

## Reviews

Edited by ALAN TYLER and JOHN CHANDLER

Anthea Jones (ed.), *Dissenters' Meeting-House Certificates and Registrations for Bristol and Gloucestershire 1672–1852*. (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Gloucestershire Record Series, vol. 32, 2018). lxxvi + 305pp., 20 col. ill., maps, tables. Hardback, £30.00 [ISBN: 9780900197956].

Today we are familiar with numerous nonconformist chapels that have been closed and now used for other purposes such as attractive and spacious homes. Apart from being easily identified by the external appearance, there is often carved in stone the title of the former denomination and the year in which the building was opened. But what is the history of these places of worship – those that have been closed and those still open and used for Sunday worship? This volume provides a significant contribution to the history and development of nonconformity in Bristol and Gloucestershire. The origins of English nonconformity go back to the 17th century and included the 2,000 or so pastors who had previously ministered in the Church of England but had not been ordained by a bishop. At the Restoration they had to choose between episcopal ordination (the minority option) or leaving the congregations they had previously served and become nonconformists. It is these newly-created denominations (excluding Roman Catholics) together with later developments that are included in this volume. To obtain permission to meet for worship each congregation had to obtain a certificate from the magistrate or diocesan bishop. In this volume over 2,000 certificates and registrations have been painstakingly transcribed and are conveniently listed alphabetically and cover the years 1672 to 1852. Alongside these records may be put the findings of the Religious Census of 1851 (*The Religious Census of Bristol and Gloucestershire 1851*, Gloucestershire Record Series, vol. 29, 2015). Together these two volumes provide an extraordinarily detailed picture of the religious traditions of the city and county. However, it is not a complete picture. Not all congregations were registered, certificates and registrations were lost and many places of worship were unrecorded in the Religious Census, not least because the enumerators had difficulty in identifying and locating groups of worshippers assembling in private houses. This volume records their existence (but not the number of worshippers) and in so doing provides a record of the vibrant nonconformity that was unrecorded in the Census.

Nationally, most of the permissions were for congregations that assembled in 'private houses, or floors or rooms of dwelling houses', and it is clear from the certificates and registrations that other larger venues were used in Gloucestershire such as barns, mills, a hayloft, a workshop, rooms in public houses and a music hall. In Bristol two ships were used as places of worship – the 'Seaman's Chapel' (no. 38) and the 'Clifton Ark' (no. 569). Where houses and cottages were used the owners (usually male but sometimes female) were members of the particular denomination. Some of the properties were recorded as being rented (no. 1967) or currently unoccupied (nos. 1440 and 1876) and others too must have been the same. From the attendance figures recorded in the Religious Census (and therefore towards the end of the period covered by the certificates and registrations) and depending on the size of the available space these house churches accommodated anything between 25 and 100 adults. Others would have been much smaller and the worshippers crammed into small rooms – were seats provided for them or did they stand or sit on the floor? There is

evidence to suggest that over the years the congregations relocated from house to house – perhaps as the numbers of worshippers increased or simply that the previous venue was no longer available to accommodate them.

For many nonconformists there was a common sequence – open-air preaching was followed by the formation of a congregation which then met for worship in a house or some other convenient place; and only after sufficient funds had been raised did they erect their own place of worship. It is more than likely that several smaller congregations of the same denomination pooled their limited resources to erect their own chapel. These progressive developments are evident in the dates of the certificates and registrations, and also recorded in the opening of places of worship listed in the Religious Census. Later in the 19th century the small chapels were replaced by larger buildings (and often opened in debt), but by then the tide was turning and the number of worshippers was in slow decline.

Nonconformity is conveniently divided into ‘old dissent’ (Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Independents and the Society of Friends (the Quakers)); and ‘new dissent’ – the Arminian societies associated with John and Charles Wesley, the Moravians, Calvinistic Methodism and the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion (associated with George Whitefield). Important to Gloucestershire (and with one in London) were those chapels associated with Rowland Hill. Although he was in Anglican orders (he was ordained as a deacon, but never a priest, and thus wearing, as he put it, ‘only one ecclesiastical boot’), he exercised a significant evangelical ministry in the county. On evangelicalism, the text makes the not uncommon confusion between ‘evangelical’ (which gave a particular theological identity), ‘evangelism’ (concerning the proclamation of the gospel) and ‘evangelist’ (the distinctive role of the preacher); also used were the pejoratives ‘evangelisers’ and even ‘proselytisers’.

