BOOK REVIEWS

Wells Cathedral: Excavations and structural studies, 1978-93, Vols 1 and 2, by Warwick Rodwell. English Heritage Archaeological Reports; cased, 618 pp, 543 figs, xv col. plates. £150. ISBN 1 85074 741 5

The primary purpose of this monograph is to report on the excavations in the Camery, the green south of the choir of Wells cathedral (or quire, as Dr Rodwell has it) and east of the cloister, between 1978 and 1980. However, Dr Rodwell quite rightly considered that it would be pointless to present this evidence separately from that obtained from the programme of structural study of the standing fabric which in many instances is continuous with the below ground remains. Consequently the volumes include studies on the cloister, the present cathedral, other subsidiary structures of the canonry, and, particularly important, the water ways and waterworks that give the town its name. These will not be commented upon further in this review, but are of the highest quality and insight, bringing much new material and conclusions to light, especially on the question of the cloister development.

These studies occupied the period up until1993 and it is not in any way Dr Rodwell's fault that the publication has been delayed until the new millennium. Indeed, that such a detailed and extensive study has appeared this promptly would, in fact, be cause for congratulations. It is astonishing, therefore, to be told that the manuscript was ready for publication in 1994. Without wishing to diminish the achievement of his collaborators, we must recognise that the successful and early conclusion to the post excavation programme is because it was largely a one man project and not the product of a large committee. This also allows one or two personal notes to shine through. I was much struck by the relative absence of the words 'left' and 'right'. Like a Pythonesque drill sergeant, Dr Rodwell more commonly employs 'sinister, dexter'.

This has also resulted in the happily unfashionable structure. Dr Rodwell has presented the evidence in the form of a supported interpretative narrative. The evidence to back his conclusions is brought forward, but he has made no attempt to pretend to spurious objectivity (there is an archive available for those without a life). The excavation evidence is set out in a phase-by-phase descriptive sequence, and references to the appropriate standing building evidence are brought in where necessary. This sometimes leads to limited repetition later in the book, but in such a complex and large project, repetition is not such a bad thing. References back and forward in the text are particularly helpful in this context. Dr Rodwell also puts the site evidence into a broader context, physical, economic and historical. While there are theoretical drawbacks in such an approach – the author's position in the text as the narrator makes it more difficult to argue against his interpretations – the advantage is that we can see both the tremendous technical skill employed in the excavations and the arguments used to interpret the evidence, both during and after excavation. The thought processes and lines of deduction and induction are particularly clear. This book is a model for the thoughtful interrogation of evidence both above and below ground, not only after but during fieldwork.

If there is a weakness it is in the reliance on plausible argument. There are a number of 'must have been's and 'likely that's that become accepted interpretation a few sentences along. This is particularly true of the discussion of the early structures 1–3, the 'mausoleum', the 'cemetery structure' and the 'mortuary chapel'. While the disentangling of the evidence is exemplary, the truncation and dissection of the early levels by later activities means that detailed interpretation can only be heuristic. This leads us to the potentially most important results of the Camery excavations: the identification of a Roman burial chamber and surrounding mausoleum and the claims made as to its seminal influence on the founding, siting and alignment of the Anglo-Saxon minster and later cathedral.

One of the earliest features is a rectangular, stone-lined pit with post settings that is likely to have had a timber predecessor (Structure 1). This much seems established, and although conclusive dating evidence is lacking it does seem that the most likely period for its construction is late Roman or early post-Roman. As to its function or overall plan, the evidence is even poorer. The supposed surrounding structure is represented by extremely fragmentary robber trenches, and the contents of the pit are a special charnel of much later date. The pit is interpreted as the central sunken burial chamber within an outer room or ambulatory of a late Roman style mausoleum. The evidence for this resides less in the primary features of the structures themselves as in the plausible arguments from the influence the structure had on later developments. As the burial pit was carefully emptied and refilled with specially selected bones in the late 10th century, when it was demolished and built over, its original arrangements have to be guessed at. The charnel itself has 14C dates that suggest it originated in the 7th to 10th centuries, and this is the date range of the cemetery to north and west that shares its alignment. It is convincingly suggested that the bones, of up to 50 individuals, may have been the contents of burials in and around the original pit, perhaps within the outer part of the mausoleum. Unfortunately, very little of this area has survived later destruction.

The mausoleum may also have a spatial relationship with the springs to the east, but alignments are not really demonstrated to this reviewer's satisfaction until the buildings of the 10th century.

This all suggests a major significance for the burial pit and structure. Dr. Rodwell would explain this significance by interpreting the mausoleum as a Christian monument of late-Roman date which formed the focus of religious activity which either attracted or gave rise to the religious site which emerges as the 8th-century minster. However, there are no runs of 14C dates and horizontal stratigraphy which provide the continuity seen at Cannington or Henley Wood from late Roman to the 7th or 8th centuries, so such continuity is unproven, if more than possible. It is clear from the excavations, however, that there is more than ephemeral Roman activity in the immediate vicinity of the Camery. It is also possible that, in Somerset, Roman practices might last very much longer than the early 5th century, and the apparent *romanitas* of the structure does not mean it originates in the conventionally Roman period.

Structure 2 is merely a set of two parallel walls, but its early date and relationship to an early group of burials seems clear. It is on a different alignment to the other structures, which suggests the alignment question is a complex one.

