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REVIEWS

Excavations at Market Way St Stephen's, Canterbury. By Richard Helm and Jon Rady. ix + 90 pp. 35 figs, 30 plates and 33 tables. CAT Occasional Paper No. 8, 2011. Paperback, £13.95. ISBN 978-1-870545-2-1.

This very recently published report on the Market Way excavations adds considerably to the knowledge and understanding of the importance of suburban sites peripheral to Canterbury. Activity on this site has been dated to the Mesolithic, through the Neolithic to the transition of the Bronze to the Iron Age. After an apparent break in use of the site there is evidence of late Iron Age and early Roman agricultural activity along the Stour reflecting a trend already identified in the area. Although the excavations did not uncover as much as was hoped to consolidate the nearby findings by Frank Jenkins in the 1950s, sufficient evidence remained of the suburban pottery and tile industry which emerged in Canterbury suburbs during the first and second centuries AD, fixing the Market Way site into the overall pattern of activity along the Stour. From the mid-second century AD signs of abandonment are all that remain. The possible existence of a Roman road running from Northgate to the Market Way site is sustained by later Roman inhumation burials along the route, and the use of the route after a four hundred year hiatus, when the next agricultural settlements, evidenced by field patterns, emerged in the eighth century, only to be abandoned after the middle of the ninth century. Thereafter the site remained unoccupied until late post-medieval horticultural usage.

REVIEWS EDITOR

Romney Marsh: Persistence and Change in a Coastal Lowland. Edited by Martyn Waller, Elizabeth Edwards and Luke Barber. xviii + 188 pp. Maps, figs and tables throughout, 11 plates (b/w and colour). Romney Marsh Research Trust 2010. Paperback £15. ISBN 978-0-9566575-0-3.

This is the fifth of a series of research monographs on the evolution of the environment, the archaeology, and the history of the Romney Marsh

area, produced by the Romney Marsh Research Trust (RMRT) and its antecedents.

In nine separate papers, this monograph reports on significant work done over the last ten years; three papers on work done on the evolution of the environment in the Holocene age; two papers on archaeological work done under the guidance of PPG 16; and four historical papers on life and work at various periods.

A paper on the Holocene Coastal deposits of Sussex, drawing on the considerable amount of data on the coastal deposits in the Romney Marsh area and Sussex, compares the Holocene sedimentary sequences of the Marsh with those found in the valleys and levels in the west along the Sussex coast. One conclusion which may be made is that many of the differences may be attributed to size. By virtue of its size, the Romney Marsh complex appears to have been both conducive to prolonged periods of wetland development and resilient, with large parts of the sedimentary protected from subsequent destruction. The second paper of research into the Holocene era draws on new stratigraphic information and sedimentological data from Walland Marsh sites (a database derived from thousands of boreholes and over 30 radiocarbon-dated pollen diagrams) sheds new light on the late Holocene evolution of Southern Walland Marsh, regarding the incidence and spread of peat formation. And sedimentological investigations of outcropping at Sandyland and Midley Church Bank suggest that the probable origin of these deposits may be assigned to the existence of a tidal channel. The third Holocene era paper, on Fire Histories from the edge of Romney Marsh, concludes that there is evidence that the Fire history of the area may be divided into three phases: early Holocene, evidence of burning of vegetation; mid-Holocene, fewer burning and disturbance events; late Holocene, increased use of fire.

The paper on planning-led archaeology in the area is somewhat disappointing, in that it is not a review of the archaeological results themselves, but rather a dissertation on the methods by which archaeological investigations could be carried out under the provisions of the government guidance PPG16, after discussion between the County Archaeologist and the Archaeological Companies tendering for the work. While the interplay between the County Archaeologist and the organisation bidding for the work might produce solutions for particular situations, the complexity of the corpus of solutions may be indicated by the fact that 16 different professional commercial organisations did the work, 11 of which were involved in only one investigation, and that County Archaeologists from Sussex and Kent were involved in sites in different parts of the Marsh, with somewhat different ideas on the nature of the investigations to be carried out. The paper does, however, assert that the planning-led archaeology of the last 20 years has significantly

added to knowledge of prehistoric, Romano-British and Saxon sites; and has produced a major increase in understanding of medieval, post medieval and modern archaeology. The Paper also contains a useful map which plots the locations of sites where archaeological investigations have been carried out. A further, short, paper describes the compilation of a Romney Marsh Gazetteer of archaeological sites and monuments of all periods, which is now available on the RMRT website. To date, there are over 5,000 entries in the Gazetteer.

Three of the historical papers study aspects of life and work on the Marsh in periods from the early 14th to the late 18th centuries, and a fourth paper examines the development of agriculture on the Marsh in the period 1790 to 1990.

The first historical paper reviews farming practice on Christ Church Priory Marshland Manors in the early 14th century and examines the arable and livestock aspects of the farming regime practised there, assessing how far they were affected by the disasters before the Black Death, and how the priory officials countered the problems faced. The analysis showed that the highly developed sheep-based mixed husbandry (at Appledore), and the cattle-based mixed husbandry (at Agney), though suffering some years of poor grain harvests, were more deeply affected by various livestock disasters. Nevertheless, such difficulties were seemingly overcome in the longer term, with both manors functioning successfully *c.*1348

The second historical paper describes the monuments by which the Godfrey family, who lived and held property in the towns of the Cinque Ports from the 13th century onwards, remembered and commemorated their dead in the churches of Lydd, New Romney and New Winchelsea. Overall, the Godfreys demonstrated ways in which standing in the local community could be spread, through a multitude of carefully chosen forms of commemoration. The paper concludes that while the Godfrey monuments never reached the complexity of design or scale of expenditure of those of the upper gentry and minor nobility in Kent, they throw light on the lower gentry.

The third historical paper examines aspects of corporate and private landownership on the Walland Marsh and the Denge Marsh in the 18th century, with particular reference to the process by which Marsh Graziers (particularly Thomas Denne) were able to acquire, piecemeal, privately owned acreage to farm direct. The process took a privileged minority of the town of Lydd from a position of owning little if any land into the ranks of the larger landowners on the Marsh.

