

## Reviews

ROMAN SILCHESTER, the archæology of a Romano-British Town by G. C. Boon, B.A., F.S.A. Max Parrish, London. 25/-. 1957.

Our Society has had the benefit of several reports from Mr. Boon on his work at Calleva as well as conducted tours of the investigations in progress. Now we have his thoughts and conclusions to date in book form with a foreword by His Grace the Duke of Wellington and an introduction by Mrs. M. Aylwyn Cotton. Mr. Boon like the most successful earlier accounts of work on this Roman town is highly personal. We have the brief memoranda of Hearne and Stukeley, Stair with Collet (not so well known) and the beautifully illustrated diaries of the Rev. J. G. Joyce, also the many learned theories of the late J. B. P. Karlslake. The Antiquaries excavations directed by W. H. St. John Hope, G. E. Fox and Mill Stephenson have not this element in their Reports, excellent and indispensable as they are. Mr. Boon has appeared as the dedicated expert living on the site for much of his stay in this district when not engaged at his professional duties in Reading Museum. He has produced a very readable book embodying the best that has gone before, and by his own efforts he has solved problems to which others had devoted a lifetime of theory. At the same time Mr. Boon is cautious; he is still not quite sure if he has found the Belgic oppidum, but he has amplified the story with excavation combined with careful ground survey. His digging has never had the spectacular appeal of the huge foundations like those of Joyce or the Antiquaries, but in spite of their limited extent, they have all produced very important new information. Of special interest is the attention given to the long occupation of the site and the author's attempt to sub-divide it into "old", "middle" and "new" towns. With this point in view, Mr. Boon has produced a new edition of the town plan which with a sketch-map of the defences and main roads, throws much light on this problem. Many of the more important public buildings and houses are illustrated by the reproduction of earlier plans supplemented by excellent three-dimensional reconstructed drawings. In his description of these, Mr. Boon has shown the extent of his imagination. We can remark for instance on his description of the Basilica or town hall, a building much larger than the Guildhall of London with its roof, 70 feet above the ground from which on a clear day the hills of the Thames Valley (9 miles across the woodlands to the north) might be glimpsed. Like a view from the roof of St. George's Chapel, only appreciated by the few who have made the climb. To the Public Baths Mr. Boon adds Seneca's description of the continual uproar coming from the building, so like that of today from the local Baths on a Sunday morning! Other sounds too are not missed, all-in wrestling in Reading Town Hall is likened to noises from the amphitheatre on a public holiday. The Temples, houses, homes, shops and other economic life all have their chapters, illustrated with excellent drawings of many well known pieces in the Silchester collection, drawn by Mr. Gwatkin. There are old and new photographs of the excavations and more specialized objects well spaced throughout the book, but perhaps we might have had a few more reproductions of pavement designs although none of these had the interest of Bignor or Lower Ham. A final chapter gives a re-survey of roads and transport and on one particular here we may disagree with the suggested course of the little-known Calleva-St. Albans highway. This Mr. Boon would like to take over the Thames at Cookham-Hedsor where the pile-dwelling at the Wharf is suggested as a Roman bridge. Our members the late H. E. Bannard and F. J. Bloomfield gave much thought to the course of this road, Bannard taking it over the river near Taplow Mills (B.A.S.J. Vol. 35, p. 66) and Mr. Seaby in his map (B.A.S.J. Vol. 36, p. 34) at Maidenhead. Bloomfield always inclined towards the ancient crossing at Cookham where there is still a ferry—"My Lady Ferry" at a spot known as "The Springs". Any of these routes avoid the impossible course over marshy ground at Cookham and the difficulties on the Bucks bank at Hedsor. One cannot read the book without using the many well documented footnotes, but these are tucked away at the end of the volume in such a way as to thoroughly bemuse and lose the reader's patience, especially if he reads in bed!

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THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR CASTLE. Edited by John Neale Dalton, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., LL.D., F.S.A., with a Preface and introduction by Maurice F. Bond, O.B.E., M.A., F.S.A., Hon. Custodian of the Muniments, St George's Chapel. 629 pp + 3 plates. Published for the Dean & Canons of St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle by Oxley & Son (Windsor) Ltd. 4 High St. Windsor. 1957. £4. 4.

The publication of Canon Dalton's calendar of documents preserved in the aerary at St George's Chapel has presented a great work of reference for students of all classes of English medieval history. It was well known that for 17 years the late Canon worked on the list of the huge body of material and the catalogue running into more than 450 quarto pages was printed off in 1908 by the Aberdeen University Press. The unbound fly sheets had to put be on one side until now, when through the energy of Mr. Bond they have been bound into one volume with a 113-page Index compiled by Mr. A. W. Mabbs of the Public Record Office. Some of us had the opportunity of seeing the late Canon Ollard working on the St George's material, but it is to Mr. Bond that the variety and extent of the documents has become more widely known and appreciated. Several have, with permission of the Dean and Canons, been on exhibition in Windsor Guildhall since 1951.

