

## Reviews

Edited by ALAN TYLER

David H. Higgins, *Saint Jordan of Bristol: foundations of English Christianity and culture in the west of England in the seventh century* (London, New Generation Publishing 2015). vi + 250pp., 49figs. Cardcovers, no price stated [ISBN: 9781785072765].

The late David Higgins has published a number of studies centred on the person of St Jordan of Bristol in the course of the last decade. In this book he brings these studies together and attempts to place the life and work of St Jordan in the context of a broad narrative of the conversion of England in the 7th century. The attempt is a bold one, given that the only evidence for Jordan's life and work is a 16-line hymn preserved in a 15th-century Book of Hours; the hymn envisages Jordan as a companion of St Augustine of Canterbury in his work of preaching to the English.

Unfortunately, the thesis is undermined by a deep-rooted methodological flaw. The author offers us a stark choice. He argues that we should either believe the evidence of the hymn, or we should regard the hymn as fraud 'foisted on a credulous Bristol populace'. While the author is well aware in principle that hagiography is a complex genre in which inventiveness may have pious as well as impious motives, in practice he does less than justice to the complex and subtle ways in which cults could emerge and change over time.

Higgins claims that he has gone a long way towards bridging the gap between the early 7th century and the late medieval period by identifying the style of the hymn as distinctively 10th-century in date; he suggests that it was in all likelihood composed by Wulfstan Cantor. This claim does not stand up to close examination.<sup>1</sup> The sheer regularity of the verses, which in terms of a strict bisyllabic rhyme-scheme arrange themselves easily into eight (or perhaps better seven plus one) 'stanzas' of four octosyllables each, linked by both medial and end-rhyme between pairs of octosyllabic lines, cannot be paralleled from known materials from Anglo-Saxon England; this speaks rather to a much later date, when (for example) leonine hexameters were flourishing and experimental rhyme-schemes were in fashion, especially in hymns. The same applies to the -e/- (a)e rhymes in stanzas 1, 5, and 6, which likewise find few parallels in early Anglo-Latin, but are fairly common later. The strict rhyme-scheme half-fails in stanza 8, as does the caesura; the final hexasyllabic *promissionibus* is a closing flourish. The alliteration evident in stanzas 1 and 7 (and the cheeky closing rhyme on *Amen*) again highlight the contrast between stanza 8 and the rest of the text. Earlier Anglo-Latin octosyllables on the model of Aldhelm's have weak monosyllabic end rhyme, as do the 10th-century octosyllables of Lantfred and Wulfstan's hymn to St Æthelwold. In short, the case for attribution to Wulfstan Cantor, given contemporary parallels and his own sporadic patterns of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration, seems extremely weak.

Higgins was evidently well aware that his arguments did not meet with universal approval and challenges his critics 'to show beyond a reasonable doubt precisely by whom, when and with

1. I am much indebted to Prof. Andy Orchard of Oxford University for his comments on the attribution to Wulfstan, which I quote in the remainder of this paragraph.

what motive the spurious legend of St Jordan was created'. While I cannot give a precise answer to these questions, the evidence does suggest at least one alternative context. Three points deserve consideration. First it is worth emphasizing that there is no evidence that Jordan was ever promoted actively as a saint of any importance, despite the absence of any other cult local to Bristol; beyond the existence of a chapel dedicated to St Jordan on College Green, a reference to an image of him in the early 16th century and the hymn in the 15th-century Book of Hours, nothing further of his cult is known, and his name does not appear in the calendars of liturgical books from Bristol, as the author notes. Secondly we should note that the name Jordan became popular after the First Crusade when phials of water from the River Jordan were brought back to England and used in baptism; the name was particularly favoured in Bristol in the 12th and early 13th centuries. The name is unattested in Anglo-Saxon England, and Higgins suggests that Jordan was a member of the Roman family of Late Antiquity whose name is preserved in the *Catacumbas Iordanorum* on the *Via Salaria Nova*. Thirdly we should consider the interesting point that the first record of St Jordan's chapel is found in 1393 in the form of a bequest involving the hermit of St Jordan's chapel. Hermits usually wished to be buried at their hermitage and when hermits are found elsewhere in residence adjacent to the tomb of a saint, this is most commonly in a hermitage occupied by a saintly predecessor. The most successful (and thus best documented) hermits were succeeded by communities (for example Godric of Finchale), but in other cases we can see saintly hermits followed by other hermits. The cave which formed the hermitage of Robert of Knaresborough is a case in point; Robert was followed by two successive hermits before a priory was established more than twenty years after his death.

For this reviewer the evidence suggests a very different possibility to that proposed by Higgins, namely that Jordan may have been a hermit on College Green in Bristol in the 12th or 13th century. After his death a local cult might have developed, but no *Life* was ever written, and the cult may thus have remained of minor importance while further hermits continued to live on College Green (presumably with the support of the nearby St Augustine's Abbey). In the course of time the details of the saint's life may have been so completely forgotten that when the author of the hymn preserved in the Book of Hours came to set about his composition, he had *tabula rasa*. In these circumstances it would have been entirely natural for an author associated with a community in which the cult of St Augustine of Canterbury was prominent (as well as that of St Augustine of Hippo) to imagine Jordan as a companion of Augustine and as a founding saint of Christianity in the area.

It is also possible to make a tentative suggestion as to the reason for the compilation of the verses. It is striking that line 5 contains a request to Jordan that he should be 'the patron [saint] of this place' (*Huius loci sis patronus in quo iaces tumulatus*). It was common practice for written details of the life and miracles of a saint to be displayed in close proximity to his or her shrine. Thus the verses may well have been composed for display in St Jordan's chapel, perhaps on painted boards.

I do not claim this line of thought as a definitive interpretation of the slender evidence for Jordan, but I put it forward to make the point that at least one alternative explanation of the evidence is available which is fully in accordance with the normal patterns visible elsewhere in the evolution of saints' cults. Moreover, this explanation does not involve huge leaps of faith across both time (the eight centuries between Jordan's purported arrival in Bristol in the early 7th century and the earliest references to him) and space (the attribution of a Roman origin to a saint known only in late medieval Bristol). Other students of the evidence may well be able to suggest alternative interpretations.