Dr Rodwell also sees the relationship of the late Saxon mortuary chapel (Structure 3) to the mausoleum as seminal, pushing the origin of the alignment of the Saxon cathedral back to early post-Roman or Roman times. Yet there is in truth not a very strong relationship. While Structure 3 clearly provides the alignment of all later buildings on the site until the 15th century, it does not align that closely with the 'Roman' burial pit and its outer structure; neither does it share its axis, occupying only one corner. A well-stratified coin dates Structure 3 to the late 10th century at the earliest, while a 14C date suggests that the burials within it are 8th or 9th century. Dr Rodwell argues that Structure 3 was built to enclose a group of older burials in that corner, while the other less important ones were re-interred in the mausoleum pit. This obviously would imply a close and direct relationship between the two structures, and it does seem to be true that

Structure 1 was carefully dismantled to allow the construction of Structure 3. However, the stratigraphical relationship of mortuary chapel to burials is ambiguous and the single14C date of 677–790 may well simply be too early. However, it is undeniable that the earlier structures represent a religious and presumably Christian focus of a date considerably earlier than the founding of the see, possibly well before the 8th-century minster, and that the mortuary chapel replaces them in the 10th century. Whether there is an organic or symbolic connection between the two structures is less clear. An origin in a sub-Roman milieu seems highly likely, but as with most archaeological interpretation of the post-Roman centuries, the verdict is the Scottish 'unproven'. This reviewer has no better ideas, and has a strong suspicion that Dr Rodwell's hypothesis is the right one, but the weaknesses in the argument must be recognised.

What is clear is that the late Saxon chapel of St Mary that grew up on the site, and in its various incarnations survived until the late 15th century, developed directly out of the mortuary chapel and that the Saxon cathedral, founded in 909, shared its alignment. Though the latter is under the cloister and only a tiny portion of its eastern apse was found in the Camery excavations, it is quite clear that the Saxon cathedral does run under the cloister garth and does share the alignment of Structure 3. Thus, an important element of the Saxon layout, its origins, date and alignment, has been confirmed and elucidated.

It is suggested that the structures north and south of St Mary's Chapel are part of Bishop Giso's collegiate buildings, which he built in the third quarter of the 11th century to house the canons in quasi-monastic style. This seems very likely. The rest of the sequence is elegantly disentangled and described: in particular, the evidence for the development, almost rebuild, of the chapel in the 13th century, is clearly laid out. Later changes, culminating in the total demolition of the older structures and the creation of Bishop Stillington's chantry chapel in 1477 on the alignment of the cathedral church and cloister, follow.

The integration of standing building evidence into the excavated data has been remarked upon. Equally informative and requiring a very sharp and careful eye, has been the use made of architectural mouldings, sculpture and building stone geology to both date and inform paper restoration of the buildings which otherwise exist as very little more than foundations, even those sometimes robbed. We might expect no less from Dr Rodwell and Jerry Sampson.

Burial archaeology is used both to inform the broader archaeological interpretation, for the study of burial practices and for a study of the population itself. In particular, a forensic approach was taken to the history of the inhumations after interment, as there were several puzzling features of different burials' degrees of preservation.

We might conclude by saying that the huge number of photographs and drawings are all of the highest quality. Drawings of buried and standing structure are clear and informative; Richard Bryant's drawings of architectural sculpture are both of those and also beautiful. Those with deep enough pockets to actually buy these volumes will indeed have a thing of beauty, as well as scholarship: the rest of us will have to take our turn at the library.

PETER DAVENPORT

Roman Somerset, by Peter Leach. The Dovecote Press, Wimborne, 2001; 133 pp., 74 figs.; £8:95; ISBN 1 874336 93 8

This is a welcome book, the first on Roman Somerset, and written by Peter Leach who has spent much of his working life investigating the archaeology of the county. That it is the first book may be a surprise, as Somerset is rich in Roman remains. Around the towns of Bath and Ilchester the county contains the highest concentrations of villas in Roman Britain and also features the celebrated religious spa at Bath. Yet modern Somerset does not coincide with any

known political or administrative area in Roman Britain, and as Leach points out overlies parts of three immediately pre-Roman tribal areas. For this reason it has escaped scholarly attention.

Peter Leach is comfortable with his subject, and the book is written in an easy and accessible style. It is also well illustrated which is essential in a modern publication. In providing an overview it is appropriate that the book is essentially descriptive. It is not a platform for the launching of new ideas and interpretations, but those presented are up to date. Results from quite recent excavations are also referred to reflecting the fact that the author has his ear close to the ground of Somerset archaeology.

For people living in Somerset and nearby this will be a most useful book to help them understand the Roman archaeology of the county. It explains the pre-Roman background to Somerset and describes the pattern of settlement, economy and religious life. The reader can see how these patterns responded to the very diverse physical landscapes in the county. The contrast between the wetland Levels and Exmoor, just a few miles to the south, must be one of the most extreme in British physical geography!

The book is published by the Dovecote Press and like so many modern publications does not stand alone, but is one of a series. As such it can be compared with Bill Putnam's *Roman Dorset*, originally written twenty years ago but recently reprinted by Dovecote. *Roman Somerset* follows the same formula. The chapter headings are slightly different although similar ground is covered. Overall it is more substantial and superior in content and design to Putnam's work. It ought to be as it is nearly twice the price, although this is more to do with the low price of *Roman Dorset* than the reasonable price for *Roman Somerset*. Indeed, in quality and presentation this book is more appropriately compared with Alan McWhirr's survey of our neighbouring county to the north in *Roman Gloucestershire*, published by Alan Sutton in 1983.

There are two things that let the book down, one minor and the other more significant. In the section on Places to Visit, which is a very good section to have, there are errors in the locations given for objects. The finds from Camerton are in Bristol Museum, except for the military metalwork hoard which is at the British Museum. The Keynsham villa mosaics are stored in the basement of Keynsham Town Hall.

A more significant shortcoming is the poor quality of the index. Even in this relatively short publication sub-entries should have been included. Strings of 19 page references for 'Ilchester' and 16 for 'Durotriges' are most unhelpful to the reader and fall well below the current British Standard. Yet half an index page that could easily have accommodated sub-entries has been left blank. Publisher please note!

Overall then, this is an excellent introduction both for people with a general interest and also for those who want to have a better understanding of the county they live in. It is the kind of publication that could have an extended shelf life if fully revised and updated, rather than be simply reprinted, in ten years time.

