



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

REVIEWS

Lost Glass from Kent Churches. By C.R. Cuncer. 21.5 × 13.5 cm. Pp. 170, 9 figs., 11 colour pls. *Kent Records*, Volume XXII, Maidstone, 1980.

For the best part of half a century the name of C.R. Cuncer has been synonymous with the study of stained glass in our county. Articles describing glass in Kentish churches began regularly to appear over his signature in *Arch. Cant.* and other publications soon after the Second World War. These encouraged devotees like myself to go around and look at country houses like Chilham, Mereworth, Lullingstone and Cranbrook as well as other places where medieval glass survives. For many years past, his friends and admirers have been hoping for a *magnum opus* from 'Jimmy's' pen, which would record all the stained glass of any antiquity which still survives in the churches of east and west Kent. Now he has produced an unusual volume, not on glass that can still be seen, but on glass that has vanished from earthly sight but of which records still survive; anyone who reads this fascinating book can only feel sad that so much has been lost, some of it comparatively recently.

Here is a survey of glass which could once be seen in more than a hundred buildings in Kent. Much of it survived the iconoclastic excesses of the Reformation period and the Great Rebellion. This is presumably because much of this glass was heraldic in character and so escaped the attention of those vandals who smashed figures of saints and even biblical scenes as being 'emblems of Popery'. Alas, aesthetic indifference and downright neglect have been almost as effective in the destruction of glass as religious bigotry. At the end of the book are eleven colour plates of glass seen, drawn and painted by distinguished antiquaries like Charles Winston and Thomas Fisher, who flourished nearly two centuries ago when much ancient glass could still be seen in both churches and manor houses in Kent. At the end of his introduction, Mr. Cuncer writes encouragingly of his hope that 'the remainder of the hitherto unpublished records [of lost glass] will be integrated with the complete catalogue of surviving glass in the forthcoming Kent volume of *Corpus Vitriarium Medii Aevii*'. So we must wait patiently and hope that the day of publication of that

definitive work may not be too long delayed. In the meantime, this very nicely produced volume serves to whet one's appetite for even better things.

D. INGRAM HILL

Excavation of the Roman and Saxon Site at Orpington. By Susann Palmer. 29.5 × 21 cm. Pp. 67, 8 figs. and 1 pl. London Borough of Bromley, 1984 [£4.00, typed, limp].

Settlement from prehistoric to Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon times on the banks of the river Cray in the vicinity of Orpington has long been known from sporadic finds and, more recently, from the excavations by P.J. Tester in the late 1960s (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiii (1968), 125–50; lxxxiv (1969), 39–78; and lxxxv (1970), 203–4). Mrs. Palmer, curator of the Orpington museum, excavated between 1971 and 1978 areas close to Mr Tester's site, which were not available to him, and the report under review is the detailed publication of this work.

After an introductory section of general information on the site, Mrs. Palmer reports on the periods, mainly Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon, represented on her site. Mesolithic occupation is known only by 'a fairly large scatter of Mesolithic artifacts' (p. 6), such as may be found on other river gravel sites. The few Iron Age sherds cannot by themselves argue for such occupation of the site of any substantial or prolonged nature. Turning to the Romano-British period, which is the main part of this report, the clear evidence from the finds of Mr Tester's work is now fully confirmed by the excavation of a small bath-house very close to the Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

The bath-house consisted of the standard three rooms, but lacked a furnace. Its interpretation is, however, sadly very confused. The walls of the building, at 1½ to 2 ft. thick, are not unusually solid, nor do they suggest 'a very substantial superstructure, probably more than one storey high' (p. 7), which would be unique amongst known Romano-British baths. It is not clear, either, how these walls were rendered, internally or outside, for 'a type of chalky plaster' is the only imprecise mention. Plaster, which is often mentioned, is not particularly impervious, and one wonders whether Mrs. Palmer means *opus signinum* (not *opus* as persistently called). There were no *pilae in situ*, nor any debris from the suspended floor. Tiles were not normally used to waterproof the sides and bottom of a bath (p. 7) and, naturally, none survived in place.

