

## BOOK REVIEWS

John Coles, Arminell Goodall and Stephen Minnitt, *Arthur Bulleid and the Glastonbury Lake Village, 1892-1992* (Somerset Levels Project and Somerset County Museums Service, 1992), 80 pp.; illustrated; £2.50.

Although the name of Dr Arthur Bulleid is familiar from a thousand footnotes, the nature of the man and the scale of his achievement have been largely forgotten in the years since his death in 1951. Stephen Dewar published a brief tribute to his old friend in 1966, and Bryony and John Coles in *Sweet Track to Glastonbury* (1986) were generous in their assessment of Bulleid's importance. Now, in *Arthur Bulleid and the Glastonbury Lake Village*, the diffident Somerset doctor is rescued from obscurity, and emerges not only as an outstanding pioneer of modern British archaeology, but as one of the most kindly of men. The book has been published to mark the centenary of Bulleid's discovery of the Glastonbury Lake Village in 1892, and has been written by three people well qualified to do him justice: Professor John Coles is co-director of the Somerset Levels Project; Stephen Minnitt is Assistant County Museums Officer; and Arminell Goodall is Dr Bulleid's daughter.

It was one of archaeology's more unlikely coincidences that Bulleid should have grown up within two miles of the late Iron Age site with which his name will always be associated. He was born at Glastonbury in 1862, and learned a love of history and antiquities from his father, J.G.L. Bulleid, seven times mayor of the town and founder in 1886 of the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society. The authors describe how Bulleid's reading of Ferdinand Keller's *The Lake Dwellings of Switzerland* convinced him that the Somerset moors might well contain sites of a similar kind. After four years of intermittent searching, the moment of discovery came on an afternoon in March 1892, when, as he drove across the moor from Glastonbury to Godney, he noticed a field 'covered with small mounds'. Tentative excavations that summer revealed the clay floors and hearths of the Lake Village dwellings, the massive timber sub-structures, and a wealth of artefacts made of stone, metal, pottery, glass, and wood. Although Bulleid was by now far advanced in his studies to qualify as a doctor, he decided almost at once to undertake 'a major, perhaps total, excavation of the village'. At the same time, the course of his future life was fixed.

The authors record the excited response which Bulleid's discovery of the Lake Village aroused both locally and nationally. The *Times* described the site in a notice occupying a large part of one page, and a flood of reports in other newspapers followed. There were even commemorative dialect poems, among them 'Jan's Thauts 'Bout Th' Burtish Vullige', of whose 21 verses the authors mercifully offer us only a few. Bulleid acquired the archaeological skills demanded by the complex site with remarkable speed, developing a habit of meticulous observation and record keeping which suited his scientific cast of mind, and which has ensured the

lasting value of his work. He also harnessed a natural artistic ability to the unfamiliar task of archaeological illustration, of which he became an outstanding practitioner (the book contains some excellent examples of his work). Not least of the qualities which Bulleid brought to the Lake Village excavations was his readiness to collaborate and to seek advice: indeed, the Lake Village excavations can be said to mark the coming of age of an inter-disciplinary approach to archaeology. A 'Committee of Reference and Advice', consisting of most of the leading archaeologists of the day, was set up soon after the discovery of the site, and when the first volume of the Lake Village report appeared in 1911, the work of the main contributors was supplemented by chapters, chiefly on animal and plant remains, written by leading specialists.

Bulleid's generous ability to collaborate showed itself most of all in the long years of excavation at Glastonbury, and later at Meare, which he shared with Harold St George Gray. The authors quote Gray's suitably deferential letter of 1897 in which he introduces himself to Bulleid as the assistant to General Pitt-Rivers and proposes 'cycling over to Glastonbury at the weekend, hoping to see something of the results of your researches'. Gray's appointment as Assistant Secretary of this Society in 1901 brought him permanently to the county, and in May 1904 he and Bulleid began the first of their joint excavations. They worked first on the Glastonbury site, turning their attention in 1909 to the Lake Village at Meare which Bulleid had identified in 1895 and where Gray was still directing excavations in 1956, aged 84.

The authors are too good-natured to dwell much on the temperamental difficulties which beset the relationship of Bulleid and Gray; but they leave little doubt that Gray's considerable gifts were matched by his egoism. He, and others, were never reconciled to the fact that Bulleid had taken a leading role in the excavation and publication of one of Europe's most important Iron Age sites, and Bulleid was by nature too gentle a man to parry Gray's sometimes shameless condescension. The personal differences did not, however, have any apparent effect on the quality of the work they produced together: *The Glastonbury Lake Village*, volume 1 (1911), remains a landmark in archaeological publication, and stands near the beginning of a long series of jointly-written reports which continued until the publication in 1948 of *The Meare Lake Village*, volume 1. It is sad to reflect that their relationship improved so little over that long span of time, and Gray's obituary of his old colleague, published in volume 96 of *Proceedings*, is a curiously muted and unsatisfactory performance.

It was left to a later generation to acknowledge Bulleid at his true worth. Tessa Wheeler called him 'something of a legend', and Harry Godwin regarded it as one of the chief benefits of his own excavations in Somerset 'that they brought me into contact with so distinguished and lovable a man'. In words and pictures, the authors have provided an appropriate and excellently-produced tribute, describing Bulleid's work at the Lake Villages as well as at other sites such as the Keynsham Roman villa, and recalling the personality of someone who gained the affection and admiration of so many. The book will be enjoyed by anyone who is interested in the history of British archaeology.

TOM MAYBERRY

Ralph Jackson, *Camerton: the Late Iron Age and Early Roman Metalwork* (British Museum Publications, 1990), 96 pp., with numerous figures and plates; £40.

