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REVIEWS

Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Society: The Dominican Priory of Dartford. By Paul Lee. York Medieval Press/Boydell, 2001. Pp. 243, 1 map. Hardback: £50. ISBN 1903153026

Though written in a modest style, with cautiously stated conclusions, this study based on a University of Kent doctoral thesis is a valuable contribution to the history of both late medieval Kent and late medieval religion. Apart from one or two articles, not much has been published about the wealthy royal nunnery of Dartford since the summary account by A.G. Little in Vol. II of the *Victoria County History of Kent* in 1926. But its history stands at the centre of many concerns of current research, as Paul Lee makes clear in his Introduction with a useful historiographical survey: the degree of vitality of both female monasticism and lay piety in the late middle ages, the localised nature of a monastic house's ties with secular society in this period, literacy and the diffusion of new spiritual ideals down to the Reformation. Accordingly, though Lee summarises what is known of the priory through its whole history from foundation in the 1340s to the death of the last professed nun in exile abroad in 1585, his main focus is on the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which is also much the best documented part of the subject.

The book falls into three parts: a study of the priory and its local setting (Chs 1 and 2), an analysis of the nuns' spiritual culture and their surviving books (Chs 4 and 5) and a short account of their fortunes after the dissolution of 1539 (Ch. 3). In the first part he emphasises the special status of Dartford as the only Dominican nunnery in England, with an income which began as £100 a year from Edward III in 1356, soon to be overtaken by other grants, and had risen to £500 by the early sixteenth century, placing it seventh among the hundred or so English nunneries at the Dissolution. Royal patronage also gave the house tax exemption and other privileges, and contributed to its popularity with noble and gentry families, in Kent and elsewhere. The community shared its endowment with the friars of King's Langley, another royal house, which initially provided six chaplains to support the Dartford nuns, though after

1415 the sisters resisted this arrangement and at some later point gained more freedom to appoint their own clerical advisers. Other themes include the appearance of chantry priests within the nunnery – two were still saying masses for the soul of Richard II in 1535 in accordance with his grant of 1384, the growth of a school for girls and even young boys within the house by the late fifteenth century, and the role of the friars at Dartford in local society. Analysis of surviving testamentary materials, mostly from the Rochester consistory court (1438-1537) shows a relatively low level of bequests to monasteries in Kent compared with other regions, and some suggestions are made as to why this was. The main exception, as far as Dartford was concerned, lay in very local support, from Dartford parish itself. All through the period, however, insistence on the strict enclosure of the nuns seems scarcely to have softened, which restricted the influence of the sisters themselves on the society around them.

The analysis of the religious culture of the house places it firmly in context with the distinctive late medieval piety of the Carthusians, especially the nuns of Syon Abbey. The argument that nuns had specially close links with the culture of pious lay people through their use of vernacular, rather than Latin, texts is explored, though the Dartford evidence can only be suggestive. Just eight books linked with the priory or its known members survive, and they are fully discussed. Douce 322 from the Bodleian Library, a large and miscellaneous collection of devotional texts copied in a London workshop around 1475, is the most interesting, but others include an English commentary on the Augustinian rule used at Dartford and a copy of the *Brut* chronicle. Other references to books include the unfortunate purchase for 5 marks of one which turned out to have been stolen, taken by a highwayman from a travelling rector on Swanscombe Hill in 1365, as emerged at his trial. On the eve of the Reformation, Bishop John Fisher of Rochester, imprisoned in the Tower, sent two of his last works to his half-sister Elizabeth White, who was a nun at Dartford. This foreshadows the determination of the few nuns who maintained some sort of communal life in a house at Sutton, near to Dartford, after the dissolution of 1539.

Seven of them joined the Marian refoundation of 1557, one of only six in England, before reoccupying their old site in 1558. Dissolved once more in 1559, they refused pensions and crossed to Antwerp with the Syon nuns in a boat provided by Philip II.

Years of poverty in Zeeland followed, before eventual relocation to Bruges, but almost all of them persisted to the end in their vocation.