Room 1 was clearly intended to be the *frigidarium* of the unit, probably with a plunge-bath to its south, Rooms 2 and 3, the

tepidarium and *caldarium*, respectively, each with its own plunge-bath; the terms *frigidarium*, *tepidarium* and *caldarium* apply to the entire rooms, not to their plunge-baths only. Clearly as the flues in the partition wall demonstrate, Rooms 2 and 3 were meant to be served by a hypocaust, the heat deriving from a stoke-hole to the east of Room 3; a gap in its eastern wall indicates the intended location of the *prae-furnium* – a typing error would have us believe that ‘*the hypocaust* (my italics) may have been situated somewhere just outside this wall’ (p.10). However, no direct evidence for such a stoke-hole was found, nor any accumulation of ashes and soot. According to the excavator, Room 1 was later than Rooms 2 and 3 because its north wall projects a little beyond that of Rooms 2 and 3, because she detected ‘a fairly clear break’ (p. 10) in the construction of the wall dividing it from Room 2, and because Rooms 2 and 3 had deeper foundations than Room 1. The projecting north wall of Room 1 is no argument for later building as it could merely indicate an intention from the start to build a larger room. The ‘fairly clear break’ (and why ‘fairly’ clear?) need indicate no more than either poor construction (a later room would normally have been well and truly bonded with the existing structure) or a temporary gap in construction, even some subsidence in the unstable ground. The shallower foundations of Room 1 may be explained by the fact that, lacking a hypocaust, this room would have had a comparatively lighter roof of roofing-tiles over a timber-framed truss unlike the heated rooms needing barrel-vaulted and heavier roofs. Yet, the most telling objection to Mrs. Palmer’s interpretation and discussion (p. 25) is that a bath-house must have a cold room *ab initio*. What is reasonably clear from the published evidence is that this bath-house was neither completed nor commissioned. Apart from the significant absence of much of the usual debris (and there is no need to postulate its wholesale removal), ‘the absence of thick charcoal deposits indicates that the building was not destroyed by fire’ (p. 7); indeed, for it was never used! It seems more likely, for reasons that its excavation cannot show, to suppose that this bath-house was abandoned before its completion and its rooms largely used as a dump, as suggested by the finds in their filling. The mind boggles at the mere thought of Romano-British Orpington ladies using the *tepidarium* ‘also’ (p. 9) as a weaving-room; it shows confusion of the function and *modus operandi* of Roman baths.

Cobbling outside the baths and for some distance to the west suggested a courtyard (p. 12), ‘outbuildings’ and other structures (pp. 13–5, 25) whose interpretation is both difficult to follow and to judge, owing to the scale such features are drawn at on Fig. 2; however, it is clear that the unexcavated portion of the baths did not

continue beyond Bellefield Road as no walls were present in the two trenches excavated south-east of the road. The cobbling suggests that, if the bath-house was not built as an 'isolated' baths, as the finds argue, the main house may well lie to its south and west. A large pit in Mr Tester's cemetery is here (p. 14) reinterpreted as a latrine, at some discomfort to its potential users as it lies some 60 ft. beyond the nearest point of the baths.

The Anglo-Saxon period adds 12 definite new burials to the 71 found by Mr Tester and their associated finds as well as some speculation on the likely site of the settlement.

The rest of the report (pp. 31-67) consists of appendices, very uneconomically laid out (e.g. p. 59 consists of seven lines only), detailing the finds of the excavation in far too much detail so far as pottery is concerned. For, the pottery 'is largely unstratified material' (p. 32); its main value, and that of the other finds, is to indicate a dwelling-house in the neighbourhood of the excavation site. Detailed analysis of such unstratified pottery serves little purpose; a list of the wares recovered would have amply sufficed. Latin terms have generally defeated the typist, especially in Appendix 5, with such infelicities as 'SECURITAS REPUBLICAE' (twice), 'CONSECRATTO', 'REPARTIO', and 'Arks' for Arles, not to mention 'Gesterlius of mid-second century', not an enigmatic new emperor but *sestertius*, and 'Valenader'; all these, and many other misprints, should have been picked out on revision.

Obviously, much effort and time have been expended on this excavation by Mrs. Palmer, her helpers and specialist contributors, and they are warmly congratulated for this dedicated work as well as for the discovery of the Romano-British site clearly indicated by Mr Tester's earlier work.

A. P. DETSICAS

In Quest of Hasted. By John Boyle. 25 × 19 cm. Pp. xi + 146, 12 Pls. and 15 figs. Phillimore, 1984 (£12.95, cased).

