

Reviews

Edited by ALAN TYLER

David Wilson, Alan Bagnall and Beryl Taylor, *Report on the Excavation of a Romano-British Site in Wortley, South Gloucestershire*, British Archaeological Report British Series 591 (Oxford, Archaeopress, 2014). iv + 222 pp., numerous illustrations. Cardcovers, £48.00 [ISBN: 9781407312255]

The chance discovery in 1981 of a piece of mosaic flooring whilst building a fence in the hamlet of Wortley, just outside Wotton-under-Edge, led a group of local enthusiasts to explore the findspot and thereafter persuade the University of Keele to adopt the site for a training excavation between 1983 and 1996. Production of this report has evidently been a labour of love for the authors who, amongst other tasks, must have spent countless hours reconstructing the decorative schemes of painted wall plaster from numerous small fragments. The results of their labours are presented in this fully-illustrated report which places the excavation results on record, a feat not always accomplished by every voluntary (or indeed professional) group. For this the authors deserve considerable praise. The report does, however, suffer from a number of omissions. For instance, the overall site plans are of ‘block’ type rather than more detailed ones which show exactly what was found and the limits of investigation. This is surprising as detailed stone-by-stone plans were presented in the interim reports. The contexts in which the artefacts were found are also not routinely presented, and the pottery in particular suffers from a lack of quantification. Finally, as will become apparent, interpretation of the findings is not straightforward and readers may be disappointed that the concluding discussion occupies less than half a page. Nevertheless much of value can still be gained from this report and the site is both fascinating and important.

The earliest structure revealed was a masonry house, with no evidence for preceding timber buildings (although that is not to say that they were not present on other parts of the site). The house was of courtyard plan and indeed, if there were rooms on all four sides, potentially of peristyle type. Ground-probing radar gives little indication of structures on the north side of the courtyard, but this may be due to a lack of responsiveness to this technique rather than a true absence. Indeed we might reasonably expect some richly-appointed rooms here, including a main reception room, which would have benefited from the south-facing aspect. If the house was indeed of peristyle design then this would be noteworthy as houses of this plan were not that commonly adopted for Romano-British villas. The Berkeley Street house in Gloucester provides a local urban example of 2nd-century date.

The rooms excavated in the south range were not of particular status, while to the east was a modest bath suite of simple row-type plan, but with an abnormally large cold bath or swimming pool (c.13.7 m long by 2 m wide) which seems out of proportion to the other rooms. The villa at Eccles in Kent affords perhaps the best British comparison. There a 2nd-century cold bath, 13.4 × 3.4 m, was flanked on three sides by corridors, but the whole bath suite was on a much more substantial scale than that at Wortley. Another unusual aspect of the house was a cellar in the west range, which was equipped with splay windows, niches, painted wall plaster and a curious

cruciform arrangement of stone-lined channels (presumably for drainage) below a solid mortar floor. The room above the cellar, to judge from the wall plaster from the infill of the cellar, was also of some opulence and perhaps contained a plastered household shrine. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the cellar was used for ritual activity.

Considerable uncertainty attaches to the chronology of the house and in particular it is difficult to ascertain how the dates proposed by the authors for the various phases have been derived. There is some 1st-century pottery from the site, but whether the construction of the masonry house is as early as *c.*AD 60 as the authors suggest is highly debatable. The only useful dating evidence from the house as reported is that there was Antonine samian in the backfilling of a drain leading from the baths; 'post AD 200' pottery beneath the mortar floors of Rooms 9 and 10, and that the final courtyard surface was laid after the loss of a coin of Tetricus I and thus after *c.*270. Overall one suspects that there was occupation on the site from the second half of the 1st century, but the masonry house may date to the second half of the 2nd or first part of the 3rd century. Occupation of the house continued into the first half of the 4th century, but the cellar had been infilled and the south range given over to light industrial activities by the middle of that century to infer from the absence from those deposits of shell-tempered ware which appears in the Cotswolds from the 360s. It does not necessarily indicate 5th-century activity as the authors suggest. But activity continued elsewhere on the site until the end of the 4th century at least, to judge from a deposit containing this pottery which accumulated above the infilled cellar and from the coin list which includes two issues of the House of Valentinian (364–78) and a single issue of the House of Theodosius (378–402).

Just what kind of site was Wortley? If we take the term *villa* to have no greater meaning than a rural Roman-style house of some pretension, there is no reason not to consider it within this broad category, but that in itself tells us little about the activities that occurred here. Mixed agriculture took place in the vicinity of the house to judge from the numerous cattle bones split to extract marrow and a late 4th-century deposit of infested grain. The infilling of the cellar also included a deposit of unfired *tegulae*, which must testify to tile manufacture nearby, an important discovery which adds to the handful of British villas where this activity has been detected. Presumably tile manufacture was another facet of the villa's economy. The house was a residence of some status, and fine dining is indicated by fish bones recovered from a drain leading from a latrine. One suspects that there is a complex story to be told at Wortley of which the partially excavated house is but one element. Where were the tileworks for instance? Why was bone marrow being extracted on such a scale?

The excavations at Wortley confirm, if we needed any reminder, that there is no such thing as a typical Cotswold villa and that every site has its own particular story to tell. The dedication of the authors and their helpers over thirty years has begun to reveal the story of this fascinating site and they are to be warmly commended for what they have achieved.

NEIL HOLBROOK
Cotswold Archaeology

Christopher R. Elrington (ed.) *Abstracts of Feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire, 1300-1359* (Gloucestershire Record Series volume 20, BGAS 2006) 228 pp. Hardback, £30.00 (£22.50 to BGAS members) [ISBN: 0900197668]

Christopher R. Elrington (ed.) *Abstracts of Feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire, 1360-1508* (Gloucestershire Record Series volume 27, BGAS 2013) 288 pp. Hardback, £30.00 (£22.50 to BGAS members) [ISBN: 9780900197826]

What use are Feet of Fines, and for whom? Local, family and national historians all draw on fines, or final concords, especially when they are made available in a record series. They can be used as a source of political geography, medieval landholding (very significantly by women) manorial topography and descents. Ideally fines are utilized in conjunction with other records, many to be found in print, such as visitation rolls, calendars of institutions *sede vacante*, *Inquisitiones Post Mortem* and Aids to Knight the Black Prince (20 Ed. III), of which some modern editions exist for Gloucestershire and other counties such as Kent, for example. The first volume in the series of printed Feet of Fines for Gloucestershire, *Abstracts of Feet of Fines for Gloucestershire, 1199–1299* (BGAS 2003) contains a notable introduction to the nature, uses and limitations of fines; armed with this, as well as the volumes reviewed here, historians of all kinds can make use of them. Volume 20 of the Gloucestershire Fines itself contains a brief but important introduction to the legal changes which affected the conveying or settling of property by fine over the 14th century. Volume 27 brings the abstracts for Gloucestershire down to 1508 when The National Archives series CP 25/2 begins. Both volumes also include fines for the county which were identified among the ‘Divers’, ‘Unknown and Various Counties’ rolls.