There are other aspects of Higgins' study which require consideration. He makes a case for College Green in Bristol as the site of the Augustine's Oak conference of c.603, at which Augustine met the British bishops. The conference is stated by Bede to have taken place on the borders of the

kingdoms of the Hwicce and the West Saxons, and as Higgins rightly emphasizes, this must refer to the location of Augustine's Oak at the time when Bede was writing c.730. College Green is as plausible a site as any among those which have been put forward, but it should be emphasized that the site remains unknown and that there is not enough evidence for us to propose any site for the meeting with confidence. Much more curious is the argument put forward for the second session of the conference to have taken place in the vicinity of Worcester. This suggestion is made on the basis of antiquarian traditions at a number of places around Worcester. Yet it is most improbable that such antiquarian traditions have anything reliable to relate about events which occurred more than a millennium earlier. On the contrary, these traditions reflect widespread knowledge of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and speculative local traditions associated with Augustine are only to be expected.

Also problematic is the suggestion that St Jordan's chapel shared its orientation with the church of St Augustine the Less, forming a sacred alignment of early medieval buildings. Both the date of origin and the exact alignment of St Jordan's chapel are unknown, while the alignment suggested for St Augustine the Less is based purely on the orientation of the earliest excavated graves, which are themselves unlikely to be older than the 11th century.

It is also proposed that the relief carving of the 'Harrowing of Hell' preserved in Bristol Cathedral may have formed part of the end panel of a shrine to St Jordan (the point is mentioned only briefly in this book, but was developed in more detail in a paper in vol. 127 (2009), pp. 213–31, of these *Transactions*). The panel was published in detail by Professor Rosemary Cramp in the volume covering South-West England in the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, and the proposal made by Higgins is difficult to accept. The known remnants of shrines from Anglo-Saxon England (for instance the Lichfield Angel and the fragments from Congresbury) are much smaller in scale, and the Bristol Harrowing of Hell seems too large for a shrine. The evidence of its shape has also been distorted. The panel tapers from 76.5 cm in width at the base to 65 cm at the top. In Fig. 1 of the article published in the *Transactions*, the camera angle has exaggerated the tapering effect, and this effect was then further distorted in the suggested reconstruction (Fig. 18). Without these distortions the sides of the supposed tomb would not be far from vertical. In practice it seems much more likely that the Bristol panel was designed to be built into a wall; large-scale wall panels and roods are well-attested in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon sculpture from the area, as exemplified by the figure of Christ at Beverstone.

I do agree with Higgins that there is a strong possibility that there was an early church at Bristol, though in my view this is much more likely to have been established in the late 7th or early 8th century than in the time of Augustine's mission; it is a moot point whether this early church was located at College Green or on the site of St Peter's church. What is needed here is a study of the parochial origins of the Bristol area, using the rigorous methodology employed by Steven Bassett in a series of studies across the western Midlands.

Further research would also be beneficial into the contents, codicology and palaeography of Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College MS 80 – the Book of Hours which contains the hymn to St Jordan; such work might well shed more light on the cult of Jordan in the 15th century.

In his career at Bristol University David Higgins carried out invaluable work on Dante for which he will long be remembered. It may be that the scepticism which existed in some circles about relics in late medieval Italy (Boccaccio is quoted to this effect) misled him into the false antithesis outlined at the start of this review. He deserves our thanks for his diligent collection of materials relating to Jordan, but his wider conclusions must be considered as speculations based on a hypothesis which does not stand up to close examination.

MICHAEL HARE  
*Gloucester*

Jill Barlow, Richard Bryant, Carolyn Heighway, Chris Jeens and David Smith, *Edward II: his last months and his monument* (Bristol & Gloucestershire Monographs 2: BGAS/Past Historic 2015) xiv + 130pp., 67 figs., 2 maps. Hardback, £30.00 (from Past Historic) [ISBN: 9780900197895].

This is a significant miscellany volume which continues the Society's recent initiatives to make the manuscripts held at Berkeley castle better known and accessible to historians. The four chapters here are each directly connected to the final crisis of the reign of Edward II, and in particular to events in Gloucestershire. The King had abandoned London on 2 October 1326; he died at Berkeley on 21 September 1327. In the interim the Gloucestershire estates of the Berkeley family, eight manors surrounding the castle of the same name, were witness to three major events in the playing out of the national political crisis. In October 1326 Edward II had fled from Gloucester to Chepstow, ordering Berkeley to be readied for a siege; Isabelle and Roger Mortimer arrived at the castle on 21 October and stayed there overnight. Later the captive king was held at Berkeley from 5 April to 21 September 1327, the day on which he was murdered, although his corpse was held there for a month until 21 October, when it was carried to then abbey church (later cathedral) at Gloucester for burial on 21 December 1327.

The first chapter prints extracts from eight accounts of the Berkeley estate during this period which provide information on these well-known events. Digital images of the relevant entries in the documents are printed with a translation in English below. Whilst it would not be surprising to find mention of political events in the accounts of the keeper and receiver of the castle itself, it is very unusual for such events to leave their mark in such numbers on the more routine accounts of the reeves of surrounding manors. In 1403 the stay of Henry IV in Shrewsbury after the battle of that name has left scant record in that borough's accounts, and his army's earlier stay at the royal manor at Rushden (Northants.) whilst reinforcements were recruited has left no mark at all in that estate's records. Herein lies the wider interest of the Berkeley entries which *inter alia* reveal the minor depredations of the queen's army, distinguishing between the contingents of the earl of Lancaster, Hainaulters, the earl of Kent, the bishop of Winchester, Henry Beaumont and Sir Hugh Audley.

The Berkeley records are well known, from Smyth's 17th-century *Lives of the Berkeleys* through Isaac Jeayes' 1892 descriptive catalogue to Bridget Wells-Furby's new 2004 version, but have not always been well used. Access has more recently been by means of microfilms held at Gloucestershire Archives, and editions of the records are thus to be warmly welcomed. Here the extracts have been selected, rearranged and presented thematically, initially to include provisioning of the castle with grain and livestock against royal visits, and then geographically by manor from north to south during the passage of Queen Isabelle's army, and finally to cover the period of the king's captivity and death. Good-quality digital images of the entries allow the reader to check the English translation against the original; but the approach remains somewhat problematic since editorial choice is crucial. To give an example, there are 17 entries from the account of the reeve of Alkington from September 1326 to September 1327 in the edition, mostly in single entries, but with two groups of three and one group of four, between those numbered from five to 76 in the edition. Of these six match Latin extracts given in Jeayes' catalogue, although he included some additional material not considered relevant here. The editors here make a similar choice in printing a longer selection of payments for messengers in the receiver's account of 1327 since they cannot safely identify which relate to the king's captivity and which to more routine estate business. There are also some issues connected with the survival of the accounts at Berkeley, since for part of the period the estate was in Crown hands. All of this seems to me to make a compelling case for editions of these records *in extenso*; but in the meantime one has to be grateful for the careful editing of the extracts chosen and printed, and for the scholarly commentaries on each of the three sections. On the character of one of England's post-1066 invasion armies the extracts

are invaluable, and that one truth in Berkeley's evidence at his trial in parliament in 1330 might hinge on his cheese bill reveal another truth, that historians must often rely on the routine record to illuminate the extraordinary