STEPHEN CLEWS

Bath Administer'd: Corporation Affairs at the 18th-Century Spa, by Trevor Fawcett, Ruton, 2001, 142 pp, £8.00. ISBN 0 9526326 2 4

Life in Georgian Bath has already been extremely well covered, of course, in the writings of historians and novelists over the past 250 years. It is therefore very much to Mr Fawcett's credit that he has found a fresh way not only of conveying something of the atmosphere of this 18th-century city, but also of adding to our knowledge of the period. *Bath Administer'd* is the third of his books in a growing series published by Ruton – the previous ones being *Voices of Eighteenth-Century Bath* (1995) and *Bath Entertain'd* (1998). A fourth is already in the pipeline.

Bath Administer'd is an impressive, useful and interesting volume – far more so than a casual glance at its cover or title would convey. Based on extensive research from original source material (including the minutes of Bath Council meetings, the Bath Chamberlain's accounts and the early issues of local newspapers), the book examines every aspect of life and work in a city which was tightly controlled by the Mayor and Corporation.

Over 100 entries, listed in alphabetical order, provide a detailed glossary of terms which will be invaluable to historians and writers alike. Clearly outlined, for instance, are the duties of the various officials (Chamberlain, Recorder, Constable, Town Clerk etc.), the functions of local courts (Pie Powder, Quarter Sessions, Requests, Record etc.), the system of control within the market (Supervisors of Flesh and Fish, Ale Tasters etc.) and the responsibilities of those working at the hot water baths (Guides, Pumpers, Sergeants-at-Arms etc.). Less well-known areas, too, are covered – Friendly Societies, Insurance, Loyalist Association, Processing, Society of Guardians, Weighing Engine etc.). Unlike the vague generalisations which often appear in books on the period, the descriptions provided here are lucid, accurate and concise.

Quite apart, however, from the book's usefulness to scholars, it also provides a most fascinating and enjoyable account for the general reader, who can dip into those sections which catch the eye. He might, for instance, be interested to learn that the Beadles kept boisterous sedan chairmen in order and whipped vagrants on top of a cart; that the ducking stool on Boatstall Quay was used in 1717 to duck Joan Fletcher at the Mayor's behest; that the Bath Fire Office was offering a reward in 1767 to the first fire engine to arrive on the scene of a fire; that the Gaoler had no salary but made his living by charging inmates a tariff of fees for special privileges (such as beds) or services; that drunks and brawlers were locked up overnight in the Constables' Cage in the market place; that the Mayor, faced by the threat of arson, called out a posse of 15 petty constables in 1730 to make a nocturnal sweep of the area, picking up 40 vagrants on suspicion; that the first proper sewer in the city was laid in 1718 in the area of what became know as Orange Grove; or that all householders were required by statute from 1707 to hang out a lantern to assist in the drive for street lighting.

This book, illustrated by 24 drawings and documents and priced most reasonably, is strongly recommended.

JOHN WROUGHTON

Death of a King, by Roy Martin Haines, 2002. Scotforth, Scotforth Books. xv + 155 pp, £12.95. ISBN 1-904244-00-9

Subtitled 'An account of the supposed escape and afterlife of Edward of Carnarvon, formerly Edward II, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Aquitaine', this is an examination of what happened to Edward after his capture and imprisonment in 1327. The author describes it as 'not a historical novel but history without the baffling apparatus of footnotes and critical apparatus beloved of the historian but anathema to the general reader, and enlightened by original sources in translation'.

The book starts with an odd diversion to Westminster Abbey, irrelevant to the theme of the book except for providing the author with inspiration in the adjoining Ashburnham House. It then settles down to a brief, straightforward account of the politics and personae of the reign of Edward II, followed by an analysis of the contemporary accounts of the deposition, imprisonment and death of the king. This moves on to the presentation of cases against all the leading figures who were involved with the death of the king, starting with Queen Isabella, and her lover, Roger Mortimer, earl of March, and spending some time over the travels of Sir Thomas Gurney, condemned to death for the murder. Gurney escaped abroad before being captured and dying in

custody on his way back to England, but on whose orders he committed the deed is more problematic, and thoroughly discussed. Next to be considered is the hypothesis, based on an Italian letter, surviving only in a later copy, which suggests that Edward escaped from captivity and travelled to Italy where he spent the rest of his life as a hermit. The author manages to tie most of the strands of his story into a convincing solution, which should not be revealed here. He has a fascinating story to tell and for the most part handles his material well.

Each chapter starts with quotations from sources, and while contemporary ones are valuable, it is a little difficult to see the point of quotations from the poet Thomas Grey, or Vita Sackville-West's description of the dungeon of Berkeley Castle. It is also generously illustrated in black and white, but here again the inclusion of pictures of Elizabeth I, Ashburnham House or effigies of the forefather of the murderer seem superfluous. Although the book does not have the 'baffling apparatus' of footnotes, it does includes a detailed who's who, sketch maps, bibliography and family trees, which would normally be classified as part of the 'critical apparatus' the author claims to eschew. Most readers will be glad of them. Plenty of good history for the general reader is written both with and without footnotes, but rarely can it have been done, as here, without an index.

ANNE CRAWFORD

Queen Charlton: Perambulation by G.A.J. Loxton, 1999, illustrated by J Connell Loxton, 120 pp; ISBN 0 9537458 0 5.
Ston Easton: Perambulation by G.A.J. Loxton, 2000, illustrated by J Connell Loxton. 185 pp, ISBN 0 9537458 1 3.

These two volumes are thoroughly researched and well presented histories of the two northern Mendip villages of Queen Charlton and Ston Easton; they are both refreshingly unpretentious and down to earth. The author 'once a boy at plough looking up the farming ladder' is well qualified to appreciate the documentary evidence of earlier farming practices described in the historical sources and to interpret the agrarian terminology. He says that 'until recent times village life was shaped by agricultural activities' but both volumes inherently expand the idea that the entire rural landscape was so created.