The fourth historical paper charts the linked economic and landscape change across the area of Romney Marsh in the period 1790 to 1890, in an account well supported by statistics and maps. The paper notes that drainage improvements over this period widened the options for agricultural development, and the area became progressively integrated within the

national economy. The period post 1940 saw widespread conversion of permanent pasture and the domination of arable farming. The author is of the view that it was the economic requirement for land-use change which drove the implementation of drainage and arable conversion rather than science and technology influencing change in a piecemeal fashion. Issues concerning Landscape and Habitat conservation continue to compete with agricultural and flood defence imperatives, making an uncertain future.

This collection of papers on the Romney Marsh area is a first rate and important contribution to our understanding of the area, and the Romney Marsh Research Trust is to be congratulated on having sponsored, assembled and published it.

FRANK PANTON

The Kingdom and People of Kent AD 400-1066: Their History and Archaeology. By Stuart Brookes and Sue Harrington. 160 pp. 40 figures, 15 colour plates. The History Press, 2010. Paperback £14.99. ISBN 978-0-7524-5694-2.

Kent deserves and needs a concise modern synthesis of the Anglo-Saxon period and in many respects this new book fits the bill. It would appear to be aimed at the general reader with an interest in local history, especially those with an interest in our rich Anglo-Saxon heritage. Although of use and interest to students too, the book does not contain many references to the research which underpins it, which will be frustrating to some but possibly a relief to others. There is good list of 'further reading' at the back, divided into specific subjects, but this is not a substitute for concise references.

The structure is straightforwardly chronological without separate sections on particular topics or artefacts. There are four appendices; three of them are particularly useful as they set out the law codes of Aethelberht; Hlothhere and Eadric; and Wihred. The fourth appendix lists the Kentish Kings and rulers. The book is well illustrated with black and white line drawings and coloured plates. The most impressive figures are the maps; there are lots of them and they are of excellent quality and utility.

Chapter 1 'Introduction and Background' introduces the subject with an overview of Kentish geology and geography before discussing the nature of the archaeological and historical evidence. The discussion of the archaeological evidence is good, tracing the development of Anglo-Saxon archaeology from the eighteenth-century antiquarians through to today's scientific excavations. Written sources include Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* as the main historical sources which are discussed alongside documentary sources such as law-codes, charters and the tribal hidage.

Chapter 2 covers late Roman and fifth-century Kent and even though this is an incredibly difficult period to make sense of, this is the weakest chapter in the book. For example, in their discussion of late Roman Kent Brookes and Harrington discuss the Saxon Shore forts only as the Roman response to piratical German raiding. There is no discussion or recognition of the important and ongoing debate about whether this really was their purpose. When the historical evidence for the fifth century is discussed the authors state that ‘the major sources that will be referred to here are’ the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* and Bede, which was surprising as both are very late as sources for the fifth century as the authors acknowledge. Furthermore the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* borrow from Bede, but Bede largely gets his fifth century material from Gildas who wrote c.560 and is a far better historical source for this period. This discussion of the historical sources is followed by some interesting insights into the DNA evidence, followed by a detailed discussion of the archaeological evidence for the earliest arrivals.

Chapter 3, which traces the development of Kent ‘from multi-culture to Kentish culture’ during the sixth century is excellent, as are all the subsequent chapters where the focus is mainly on the archaeological and ancient documentary evidence. There is a valuable discussion of the early continental influences on Kent, especially from Francia and Southern Scandinavia. This mainly draws upon the artefactual evidence, with discussions of early Frankish and Jutish jewellery and the emergence of specifically Kentish brooch forms in the mid sixth century. Important Kentish cemeteries are also discussed with emphasis on the distribution of weapons burials. There is also a focus on individual graves of special significance, which provides some useful insights. Settlement sites and the extension of Kentish influence into west Kent and the Isle of Wight are also examined in this chapter. Finally the religious beliefs of the inhabitants are considered, mainly drawing upon the evidence from cemeteries. The final sentence of this chapter neatly sums it up ‘Whether at the beginning of the century the upper echelons of society thought of themselves as Jutes is debatable, but by the end they were demonstrably Kentish’.

Aethelberht’s Kent deservedly has a chapter to itself. Like all the other chapters, chapter four presents a very wide ranging discussion. It begins by asking why Aethelberht was the first English king to emerge into the historical record and suggests that the arrival of Christianity in 597 and the subsequent conversion of the Kentish people was a key factor in this process. Aethelberht’s law code is used as the basis for a discussion of the nature of Kentish society and the extent of royal power in this period. Cemetery evidence is once again drawn upon to try and compare the type of society depicted in the law codes with that revealed by the archaeological evidence. The archaeological evidence is also used

to suggest the emergence of an elite as evidenced by prominent graves, of both males and females, containing some of the most exquisite dress accessories Kent produced, such as the Kingston brooch. There is also a very useful and extensive discussion of how trade seems to have been organised, with a focus on Kentish emporia.

Aethelberht's reign marked the zenith of Kentish power and influence. Chapter 4, which covers the period 650 to 850 begins with an account of how larger kingdoms began swallowing up their smaller neighbours. The authors note how even before Aethelberht's death, Raedwald of the East Angles succeeded him as *Bretwalda*. The problems which beset Kent and its royal house in the second half of the seventh century are described but the bulk of the chapter concerns the organisation of Kent's landscape. Estate centres are discussed in the context of the peripatetic nature of kingship. The relative paucity of the archaeological evidence for these estate centres is noted and the recent excavations at Eastry and Lyminge are discussed. There is an interesting analysis of the administration of the landscape using a range of mainly documentary evidence such as the Tribal Hidage, the law-codes of Whitred and Eadric and the Domesday survey. The development of the Kentish church is traced with a discussion of the nature of Kentish minsters and their churches. Finally, the emergence of urban centres is investigated. Apart from referring to Canterbury's Roman theatre as an 'amphitheatre', an error repeated in the concluding final chapter, there are good discussions of recent archaeological investigations at Canterbury, Dover and Rochester.