The volumes provide very full abstracts giving the date of the fine both by regnal year and modern form; places identified by both original name and modern form and, outside Gloucestershire, by county; the nature of the property e.g. manor or advowson of church; the titles and roles of parties, the nature of the concord and any consideration. The manuscript reference is given from the original rolls in The National Archives, in the series CP 25/1, so that users of the volumes can look up further details in the rolls. Where fines of unusual interest, for instance one of ‘the rector of the house or monastery of the order of St Augustine’ which was linked to a chantry in the parish church of Edington, the editor made a reference to other appropriate printed work.

The volumes reviewed here are beautifully edited and indexed, both by place-names and personal-names and subject. For example, occupation and callings are listed as such, and also references to people with surnames (bynames) derived from their occupation which at least until the mid 14th century are likely to reflect their actual activity; strangely, perhaps, John le taverner is omitted from the index of occupations. The economies of Bristol and Gloucester can be studied by using all these occupational entries, together with their urban records, and the fourth volume of the *Victoria County History* for Gloucestershire (1988). There exist 226 fines for Bristol dated between 1196 and 1373 which were calendared by E.E.W. Veale in ‘The Feet of Fines relating to Bristol at the Public Record Office’, part of *The Great Red Book of Bristol* (Bristol Record Society 2, 1931). There are no more fines for Bristol itself after 1373 and Veale discusses the possible reasons for this. However the volumes under review extend Veale’s work by containing a number of fines where the property included some in Bristol as well as elsewhere, or property which appears in the Cities and Towns file of Henry VII’s reign. These fines appear to offer the potential to examine landholding by people within the city (and thus in Veale’s calendar) and also outside it, such as John la Warr. Elrington seems to have been relatively uninterested in Bristol, referring, in his first volume of abstracts (p. xv), to Veale’s calendar as one of two ‘small selections’ of fines already in print. Nevertheless the indexes to his own volumes reveal the richness of material on the city, from burgesses to shops via churches, merchants, messuages, an inn and features of the suburbs.

The volumes are also of interest beyond Gloucestershire for the abstracts of conveyances of lands in other places together with those within the county, such as the fines concerned with the Mortimer family lands which extended widely across England and Wales. Other fines concerned the significant holders of manors and rents across a smaller number of counties, such as Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Kent, but the great majority are simple fines, such as the one photographed for volume 27, which are concerned with much smaller but still valuable amounts of property.

Volume 20 contains *corrigenda* for volume 16 of the series, *Abstracts of Feet of Fines for Gloucestershire, 1199–1299*. Volume 27 is completed by a bibliography of the works of Christopher Elrington, the distinguished medievalist and general editor of the *VCH*. While these volumes are classics of record series production, time moves on and record societies must move with it. Three developments in particular are affecting production for some societies: falling memberships, both individual and institutional, very heavy academic commitments in university departments and the digital world. The BGAS volumes are mentioned on the useful website ‘Some Notes on Medieval English Genealogy’ (www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/counties.shtml) together with an introduction to the source, references to printed fines from numerous counties and links to Professor Robert Palmer’s website, the Anglo-American Legal Tradition (www.aalt.law.uh.edu). The latter gives both abstracts to stray fines omitted from printed sources, including one for Gloucestershire, and good-quality images of numerous fines. Such websites depend both on traditional practice by record societies and on the ability of new technologies to extend it and keep it up-to-date (notably for counties less well placed than those served by BGAS). Digitization also makes easily accessible older works such as Veale’s ‘Feet of Fines’ for Bristol, which is now freely available online at Google Books, after a decision taken by the Bristol Record Society which is noted on its website. Similar is true for other county societies which are active in record publishing, such as the Kent Archaeological Society, which has an ongoing programme of digitizing early books, including abstracts of fines, and presenting them on its website. The discipline of history continues to need the excellent work of scholars in making material available to professionals, students and independent scholars through ‘printed’ records, but the digital world is throwing up challenges as to how exactly that ‘printing’ will take place. Every two years the County Societies Symposium offers the opportunity to hear expert views on new developments and discuss future possibilities. Readers of this review are most welcome to participate.

GILLIAN DRAPER
University of Kent

Chris Hobson, *The Tames of Fairford: the life and times of a Medieval Cotswold wool merchant and his family* (Much Wenlock, RJL Smith & Associates, 2013). iii + 80 pp., 33 ill., 4 maps/plans. Cardcovers. £12.00 [ISBN: 9780957349254]

Of the wool merchants living and working in the Cotswolds in the late Middle Ages, John Tame (d. 1500) is known for his role in the rebuilding of Fairford’s parish church. The Tames were settled in Fairford, a parish straddling the lower reaches of the River Coln, by 1416 when an earlier John Tame was named as a collector of a subsidy in Gloucestershire, a nomination suggestive that he was a person of standing in the wider community. That John or his namesake was father of the wool merchant who is the central character in this new history of his family. Although John (d. 1500) is first recorded as a significant landholder in Fairford in 1479 when, with his father-in-law John Twiniho, he took a new lease of the manorial demesne there, he inherited tenements in the borough of Fairford and acquired more property in the town. Active as a wool merchant by 1466, he was among men selling wool to an Italian buyer in 1473 – Italian merchants were active in the Cotswold wool trade by the early 14th century – and he exported large shipments of wool and sheep fells through the port of London in the early 1480s. There is no evidence that he had any direct role in the arable farming that along with animal husbandry was the mainstay of the Cotswold agrarian economy by the late Middle Ages.