The second chapter presents a structural analysis of the tomb of Edward II in the cathedral at Gloucester made possible by a recording and repair programme from 2006 to 2008. This too is significant addition to the historiography and reveals the several stages in construction from an initial Purbeck marble slab of 1327, perhaps topped with a wooden effigy, to the erection of the triple-towered monument which surrounds (and mostly obscures) it of c.1335, and finally to restorations in the 18th and 19th centuries. These latter include the painting of Richard II's badge of the White Hart at intervals on the pillars either side of the tomb, possibly painted during that king's visit in 1378. One badge sits squarely as the focus for the east end of the third tier of the tomb's canopy: the 'halls of heaven,' which perhaps confirms Richard's patronage of his great-grandfather's cult at Gloucester. The whole is a credit to modern conservation techniques, richly illustrated with line drawings, photographs and contemporary views, and revealing of the building programme and original polychrome decoration. A coloured drawing of the tomb is reproduced as both the frontispiece and figure 3; one might have preferred to lose one and have a copy of Sandford's 1683 illustration which shows the heraldic shields. The chapter also includes a detailed consideration of the tiled pavement on which the monument stands. For the historian it demonstrates that the tomb is in the position for which it was always designed, and that there were two phases of construction, one coincident with the king's burial and the second taking place shortly after but almost certainly under the patronage of Edward III. These hints take us to the vexed territory of the survival stories of Edward II and the oft-asserted notion that this masterpiece of courtly architecture does not cover the king's own corpse.

The fourth chapter prints and reproduces previously unpublished oral testimony of the opening of the king's tomb in 1855, which noted that 'his friends could quite well have recognised him'. The fascination with opening royal tombs currently threatens to match the fashion of the 18th century and has fostered a kind of celebrity archaeology. In the case of Edward II this is the more attractive because of a respectable historiography which argues that the king escaped from Berkeley and survived for over a decade. A crucial piece of evidence is contained within a letter allegedly drafted by Manuel de Fieschi, a papal notary, which purports to be a confession of the king taken in the late 1330s.

To include a discussion of the Fieschi letter in this volume might be thought an indulgence by the editors, but since the confession includes an account of the king's 'escape' from Berkeley its place in this volume is warranted. The chapter prints a digital facsimile of the manuscript and an English translation, although the letter has often been translated. David Smith here offers a reinterpretation of the motives which lay behind the letter, and makes an elegant argument that it represents an uncirculated draft of a propaganda letter designed to further papal attempts to unpick Edward III's alliances against the French in the first phase of the Hundred Years War at a time when there was a known impostor who visited Cologne, Koblenz and Antwerp. Does it add to the 'proof' of Edward's escape from Berkeley? Edward II's modern biographer, Seymour Phillips, thought the claim 'possible but not likely'. Payments made to make good the castle after Edward II's known but temporary escape from Berkeley (stone, ironwork, timber and locks in the accounts) might have been considered a misfortune, but to have incurred a second bill was perhaps a carelessness of which the Berkeleys were not guilty.

This is a handsome and well-produced volume which adds enormously to the historiography of the end of the reign of Edward II.

PHILIP MORGAN

*Keele*

Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World 1680–1780* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2015). xvi + 233 pp., 3 maps, 61 ill., 6 tables. Hardback, £60.00 [ISBN: 9781137378378].

Anyone who has found themselves reading the advertisements in 18th-century editions of the *Gloucestershire Journal* in the course of their research will recognise the wording 'modern-built house ... fit for a gentleman'. This thought-provoking book unpacks the significance of the small classical house indicated by such phrasing as an architectural type in order to explore status and social mobility among the 18th-century gentry. At its core is an in-depth study of 81 such houses, typically with four main rooms on each floor, built in Gloucestershire in the century after 1680, their builders and their occupiers. The combination of architectural history and an exploration of material culture in relation to the spatial arrangement, decoration and furnishing of the houses, in combination with documentary evidence and statistics creates an engagingly comprehensive amalgam.

The first chapter introduces the Gloucestershire gentlemen's houses at the core of the book, providing the context of where, when and by whom they were built and who lived in them. This is followed by an overview of the remaining, predominantly North American, houses used to complement the findings of the core study. The most significant of these is Stenton in Philadelphia, where the author worked as director. It was realising the similarities between Stenton and elite houses on the other side of the Atlantic that propelled him into the research that led to this book. The next chapter explores the array of styles in the classical idiom embodied by these houses, which typically offered compact, economical and adaptable designs. Chapter 4 considers the location of these houses within their surroundings, lacking as they did the social separation of the larger country houses in their landed estates. The author stresses that their function was as full-time residences rather than as villas or country retreats and considers the implications of this. The next two chapters describe how their spatial arrangements, decoration and furnishings created the setting for genteel life within these houses. The ephemeral nature of interior arrangements means that these chapters rely on a comparatively few examples for which chance physical evidence and inventories survive, but the available material is convincingly presented. Chapter 7 explores the social and cultural interactions that took place within these houses and how the conduct of such interactions could be used to reinforce claims to gentility. The final chapter considers how the domestic setting of gentlemen's houses related to their participation in overlapping local, regional, national and transatlantic networks.

Hague identifies the small classical house as a form which enabled the performance of genteel status. His research suggests that, initially adopted as an innovative form by the lesser landed gentry, from the 1720s such houses increasingly drew their occupants from professional and mercantile backgrounds. He uses his evidence to challenge the pattern of limited social mobility presented by Lawrence and Jean Fawtier Stone three decades ago in *An Open Elite?* His contention is that these houses are not aspirational, but rather confirmed or reinforced a status conferred by accumulated wealth or office. The argument is persuasive, but statistics based on such a comparatively small sample over a long period must always be treated with caution. There would need to be equally detailed studies of a range of counties or regions before the conclusions presented here could be accepted as generally applicable. The historiography of the 17th-century 'county community' should make all historians of the gentry wary of extrapolating from a single county to the whole of England, never mind Britain as a whole and its North American colonies.