The penultimate chapter explores the end of Kent as an independent kingdom beginning with an account of the successive Viking raids which plagued Kent throughout the ninth century. There is a lack of archaeological evidence for the Viking presence in Kent but the authors present a fascinating discussion of how important Kentish towns tried to reorganise their defences in this period. The authors note how even before the Viking incursions Kent had already begun to lose its independence and was ruled by the Mercian King Offa in 780. This ebbing of power continued throughout the ninth century with vestiges of power temporarily passing back to Kentish royalty only to be lost again. There is a detailed discussion of how the defences of Dover were revamped in the tenth century especially at the site of St Mary-in-Castro and the Roman *Pharos*. A final section gives an overview of developments in this period and gives an overview of what Kent was like on the eve of the Norman invasion. A very short conclusion, which discusses continuity between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods and sums up some of the main themes which emerge from the study as a whole completes the book.

Overall this is a readable and accessible account of the period. Its main quality is that it is informed by a very up-to-date knowledge of the archaeological evidence. Despite a few reservations about certain

aspects, those with an interest in Kent's Anglo-Saxon heritage will find this a rewarding and useful publication.

COLIN ANDREWS

Later Medieval Kent, 1220-1540. Edited by Sheila Sweetinburgh. 306 pp. 12 b/w plates, 6 figures, 2 maps. Boydell Press, 2010. Hardback £59. ISBN 978 0 85115 584 5.

This is the ninth publication in the impressive Kent History Project series and covers the period 1220-1540. The twelve essays cover a spectrum of aspects of Kentish history, and undoubtedly fulfil the editor's intention to highlight 'the distinctive nature of Kent'. A disadvantage of essay collections is that the resulting volume may not provide an overall understanding of the period under discussion. In this case, however, the thoughtful selection of subject matter and skilful cross-referencing by the editor has avoided this trap and the volume, although intentionally not a narrative history of the county, gives an admirably clear sense of Kent's distinctive character before the Reformation.

The essays divide roughly into three general themes, on the economy and land-use, religious life, and politics and society, all of which have been written by widely-respected academics, actively engaged in research in these areas. Mavis Mate's comprehensive overview of the county before and after the Black Death contains an astonishing amount of lively, personal detail, given the breadth of her topic, and is essential reading as context for the rest of the book. Gill Draper's examination of the impact of maritime activity on both coastal and inland settlements is a timely reminder of the importance of the sea and rivers in medieval Kent. In recognising this, she draws out the importance to its economy of the county's location between London and the continent, through merchant shipping, service industries and transport. Using an interesting range of documentary, archaeological, place name and surname evidence, she assesses the timber requirements of shipbuilding on the hinterland, although the corresponding section on iron production and supply is unexpectedly short and perhaps rather peripheral to the rest of the essay.

Bruce Campbell's essay on agriculture, mainly during the fourteenth century, uses the rich archive of Inquisitions Post-Mortem and manorial records of major land-owners to conclude that Kentish farms were predominantly mixed-husbandry systems. He produces a large amount of 'hard-data', including stocking and seeding rates, crop rotations and agricultural responses to climatic conditions and epidemics, but his analysis of the impact of farming practice on Kentish society help to make this otherwise fairly dense essay accessible to the general reader.

The religious life of the county receives a comprehensive examination, including an overview of the development of religious institutions and practice by Barry Dobson and Elizabeth Edwards. This contains an excellent survey of the different religious orders and foundations, in which the only shortfall is a tantalising glimpse of the Trinitarians, but no further analysis. Sheila Sweetinburgh provides an exemplary essay on the development of almshouses and hospitals, more prevalent in Kent than anywhere else in England. Mixing extensive primary source material with a detailed understanding of their function, she brings to life these once important foundations, of which there is no real modern equivalent.

Rob Lutton and Karen Jones look at the evidence of non-standard religious beliefs and practices. Concentrating on the rise of Lollardy in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Lutton uses, in particular, the Kent Heresy (Trial) Proceedings to allow the voices of individuals accused of heresy to be heard. He then follows these moving testimonies with a sensitive discussion of Kentish heterodoxy. Jones takes our understanding of 'unorthodox' beliefs a step further by using the notoriously difficult ecclesiastical court records to consider the prevalence of, and attitudes to, witchcraft and magic. She illustrates her discussion of the origins and variety of such beliefs with numerous fascinating and lively examples of court cases, and charts the gradual association in the fifteenth century between women and 'black magic.'

Sheila Sweetinburgh's second essay – on towns – provides a link between the essays on the religious world with those on society and politics. Drawing on an impressive range of civic documents, she considers not only the influence of the church on urban life through the parish and guilds, but also that of the secular government on its citizens. In particular, she examines the fascinating relationships between the built environment and such urban rituals as mayor-making and civic elections.

The final essays discuss the influence of the upper levels of Kentish society on county life and on national politics. Both David Grummit and Malcolm Mercer succeed in highlighting the way the county's proximity to London and the royal court, and the continent, especially Calais, lent its political allegiance a national importance. Grummit provides an authoritative study of the 'movers and shakers' in late medieval Kent, and their place within the government and management of the county. Despite some inevitable overlap with Mercer's analysis of the county's role in the political turbulence of fifteenth-century national politics, these two essays inform each other very usefully, and Mercer's careful analysis of the complexity of relationships and allegiances leave a clear picture of just how important this region was in the history of England.

Later Medieval Kent is a fascinating and accessible read, but there are a couple of minor disappointments. Firstly, there is a definite bias

towards east and north Kent, although it must be said that this is almost certainly a reflection of the low survival rates of primary evidence for west Kent. Thus Maidstone, Tonbridge, Ashford, Cranbrook and the rest of the Weald are only mentioned in passing in many of the essays, although Lutton's chapter on Lollardy does help to redress this balance. It is perhaps also surprising that the cloth trade is not addressed in its own right – an industry that also might have helped to focus attention on western and southern parts of the county. Regretfully, however, historians can only work with the evidence that has survived, and these are minor quibbles in what is otherwise an excellent book.

REBECCA WARREN

John Stone's Chronicle: Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, 1417-1472. Selected, Translated and Introduced by Meriel Connor, Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, 2010. viii + 165pp., 7 tables. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-58044-107-0.