The name of Camerton is synonymous with two Somerset archaeologists – the Revd John Skinner, rector of Camerton from 1800 until his death in 1839, and Bill

Wedlake, to whose memory the present volume is dedicated. Regrettably, as Ralph Jackson states in his preface, Bill Wedlake, whose own work on the site spanned some thirty years, died a few months before the publication of the book. The foreword is written by Dr Ian Longworth, Keeper of Romano-British Antiquities at the British Museum, and he concludes that if Bill Wedlake were still alive today 'he would be the first to thank and congratulate Ralph Jackson for his work'. He would indeed, for the book has been completed after much painstaking work. It comprises some 96 pages of text, followed by 32 of figures and 15 of photographic plates. It is essentially a catalogue of archaeological finds from Camerton which were discovered in an unorthodox manner.

It was in 1980 that permission was granted by the landowner for metal detectors to be used on his fields at Camerton. The fields happened to border the Fosse Way on its route from Ilchester to Bath and the metal detector operators accumulated some 300 metal artefacts, mostly from the late Iron Age and Roman periods. It was fortunate that the dealer to whom they were offered realised their importance, yet unfortunate that they were first extracted from the land with no record of their precise location or stratification, and then that several of them were cleaned – some 'ruthlessly' with a power tool – which succeeded in destroying important evidence of style, weight and method of manufacture. Some of the artefacts were further damaged with fibreglass 'repairs' before being offered to the dealer.

The dealer duly notified the museums at Taunton and Bristol, and eventually it was the British Museum which was persuaded that the whole hoard was of such importance that it should be purchased in its entirety. This was duly done, and the present work is the result of Ralph Jackson's scholarship in examining and recording each of the 307 items from Camerton, together with a further four items from Stantonbury Hill, some 7 km to the north-west of Camerton. These last items (a ploughshare, two reaping hooks and an axe blade) were found before the Camerton material, but may well have come from a larger hoard. In the catalogue of finds, each item has been drawn, measured, weighed and described in detail. Further, it has then been compared with like finds from other sites on the British mainland and on the continent. A scientific report by Mike Cowell gives a qualitative analysis of each object. Ralph Jackson rightly gives credit to Philip Compton who drew the entire collection of objects from at least two angles, and sometimes more. The drawings are indeed a tribute to his skill and long experience in archaeological illustration.

The first 25 pages of the work are a detailed description of the site, together with photographs and plans which neatly tie in with those illustrated in Wedlake's *Camerton* and also those in Skinner's manuscript. A most attractive feature of the book is the second appendix, which is a transcription of the letter written by the Revd John Skinner to Samuel Lysons, dated 23 and 29 November 1815. This letter is not kept with the rest of the Skinner manuscripts in the Manuscript Room at the British Library, but in the library of the department of which Ralph Jackson is a curator – the Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities at the British Museum. This is the first published transcription of Skinner's account, and is complemented with nine plates showing pages from the manuscript.

Perhaps the prize exhibit from the hoard is the copper alloy figurine of a wild boar. The frontispiece of the work is a photograph of this figurine, 'said to have been found in the same area as the other Camerton metalwork'. Of some 23 British boar figurines only three have a known stratified context, but on stylistic and metallurgical grounds, Jackson argues that the figurine should be dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. Could this then have been an emblem of the Legio XX Valeria? Whilst he observes that the Mendip lead mines were controlled

by the Legio II Augusta 'by some stage in the reign of Nero', it is perhaps puzzling that Camerton should have come within the ambit of the Legio XX Valeria at Kingsholm. There is evidence to suggest that the army began the Roman mining activity both on the Mendips, probably by AD 49, and in South Wales, where again a Legio II Augusta ingot (fragment) attests to their presence. But the fort at Charterhouse supervised at very close quarters the mining activity there, as did the forts at Brough on Noe (Derbyshire) and Brough on Stainmore (Cumbria) the lead mines in those areas. Camerton would appear to be too far from the Mendip mines to exercise control, as is suggested here, although Nanstallon in Cornwall may be cited as an example of a distant fort controlling mines, in this case of tin.

The important matter, however, is the fact that, as Jackson rightly argues, the content of the Camerton hoard suggests a 'closure' deposit, that is, a military hoard within a fort. Jackson draws comparisons with other 'closure' deposits from the British sites – Hod Hill, and more recently those from Corbridge, in Northumberland, and Strageath, in Scotland. Whilst agreeing that the existence of a conquest-period fort at Camerton cannot be confirmed by this collection of metalwork, he points out that it would seem perverse to deny the very high probability of such a structure. Wedlake had realised that further work at Camerton might one day resolve the question of an early military presence. Happily, he was aware of these recent finds, and was one of the first to realise their significance. Ralph Jackson's *Camerton* holds considerable interest for me. It is a quite excellent work. I regret only that this hardback edition, priced at £40, will not be read by the many people who would be fascinated by it, and whom it deserves to reach.

DAVID ELKINGTON

Michael Costen, *The Origins of Somerset* (Manchester University Press, 1992). xvi + 202 pp; £35 hardback, £12.95 paperback.

This is the second volume in the series *Origins of the Shires*, which seeks to present a multi-disciplinary view of each county. The old county of Somerset is examined mainly from an historical viewpoint up to AD 1150, but extensive use is also made of place-name and archaeological evidence. The latter not surprisingly dominates the first two chapters on the earliest farmers and the Romans, but Costen's own disciplines of history and place names are the principal basis for later parts.

The book as a whole is the most useful for the county since the very successful *Archaeology of Somerset* edited by Aston and Burrow (1981), and indeed provides a very useful complementary study to both that and its sister volume for Avon. The emphasis is rather different. The author asserts that the county has been shaped by its rulers: some archaeologists, and especially this reviewer, would argue the exact reverse!

The introduction on the geology and topography of the county is excellent, and the Neolithic and Bronze Age surveys are very up to date, including the recent remarkably precise dating for the Sweet Track to the winter of 3807–3806 BC (not, as in the book, 3807–8!). Although the trackways are narrow, deposits of animal dung beetles were found, and the Coles' do support the movement of animals along them.