The attempt to widen the book's perspective to present the role of the small classical house in the British Atlantic World as a whole is less successful than the case study of Gloucestershire. The North American material is interesting, but the varying contexts of the different colonies are too

diverse to make a convincing case. The references to British examples outside Gloucestershire are too few and unrelated to provide robust support for the argument. Despite some misgivings about the widening of the context to argue a case beyond what the evidence will support, this is a well-researched and engagingly presented book which uses a refreshing and welcome range of evidence. There are plenty of illustrations, although the detail on some has been lost in the process of reproduction and those listed as colour plates are sadly greyscale images. It would have been useful to have an appendix listing the Gloucestershire houses included in the study, only around half of which can be identified from the index. Hopefully this study will encourage further research on the small gentry houses built in other regions in this period. In the meantime this book should become essential reading for students of the 18th-century gentry.

JAN BROADWAY  
*Gloucester*

Alan Munden (ed.), *The Religious Census of Bristol and Gloucestershire 1851* (Gloucestershire Record Series 29, BGAS 2015). lxxviii + 376 pp., 5 figs. Hardback, £30.00 [ISBN: 9780900197888].

This is the latest of a number of studies that have transcribed and analysed the local results of the 1851 Religious Census. Local studies are always valuable to local historians, but this particular volume, while obviously most pertinent to Bristol and Gloucestershire, is greatly recommended to historians everywhere because of its outstanding Introduction. The editor is highly familiar with the 1851 Religious Census. An Anglican clergyman serving in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Dr Munden edited *The Religious Census 1851: Northumberland and County Durham* (Surtees Society 216, 2012), a similar template being employed to structure both it and the Bristol and Gloucestershire volume. The latter, however, is more wide-ranging. Having served in Gloucestershire during an earlier period in his career, Dr Munden has published extensively on Gloucestershire churches and churchmen, focusing particularly on 19th-century Anglican evangelicals, such as Francis Close of Cheltenham. Both his familiarity with the area's churches and his profound knowledge of 19th-century religious history ensure that *The Religious Census of Bristol and Gloucestershire 1851* is highly successful in presenting a detailed portrait of local church and chapel attendance in the mid 19th century, while also providing a comprehensive explanation of the contentious issues which dominated local and national religious belief and practice during the period.

The Sunday school movement is synonymous with the city of Gloucester, Thomas Stock, incumbent of St John's, opening the first Sunday school there, aided by the philanthropist and proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal*, Robert Raikes, who publicized the Sunday school movement nationwide. The Introduction covers this topic, as well as others including Anglican clerical social class, non-residence, pluralism, pew rents and the provision of galleries – themes often prioritized by analysts of the results of the 1851 Religious Census – but Dr Munden's greatest achievement lies in the Introduction's discussion of wider religious issues, most notably the influence of dissent, both old and new. The area was rich in famous preachers like George Whitefield (born in the Bell Inn, Gloucester) and Rowland Hill (who had his own chapel at Wotton-under-Edge), while early Methodism was highly successful in Bristol: Charles Wesley lived there from 1749 to 1771; John Wesley supervised George Whitefield's Kingswood School and preached in the city frequently. Anglican evangelicalism, which was initially derided by many in the Established Church, increased in power in Gloucestershire during the episcopate of England's first evangelical bishop, Henry Ryder (b. 1777; d. 1836), taking deep root in Cheltenham during the years 1816 to 1856, when Charles Jarvis and Francis Close held sway. During Close's ministry his parish church was the

best attended in the county, when crowds of over 1,500 people were regularly drawn to hear his powerful preaching. The Introduction also discusses issues surrounding the growth of the Oxford Movement, locally and nationally. John Keble served as curate in several Gloucestershire parishes, there composing some of his famous devotional poetry, published as *The Christian Year* in 1827. His brother Henry, meanwhile, was a local leader of the movement when a number of his clerical contemporaries seceded to Rome. In a discussion of local reactions to such upheavals, Dr Munden's comparisons between members of the Oxford Movement/Cambridge Camden Society who were determined to return Anglican worship to its medieval roots, and Francis Close, whose horrified reaction to such change was to call it 'ecclesiastical mania', are masterly.

Transcription of the 1851 Religious Census returns can present difficulties. In terms of the Bristol and Gloucestershire returns, those for the Bristol Enumeration District are missing. Through using other sources such as local directories, Dr Munden was able to name contemporaneous religious buildings in this district, but was obliged to rely on a later local religious census (published in the *Western Daily Press* on 2 November 1881), for numbering those in attendance. This is not the same as judging like with like, though Dr Munden believes that the numbers are likely to approximate to the 1851 attendance. Difficulties in transcription also occur because returns were originally filed under the names of other counties, or because parishes which were in one county were subsequently transferred to another. The parish of Quinton was transferred from Gloucestershire to Warwickshire in 1935. Dr Munden has included Quinton in this volume, noting the parish church of All Saints (The National Archives, HO 129/406/1/1), but the volume appears not to include Upper Quinton Methodist Chapel, erected in 1818 (HO 129/406/1/1/2). This entry is to be found on page 289 of *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire*, edited by Keith Geary (Dugdale Society 47, 2014), illustrating the usefulness of consulting edited volumes of census material published for neighbouring counties. There is virtue, too, in comparing and contrasting the approaches of the various editors. While Alan Munden casts a narrow but highly penetrating beam on religious change during the period, Keith Geary, though also noting change, reflects on how the geography and social settlement of Warwickshire affected religious diversity. To this end Geary provided a number of maps, the introduction of which could have formed a useful addition to Dr Munden's volume. But these are minor points, for *The Religious Census of Bristol and Gloucestershire 1851* must stand as one of the most scholarly treatments yet produced of mid 19th-century religious change and diversity as demonstrated locally by the 1851 Religious Census.

JANE PLATT  
*Oxford*

[Editor's Note: This review is substantially the same as that printed in *Local Historian* 46(2), April 2016, 160–1.]

Rose Wallis, *The Victoria History of Gloucestershire: Yate* (Woodbridge & London, Boydell & Brewer/Institute of Historical Research 2015). ix + 119 pp., 24 figs., 4 maps, 9 tables. Cardcovers, £12.00 [ISBN: 9781909646100].

We are used to seeing Big Red Books bearing the *Victoria County History* title, and to finding them covering a large number of more or less contiguous parishes, organized according to hundreds. In Gloucestershire, we have been led to anticipate volume XIII covering 13 parishes in the Severn and Leadon valleys [Ed. published in September 2016]. It may well come as a considerable



surprise, except to those who consult the VCH website, to find the prestigious VCH label on a slim grey volume dealing with the single historic parish of Yate in the 'Deep South'. It is a foretaste of volume XIV, to cover an area of southern Gloucestershire which will also include the three Sodbury parishes, and it forms the groundwork of the eventual article on Yate in that volume.