It is difficult to take issue with the conclusions of this study, which are both balanced and well qualified, especially as regards the limitations of the surviving evidence. Full acknowledgements are given to

other relevant studies (though *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in the Late Medieval England* by Nancy Warren (Pennsylvania U.P. 2001), which also draws heavily on the Dartford example, would have appeared too late to be considered). But by choice as well as the quality of the evidence Lee focuses on 'learning and spirituality' as his main subject. Local historians may thus regret that more is not said about the nature of Dartford as a small market town with a 'flourishing and orthodox' parish church, almshouse, chapel and leper hospital, strong links to London and role as a 'natural stopping-off point' on the Dover road. The local properties of the priory are described in some detail in the rentals of 1507/8 and 1521/2, and clearly could be analysed further. Similarly the major, if interrupted, royal interest in the house could be set in the wider context of kings' endowment of churches and royal governmental policies towards Kent. Edward III's determination to push through the construction of the priory after 1349, at the peak of the mortality caused by the Black Death, which we know to have been severe in the Rochester diocese, is remarkable in itself. Unfortunately, too, little is known from survey or archaeology about the buildings on the site, and not much is said about them here. The surviving painted retable probably from Dartford is described but not illustrated. But these are only minor criticisms. Within the limits he has set himself, Paul Lee has written a very good book, which should be much appreciated by historians of Kent.

RICHARD EALES

Records of Early English Drama: Kent: Diocese of Canterbury. Ed. James M. Gibson. 3 vols., ccxxiv + 1664 pp. 3 maps, 1 photograph, 1 table. University of Toronto Press and The British Library (2002). Hardback, £225. ISBN 0-8020-8726-4.

Kent: Diocese of Canterbury is the sixteenth title in the Records of Early English Drama (hereafter REED), self-described as 'a project intended to locate, transcribe and publish systematically all surviving external evidence of dramatic, ceremonial and minstrel activity in Great Britain before 1642' (REED, *Newsletter* 1:1, page 1). The matrix of this project is the University of Toronto: home of two postgraduate centres for Medieval Studies, another for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, and yet another for Drama, the university has since the mid-1960s given place to performances of medieval and Tudor dramatic texts. Later in the 1960s, the inception of the University of Toronto Press *Collected Works of Erasmus in English* advertised the capacity of that press to undertake long-term publication of specialist

research. And in the early 1970s the University of Toronto moved to the cutting edge of work in the application of computer technology to Humanities subjects. This propitious combination of resources, when catalysed by some determined individuals (above all, Alexandra Johnston, general editor of REED and co-editor of the two York volumes which were its first fruits), soon generated impressive results. Setting out to organise and publish, within a single series, work which previously had been pursued more or less in isolation and presented under various umbrellas, REED has been a model of scholarly co-operation and research co-ordination across three decades. Its strengths, which are cumulative as well as collaborative, are abundantly evident in these latest volumes to appear in the series.

From the beginning of REED in the mid-1970s, the publication of the dramatic records of Kent was seen to be a special case within the project because it had already been done – only partially, but carefully and recently. Giles E. Dawson's edition of *Records of Plays and Players in Kent, 1450-1642* had been published by the Malone Society in 1965, as Volume 7 in its Collections series. While Dawson's MSR volume remains an impressive piece of solo scholarship, the new REED volumes edited by James M. Gibson mark many advances on the earlier work – certainly enough to warrant institutional (and perhaps even personal!) investment in a set of them. Excluding all of the parishes within the diocese of Rochester, territorial coverage is of course smaller, but the temporal coverage is very much greater. The range of records is also much more various, selection having been determined by a much broader definition of the field of interest. Attentive to many kinds of performance and performers, not just dramatic plays and professional players, the REED collection publishes records of activities (such as charivari and bear-baiting) which were far beyond the pale of the earlier volume. Some indication of the overall differences in coverage can be given by noting the measure of their areas of greatest overlap: where Dawson's volume comprised some 2,000 entries which record payments to entertainers visiting 13 cities and towns across Kent between 1450 and 1642, Gibson's volumes contain – alongside much else – 2,400 such entries for 11 cities east of the Medway between 1272 and 1642. Entries common to both collections gain from the company which they keep in the REED one. For example, of the following seven entries given by Gibson from the Canterbury City Chamberlains' Accounts for 1563-4, only the three asterisked entries had been published in the MSR volume:

Item Receyvd off Mr arden ffor a payer off wheeles & ye bedd off an old
pagent ijs. [xd.] viijd

*Item gylvyn to ye erle of warwykes players at Master mayers
comandmentt xs

Item paid ffor Carryng off Sartyn owldes off a padgant/ ffrom ye pallys
to ye cowrt hall viijd