The manuscripts cover the whole history of the foundation of St George's by Letters Patent dated August 6, 1384, down to modern repairs to the fabric, with registers. Chapter correspondence, letters, petitions and memoranda relating to the Military Knights.

In his introduction, Mr. Bond explains how the College is administered, what records there are of the Collegiate officers and how their duties have changed through the centuries. The Dean is *Register* of the Order of the Garter, which includes responsibility for the main Garter records as well as the interesting wooden screen in the Deanery with the arms of all the knights from the time of James I emblazoned on it. The connexion between the College and the Order of the Garter is most difficult to define. The Order is nowhere mentioned in the foundation of the College which throughout the 6 centuries of its life has been quite independent.

There are so many branches of historical study covered in the list that only a few can be mentioned in a brief review. The chief interest will perhaps be focussed on the mass of material dealing with the past and present properties of the College. This includes Papal "Bulls", Royal Charters and grants of liberty, all still housed in the original wooden press made for them in 1422.

Many Berkshire properties and personages appear. There is much about the Newbury region, where St George's acquired the Priory of Sandleford. John Wynchecomb senior with his son appears on a bond for £20, 8 Aug. 1519, one of the few signatures of this great Berkshire character known. But many of the records are much earlier. In 1160 there was a grant by William de Fécamp of the Church of St John the Baptist Sandleford and of land at East Woodhay. In the next century there are grants at West Ilsley and at Aldworth where there is reference to the De la Beche family. Poughley Priory comes into the story and the Prior of Bisham, bringing in land at Maidenhead, 29 Sept. 1433. This latter document was witnessed by Wm. Blakamour, a name still surviving at Maidenhead where there is a Blackamoor Lane. Sutton Courtenay church was appropriated to St George's in 1403 and later we find the chapel of Appleford also appropriated. Lockinge, Wantage, East Hendred, Lambourn, the Letcombes and many other Berkshire places appear frequently, while the Abbots of Reading and Abingdon make their claims to various properties and tithes. As early as the time of King Stephen Reading Abbey had acquired certain low-lying lands at Windsor known as Underore. In June 1330 some of this property was granted to Edmund son of Gilbert the Baker of Windsor. It changed hands again in

1419 and 1462. In 1468 it became connected with a house in Windsor High St. opposite the parish church also "in fee of the Abbot of Reading". But the list is almost inexhaustible and can be consulted at will by using the index which lists all proper names as well as subjects. The book is well produced and easy to consult. In addition to the manuscripts listed by Canon Dalton there is an addenda of other records added to the aery, manuscripts dating mainly from 1800 to 1950. Many of these have been acquired by chance purchase such as the small volume of MS, letters and accounts relating to the Poor Knights endorsed "Phillips MS. 25942" and noted as "bought June 1937 from Messrs. Colbeck Radford of London for the Royal Library. Transferred to the Archives of the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, January 1940".

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**THE BAPTISM, MARRIAGE AND BURIAL REGISTERS OF ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.** Edited by Edmund H. Fellowes, C.H., M.V.O., M.A., Mus.Doc. and Elizabeth R. Poyser, M.A. with a Preface by Maurice F. Bond, O.B.E., M.A., F.S.A. Printed and Published for the Dean and Canons of St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle by Oxley & Son (Windsor) Ltd. 4 High St. Windsor. 1957. £1. 1.

Mr Bond in his Preface to this volume, one of the series of Historical Monographs on St George's Chapel, gives a brief outline on how the publications began and reminds us that our former Honorary Member, the late Dr E. H. Fellowes had a special interest in genealogical studies. Thus it was he who undertook the publication of the Registers, unfortunately at the close of his long and active life, so that he did not live to see the book in print. Dr Fellowes had compiled an introduction to the work, and this tells us that the Registers are of unique interest, comparable only with those at Westminster Abbey. 11 Sovereigns have now been buried at Windsor and the Marriage Register contains a number of Royal and other autographs. The earliest entries date from 1609, but regular records do not commence before 1625. The Baptismal Register is mainly of domestic interest being largely of children born in the Castle to organists, military knights, lay clerks and vergers. Others include children of those whose callings were associated with the Castle or Royal Household.

The Marriage section commences in 1627. The Chapel attained great popularity for weddings in the 50 years following the Restoration. Between 1684 and 1705 over 700 marriages were solemnized. Then the flow ceased and after 1753 apart from Royal ceremonies, marriages became rare events. Burials form a large section, apart from the Royal tombs, many of which are too early in date to come into the record, the interest is domestic. Many military knights and lay clerks lie in the chapel and its precincts, but most of the clergy were buried elsewhere. This is not surprising for most of the appointed clergy, like Dr Fellowes himself, had family connexions with other parts of the country. Miss Poyser has completed Dr Fellowes' intentions with great care and accuracy. The registers have been reproduced in full with all the lists of names associated with Royal marriages. These are important for without them in the course of time it might become difficult to identify several of the signatories. There are four appendices and a 44-page Index of persons and places.

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