There are a number of reasons to welcome this initiative. Firstly, progress is progress, even if it means doing things outside of a long-projected sequence and following the money; the present book has been handsomely supported by South Gloucestershire Council and apparently fast-tracked. Secondly, the money has been advanced, it seems to me, for an increasingly important reason. VCH was conceived at a time when its organizing principle, the county, was still an essentially rural construct, and county history was rural history. Manchester and Leeds were not county towns. A long-established major city, such as Winchester, York or Oxford, might get a volume or most of one to itself, but that reflects the centuries-long importance and strong documentary history of such places. There are many reasons why work in so many counties has stalled, but when funds eventually become available for a restart, things are not necessarily going to be done according to the same priorities. A clear majority of people, and therefore users of VCH, are now urban folk who may well identify less strongly with a rural county, especially since some traditional counties were beaten unrecognizable in 1974. The new Yate volume satisfies certain new imperatives, one of them iconically; it covers a parish which has evolved from being a rural entity to a sizeable town. Its significance is that of a county town (well, what do you call the *caput* of a Unitary Authority?), and the official abode of the paymasters of the volume, who clearly have an enlightened interest in advancing the VCH project in a way which foregrounds their own town. Other major projects, including the one with which the reviewer is associated, the Survey of English Place-Names (SEPN), have seen things evolve in comparable ways: some county surveys have stalled, or have become unwieldy as the desire for inclusiveness, the availability of information and the lack of suitably qualified scholars with appropriate funding have all had a potentially inhibiting impact on the implementation of the original survey design. SEPN has recently responded in much the same way as VCH: with a proposal to complement the blue county volumes with volumes focusing on urban entities such as Bristol and Leeds.

Rose Wallis's excellent volume is a very welcome addition to the VCH landscape, and reflects the changes just outlined in interesting ways. VCH consumers will expect to find detailed chronological accounts of the local manor(s) and lords, the church, the parochial charities and the advowson, and will not be disappointed. Many rural parishes have nothing much that could be described as industrial, but Yate had proto-industry in the form of the extraction of stone, coal and celestine, and that is one of the reasons which stimulated its development as a town. Wallis remarks especially (p. 51) on the uniqueness of celestine extraction in an English parochial economy, and its effect on planning (p. 53). More, perhaps, could have been made of what may have been uncomfortable relations with its snootier neighbour Chipping Sodbury, a market town of 700 years' standing, condescending over Yate's eastern boundary. We hear that when administrative unification was proposed in 1980, it was declined on the grounds that Yate was essentially urban, whilst the character of Sodbury was both urban and rural (p. 65). Yate has prospered and is vibrant, whilst Sodbury no doubt vibrates at a dignified lower pitch.

The division of the book into chapters corresponding to traditional VCH sections also reflects the urban realities in an interesting way. Wallis starts with an introduction to the parish within its geographical constraints and changing administrative boundaries, but the tone is set by the emphasis, even so early, on the transport links which have been a significant contributory factor in Yate's development, on the history of its population with its steep upward curve especially since about 1800, and on its built environment, including the semi-planned new town involving

considerable private development. Popular and administrative worry about complementing urban expansion with suitable infrastructure is a constant theme (notoriously paralleled in the 1990s in nearby Bradley Stoke). The second chapter deals with the three local manors and their successor estates. It is implied that the prevalence of absentee landlords, especially their absence from the vestry meeting, has contributed (along with the equal prevalence of absentee incumbents dealt with in the later chapter on the Church) to the relatively unfettered development which characterized the emergence of modern Yate. There was, affirms Wallis, 'no single locus of power in the parish' (p. 69) until very recently.

The chapter on economic history gives a clear account of Yate's development, starting with low-key dependence on agriculture with marginal interests in mining and quarrying. Yate offers a significant contrast with nearby Kingswood, in that the extractive industries were fully embedded in the manorial economy rather than exploited by the independent swashbuckling which became notorious during the 18th century in the disafforested area further south. These industries formed a major element in the orderly emergence of a fully-fledged, if small, industrial town, depending to a large extent on its proximity to Bristol for its markets and for its workforce, a matter which has had a significant impact on urban planning and infrastructure. By the time the die was cast and Yate was busy industrializing, 20th-century planners seem to have envisaged a town which was self-supporting, a town whose industry was staffed in a garden-cityish kind of way by local residents with minimal transport needs; that is, they saw the changed realities through the prism of a village-like economy which Yate was well on the way to outstripping. Commuting to and from Bristol, driven in part by household economics (who could afford to live where and pay how much for transport) and partly by lifestyle choice (who wanted to access the fleshpots of Bristol or the scrawnier fare of Yate), has become the norm, to the extent of forcing the reopening in 1989 of the station which had been closed by Beeching in 1965, and Yate is therefore not the place envisaged by its early planners. It is also interesting that segregation of industry and housing was practised (pp. 56 and 71), which has also had infrastructural consequences and was seen as endangering the 'occupational community' once normal in Victorian towns.

Wallis deals next with the history of local government from the age of the manor via that of the vestry to that of the unitary authority. The following chapter on social history covers all aspects of social structure, employment and entertainment through to the present, and the impression left is of a parish not well provided, and ungenerous, with charitable support for the poor, and rather limited educational provision also, with frequent references to unsuitable school accommodation, especially before the Second World War.

The final chapter is on religious history. Again, Wallis brings the story right up to date, finishing with numbers on the present religious diversity and the growth of non-religious attitudes. We learn, opaquely, that St Mary's has been 're-ordered to make it "a centre of Christian activity"' (p. 105), and we would like to know what it was before. The more conventional religious history of the parish, i.e. the Anglican hegemony and its disturbance by Nonconformity (taking opportunities, she implies, offered by a succession of absentee rectors), and their joint impact on the expansion of educational opportunity, is expertly handled, but shows no real surprises. That might be viewed as an anticlimax, but VCH articles are not intended to conform to the rules of rhetoric, and one is left with the satisfaction of having read an informative and well-ordered account of an untypical and interesting place which epitomizes the new dynamic in aspects of historical research.

The thematic organization of the text leads to occasional duplication or repetition where the subject matter does not easily partition, e.g. where the manor and the glebe both impact on land use – in early modern times, for instance, the church land becomes a manor – or when dealing with issues in church history which impact on parochial government. The issue of lack of centralized authority crops up several times, but given its thematic importance, there is no harm in that.

There is very little unclarity to vex even a reader who, like the reviewer, has no deep knowledge of the town.

The book is well produced; the typography is good, and the choice of illustrations pertinent and varied. Thankfully, it is indexed, but the index was silent on the first three things the reviewer looked up.

