REVIEWS

Kent Clocks and Clockmakers. By Michael Pearson. 246 x 186mm. 320 pp, 206 black and white illustrations, map, 13 colour illustrations. Mayfield books, Mayfield, 1997 (Cased, £34.99).

This study, the produce of many years of dedicated research, throws considerable new light upon the origins and development of clockmaking in Kent. By drawing upon a wide range of archival evidence - wills, inventories, churchwarden's accounts and local newspapers - the author not only traces the development of clockmaking from the later thirteenth century to the later nineteenth century, but he also provides the biographical details of around 1,200 of the County's clockmakers. In view of its clear literary style and wealth of illustrations, this book will appeal to horologists and local historians alike - as well as the lay reader at large.

Although most of the emphasis in the first six chapters centres on the technical progress made by the Kentish clockmaking industry, and the role played by certain individuals in that advance, these supply-side changes are related to the growth of consumer demand. As the author notes, in following the writings of Chalklin and others, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a remarkable upsurge in prosperity in Kent. Both the landed classes, who experienced rising prices and profits from the sale of their corn, hops and fruit to London's insatiable markets, and the mercantile and professional classes in the burgeoning dockyard towns and ports of north-west Kent, enjoyed an unprecedented increase in their incomes and wealth during this period. Together these two demand-side factors, in an age that was renowned for its conspicuous consumption and ostentatious display, exerted a powerful influence upon the growth and character of the indigenous clockmaking industry.

At first this industry was based in and around Canterbury, though a number of secondary centres subsequently grew up in other locations such as Ashford, Rochester and Maidstone. Such was the rate of growth in the County at large that by the mid eighteenth century 'virtually every town and large village' had its own resident clockmaker (or watchmaker), and some of these, such as various

members of the Baker, Cutbrush, Deale and Greenhill families, were very skilled craftsmen indeed. It is evident from the superb illustrations of clocks held in private and public collections that a high level of technical expertise and stylistic competence was achieved by the Kentish clockmakers during this period. On the basis of twenty years experience as a collector and dealer in clocks, the author found that most Kentish clocks exhibited 'a fine degree of skill and workmanship ... equal in every respect to the output of London makers'. In fact, it was 'very rare to find a poor clock by a Kent maker'.

Many different types of clock - turret, lantern, bracket, longcase, tavern and hooded wall clocks - were made in Kent at different points in its history, and the relative merits of these are considered in some detail. The turret clock, which first appeared in 1292, when one was installed in Canterbury Cathedral, was the earliest weight-driven clock recorded in Kent. From that point onwards the author, by the use of churchwarden's accounts and other evidence, is able to show how these clocks spread to many other churches, as well as guild-halls, market squares and other public buildings, throughout the length and breadth of the County. Such was their popularity that by the early eighteenth century 'the vast majority of village churches, together with a number of great houses in the county, had been equipped with a turret clock'. Whilst these clocks fulfilled a valuable public service, household clocks were virtually unknown in Kent. Although a primitive form of domestic clock was in existence, such as the chamber clock and the spring-driven table clock, these were far too expensive for the common man and were therefore only found in wealthy households. This situation, however, was radically changed with the coming of the brass-cased lantern clock, which was introduced into England by Flemish refugee craftsmen during the later sixteenth century. As these clocks were cheaper than the earlier domestic clocks, and therefore came within the reach of people of modest means, they remained popular in Kent from the seventeenth century until the mid eighteenth century. Indeed, it is evident from the illustrations in the text that a number of high quality lantern clocks were made in Kent during this period, especially by Richard Greenhill of Ashford, John Dodd of Faversham, Edward Cutbrush of Maidstone and George Thatcher of Cranbrook.

Despite this progress, the early lantern clocks suffered from a number of weaknesses and these, along with a discussion on the various attempts that were made to overcome them, constitutes one of the most interesting passages in the book. The fact that lantern clocks were operated by a balance wheel which moved at an inconstant pace,

and were easily upset by accumulations of dirt and variations in room temperatures, tended to make them poor timekeepers. This unsatisfactory situation, however, changed during the second half of the seventeenth century following a series of technical improvements to the clock's escapement mechanism. This came about via the introduction of Huygen's pendulum into English clockmaking by Ahasuerus Fromanteel in 1658, the replacement of the balance wheel escapement by the verge escapement, and the replacement of this escapement by the technically superior anchor escapement in 1675. These advances not only made for accurate timekeeping, but the use of the long pendulum also gave rise to the first longcase clock.