The principal source material for these volumes are the Hippisley Papers in the Somerset Record Office but manor roll books, field names, probate inventories and ecclesiastical court records, amongst many other sources, were examined. Each volume is structured thematically but, with a passing nod towards a narrative chronology, starts with an overview of the prehistoric evidence. Queen Charlton has twenty chapters while Ston Easton has twenty nine. These include such headings as The Medieval Village (1086–1485); Chapel and Church (1308–1930); Church Law (1600–1727); Quit Rent and Rack Rent (1672–1710); Old, Orphaned and Unemployed (1600–1900); Coal and the Bristol Connection (1600–1930). We are told in the introductions that these are 'reference books', in addition to being 'histories', and the chapter headed 'Houses (1710–1900)', in the Ston Easton volume, is a good example with succinctly laid out data and map extracts. As reference works they will be of considerable benefit to local historians of the region. I was particularly pleased to see local names for farming practice, equipment and animals recorded in the Glossary; a part of our language as directly threatened as the way of life they sprang from.

There is an almost seamless shift between the presentation of historical data and the later, more intimate local history. The Queen Charlton volume includes a chapter on 'Village Life at the Turn of the Century (1889–1918)' by the author's father, Joseph Loxton, whose detailed accounts of harvesting and breaking horses to saddle and shafts might, with the removal of

some minor anachronisms, be as easily transposed into the chapter on 'The Medieval Village'. As individual case studies these two books are recommended reading for anyone interested in local history and the development of the countryside; for anyone with such interests living in, or near to, these two villages I would have thought they were essential reading.

RICHARD MCDONNELL

Cadbury Castle, Somerset. The Later Prehistoric and Early Historic Archaeology, J. Barrett, P.W.M. Freeman and A. Woodward, English Heritage; 389 pp, illus, £45. ISBN 1 85074 716 4

Many of the largest and most significant archaeological excavations have been plagued by lengthy delays in publication or even by not being written up at all. This work, alongside its companion volume by Leslie Alcock on the early medieval occupation (published 1995), represents the final publication of Alcock's excavations at Cadbury between 1966 and 1973, although the fate of the early prehistoric evidence remains uncertain, as this volume begins with the first enclosure of the hill in the later Bronze Age. The ongoing South Cadbury Environs Project will also provide important landscape context for the hilllfort. Although the Camelot Research Committee wanted primarily to investigate the Dark Age activity on the site, all periods were recorded 'fairly and impartially'. The result is a very important record of a late prehistoric hillfort with 'some of the most complex and well preserved Iron Age deposits ever excavated in Britain'.

The complexity of the site record has obviously put a strain on the authors who described the period since the post excavation began in 1991 as 'the re-excavation of an excavation archive'. This explains the somewhat odd structure of the book which, after setting out the research and physical background, spends most of its pages on detailed discussion of the site chronology, the rampart sections and the south-west gate. The large excavations of the interior are presented in a much shorter section and as a result are much more accessible to the general reader. The finds reports are well organised according to the evidence they provide on how the human body was clothed and fed, the tools and materials used and the waste produced. Sadly the enormous bone assemblage was only briefly assessed for the publication due to the ill health of Barbara Noddle whose comprehensive summary will only appear in the archive. The geophysical work and RCHME contour surveys are however a welcome addition.

The volume is an excellent analytical interpretation of the excavation record, differing in some conclusions from previous publications. Anyone looking for the final word on the 'massacre levels' in the south-west gate will be pleased by the detailed analysis of the events, disheartened by the correct conclusion that it is impossible to link it to any particular historical event in the 1st century AD and will probably disagree with Anne Woodward's comment that the exact date 'is largely irrelevant'. Other highlights include the evidence for Roman reuse of the ramparts alongside the occupation of the barrack blocks and the reinterpretation of Alcock's Anglo-Saxon church foundation as a Roman temple robbed out and backfilled in the 5th or 6th centuries AD).

The site chronology was obviously a major problem in producing the publication as there was little dateable metalwork and the radiocarbon dates were relatively useless. The main phasing scheme is therefore derived from Woodward's analysis of the pottery but in addition to her ten ceramic assemblages there are 14 numbered episodes at the south-west gate, a confusing coding of the rampart deposits and the use of the terms 'early, middle and later Cadbury'. Readers are advised to photocopy the chronological table on p. 42 and keep it by them at all times if they wish to understand how the various terms relate to each other and to actual calendar years

(remember them?). A good summary would overcome many of these problems but in its stead there is a short passage by John Barrett second guessing the mentality of the late prehistoric inhabitants, which will come across as deep insight or pretentious babbling depending on your archaeological leanings. Overall the volume represents an excellent interpretation of excavations of great significance to prehistoric archaeology but it functions far less well as an accessible presentation to the general reader.

RICHARD BRUNNING

Mills of the Isle and its tributaries, Derrick Warren. SIAS Survey No.15, published by the Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society, 2001. ISBN 0 9533539 4 X. £4.50

The River Isle rises on the Blackdown Hills near Chard and flows north-east for some 14 miles to its confluence with the Parrett at Langport. For centuries the river and its tributaries have been harnessed to provide power for a diverse range of enterprises.

The author's approach is to list the mill sites, as comprehensively as possible, together with their NGR map reference. An informative historical account follows drawn from a wide range of sources, from the Domesday Survey to oral accounts within living memory. The author's invaluable site work reinforces this, and he often includes photographs and large-scale maps. Finally a glossary explains milling terminology and processes.

What develops is a remarkable picture of how important mills were in the economy of this area until relatively recently. The woollen industry that was so significant in the Middle Ages, but was practically extinct by the 19th century, relied on waterpower for weaving and fulling cloth. Mills ground bark for tanning vats. Flax grown in the area was dressed and spun and woven into sailcloth, and of course mills processed grain for baking and brewing and animal feed. Most unusually Nimmer Mills near Chard was the site of Coates brushworks, which produced all manner of brushes from bone and bristle.

