REVIEWS

Accounts of the Roberts Family of Boarzell, Sussex, c. 1568–1582. (Ed.) Robert Tittler $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pp. xxviii + 181. Sussex Record Society, Lewes, 1979. £6.75.

It is always useful to add to the corpus of available printed sources for the economic and social history of an earlier age and Professor Tittler has produced a well introduced volume of accounts of equal significance for Kent and Sussex to which there are not only adequate indexes to persons, places and subjects but also a most useful glossary. As always with the Sussex Record Society the volume is well produced and the price by no means unreasonable for a hard-backed volume at the present time.

Boarzell in Ticehurst was added to the Roberts estates as early as 1459 and became the residence of the junior branch of a family best known for its association with Glassenbury, but the properties associated with Boarzell included an estate at Snave so that these records have a direct, as well as an indirect, link with Kent. In any event any estate on the border area between Tunbridge Wells and Rye is bound to reflect conditions on both sides of the county boundary and to be equally valid as evidence for either.

On the other hand, in two ways this book presents problems. In the first instance here are two early and detailed volumes of accounts which nevertheless are only partially dated and are inevitably very repetitive. Repeatedly the editor has to admit that statistical evidence is destroyed by the lack of dating and the impossibility of quantifying the material surviving. That there is a mass of important evidence is not denied, but no one could read these accounts at a sitting – they form a book of reference not of reading – and yet because of the missing elements the value of these entries is far less complete than might have been wished. One has to query therefore the validity of the exercise. Professor Tittler has written a good introduction, but it amounts to relatively little new because the material used is so intransigent.

In the second place one must question editorial method. The freedom of the editor to determine how far to modify the original text or to modernize archaic usages is admitted; he must determine what is

desirable, but none the less the validity of producing what is virtually a transcript of a late sixteenth century document is to be questioned. If this added to our knowledge of the English of the day or if it represented such special idiosyncrasy as to throw light on the personality of the author it would be justifiable, but in a book of accounts it is difficult to feel that either cause is served. The use of the abbreviation 'It' for 'Item' and the failure to standardize capitals can simply create irritation and a resistance in the reader unless he can concede a good reason for so doing. It seems strange that when good and relatively simple standards for editing have been established by the British Records Association and by O.U.P. for many years this almost naive belief in the value of a transcript should prevail. With middle English it would be essential, but not in this context, although one fully acknowledges the problems of standardization.

Nevertheless there is much of value; this book adds to our sum total of readily available information of Wealden farming in the reign of Elizabeth I and to that end it will be used to illustrate developments and traditions for the local history of that area. It is probable that this element is more important than the evidence for household expenses, which would seem far less uncommon in Kent, certainly, than Professor Tittler would have us believe. One only wishes that the source had proved more amenable to the intentions of the editor and therefore provided still more insight into the life and work of a gentle family of the period.

F. HULL

The History of Danson. By Ruth Hutcherson. 20 × 15 cm. Pp. 51 with numerous illustrations. Privately published, 1979.

It is a strange irony that although William Camden, the famous antiquary, left his manorial interest in Bexley in 1623 to endow a chair of history in Oxford University, no-one has so far written a complete history of Bexley itself – once a corner of Kent but now absorbed into the administrative area of Greater London. In recent years, however, there have been several minor publications dealing with particular features of the place, this privately published booklet by Mrs. Hutcherson being the latest addition.

Danson Park is well known today as a public open space containing a large lake used for boating and fishing. Since 1924, it has been owned by the local authority, but before that the history of the estate can be traced back to the reign of John when Walter of *Densynton* held land here in the archbishop's manor of Bexley. Mrs. Hutcherson is a native