Nationwide, the 1851 Religious Census identified 35 separate denominations, of which 22 were identified as existing in Gloucestershire. In Bristol there were two others that existed outside of mainstream nonconformity – the Christian Revivalists (no. 51) and the ‘Rational Religionists’ (no. 61). Of the 1748 places of worship in the county, 144 were registered in the 17th century; 368 in the 18th century (most during the period of the Evangelical Revival); and 1,236 during the 19th century (596 during the years 1821–40 when there were waves of revivalism within the various Methodist factions and the emergence of the newly-created Christian Brethren). Some of the certificates and registrations are credited by the editor with the name of a denomination, and when the text is put alongside the Religious Census, there are another 50 and more denominations that can be confidently identified by person, place, month and year.

Outside Bristol, several towns in Gloucestershire had a significant number of nonconformist congregations. They were mostly in towns such as Cirencester, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury. Tewkesbury was an important centre because of the presence of a nonconformist academy (that had moved from smaller premises in Gloucester) and in Bristol there was a Baptist academy. According to the certificates the Society of Friends (the Quakers) had established a number of meetings, but they subsequently declined, so that by 1851 only 11 meeting houses were still open. Similarly, while Presbyterianism had flourished in the 17th century, by the following century the places of worship had either ceased to exist or the ministers and members had made the transition from Trinitarianism to Unitarianism, so that by 1851 there were only six Unitarian congregations in the county. Longer lasting, and surviving, was Independency (later called Congregationalism and from 1972 the United Reformed Church). Following the Evangelical Revival and the formation of rival Methodist factions during the first half of the 19th century, division led to unity (in 1857 and 1907) culminating in the majority of Methodists supporting the nationwide union in 1932. Doctrinal differences and an increasing number of converts during local revivals resulted in more chapels being opened, and even in small rural parishes there could be several competing denominations outside the Church of England.

In Wilmcote, in the neighbouring county of Warwickshire, the preaching at the Independent chapel provided a distinctive alternative to the Tractarian parish church, so that 'much good has of late years been done in counteracting the errors of Puseyism in this vicinity'. While there were Tractarian and later Anglo-Catholic clergy in Gloucestershire who alienated their Protestant parishioners, there is little evidence to suggest the growth and strength of nonconformity in competition to the parish church.

This is a well-produced volume and a most useful addition to the Gloucestershire Record Series, again under the painstaking oversight of the general editor James Hodsdon. It is good to have as endpapers the clear map of the parishes, coloured photographs of some of the chapels and copies of eight of the original documents.

ALAN MUNDEN  
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Alex Craven and Beth Hartland, *The Victoria History of Gloucestershire: Cheltenham before the Spa* (London, Institute of Historical Research 2018). x + 168 pp., 53 figs. Cardcovers, £14.00 [ISBN: 9781909646742].

The attractive illustrated cover of this paperback, and its intriguing title, seem designed to make a potential purchaser pick it off the shelf of a local bookshop. What would that person find inside – their first impressions? Well, a text which is easy on the eye, divided into chapters, with some slightly surprising pale turquoise pages, and many footnotes on every page. Readers not familiar with the Victoria County History and its role in local history will find these explained in the preface by James Hodsdon, the Chair of the Gloucestershire County History Trust. The Trust brought the book to fruition by the collaboration of two professional historians and volunteers mainly from the Cheltenham Local History Society and with support from John Chandler, notably his contribution of the index and many of the explanatory panels – the pale turquoise pages. If you go online to find a price and ordering details, there is a lot more background to this.

It is important to understand the VCH genesis, and those familiar with VCH paperbacks might want to know this is not part of the England's Past for Everyone series, that is, it is not entirely a stand-alone book, but a VCH Short, the first instalment of a projected hardback covering a wider area of Gloucestershire and a longer time period, the classic 'earliest times to the present day'.

The chapters therefore fit what the VCH regards as 'the most significant topics of historical enquiry' into a systematic formula: Land and People, Settlement, Landownership, Economic History, Local Government, Social History, Economic History and Religious History. These topics are covered in detail from the 8th century to c.1740, although many of the explanatory panels cover longer periods, since they are helpfully designed to explain terms and concepts not necessarily familiar to the general reader or modern-period historians, and clearly based on modern research, although this is not cited. So, for example, the first five (of 19 panels) cover hundreds, parishes and other divisions; early roads and communications; Romans and natives in the landscape, field and early minor names in the landscape, and monastic landlords. These and other panels are useful to readers of this book in particular, local historians in general, and also undergraduate and postgraduate students approaching the medieval and early modern periods. The title of the sixth panel, 'why are manorial descents important', is rather telling because it is a justification for the VCH's tracing of the holding of manors by elites from before the Conquest. This of course is a mainstay of early VCH volumes and indeed of antiquarian works and, as the