This attractive little book in the now standard SIAS survey format provides an approachable and authoritative study of this subject.

DAVID WALKER

The Voices of Morebath. Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village, by Eamon Duffy. Yale University Press, 2001. 232pp; illus; price not stated. ISBN 0 300 09185 0

Eamon Duffy, Reader in Church History at Cambridge, has based this book on a detailed study of a remarkable documentary source: the parish accounts of Morebath kept by the parish priest, Christopher Trychay, whose incumbency spanned the period 1520–74 which included the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, the Marian reaction and the Elizabethan religious settlement. This thinly populated remote Devon parish on the border with Somerset had connections with that county (Barlinch priory was endowed with the manor and rectorial tithes, and the Sydenhams of neighbouring Dulverton, who were the nearest gentry family, had some influence upon Morebath's affairs); and extracts from Trychay's accounts were published by this Society in 1883 (*SANH* 29) and by the Somerset Record Society (vol. 4) in 1890. The appeal of this new book will not be confined to readers in Devon and Somerset, however.

Trychay's accounts were transcribed by J. Erskine Binney and published in 1903–4 in a supplementary volume of *Devon Notes and Queries*. Duffy regards Binney's version as 'basically

reliable' when compared with the original MS in the Devon Record Office, but he has identified some errors: notably a mistranscription which has long obscured remarkable evidence that several men of the parish took part in the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549, with the material support of their priest and fellow parishioners. The accounts contain Trychay's fair-copy version of the separate accounts of various parochial officers or organisations such as the High Wardens (churchwardens), the Maidens, the Young Men and the wardens of the 'stores' (funds) associated with images and lights devoted to a variety of saints (Trychay himself introduced and successfully encouraged the cult of St Sidwell in the parish), together with additional material such as records of parish rates and impositions for military and other purposes. Duffy regards these accounts as more than a mere exercise in book-keeping, however, for they also appear to have had a propaganda function. The draft accounts of the various parochial officers were apparently read out before the assembled parishioners at meetings (several per year) over which Trychay presided, and he used these occasions and the fair-copy accounts which he drew up to encourage the inhabitants in their devotion to their parish church and to stimulate community feeling. At times the records seem to contain the actual spoken words used by Trychay and some of his parishioners at these meetings: these are 'The Voices' of Morebath, although the dominant 'voice' is that of Trychay himself.

The accounts show that the organisational structure of Morebath parish was remarkably elaborate in the late medieval period, and at any one time a relatively high proportion of the small adult population held office of some kind. The accounts also contain much information about late medieval religious practices in Morebath and the extent to which ordinary parishioners were prepared to contribute (through 'ales', gifts, bequests and caring for the 'church sheep', for example) to the cost of the ritualistic trappings associated with them. Some of these practices were being affected, however, as early as the 1530s by the Henrician Reformation, in particular by the 1538 Injunctions which attacked superstitious devotion to images. Interestingly, Simon Heynes, the unpopular reforming dean of Exeter, seems to have had advance knowledge of these Injunctions and to have begun enforcing them before they were formally promulgated. Duffy's book leaves little doubt that in the 16th century remote-seeming localities were quickly made aware of what was required of them by central government

Trychay was clearly a conservative priest in a conservative parish, and the successive religious changes of Henry VIII's reign must have created a sense of disorientation which quickly intensified under the impact of the much more radical Edwardian Reformation. Duffy's close examination of Trychay's accounts reveals that five men of Morebath, equipped and financed by the parish, joined the rebels of 1549 at their camp at St David's Down near Exeter, of whom only two seem to have returned. After the crushing of the rebellion, someone (Trychay?) attempted to obliterate the word 'camp' in the accounts (presumably to mislead the authorities about the parish's involvement in these events), and Binney eventually misread 'sent davys downe' as 'sent Denys downe'.

After the traumas of Edward VI's reign, the Marian reaction was evidently congenial to Trychay and his conservative parishioners, but the accession of Elizabeth presented further religious challenges. On this occasion there was no outright rebellion and Morebath's ageing but still conscientious parish priest seems to have gradually adopted an inward conformity to match the outward compliance demanded by the Crown, although Duffy's view of Trychay's personal feelings at this time perhaps needs stronger supporting evidence.

Many aspects of parish life during the 16th century are manifested in the Morebath accounts (the church was burgled on two occasions, there was a prolonged dispute over payment of the parish clerk, and a cucking-stool for erring women was obtained in 1557, for example, and the parish was clearly affected by the imposition of secular responsibilities and increased financial burdens by the state during the course of the 16th century) but the major theme is that of the local consequences of successive, sometimes contradictory, religious policies adopted by central

government. This study of the impact of momentous religious changes on a particular rural community should be of great interest not only to local historians in Devon and Somerset but to a much wider readership, and it has relevance to the continuing 'Debate on the English Reformation' in academic circles: the picture which it paints is consistent with the view that the Reformation was essentially imposed from above and that the broad conversion of the nation to Protestantism was not achieved until the later 16th century, although Duffy makes the point that the case of Morebath does not prove an entire thesis because there was no such thing as a 'typical' Tudor village from which national inferences might be drawn. Many ordinary people in the east of England welcomed Protestantism, whereas the South-West was conservative. *The Voices of Morebath* provides a vivid and fascinating insight into what happened in one parish in the latter part of the country.

At many points throughout the book Duffy provides useful additional information to clarify matters referred to in Trychay's accounts, and he takes care to place events in Morebath in their wider historical context. The book is well written and includes many transcribed passages from the accounts, each accompanied, helpfully, by a version with modern spelling. The book is also well produced and the illustrations include several colour plates of landscapes and buildings (including the church which was heavily restored in the 19th century) and reproductions, albeit on rather a small scale, of parts of the original script of the accounts. There is also a tabulated list of the various parish officials and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

MARK MCDERMOTT

The Field Archaeology of Exmoor, by Hazel Riley and Robert Wilson-North. English Heritage, 2001; xii+192 pp. 190 illustrations, many in colour. Price not stated. ISBN 1 873592 58 2.