Item paid to ffetherston ffor his sufferyng ye paigons to stand in ye pallys
hawll ijs

*Item gyvyn to my lord Robert dwdles players at Master mayers Com-
andymnt xs

Item paid to my lord of lwrborthes berward at Master mayers Com-
andymnt iijs iiijd

*Item gyvyn to ye Qwenes berward at Master mayers Comandymnt vjs
viijd

The old pageants which are mentioned in the first, third and fourth items can probably be identified as relicts of the pageantry for the marching watches with which the city of Canterbury had celebrated the eve of the Feast of the Translation of Thomas Becket from 1505 to 1522, from 1530 until the last years of Henry VIII's reign, and again, after some repair work, during the reign of Mary I. With that identification, the accounts for 1563-4 appear as memorials to a dead theatrical – and ecclesiastical – order: the stripping of the pageant wagons. But there are also traces of things newborn – or at least recycled. Who was Master Arden? What use had he for the pair of wheels which he bought? And for the bed? Was that bed the base of a wagon or the furniture of a Nativity pageant? What were those 'certain olds' taken from a pageant parked (rather expensively) in the archiepiscopal palace, and what became of them after their delivery to the guildhall? Were they used in performance there by either of the two groups of visiting players to whom Canterbury made payments in 1563-4?

The reader can follow the recorded movements through east Kent of the earl of Warwick's players, the earl of Leicester's players, the bearward of lord Hastings of Loughborough, the queen's bearward, among numerous performers: the greater ease with which performers can be tracked in the REED collection is one of the many respects in which it is far friendlier to its user than the MSR collection. The REED editor's 224 pages of preliminaries digest a great deal of information: the first 40 pages of his Introduction condense much chorography; the next 50 pages generalise about dramatic, musical and ceremonial customs of which the extant records give evidence; and then 90 pages describe, in full and precise bibliographical detail, the documents in which the records have been located and from which they have been transcribed. The texts of the records are printed with minimally intrusive footnotes that gloss dates, names and textual obscurities; and 130 pages of endnotes provide further elucidation, contextualisation and cross-referencing. All of this, plus five heterogenous (and helpful) appendices and the translation of Latin documents, represents James

Gibson's massive achievement. Other scholars, moreover, have made weighty contributions to *Records of Early English Drama: Kent: Canterbury Diocese*, notably: the translations of records extant in Italian and French; the glossaries of Latin and of English terms; the two-part index of patrons and travelling companies; and a general index which amazes by accuracy and legibility. Much of the apparatus builds upon work towards other REED titles, with which this one also shares handsome typography and elegant lay-out. Only the illustrations disappoint – for quantity, selection of image, and quality of reproduction.

MARION O'CONNOR

The Kent & Sussex Weald. By Peter Brandon. Pp. 280, 153 b/w, 29 colour illustrations. Phillimore, Chichester, 2003. Hardback, £25. ISBN 1 86077 241 2

Peter Brandon's new book is a celebration of the Kent and Sussex Weald and the way in which the lives of the people that have lived there through the ages have been shaped by its heavy clays and extensive woodland. This book is more than a chronological explanation of how generations of labourers and farmers carved the great forest of *Andredesweald* into the distinctive landscape of small family farms interspersed by small areas of managed woodland that can still be seen today. It explores the themes of change and continuity within the region often using the words of poets and writers who have known and loved the Weald, together with observations and comments from archival sources. Further, in his attempt to help us understand the formation of this unique landscape, Dr Brandon has drawn on a range of other fascinating sources. He has spoken to farmers and foresters currently working in the Weald and utilised their local knowledge to explain anomalies in the distribution of soil types in fields and to understand forestry practices. When he describes the physical difficulties faced by our Saxon and early medieval forebears in clearing the woodland for settlement without the aid of today's bulldozers and chainsaws, Dr Brandon turns for help to the seventeenth-century pioneers of North America to extend our understanding of the process of selecting and clearing sites for a homestead.