English monastic chronicles came in various forms: studies of general and local history; accounts of the history of a religious house from its earliest days; and annals of events of the writer's own time. The Chronicle of John Stone is related to these annals, but his interest is specially liturgical, a record of what was done on particular days and on royal and aristocratic visits to Christ Church Priory. His chronicle provided a handy reference book for questions such as 'What did we do at the enthronement of John Kemp as archbishop in December 1452?' This sort of record is still preserved in modern cathedrals.

John Stone probably came from Stone-in-Oxney. He became a novice in 1418 and died before 1480, after holding the offices of refectorer, sub-sacrist and third prior, assisting the prior and the sub-prior. His chronicle is preserved in a fifteenth-century copy at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 417, and was published (in Latin) by W.G. Searle, *The Chronicle of John Stone*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society Octavo Publications XXXIV (1902). Meriel Connor has made a selection for translation, providing an Introduction and useful tables, glossary and a reading list in an Appendix. Because Stone mentions royal visits and those of aristocrats, there are family trees for Lancaster, York, Beaufort, Stafford, Bourchier and Neville. The Introduction gives a sympathetic account of monastic life at Christ Church Priory in the fifteenth century and its relations with the great men of the time.

The chronicle begins with obits of monks from 1415-1433, then begins again from 1420 with the marriage of Henry V at Troyes, continuing with enthronements, visits of ecclesiastics (Archbishop of Rheims in 1445),

the death at sea of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk 1450, danger from Jack Cade 1450, the Battle of Northampton 1460, the Feast of the Translation of St Thomas in Jubilee Year 1470. Throughout the obits are continued, as far as Thomas Ash 1472. An example of liturgical directions is at the death of John Stafford, Archbishop, 25 May 1452. He died at his palace at Maidstone and on 29 May his body was brought to Canterbury and received by the monks at the Westgate. On 30 May there were three masses in the choir, the third being his requiem, celebrated by the Bishop of Rochester, who buried him in the Martyrdom before the new chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where his remains still lie. Extreme weather is often noticed, including a great frost and heavy falls of snow lasting from the 25 November 1434 to 10 February 1435, 'at which feast it began to thaw and the ice melted to the great delight of the people'.

There is a small error at the end of the Introduction (p. 46). The manor of Vauxhall with which the Black Prince endowed his chantry was not at Canterbury but on the Surrey bank of the Thames, not far from the prince's palace at Kennington. By the eighteenth century the Dean and Chapter (as successors of the Priory) received a good income from property there, likewise the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who took over the estate in 1862.

MARGARET SPARKS

[See also the article in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXVIII (2008), 143-64. Ed.]

Sandwich, The 'completest medieval town in England'. A study of the town and port from its origins to 1600. By Helen Clarke, Sarah Pearson, Mavis Mate and Keith Parfitt. xviii + 326 pp. 225 figures (b/w and colour), 14 tables. Oxbow Books, 2010. Hardback £35. ISBN 978-1-84217-400-5.

The basis of this project was in architectural history and, as a justification of the description 'the completest medieval town in England', it is the architecture and urban topography which underpin the whole study. However, in order to contextualise the establishment and development of medieval Sandwich, the project leaders have approached the project within a fairly innovative interdisciplinary framework. An impressive attempt has been made to meld together the disciplines informing topography and urban morphology, together with archaeological, architectural and historical investigations, rather than providing a collection of individually authored essays with only loose connecting threads. On the whole this works most effectively, but at times it is just possible to see where the author changes without a clear cross-reference back to recently made arguments. This is, however, a very minor point, and the

study flows throughout the chronological periods of development with all the different disciplines smoothly contributing to the overall interpretative picture.

The early part of the book deals with the uncertainties of the origin of Sandwich. Given the few, if any, definitive Roman remains and few Anglo-Saxon, a cautious argument is postulated for a shift from Richborough, with medieval Sandwich emerging in the latter part of the first millennium AD as little more than a favourable landing place with easy access to the hinterlands, although the authors are very wary of committing themselves to any definitive interpretations. This caution continues throughout the early chapters until there is more confident certainty with the survival of good documentary sources from the end of the thirteenth century to back up the archaeological and visual evidence.

The early growth of the town is reflected in the location by the authors of the three major churches of St Clement's, St Mary's and St Peter's within their respective parishes, together with the dominant role of the Haven and the management of the waterways, particularly the Delf river. Much of the discussion uses the evidence of the street layout, which is reinforced by the number of surviving buildings, and this is supported by some excellent maps. Many of the street names have changed (for example, Love Lane to St Peter's Street, Luckboat to King Street) and there have been minor deviations over time such as Fishmarket (Market Street) which probably ran on through the line of the later twelfth-century addition to St Peter's Church (p. 51). Most of these are highlighted and easy to follow on the street map shown on both end papers. The whole book is an impressive coming together of expert research into the archaeology, topography, economy and local infrastructure of Sandwich, and the architectural survival of so much of the early town. The investigation of buildings supported by documentary research picks out some minute changes as well as the more dramatic rebuilds like the sixteenth-century timber-framed buildings in Strand Street behind which are the remains of early small stone structures (p. 96ff). All are beautifully illustrated with black and white, and colour photographs and plans. Such expertise does however give rise to one minor drawback for the less-informed. As an example, the excellent aerial view of the town on p. 71 (Fig. 5.3) shows 'the changed street pattern following the building of Mill Wall'. Some highlighting of the relevant features on this and one or two other illustrations would be a considerable help, for those unable immediately to identify specific locations.

Before the Black Death in the middle of the fourteenth century, Sandwich was one of England's larger towns with a population recently estimated at c.5,000 and its urban landscape reflected the economic interests and infrastructure of the community and the dominance of the Haven and its trade. By the end of the fourteenth century the population was probably

reduced by more than half, and it was not until the sixteenth-century influx of Flemish and Walloon refugees that there was a resurgence of numbers. This resulted in a doubling of the population and the establishment of a new cloth industry with subsidiary services until there was an almost inevitable progression to tensions and restrictions. These quickly led to a consequent reduction in the size of the immigrant community, although it is also suggested that poor conditions in the 1590s arising from Marshland fevers may have contributed to persistent excess of burials over births (p. 232). Apparently much of the migrant population was housed in new, 'cheap, poorly constructed houses' which did not survive, but the earlier medieval, higher status houses did, and investment was also made in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in new public buildings, among the most well-known survivor being the Manwood School with its faux Dutch gables.