This is an important book and yet one very difficult to assess. It is not a biography, rather the author has chosen to examine in depth the manner in which Hasted set about his self-imposed task and incidents of his life only appear if relevant to that primary objective.

Nevertheless it is always sad when a figure, traditionally great, is debunked and that, it must be said, is the principal outcome of this study. The summing up on p. 129, that Hasted suffered from 'defects of character which made him on the one hand quarrelsome and

unpredictable and on the other, sly, deceitful and even fraudulent; and thirdly, lack of real aptitude for the task he had undertaken', is as damning as one could wish, yet clear enough from the evidence which Hasted, himself, so obligingly left of his endeavours.

In Mr Boyle's account, 'the historian of Kent' is seen as a 'scissors and paper' compiler; a man who seldom corrected according to advice submitted, yet repeatedly sought that advice; and a man who gave his name to a second edition substantially altered and amended by hands other than his own, but without acknowledgement. Two positive features stand out: one, that the first Folio edition is the essential Hasted and is far more significant than the second Octavo edition, which has so often been accepted as preferable; second, that Hasted had the ability to compile massive and excellent indexes to his work.

In coming to his conclusions the author has used a mass of material at Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and London and has done so to good effect. Unfortunately, what is ostensibly a scholarly study is marred by a certain naivety in that Mr Boyle has chosen to treat his subject almost as a detective story and that his enthusiasm for the task results in elements of gratuitous information, useful, perhaps, to the amateur starting out on his first research project, but irritating to the reader with some experience in historical or biographical study. While the handling of the documentation is generally sound, it is unfortunate that in providing what are called 'Biographies of Correspondents' there is some lack of criticism in determining what is relevant and what is, interesting perhaps, but totally irrelevant to the matter in hand.

It is important that Mr Boyle has provided two appendices, one briefly describing the Hasted MSS. in the British Library, and one regarding Hasted's use of the Public Records, but a third, giving biographical details of those antiquaries referred to in the text is of less significance. There is a satisfactory general index, but the book lacks a bibliography either of the wider range of *Hastediana* or of printed works consulted and this lack is a major fault for others will doubtless wish to follow in Mr Boyle's footsteps and a simple list of sources would have been valuable.

Hasted's work remains as a vast monument to his industry and, regrettably, to his vanity, but, whatever its faults, it is the primary *History of Kent* and will remain such for many years to come. The value of Mr Boyle's *Quest* lies in making us more aware of the faults and weaknesses in that great undertaking, for it was a great concept and, despite those faults, it was completed and may still be used beside the vast amount of additional material now available to the scholar of today. It is well that the follies of 'Mr Cludge', the hack

who rewrote much of the second edition should be uncovered for the monumental scale of the Folio edition remains the nobler however it was physically compiled. The marvel is not that it is flawed, but that it is still an essential tool for the study of Kentish history. By his investigation John Boyle has done Kentish historiography a valuable service and his slim volume should be read and marked by all who would use Hasted's *History* as a primary source for things Kentish. As a book, the *Quest for Hasted* may have its faults, too, but as a statement of a well documented search it cannot be ignored.

FELIX HULL

Leaves from a Life. By the Rev. H. Hugh Gower. 25.5 × 21 cm. Pp. vi + 85, duplicated, typewritten, unillustrated. Published by the Faversham Society, 1985.

Herbert Hugh Gower was born in humble circumstances at Faversham in 1872 and lived and worked there until 1907. As a young man he found employment in various branches of the building industry, but his ambition was to become a Methodist minister. His lack of formal education, however, stood in the way of achieving this ambition. Trade depression in 1907 prompted him to emigrate to Canada, and North America became his home until his death in 1937.

A grand-daughter, Vivienne Gower Mylne, while at the University of Kent at Canterbury came into possession of a collection of family papers including this autobiography now forming the 26th publication of the Faversham society. An editorial note states that over half the contents relate to Faversham; the rest describes the author's career in America. In his mid-thirties he was eventually ordained into the Methodist ministry and in 1933 he came on a return trip to Faversham. The account of this visit is of some interest though less so than the earlier chapters describing conditions of working-class life during his first thirty-five years in east Kent.

One might feel that local interest would have been heightened if details of Gower's life and ministry in America had been summarised while retaining in full the recollections of his native town in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era. Nevertheless, the Faversham Society's decision to publish the whole can be justified on the grounds that it establishes a permanent record of a man of local origin who strove successfully to overcome early disadvantages to achieve a life of service and personal fulfilment.