After discussing John's business in Fairford and Cirencester, the careers and fortunes of other members of the Tame family are described. John's successors were his son Edmund (d. 1534) and grandson Edmund (d. without issue 1544). Both Edmunds, father and son, played a part in county administration and they attended the royal court. Both were knighted. In 1520 Henry VIII visited Fairford and in 1539 the younger Sir Edmund was among the party that, on her arrival in England, escorted Anne of Cleves from Dover to London.

A considerable part of the book shows how the Tames amassed estates as both owners and lessees. In Fairford they remained tenants of the manorial demesne until the Crown granted it in 1547 to Katherine Tame, the widow of the younger Sir Edmund Tame, and her husband Walter Buckler. The estates are summarized in an appendix, an alphabetical gazetteer under the names of manors and landholdings. The estates clustered mostly in the Cotswolds to the north and west of Fairford and included holdings in Bibury, North Cerney, Chedworth and Rendcomb. In the maps accompanying the appendix the boundary of Gloucestershire is shown as it was drawn from 1974. Thus they do not record that part of Minety was until the mid 19th century an island of Gloucestershire within Wiltshire.

Fairford church is famous for the survival of nearly all of its early 16th-century window glass. The antiquary John Leland on passing through Fairford in the early 1540s noted that John Tame began its 'new fair church' and Edmund Tame finished it. The rebuilding of the church is discussed in some detail and a separate chapter is devoted to the dating and design of its new windows. For the latter the author is able to draw not only on the assessments of early writers such as James Gerald Joyce (1872) but also on recent scholarly studies by Hilary Wayment (1984) and by Sarah Brown and Lindsay MacDonald (1997). Tame family memorials in the church are also given their own chapter and an uncredited church plan identifies the locations of the tombs of John Tame and his son Edmund and names the subjects and persons illustrated in each of the windows.

Among other subjects investigated is that of the Tames' origins. Leland's statement that the family originated in Stowell, near Northleach, is examined. The role of the elder Sir Edmund Tame in the rebuilding of Rendcomb church in the early 16th century is affirmed and the belief current in the early 18th century that a member of the family built an inn at Barnsley for his own use when travelling between Fairford and Rendcomb is repeated. The younger Sir Edmund Tame lived at, and was buried at, Rendcomb. Among the many characters introduced is Hugh Westwood (d. 1559), a landholder in Chedworth and a creditor of the younger Sir Edmund Tame. He founded a grammar school in Northleach and an almshouse in Bibury.

References in the book suggest original records in Gloucestershire Archives and The National Archives were consulted. The book is, however, heavily dependent on secondary sources, in particular the parish histories published in the Gloucestershire volumes of the *Victoria County History*. I wrote the Fairford account in 1977. Full use has been made also of the abstracts of Gloucestershire Feet of Fines down to 1508 prepared by Christopher Elrington and published by this Society.

A substantial appendix is devoted to transcripts of the wills of John Tame and other members of the family. The texts have been downloaded from The National Archives website without acknowledging that they have been taken from the registers of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. While a discussion of the use of that court for probate purposes as an indicator of a testator's status and wealth is absent, the inclusion of the transcripts is most useful. In a period of religious change the text of a will and its bequests can provide evidence for a testator's religious affiliations. The wills shed interesting light on the Tames' sheep-farming enterprises. Among the beneficiaries of John Tame's will were four shepherds, one of them based in Compton. At that time Compton Abdale, a parish in the Coln valley some way upstream of Fairford, included a major centre for flock management. The site, overlooking the river, was identified through

earthworks by Christopher Dyer and was reported to this Society in his 2002 presidential address. The wills show that Sir Edmund Tame, both father and son, ran flocks in Woodmancote, in North Cerney. We also learn that the elder Sir Edmund left provision for repairs to the way from Cirencester to Faringdon and that by her will, proved in 1545, his widow Elizabeth provided for the repair of the same way, a major route connecting Fairford with Southampton and London, and of St John's bridge, which carried it over the River Thames at Gloucestershire's boundary. The younger Sir Edmund's will of 1544 refers to an interest he had by the king's grant in 'the Oulnaye' in Gloucestershire. In the gazetteer of estates this is described as 'a farm at "Oxhaye"', but might it have been on Alney Island, an area of meadow land by the Severn outside Gloucester? Certainly some Severnside meadows were used in the early 16th century for the wintering of flocks kept for part of the year on the Cotswolds.

It is wrongly claimed that the first published history of Fairford was contained in Ralph Bigland's late 18th-century *Historical, Monumental, and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester*. Discounted thus are the county histories by Sir Robert Atkyns (1712) and Samuel Rudder (1779), both of which included accounts of Fairford. Not mentioned is a history of Fairford church produced at Rudder's printing business in Cirencester in 1763. Despite its limitations, which include a few typing errors, this generously illustrated study has great value in bringing together from many sources information about a family that stood at the centre of sheep farming in the Coln valley and the wider Cotswolds in the late 15th and early 16th century.

JOHN JUŘICA
Cheltenham

Joseph Bettey, *St James's Fair, Bristol, 1137–1837* (Bristol, Avon Local History & Archaeology Books 16, 2014). 46pp., 10 ill., 1 map. Cardcovers, £3.50

St James's Fair was the most important of Bristol's traditional fairs, and from its medieval inception until its suppression in 1837 it drew traders and entertainers (and not a few mountebanks, ne'er-do-wells and prostitutes) into the city from far and wide. From the later Middle Ages until 1731 the fair was held at St James's Tide, beginning at the feast of St James on 25 July; centred in the church and churchyard of St James's Priory, it was founded in the 12th century by Robert Fitzhamon, earl of Gloucester. In its last century of existence the fair was shunted to a September date and to a suburban pitch at Broadmead to make way for newer fairs and for the increasing popularity of shops. Initially, there were Whitsun fairs associated with the Priory and founded by the earls of Gloucester, but these seem to have transformed into St James's Fair at some time during or after the 13th century. The fair provided a valuable source of income for the Priory, and later for the parish, and a special fair court of 'pie powder' was held in Bristol.