of Bexley and has devoted much time and labour to researching its history, so that this booklet is a mine of interesting and authoritative information concerning that part of it known variously in times past as Densington or Danson. Matthew Parker, son of the Elizabethan archbishop, possessed it for a while, and in the middle of the eighteenth century it was transformed into an elegant country seat by Sir John Boyd who employed Sir Robert Taylor to build the Palladian Mansion, now unhappily in a very dilapidated condition despite its Grade I listing. The author carefully avoids repeating the popular belief that laying out the Park was entirely the work of Capability Brown although his influence in the design is apparent. A certain Fean Garwood who died in 1779 is described on his tombstone in Bexley churchyard as 'Late Gardener to Sir John Boyd', and to him must have fallen the task of carrying out the designs which transformed this area of woods and farmland into a suitable setting for the gentleman's seat of 'Danson Hill'. To embellish it Sir William Chambers designed a delightful summerhouse in the form of a Doric temple, standing at the end of the lake until 1961 when Bexley Council pulled it down to avoid the expense of repairing it. Happily, the remains were salvaged by Sir David Bowes-Lyon and it now stands rebuilt at St. Paul's Walden, Hertfordshire.

Copies of the book may be obtained from the author at 45 Valentine Avenue, Bexley, price 80p including postage.

P. J. TESTER

The Coming of Rome. By John Wacher. 24 × 16 cm. Pp. xiv + 193, 11 maps, 3 figs. and 100 pls. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1979. £7.50.

The third volume of the series *Britain before the Conquest* in 1066, John Wacher's *The Coming of Rome* is a very welcome addition to the literature of Roman Britain to which the author has already contributed many papers and books. It seems to be addressed to readers likely to be attracted to an account of Roman Britain without needing to know the published evidence supporting statements made in this book, hence the total absence of references, except in Chapters 6 and 7 where sources are painstakingly given. The danger is that, for all Wacher's care to give alternative views on matters of controversy, the non-specialist reader may well come to consider the author's own interpretation of the evidence as generally accepted by specialists; and, once such a view has been hallowed in print, it is often very difficult to persuade the general reader that it is only one possible interpretation.

Moreover, the artificial division of Roman Britain into two volumes (*Later Roman Britain* is yet to come), however desirable from the publishers' point of view, has given this book a feeling of suspended sentence, clearly the best that Wacher's brief could ensure, and the reader is seldom sure where the chronological dividing line lies as the material is often garnered from contexts that could be considered 'later'. What this book aims at is made clear only in the concluding chapter, '*something* (my italics) of the people who lived and worked in Roman Britain, their way of life and the benefits and the advantages which accrued to them from the Roman occupation' (p. 179).

Within this limited scope, Wacher has written a vivid account of his subject in a lucid style that commends itself to the reader; he has both offered his own views and avoided areas where he, presumably, felt no strong urge to enter the lists. The survey of the century between Caesar and the Claudian invasion in the first three chapters follows generally accepted lines, though Wacher's unorthodox insistence on the Cantii (Maps 1, 3, 5 and elsewhere in the text) remains without explanation.

The only source for the name Cantii is Ptolemy who, apparently unaware of the name of the newly created confederation of anonymous tribes into a *civitas,* seems to have coined it in preference to Caesar's well-known circumlocution. It is curious that, whilst accepting that *civitates* were founded in the south-east soon after the invasion (p. 72 ff.), Wacher chooses to ignore the name of the *civitas* (Cantiaci) as clearly expressed in that of its capital; are we to believe that the Cantii of Ptolemy later became the Cantiaci of the Ravennas? What is the need or the evidence for such a change?

There follows (Chapters 4 and 5) an account of the invasion and annexation of most of Britain into the Roman world, with sections devoted to military strategy and expedience and civilian development. In the former, Wacher outlines the sequence of events culminating in the consolidation of the province behind the line of Hadrian's Wall; here, the author proposes a partial re-appraisal of the purpose of that frontier work (pp. 62–3), which may not command universal acceptance amongst specialists. Dealing with the evolution of lowland Britain into a romanized province, Wacher's views are both stimulating and, understandably, selective. The towns, considered by the author of *The Towns of Roman Britain* straight-jacketed by the confines of this book, are dealt with rather synoptically: Canterbury appears misplaced beyond the junction of the Richborough and Dover roads; Maidstone and Hastings, for which there is no secure evidence as towns, are retained, Rochester and Crayford are omitted (Map 11). Turning to the countryside, major roads (e.g. the Rochester-Hastings road) are not shown whereas there is a spur off Watling Street from near the presumed site of Durolevum towards the Thames estuary,