The author's discussion of the longcase clock in Kent is full of interesting observations and is illustrated throughout with some of the finest examples of the clockmakers' art. Although only a small number of longcase clocks were made before 1700, over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increasing numbers of thirty-hour and eight-day longcase clocks were being made in the County. At first, between 1680 and 1730, these clocks were based upon London-made clocks, and were therefore 'virtually indistinguishable' from them, though a distinctive Kentish style, especially in the eastern parts of the County, soon evolved in its own right. Furthermore, most of the clock cases made in Kent during the first half of the eighteenth century were made of oak, as indeed they were in most other counties, though by the second half of the century richly figured West Indian mahogany was being used on the more expensive cases. On the other hand, clock cases veneered in burr (or figured) walnut, a highly prized wood in fashionable circles during the early part of the century, were 'relatively unknown', as indeed were clock cases decorated with seaweed or arabesque marquetry. Similarly, and in following the London fashion, some clock case were ebonised, or lacquered in red or green, and decorated with a gold chinoiserie design - such as the ones made by Thomas Jenkinson of Sandwich and John Wimble of Ashford - though these were not commonly found. The use of the caddy-shaped and pagoda-shaped hood top and break-arch dial were also borrowed from London, as were the crown-and-cherub and mask-and-foliage gilt-brass spandrels and silvered and brass dial plates engraved with flowers, birds and rococco scrolls.

This original study, which is admirably served by a number of excellent photographs, maps, genealogical tables and contemporary engravings, makes a valuable contribution to a growing list of scholarly publications on the history of English provincial clocks and clockmakers. Despite a few minor typographical errors, and the lack of a list of illustrations appearing in the text, the narrative is clear and

compelling and the biographical details of the country's clockmakers and watchmakers will no doubt remain the definitive work on this subject for many years to come

T. L. RICHARDSON

Religious Worship in Kent – the Census of 1851. Edited by Margaret Roake. 14 x 21.5cm, lii + 460 pp, 7 maps, 8 black and white illustrations. Kent Records, Vol. xxvii. Kent Archaeological Society, 1999. Available from the Society, Members, £20.00 (£24.60 by post), non-members, £30 (£34.60 by post).

On 30 March 1851 officials from every place of worship in England and Wales were asked to fill in forms providing information about the building in which they met, its seating capacity and the numbers who attended services on that day. The 1851 religious census was the first – and last – government-sponsored attempt to calculate the nation's religious provision. A unique compendium of data, it has enabled historians to compare the denominational geography of different regions, to examine diversity within counties and to gain fascinating insights into local life. Recognising its value, some county record societies have published the original returns. Thanks to the efforts of Margaret Roake the census returns for Kent are now available in an easily accessible form. She has transcribed the answers provided by respondents in detail, retaining descriptions such as 'ancient parish church' which some editors omit to save space. Each of the 1,003 entries has headings (e.g. denomination, endowment, sittings, attendance on 30 March, average attendance). This arrangement makes the Kent volume both attractive and easy to use.

Some of the most interesting material can be found in the 'remarks' made by respondents. While some left this section of their forms blank, others used it to put flesh onto the bare bones of attendance figures. The Rector of Hayes explained that his morning congregation consisted 'principally of the Gentry, the afternoon congregation almost entirely of the poor'! (no. 107). The morning and afternoon services at Providence Baptist Chapel, Maidstone, attracted people from the surrounding villages whereas the evening service was attended mainly by inhabitants of the town (no. 433). In the summer months visitors swelled the size of congregations in places such as Gravesend (no. 190) and Margate (no. 806) where a Catholic church was erected largely for their benefit. The incumbent of Walmer commented 'The variation between the Estimated Number of the

Congregation and ye Average Number is caused by a large proportion of ye better style houses being filled in ye Summer but empty in ye Winter; also by bad weather (as on March 30th pm, the Sunday specified) owing to ye distance at which the bulk of ye population is removed from the Church' (no. 878). The congregation of Eynsford Baptist Chapel travelled between one and four miles to worship and hence 'both the season of the year and the state of the weather have a great effect upon the number attending' (no. 174). At Paddlesworth there were 'No roads to the church and the fields almost impassible in wet weather ... Fair weather gives a full Church, bad weather reduces the congregation to 12 or 18' (no. 950). 'Inclement weather', which so often determined the marital fortunes of Jane Austen's heroines, continued to influence what people were able to do several decades later.