Joseph Bettey needs no introduction to anyone with an interest in the medieval and early-modern history of the West Country, and in this booklet he provides a characteristically readable, well-researched and perspicacious account of this important subject. He draws on a range of material, but is understandably able to be more expansive in the post-Dissolution period, and particularly from the 18th century onwards, since the medieval evidence for the fair is rather fragmentary. Bettey sets the fair in the context of West Country and other Bristol fairs, and in so doing is able to emphasize St James's Fair's national importance: in its prime it was an important date in the calendar of London traders. His discussion of some of the sideshows on offer – and which assumed increasing importance at the expense of the fair's purely commercial side – is entertaining and intriguing.

There are a few typos or infelicities of presentation, and, inevitably, in a short booklet, there are problems caused by the effort to cram a long story into a restricted space. Assuming a foundation date of 1137 for St James's Fair (and the Priory) allows the volume to cover a neat 700 years between the fair's birth and death. However, no foundation charter is extant for either Priory or its fair, and while the Priory was founded between 1124 and 1137, there is no firm proof of the date of the fair's origin. Also, while the founder, Robert, earl of Gloucester, died in Bristol in 1147 and was buried – initially at least – in St James's Priory, that structure within the priory church which now purports to be his tomb is not, or, at least, the effigy mounted upon it is not him, and nor does the tomb itself look much like early accounts of Robert's Bristol tomb. Bettey acknowledges that the effigy is "much later", but a careless reader might still assume that there is nothing problematic about the attribution. There is much more detail on the priory itself in Reg Jackson, *Excavations at St James's Priory, Bristol* (Oxford, Oxbow Books 2006). Both the historical introduction to Jackson's book, and Bettey's booklet, acknowledge their debt to the work of F.W. Potto Hicks on the medieval history of St James, but Jackson's work is not used by Bettey, which perhaps is unfortunate. Bettey's assumption that the Whitsun Fair was effectively the same as St James's Fair, the latter having been moved to July, is almost certainly correct, but the case may not have been quite as cut and dried as he presents it. Finally, Bettey attributes the fair's suppression in 1837 pretty much entirely to concerns from certain influential groups about the moral disorder it engendered. While this is certainly the 'official' line, it might also have been useful to discuss the suppression in the contexts of contemporary trends towards 'respectability' and 'order' within civic governance, and of the internal politics of the newly-reformed borough.

These are mere quibbles, however, and should not be allowed to distract from what is an informative and entertaining study, and another excellent addition to ALHA's fine series of local history booklets.

PETER FLEMING

University of the West of England

Tim Jordan and Lionel Walrond, *The Cotswold House* (Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2014). 191 pp., 398 col. pls., 5 plans, 1 map. Hardback, £20.00 [ISBN: 9781445608402]

To misquote *Punch* (9 November 1895), 'Well, Your Grace, it is good in parts'. This curious book is too. For a start it has the astonishing number of 396 colour photos (and two sketches) of houses in the Cotswolds, rural and urban crammed into its 191 pages; all very well reproduced and forming a very full and useful resource. The book is divided into two parts: 'Geography and the Story of an Evolving Style', and 'Specific Features and Characteristics'.

However, the text is very short and rather unfocused and it is difficult to extract any clear direction or conclusions from it, certainly not those promised by the section headings. The tone is chatty, and the book is clearly aimed at the interested but largely ignorant amateur. In the first part, an attempt is made to define the Cotswolds, not surprisingly coming to the conclusion that it is 'the limestone plateau itself', although as is half-recognised, its boundaries are almost impossible to be precise about. Defining the 'Cotswold style' is even less successful. The authors attempt to provide a historical framework, presumably believing that this would explain the emergence of a Cotswold style. Such an approach might well be fruitful, but the historical survey ('Historical Elements of an Evolving Cotswold Style'), occupying six pages, is so general that it might well be applied to almost any part of lowland Britain, and certainly doesn't explain how the Cotswold style emerged, let alone what it is. Apart from the use of local stone, the variations in

which are reasonably well if superficially described, there is little to explain what, for example, an early 19th-century weaver's terraced cottage in Nailsworth has in common with a bishop's 16th-century summer residence. To be fair, this problem is recognised by the authors, but nowhere is the issue adequately addressed. Most vernacular traditions died out during the 18th century and if the authors had taken this view then the character they are trying to define would be clearer. The authors also take the Arts and Crafts movement as a continuation rather than a sophisticated revival and use it to link the Cotswold tradition (which here seems to mean the yeoman's or smaller manor house of the 17th century) to the later 20th century, and modern pastiches of varying quality.

The importance of the social framework that housing reflects and from which it grows is recognised, but again very superficially touched upon, chronologically and functionally. There are hardly any house plans, and the house plan discussion is a little idiosyncratic; even with a paragraph on longhouses, which as the authors clearly understand, do not exist in the Cotswolds.

The section on Grander Houses might have usefully illustrated the way that such houses filtered national changes in fashion down to the vernacular, but is little more than a vaguely chronological list. One oddity in this list is the description of Sezincote as in something called 'Anglo-Arcadian style', when it was built from the wealth of a returning nabob in an avowedly 'Hindoo' style, chosen to represent the source of his wealth.

The section on roofs is particularly disappointing, concentrating on coverings, and giving a reasonable description of traditional Cotswold stone roofs and the way roofers coped without lead or shaped copings. But the section on roof structure is woeful, the only substantive section being on the extended collar truss, with a useful if poorly expressed distinction made between crucks and later kneed principals (which are correctly distinguished from crucks and tend to be from the 18th and early 19th centuries).

This book will not serve as a guide or textbook on Cotswold vernacular building, but it might make an introduction to the wealth and variety of houses in the Cotswolds and a useful library of examples.

PETER DAVENPORT
Cotswold Archaeology

Marion Mako, *The University of Bristol Historic Gardens*, 2nd edition (Bristol, University of Bristol, 2013). 86 pp., numerous illustrations, 11 maps/plans. Cardcovers, £5.00 [ISBN: 9780856100153]

This book is the second edition of Marion Mako's work on the historic gardens of Bristol University. It contains more information about the original owners and the designers of these gardens and more detail of their past appearance. There are more and excellent photographs and this edition has an index. It covers eight gardens acquired with properties bought or gifted to the University and the 'Centenary Garden' adjacent to the Wills Memorial Building at the top of Park Street masterminded by Professor Mowl, well known for his series of county books on garden history. It is fortunate that the University has acquired such an interesting group of gardens and has carefully maintained them.

