the greater part of his career.

The numerous illustrations are well related to the text, although it is a pity that not more of Richardson's own delightful sketches were used. The cover illustration is a drawing by the professional perspectivist, J. D. M. Harvey, of

Richardson's now demolished Leith House in the City. This has been cropped, presumably to fit the proportions of the cover, but in doing so a characteristic ornamental feature which Richardson used to terminate the long façade of the building has disappeared.

This book is, nevertheless, an excellent start to the rehabilitation of an important figure in twentieth-century architecture. The lists of his buildings and writing are particularly useful.

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