It is refreshing to find a historian who has taken in the theoretical frameworks that have underpinned prehistory in the last two decades. Costen develops such matters as the social implications of barrow and hillfort distribution, and the new ideas of Colin Renfrew, Martin Millett and Ian Hodder – essentially a new and fresh look at Somerset prehistory. The author lays special emphasis on the

importance of South Cadbury in all its periods as the great central place of the south-east of the county; but we should note that the skeletal remains of the massacre of c. AD 70 were not in the ditch, which Alcock never dug, but in the entrance hollow way.

Ptolemy's *ISCHALIS* is suggested to be Cheddar, convenient for the movement of Mendip lead to the waterway of the Axe. *VEB* . . . (a name on a lead pig) is identified as Charterhouse rather than Ubley. There is a useful map of place-names which suggest Roman sites: Blacklands, Chisels, Cinderland, Crock, Flower, Chester (in eighteen parishes); and a new look at Gatcombe, Somerset, it is observed, is rich in coin hoards of the late Roman period. An original idea is that villa owners camped in their villas in the final phase of Roman Britain, and then abandoned them in favour of buildings more suited to the reduced technology of the time. Evidence, please; and also for the assertion that people 'used up' all the old supplies of Roman pottery and then used leather and wood. The general thesis here is that those who had land held on to it, and that landlessness led to demographic collapse.

Costen prefers the early dating for Badon of c. 450; to judge from the archaeology, however, the conventional dating of c. 500 fits the chronology of the English expansion to the west rather better. In the struggles for south Somerset, South Cadbury is again seen as a major deterrent to invasion – a great bastion facing the English to the east, with Wansdyke as an agreed boundary to the north.

The author is on his own ground with the coming of the English. There is a new map of Glastonbury's estates up to 726 – a mere 200 hides. Too much is made, however, of the abbey's Irish connections; there is really no evidence for their presence or peregrination in the 8th century, and especially not at Beckery, which this reviewer excavated. There is an excellent section on place-names indicating facets of English settlement. All this is history; the 7th and 8th centuries are the real dark age for Somerset archaeology. There is here evident an especial interest in estates and central places. Multiple estates figure largely, and notably the major fragmentation of these in the later Anglo-Saxon period. It should be made clearer that this is still a matter of contention.

Somerset is not one of the richer counties for Anglo-Saxon churches; it is thus welcome to find a gazetteer of all places where for one reason or another there *ought* to be an early church, even if there is nothing obvious in the fabric to indicate this. Here is a case for careful analysis of plan and structure, and perhaps for dowsing!

Costen ends with a look at Domesday and the effects of the Norman Conquest, and provides a summing up of the themes set out in the book. If there is one thing that archaeology has shown, it is that prehistoric society and the landscape it moulded (and was moulded by) were highly complex, organised and anything but chaotic. Later, documented, societies added little new before modern times. Even the open-field system and its characteristic undulations (here dated in Somerset to the 9th century) are only a veneer which masks (and protects?) earlier landscapes.

The book is well-produced, with many clear maps. In any subsequent edition, it would be worth having an aerial view of Wansdyke, rather than the bushy path shown in plate 4. There ought to be some consistency in place-names. The Henley Wood temple site is referred to as Henley Wood, Henley Hill, and Yatton; Cadbury Castle is sometimes South Cadbury; and Pagans Hill has in places become bosky as Pagans Wood. Misprints have crept into the spellings of Trevisker, Compton Dundon, Brean Down (fig. 3.3), and the BUFAU; Cannington grave FT 26 is not, alas, dated as precisely as AD 621; 'Carley and Abrams' should be 'Abrams and Carley'; Lady Eileen Fox should be Aileen; West Harptree should be East Harptree.

These are minor points, however, in a book which makes a substantial new contribution to the history and archaeology of the county. It deserves to be widely read.

PHILIP RAHTZ

Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (eds), *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey: Essays in Honour of the Ninetieth Birthday of C.A. Raleigh Radford* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1991), 351 pp., 22 figs, 11 plates, 5 maps; £49.50.

This book might well have been called 'Sixteen Essays in Search of a Publisher'. The title given is a misnomer: only one essay deals with the archaeology of Glastonbury, and even that does not deal with the archaeology of Glastonbury Abbey.

'Pagan and Christian by the Severn Sea', by Professor Philip Rahtz, is a useful study of the early history of Christianity in Somerset as evidenced by archaeological excavations in Somerset during the past two decades. But of these excavations only one, Rahtz's excavation on Glastonbury Tor between 1964 and 1966, has been at Glastonbury and this was fully published in the *Archaeological Journal* in 1971. Similarly, his excavation at Beckery was fully published by the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society in 1974. Thus, much of the material offered by Rahtz will be entirely familiar to any serious student of Glastonbury.

The single most astonishing thing about this book is that only one author, Charles Wood, refers to the excavations carried out at the abbey by the dedicatee (pp. 274-5). Dr Radford conducted a campaign of excavations between 1951 and 1964, primarily aimed at elucidating the history of the site up to the fire of 1184 in which, Adam of Domerham tells us, the whole monastery was consumed. Dr Radford was following in the footsteps of a series of distinguished excavators, notably Bligh Bond between 1908 and 1926, Theodore Fyfe from 1926 to 1927, and Sir Alfred Clapham, Dom Ethelbert Horne, O.S.B., and Sir Charles Peers from 1928 to 1939. For the latter triumvirate Bill Wedlake, who died in 1989, acted as foreman. All of Dr Radford's predecessors published accounts of their excavations, and Radford himself has published a detailed interim report on his work in *British Archaeological Association: Conference Transactions for 1978* (1981). Surely the editors might have furnished the reader with a bibliography of all those publications which concern 'The Archaeology . . . of Glastonbury Abbey'. It would have been appropriate, also, to provide a bibliography of the considerable *corpus* of works published by Dr Radford himself.