The gardens fall into definable groups. First the 18th-century gardens of Goldney House, Clifton Hill House and the Royal Fort. Goldney, with its canal, grotto and other features is well known and made more interesting by the garden book kept by Thomas Goldney III from 1736. Clifton Hill has been much altered but well restored due to the enthusiasm of Mrs Buraeside, the warden. Humphrey Repton's Red Book for the Royal Fort garden is more a description of the work

done rather than the usual ‘before and after’ approach and shows how well he hid the intrusive development of Clifton from the view across Tyndalls Park and also the public footpath that runs along the top of the park. He stationed men with tall poles to help him settle on appropriate sites for servicing belts of trees. Tyndalls Park was built over in the 19th century, leaving only the domestic gardens in front of the house.

The second is the high Victorian gardenesque fashion exemplified by Langford House (now the veterinary college) near Wrington, Burwalls and Hampton House (now a hall of residence and homeopathic hospital) both of which have Pulmanite artificial stone rockeries which the Wills family rather liked. Langford was a typical garden of the rich man in the late 19th century. Like all Victorian gardens it was labour intensive and when privately owned before mechanization had nine gardeners.

Then there is the Arts and Crafts style of the late 19th and early 20th century as exemplified at Wills Hall and parts of the grounds of adjacent Downside House. Here Sir George Oatley, who did much work for the University and the Wills family, was influential. Lastly, Manor Hall owes its garden both financially and in design to Hiatt Baker who was a distinguished plant collector and gave careful consideration to what was appropriate for a hall of residence as opposed to a private garden but his lack of experience in design is apparent.

These gardens are a cross-section of that which were typical with wealthy people over the past three centuries though surprisingly there are none by the leading designers of the late 19th and the 20th century, most of whom worked on gardens in adjacent counties. They indicate local wealth particularly in the hundred years 1850–1950, but nearly all the businesses that produced it have now ceased to trade or are a shadow of their former selves. Imperial Tobacco, once a dominant force, is no longer in Bristol and what is left is a fragment. Baker Baker, haberdashers and drapers, lost their Wine Street premises in the Blitz. Increasingly obsolete, the business was never successfully re-established. It is a salutary tale. Commercial wealth is not static but it is fortunate that it was available for the philanthropy that supported the University so generously. The gardens are a happy ancillary to the main objective.

GERARD LEIGHTON
Bath

Eugene Byrne, *Unbuilt Bristol: the city that might have been 1750–2050* (Bristol, Redcliffe Press, 2013). 128 pp., 42 pl., 30 col. pls. Cardcovers, £15.00 [ISBN: 9781908326270]

There has lately been something of a vogue for ‘counter-factual’ history. What would have happened if Cleopatra’s nose had been a few millimetres longer? What would have happened if (to take a currently topical example) Great Britain had stayed out of the war of 1914–18? It is always an interesting parlour game, and at its best can provide penetrating insights into what *did* happen.

In the field of architectural history, the counter-factualist has much visual material at his disposal with which to demonstrate how ‘what might have been’ might have looked. The glory of local writer Eugene Byrne’s account of *Unbuilt Bristol* lies in the plethora of illustrations – maps, architects’ designs, artists’ impressions, photographs – which he has used well to give life to the stories he has to tell.

The book can be read at a sitting. Alternatively, the short chapters (51 of them in 128 pages) lend themselves to consumption one or two at a time, if wished.

Some of the stories are well known – for example the various plans for a bridge over the Avon, one of which included homes and shops built, medieval style, into the structure, which preceded

the current suspension bridge, and for the post-war reconstruction of the city centre. Many are much less so; who today knows that there might have been a garden cemetery in Stokes Croft, or an obelisk commemorating King George V near Broad Quay House?

Projects failed for various reasons to come to fruition. Lack of money is a perennial – the railway bubbles of the 1840s and the alternating cycles of boom and recession which have characterized the British economy for much of the period since 1945, being but two instances. Corporate rivalry (such as the GWR's jealousy of competition in the 19th century), party political differences and friction between central and local government (as between the Labour-controlled Council and the Bristol Development Corporation set up by the Conservative government in the 1980s) have also played a part. There is one instance of outright corruption (city surveyor Richard Shackleton Pope procuring a re-run, which his firm won, of the competition to design the new Assize Court in Small Street in 1867) and another where concern for public decency (seen by Mr Byrne as 'petty philistinism') put paid to a project for massive bronze nudes at either end of the Council House, fronting the Cathedral.

Conservation did not become a concern until well into the 20th century. Opponents of a railway terminus in Queen Square were, in 1861–3, concerned in many cases for the value of their adjoining properties, but nothing was said of the Square as an open space or cultural amenity. By contrast, the opposition to the proposed Grand Spa Hotel overlooking the Avon Gorge in 1969–73 focused very largely on the likely visual impact on the gorge.

The emphasis is on the period after 1945, when, it is often said, the planners finished what the *Luftwaffe* began. The truth is more complicated. In the post-war euphoria of December 1945 the Council, under the tutelage of City Architect J. Nelson Meredith, sought power to purchase 771 acres in the central areas of the city. The Ministry responded that by no means all of this fell within the statutory definition of war damaged areas and subsequent economic austerity further whittled the total down to the 4.5 acres purchased for the Broadmead development in 1948. Overgrown bombed sites could be seen well into the 1980s.

Many will have personal memories of aspects of post-war planning. Your reviewer worked in the Whitefriars complex in the 1980s and recalls lunchtime strolls over the walkway towards Nelson Street – the remaining fragment of an ambitious 1960s project for 'pathways in the air' above central Bristol.

As its subtitle implies, *Unbuilt Bristol* has much to say about the future as well as the past. There are still many unanswered questions, 'What shall we do about Castle Park?' being one of them. More generally, Mr Byrne predicts that with the advent of online shopping, Cabot Circus may be the last large retail project in Bristol and that future controversy is likely to centre on housing, leisure and scientific ventures.

There are many quirky moments, too, such as the intended statue of Brunel who would have raised his stovepipe hat to motorists as they paid their toll at the suspension bridge.

