# REVIEWS

WINDSOR CASTLE. *By* OLWEN HEDLEY, *240 pages, 19 illustrations and 6 plans. Published by Robert Hale, London, 1967. £1 15s.*

Miss Hedley has produced a work which, in a very readable form, gives the complete story of the Castle from its beginning to the present day. In her studies of the development of the building she had the great advantage of living for some years in one of the most ancient parts of the fabric and her daily contact with the Royal apartments gave her an insight which few other writers can have enjoyed. In addition to this naturally acquired expertise, Miss Hedley has studied the extensive literature connected with the place including the writings of many lesser personalities associated with Windsor and the Court through the centuries and these sources add much to the picture of life in and around the Castle, especially from the 17th century onwards.

The origins and development of Windsor Castle are still obscure,* there is no evidence of occupation on the great chalk hill or indeed in New Windsor before 1070. There are traces of very early settlement with perhaps earthworks on the adjacent St. Leonard's Hill to the west, that site being chosen for its command of the forest area, but as there was no easy Thames crossing, New Windsor was perferred by the Normans for there was already a ford over the river at or near the present Windsor bridge, and another crossing at Datchet, both commanded by the Castle on the chalk hill. Weapons of flint, bronze and Iron Age have been dredged from the Thames in quantity in the vicinity whereas evidence of early land occupation except on St. Leonard's Hill and Old Windsor (including Bishopsgate) is extremely scanty. The half dozen Roman coins found in New Windsor during the past 20 years is almost negative evidence of that period and the abundant Saxon pottery and other finds all come from Old Windsor. Archaeological evidence of early medieval date too is lacking from the Castle site and indeed from New Windsor itself, the reviewer's investigations of many building sites and street excavations over the years have produced very little in the way of early pottery or other finds It is unfortunate that there was no observer to watch and record the 19th century alterations to the Castle, for doubtless much evidence could have been derived from these works. There has been little opportunity to do this since until the recent Ministry of Works restorations of the range of early buildings north of St. George's Chapel. These have been shown as Royal apartments up to the time of King Henry III, and we would therefore like to know more about the early occupation of the buildings in the Upper Ward. Miss Hedley includes these recent discoveries and gives an excellent account with references to the building periods with the foundation of the Order of the Garter and the building of St. George's Chapel. There is a chapter on Shakespeare's Windsor and the well documented developments during the Stuart period, but it is from the time of William and Mary that the Author brings the buildings to life. During the first 40 years of the Hanoverian dynasty, Royalty seldom came to the Castle, but no traveller of consequence failed to visit the Royal palace and its lack of majesty was often commented upon. Regeneration came in 1761 when the new Queen Charlotte 'from the first moment she saw the place, expressed a desire to reside there'. The buildings in the Upper Ward were almost uninhabitable and the Queen's Lodge

*The Royal Archaeological Institute has recently inaugurated a research programme into the origins of the castle in England. There is a useful paper by the late Dr John E. Morris on *Saxon Burghs & Norman Castles* in Volume 31 of our Journal (1927). Dr Morris pointed out from the Burghal Hideage that at Windsor (i.e. Old Windsor) the word *burgus* is not used.

(now vanished) was built for her, destroying some of the original Castle defences on the south side. 'The magic of Georgian occasions' shines out in many letters and diaries, reference being made to Fanny Burney, Mrs Papendiek, Dorothy Wordsworth, Charles Knight and many others. George IV's expensive renovations are described in detail, then comes intimate chapters on Queen Victoria and her long residences in the Castle both during her married life and widowhood. The narrative is brought up to the present day with stories from the times of George VI and our present Queen. There are excellent references to all sources and an index which is invaluable. The illustrations have been carefully chosen, a difficult task for so many have been reproduced in other works. It would have been useful if there had been a fresh reproduction of the sketch of the Castle taken from Eton in 1450 in Higden's Polychronicon in Eton College Library. This shows the whole north front before St. George's Chapel was built, the only readily available reproduction being in St. John Hope's *Windsor Castle* (1913). F.M.U.