One of the least expected outcomes of reading this study is the underlying sense of the rapidity of Sandwich's establishment in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Chapters 3 and 4) before it reached its medieval zenith (Part III) and the decline to relative stagnation by the end of the fifteenth century (Chapter 9), caused in the main by the silting up of the entrance to the Stour and the Sandwich Haven. In this way the history of Sandwich has more in common with the establishment, rise and fall, and regeneration of industrial centres from the early eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, rather than with the 2,000+ years of traditional organic growth and development so familiar in other market and port towns in Kent.

This is a very important and well-produced book, successfully extending the use of interdisciplinary studies, and it has set the standard very high for new studies of other towns.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

British Cast-Iron Firebacks of the 16th to Mid 18th Centuries. By Jeremy Hodgkinson. Hodgerbooks, Worth, Crawley, 2010. 278 pp. 342 illustrations. Paperback, £24.99. ISBN 978 09566726 05.

Firebacks were cast-iron plates placed at the back of fireplaces to shield the structure from the heat and to reflect it into the room. They were made between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Interest lies in the design or pattern they display. The introduction to the book explains the way they were made, at blast furnaces where iron ore was smelted and at urban foundries. Open sand moulds were used, the sand being bonded with clay. The decoration was impressed on them and then the molten iron was poured in.

The earliest dated fireback was 1553, others presumably being made at least from the 1540s. They quickly became popular, so that by the 1560s they were imported from the Low Countries, and they continued to be brought from The Netherlands and North Germany. In a much smaller way grave slabs in churches were also made of cast iron and often have textual inscriptions, the earliest dated being 1570. Firebacks were used in manor houses, farmhouses and houses in towns, especially London in the seventeenth century. The most productive period for their manufacture was up to the mid seventeenth century; the fact that the majority of furnaces were then in Sussex, Kent and Surrey accounts for the survival of so many firebacks from that area. There is evidence of them in wills and inventories of owners and the records of manufacturers. They obviously gave ironmasters a source of income in addition to ordnance, iron for conversion to wrought iron and other cast iron products. A useful section of the book deals with the historiography beginning with Lower in 1849 and emphasising the work of H.R. Schubert in the 1950s.

Most of the book illustrates and describes in great detail 342 examples, particularly from the south-east. Sussex museums, particularly the Anne of Cleves Museum at Lewes and the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, hold many and some are in Sussex National Trust properties. Thirty-eight are in Kent, half being held privately, including an important collection in Rolvenden, not named. The National Trust holds a few in its Kent houses and there are one or two in museums in Rochester, Maidstone, Cranbrook and Dartford.

The items are arranged according to the means by which the images on firebacks were formed. Some of the stamps in the mould showed common domestic objects. Others were especially carved, such as heraldic badges and shields. One of the mid-sixteenth century at Ightham More (fig. 81) has royal shields as well as two lions passant and tiny 'imp' figures. Two much later firebacks show family arms at Quebec House (105), and another of similar date at Knole (107) the arms are almost certainly of Lionel Sackville, first Duke of Dorset. Some carved firebacks are lettered and dated, and others have carved pattern panels. A growing number of firebacks were cast from moulds formed from single patterns which could be used repeatedly. They provide some of the most elaborate decorations, comprising half the examples; they include the Stuart armorial fireback of 1618 at Penshurst Place (186) or the 1650 fireback showing St George and the Dragon with the inscription 'do not despair' at Rolvenden (253).

This important book is a beautifully illustrated reference work with a clear and concise Introduction

CHRISTOPHER CHALKLIN

Inheritance. The story of Knole & the Sackvilles. By Robert Sackville-West. xxi + 292 pp. Bloomsbury, London, 2010. Hardback, £20. ISBN 978 1 4088 0338 7.

Knole, with its numerous rooms, stairways, and several courtyards, sitting confidently on a sandstone rise and surrounded by its deer park, is one of the great houses of south-east England. Vita Sackville-West describing her beloved childhood home likened it to a 'medieval village' with 'its square turrets and grey walls, its hundred chimneys ... The house was really as self-contained as a little town; the carpenter's shop, the painter's shop, the forge, the sawmill, the hot-house'. As the home of the Sackvilles, on and off, for the last four hundred years, it has played a minor role in the region's history, and now as a National Trust property yearly attracts thousands of visitors.

Various writers have told the story of Knole, including Vita Sackville-West, but Robert Sackville-West's account of this wonderful house lived in by his often 'dysfunctional' forbears is a truly engaging story, vividly told, well-written, and a pleasure to read, whether or not you know the house. Knole began as one of a small number of medieval manors to the east of Sevenoaks. The heart of the present house was the work of Archbishop Bouchier, but by the early seventeenth century Thomas Sackville, diplomat, courtier and Lord Treasurer, first Earl of Dorset, had acquired it as part of his extensive estates. Thereafter, members of the Sackville family lived at Knole, a place that witnessed their failures, felicities, and frequent infidelities. This book is about house and family, focusing primarily on the inhabitants, but including the furniture, fittings, and the art works that they collected, and sometimes sold when the going got hard.

The Knole estate determined the townscape of Sevenoaks, the town hugging the western wall that kept in the deer. In Sackville-West's story, Knole is largely a self-sufficient community. Sevenoaks has a rare walk-on part, one occasion in the 1880s when annoyed townspeople, excluded from access to the park, broke down the obstacles to entry, marched on the house and shouted abuse at the haughty aristocratic incumbent. Since that minor incident was resolved, the extensive park has been open at all hours and a great amenity for the town. Fortunately the Sackville-Wests did not resort to the vulgar money-earning means pursued by other families desperate to save their over-weighty cash-strapped property. The final chapter in the book describing the transfer from private hands to the National Trust, this reviewer found among the more interesting, providing an account of careful manipulation to secure the best advantage for the future of the family in the face of declining financial resources.