Unbuilt Bristol cannot be recommended without certain reservations. Firstly, it is not a scholarly work. The illustrations are attributed but there is no apparatus of footnotes and little cross-referencing in the text and the serious general reader could have done with a bibliographical note.

Secondly, the strict chronological approach can lead to confusion. 'Railway mania' in the 1840s is chronicled on page 23. Several topics later, we return on page 39 to the railway mania of the 1860s. Again, the various projects over the years to harness the tidal power of the Severn and Avon would perhaps have been better dealt with in one chapter. Further confusion is caused by the main text being interspersed with shorter (unrelated) pieces on blue shaded pages.

Lastly, the style is journalese and not necessarily quality journalese at that. We are told to 'expect the debate [on a Severn barrage] to heat up again'. Victorian gentlemen, it is suggested, 'treated

the lower orders like dirt' (what is Mr Byrne's evidence for this assertion?). Queen Victoria only 'notched up' one visit to Bristol during her reign. Elsewhere she is referred to, disrespectfully, as 'the old girl'. All this is a pity. Mr Byrne has chosen a subject of inherent interest and said much of importance about it; he should have realised that it is not necessary to be populist in order to produce a popular work.

JOHN STEVENS

Bristol

Jesse Norman, *Edmund Burke: philosopher, politician, prophet* (William Collins, 2013). iv + 325 pp., 18 greyscale illustrations. Hardback, £20.00 [ISBN: 9780007489626]

Edmund Burke's connection with Bristol was mutually opportunistic, short-lived and fractious. In 1774 Bristol merchants adopted him to stand with Henry Cruger, to oppose the hard line the government was taking with the American colonies, which the merchants perceived as harming their trading. Immediately rejecting any suggestion that he should follow Bristol instructions, Burke fell out with his electors over the government's proposals to relax the restrictions on Irish trade. He visited Bristol only twice while its MP, and did not stand for the city in 1780. Yet Burke appears in all the modern histories of Bristol, and until recently he was one of the few people and, Samuel Morley apart, the only politician, commemorated with a public statue. So a biography of Burke by a prominent backbench MP and Burke enthusiast calls for notice.

The first five chapters recount Burke's life. The last six start by describing and analyzing Burke's political thought as evidenced in his speeches and writings, the apologia drifting into a Burke-buttressed exposition of the author's own political position, which qualifies rightwing but non-libertarian conservatism with compassion to compensate for the deficiencies of unfettered free-market economics. As the subtitle implies, the author presents Burke as a political theorist. In fact he was pragmatic within the constraints of some broad principles, for example that revolution is always wrong; that the franchise should be restricted to the propertied classes; and that MPs ought to exercise their own judgment, and are not bound to follow the interest, let alone the instructions or wishes, of their constituents. Burke was no theorist: he despised philosophy, which he misidentified with metaphysics. Because he did not have a theory to apply in detail, his politics contains contradictions and inconsistencies (paradoxes, the author calls them), of which his insistence on describing himself as Bristol's representative is but one example.

Of more interest to local historians is what the author says about Burke's Bristol connection. The author's reliance on secondary sources and the limited referencing does not inspire confidence. A comment that, because the average election budget for a parliamentary candidate in 2010 was £12,000, 'there is extraordinarily little "money power" in modern British politics', makes one wonder which planet the author is on: Hereford and South Herefordshire, apparently.

Born in Ireland, Burke came to London in 1750, read for the bar, dropped out in 1755, and married a Catholic. Turning to writing (*A vindication of natural society*, 1756; *A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, 1757; *An account of the European settlements in America*, 1757; and the editing of the *Annual Register*, 1758), Burke got a paid post as secretary to the MP William Hamilton. When Hamilton was made secretary (and later Chancellor of the Exchequer) for Ireland, Burke accompanied him to Dublin, but had to resign in 1765 after Hamilton's dismissal. Burke then got a job as secretary to Rockingham, and Burke's 'cousin' Will persuaded Lord Verney to give Burke a parliamentary seat as MP for Verney's pocket borough of Wendover.

In 1767, though heavily in debt through speculating in East India Company shares, Burke bought a mansion and estate in Buckinghamshire for £20,000. When the market collapsed, Burke plunged deeper in debt, and remained so throughout his life. One way to avoid imprisonment for debt was by staying in parliament, whose members were immune from such imprisonment, which may explain why Burke was always looking to retain a 7-year parliamentary seat or acquire a safer one. In 1770 the provincial assembly of New York retained Burke as its London agent: hence Burke's attack on the tea tax and his speech on conciliation with the American colonies. When the 1774 general election loomed, Verney's debts led him to sell Wendover to the highest bidder, so he required Burke to look elsewhere. Desperate for a seat to maintain immunity from imprisonment for debt, Burke persuaded Rockingham to give him Malton, for which Burke was elected on 11 October 1774. That same day Bristol merchants led by Richard Champion asked Burke to stand in Bristol, which Burke agreed to, because he had learned from his Wendover experience that a seat for pocket borough was at the whim of the proprietor, whereas in Bristol the franchise was broadly based. Burke was elected for Bristol with Henry Cruger, who was based in New York, a fact the author does not mention. Burke's acceptance speech made it clear that he would not be bound to vote in accordance with Bristol instructions. In 1776 he ceased to act as agent for New York.

The first split between Burke and his constituents came in 1777, when the Rockingham group boycotted parliament which, as Burke's constituents pointed out, disabled him from representing them. Burke repeated his views about representation in a *Letter to the sheriffs of Bristol*, which the author acknowledges to be 'distinctly unpersuasive'. What made the split unbridgeable was Burke's attitude to Ireland, which had suffered from blockading of the American trade, the depredations of absentee landlords (Rockingham drew £15,000 a year), the Navigation Acts and the anti-Catholic laws. When Samuel Span, master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, asked the city's MPs to oppose reforms proposed by North, Cruger complied but Burke refused. Burke also supported a bill to relieve insolvent debtors, which would have benefited Burke but not his Bristol merchant constituents. So when North called an early general election in 1780, Burke did not seek re-election in Bristol. Rockingham obliged by requiring his client in Malton to stand down, and Burke was elected there a second time. He had no further dealings with Bristol.