Among the many nuggets of information which the returns provide about the Church of England are accounts of how Anglicans responded to the problem of 'ancient' parish churches situated at a distance from current concentrations of population. The Vicar of Higham offered a Sunday service in a schoolroom in the centre of the village (no. 208). Inhabitants of Brasted went to 'the nearer churches of neighbouring parishes' (no. 340). Arrangements which are sometimes assumed to be characteristic of the late twentieth century existed in 1851. Then as now some parishes shared clerical provision. The parish churches of Capel and Tudelely each had one service on a Sunday, alternating morning and afternoon: 'the same congregation for the most part frequent both churches' (nos. 384, 385). Responses to questions about endowments show that the value of livings in Kent varied considerably. Some clergymen refused to supply information about such matters but others took the opportunity to stress the inadequacy of their incomes. A few were clearly worried that the census would be used to further the interests of Dissent against the Church of England. In an age when religious controversy evoked powerful emotions, the Vicar of Stoke, near Rochester, articulated the suspicion that 'sects inimical to the Church' would exaggerate their support (no. 228).

In terms of total attendance Kent was a strongly Anglican county. However 519 of the worshipping communities which Registrars identified did not belong to the establish church: there were Jews, Catholics and a variety of Protestant Dissenters. Dissenting places of worship varied considerably in size. Wesleyans in Maidstone and Canterbury reported that their chapels could seat over 1,000 (nos. 432, 647). At the other end of the Dissenting spectrum were societies which met, as many eighteenth-century revivalist groups had, in

homes, hired rooms or barns. Independents at Orpington held their services in a schoolroom (no. 124), Wesleyans at Chiddingstone in 'a Room in a House occupied by labourers' (no. 351). Kent had more independent sectarian groups than other counties. The census returns reveal how some of these perceived themselves. Under 'Denomination' the minister of Broad Street Church, Ramsgate, wrote 'No name but that of Christian': 'We deem all sects un-scriptural ... ware are no 'Religious Denomination'' (no. 825).

Historians and sociologists have discussed at length the reliability of the census and the light it throws on Victorian religion. Margaret Roake summarises some of their research in an introduction which seeks to characterise mid-nineteenth century churches and society and which examines census evidence from Kent. While some of her summaries may be too contracted for general readers and some of her generalisations questioned by specialists, the volume is a valuable addition to the published records of the County. It will be greatly appreciated by students of church history, by local historians and by anyone interested in the lives of people in Kent a hundred and fifty years ago.

DOREEN ROSMAN
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The Isle of Thanet Farming Community. By R.K.I. Quested. xiv + 364pp, 3 maps (one loose), 16 illustrations and 29 tables. Wye College Press, 1996 (Paperback, £12.00).

This history is unusual in that it brings the reader up to the last decade of the twentieth century. Chapters 1 to 4, approximately one third of the text, set out to weave a path through the history of Thanet up to the Napoleonic Wars, acknowledging past attempts but setting these in the context of new analyses which have appeared, indicating on the way notable gaps in our current knowledge of the area and its administration. Perhaps not surprisingly details of husbandry are based on spot references to individual farming operations until the later eighteenth century and the arrival of such as Marshall, Young and in particular Boys and their more detailed analysis, albeit with shortcomings of their own. By their very nature spot references to wages, rents etc, mean that no strong inferences can be made.

The next six chapters trace the story of Thanet for the following 200 years, up to 1993. It would appear that Thanet emerged from the post-Napoleonic agricultural depression sooner than the Weald, a

region which compares unfavourably in agricultural terms, largely, one assumes because of the greater ease of working the land in Thanet and, from Dr Quested's observations, a greater degree of high farming. It is perhaps in the absence of comparison with other regions of the County that some will be disappointed, but given the author's own terms of reference and the constrictions of a manageable volume, her approach can be justified.

In many respects her sources are those to be expected by the agrarian historian. However, these are well integrated with local sources, many of which would probably not have been available to an historian not of the locality. The effect is to provide a truly local view of Thanet, particularly over the past two centuries, within the skeleton of a national perspective woven into the story.