Of the three essays beside that of Rahtz which the editors have grouped under the heading 'Buildings and Archaeological Surveys', the best is that by Michael Costen on 'Some Evidence for New Settlements and Field Systems in Late Anglo-Saxon Somerset'. This reviewer was particularly impressed by his argument (pp. 48-50) for the existence of a pre-Conquest minster church at Shapwick. The essay is unfortunately marred by a howler in his study of East and West Lydford. Map 2 on page 47 shows the two divided by the River Cary. The river is in fact the Brue, as Costen correctly states on the facing page 46.

There are eight essays grouped under the heading 'Manuscripts and Texts'. The first of these is by far the best essay in the book: 'A Single-Sheet Facsimile of a Diploma of King Ine for Glastonbury' by Lesley Abrams. The diploma, no. 248 in Sawyer's handlist of Anglo-Saxon charters, records the gift of four estates in Somerset to Abbot Berwald, dated 705, and is a document belonging to the Society. It is preserved in the County Record Office, Taunton, although the superb

plates which Miss Abrams has used to illustrate her essay have been provided by the British Library. The suspicion of forgery has been levelled against this diploma; Miss Abrams is concerned to establish its authenticity, and examines the palaeography and spelling and diplomatic evidence in minute detail. One of the principal palaeographic problems, first pointed out by Julian Brown, is the presence of certain intrusive features (inconsistent with an early origin) which could, Brown said, date the execution of the copy to 'as late as the sixteenth century'. As Miss Abrams admits, 'the charter's letter *h* remains a renegade, without close parallel until the sixteenth century'. Nonetheless, the weight of evidence adduced to establish the 8th century date of this manuscript is to my mind convincing, and I concur with her view that the Society is fortunate enough to possess an authentic diploma dated to 705/6.

The four estates are 'iuxta flumen quod appellatur Tan' (by the river which is called Tone), at Pouelt, Duluting and Corregescumb. In a lengthy analysis Miss Abrams attempts to identify these estates, but on her own admission cannot entirely succeed. The identity of the estates is not, however, what matters most. What matters most is that it is clear that King Ine was granting estates to a religious community which was already in existence by 705. This scotches the hypothesis that Ine was the founder of the community at Glastonbury.

The author of the succeeding essay rightly deals with this matter at length. Sarah Foot's essay, 'Glastonbury's Early Abbots' will be required reading for any archaeologist or historian attempting to establish the historical facts behind the Glastonbury legends. Her essay is based upon the discovery in a manuscript from the second quarter of the 11th century (British Library ms. Cotton Tiberius B. v. part 1, at 23va) of what has been presumed to be a list of the early abbots of Glastonbury compiled in the second half of the 10th century. The Tiberius list contains nineteen names, of which three, Hemgils, Wealhstod and Coengils, precede that of Beorhtwald. Miss Foot marshals all the material available from manuscript sources for these nineteen abbots.

In the section devoted to Hemgils she shows that three charters survive in favour of an Abbot Hæmgils which are assignable to the years 680–2. This gives us a possible starting-point for the community. She goes on to say that 'Hæmgils would also seem to have been remembered in later years at Glastonbury, since a spurious charter of King Cuthred – confirming all the grants made to Glastonbury by earlier kings – referred to the sarcophagus of Abbot Hæmgils, which suggests that at the time this document was forged Hæmgils may have been held in some veneration by the community, possibly because he was known to have been the minster's first abbot.' This contention has widespread implications for the interpretation of the earliest fabric known from excavations. It is worth pointing out, however, that Dr Radford in his interim report refers to an earlier grant to Glastonbury made by Cenwalh, King of Wessex (643–74), towards the end of his reign.

There are four essays grouped under the heading 'Interpretations', of which I have already mentioned one. Charles Wood's 'Fraud and its Consequences: Savaric of Bath and the Reform of Glastonbury' is a wittily-written attempt to demonstrate that the *cultus* of Joseph of Arimathea owed its origin to the need felt by the community following the rule of Savaric, Bishop of Bath and Wells, to free itself from its subordination to Wells by establishing a claim to apostolic foundation. He cites the version of William of Malmesbury's *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* in its amplified version which took shape before 1250 and includes an account of how St Philip dispatched 'his very dear friend, Joseph of Arimathea, who . . . came to Britain in 63 AD'.

'Left unstated, for it needed no stress', claims Wood, 'was the real point of the

passage, that churches first in their foundation take precedence over all others, in this case the ones belonging to that late-comer the bishop of Bath and Wells and his villainous associates, the canons of Wells.' The Glastonbury claim is surely based upon a search for Biblical roots which is much more profound than the motive of political expediency which Wood proposes. The Glastonbury belief concerning St Joseph of Arimathea is closely paralleled in France by the belief that St Mary Magdalene spent thirty years in a cave near Marseilles.

To the mind of this reviewer, the collection of essays is too heterogeneous to work as a book. Nonetheless, the volume includes material which provides a great deal of food for thought. The asking price of £49.50 may prevent its reaching a wide market.

HUMPHREY WOODS

Kate Harris, with the assistance of William Smith, *Glastonbury Abbey Records at Longleat House: a Summary List* (Somerset Record Society, vol. 81, 1991), xiii + 105 pp.; £15.00.

County record societies are developing a genre of catalogues of records surviving from medieval monastic estates. To Janet Martin's analysis of Peterborough cartularies and registers (Northamptonshire, 1978) and R.M. Thomson's account of the Bury St Edmunds archives (Suffolk, 1980) we can now add Kate Harris's list of the Glastonbury records at Longleat. There is nothing wrong in a record society publishing catalogues of this sort; indeed, they may well point the way forward to the societies' most useful sphere of work in the future. Given the availability of cheap photocopies and microfilms, a *catalogue raisonné* that opens up a whole class of records to research will often be more helpful to every kind of record-user than a traditional edition of a limited number of documents.