It would be unfair to dismiss the second part of the book as Burke Lite for Beginners: better to regard it as a readable introduction before embarking on the more rigorous academic critiques of Burke's voluminous utterances mentioned in the bibliography. The first part, however, throws light on some of the considerations which may have motivated Burke to act as he did. Why Bristol should have honoured him (Did Rosebery think Burke was a Liberal?) and continues to do so remains a mystery.

WILLIAM EVANS
Bristol

Steve Poole (ed.), *A City Built Upon the Water: Maritime Bristol 1750–1900* (Bristol, Redcliffe Press/UWE, 2013). 224 pp., 76 illus., 8 col. pls., 17 tables. Cardcovers, £15.00 [ISBN: 9781908326102]

The regrettable cessation of the once-flourishing programme of University Extra-Mural and Continuing Education in the Bristol region, and the ending of the associated lectures and research on local history, means that the Regional History Centre of the University of the West of England has become the principal source of information and support for the general public. It is greatly to its credit that it provides such a range of lectures, seminars, conferences and publications, and

also co-operates with Avon Local History Association and with Bristol Museum's M Shed. This book, containing nine essays on various aspects of the maritime history of Bristol, is published by the Regional History Centre in conjunction with the long-established Bristol publisher, Redcliffe Press. It is intended to be the first of a series on key themes in Bristol history. Together these essays provide an excellent account of Bristol shipping, river pilots, slave voyages, the docks and busy life of the port during the years 1750–1900.

The introduction by Steve Poole, who is Director of the Regional History Centre, provides the background to the port which, as the title of the book suggests, was crucial to the economic prosperity of the city. Like the later essay by Katy Layton-Jones of Leicester University, Steve Poole emphasizes the contrast between the picturesque approach to the city docks through the scenic beauty of the Avon Gorge, lauded by poets and artists, and the crowded waterfront, industrial pollution and the seedy pubs and lodging houses catering for seamen of central Bristol. It was this disparity which struck so many of those visiting the elegant heights of Clifton or taking the medicinal waters at the Hotwells Spa. The same theme underlies the informative essay by David Hussey on the Hotwells Spa and the Port of Bristol. Other essays describe the difficulty merchants and ships' captains experienced in dealing with the pilots of Pill whose detailed knowledge of the difficult navigation of the river and its approaches made their expertise indispensable. The life of a pilot was dangerous and hard, but they were well aware of their importance to the success of the port. The author, Nicholas Rogers, provides ample evidence to justify calling Pill 'A Village of Trouble-makers'. Matt Neale considers the trade of the port and the scale of theft and pilfering of goods from ships and warehouses. He supplies copious evidence to support his dramatic assertion that 'It is not possible to understand how Bristol's harbour operated without considering the place of criminality within it'.

The essay by Mike Breward on 'Crewing the Slave Trade' is concerned with methods of recruitment for these hazardous voyages and the appalling conditions suffered by their African victims. The crews of slaving ships were also subject to great hardship and ill-treatment. Peter Malpass provides a useful overview of the creation of the Floating Harbour and the work of the Bristol Dock Company established in 1803. He corrects many of the criticisms often made of the Dock Company and emphasizes the remarkable engineering triumph and the massive work involved in modernizing a port where previously ships had been stranded on the mud twice a day when the tide retreated. Steve Poole has contributed a second well-researched essay on the difficulties caused by foreign sailors in Bristol. They were prone to fighting and quick to use knives, and the problems were exacerbated because ships often took several weeks to discharge their cargoes. Mariners had little to do but patronize the bars, brothels and dens of vice in the streets around the waterfront. Finally, Spencer Jordan of Cardiff Metropolitan University has written a thought-provoking essay on 'The Myth of Edward Colston'. He links the cult which grew during the 19th century about Colston's massive contributions to the city with the city's elite and their dependence on the docks. He claims that the cult declined as the economic basis of Bristol's prosperity changed and as shipping moved to Avonmouth: 'in 1895 the statue of a brooding Edward Colston in Colston Avenue was erected, yet it could not hold back the wave of change ... He is still there, staring forlornly out across the traffic in the direction of the open sea, but the city docks have long gone'.

This is an attractive and well-produced book which represents remarkably good value. The essays are based on extensive new research, and are lavishly illustrated, including eight in colour. Many of the illustrations are culled from little-known examples in the Bristol Art Gallery collections. The publication provides an excellent start to what promises to be a useful and informative series.

JOSEPH BETTEY
Bristol

Chris Heal, *Felt-Hatting in Bristol & South Gloucestershire I: the Rise* (Bristol, Avon Local History & Archaeology 13, 2013). 42 pp., 11 ill., 3 maps. Cardcovers, £3.50

Chris Heal, *Felt-Hatting in Bristol & South Gloucestershire II: the Fall*, (Bristol, Avon Local History & Archaeology 14, 2013). 42 pp., 8 ill., 5 maps. Cardcovers, £3.50

Until well into the 20th century no man, rich or poor, would be about his business without a hat, and although millions of felt hats were made each year for the home market and millions more for export, today it is a largely forgotten industry. Also forgotten is the important rôle that felt hat-making played in this part of the West Country for over 300 years, employing many thousands of men in the second largest manufacturing industry in south Gloucestershire after the cloth industry. Being always a 'cottage' industry, dominated by local families who left no substantial industrial or technological remains, it has consequently been overlooked by later researchers. This has now been thoroughly rectified by Chris Heal's study in these two volumes, arising from his research for a degree at Bristol University, which together cover felt hat-making in Bristol and South Gloucestershire from its origins in the mid 16th century to its demise in the late 19th century.

Volume I introduces the special properties of felt and the traditional skills employed in its manufacture before discussing the reasons for the development of felt-hatting in south Gloucestershire in the 17th and 18th centuries. Collaboration between the Bristol trading companies and the rural craftsmen maintained a considerable volume of exports, the most surprising perhaps being for the slave trade, in which a large proportion was supplied for the plantation slaves as well as to the slavers themselves in West Africa.

Evidence of this industry still remains in the landscape. Felt-making houses, built on encroachments on waste ground, can still be found, and particular attention is paid here to the felt-makers' way of life; their organization and trade combinations; the role of alcohol in both work and relaxation; health problems arising from a chemically hazardous work environment, and the fluctuations of wealth, poverty and crime. Identification of the leading felt-making families will be of particular interest to the genealogist.