panel boldly states, such descents do not make ‘inspiring prose’. When they are well researched, as here, they are an invaluable and ongoing resource to which (local) historians will turn in the future, and this is the justification for their publication. When such historians approach other topics in this locality, they will be able to return to the lists of manors here and their descents as a reliable source of information. They will also find the royal demesne manor of Cheltenham set in the wider national context: its exchange for the strategically significant Cinque Ports of Rye and Winchelsea in Sussex after Henry III’s defeat in Poitou in 1242. This enables the authors to set out part of the reason for the growth of Cheltenham as a market town, before going on to deal with other manors and estates in the remit of the book (Redgrove, Cheltenham rectory, Arle Court, and several others).

Urban growth appears in other chapters of course, with discussion of mills and other trades and industries following on from agriculture and leading on to the early modern period and including Cheltenham’s market and two fairs. Primary sources in the National Archives and Gloucestershire Archives and Bristol Record Office, the British Library and beyond have clearly been closely examined, as well as numerous printed primary sources and secondary antiquarian and local history books. From time to time the amount of factual detail is slightly overwhelming at the expense of a stronger narrative, but this is perhaps the price to be paid for such a rich resource. The book finishes with a consideration of the origins and status of the parish church, originally a minster, and of parochial life as expressed in bequests to chantries and lights (which have an explanatory panel) and a summary of the building’s development. The consequences of the Dissolution, Reformation and Civil War for Cheltenham are explained, together with the role, numbers and activities of dissenters from the Anglican Church, who also have their own helpful panel explaining nonconformity.

The book is beautifully illustrated with photos and extracts from documents and well supplied with maps but, as an outsider, I would nevertheless have found a location map helpful too. This might also be a thought of the putative purchaser of *Cheltenham before the Spa* from a local bookshop who, like me, might be surprised by the absence of a concluding chapter. This however seems to be a result of its admirable prompt publication as part of what in time will be a fuller VCH volume, and once this is understood, does not detract from the hard work of all those who contributed to it. It should be widely read.

GILLIAN DRAPER  
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Nigel Baker, Jonathan Brett and Robert Jones, *Bristol, an Archaeological Assessment: a worshipful town and famous city* (Oxford, Oxbow Books/Historic England 2018). xviii + 573 pp., 342 figs., 2 tabs., 17 plans. Hardback, £40 [ISBN: 9781785708770].

This is the long-awaited bible of Bristol archaeology; a narrative which describes and discusses every archaeological excavation whether published or not, and every notable historic building whether extant or destroyed. Massively detailed, encyclopaedic and well referenced, it is an ideal springboard for research; lavishly illustrated and well written, it even goes well on the coffee-table. Its ultimate purpose, however, is to determine which sites merit fuller publication, and to help the city’s planners ensure that archaeology is not unwittingly destroyed. The area covered extends roughly 1 km from the high cross and approximates to that built up c.1750 except Bedminster and Clifton.

Opening chapters survey Bristol’s geology, its archaeologists, painters, photographers and map-makers, and its prehistoric and Roman antecedents. At the core of the work are four broadly

chronological chapters detailing the historical geography of the town and city from its enigmatic beginnings c.950 to 1900. In the 11th and 12th centuries we read of a defended town at the gate of a castle founded by Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances. In the 12th and 13th centuries Robert, earl of Gloucester, Robert Fitzharding, the Knights Templar and others developed walled or gated suburbs at Redcliffe with Temple, the Marsh, Lewins Mead, Broadmead and Old Market, with a fringe of eight religious houses to the north-east and north-west. Those developments secured Bristol's place as England's first county borough in 1373, and its second most populous provincial town (after York) in 1377. In the 16th century the borough became a city, St Augustine's abbey became a cathedral and other religious houses became mansions. The 17th century saw the castle redeveloped for commerce, together with a general rebuilding and a sprinkling of garden houses in St Michael's Hill and Kingsdown. Rebuilding continued in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the Floating Harbour was created and different uses were segregated; commerce in the historic core, industry and poor dwellings in the inner suburbs and fine houses around Queen Square, St James's Square, Brunswick Square, Portland Square, Kingsdown and King Square.