Dr Quested chooses to analyse each of her farming eras, themselves at some variance with those of Ernle more normally used, under similar headings. Although not consistent in their phrasing, these are broadly: the general position of farmers; position of the farmworkers; farming practices; the ploughing match. Such a method not only provides a useful means of seeing changes for each categorisation from one period to another, but also permits particular aspects to be quickly surveyed for those wishing to use her book for reference.

The course of agricultural fortunes, and the social background of the Thanet Community, are interestingly traced through a series of analyses of the 'all Thanet ploughing match', and surrounding events, from its inception in December 1836 to its final demise in 1973. Dr Quested writes that, 'for the term of its life, the press reports of the match were to be a fairly but not totally accurate barometer of the general state of Thanet farming'. Particularly redolent is the comparison between the farmers of the 1830s quaffing good wine with titled men at the ploughing match dinners, and the farmers of 1903-1914 at the ploughing match barn lunches.

It is perhaps on the final main chapter that future historians will focus. The war years had been good for the Thanet farmer, Dr Quested argues because of their good fortune and good skills. But it is the view of the contemporary observer, recording the accelerating change and acknowledging the damage to the soil quality, that will provide the interest for later analysts.

The tables reproduced at the end of the text are based on agricultural returns up to 1988 and provide a quick guide to the changes recorded in Thanet's agriculture over 120 years. The illustrations at the end of this book are largely based on the ploughing matches of this century. These nevertheless tell a story of change not only in technology but in the society within which it was centred.

While some might disagree with the author's suggestions for possible future uses of the land, it is difficult to argue with her contention that 'if much more of the best Thanet land is preventably and irrevocably lost, it will be ... a crime against our ancestors and our descendants'.

Sadly a consolidated bibliography is not provided. However, written by someone with roots deep in this soil, this book provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the agricultural, economic and social history of one of the more remote, and in many respects ignored regions, of our County. It also indicates areas of study which could usefully be pursued by future researchers.

PHILIP BETTS

Tonbridge in the Early Twentieth Century. Edited by Christopher Chalklin. 14.75 x 21cm, 208 pp. Tonbridge Historical Society, 1999. (Paperback, £6.50). Available from the Society, 8 Woodview Crescent, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9HP.

Over the past two decades Christopher Chalklin has shared with local people his extensive knowledge of Tonbridge's past and enthused members of local adult education classes of the Historical Society to write on the history of the town and the surrounding district. The result has been five books of essays ranging over the history of the last two centuries, the most recent covering the first four decades of the twentieth century. This looks at various aspects of the social, economic and cultural life of the market town mainly in the inter-war years. By 1939, despite a small increase in the population from c.14,000 to 17,000, the shape of Tonbridge was very similar to what it had been forty years before. The river (and to some extent the rail- way) dictated urban development and also caused regular flooding which was not effectively controlled until the 1970s.

All too often the study and writing of English local history stops at 1914 as if the recent and remembered past was either too complex or too near for serious research. When in many local histories the twentieth century is addressed, invariably the treatment is brief and glosses over some of the major developments that have affected peoples' lives such as local utilities of water, gas and electricity, paved roads, the telephone (covered in the previous Chalklin book on Tonbridge), shops and services, religious belief and practice, health, education, and politics. It is thus useful to have essays on the history

of a Kent town in the twentieth century which fruitfully explore some of these topics.

A useful measure of a good local history is whether it can be read with profit by those who do not know the area concerned. Some local histories are clearly written with an eye mainly to readers who live in or have a close knowledge of the place. Certain of the essays in Chalklin's volume meet the first requirement, while others clearly cater for the parochially informed. The editor's introduction on the changing appearance of Tonbridge is solidly in the first category. So also are the next essays on transport and travel, by Peter Swan, although it would have been useful to have had more information on horses (and their handlers) which remained in commercial use, although steadily declining, throughout the period. However, the chapter by Pat Hopcroft on 'The changing appearance of the town' does require a good deal of local knowledge to appreciate the full range of ideas and examples presented.

Peter Humphries account of 'Tonbridge Families remembered: Home and School', and 'Work and Leisure', are two excellent chapters, which, the titles might suggest are narrowly parochial, but prove not to be so. Indeed they are 'an attempt to trace a number of themes in the history of Tonbridge between the wars, using as a primary source the experience of a particular family group as recalled in the memories of contemporaries' (p.84). These are well-constructed accounts of the domestic economy and material culture of working-class and lower middle-class families which can be read by anyone anywhere. Sexagenarians will undoubtedly read the chapters with great pleasure for their evocation of a remembered past, while younger readers will find they provide profitable insights into a way of life which is now passed.