HISTORY IN ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR CASTLE, *by* RENA GARDINER *and* MAURICE BOND. *Drawn, printed and produced for the Dean and Canons of Windsor by Rena Gardiner at the Workshop Press, The Thatch Cottage, Tarrant Monkton, Blandford Forum, Dorset,* 1966, *price* 3*s.* 6*d.*

This is a new venture for a booklet of coloured illustrations with some 50 original lithographs reproduced direct from aluminium plates. There are imaginative drawings of the earliest chapel, the erection of the existing building with many of the historical events connected with the Chapel and Castle. We have seen nothing quite like this anywhere previously and it deserves the widest circulation with a special appeal to school children. The brief descriptions of the events by our member Mr Bond adds to the value of the work, his accounts like those of the completion in 1249 of the first Chapel, the pilgrimages to the tomb of Henry VI, the burial of Jane Seymour and Samuel Pepys at Mattins, Feb. 26, 1666 are noteworthy.

THE ROMANCE OF ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR CASTLE, *by* HARRY BLACKBURNE, *late Canon of Windsor and* MAURICE BOND, O.B.E., F.S.A. *7th Edition (revised); Oxley and Son (Windsor) Ltd,* 1968, 86 *pages with a Plan and many illustrations. Price* 2*s.* 6*d. To be obtained from the Hon. Sec. The Friends of St. George's, The Curfew Tower, Windsor Castle.*

This is a new and completely revised edition of the well known handbook which has sold many tens of thousand copies to Windsor Castle visitors. Mr Bond is to be congratulated in continuing the work in a new format with many fresh illustrations of a very high quality. There is no other readily available work describing the Chapel with its monuments and historical associations in such a succinct manner and it should be read and possessed by everyone interested in the Royal County's most noble building. The work is divided into 13 chapters and includes a brief account of the recent discoveries made during the establishment of St. George's House, there is also a very complete bibliography. F.M.U.

THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR, *by* SHELAGH BOND, M.A., F.R. HIST. S. *Pitkin Pictorials Ltd.,* 11 *Wyfold Road, London, SW6. Price* 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR, *by* SHELAGH BOND, M.A., F.R. HIST. S. *Pitkin Pictorials Ltd.,* 11 *Wyfold Road, London, SW6. Price* 2*s.* 6*d.*

These two new booklets in the Pitkin Pictorial range will become very popular productions. The one on the Royal Borough is an entirely new venture, both are full of recently taken photographs, some in colour. Windsor is

visited by many thousands every year and souvenirs of this quality have been required for a long time. Mrs Bond is well known for the books she has produced in the historical monograph series of St. George's Chapel as well as the papers written for our Journal. Her local knowledge and scholarship are used most profitably in these booklets. F.M.U.

*Regional Archaeologies:* WESSEX, *by* P. J. FOWLER, *Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 48 Charles Street, Mayfair, W1. 88 pages, 45 illustrations, 1967. Price 16s.*

There have been a number of expensive books published in recent years describing the antiquities of southern England, meanwhile research and excavation have continued rapidly with results that render obsolete many of the theories printed. It is therefore useful to find a modest work at a moderate price which is very sound in its background and at the same time as up to date as conditions allow. It includes a list of sites in four counties worth visiting, museums, maps, a bibliography and a good index. The author is a tutor in prehistory and archaeology in the University of Bristol Department of extra-mural studies and he has an intimate knowledge of the field monuments in Dorset and Wiltshire as well as parts of west Hampshire and west Berkshire. Wessex is a convenient term for central southern England yet it is not too sharply demarcated, the popularity of the name being derived largely from Thomas Hardy. The area has never formed one political unit, but geographically it is dominated by chalk uplands and thus its development through the ages has been uniform to a large extent, Mr Fowler discusses occupation from Paleolithic to Roman times and remarks that the chalklands appear devoid of Mesolithic sites due possibly to subsequent erosion. Reference is made to Mr Wymer's important Thatcham excavations. Little is known yet of Neolithic settlements, none in Wessex have produced evidence of the types of buildings. Flint mining too in the region has not been noticed on any scale, this side of Neolithic economy requiring further study. We believe there are sites in Berkshire which would repay investigation. There are good chapters on everyday life in the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, the theories of the various invasions are dealt with with clear drawings of pottery and weapons. In the later period, the region does not seem to have been directly affected by more invasions until the coming of the Belgae to the Selsey area in the 1st century B.C. Some 150 hill-forts have been identified and space is given to details of their construction and distribution, as well as early field-systems and settlements generally. The final chapter on the Roman occupation stresses the importance and rapidity in which the road system was constructed, with the distribution of towns, villas and settlements. The illustrations include maps and plans as well as air-photos, the book can be recommended as a well printed and easily read archaeological introduction to the region. F.M.U.