The treatment is generally topographical, with supporting sections on Bristol's place in history and its trades and industries, including the transatlantic trade. Topics covered in detail range from almshouses to glasshouses and from shipbuilding to butchery. The text switches seamlessly between excavation reports and the evidence of maps, drawings, photographs, St Augustine's cartulary, William Worcester's itinerary and countless other sources. The medieval chapters demonstrate how widely explored, and how rich, is Bristol's medieval archaeology. The 18th and 19th century chapter, on the other hand, is basically documentary history in the manner of the *Victoria County History*, culminating in a street-by-street guide to manufacturing companies; archaeology is still important but supplies supporting details of for instance diet, health and the layout of industrial plant.

Ten maps, specially drawn for the volume, show the topography of the medieval town. Most of the other illustrations are culled from existing sources; consequently, we have good plans of St Augustine's abbey, the Templar preceptory, Blackfriars and Greyfriars, but not of other major sites. There is no plan of St James's priory because Jackson's monograph did not plot the extant nave beside the excavated choir. There is no plan of all known remains of the castle because Good did not plot Ponsford's discoveries alongside his own, or plot the extant porch and anteroom in the same detail as the excavated keep. There is no plan of the Royal Fort to show the bastions plotted by King in relation to those extant or known from maps and property records. The authors have tried to remedy these omissions by including tiny plans within their maps, but they in turn have failed to plot the full extent of medieval religious precincts. The Templars' precinct should extend north to Water Lane as on pp. 113 and 212–13; the Blackfriars' precinct should extend east beyond Penn Street to include their great orchard as on p. 202; the precinct of St James's priory should extend east to include its barns in St James's Barton as on p. 190; and the precinct of St Augustine's abbey should extend west to include the Bishop's Park, as in our *Transactions*, vol. 124 (2006), p. 67.

Inevitably in a book of this size, there are inconsistencies. In the deposit model on p. 34 the cathedral stands low in an alluvial plain, but in the geological map on p. 24 it stands high on a sandstone bluff. The 13th-century main road to Gloucester heads eastwards through Lawford's Gate on p. 101, but northwards through Broadmead Bars on p. 104. The inner north porch of St Mary Redcliffe is treated as 12th-century work on p. 108. but illustrated as 13th-century work on p. 183.

At the end is a valuable digest of Bristol's Historic Environment Record, telling briefly what has been found on each site, when and by whom, and where it has been mentioned in print. This could have been a key to the whole volume, but it is not indexed or cross-referenced to the text. Indeed, the domestic, industrial and commercial sites which are the staple content of the book are

not indexed at all, nor does the table of contents show subject headings within chapters. The rush to publish has made this a reference book which cannot be referred to, a treasure-chest forever locked. To navigate much of the volume the reader has to rely on the internal structure of the text, which ironically was perfected through eight years' deliberation, from 2002 when the first draft was finished to 2010 when the final draft was begun. Despite blemishes, this is a brilliant exposition of thousands of sources hitherto inaccessible or scattered through the literature. It is a monument to the enlightened patronage of Historic England, the teamwork of 33 collaborators and the high scholarship, sound judgement and literary skill of Nigel Baker, Jonathan Brett and Robert Jones.

JOHN RHODES  
*Gloucester*

Andrew Simmonds, Edward Biddulph and Ken Welsh, *In the Shadow of Corinium: prehistoric and Roman occupation at Kingshill South, Cirencester, Gloucestershire*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 41 (Oxford, Oxford Archaeology 2018). xii + 237pp., 80 figs., 64 tabs. Cardcovers, £15.00 [ISBN: 9781905905416].

The title of this report is interesting. Since the site excavated is on ground higher than *Corinium*, the shadow cannot be physical, it must be metaphorical. It would have been good, considering the years of excavation and publication of the Cirencester Excavation Committee, now happily defunct, if the authors could have referred their finds to the pottery, bones and other materials found in the Roman town. Sadly, the present authors' references are usually of regret that such reports do not exist, and it is time to admit that by the 1970s the work of that committee was behind the times. I write as a culpable member of that committee who did not make enough fuss, and this explains my completely personal interpretation of the title.

A second general point concerns the surroundings of the site now completely separated from the town by the ring road. This is acknowledged in the report, mainly to say that if the ring-road had not been constructed, or if adequate observation of its construction had taken place, many features found incomplete on the site would be more intelligible. A similar obstacle, present at times in the Roman period, the outer course of the River Churn, although mentioned briefly in the introduction, then disappears from view. In this the authors are in perfect company because no one, so far as I know, has ever taken this artificial watercourse into archaeological consideration. This is a point I will return to.