Most of the records listed here are included on microfilms that have already been published: the microfilm edition of the Glastonbury Abbey compotus and court rolls is still available, as a whole or in single reels, from Microform (Wakefield) Ltd. The list gives for each document not only its reference number in the Longleat muniment room, but also its location (reel and item number) in the microfilm edition, to which it thus provides a comprehensive guide. The compotus rolls (i.e. manorial accounts) and court rolls take up about three-quarters of the present work; they are listed for each manor in turn, and composite rolls, covering some or many manors, are described in detail. The list is clearly laid out and easy to use, and the records, though impressively complete for some manors, provide few surprises. There is a composite account roll from 1257-8 (not a particularly early date) but no other accounts until the 1270s; the last composite roll dates from 1333-4 and all accounts thereafter are for individual manors. The earliest court rolls date from 1262. Other records are listed under the headings 'charters', 'cartularies and registers' and (for both pre- and post-Dissolution records of the estate) 'general' and 'topographical'. It is surprising that so few deeds are listed, but the editor points out that whereas grants to Glastonbury itself can be easily identified, it is much harder to identify deeds that are simply of Glastonbury provenance; the Longleat muniment room may well contain many items from the abbey's archives that have not been recognised as such.

That the records are there at all is a tribute to the builder of Longleat, Sir John Thynne, who in 1555 resisted demands to hand them over to the Lord Treasurer, presumably to join the monastic records collected by the Court of Augmentations. The short introduction to the catalogue brings out clearly and interestingly how the ancient records of his properties were of practical use to the landowner in the



sixteenth or seventeenth century, a point to bear in mind when we contemplate the work of antiquaries of the period: they were working among records of real, functional value, and the pedigrees and manorial descents that they constructed were of real, functional value too, far less remote from the everyday world than the work of a modern academic historian. However, some Glastonbury records escaped Sir John Thynne, and the Lord Treasurer too. Thus, there are Glastonbury cartularies and registers at the British Library, the Bodleian Library and elsewhere. It is perhaps a pity that these other records are not included in the catalogue so as to complete the picture of the surviving archives of the abbey; but this would have imposed a new and lengthy labour on the editor, and we should be grateful for what we have been given. Combined with the microfilm edition it makes widely available for the first time one of the most important archives to survive from the monasteries of medieval England.

P.D.A. HARVEY

A. J. Scrase, *Wells: a Study of Town Origins and Early Development* (Bristol Polytechnic, Town and Country Planning Working Paper no. 12, 1989), 107 pp.: no price stated.

This study marks an important milestone in the morphological analysis of towns in Somerset and in southern England in general. The volume is produced in a functional A4 typewritten format, which should ensure that it is available to interested readers at a reasonable price.

There are several parts to the book, which begins with an examination of earlier work on the town by Aston and Leech, Havinden, and Rodwell and is followed by Scrase's morphological analysis of the religious precincts such as the Liberty of St. Andrew and of larger plots within the town. He then attempts to reconstruct the street pattern of Wells from c. 800 through to Bishop Joscelin's works of c. 1275. Using the topographic and morphological evidence, Scrase suggests that one of the main routes influencing the location of the minster church was the east-west road leading from Cheddar and Axbridge to east Mendip and Frome. The springs to the east of the minster were adjacent to the north-south road from Bath to Shepton Mallet and it is quite likely that an early settlement existed at the crossroads formed by the intersection of these two routes. It is worth noting Rodwell's suggestions that there was a Roman settlement to the east of the minster, close to the spring, and that it is possible this took the form of a Roman roadside settlement. The recent discoveries at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet, indicate the nature of such roadside sites. Wells should be considered as being on the route from the Roman town of Shepton Mallet to Bath. Further archaeological assessment and evaluation of this part of Wells could clarify the nature and extent of the elusive Roman settlement at Wells, a problem discussed by Scrase in his examination of the early historians' attempts to give Wells an early (pre-Glastonbury) name such as *Fontanetum*, *Theodorodunum* or *Tideston*.

Another important topographic detail which is picked up in Scrase's analysis is the identification of Southover as being a separate nucleus probably of Anglo-Saxon date. The insertion of the Liberty as a route to take some through traffic away from the Cathedral is thought to have occurred shortly after the Conquest, and the Bristol road - the New Street - is attributed to the period of Bishop Robert of Lewes after c. 1160. It is also possible, however, that the origins of these two roads were related, and reflected the increased movement of traffic to and from Bristol in the later part of the 12th century.

This study covers a great deal of ground and uses all the techniques adopted by

historical geographers such as Brian Roberts in studying village plans. Much of the boundary work used by Scrase in Wells is based upon the property boundaries shown on 19th century maps. The antiquity of these boundaries has rarely been proved by archaeological methods, but studies of this type clearly demonstrate how valuable morphological techniques can be in posing questions about town origins, if not actually in providing all the answers. The study includes a useful list of street names in Wells, showing how they have changed through time. Some have particularly descriptive antecedents.

Wells is fortunate in possessing a very rich documentary heritage, including over 800 medieval property deeds. The author has studied such sources intensively, and is to be congratulated on analysing and presenting the results of his research to such good effect. As a case study for the county, this is one from which other researchers could learn much. My only criticism is of the maps. Several have no scale or north point, and part of Simes' map of 1735, reproduced on the cover, is not identified in the report.

ROBERT CROFT

Mary Siraut (ed.), *The Trevelyan Letters to 1840* (Somerset Record Society, vol. 80, 1990), xv + 213 pp.; £22.50.

For over 400 years the Trevelyan family owned and usually occupied Nettlecombe Court. They were a prolific family, as Mary Siraut shows, and that gave rise to financial problems. On the other hand, their ownership of Nettlecombe was assured and unbroken and, as a consequence, a rich vein of family muniments has survived. Drawing from this source, Mary Siraut has concentrated on correspondence received, and has further restricted herself to letters directed to successive heads of the Trevelyan family. Even so, this has meant the transcription of 435 letters spanning 350 years from before 1500 to 1840. Such a task must have been daunting in itself, and made the more so when a rough estimate indicates that there were 200 different hands to decipher displaying varying educational attainments and much idiosyncratic spelling. Some balance to the one-way traffic has been made possible by the fact that sixty letters were written *by* the heads of the family – drafts, copies not sent, letters to a wife when her husband was away, or those written to members of the Willoughby family, subsequently returned to Nettlecombe upon the inheritance of the Willoughby estate.