THE GENUINE ASSER. *By* DOROTHY WHITELOCK. *(The Stanton Lecture, 1967: University of Reading, 1968) 21 pp. 7s. 6d.*

Reading University is to be congratulated on having founded an annual lecture in memory of Sir Frank Stenton, and on having invited Professor Dorothy Whitelock to deliver the first one in 1967. The subject that she chose was one of the most fascinating problems in Anglo-Saxon history, the genuineness of *Asser's Life of King Alfred.* Was that work really written (as it claims) in 893 by Asser the 'mass-priest' of King Alfred, who came to his court from Wales *c.* 884 and was subsequently appointed to the see of Sherborne? The question has been debated for more than a hundred years, and Professor Whitelock's lecture is in reply to the views expressed by Professor V. H. Galbraith in 1962. In Galbraith's view the life is a 'forgery'—that is to say, it was not composed by Asser in the ninth century, but by someone with access to genuine materials in the eleventh century; and the candidate he tentatively puts forward is

Leofric Bishop of Exeter (1046–72). The first objection to Galbraith's theory was that the manuscript (which was destroyed in the Cottonian fire of 1731) had been dated by Wanley as '1000 or 1001', and that several modern palaeographers who have studied 'the poorly drawn facsimile' of the first page have agreed with this verdict. Professor Whitelock is wise not to rely too heavily on this objection, for it is notoriously difficult to ascribe precise dates to isolated manuscripts on the evidence of their handwriting alone. The arguments which she deploys are much more widely based and depend upon a formidable range of learning. It would be pointless to rehearse them in detail; she herself has expressed them as concisely and lucidly as possible in a mere 21 pages. But it may be in order to make one general observation.

To the non-Anglo-Saxonist, the principal obstacle to the study of the *Life* lies in the difficulty of distinguishing between its various elements. On the one hand there is the framework which is universally recognized as a translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. On the other hand there are the 'good stories' about Alfred and the accounts of his illnesses which are universally recognized as the work of the 'genuine' or 'ungenuine' Asser. In between there is a certain amount of material which could *either* have been translated from the Chronicle (for the version which 'Asser' used is otherwise unknown), *or* have been composed by 'Asser'. This doubtful terrain will have to be mapped before any further progress can be made, and that means a new critical edition of the text. (In the present lecture, as also in her article in the re-issue of Stevenson's edition, Miss Whitelock makes important textual criticisms which suggest that she may well be preparing an edition of the sort that is needed.) As things stand, Miss Whitelock's most impressive arguments for a ninth century date depend on passages which are, or well might be, translations from the Chronicle; Galbraith's are based mainly on those which are undisputably 'Asser'. But there are two notable exceptions where the scholars cross into each other's territory. Miss Whitelock defends the dedication by pointing out that the title given to King Alfred (*rex Anglsaxonum*) is in accordance with eighth-and-ninth-century Frankish usage—though even assuming that the historic Asser had spent a long time in *Francia*, it might still have been expected that he would have learnt Alfred's correct title while in residence at his court. Galbraith, on the other hand, points to the significance of the mistake which 'Asser' made in translating the Chronicle's annal for 886. The Chronicle stated that those who submitted to Alfred in that year were all the English except (*buton*) those who were in captivity to the Danes. 'Asser' makes this out to be 'all the Angles and Saxons who had formerly been dispersed or in captivity to the Danes', thus including, instead of excluding, the Northumbrians, the eastern Mercians, and the East Anglians. How could he have made such a mistake if he were actually at King Alfred's court at the time? R.H.C.D.