Flick through only a few pages and it becomes clear that an abundant range of visual resources are present to amplify the text. These range from the historical geographer's tools of distribution maps and bar charts to the more picturesque representations of medieval and early modern maps and portraits as well as later paintings of landscapes and domestic interiors in the Weald. To take one instance, besides showing a present-day artist's impression of the various pro-

cesses of the Wealden iron industry, Dr. Brandon has also included a particularly interesting late fifteenth-century watercolour by Dürer of an industrial complex in South Germany which gives a contemporary view of how a Wealden ironworks may have looked. There are also many delightful recent sketches of houses by John Malton and a wealth of photographs, many of which were taken by the author to illustrate specific points. A coloured photograph of an abandoned lane near Hadlow Down taken in 2001 shows wheel ruts protruding from a flooded track hemmed by untrimmed hawthorn hedges. Could this be one of the 'scrabby and splodgy bits linked by shady lanes' which he describes so affectionately in his Introduction as being virtually unchanged from the time of the medieval farmer?

The format of the book has been designed to be user-friendly with thirty concise chapters which not only cover the history of the Kent and Sussex Weald but treat specific regional topics like woodland management and the development of 'coppice-with-standards', timber-framed buildings, and the impact of Londoners on the Weald. In his second chapter, Dr Brandon defines the Weald in historian's terms as the area that was still unsettled and covered in oak forest when the Saxons and Jutes arrived. This definition was of particular economic importance to local people as up until the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 they were exempt from paying tithes on woodland in the Weald by immemorial custom. The theme of this relationship between the wooded landscape and the Wealdsman is a major topic of the book. Until relatively recently the woodland produced valuable commercial crops and the small family mixed farms managed to wrench a living from the cold Wealden clay. The book ends with a discussion of the threats to this traditional landscape brought about by changes in farming due to subsidies and cheaper foreign imports, lack of sustainable woodland management and from modern housing developments. Dr. Brandon clearly believes that the special character of the Weald and its role as haven for exhausted city workers can only be maintained through the continuity of traditional family farmers and by a renewal of coppicing and traditional woodland management.

Far from writing a dry academic tome, Dr Brandon has cleverly combined an extensive knowledge of the geography and history of the region accumulated over nearly fifty years, with a rich feast of visual and literary illustrations from writers and painters to explore its countryside. Such is the enthusiasm and curiosity that this book inspires, readers will find it difficult to restrain themselves from lacing on their walking-boots at the first opportunity and heading off down the by-ways and footpaths of Kent and Sussex following in Dr Brandon's footsteps to discover the hidden secrets of the Weald.

SUE PETRIE

Black Victorians/Black Victoriana. Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, ed. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London. Rutgers University Press (2003). Pp. vii + 222. ISBN 0-8135-3214-0 (cloth), ISBN 0-8135-3215-9 (paperback)

Blacks in Britain in the eighteenth century, probably at least ten thousand in number, have received much scholarly attention, but their presence, both numerical and symbolic, appeared to decline sharply in the nineteenth century, only to pick up after the Second World War. This book sets out to revise this interpretation. No figures for the numbers of blacks in Britain in the nineteenth century are hazarded, but we encounter blacks of many different kinds: a West African girl adopted by Queen Victoria; Pablo Fanque, the black circus proprietor; the composer Samuel Taylor-Coleridge; many transatlantic visitors or residents, including Mary Seacole, now a rival in fame to Florence Nightingale as a Crimean War nurse, and Ida B. Wells who in the 1890s brought her anti-lynching campaign to Britain; travelling preachers, African envoys to London; and, as a fitting finale, delegates to the Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900. All of these had some kind of public profile, but were there less prominent blacks, and if so, from where, how many and in what occupation?

These are the questions David Killingray addresses in his contribution entitled 'Tracing Peoples of African Origin and Descent in Victorian Kent'. Killingray uses a multiplicity of sources, including paintings and photographs, press reports, local histories, coroners' inquests, and the census enumerators' returns. Hoping to build up a database, he encourages all family historians who use the enumerators' returns to note down any references to blacks which may catch their eye. His own trawl is a rich one. There were well-known blacks born or living in Kent, or passing through it. They include William Cuffay, a Chartist leader, born in Chatham, his father having almost certainly gained his freedom from slavery in St Kitts by joining the Royal Navy; Walter Tull, born in Folkestone in 1888, who, after a period as a professional footballer, joined the army in 1914 and in 1917 became the first black commissioned officer; Dr George Rice (1848-1935), son of freed slaves, who qualified in medicine in Edinburgh, and was superintendent of Woolwich Union Infirmary. Canterbury attracted clergy and theology students. In 1864 Samuel Ajayi Crowther was consecrated in the Cathedral as the first bishop of Western Africa. St Augustine's College in Canterbury had a number of black students including in the 1850s Lambert Mackenzie, the first black West Indian ordained in the Anglican Church.