As deputy editor of the *Victoria County History*, and herself responsible for compiling the entire Nettlecombe section in *VCH* volume 5, Mary Siraut was the obvious candidate for this study and has made good use of information gathered in the course of her Nettlecombe research, but for which the spare discipline of the *VCH* allowed no place. Her introduction is densely packed, and she is always ready to pursue an alternative source from elsewhere in the Nettlecombe manuscripts rather than referring directly to letters in the text (*see* 'shrievalty', for example). On the other hand, where she can be faulted is in her concentration on the history of the Trevelyan family specifically. There is no discussion of the letters themselves, and without such an element to the introduction, readers coming 'cold' will find the correspondence hard to comprehend, for the letters lack a common theme. She has also missed the opportunity of speculating, for example, on the character of different heads of the family as revealed in letters to or from wives or children, of assessing the family's place in the society of the county (*cf.* Lord Waldegrave, Cely Trevillian and the unspeakable Wyndham in 1664), and of offering an opinion on the apparent reluctance of the Trevelyans to undertake public office.

The volume lacks an editorial note on the text, and so leaves unanswered two

questions which immediately arise. The obvious way to arrange the letters for publication was in chronological order, but this must cut across the order in which the Trevelyan papers have been preserved. It would have been re-assuring, at least, to have the editor's impression of how 'original' the surviving document bundles are, and whether they have a subjectal basis. Secondly, there are, inevitably, many undated letters, a few of which have been assigned to a limited time bracket; but there is no explanation of why a particular order has been chosen for letters which have been left completely undated. On the credit side, although it is not possible to judge the quality of the transcription without reading all the letters in the original, the overall impression is one of accuracy, as the letters make good sense; proof reading is of a high order throughout.

Letters of this kind must have been a nightmare for the indexer. The normally straightforward personal and place-name indexes must have presented many problems, and the subject index even more: the letters are often obliquely presented, both writer and receiver being familiar with the matter in hand. Subject entries tend, therefore, to mirror the simple, single-line allusions in the originals, and some have been overlooked ('magistracy', for example).

In publishing the *Trevelyan Letters*, the Record Society has broken new ground in the sense that many of the writers came from ordinary, even humble, origins and wrote on ordinary themes. In this the letters resemble diocesan depositions, and the Society is to be commended for adding a further dimension to the variety of its publications. Mary Siraut clearly knows much of the whole background – Nettlescombe history as well as the position of the correspondents involved. The pity of it is that she has not shared her knowledge as completely as she might have done.

DEREK SHORROCKS

Robert Dunning, *Some Somerset Country Houses: a Personal Selection* (Dovecote Press, 1991), 158 pp.; £14.95.

How, and when, did the country house tradition begin? Robert Dunning, in his introductory chapter, suggests that such houses originally reflected the tastes of late medieval abbots and bishops who established residences on their estates where they could escape the pressures of official life. By the 15th century, the bishops of Bath and Wells spent as little time as possible at the bishop's palace in Wells, their presence tending to make the Dean and Chapter 'nervous and irritable'. Instead, they retreated to the country, where guests could be entertained with a little hunting. Each bishop had his own favourite residence: Henry Bowet (1401–8) preferred Banwell, and his successors – Nicholas Bubwith, John Stafford and Thomas Bekynton – Banwell and Wookey. These country retreats, together with the abbot of Glastonbury's house at Sharpham Park, became real centres of social and political influence.

The Dissolution opened up a huge land market. Tudor merchants had a compulsive desire to invest in land, and built their homes on new sites chosen for their beauty. Ancient families converted their castles and the *nouveau riche* adapted former monastic buildings with great ingenuity. Such were the processes, Dr Dunning suggests, which led to the birth of the English country house. It must be said that the evidence he presents in *Some Somerset Country Houses* does not entirely support his analysis: one is left with the impression that on the whole the evolution of most of the properties described in the book was owing to gentry and lesser gentry families who had deep roots in the county before particular properties were built or converted from ecclesiastical buildings.

This is the latest of many books and articles in which Dr Dunning has considered

aspects of Somerset's history, and is excellently illustrated with photographs (many by A.F. Kersting), watercolours, engravings and portraits. It is a personal selection of 27 widely-dispersed castles, mansions and manor houses which are among the glories of the county. Some, such as Dunster Castle and Montacute, are very well known, but others are not normally open to the public, the book thus offering us a privileged glimpse. Dr Dunning's impeccable research has enabled him to trace the descent of the properties through the centuries, and to reveal much about the occupiers and their social background. The architectural development of the houses is also described. In the absence of a simplified plan of each of the houses, however, it is difficult to gain a clear sense of how the houses evolved architecturally, or of relative proportions and plan forms; nor is it possible, without plans, to plot any of the structural and other features to which the text particularly refers. Photographs of some of the architectural details are, however, a considerable compensation, and the illustrations of the rare roof structures at Fairfield and North Cadbury are of special interest.

*Some Somerset Country Houses* fills a niche in the literature relating to Somerset and reflects Dr Dunning's wide knowledge of the county's principal landed families. If there is a significant criticism, it must be that the book lacks index, references and bibliography. No doubt they were omitted for commercial reasons, but their absence must diminish the value of the book to many of its potential readers.

JOHN DALLIMORE

C. Stell, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in South-West England* (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1991), 263 pp., 229 illustrations; £60.

At first glance this is a very attractive volume and as such it will appeal to the general reader, especially to anyone with nonconformist sympathies. It serves as an introduction to the history and architecture of nonconformist chapels in the region and, sadly, as a reminder of what we have lost. The photographs, including some interiors, illustrate the wide variety of architectural styles used by different denominations, and the contrast between the tastes and pockets of sophisticated urban congregations and those of remote rural communities. Unfortunately, most potential readers will probably be deterred by the high price of the volume.