There is much more that a reader might like to know about Knole. We are told that early in the twentieth century the house had a telephone, electric light and also some central heating, but not about the vital water

supply needed to provide for, at times, more than 200 people. And the story of the relationship between Knole and Sevenoaks has yet to be written. But you can't have everything in a single book. Robert Sackville-West has given us much to enjoy in this splendid volume with its coloured and black and white plates; there is a plan of the house, although no map of the estate. This is a work of devoted and careful scholarship which can be read with profit and pleasure by many. May it soon appear in a paperback edition.

DAVID KILLINGRAY

Letters from Bishopsbourne: three writers in an English Village. By Christopher Scoble. BMM, 2010, 354 pp., 48 plates (32b/w and 16 colour) and 1 map. Hard cover £17.99. ISBN 978 0 9541544 1 7.

Despite its apparently precise focus, this book casts its net very widely. It centres on three major writers who lived in Bishopsbourne: Jocelyn Brooke, who lived there between 1945-1966; Joseph Conrad between 1919 and 1924; Richard Hooker between 1595 and 1600. Each is allocated two chapters, the second of which looks at their time in the village. There are, in addition, a number of shorter sections on a broader range of figures who have a connection with Bishopsbourne – the historian Kenneth Witney; the spiritualist Arthur Waite; Alec Waugh, the author of *The Loom of Youth*; Joseph Reade, the nineteenth-century cleric and microscopist; the eighteenth-century cricketer, Horace Mann. This is an impressive line-up for a small village – and one that raises questions as to what such a heterogeneous group might draw from a particular place.

It is in the discussion of Jocelyn Brooke that Scoble draws out the most fruitful interaction of writing and place. Brooke's works lend themselves to this approach. His best known novels draw deeply on his own life and its recurrent themes – childhood in the country around Bishopsbourne; army service; botany and the hunt for orchids. For Brooke these were not only the key influences on his life and sensibility, they became, also, the means of representing it. For Brooke this part of Kent became an 'obsessional' landscape, strewn with landmarks – woods, water tower, 'monolithic uplands' above the village, mysterious encampments – that haunted his memory and provided a mine for his narratives. In Brooke's writing the country around Bishopsbourne takes on a mythical quality and the local place names – Bladbean, Old Wives Lees, Wheelbarrow Town – make it exotic rather than familiar. It is in some ways the Kent of the Second World War: a rural landscape both defined and threatened by the conflict in a manner similar to the way it is portrayed in Michael Powell's 1944 film, *A Canterbury Tale*, where place is evoked in terms

of values and resonances. Clearly Scoble is sympathetic to this mode of representation: he places a vivid description of the film and its landscapes as the opening chapter to *Letters from Bishopsbourne* and he introduces each of his major figures – Brooke, Conrad and Hooker – with a description of the place that he himself first discovered them.

But neither Conrad nor Hooker reacted to Bishopsbourne in a way that can offer a substantial comparison with Brooke. Their work offers no comparable point of departure – indeed, according to Scoble, Conrad seemed to engage relatively little with the Kent landscape. He responded most directly to it when he lived near Postling some years earlier, but he described the situation of Bishopsbourne as ‘down in a hole’. He took no walks in the surrounding country and played only a small part in village life. Occasionally, Scoble tells us, he would drive to the top of the Downs so that he could get a view of the sea. Nothing that he wrote during his five years in the village drew on his immediate surroundings. The chapters on Hooker present the same problem, albeit in a somewhat different way. Like Conrad, Hooker spent the last five years of his life in the village and it is likely, as Scoble says, that this was a time of retreat from London and church politics, a period that allowed him space to complete Book V of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. But neither the work itself nor the available secondary sources (chiefly Izaak Walton’s *Life*) can provide an account of Hooker’s life in Bishopsbourne, or any particular sense of how he engaged with this place. Although Scoble carefully evokes the community in which Hooker lived and worked and gives a detailed account of the work he wrote there, there are no illuminating comparisons to be drawn between the two twentieth-century novelists and the writer of a religious text which is so remote in time and so different in genre.

To stress the importance of their *writing* may seem restrictive. But *Letters from Bishopsbourne* is described in the publicity as a ‘collective biography’. This is overstating the case. The only common characteristic of these three writers is that a part (and, for two of them, a very small part) of their lives were lived in Bishopsbourne. They lived there in very different periods and under different social conditions. They had different cultural preconceptions and, doubtless, quite different ideas of ‘place’. A collective study of writers and place would need to investigate whether there were shared preconceptions or experience and how living in the village had shaped these.

However many readers will respond to Scoble’s delight in this place and his search for a creative connection between a writer and his material surroundings – the sense of what he calls ‘mysterious possibilities, the excitement of names and locations on maps’. This can be overdone – and it is, in some places, when Scoble’s sense of mysterious possibility runs away with him. But *Letters from Bishopsbourne* offers much information, as well as pictures of life in this village at different points in time. It

offers also some amusing glimpses of the different directions that the creative impulse might take. For Jocelyn Brooke the Nailbourne was 'the seeping subterranean woe-waters', an intrinsic characteristic of the valley; Conrad, on the other hand, noticed it only when stamping his foot on a rotten floor board in his hall: the Nailbourne had run underneath. The evident pleasure in connection and association extends to the generous number of illustrations, the fifty-plus pages of notes and an index – which includes, amongst much else, Proust, cricket (fifteen references), the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Marie Corelli, Dr Doolittle and Horlicks – that allows for further extensive exploration.

JUDITH HATTAWAY

Colony. Strange origins of one of the earliest modern democracies. By Reg Hamilton. viii + 311 pp. Wakefield Press, Adelaide, South Australia, 2010. Paperback, A\$34.95. ISBN 978 1 86254 893 0.