But Killingray's most intriguing findings relate to the less famous or the occasionally infamous. A painting of Margate iron jetty in 1869

shows a black boy polishing shoes. In a photograph of 1910 there is, counter-intuitively, a black Metropolitan policeman. Blacks were more likely to surface in the historical record as criminals: an eight year old black boy in Greenwich in 1836 sentenced for stealing crockery and sleeping out of door, William Rind, a fifty-one year old black labourer, transported to Van Dieman's Land for sodomy; Sarah Hart, a black prostitute from Woolwich, frequently before the courts; Arthur Roberts, 'a negro prisoner' in Maidstone Gaol in 1886 for uttering counterfeit coin. The coroners' inquests tell us about a black lion-tamer killed by a lion at Greenwich in 1871, and of John Donkey, 'a handsome negro about six feet in height', found dead in a brickworks in Lewisham where he had sought shelter from the cold.

What did the host population make of the blacks living in their midst? Killingray's sources offer him only inconclusive hints. Other essays in this book and elsewhere offer more substantial clues. The standard interpretation is that blacks enjoyed a positive image during the early nineteenth-century anti-slavery campaigns, but that after emancipation in the 1830s a growing racism seeped into the discourse and had become universal by the end of the century. There is now evidence that this tells less than the whole story. It can hardly account for the extraordinary reception given to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the 1850s, with eighteen English editions of the book and twelve plays derived from it. And it underplays the resistance to the new orthodoxy to be found among nonconformists, especially Quakers, and among the surviving anti-slavery societies. Above all, it is suggested in this book, it ignores the part played by blacks in Britain in refusing to accommodate to the new separatist orthodoxies. How far, and in what ways, this was true in Kent, the sources do not reveal, but Killingray's valuable work has at least alerted scholars to the presence of blacks in the County in the nineteenth century.

HUGH CUNNINGHAM

Hersden, Chislet Colliery Village. By Ross Llewellyn. Pp.86, 90 b/w photographs and 7 b/w illustrations, paperback £9.95. From the author: ross@wellyn.fsnet.co.uk. ISBN 0-9544789-1-6

Hersden is an isolated village, purpose-built to house the workers at Chislet Colliery. The village began to take shape in the 1920s, starting with 50 houses and was enlarged over the years according to the financial state of the colliery at any one time, with the last houses built in the 1950s. Originally called Chislet Colliery Village, it was renamed because of the confusion with Chislet village, which was

some distance away. The name Hersden was derived from 'Hersing' and 'Hoplands', both names being local to the manor of Chislet.

Starting with the birth of the Kent coalfield at the beginning of the twentieth Century, Ross Llewellyn tells how miners from all over the country settled in the village. They were forced by economic hardship during the inter-war years of the depression to leave their own areas and seek work in the new coalfield of Kent, leading to an interesting social and regional mix. This is an intriguing and informative book that can be roughly split into two sections: firstly the social life of the village and secondly the history of the colliery, its people and work.

All the main events of the village have a mention. The testaments from local people, together with newspaper reports, are used to bring the village alive. The social life is well illustrated with photographs, including children's concerts, celebration street parties and other entertainment. The centre of community life was the Black Hut, which had started out as a colliery office but was soon used variously as a church, changing rooms for the football club, a practice hut for the colliery band and a hall for community concerts. The growth of the three churches, the Methodists, Church of England and the Roman Catholic, is also discussed.

There is an interesting section on the Second World War and how it affected the village. Kent was on the front line of any possible attack and many families were evacuated, leaving the men to continue work in the mines because coal was seen as a vital industry. Llewellyn gives his own fascinating reminiscences of growing up in Hersden during and just after the war years. He paints a picture not only of life at the old wooden school but also how in his free time he was at liberty to roam the woods and fields surrounding the village and take part in all the adventures of young boys: an idyllic life of play, fishing, swimming in the rivers and sliding down the stone tip on tins.

The demise of the pit is well documented, culminating in the closure of Chislet Colliery in 1969. It was the first of the four collieries in the Kent coalfield to be shut, and it would have been appropriate to learn something of how the village coped with the closure. The miners were transferred to other pits in the area but with the closure of all the Kent pits in the 1980s it must have had a detrimental effect on a community that depended on mining.