Copies may be obtained from the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, 13, Preston Street, Faversham, ME13 8NS. Price in U.K. 95p, or by post £1.41.

P. J. TESTER

Kentish Visitations of Archbishop Warham and his Deputies, 1511-1512. (Ed.) K.L. Wood-Legh. Pp. xxvii + 343. Kent Records vol. xxiv, Kent Archaeological Society, Maidstone 1984.

Over the last two decades much work has been done by ecclesiastical historians on the condition of the English Church in the years immediately preceding the Reformation. Although a fairly clear consensus of opinion has emerged from this research, it is always additionally valuable to have easily accessible in print some of the primary evidence upon which these opinions are based. Warham, himself, though Archbishop of Canterbury for 29 years, has been rather neglected by historians, having been overshadowed politically by Wolsey of York, and spiritually by Fisher of Rochester. His register has not been edited, though the record of his 1511-12 visitation, which covers folios 35-89 of the register, was used as the basis of two articles published in learned journals in 1846-47 and 1891.

The present edition of the visitation records was begun by Kathleen Wood-Legh in 1964 and substantially completed before her death in 1981. Prior to that she had arranged with Professor C.R. Cheney to see the edition through the press and to make those alterations he thought fit. These have clearly been extensive and the introduction is largely Professor Cheney's work. It hardly needs saying that, with such a distinguished editorial pedigree, the resulting volume is a major contribution to the printed sources for English ecclesiastical history, and one of the most significant record publications ever undertaken by the Kent Archaeological Society.

What the documents reveal, however, is not very sensational: a moderate amount of monastic maladministration and parochial laxity, none of it very serious; some indications of potential heresy; as well as the usual disputes between regular and secular clergy, between incumbents and their patrons or parishioners. Nevertheless, there is useful information here, both for the local historian interested in his or her own community as it was in the early sixteenth century, and for the ecclesiastical historian anxious to compare the state of one diocese with another.

The text is very clearly presented and in a manner that will make it

usable by both professional and amateur historians. Although the text of the whole visitation process for monastic and collegiate churches is published, as it was written, in Latin, the editors have provided a perfectly adequate English summary of the main points. In the case of the parochial visitations, which are arranged by deanery, the *comperta* or presentments are in the vernacular and only the *acta* or injunctions in Latin. It is likely that the amateur historian may have more difficulty in unravelling the former, which have not been translated, than the latter which have been provided with summaries in modern English!

The Kent Archaeological Society is to be congratulated for having published this valuable edition to its series of record publications. It should be an essential volume of reference for every serious student of Kentish local history, for all students of late medieval church history, and for every self-respecting historical library.

NIGEL YATES

The Early Kentish Seaside (1736-1840): Kentish Sources VIII. (Ed.) John Whyman. 14 cm. Pp. ix. + 404, 24 illustrations. *The Later Kentish Seaside (1840-1974) : Kentish Sources IX.* (Eds.) Felicity Stafford and Nigel Yates. 20½ × 14 cm., Pp. x + 194, 36 illustrations. Alan Sutton for Kent Archives Office, 1985.

These two volumes were published to coincide with a major exhibition of the Kentish seaside held at Maidstone and Whitstable museums, and Margate and Folkestone libraries, between June and September 1985.

The first very substantial book deals with Kentish resorts before the coming of the railways. As John Whyman emphasises, most Kentish resorts – Gravesend, Sheerness, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe – began in this earlier period. Margate was the most popular resort. While the railways helped them to expand, only Tankerton-on-Sea, Birchington-on-Sea and Westgate-on-Sea were important railway creations from the 1860s. Coaches and sailing boats brought the visitors until 1815, when steamboats were introduced. A useful commentary of 31 pages is supplied. The rest of the book consists of documents. They concern particularly transport by coach, hoy and steamboat, accommodation in hotels, lodging houses and boarding houses, sea-bathing, enjoyment of the beach and other outside amusements, and indoor entertainment provided by assembly rooms, circulating libraries and theatres. There are also

documents about the visitors, including comments about stays by prominent people and long lists of fashionable arrivals in 1817, and descriptions of specific visits including an 1828 holiday in Ramsgate from a MS journal. Local newspapers and guidebooks supply many of the documents, and manuscripts are used to a less extent, such as the records of the Margate Sea Bathing Infirmary. They all make fascinating reading: their selection to illustrate the various themes must have been a considerable labour, despite the author's long research experience of the history of the Thanet seaside resorts. The Kent Archives Office was fortunate to be able to use Dr Whyman's great expertise.