The title, however, is very misleading, not only because of the inclusion of Hampshire and Berkshire in South-West England, but also because readers familiar with the RCHME's county volumes, described as inventories, and expecting the same quality of coverage, are going to be disappointed. The lack of RCHME volumes, especially for Somerset, and of any comprehensive study of nonconformist architecture, makes any volume on the subject welcome. It seems churlish, therefore, to be obliged to criticize the book, but as far as the Somerset reader is concerned the volume is extremely selective. It is also based on out-of-date information, and it seems strange, for example, that the Somerset section could be compiled without reference to the volumes of the Somerset VCH.

The foreword declares that the purpose of the book is to inform those concerned with chapels which are threatened with demolition and ill-advised alteration. The Somerset section of the volume proceeds to describe, sometimes in the present tense, at least seven chapels which have been demolished (it is surely too late to save them) and omits the majority of those still standing, whether in use or under threat. In fact those in greatest danger, some already derelict, are the little-known chapels omitted from all lists and surveys, including this one. Many isolated rural chapels have been lost, some relatively recently, and several were never photo-

graphed. Surely this volume would have been an ideal place in which at least to list all known chapels, perhaps in addenda to the main county sections. It is also a pity that at least one illustration of each building detailed in the text was not provided, and that the photography was not updated for buildings still in use.

There are many curious omissions. The large parish of North Petherton, for example, with a varied nonconformist history, is omitted altogether, yet has five chapels still standing, one still a place of worship, and at least two others which were lost only a short while ago. Only a fraction of Bridgwater's wealth of nonconformist buildings is covered: many have been demolished, but some remain, such as the former Polden Street Bible Christian chapel and its highly decorative Victorian Tudor manse, now sadly decayed. Many fine rural chapels such as Burton (1833) and interesting relics such as the former Mariners' Christian chapels at Bridgwater (1837) and Steart (1847) and the miners' chapel at Brendon Hill have been overlooked. Although not always of the highest architectural merit, it is strange that more buildings by known architects were not thought worthy of inclusion, for instance the Baptist chapel at Montacute by Morgan Davis (1879). Some chapels have long histories even if they present a plain face to the world: Kingston and Stogumber chapels are examples which come to mind, although the latter does get a brief entry. There are even ruins, such as those at Broomfield and Stolford, which are at least worth recording before they disappear completely. Other chapels, converted to secular uses, still retain interesting features which may in future be 'modernized' out of existence.

The attempt to deal with such a large area has inevitably resulted in incomplete and superficial coverage. Although the preface tries to make clear the precise coverage of the volume it still does not explain many of the omissions, and in any case most readers will be guided by the title and may not even look at the preface. If architectural merit in the eyes of the editor was the sole criterion for inclusion then either the word 'inventory' should have been omitted from the title page or a summary gazetteer of other chapels should have been included. It might also have been useful to have sites plotted on county maps. The reader is, however, provided with a useful bibliography and a fairly comprehensive index.

MARY SIRAUT

K. Barker and R. Kain (eds), *Maps and History in South-West England* (University of Exeter Press, 1991), xii + 148 pp.: £8.95.

This volume, the 31st in the Exeter Studies in History series and a product of the activities of the University of Exeter Centre for South-Western Historical Studies, contains the text of Professor Ravenhill's Harte Lecture for 1990 entitled 'The South West in the Eighteenth Century Re-Mapping of England' and five papers based on some of those read at a conference held in Sherborne in the same year.

Although Somerset features rather insignificantly in this volume, the contributors provide examples of the different ways in which maps may be studied by historians, both as sources of many kinds of information, and as subjects of study in themselves. Thus, enclosure and tithe maps and their accompanying awards and Ordnance Survey maps may properly be seen as vital documents not simply for contemporary but for earlier evidence of local topography. At the same time, their value is enhanced by knowledge of the methods and standards of compilation, and of their social and economic significance. The same is true of estate maps, which here include the remarkable 16th century map of part of the area around Sherborne and Yetminster, convincingly argued by Katherine Barker to have been drawn up for a Chancery case involving the Bishop of Salisbury. Graham Haslam's chapter

on the 18th century estate maps of the Duchy of Cornwall notes that the Duchy holds maps of Stratton on the Fosse, Stoke sub Hamdon, Shepton Mallet, Ingelescombe (?Englishcombe), Widcombe, West Harptree, Laverton, and Farrington Gurney, illustrating Stratton (and several others) rather poorly.

The chapter by John Chapman on enclosure maps ranges well beyond the south-west, but includes illustrations of maps of Milverton and Crewkerne; and the chapter on tithe surveys includes information on surveyors such as Thomas Oates Bennett of Bruton. John Oliver's study of the Ordnance Survey has a very useful appendix listing large-scale urban surveys from Bristol westwards.

ROBERT DUNNING

Stuart Raymond, *Somerset: a Genealogical Bibliography* (Federation of Family History Societies, 1991), 108 pp.; £6.00.

This bibliography of printed sources for genealogists with Somerset ancestry does not claim to be comprehensive. It is doubtful whether any such work could ever be called that. The author has done a great deal of research and it would be churlish for a reviewer to call attention to too many omissions, though they are more numerous than they ought to be.

A greater drawback to this work than its incompleteness lies in its format. There is no room for any discussion of the relative value of the works listed: all are given equal weight and the point is never made that some should be used with caution. Mr. Raymond does not, for example, point out that some entries in the marriage registers printed by Phillimore are inaccurate or that many of the names in Stoate's edition of the Protestation Returns and Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1641/42 were wrongly transcribed. Any genealogists relying on these works without recourse to the originals could easily be led astray.