Sometimes mining technological terms can be a bit bewildering but a comprehensive appendix on Kent pit language rectifies this. There is some repetition, which can be annoying, for example a précis of an article in the *Kentish Gazette* on the opening of the pithead baths is followed, quite superfluously, by the article in question. The proof-reading should also have been more thorough. However, all these are

minor points. With a selection of photographs covering many aspects of village social and working life this was an enjoyable read and a useful aid to the historian researching a Kent village as well as a must for anyone who knows the area.

ANN KNEIF

A History of Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells. By Roger Farthing. Pp. xii + 484, 218 illustrations. Phillimore, Chichester, 2003. £50. ISBN 1 86077 263 3.

This long, learned and attractively written book is carefully illustrated throughout and well produced. It relates to one of the earliest parts of Tunbridge Wells. By the 1690s and in the eighteenth century it was a principal site of lodging houses for summer visitors from London and elsewhere. When the spa grew dramatically during the nineteenth century as a residential town, most of Mount Sion's older and new buildings became larger permanent homes and boarding houses. Owners and occupants are mentioned with the houses.

As the author has lived on Mount Sion for 40 years his knowledge of the physical characteristics of the site and especially its building is unique. He has spent his years of retirement from teaching in researching contemporary title deeds, poor law rate books, Lawsuits in Chancery, wills and newspaper advertisements in the National Archives, Centre of Kentish Studies at Maidstone, and other record offices and libraries, and tracing and talking and writing to descendants of the builders and former residents.

The site was heath at the southern tip of the huge 5,000-acre forest or park called Southfrith in Tonbridge parish, owned by Viscountess Purbeck of *Somerhill*. She and her Steward, a lawyer of Tonbridge town named Thomas Weller, made 33-50 year leases of building plots with adjoining land to local craft men, retailers and farmers and to Londoners between 4 November 1684 and 1696. The ground covered over 100 acres on Mount Sion and some distance to the north, Roger Farthing being particularly concerned with the history of about 40 acres between the High Street (the 'Foot of Mount Sion') and the top of the hill. It is shown, in the large-scale plan by John Bowra in 1738, covered with well-spaced houses, stables, bowling green and public grove. The lodging houses lacked the grandeur of Bath's stone terraces, being mostly modest timber and brick structures of two storeys and garrets, weather boarded or tile-faced. Infilling occurred slowly, speeding up only in the later nineteenth century.

The Chapters are not based on general themes relating to the growth

of the community and its buildings; instead they describe the history in turn of each piece of land, with its early buildings and its residents, stretching from the High Street to the road to Pembury at the top of the hill, and other plots at right-angles to them on the south side of Mount Sion Road. There are asides such as Chapter 8 on the use of Tonbridge poor rates as an historical source. The reasons for the author's conclusions about such problems as the identification of buildings and their occupants at particular dates are always carefully explained. There is as much interesting detail about individuals as possible, sometimes with family trees. The book ends with a long 'Commentary and References' instead of footnotes.

It may be helpful to mention a few of the people (mostly middle class) and the buildings described in the book. Among the early leading figures was the apothecary John Brett (died 1719) from Essex Street near the Strand, the brother-in-law of a Dr Chamberlain who invented forceps and is said not to have attended the birth of James II's son in 1688 as expected because he was caring for a patient in Chatham. An original lessee, he built the *Angel Inn* near the Chapel (King Charles's Church) in 1690, became an important landowner in 1715 when he bought the remaining estate of the Viscountess's son, and left the 'New House lately finished and furnished by me' with stables at his death. One of the most interesting early buildings is *The Compasses*, presumably built by a Speldhurst farmer, John Mercer, which still stands as shown in its picture, described with its furniture in a probate inventory of 1718.

In the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Delves family were prominent in their number, wealth and administrative leadership. Richard Delves from Waldron, Sussex came to the Wells before his marriage to a local girl Dorothea Mercer, in 1752; their child Joseph was the first of about 70 Delves babies baptised at King Charles' Church over 120 years! Richard was a butcher who bought 17 farms and more than six houses by his death in 1804. Some of his descendants were also butchers, two built the well-known Bedford Terrace in 1833, and William Henry was chairman and secretary of several local societies and institutions, an Alderman, J.P and mayor in 1900. The last chapter details the background and events relating to the riot, lawsuits and political rows caused by the bellicose and tactless Dr Webber of No. 7 Mount Sion in 1864.