Perhaps it is best at the outset to divide this report into observations, which may be archaeological facts, and discussion – what is interpreted from those observations. I approve of most of the observations and the way that they are presented, but I beg to differ on much of their interpretation; a good productive tension.

There are five chapters: Introduction (1–9), the archaeological sequence (11–58), the finds (59–122), environmental evidence (123–89) and discussion (191–213). In the introduction the situation of the site is set out in its relationship to the surrounding contours, the modern housing estates, the ring-road, other nearby archaeological interventions and the Roman town. The excellent clear plan (fig 1.6) gives the reader a very good idea of the archaeology that is to follow. It is interesting that virtually all the archaeology is found on about one quarter of the area examined and the rest has only the occasional pit or gully.

The move from the introduction to the sequence provides an omission which is most untypical of the rest of the factual report. On the overall site plan (1.6) there is a rather obvious ditch

running directly north–south in the middle of the area. To learn more about this, readers have to find on which of the period plans given in the sequence this ditch is numbered so that they may read in the text its date and purpose. In fact, the ditch is numbered on the period 1 plan as feature 3024, which means the excavators thought it was prehistoric, but sadly it is not further noted in the text either here or elsewhere, presumably because there is little more to say about it than that it is probably prehistoric. I must emphasize that quibbles such as this are extremely rare in this volume. The early prehistory consists mainly of flints and a possible pit. The later prehistory involves pits and postholes of the early Iron Age, and the transition from Iron Age to Roman may show the first boundaries of fields and enclosures which develop later.

The Roman period is divided into early (late 1st to early 2nd century), middle (2nd century) and late (3rd to 4th century). Early Roman includes two metalled areas with a number of ditches and postholes, although no complete plans. Suddenly, perhaps soon after AD 100, a whole series of rectangular enclosures was surrounded by ditches, and between the two intensively-ditched areas a rectangular dry-stone building (building 1) was erected. Building 1 (see fig 2.19 for full detail), as a fact, is formed of a rectangle within a rectangle, or a rectangular building with a symmetric rectangle surrounding it. Since this must be frustrating to read without a plan to look at, let us call it a large single room with a corridor running all round it – but interpretation has now reared its head. Within it there are pits and four areas of burning, at least two which may be hearths. The site also has building 2, again with dry-stone walls, with a curved end on the site and the other end vanishing into the ring-road.

Moving into the later Roman period, the last on the site, buildings 1 and 2 have gone but the western part of the site is full of intersecting enclosure ditches and, to the north, a strange set of short stone sleeper walls which may be building 3, perhaps the basis for a building needing to be lifted up above the ground surface. Interpretation again might suggest a granary. But what are all those enclosure ditches and a granary doing in otherwise empty space? The possible granary is at the extreme edge of the site beside an area of modern occupation, in the development of which no remains were noticed or recorded. It is therefore difficult to accept the authors' suggestion in the discussion that the latest focus of the settlement, with higher status, moved to this area.

It is time to move on to the finds, which include the pottery (prehistoric 502 sherds, and Roman 17,000). This is described, quantified and listed by a system so that only the samian pottery and less than 30 other sherds are illustrated. There is a good discussion and comparisons are made with other nearby sites, although there is some difference of opinion between the writers Biddulph (pottery) and Booth (coins) as to the position of the nearest useful point of comparison in the houses excavated near The Beeches. Biddulph places those houses to the east and north of the site outside the Roman walls of *Corinium* (77), while Booth places the same houses (86) inside the walls but to the north-west, which is correct. One further point about the Beeches Houses report needs to be inserted here, for that site included a very late Roman rubbish layer some 12 inches thick covering the floor of a large ?deserted building. The contents of that layer were kept separate, and if they had been properly published would have been a superb point of comparison for other late Roman deposits inside and outside the town.

Pottery gives way to coins, in the very capable hands of Paul Booth, although it is strange when luxurious detail is given of seeds, bones and charcoal, that a moderate coin list is banished to an appendix at the end of the volume. Twenty of the coins were struck before 260, 32 from 260 to 296, and 118 in the 4th century. This is a reasonable distribution for a rural site in Britain, but it does not fit easily with the lifetimes of the buildings. Then follow ceramic building materials – mainly roof tiles, worked and structural stone, metal and other small finds. These include a remarkable series of brooches, all but one of which are early, and the one possible later example is not complete. Here the brooches agree with the periods of use of the buildings, while the coins

are less closely related. Then follow metalworking debris, worked flint, fired clay and mortar and glass.