RICHARD COATES

*Bristol*

Richard Skeet, *Rescued from Obscurity ... the continuing story of the ... Hereford & Gloucester Canal* (The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust 2014). 200pp., numerous illustrations. Cardcovers, £10.00 [ISBN: 9780992944100].

This very readable book outlines the history of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, its decline into obscurity and the efforts of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal Trust volunteers to bring it back into service.

The first few chapters cover much the same ground as the earlier history of the canal by the late David Bick, published in 1979, but the author has included many quotations from original documents to tell the story in the words of the people of the time. These sources range from canal company records and newspapers to the canal engineer's diary, the published log of a pleasure boat and John Masefield's autobiography. These add much interesting detail about the difficulties encountered in building and operating the canal, including an account of the confrontation which occurred when two boats met in the middle of Oxenhall tunnel and neither skipper would give way for 58 hours.

Two of the early quotes refer to the work of a Mr Price, who could have been identified as William Price, a prominent shareholder and member of the managing Committee who effectively acted as unpaid general manager of the Canal Company for its first year. In gratitude for this service, his fellow committee men presented him with some fine silverware that has passed down through the Price family and is now on loan to the Gloucester Waterways Museum.

The book is enhanced by clear specially drawn maps and other illustrations, including a picture of a fan decorated with a map of the canal that was used to publicise the sale of shares.

The second half of the book outlines the work of volunteers, initially aiming just to restore short sections and now to work towards full restoration. The extraordinary efforts that have been made tend to mirror the challenges faced by the original canal builders. Much progress has been made using the labour of volunteers, but the Canal Trust has also been successful in other ways. Developers have been persuaded to make provision for the canal in their schemes, to the mutual benefit of both parties, and properties have been purchased that offer business opportunities providing long term income streams. These chapters are again well illustrated with colour photographs of work in progress and special occasions.

The book will be of great interest to canal enthusiasts and to those living along the route of the canal, and it can also be read as highlighting what can be achieved by enthusiastic volunteers.

HUGH CONWAY-JONES

*Gloucester*

Dave Backwith, Roger Ball, Stephen E. Hunt and Mike Richardson, *Strikers, Hobblers, Conchies and Reds: a radical history of Bristol 1880–1939* (London, Breviary Stuff Publications 2014). xiii + 350pp., 101 ill. Cardcovers, £18.50 [ISBN: 9780992946609].

Despite its subtitle, this book is not a connected account of radical people or events in Bristol from 1880 to 1939. It is a collection of eight essays, seven of which have been published as separate booklets in the *Bristol Radical Pamphleteer* series. They narrate and examine a selection of events and movements that happened between those dates, in which socialists, syndicalists, communists, anarchists and poor, largely powerless, people whom historians have not bothered to label, challenged or fought against the powers that were. So the book does not deal with topics that some readers might expect to see in a radical history of Bristol, or even a history of radical Bristol: for example, the roles and stances of workers during (as distinct from before) the First World War, the women's suffrage movement, or the General Strike of 1926.

The collection is of the 'history from below' genre, but it is about not just radicals or radicalism: the pilots of Crockerne Pill invented, asserted, defended and exploited a good old-fashioned monopoly that Adam Smith would have deplored, and they navigated themselves into a trade union not out of radicalism but as a more effective means. And 'radical' would misdescribe, at any rate in modern discourses, the ex-servicemen who in 1920 gave Bristol Tramways Company a week to dismiss all its women employees and attacked the company's premises, burned trams and assaulted conductresses until the company gave in.

The first essay, by Dr Hunt, traces the emergence of anarchism locally. It identifies a small number of local anarchists and describes their contacts with, and visits from, anarchists better known elsewhere, such as William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, the Whiteway colony near Stroud, the Clarion movement, and Edward Carpenter. Dr Hunt:

Carpenter was the original crank, a vegetarian and the kind of 'bananas and sandals wearer' that George Orwell had in mind when he wrote scathingly: 'One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words "Socialism" and "Communism" draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex maniac, Quaker, "Nature Cure" quack, pacifist and feminist in England.' Well, he wasn't a Quaker or pacifist, but seven out of nine isn't bad.

Dr Hunt describes what some of the men experienced when they refused conscription in 1916. One of them came from Bristol. They were few and isolated. Dr Hunt sees these early anarchists as informing various subsequent strands of radicalism. He makes a brave and sympathetic case, but even on the evidence he adduces, one is left with the feeling that their impact is overstated.

Dr Richardson's first contribution entertainingly and lucidly narrates how the Pill pilots (the Hobblers of the title) defended their monopoly against attacks by shipowners, masters of vessels and the city council, who wanted freedom to engage whom they wished, especially as steamships replaced sail. Dr Richardson shows how the pilots shifted from near-piracy and truculent and violent individualism to realising that trade union membership offered a better way of protecting their interests against the dogmatics of free trade and the superiority of new technologies. He presents their actions not as shrewd self-interest during economic and technological change, but as community-based class struggle. This whig interpretation of history with a History Workshop twist culminates in them joining in 1884 the UK Pilots Association, which became a section of the Transport and General Workers Union in 1985. (Its secretary and solicitor from 1913 to 1953, Dr Richardson does not mention, was a Citizen party leader of the city council and chaired the local Conservative association. Whoever wrote his *Times* obituary thought the UKPA was to do with aviation.)

Dr Richardson then has two essays on the strikes and lockouts in Bristol in 1889 and 1890, when wages were increasing elsewhere but there was high unemployment. He describes the parts played by women such as [Elizabeth] Miriam Daniell and Helena Brown; the paternalism of employers such as Lysaght's, the gas company, Fry's, Thomas's, the docks, the cotton factory and the footwear manufacturers; their responses to the workers' demands; and the course of the strikes and lockouts. From these events Dr Richardson draws out the origins of labour representation locally.

Dr Ball examines events, involving Sanders's sweet factory, the deal runners on the docks, and Malago Vale colliery, leading up to a lantern procession on 23 December 1892, aimed at collecting money for strikers and their families, which was broken up by police and cavalry. One rally involved 7–8,000 people. It is difficult to resist Dr Ball's conclusion that the authorities' response was deliberate, unnecessary, repressive and misjudged.

Dr Hunt traces how the Stamp Acts and teetotalism made some of Bristol's 100 or so coffee taverns meeting places for socialists, anarchists and trade unionists.