The book is designed primarily for residents of Mount Sion and the people of the town, which explains its rather narrow focus. Yet it should be read by all visitors to the town who are attracted by its past. Historians concerned with English urban building and middle class families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who are not primarily interested in Tunbridge Wells should also read it. Because

of its extensive and reliable contents it deserves to have a permanent place as a major contribution to the history of the town.

CHRISTOPHER CHALKLIN

A New History of Wye, The Heritage of a Kent Village. Eds, Paul Burnham and Maureen de Saxe. Pp. xxii + 180. Wye Historical Society (2003). 8 tables, 8 figures, 14 maps, 32 colour plates and many additional b/w illustrations. Hardback (£16.50, plus £4 first class postage). Cheques payable to Wye Historical Society. Postage outside UK at cost. Orders to: The Secretary, Wye Historical Society, 1 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent. TN25 5AW. ISBN 0 9546499 0 7

This new 'history' of the village of Wye is the first since 1842, when the local doctor, W.S. Morris, published the 'parochial' and 'anti-quarian' *History and Topography of Wye*. The aims of this later volume are clearly set out as investigations into the wider influences on the development of the village from the geological factors, leading to early routes and settlement, up to the Second World War. Until the last three of the nineteen chapters ('Wye: 1815 to 1914', 'Wye in the First World War' and 'Front Line Wye: Wye in the Second World War'), this is uncompromisingly elitist history, with the influence of the Crown, the Church and the larger landowners writ large. Obviously the authors were themselves influenced by the accessibility of source material, but legal and church records *inter alia* are readily available to show how the full economic and social life of a community has been structured and developed since the middle ages.

Nevertheless, this books has many strengths, not least the commitment to careful research by its authors, who have followed their individual enthusiasms with a thoroughness which provides a fascinating read. Each chapter is followed by a comprehensive bibliography, while the authors strive to avoid repeating at length what can easily be found elsewhere. The early discussion on the origins of the name 'Wye' is a master class by Ian Cooling of knowledgeable and informed speculation tempered by cautious scepticism. This first part of the story is further strengthened by the lucid and informative chapter on landscape and early settlements and the satisfying chapter on the surprisingly recent history of the Crown on the downs, both by Paul Burnham. The central chapters deal with the influences, and family histories, of the landowners from the eleventh to the eighteenth century: Battle Abbey in the post-conquest period, the Twisdens, the Finches, the Thornhills and Sawbridges at Olantigh, and the role of the Church and the College as well as other educational institutions. Dr Lansberry's essay on nineteenth-century Wye (chapter 17) demon-

strates clearly the changing effects on a rural population of national demographic trends in the first half of the century and the local industrialisation of the railway town of Ashford. The two final chapters, by Maureen de Saxe, Paul Cobb 'and others', on the twentieth century draw on the wealth of visual and personal memories to add to the ever-widening picture of the experiences of the people of Kent in the two World Wars.

The volume is lavishly illustrated and supported by a wide range of maps and useful data, although the apparent lack of correlation between the hundreds in the map on p.26 and those listed in Table 6.1 on p.27, where Felborough Hundred is missing, is rather frustrating. The obvious affection for the built and natural landscape of Wye demonstrated by the contributors and epitomised in Ian Coulson's chapter 15, 'Houses of Wye and Hinxhill', is supported by the high quality of the colour plates and black and white illustrations. This should enthuse both those familiar with the village and those who wish to know more.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Hastingleigh 1000-2000 AD. By B.J.L. Berry, Gateway Press, Baltimore (2002). Pp. xiii + 364, includes detailed figures, maps, glossary and appendices. Hardback, available from Brian Berry, 2404 Forest Court, McKinney, Texas, TX75070-4018, USA. Library of Congress Control no. 2002111830.