Mr. Raymond cites Florence Chuk's excellent work on Somerset emigrants to Australia, but does not make it clear that she deals only with those who landed at Port Philip. He also repeats the commonly-held but mistaken view that *all* the probate records of the Diocese of Bath and Wells were destroyed at Exeter in 1942. The majority of these records, yes – but not all.

Any subsequent edition of this book should perhaps have a separate section for borough records. I found it odd that the five volumes of the Somerset Record Society dealing with Bridgwater borough records were listed in the chapter on National, County and Parochial Administration, while the same series' volume on Wells city charters is to be found under Estate and Family Papers. This bibliography could prove useful for those genealogists who have already made fair progress and who are looking for complementary material. I doubt its value, however, for those just beginning the search.

S.J. BERRY

Lesley and Roy Adkins, *A Field Guide to Somerset Archaeology* (The Dovecote Press, 1992), 138 pp., numerous figures and illustrations; £9.95.

Anyone familiar with the work of Lesley and Roy Adkins will not be surprised by the high quality of both text and illustrations in their latest book. *A Field Guide to Somerset Archaeology* provides an alphabetical gazetteer of archaeological sites within the post-1974 county of Somerset and is prefaced by a brief introduction and an overview of major sites grouped by archaeological periods. The gazetteer entries include information on site locations, the availability of parking, and disabled access, while the site descriptions themselves, though necessarily succinct, are

sufficiently detailed to answer most of the immediate questions likely to arise in the mind of a non-specialist visitor. The majority of entries contain references to further reading, full details of relevant literature being provided in a bibliography at the end of the book.

The authors confine themselves to sites of which there are visible remains, though they do not keep to that rule quite strictly: Ilchester, whose Roman remains are all but invisible, could not be omitted, and some other hidden sites, such as Athelney Abbey, also find a way in. The guide ranges chronologically from the Palaeolithic period to the close of the Middle Ages, and inevitably is least comprehensive in its medieval coverage. Castles and religious houses are included, but parish churches are generally omitted, and the few churchyard crosses and medieval bridges described by the authors are bound to seem an arbitrary selection. The important omissions from the book, however, are those dictated by the choice of 'new' Somerset as the county to be described, a county without significance in historical terms (and evidently without a future). We are deprived as a result of sites such as Dolebury Warren, Stanton Drew and the Roman baths, and that is surely a pity.

The book is concise, reliable and accessible, and is illustrated with some excellent figures and photographs. It is likely to become a source of immediate reference to those who already know something of the county's archaeology, and a source of inspiration to those wanting to discover more.

TOM MAYBERRY

Richard Coleman-Smith and Terry Pearson, *Excavations in the Donyatt Potteries* (Phillimore, Chichester, 1988), 428 pp.; £40.00.

This book describes the results of excavations, fieldwork and documentary research into the medieval and post-medieval pottery industry at Donyatt in south-west Somerset; it also provides us with the first publication of all the significant Donyatt pots in museums and private collections. This was a formidable and time-consuming task, but the result is indeed a landmark; it is the most important comprehensive survey of any pottery production centre in Britain so far published.

After a description of the geological background, a section by Oliver Rackham suggests that the fuel came from the hedgerows, not the forest. This is an important new idea in view of the popular belief that most industries resulted in the destruction of woodland. Ian Morley's historical account concentrates on the evidence for potter families, including the remarkable continuity of the Norris family's involvement in the Donyatt pottery industry for 200 years from 1676 to 1872. Inventories show that livestock accounted for much of the potters' wealth, so pottery-making was probably a part-time activity. They were basically farmers, as most other potters seem to have been before the introduction of industrial pottery production.

Coleman-Smith and Pearson have combined the documentary evidence with the results of fieldwork and magnetic survey to locate nineteen pottery production sites. Six of these were excavated between 1968 and 1972, and the results are given, with clear plans and descriptions, setting out the sequence for each site. The conservatism of the potters is shown by the use of wood for firing the kilns, which were still of the simple two-flue type until quite late. There is a useful summary, for the general reader, of the kilns and their products, greatly enlivened by the admirable drawings, which suggest how the kilns may have worked, and sketches of the wide range of pottery types produced.

A detailed list is given of the ceramic imports found on the kiln sites, which are

important since more of these foreign shapes were copied at Donyatt than at many other centres. There is also a catalogue of the small finds found at the kiln sites, providing a very useful survey of domestic objects. There are sections on inscriptions, decorative techniques, and distribution, and a comprehensive bibliography.

The main part of the book is a 250-page pottery catalogue, with detailed descriptions and drawings of the pottery excavated from the kilns, and comparisons with material found on consumer sites or surviving in collections. Fabric descriptions are given for the full range, from the coarse-tempered fabrics found in the 13th century clamp kilns, to the refined products of the early 20th century. This catalogue is well organised by form, and follows through the development of shapes, decoration and techniques: a model of how to present such data. This unique sequence, over a considerable period of time, has not been provided for any other pottery production centre in Britain. Over thirty forms of vessel are described, as well as building materials and kiln furniture. The drawings, of some 1,300 vessels, are very clear and well produced, as are the forty-nine excellent black and white photographs and the three colour plates.

Because of the presence of both medieval and post-medieval pottery, this corpus is the most comprehensive catalogue of pottery forms so far produced, and demonstrates the great proliferation in pottery forms from the 16th century onwards. With each shape there are section drawings, with a description of its use and origin, and several references. Although the references are not always the primary examples which might be expected, the range is so wide that for anyone who wishes to look up a pottery form for country pottery, this book is now the best source, rather than the multitude of superficial encyclopedias. It would have been more helpful if the captions for the figures, particularly for the larger groups such as jugs and bowls, had been more informative and included the date range for ease of reference. In view of the other Somerset kilns producing similar types, there might have been more discussion as to why the pottery not found at Donyatt has been assigned to that production centre. Perhaps the term 'Donyatt-type' might have been preferable. Although it would be possible to quibble with some of the detail, this is a most important publication which should be on the shelf of everyone interested in pottery.

J.G. HURST

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