Volume II then continues into the 19th century, charting the influence of Methodism and, more significantly, the arrival of the London hatters which brought in a timely influx of new business. About 30 prominent London names can be particularly identified in such areas as Frampton Cotterell, Oldland Common, Watley's End, Winterbourne and Rangeworthy. However, traditional practices, in particular the restrictive apprenticeship system, soon brought the rural felt-makers into conflict with the London firms, leading to a series of disastrous strikes in the 1830s. These, together with the new fashion for silk hats and the inevitable introduction of mechanical production, progressively led to felt manufacturing being located elsewhere and the demise of the rural craftsman.

These two volumes therefore fill a significant gap in our knowledge of the history of Bristol and South Gloucestershire, even though a great deal has been excluded from Dr Heal's original thesis by reasons of space. This has left few opportunities for illustration, but clear maps, diagrams and charts, together with extensive reference notes and bibliography provide the reader with ample material for further study.

MIKE CHAPMAN

Twerton

Anthea Jones, *Cheltenham: a new history* (Lancaster, Carnegie Publishing, 2010). 406pp., numerous illustrations. Hardback, £24.99 [ISBN: 9781859361542]

This book, launched shortly before the start of the Cheltenham Literature Festival in 2010, was an instant success with visitors and local residents. Anthea's talk at the Festival was popular and served to further promote the book and she received favourable reviews in the local press at the time. Cheltenham's MP Martin Horwood welcomed the book, believing it important that people should understand the history of Cheltenham. He hoped it would encourage people to 'go out and find out more about the town they live in'.

Being asked to review a book four years after its publication causes one to wonder just what its effect has been. How has it been received? Has it stood the test of time or is it too early to tell? What about the future? *Cheltenham: a new history* – 'newer' than what one may ask and how long can 'new' remain 'new'? Seemingly endless questions!

I obtained a copy soon after publication but, like others I now discover, I did not read the book from cover to cover. I was captivated by the lovely illustrations, mostly colour, which appear on almost every page and I have to confess to thumbing through looking at the photographs and drawings etc. and reading the extensive accompanying captions. On reflection, perhaps this is not such a bad thing, rather a clever ploy by Anthea to bring her book to a wider audience. There is no doubt that this is a serious book. It contains an extensive bibliography of published primary sources and books, pamphlets, articles and theses, giving an indication of the depth of the author's research. Each chapter has a substantial number of explanatory notes and references and it is especially pleasing to see mention of the many research articles by members of various local history societies over the last 20 years or so and indeed to BGAS publications.

The comprehensive index is there for reference and enables one to 'dip in' to the text as and when required. Having now read the book in its entirety, I would recommend those who to date have only used the book as a reference tool to do so. They will not be disappointed and it will be time well spent. Anthea has a relaxed style of writing and her explanations are easy to follow without being patronizing. This, I imagine, comes from her experience as a teacher, having been head of history at Cheltenham Ladies' College for more than 15 years. One criticism is that perhaps the index could have been more comprehensive. Personally, I would like to have seen individual occupations indexed separately. Also, there are some unfortunate spelling mistakes when acknowledging other writers.

On the dust jacket, seemingly almost an afterthought, mention is made of the book encompassing 'the history of outlying areas such as Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Swindon'. All these villages are given due consideration, a feature which should make the book more attractive to those living in these areas, but as yet I feel a largely untapped audience. Although the publishers have attempted to promote this book 'to anyone with an interest in Britain's varied history' I sense another lost marketing opportunity in that on reading the book it is very clear that anyone with an interest in the Cotswolds and the wider Gloucestershire would find the book fascinating and enjoyable. However, I was surprised to find no modern plan of the town included. Anthea's *The Cotswolds* (1994) has a map spread across the inside front cover and first page. Such a map showing Cheltenham and its outlying areas would, I believe, have been helpful.

Anthea's previous books, *Tewkesbury* (1987), *The Cotswolds* (1994) and *A Thousand Years of the English Parish* (2000), have provided her with a wealth of material which she makes reference to in *Cheltenham: a new history*. She uses charts and tables to put statistics in context both regionally and nationally, making comparisons with other market towns, in particular Tewkesbury and Gloucester. Anthea read modern history at Oxford; further studies and research led to a PhD concentrating on social and demographic history, aspects she obviously enjoys and has a keen

understanding of. Anthea has uncovered and highlighted several interesting facts such as the claim that Cheltenham, in 1856, was 'the largest constituency in England returning but one member'. *Cheltenham: a new history* is 'new' in that it focuses largely on the social and economic aspects of the town's history and, importantly, to the present day (2010).

Over the years there have been several books produced purporting to be 'histories' of Cheltenham, all good in their own way, but generally speaking, two remain as classic books of reference. These books, *Norman's History of Cheltenham* by John Goding and *A History of Cheltenham* by Gwen Hart are timeless, the former from the 1860s, Hart a century later, and Anthea has drawn on them both for material. I believe Anthea has satisfied the need for a contemporary and comprehensive 'modern' history some 50+ years later than Hart but in doing so has herself created a problem by the inclusion of so much 'modern' detail in that four years since publication much information is already out of date. No 'history' can claim to be fully comprehensive and discoveries from all periods continue to come to light. At some time in the future I am sure we shall see a 'newer' history. The forthcoming Cheltenham volume of the *Victoria County History* may well justify a further publication but in the meantime we should be very grateful to Anthea for giving us this wonderful 'new' history for our bookshelves and for posterity.

And the price? Anthea was concerned initially that £24.99 was possibly too high. There is no doubt that the book is worth this amount – it is big and heavy and the high quality shiny paper used allows for really good reproduction of the illustrations, many of which are expertly taken photographs by Carnegie Publishing. However, since November 2012, all major booksellers and independent bookshops have had copies for sale discounted by £10 and at £14.99 this book represents exceptionally good value for money. There really is no excuse now for anyone not to buy a copy.

ELAINE NORTH
Churchdown

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

Eric Miller, *St Peter's Church, Leckhampton: the stained glass windows, also the 'Leckhampton Altarpiece' and the statue of the Madonna and Child* (Leckhampton, Leckhampton Local History Society for St Peter's Parochial Church Council, 2013). 24 pp., numerous illustrations. Cardcovers, £3.50