Dr Richardson then contributes a mainly narrative essay on labour unrest in Bristol between 1910 and 1914, affecting the cotton factory, docks, railways, mining, flour mills, footwear, tramways and building trades. He examines the actions and strategies of the police, and shows that rank-and-file workers (as distinct from, and not always supported by, the national trade union leaders) were engaged in a complicated struggle for employment rights, improved pay, and political representation.

Then follows an empathetic essay by Dr Hunt on Bristol's garden suburbs; starting with Philip Napier Miles's ostensibly philanthropic offer of land at Shirehampton to families for Ebenezer Howard-inspired housing. The early efforts, still standing and occupied, were frustrated and interrupted by the War and overtaken by events. The author expounds a critique of how the ideals of the movement were (un)progressively diluted in the city council's later provision of housing on its other estates.

The last chapter, by Dr Backwith and Dr Ball, looks at the national and local economy in the 1930s, with particular attention to the demonstrations in 1932 led by the communist-led National Unemployed Workers Movement, and the police response.

All the essays are detailed, meticulously documented and referenced, with extensive quotation from sources as distinct from mere mention in footnotes, and mercifully free of theory-laden jargon. They are mainly narrative, but with relevant analysis mostly from one or other marxism-derived perspective. To that extent the 'radical history' in the subtitle is apt. Particularly telling are the passages describing how individuals contributed to and were affected by events and the responses of the authorities, which the authors see as examples of class conflict. 'Four legs good, two legs bad' occasionally comes to mind. The authors, however, give a good sense of proportion, from the very small number of anarchists (whose lack of influence might be attributable to absence of hierarchical organization?) to the tens of thousands involved in the strikes and demonstrations of the 1890s and 1930s. Dr Richardson's essays are particularly valuable in showing the local origins of organized trade unions which played so important a part in Bristol's later history.

The illustrations are apt, but their reproduction does not always work. The posters and the Loxton drawings come out clearly enough, but some of the handwritten documents and cartoons are printed too small for the words to be legible. Many of the portraits and other images have come out patterned. The landscape photographs appear dark and murky, making the point of some of them indecipherable. Captioning could have been more accurate: 'Sea Mills Square with St Edyth's church' shows, just discernible in the gloom, Oatley's Methodist church: his St Edyth's is half a mile behind the camera.

All told, an interesting and worthwhile collection, from viewpoints and about people under-represented in Bristol's histories, and giving voice to the often ignored, disparaged and unheard. E.P. Thompson's words come to mind:

I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan – and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott – from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying; their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking; their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies; their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy ... but they lived through these times of acute social disturbance and we did not'.

And some sobering warnings for our own times about the dangers of a high Gini co-efficient, and how not to handle economic and technological change.

WILLIAM EVANS  
*Bristol*

Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed.), *Literary Bristol: writers and the city* (Bristol, Redcliffe Press/UWE, 2015). 224 pp, 51 illus., 15 col. plates. Cardcovers, £15.00 [ISBN: 9781908326737].

*Literary Bristol* is a handsomely produced and illustrated volume. The images reproduced as illustrations and colour plates, both familiar and less so, will give much pleasure. About the text, it is necessary to be more cautious.

Marie Mulvey-Roberts's introductory essay is sometimes daunting, as when we are told that 'intertopicality invokes a reader's physical experience of a place through reading, whether or not it be actual or imaginary, while intertextuality is the never-ending conversation which literature has with itself'. It is perhaps surprising that a scholar evidently at home with such terms of art should nonetheless categorize *The School for Scandal* as a 'Restoration' comedy!

Mulvey-Roberts also contributes the opening piece on *Gothic Bristol: city of darkness and light*. A theme running through the book is the physical and symbolic influence of place on literature and this essay pursues the theme through the writings of Gothic writers associated with the city, including the actress and royal mistress Mary Robinson ('Perdita') on whom what she called 'the Gothic structure, the lonely cloisters, the lofty aisles, of the antique minster' were a lasting influence, Mary Shelley, who visited Bristol the year before she wrote *Frankenstein*, and others. There is much of interest here, but also some rather tenuous links, as between Bristol and R.L. Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Robin Jarvis next explores the perceived contrast between urban corruption and rural purity – part of the stock-in-trade of Romanticism – through the early works of the Bristolian Robert Southey and his brother-in-law Samuel Taylor Coleridge, both of whom found inspiration and spiritual comfort within reach of the city, for example at Avon Gorge and Brockley Combe.

The next three essays are perhaps the most rewarding. Kerri Andrews tells of Ann Yearsley's cunning subversion of the conventions of landscape poetry (as exemplified by John Dyer's *Grongar Hill*) and the extracts quoted also show Yearsley's move from heroic couplets to blank verse, a transition common in the early Romantic period.

John Goodridge writes of the angry response of the shoemaker poet and Christian socialist John Gregory (1831–1922) to what he saw as the neglect of Thomas Chatterton by city and church. St Mary Redcliffe church, its building and bells 'reaching to another world' and a *leitmotif* for both poets, is viewed on both physical and spiritual levels. Issue should be taken with what Goodridge calls Gregory's 'naming and shaming' of the Revd Mr Whish, who removed the Chatterton

memorial from the church grounds. Given the memorial had been erected without permission; that Chatterton was considered a suicide (I am aware this has been questioned by recent scholars), in breach of the Church's laws; and that the poet was a sexual libertine and probable free-thinker, Whish's action seems eminently justifiable. Goodridge has however performed a service in rescuing from neglect a talented minor poet with affinities to contemporaries like William Morris.

The inter-war novelist E.H. Young (1880–1949) is also worth rescuing. She created a literary geography of Bristol akin to Hardy's Wessex, although her characters, on the fringe of the *bourgeoisie* – like the widow and daughters of an impoverished scholar who keep a lodging house in *Jenny Wren* (1932) – do not always find themselves at ease in it. Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei take us through the *oeuvre*.

Attention next turns, in a piece by Dawn Fowler, to new-wave dramatists of the late 1950s and 1960s, among them Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard and the Bristolian Charles Wood (1932–), who once said he considered 'piss' to be 'one of the finest words in the language'. He appears to have had something of an interest in this particular function, since a one-act play, *Prisoner and Escort* (1963), concerns a soldier who has urinated on an officer's boots. Wood's *Dingo* (1967) is a surrealist treatment of the Battle of El Alamein and attacks the reputation of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery. It is not clear whether Wood paused to consider what kind of regime he might have been living under had the tide not been turned in North Africa, or just how tenderly that regime might have felt towards *avant-garde* dramatists.