In 1837 Reg Hamilton's great-great-great grandfather, with his wife and seven children, migrated from Dover to Adelaide, in the recently created colony of South Australia. Richard, the son of a 'Freeman of Dover, although formerly employed as a tailor, declared himself to be an 'agricultural labourer', perhaps in the hope that he would be allocated land in the new colonial settlement. This determined move to the antipodes, a course taken by many other Europeans during the next century, provided the Hamiltons with new economic and social opportunities without the cloying constrictions that often prevailed in England. Part of the Hamilton family prospered, establishing the successful Ewell vineyards, named after Temple Ewell near Dover from where they had come. This is the basis for Hamilton's book which is divided into two parts; the first on Dover in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the second, and more substantial part, on the creation and governance of Adelaide. This is an attractive book, easy to read, and well illustrated with a good number of plates, some in colour. A decent map of South Australia would have helped locate the many places described in the text.

The history of overseas migration in the European imperial world since the seventeenth century is a topic that has attracted much scholarly enquiry. There are magisterial and analytical studies that take the broad sweep of human movement; and others, similar in form to Hamilton's book, that concentrate on people from a specific area migrating to an overseas colony, for example Rollo Arnold's work on Kent and New Zealand. In this context it is difficult to understand the use of the adjective 'strange' in the sub-title of Hamilton's book. New colonies were established and had a set of institutions, and although they might differ slightly one from

another, for example South Australia had no convict settlers, this hardly singles out that colony's origins as 'strange'.

The eleven chapters on Dover, some fairly brief, are largely episodic. They provide an account of administration, provincial power, and the hurly-burly often associated with small town governance by local elites. Each chapter offers some insight into what Dover was like before the Hamilton family migrated, but it is a history sustained by little analysis and placed only in a narrow comparative context. The author is a lawyer, and in writing about both Dover and Adelaide his interest and approach is primarily focused on the processes of government, a sub-motif being 'democratic institutions'. It makes for rather old-style English local history. On the other hand, those who know little of South Australia will probably find the chapters on that colony interesting, as Hamilton describes how it was established, its economic growth, the early free press, the influence of British constitutional ideas, the influence of Chartism, and the 'democratic inclinations of the colonists', most of whom were religious dissenters, that led to the development of representative self-government in 1857. Surprisingly the provision of education is ignored although it provided a means for immigrants to ascend from one socio-economic group to another.

In a way this is two books in one. Richard Hamilton came from Dover and settled in South Australia, but there is not a great deal to link the two places together. As far as one can see Dover of itself offered little to Adelaide, while immigrants to the growing town from all over, including Ireland and German, invested the new colony with ideas of independence along with their skills and ingenuity. The account of South Australia is well drawn, although the attempt to provide an imperial context, as in chapter 20, results in a rather unhelpful ramble which adds little to the text.

DAVID KILLINGRAY

'Those Dirty Miners': a History of the Kent Coalfield. By J.P. Hollingsworth. 96 pp, 128 b/w photographs and 1 b/w cartoon. Includes *Kent's Last Days of Colliery Steam*. Text and photographs by Tom Heavyside. Stenlake Publishing Ltd, 2010. Paperback. £16. ISBN 9781840335088.

The Kent coalfield was a latecomer to the industry. The discovery of a large amount of coal at the end of the nineteenth century, when excavations were being made in preparation for building a Channel tunnel at Shakespeare Cliff, was the impetus to create the first coalmining enterprise. It was a difficult start. Borings showed that the coal was at a depth of over 1,000 feet but above it, at 300 feet, was a great abundance of water that needed to be pumped out. Shakespeare Colliery was never a financial success,

mainly because at times it needed more coal to run the pit machinery than it had produced. It closed in 1915.

However, the fact that coal was to be found in Kent started a rush to set up new pits. Many of the early collieries were associated with a speculator, Arthur Burr, who is given a short biography at the end of the book under the title 'Benefactor or Swindler'. At least nine of his collieries were unsuccessful and others never got beyond the planning stage. This was mainly due to lack of infrastructure. Road and rail links were not in place and housing for the miners was lacking. The miners arrived from other coal producing areas to work in Kent, especially after the General Strike of 1926, when they had been blacklisted for their strike action in their own pits. They made their way to Kent to seek work and brought their political convictions with them. They were met with hostility by the local people, who could not understand their strange accents and objected to their dirty clothes and therefore were unwilling to provide accommodation.

The four most successful pits in the Kent coalfield were opened between 1906 and 1924. These were Tilmanstone, Snowdown, Chislet and Betteshanger, although they were also beset by problems, mainly of seeping water, where miners would often be working up to their knees in water in spite of powerful pumps. The coal in Kent was the most difficult to mine and therefore the most expensive. It was years before any of the collieries were able to make a profit. After the coal industry was nationalised in January 1947 the miners foresaw a new beginning for the industry. In spite of massive cash injections into the industry for new machinery and better working conditions, the miners' unrest culminated in the 16-month strike in 1984-1985.

Tilmanstone colliery had coal seams of up to four feet. It was considered a safe pit but was never considered economic. With no rail links to the site, an expensive aerial steel ropeway was built to transport the coal from the colliery to the port of Dover but it was never put into full operation. Tilmanstone was closed in 1986. Snowdown's infrastructure was already in place because it was at the side of the Dover to Canterbury railway. It was the deepest, most humid and hot pit, where the miners might drink up to 24 pints of water in a 24-hour shift. Most of the coal mined here was used in the steel industry, which, by the 1970s, was also having problems. It was closed in 1987. Chislet's main coal production was used for steam locomotives but with their phasing out the colliery was no longer commercially viable and it was closed in 1969. Many of the miners had come from South Wales as some Welsh coal companies held shares in Chislet. A new village, Hersden, was built to house the miners and their families. The village was isolated but contained various sports clubs, a welfare club and a community centre. During the Second World War some of the Bevin Boys, young men directed to mining, were sent for training at Chislet and a few remained to work in there in lieu of

their National Service. Betteshanger was the largest colliery in Kent. It had a record of having the most militant miners, which resulted in more industrial action than elsewhere, including a well publicised strike during the Second World War. The colliery produced high quality coal, ideal for coking coal for the steel industry. It was the last Kent colliery to close in 1989 and has since been developed into an industrial park and landscaped nature park, Fowlmead.