Other essays in the volume look at what broadly can be described as aspects of social welfare in Tonbridge. Alison Williams uncovers the history of the various private schools for boys and girls in Tonbridge that catered for the ambitions and anxieties of the town's middle-class parents. Laurence Johnson briefly discusses sport, focusing mainly on the major and easily identified clubs and activities of the town and bypassing a good deal of the activities in which working-class people engaged formally and informally. Pat Mortlock's chapter on 'Hospitals and health' is neatly drawn. Mention is made of the influenza pandemic at the end of the Great War, about which the Tonbridge Free Press wrote in early December 1918, that 'there had been more death notices in this paper during the last two months than in any period during the worst times of the war', and also of National Rat Week in 1937, highlighting a problem thought serious six

decades ago. And finally, although not last in the book, a short essay by Gwenyth Hodges on the intriguing subject of 'Councillor Clark and mixed bathing', whose seemingly eccentric concern would have gained from being looked at in the wider national context.

As a collection of essays this books suggests further topics for research of the history of Tonbridge over the last century. Politics is only fleetingly referred to, as is trade unionism (alone the Cricket Ball Makers Trade Union had 240 members), religious belief and practice gets a mere nod, and we are told little about who owned property and who exercised effective power in the town. So there is much space for further research and for future volumes in this series. This volume, and its predecessors, also offer to other local history societies in the County a model of good research practice and show where similar endeavour might lead.

DAVID KILLINGRAY
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The Flemish and Walloon Communities at Sandwich during the Reign of Elizabeth I (1561-1603). By Marcel Backhouse. 18 x 26cm, 215 pp. Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van Belgie, 1995. (Paperback, Koninklijke Acadamie, Paleis der Academien, Hertogstraat 1, Brussels, Belgium).

It is very pleasing to see in print the late Marcel Backhouse's 'abbreviated and revised version' of his doctoral thesis, which he talked about inspiringly to the Low Countries Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research in the late 1980s. Backhouse described his book as a window on history making a contribution to 'the significant part immigrant minorities played in Tudor England...'. But it is more than this. It incidentally also includes some background to the history of Sandwich and Kent before the fifteenth century and, more deliberately, the significance of the Revolt of the Netherlands for political and religious refugees. In Chapter 5 he deals with not only those refugees from the troubled Low Countries at the end of the sixteenth century, but also the contributions made by 'strangers' in Sandwich to the struggle, particularly in the Westkwartier of Flanders.

But the majority of this short book is devoted to an analysis of the strangers in Sandwich. Meticulous research has uncovered the origins and progress of only a quarter of the sixteenth-century Flemish immigrants, but far more accurate records of the smaller number of the French-speaking Walloons, most of whom were moved

to Canterbury in 1575. The lack of accuracy of names and numbers does not, however, impede the overall interpretations of the significance of the role of the Flemish immigrants within Sandwich in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Careful numerical and graphical reconstruction of data, interrelated with local historical evidence, such as the survey instituted by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1565 and the muster rolls of 1572, 1584 and 1599, confirms the general conclusion that there was a sizeable and important community of Flemings in Sandwich. In 1573 and 1574, before the removal of the Walloon community the stranger population was larger than the native (the highest figures - 1574 - show 1,600 native born, 2,400 Flemings and 500 Walloons).

Chapter 2 on 'The Religious Organisation and Discipline of the Sandwich Strangers' Church', while suffering slightly from a somewhat haphazard chronology, gives an excellent picture of the way the strangers adapted the reforms of the Netherlandish synods, and of the London church by John à Lasco and Jan Utenhove, to the needs of the local community. Education of the artisans was seen as an important primary function of the church in order to prepare ministers drawn from a wide social spectrum, with fewer from the more traditional 'intelligentsia with theological backgrounds'. As in Canterbury, and other immigrant communities, the privileges and restrictions imposed by the local council, helped to preserve the coherence and security of the Sandwich stranger community, who were responsible for policing their own people, with the support of the local magistracy.