Felicity Stafford writes a considerable introduction to the seaside resorts in the railway era. First, more and more of the middle class visited the seaside; then, by the end of the nineteenth century the working classes were making excursions at weekends and Bank Holidays. The development of the resorts is surveyed separately, the means of transport (steamer and railway co-existing), accommodation and amusements are also described. There are 40 interesting documents illustrating the development of the resorts in this period. This is followed by a long commentary by Nigel Yates on the resorts since the 1920s, dealing with promotion and publicity, bathing and entertainments, sun-bathing, beauty competitions, pavilions and gardens, holiday camps and the development of the resorts as touring centres. There are 15 documents to this section. These two books are splendid additions to the *Kentish Sources* series.

C. W. CHALKLIN

The Historia Brittonum 3 The 'Vatican' Recension. (Ed.) David N. Dumville. 23 × 15 cm. Pp. xx + 122. D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1985. £22.50 (cased).

The *Historia Brittonum* (often attributed to 'Nennius') has some interest for Kentish historians. It deals mainly with the history of the British peoples in the 'dark ages' after the departure of the Romans, but it does include a long account of the doings, or misdeeds, of Vortigern (or Guorthegirn, in this version) and his sons, and of their relations with the Saxons Hengest and Horsa, originally brought by Vortigern to Thanet as allies, but ultimately to turn against their host and over-run most of England.

It has to be said that these stories are intensely controversial. In the more sober pages of Bede, Vortigern appears, but we are told hardly anything about him, certainly not, as in the *Historia Brittonum*, that he gave away Kent to the Saxons because he was besotted with

Hengest's daughter; even less that he took his own daughter as one of his many wives and so fathered his own grandson, who was to bring him to confusion in a dramatic encounter with St. Germanus by revealing the paternity that Vortigern strove vainly to conceal. Such tales do not inspire confidence!

The problem with 'Nennius' is the appallingly complex tradition of the text, which survives in something like seven distinct versions, the result of revisions by different hands over long periods. There are various modern editions, but none so far which does more than print one or at most two versions, or else provide a conflated text which is no help to establish the authority behind different statements. David Dumville now plans a very elaborate solution, though it is simple enough in principle: he intends to print, each in a separate volume, what he regards as the seven distinct recensions of the text; in an eighth, he will attempt to reconstruct the original text from which he believes all surviving manuscripts were derived, however, remotely; and there will be two further volumes of commentary. The present, numbered 3, is the first to appear, and contains a version which takes its name from a manuscript which formerly belonged to the Vatican, though only part is still there, the rest being in Paris. The original of this recension was, David Dumville argues, composed in England and probably in 944.

By itself, this will not help to evaluate the 'evidence' contained in the *Historia*; though it provides an accessible text of one version for those who cannot find E. Faral's edition of another, or Mommsen's earlier conflated edition. When however all the volumes have appeared, it should be possible to make something of this messy and puzzling group of sources. Whether we will then find that 'Nennius' has much to tell us about the early history of Kent is another question.

BRUCE WEBSTER

Moated Sites. By D. Wilson. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 64. 16 pls., 22 figs., Shire Archaeology, 1985. £2.50 (paper).

Romano-British Wall-painting. By R. Ling. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 64. 22 pls., 16 figs. Shire Archaeology, 1985. £2.50 (paper).

Early Medieval Towns in Britain. By J. Haslam. Pp. 64. 9 pls., 15 figs. Shire Archaeology, 1985. £2.50 (paper).

Celtic Warriors. by W.F. and J.N.G. Ritchie. Pp. 56. 30 figs. Shire Archaeology, 1985. £2.50 (paper).

REVIEWS

These four new titles were published in 1985 by *Shire Archaeology* in their useful series of introductory booklets, each written by a specialist and intended for the general reader with an interest in archaeology. They each contain a good introduction to the subject they deal with and useful bibliographies for further reading as well as many informative illustrations; though the line drawings are well reproduced, the quality of the plates is variable and could well be improved.

A.P. DETSICAS