which is at best debatable. (Map 11). Wacher accepts without question the still prevailing view that Canterbury prevented the development of villas in its area and contrasts it with Cirencester (p. 79); however, it has always been at least possible that lack of modern excavation in the Stour valley may be responsible for this apparent anomaly when other Kent river valleys are considered, and work in recent years (in fairness to the author, it must be added that much of this work is not yet published) indicates that the Stour valley may have in fact a development analogous to that of the Medway and Darent valleys. Certainly, in the case of the Eccles villa, Adminius would fit my suggestion of a philo-Roman aristocrat first developing the site, but Wacher's suggestion carries less conviction than the association of Cogidubnus with Fishbourne in that it is not certainly known that Adminius 'is more than likely' to have 'returned to Britain in the wake of the Roman army' (p. 96); on the other hand, it is virtually certain that the Eccles landowner derived his wealth, at least in part, from the pottery made on the estate and very probably supplied to the army, an occupation not readily associated with a princeling. However, it must also be stressed that, apart from matters of detail, Wacher's synthesis of the early development of town and country achieves convincingly its limited objective.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the people of Roman Britain, the administrators, whether military or civilian, and the *hoi polloi,* both native and immigrant, and here Wacher relies of necessity on epigraphic evidence ranging from inscriptions to graffiti; but such is the nature of this class of archaeological material that, notwithstanding Wacher's detailed documentation, the reader becomes aware of two-dimensional people only, as it were – a lot of their functions and occupations, not enough of the people themselves, so much so that they only become human beings through imaginative reconstructions (Pl. 37). In his conclusion, Wacher has no doubt that 'Rome could not do without Britain' (p. 181); how immensely more Britain benefited from Rome becomes only too clear to the general reader through the author's concise narrative.

This volume is excellently illustrated by many photographs, though it is a pity that they vary so much in contrast that some (e.g. Pls. 3, 4 and 29) are not very informative; there are hardly any printer's errors, a few concerning the rendering of classical words (e.g. Pl. 57). A list of sites open to the public, suggestions for further reading and an adequate index complete this work. All in all, and to paraphrase John Wacher, the general reader cannot do without *The Coming of Rome,* for he will learn much more from its study than the mere 'something' claimed for it.

A. P. DETSICAS

Peckham Pupils. By Margaret Lawrence. 30 × 21 cm. Pp. 56, with 10 photographs and 5 other illustrations. Published by the Kent County Council, 1979. Price £2.

East Peckham, on the banks of the Medway in the weald of Kent, is always associated in the mind with the growing of hops, and until lately it was the Mecca of thousands of Cockneys who came each autumn for the 'hopping', creating welcome business for the local tradesmen. There was also extensive fruit-growing in the area and one can well imagine how at the appropriate seasons many of the local youngsters who should have been assimilating the rudiments of education would escape into the fields and orchards where nimble fingers could be employed to more immediate and material profit. Nevertheless, provision for their education has been made ever since 1800 when Edward Towner was employed for 'schooling' the workhouse children.

Our Member and Local Secretary, Mrs. Lawrence, is the wife of the Headmaster of the village Primary School and is therefore able to make illuminating comparison between the schooling of East Peckham children today with what was administered to them in times past. Her painstaking researches have enabled her to present a most interesting account of school life during the past two centuries. At first the clues are few but the lucky discovery of a quantity of abandoned documents in a stable has provided more ample material for the later period. The story of the children is at the same time a commentary on their social background. Although the fertility of the soil provided prosperity for the farmers, poverty among the labourers was not infrequent so that on two recorded occasions the vicar provided bread and cheese for the children in severe weather and some pupils left school early in order to get a distribution of free soup. Several photographs of children in past times, ranged in rows against the background of the school building under the stern eye of the teacher, reveal more clearly than words the nature of the regime under which they were taught.