This book presents the results of the detailed survey work carried out by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now part of English Heritage) which began in 1993. The outcome is extremely attractive with colour illustrations on almost every page, and covering the area of the National Park from earliest times to the remains of military activity during the Second World War. The book begins with a survey of Exmoor's landscape and the efforts of earlier workers to understand its, often subtle, archaeology. A chronological approach is then taken rather than the more confusing thematic format often adopted for this type or work. The earliest periods concentrate on the cairns, barrows, stone rows, circles and alignments for which Exmoor is well known but bring together the much more limited information from flint scatters. There are detailed plans (in characteristic Royal Commission style) of many of these together with distribution maps superimposed over the topography of the moor. The fragmentary evidence (compared, say to Dartmoor) of field systems is also discussed.

The later prehistoric period is dominated by discussion of hillforts, hillslope enclosures and similar defended sites, which leads on to the similar remains of Roman forts. The two well known signal stations are discussed and the newly discovered (by this survey) fort site at Rainsbury published for the first time, with earthwork plans and aerial photographs. The evidence for Roman iron-working is reported although this is still at an early stage of research.

Medieval Exmoor is dominated by discussion of the ebb and flow of settlements that led to the abandonment of many hamlets and the expansion of others. Field systems similarly show the abandonment of once cultivated land. Castles, monasteries and industrial sites all get a mention (and often a detailed plan) but it is the wider landscape that forms the backbone of the study. The post-medieval period incorporates studies of standing buildings and there are several phase plans showing the development of particular farmsteads. The influence of large landowners, such as the Knights and Aclands, is discussed as is the evidence for the 19th-century iron-

mining on the Brendon Hills and other industries such as lime-burning, stone quarrying and early tourism.

The chronological summary is brought to an end by a short chapter entitled 'The 20th century' the first half of which concentrates on the wartime use of the area. The second half is a, now seemingly obligatory, description by the local authority archaeologist of their work.

The text concludes with three appendixes. The first gives the locations (and National Monuments Record identification numbers) of all the sites shown on the distribution maps – a solution to an often-irritating problem. The second gives details of the radiocarbon dates used in the text and the third lists the detailed reports produced in the course of the project. This is followed by a single page of glossary, possibly the weakest part of the book, and an index.

In addition to the main text there are 19 'landscape studies' focusing in detail on small areas of the moor to illustrate points made in the main text. The content of these is excellent, as is the idea, but their placing within the main text (separated from it by only a thin green line) can be confusing and interrupts the flow. Jane Brayne has contributed several paintings – a few reconstructions which add to the text but also several modern landscapes which contribute less.

In short, it is hard to criticise this book which is a magnificent justification for the years of cold, wet survey work. If it has a fault it is that there is a slight civil service feel to it which means, for instance that every map is accompanied by a lengthy Ordnance Survey copyright notice (in addition to the even longer two at the beginning) and that there is a map showing the locations of all the OS 1:10,000 map sheets used in the survey. There is also a reluctance to refer to local sources of information – the reader being directed to the National Monuments Record in Swindon in all cases. These however are minor irritations in a book that should be on the shelf of every local archaeologist and all lovers of Exmoor.

CHRIS WEBSTER

"Gie I Burtle": a village apart. by C.S. John Sparkes. ELSP for John Sparkes, Cossington, 2001; 256pp; illustrated; paperback; £10. ISBN 0 903341 62 0

The air of geniality and good humour exuded by the bewhiskered countenance on the final page of this book gives an accurate portrayal of its author's character, but any further hint that it belongs to an ignorant yokel is highly deceptive. He makes no attempt to emulate the historical scholarship in Pamela Slocombe's recent book on neighbouring Mark, but he does provide acutely observant insight into a distinctive and cohesive community, especially in the generations at the further end of living memory. There is a demonstration by life-long practitioners of the precise art of cutting peat blocks by hand. We are told that as recently as the 1950s 'many families made a living by milking three or four cows supplemented by casual labour, a good garden and skilful use of a twelve bore shotgun', while for just over a century the railway was a pervasive presence, both as an employer, and as the principal artery for both people and goods between Burtle and the outside world. Home-grown social activity and entertainment has been particularly vigorous, Burtle being known more than anything else for its Silver Band. Is there something which this independent, democratic sort of community, with no dominant squire and parson, shares with many pit villages and makes it fertile ground for music-making?

John Sparkes is trenchant and serious in places, with strictures on housing, employment, transport, education and nature conservation policies insensitively and inappropriately enforced by outsiders, but good humour is never far away. My favourite anecdote concerns the two Burtle men who went fishing off the south coast, with initial disappointment and eventual spectacular success. 'Better mark the spot Bert', said Jack. 'OK', said Bert. As they were getting into the car, Jack asked, 'How diss thee mark thic spot, Bert?' 'I put a cross on the back

o' the boat', said Bert. 'You bliddy o' vule', chastised Jack, 'We might'n'ave the same boat nex' time'. As for the title of the book, 'Many years ago a young man from Burtle visited London ... When he arrived back the villagers were keen to learn about his impressions of the big city. 'Oh, Lunnon be alright,' he said, 'But gie I Burtle'.'

DAVID BROMWICH

Our Millennium Book, 'by the people of Priston and Inglesbatch'. Priston Parish Council, 2001. 156pp; illus; price not stated.