The much lionized Angela Carter (1940–92) lived in Bohemian circles in 1960s Bristol and the novels of her early 'Bristol trilogy' (1966–71), analysed by Zoe Brennan, 'are filled with alcohol and marijuana, casual sex and a disdain for mainstream values'. Her characters' fates, which include maiming, suicide and murder, testify to Carter's growing disillusionment with this kind of alternative living, but the question remains why this uniquely privileged generation – the first whose higher education was paid for by the state and the first whose young men were not obliged to do military service – should have thought it necessary to rebel in the first place.

The final essay, by Catherine Butler, describes how the author of children's and young adults' fantasy Diana Wynne Jones (1934–2011), a writer influenced by Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Eliot's *Four Quartets*, lent 'enchantment' to real locations, including Bristol ones, in her tales. Whether readers will be inspired, as Butler perhaps hopes, to make 'pilgrimages' around the city to recapture this enchantment, depends no doubt on the level of their enthusiasm for this literary sub-genre.

*Literary Bristol* is not, as its title might suggest, a comprehensive survey. Whilst the structure – essays by several hands – no doubt precludes this, there are many important figures who might at least have figured in the introduction. Hannah More is only mentioned as Ann Yearsley's patron, while little is said of Thomas Lovell Beddoes and nothing of Amelia Edwards, the Cliftonians Sir Henry Newbolt and T.E. Brown, Isaac Rosenberg, C.H. Sisson, Charles Tomlinson, or of distinguished literary visitors such as Sir John Betjeman.

The authors mainly evince leftward leanings, most of the essays displaying a disdain for money making in all its forms (not just the slave trade). These leanings are evident too in the choice of subjects, since most of the writers concerned were radically discontented with the worlds in which they lived. There is little space for those who, at any particular time, simply chronicled – or even celebrated – the given, which may account for the neglect of some of those mentioned above. In short, while containing much of value and interest, *Literary Bristol* is at the end of the day only a partial (in both senses) account of its subject.

JOHN STEVENS  
*Bristol*

David Cannadine, *Heroic Chancellor: Winston Churchill and Bristol University 1929–65* (London, Institute of Historical Research 2016). 78pp., 18 ill. Cardcovers, £10.00 [ISBN: 9781909646186].

The office of chancellor of a British university has a strange history. The earliest known statutes of any university, from 13th-century Cambridge, provide for the election of a chancellor *quoniam difficile est uniuersitatem consentire communi consensus et omni uoluntate*, ‘because it is difficult for the university to reach agreement collectively and with the assent of all’, a strikingly modern reason. The post rotated among senior members of the university, some of whom later rose to national prominence and could act as advocates for the university in high places. Then in 1504 Cambridge elected John Fisher, later bishop, cardinal and even later saint, as chancellor for life. Thus his tenure was ended only with his execution in 1535, but the idea of having a public figure as chancellor (and letting the vice-chancellor do the work) appealed, and Fisher was succeeded by Thomas Cromwell. When Henry VIII’s axe fell again, Stephen Gardiner was elected, and the tradition was established of non-resident chancellors, usually major political figures, usually alumni.

A similar pattern was established in Oxford, where it continues to this day. But when in the late 19th and early 20th century new universities were established in the great English cities, they had of course no alumni. They still wanted public figures who would represent and add glamour to the universities, and most looked to their local landed aristocrats. Bristol was the last of this group of universities, receiving its charter only in 1909, and it might have followed suit, looking perhaps to Beaufort, Bath or Waldegrave. Instead its first two chancellors were H.O. Wills, the tobacco baron who had made the crucial donation that unlocked university status, and R.B. Haldane who in government had strongly supported the new universities and Bristol in particular.

When Haldane died in 1928, the university council had some difficulty agreeing on a successor, but eventually chose Winston Churchill, who by then had lost his office of Chancellor of the Exchequer with the fall of the Baldwin government in May 1929. He arrived in Bristol, equipped with the exchequer robe that he had inherited from his father Lord Randolph, and he remained chancellor of the university until his death in 1965.

This book, an extended version of a lecture given by Sir David Cannadine to mark the 50th anniversary of Churchill’s death, chronicles the remarkable 36 years of Churchill’s chancellorship, and sets them in the context both of Churchill’s career, and of the history of the university. In 1929 Bristol was a small provincial university, with almost entirely local students living at home, but by 1965 it attracted students from all over Britain and increasingly from abroad. It also had a national and international reputation in many different subjects and occupied impressive buildings in the heart of the city.

Cannadine’s account is largely narrative, describing Churchill’s visits to the university (which ended only in 1954), his love of academic ceremonial and of being feted by the students and his choice of recipients of honorary degrees, all illustrated with generous quotations from his speeches. It is interesting to see the way Churchill’s approach to university matters reflected what was going on in the wider world, especially in the period up to the Second World War. Sir David also notes that, having at Bristol developed a taste for addressing academic audiences, he in later life used visits to other universities, especially in the United States of America, for some of his most deeply-felt orations.

Churchill’s activities as chancellor are well documented, but mystery remains over his selection as chancellor in 1929. He had no links with Bristol or the West Country, and his political career seemed to have ended in 1929. Sir David casts no new light on the reasons for his selection. He follows earlier historians (on rather slim evidence) in ascribing the initiative to Sir William McCormick, the chairman of the Treasury University Grants Committee. It seems highly



improbable that this upright Scotsman would have nominated the minister to whom he was directly responsible and who supplied the money he allocated, at least until after Churchill lost office at the election. If he suggested Churchill's name after May 1929, what was the council doing before that date? Were they waiting for the election result to see who might be available, or had they already approached someone else and been turned down? If so, who? (Baldwin himself became chancellor of St Andrews in 1929, and of Cambridge the next year.)

The council minutes are very discreet, but they do reveal that there was at least one other serious candidate. Who was it, and what were the arguments which swayed a majority for Churchill? It seems unlikely that the full story will ever be told, unless new evidence emerges, for instance from letters or diaries of those involved.

The Bristol chancellorship can never be more than a footnote in a life of Winston Churchill, but his long reign must surely have had an impact on the very new institution itself. Cannadine shows that he did not interfere in the policy making of the university (except to suggest honorary graduands). He did not unlock new sources of funding, nor did the university get any special treatment from government even when he was prime minister.

It may however be that, in a subtle way, he gave the university a level of ambition that it might otherwise have lacked. Bristol is a proud city, and its university followed suit, but Bristol's pride is often parochial and even complacent. To have a chancellor who was a major player on the international stage, and who for 25 years made the Great Hall ring with orations about Europe and the world, the British Empire and the transatlantic alliance, might well have encouraged the university to see itself in a national and international setting as well as contributing to the local community. He would be proud of the result.

JOHN KINGMAN  
*Bristol*