Within the main book, and in a different typeface, a small chapter on *Kent's Last Days of Colliery Steam* is misplaced by breaking up the narrative on the individual collieries. Information is given on the nine steam locomotives inherited in 1947 by the National Coal Board from the four productive mines. The locomotives were used exclusively within the confines of the mines. It is of interest to railway enthusiasts but has only a very small part to play in the history of the Kent coalmines.

The main part of the book is an interesting, well-researched history of an industry that survived for less than 100 years in Kent. There are many photographs; sometimes too many, so that it is sometimes easy to feel that this is merely a picture book rather than a scholarly work. It is a record of a part of our industrial heritage, an industry involving hard work, low pay and bad conditions, whose memory should be kept alive.

ANN KNEIF

An East Kent Quintet. Voices from Sturry, Fordwich, Hersden, Broad Oak and Westbere. Edited by Heather Stennett and K. H. McIntosh. 140 pp. The Society of Sturry Villages, 2010. B/w and colour illustrations throughout. Paperback £9.95 (+ £2.00 p+p) from The Society at 27 Sweechgate, Broad Oak, CT2 0QY. Tel: 01227 710413. ISBN 978 0 0544789 6 4.

Chronologically arranged oral history interviews interspersed with biographies of local characters, this collection of memories covers most of the twentieth century. A broad variety of approaches has been employed by the interviewers and compilers. There are full transcriptions, presumably from taped interviews, and in some cases the interviewers' questions are included. In some of the earlier interviews there is a tendency to use very leading questions, although at least a couple of the interviewees managed not to allow themselves to be led, notably 'A Contented Woman', Ellen Divers (pp. 4-7). In other selections, not always dated, the subjects have clearly been allowed to reminisce more freely with only minimal guidance, and although this can give rise to a fairly haphazard collection of memories, it does allow for a more 'real' context to emerge. There are also some selections which appear to be 'written' memories, but the subject's voice still speaks clearly to the reader.

There is no significant commentary or analysis, which allows the contributors to speak for themselves and the reader to develop their own interpretation. But it is not clear how much editing has taken place; all the selections seem very coherent and well-constructed, with perhaps some of the contemporary and natural speech adjusted for publication. A brief expansion of the introduction to discuss methodologies would have been helpful.

Nevertheless this collection is a fascinating read casting a searching light on the changing social infrastructure and on semi-rural and rural occupations, enhanced by the wealth of photographic illustrations. It will prove a very useful resource for students of the society and culture of east Kent in the relatively recent past.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Dover Through Time. By Robert Turcan. 96 pp. 65 b/w and 118 colour illustrations. Amberley, 2010. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-0005-5.

Faversham Through Time. By Robert Turcan. 96 pp. 180 illustrations. Amberley, 2010. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-174-3.

The study of Dover is an excellently chosen collection of photographs which give a clear comparative picture showing change over the past 100 years or so. Many of the changes are subtle modernisations of the existing built environment, but many, particularly the sea front and dock areas, show adaptation to social, economic and military demands. Turcan demonstrates how the changing environment has been used by the inhabitants and by visitors to Dover with people featuring prominently in many of the pictures. Turcan follows the same methodology for the very different town of Faversham highlighting the changes to the rural hinterland and its impact on the town together with the shifting fortunes of its industrial and maritime base on the Creek. Again a judicious use of carefully selected 'then and now' pictures helps to clarify the changing economic and social fortunes and particularly the resurrection of the town's older areas from the 1960s.

These two studies are far more than mere collections of photographs and provide a clear and well-edited selection, giving excellent introductions to the visual history of the towns and their population.

Hythe Through Time. By Martin Easdown and Linda Sage. 96 pp. 180 illustrations. Amberley, 2010. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-919-0.

With their study of Hythe through pictures, Easdown and Sage have also

taken great care to select pictures which show change over time through comparative views. But this is far more of a guide book to various locations. Missing are the people who made and lived in the community. So we have a fascinating source for those interested in purely topographical change who will be aided by the descriptive commentaries. But the social historian will have to work harder to understand the communities which were inspiring and living and working with these changes.

Alfred Hambrook's Mid-Kent Through Time. By Andrew Ashbee. 96 pp. 71 b/w and 112 colour illustrations. Amberley, 2010. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-934-3.

Andrew Ashbee, an acknowledged expert in this field, has brought his considerable skills to bear to acquire and provide pictures to compare with scenes from the printer and stationer Alfred Hambrook's collection of photographs from the first half of the twentieth century. The pictures cover a range of villages in the lower Medway valley, spreading out 'about a dozen miles [from] Snodland'. One of the most striking things about this collection is the sense of continuity within these villages, some with their own industrial past, located so close to the modern bustle of Medway and Maidstone, with only the clutter of traffic and street furniture showing the degree of change in people's lives.

Milton Regis Through Time. By John Clancy. 96 pp. 180 illustrations. Amberley, 2010. Paperback, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-84868-650-2.

Clancy's study of pictures of Milton Regis is in some ways a more intimate local study for local people than those of Hythe and Mid-Kent. Although there is a good range of comparative pictures showing some startling and dramatic changes of the kind largely unseen in Hambrook and Ashbee's work, there is also a large proportion of pictures which show the moment of incidents of change. The commentary gives an impression of talking to those who will be familiar with the story of Milton Regis or want to have their town's past elucidated. Clancy has not been afraid to put himself in his study and to add an element of oral history to his carefully collected work.

Biddenden in Pictures: People, Places Events. 98 pp, 98 b/w photographs. Biddenden Local History Society, 2010. Paperback £8.50 (cheques inc. p + p payable to Mrs P.M. Stokes) from Willow Cottage, Smarden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8JT.

This small and delightful collection of well-annotated photographs of Biddenden from the middle of the nineteenth century through much of the

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twentieth century, was published with the help of a grant from the KAS Allen Grove Local History Fund. Each photograph has been considered as a primary source and thoroughly researched, but as this is primarily a book of illustrations, with limited space for a full analysis, there is potentially scope for more detailed investigations, which might also make more of the links between the various people, places and events highlighted in this small, well-produced, book.