This Millennium Book (which was listed but not reviewed in the review article 'Somerset Millennium Books', *SANH* 144, 197-206) is very much a local effort by the inhabitants of the village of Priston and the neighbouring hamlet of Inglesbatch (in Englishcombe), two communities with traditionally close ties. According to the Introduction, the intention was not to produce 'in a formal sense, a history of the two villages', although the book does include a short account of the descent of the manor of Priston and a useful section on the parish church, and piecemeal information about the 19th and 20th centuries is to be found elsewhere in the text. Much of the book consists of a series of short pieces about the houses of the two settlements written by their occupants, who often feature in the accompanying photographs. The historical and architectural information contained in these pieces is of varying usefulness, but the contributions frequently refer to recent alterations (including a number of barn conversions as farming patterns have changed) and contain information about the present occupants themselves, including their families, occupations and perspectives on life. Two of the themes to emerge are the growth of commuting to Bristol or Bath and the desire by incomers for a rural idyll with security and a sense of community for themselves and their children. Interspersed with these contributions are some personal reminiscences of the recent past and short sections on a variety of local organisations and activities. The book is well produced and contains numerous plates (including some 'archive' photographs) and there are maps of the locations of the houses referred to in the text. As with a number of other Somerset Millennium Books, this book will be of particular interest to future local historians seeking insights into these two communities in the late 20th century.

MARK MCDERMOTT

Medieval Town Planning: A Modern Invention?, by Tony Scrase. University of the West of England, Faculty of the Built Environment, Occasional Paper no. 12, Bristol 2002; 132 pp, 26 illus; information on availability from the faculty; ISBN 1 85043 294 8

This short book suggests that archaeologists tend to approach the medieval townscape with preconceptions based on modern concepts of town planning. We divide the evidence into organic and planned growth; we tend to think in terms of town administrations having an overall concept of what they are aiming for and purposefully taking on the appropriate agents to bring their idea to life; and we overvalue the meaning of rectilinearity. Our interest in planning has meant that we have missed the point about urban change, and successive chapters illustrate what that point is by looking at examples from all over Europe as well as some familiar ones from our region.

The book starts with an entertaining chapter showing that modern concepts of town planning are sometimes in turn based on false assumptions about the pre-modern city. Apparently there are textbooks on town planning in which the medieval city is thought of as an aesthetic concept which arrived more or less fully formed and underwent little or no change. Interestingly town

planning, when it came into being in the late 19th century, sought to give itself gravitas by discovering for itself a (fictitious) origin in the Roman and medieval city. The next chapter points out that regular layouts were commonplace in the medieval period and need not arouse excitement. Market-based or grid-based plans, the author suggests, are simply differences in the scale of the ambition of the landowner to make money. Rectilinear layouts were an accidental by-product of laying out streets and areas piecemeal, rather than, as is often imagined, an incompetent attempt to achieve parallelism as part of a town plan. Subsequent chapters suggest a new explanatory framework for medieval towns. This is a behaviourist model in which the town form is seen as subjected to forces of change, stasis and power leading to different outcomes.

In the course of the author's main theme – terminological precision – we are taken on a tour of the medieval city that is full of information. The distinction is made between the foundation and enlargement of towns and their regulation. The conclusion is that the term 'town planning' is unhelpful and that the term 'organic growth' should be avoided as more or less meaningless. A modern translation of much of what went on in a medieval city's administration would better be estate management than town planning, while modern and medieval urban regulation should be seen as different things. Most of the town fabric was provided by individual householders and most of the control of urban activity was by the town authorities in response to complaints by householders about their neighbours. The actors creating the medieval town were its inhabitants rather than its authorities.

Our real aim, the author suggests, should be to try to understand the medieval town on its own terms. While this booklet does get to grips with the essential role of profit in the development of the medieval town, it is rather inclined to view the regulatory process as politically neutral – just a concern to keep things clean and tidy. This view tends to extract the city authorities from the struggle and place them on a higher plane, which is itself rather a modern view. This obscures one aspect of the interlocking dynamics of power in the medieval town.

There's no doubt that analysis of town plans and analysis of documents have shifted the archaeology of the medieval town onto a new level, and this little booklet is a useful, and entertaining, view of the process. However, it may well be time to move on from thinking that plan analysis is all we have to do. After all this isolates the town from its surrounding countryside; the next step must be to abandon that odd distinction between urban and rural archaeology.

PETER ELLIS

The Diary & Memoirs of John Allen Giles, edited by David Bromwich. Somerset Record Society, vol. 86, 2000. x + 638 pp, 1 fig., £20; ISBN 0 901732 34 6; ISSN 1335-4698

The Revd John Allen Giles, 1808-1884, 'editor and translator' (DNB), was born into a family of minor gentry from Mark, near Bridgwater, and was the elder brother of Charles Edmund Giles, architect, and founding secretary of the SANHS. Academically outstandingly, he won a Somerset scholarship to Charterhouse and in due course a Bath and Wells scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Here he gained a double first, the fellowship which followed it, and later his DCL as a Vinerian Scholar. Meanwhile, having broken off a career in the law under pressure from his family, he had taken holy orders, but more as a qualification than as a vocation. Three years of life as a leisured gentleman in Bridgwater writing and pursuing his literary studies proved to be 'no occupation sufficient for me', and in 1834 he 'began seriously to look for some public appointment either literary or scholastic'. In March the same year, now married to Anna Dickinson, he was elected headmaster of Camberwell Collegiate School, and two years later, aged only 28 and 'eminently distinguished in the University of Oxford,' applied successfully for the headship of the City of London School. However, as he freely admits, the

four years in this appointment was of no benefit either to him or the school. In 1854 the combination of a naiveté in his dealings with the world which one observes in the diary – for example a letter out of the blue to the Duke of Buccleuch asking him to give his son a nomination to a public school – and the 'peculiarities of manner and disposition' ascribed to him by his biographer in the DNB, which led to his resignation from the City of London headmastership, were to bring about an extraordinary episode in the middle of his life. When serving as curate of Bampton, in contravention of an ancient and obsolete law he conducted a marriage a few minutes before 8 a.m., and was reported to the Bishop by a vindictive parish clerk. The Bishop, recently offended by a publication of Giles' on the age and authenticity of the Old Testament, took no steps to deter a zealous clerk from instituting proceedings, and in March 1855 Giles was sentenced to twelve months in Oxford gaol. (This, fortunately, was not only reasonably comfortable, but was soon commuted to a few weeks – and attracted universal sympathy.) The remainder of his life was spent either taking private pupils, or as a parish priest. In 1876, when in his last post as vicar of Sutton, he purchased Churchill Court, near his birthplace, and divided his time between Surrey and Somerset until his death in 1884. Giles was a man of enormous energy, and when not working or writing would be travelling extensively, mostly on the continent.