Books on educational history are often dull reading, but Mrs. Lawrence treats her subject in a humane and sympathetic manner which holds our attention throughout her narrative. Not least of the virtues of her book is the inclusion of a very useful list of references with a bibliography and index. Her researches have provided a valuable contribution to the history of education in this county.

P. J. TESTER

Limeburning and the Amberley Chalk Pits: a History. 30 × 21 cm. Pp. 44, 45 figs. Published by the West Sussex County Council, County Hall, Chichester, 1979 (n.p.).

The School in an Orchard: Davington, 1882–1978. By Robert D. Hackford. 25·5 × 20 cm. Pp. xii + 34, 2 maps, 2 plans, 1 fig. Published by the Faversham Society (Faversham Papers, no. 16), 1979. 45p (65p post-paid from the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Faversham).

Kent has no outstanding record for dealing with industrial archaeology. For instance, little has been done to elucidate the history, distribution and technology of the lime-burning kilns on the chalk and ragstone of the county. There is not a dearth of material. Within a quarter of a mile from where I sit writing is a bottle kiln built into the chalk of Hollingbourne Hill and still in good condition. But unpublished!

Our Sussex neighbours have performed a service for a Kent industrial archaeologist wishing to follow their lead for they have dealt faithfully with the history and plans of the complex of kilns and quarries remaining in the chalk near Amberley railway station. They have also rounded off the job by setting up nearby the Chalk Pits Museum with 'the retention of the buildings, materials and general surroundings of the various activities to complement the tools, machines, or products made.'

The Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre at Faversham has added another volume to its impressive list of publications. Books and booklets about school histories are becoming popular, but I doubt whether any are better than Robert Hackford's story of Davington School, a school which has lived in an industrial environment since its foundation. Nearby the scholars could see the Gunpowder Mills (the log-book for 6th April, 1916, notes that 'attendance is very poor this afternoon – 125 out of 160; probably many have gone to the cemetery to view the funerals of the victims of the explosion at the Cotton Powder Works'), the hop-gardens ('72 out of 208 present owing to hop-picking'), the two breweries of Messrs. Fremlin and Shepherd Neame, the Davington Light Railway and barges in the Creek.

The two plans of the School, for 1882 and 1978, reveal an interesting development. The modern hall and kitchen occupy the site where formerly clustered the earth closets for the schoolchildren's use.

L. R. A. GROVE

Chislet and Westbere – Villages of the Stour Lathe. Edited and published by K. H. McIntosh. 21 × 15·5 cm. Pp. 164, with numerous illustrations. 1979.

Coal has given the name of Chislet a more than local reputation, for the colliery established there at the end of World War I has provided a

substantial contribution to the nation's requirements of mineral fuel, with an output in 1936 of 10,000 tons per week. But the story of the locality can be taken back long before, to the remote age when palaeolithic man left his hand-axe on the gravel banks of the Stour to be collected and recorded in the twentieth century by Dr. A. G. Ince to whom Dr. Derek Roe pays fitting tribute in this latest collection of articles and notes published by Miss McIntosh who has already given us *Sturry – The Changing Scene* and *Fordwich – The Lost Port*. This third publication maintains the same high standard, the various contributors being for the most part scholars of established reputation in their own fields. Not only history and archaeology receive attention; there are contributions on geology, entomology and botany, interspersed with snippets such as the indenture of an Elizabethan apprentice and an account of plague and influenza in the seventeenth century.

Upstreet, Hersden, Sturry and Fordwich receive mention and there is a promise of a fourth publication dealing with Hoath and Herne. Admirable sketches are provided by Roger Higham and there are also numerous photographs and a useful index. The whole resembles a well presented scrap-book, without too much regard for strict chronological order, while some of the 'scraps' are unusually weighty and authoritative. Certainly this corner of our county is being well served by these publications and we can look forward with pleasure to a future extension of the series.

Proceeds of the sale go to the churches of Sturry with Fordwich and Westbere with Hersden. Copies can be obtained from the editor at 1 Sturry Hill, Sturry, Canterbury, or The Pilgrims' Bookshop, 29 St. Margaret Street, Canterbury, price £2 including postage.

P. J. TESTER