The long central chapter 3 on 'Crafts, Commerce and Industry: the Strangers' Role in the Economy of Sandwich' revisits the traditional interpretation of the decline of Sandwich in the sixteenth century, citing the evidence of imports into Flanders and the proportion of Sandwich ships (142 out of 1,383) still in the English Fleet. Backhouse demonstrates that the policy of Elizabeth and Burghley to ensure the revival of the English cloth industry at Sandwich with positive incentives to the Flemish strangers, encouraged immigrants from a wide range of occupational backgrounds to become clothworkers. The Sandwich Council followed this policy through in the 1560s granting the strangers two market days and a market hall. The study then tells how this large economic community naturally attracted supporting occupations so that within ten years Sandwich Council had to introduce measures to expel those who 'followed any trade other than specified in the Letters Patent'.

The following chapter 4, 'Wealth and Poverty: Social Stratification and Standard of Living of the Stranger Communities at Sandwich', brings all the strands of the strangers' lives together, drawing on the

detailed evidence of their status and occupations in the Flemish Westkwartier, the level of receptivity to the reformed religion and iconoclastic sects, and the lifestyles they adopted on arriving in Sandwich. English local historians may find the assumption of a knowledge about affairs in the Low Countries difficult and this chapter might have been more accessible had the Flemish background been set in more general terms.

The final main chapter on 'The Strangers and their Involvement in the Troubles in the Westkwartier and elsewhere in the Netherlands' is very useful in reminding local historians that immigration does far more than add to the size and economy of a community. It broadens the political, social and cultural scope of the community and leads to constant two-way traffic not only in goods, but also people and ideas. Thus Backhouse's study provides not only rich material for local historians in Sandwich and Kent, but also for historians of the Low Countries and the reverberations of the Reformation in Europe.

A few editorial, stylistic, errors and a somewhat inconsistent approach to the use of Dutch spellings and English translations do provide some minor irritations, but do not diminish the overall value of this work.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS
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Also received and deposited in the Society's Library:

'The Worthiest Thing In All The World'. The Mass and Popular Religion in Late Medieval Kent. By Marcus John Ramshaw. Pp 24. St. Leonard's Historical Papers No: 1, 1997. (A5 Pamphlet, £3.99) Available from St. Leonard's Historical Press, 2 Palmarsh Avenue, Hythe, Kent CT21 6NT.

This booklet examines the religious motives and practices of ordinary men and women in late medieval Kent. Pilgrimage was a widespread popular practice in late medieval society which shaped people's attitudes about their environment and their place in the world.

Roman Roads in NW Kent. By Paul E. Waters. Pp 28, 3 maps, 8 black and white photographs. P.E. Waters & Associates Consulting Engineers, 1999. (A5 Pamphlet, £4.50). Available from P.E. Waters & Associates, 105 Highland Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 4AA.

This short booklet is a fascinating and informed account of the author's personal search for evidence of the Roman roads in his native part of north-west Kent.

The Foundation of Faversham Abbey. By Michael Frohnsdorff. Pp13. The Faversham Society 1998. (A4, card covers, spiral bound, £2.50 (£3.45 by post)). Available from the Society, Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS.

Faversham's great Abbey was founded in 1147 or 1148 (the exact date is uncertain) and in celebration of its 850th Anniversary, Councillor Mike Frohnsdorff, M.A., gave a talk about its foundation to Faversham Society members, which has now been published by the Society, enhancing understanding of the Borough's early history.

Beowulf in Kent. By Paul Wilkinson and Griselda Cann Mussett. Pp 38, 13 black and white illustrations, Faversham Paper No. 64, The Faversham Society, 1998. (A4, card covers, £2.95 (£3.95 by post)). Available from the Society, Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS.

The poem *Beowulf* is one of the great treasures of the English language, and there has been endless debate about when, where and why it came to be written. This short study offers the theory that it was not, as generally supposed, set in Denmark, but in Kent, within the Port and Hundred of Faversham, on the Isle of Harty.

A Faversham Biographical Register. By Kenneth Jacob. Four vols. Each vol pp xxxii + 65. Faversham Paper No. 56, The Faversham Society, 1997. (A4, card covers, £9.50 for all 4 vols (£12.50 by post) or £2.50 each (£3.25 by post). Available from the Society, Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS.

This new Register contains hundreds of entries, in alphabetical order from Thomas Abarowe (sued by Thomas Ales in 1482) to William Young (witness to a deed in 1499). As well as being based on the author's own manuscript collection, the register also brings together researches from Patent Rolls, Court Rolls and other original documents.

Bredgar; The History of a Kentish Parish. By Helen Allinson. (Correction to entry in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxvii (1997), 268.)