This book, assembled in the last year of his life 'for the use of none but my own family', takes the form of memoirs of his youth and schooldays, and, from his Oxford days onwards, extracts from his diary and correspondence. In spite of its severe SRS livery it is totally at odds with his forbidding and long-forgotten literary output, which comprised mostly the translation of classical, Anglo-Saxon and medieval texts, and school books on history and the classics – the list takes up six pages in the introduction. The very fault which his DNB biographer finds in his writings – hastiness – gives the memoirs a spontaneous freshness: anecdotes of and about his grandfather and father, friends, neighbours and servants; a brief period at Dorchester Grammar School, where Whackford Squeers would have been proud of the undernourishment and flogging, and numerous schoolboy adventures, japes and scrapes with echoes of Tom Brown. And Giles has edited down the diary in order to maintain the reader's interest. Work and day-to-day routine are hardly touched on, mishaps minor and major are weathered philosophically, and there is a wealth of anecdotes curious and humorous, extracts from newspapers which caught his eye, accounts of meetings with many notable figures in the literary and clerical world, encounters with strangers on his travels, including reminiscences of the Napoleonic wars (from officers from both sides) and of the Crimea, coaching accidents, crime, transcripts of trials and observations on his wide-ranging interests: archaeology, architecture, linguistics, water supplies and reform of the Imperial system – he advocated the very division of the pound into 100 parts which came about a hundred years later – and throughout that attention to detail and observation of trivia which bring a diary to life.

With a scholarly and informative introduction by the editor, this is a notable addition to the growing list of diaries of Somerset clerics in publication.

DAVID WORTHY

SHORT REVIEWS

The Shapwick Treasure, by Stephen Minnitt. Somerset County Museums Service. 2001. 24 pp., 37 figs. ISBN 0 86183 360 0

A popular description of aspects of the Shapwick Treasure, found in 1998. Sections deal with the Roman background; the finding of the hoard and the resulting survey and mini excavation which revealed a hitherto unknown villa; the 1996 Treasure Act; and, the main text section, the

coins themselves. A final section puzzles over the unusual find context (in the corner of a room in the villa).

Somerset Stories of the Supernatural, by Roger Evans; Countryside Books, Newbury, 2001; 123 pp; £7:95; ISBN 1 85306 711 3

The author, a lecturer and local historian, began this collection when asked to tell ghost stories at a Halloween party in the Levels. Since then his story-telling role has expanded and, in the process of giving talks all over the county, he has collected new ones. This book presents a selection of the stories, some present day, from his collection.

A Somerset Pomona: The Cider Apples of Somerset, by Liz Copas; Dovecote Press, Wimborne, 2001; 79pp, many illustrations; £9:95; ISBN 1 874336 87 3

This scholarly review of Somerset cider-making, written by a professional, looks, in Part I, at the history of cider-making especially its decline in the late 19th century and its revival due largely to the National Fruit and Cider Institute at Long Ashton; and at the different apple types. These latter are described in detail in Part II (there are 88 of them), while Part III adds supporting charts and tables.

The Glastonbury Canal: From Glastonbury to the Sea, by Geoffrey Body and Roy Gallop; Fiducia Press, Bristol, 2001; 48pp, illus; ISBN 0 946217 08 4

The Glastonbury canal was opened in 1833 but its life was short – its last successful year being 1853 when it was mainly carrying materials for the construction of the railway that made it redundant. The origins of the canal scheme, its construction, use, and economics are described in detail while an appendix traces the route today. There are excellent photographs of the main features along the route as well as other illustrations. The book is in A5 format allowing it to be carried in the field.

Smuggling on the Exmoor Coast 1680-1859, by John Travis; The Exmoor Society, Dulverton, 2001; 112pp, 35 figs; ISBN 1 899010 60 2

The book illustrates the history of smuggling on the Exmoor coast with a number of set-piece accounts of incidents and individuals. These are presented in chronological order, the details coming principally from the Customs records held by the PRO. An introduction sets the scene and explains the wider history of smuggling.

Collieries of Somerset and Bristol, by John Cornwell; Landmark Publishing, Ashbourne, 2001; 112pp; £14:95; ISBN 1 84306 029 9

An account of the National Coal Board period from 1947 to 1973 when the closure of Kilmersdon and Writhlington Colliery ended coalmining in the region. Each of the 13 collieries is briefly described, the texts being accompanied by plans and photographs. The author notes that many NCB records of these collieries have since been lost or destroyed. The intention of the book is as much to stand as a testament to the workforce of this period as to act as a record.

Donald Ayres' Exmoor, by Donald Ayres; Halsgrove, Tiverton, 2001; 144pp; ISBN 1 84114 123 2

The main part of the book is colour reproductions of over 100 of the author's paintings of Exmoor scenes; there is also an autobiographical text and an informative section on the author's techniques.

Downhead, Landscape of Distinction, edited by Penny Stokes, Shepton Mallet, 2000, 84pp, 103 figs; ISBN 0 947481 01 6

An outstanding parish survey which follows an introductory chapter with successive period chapters some of which provide new and interesting information on the known monuments. These are followed by a chapter looking at themes and topics: quarrying, water management, hedgerows and woodlands, roads and tracks, churches (including a good section on the Methodist church), population, and schools. There is also a chapter of management recommendations. This is an excellent, well illustrated and well researched summary of data collected from fieldwork and documentary analysis conducted in a focused way.

PETER ELLIS