This work is the result of the relatively new fashion of the acquisition of feudal lordships by, among others, Americans. Brian Berry a first generation migrant to the United States, and a geography teacher in McKinney, Texas, acquired the Lordship of Hastingleigh in 2000 from the Special Trustees of St Thomas Hospital who had sold all their land in 1903, but retained the title and incorporeal hereditaments. Berry has made the most of local expertise and researchers, and the volume combines the skills of geographers, historians and local people to create a delightful mix of modern presentation of historical data with traditional topographical and chronological local history. There is careful referencing throughout the text, although a list and sourcing of all illustrations and a full bibliography would have been helpful. Nevertheless, this enthusiastic blend of the energy of someone who has only known the village for two or three years with the expertise and heritage of families working and living in the area for centuries, provides a fresh and readable resource for the local historian.

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Folklore of Kent. By Fran and Geoff Doel. Pp. 160. 57 illustrations. Tempus (2003). Paperback, £14.90 from Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2QG
email: sales@tempus-publishing.com. ISBN 07524 26281.

A further work of local folklore and culture by the Doels, contextualising customs within seasons and religious (and non-religious) influences, concluding with a brief and tantalising survey of the 'traditional Kentish songs'.

East Kent Parishes, A Guide for Genealogists, Local Historians and other Researchers in the Diocese of Canterbury. By David Wright. Pp. 179. (second edition, 2002). Paperback, £16.50. ISBN 0 9517580 1 2.

The Kent Census Returns 1801-1901, Origins, Location, Registration Districts and Indexes. By David Wright. Pp. 91. (2003). Paperback, £6.00. ISBN 0 9517580 2 0. Both from Dr David Wright, 71 Island Wall, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1EL, email daveeastkent@aol.com.

David Wright's two resource books reflect the author's meticulous and detailed work on collecting and presenting the sources available to local historians of Kent in an extremely useable format. The addition of maps in the Census volume is a welcome bonus and the indexes of Parishes and Registration District Registrars are clear and helpful. A further volume, *Kent Probate Records. A Catalogue and Practical Guide*, will be available in 2004.

The History of Sevenoaks up to 1650. Historical researches with extensive references to Wills and other Documents. By Jean Fox. Magpie Technologies Ltd, 2003. CD, PDF format (Windows 95 or later) 6,680 pages in total of which 980 are indexes. 1.6 million words. 700 transcripts of wills. Index of 19,000 NW Kent wills in searchable database. More than 1,500 thousand people mentioned by name in Sevenoaks families. £14.99, inc. p&p, from Magpie Technologies Ltd., 13 Old Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth, PL3 4PY
email: sales@magpie-technologies.co.uk. ISBN 0-9543-3190-7.

A brave excursion into the possibilities of modern technology for providing resource material, although a subscription web site would probably offer more flexibility for both the user and for developing further researches. The material is detailed but not always easy to cross reference. Nevertheless a comprehensive transcript of wills

provides a very useful resource for the family historian in an easily accessible format.

A History of Davington Priory. By John Burke and Laurence Young. (Limited edition, 2003). Pp. 40, 3 b/w illustrations. Paperback, £3.50 from Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS or £4.00, including p&p., from *A History of Davington Priory*, c/o 3 Dark Hill, Davington, Kent ME13 7SP. Proceeds from sales of the book go to Davington parish funds and cheques should be made out to 'The Brents and Davington PCC'.

A thorough, fully-referenced, evaluation of the history, archaeology and culture of Davington Priory. In addition to the formal illustrations the text is decorated with delightful line drawings.

Faversham Gunpowder Personnel Register 1573-1840, Faversham Papers No. 84. By Raymond Godfrey and Arthur Percival. The Faversham Society, 2003. Pp. viii + 110. A4, paperback, £4.45 (£5.95 by post) from Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NS, email: faversham@btinternet.com. ISBN 1 900214 35 0, ISSN 0014-892X.

This latest paper in the 'About Faversham' series concentrates not on its technicalities but on those associated with it over a period of more than 250 years. Fully indexed, it records all that is known about over 350 people who worked in the three local gunpowder factories, or who owned them or were otherwise involved.

The House of Light and Dark: A chronicle of life in Canterbury in the nineteen-twenties. By Kenneth Pinnock. 2003. Pp. 20, 4 b/w illustrations. A5 paperback, available from Canterbury Environment Centre, St Alphege Lane, Canterbury, Kent. CT1 2EB, Email: enquiries@canterburycentre.org.uk

A nostalgic, but well-informed, 'oral history' account of a childhood in Canterbury before the Baedeker raids destroyed the author's home in St George's Terrace, overlooking the cattle market, and the building of the dual-carriage ring road separated the city centre from its wider environs.