Since the ditched enclosures form a major part of the structures found, the environmental evidence provides vital evidence on what was actually going on on the site. Animal bones, singly and in groups, are fully listed and discussed, and provide evidence for stock-rearing of some sort, and cows, sheep and horses are well represented with pigs lower down the list. Some of the bone groups are associated with shaped objects such as pins, and it seems that animal bone may have been imported into the site to provide raw material for occasional craft activity. Plant remains, seeds and charcoals are fully documented, and it is interesting that the wood species mainly represented are those of hedgerows, although without the more exotic species which in hedges of the present day might be taken to indicate substantial age. In other words, the possible charcoal from several species suggests hedges which might not have been growing for more than a century or two before the 4th century.

Human remains take their place after animals and plants, which is quite right, since they have less to say about the environment and use of the site. Four adult inhumations and six juvenile inhumations belong to the Roman period in general and one cremation is undated. These burials were scattered over the site in shallow graves or depressions, were more often on their sides or flexed, with fewer prone or supine, and so form a very different picture from that of the more-or-less organized burials just outside the Roman town in cemeteries of deep cut graves. All radiocarbon dates from the skeletons fit in the Roman period.

So what does it all mean? Here we come to the 'productive tension' promised. My main concern is the repetition of the emotive term villa. The authors do not call building 1 a villa, but they seem constantly to be apologizing to the structure for not giving it this status and dignity. Matters might have been clearer cut if they had attempted a reconstruction. Mention is occasionally made of the walls, which would have to be dry-stone walls because there is no evidence of widespread mortar or even clay packing in the destruction or demolition levels. It presumably had a roof, and the balance of comment seems to be in favour of the inner rectangle with a high roof with possibly clerestory windows, but very little glass found, and the 'corridor' roofed at a lower level. What did the roofs consist of? Mention has been made of ceramic tiles, but the quantity found could not cover the whole building. And whatever the roof, it would have been heavy, so how was it constructed and supported? Wooden posts within the dry-stone walls supporting roof timbers? No evidence. A line of central posts supporting the ridge of the roof? No. Timber sleeper beams on low dry-stone walls? Could this building have stood out on the hillside as an impressive sight for travellers approaching *Corinium* on the road from Silchester, as suggested?

These buildings were so close to the villa-like houses at the Beeches House site only a few hundred yards away, so perhaps their status was linked? The few hundred yards is agreed, but there are two obstacles to be cleared for contact. The city wall and bank has to be surmounted without any postern gate in the area that we know about, so a trek along to the London gate. But before that the stream or river has to be crossed, with no known bridge nearer than that for the London gate. The diversion of the stream into an artificial course several feet higher than its natural course inside the town must have been a major task, presumably of the 1st century AD, involving a course nearly a mile long and often six feet deep. This must have had a major impact on the people of the area and for miles around. And could the authors possibly be hinting in the title that the inhabitants of the site would have preferred to go on with their free *Dobunnic* life rather than being under the imposed Roman shadow? Perhaps, but that is another story.

It sounds as if I am tearing this report to shreds, but emphatically I am not. It is an excellent factual statement of what was found during excavations with excellent detailed reports on all the different classes of find. All I am doing is questioning the authors' interpretations and suggesting

alternatives. The fact that I can do this is a certificate of excellence for the factual reports. Neither they nor I am right – just different. Read the book and make up your own mind.

RICHARD REECE  
*Cirencester*

Kathryn Warner, *Hugh Despenser the Younger and Edward II: Downfall of a King's Favourite* (Yorkshire – Philadelphia, Pen and Sword History 2018). 218 pp, 20 ill. Paperback, £14.99 [ISBN: 0781526751751].

Hugh Despenser the Younger is not an obvious choice as the subject of a full-length biography, which is probably why we have waited nearly 700 years for one to appear. His ambition, avarice and cruelty are well documented and when he was barbarously executed at Hereford on 24 November 1326 the chroniclers are unanimous in recording the joy of the general public. To her credit Warner does not attempt to mitigate his many proven acts of theft and violence, although she does point out that one of the most notorious crimes with which he was charged, the torture of Lady Baret, cannot be substantiated. For members of this Society his main interest is that he was the favourite of Edward II whose last months were spent at Berkeley Castle. Hugh was buried in the great Abbey in his manor of Tewkesbury as was his father.

Warner's book includes all the trappings of a scholarly study: pedigrees, endnotes, an itinerary, bibliography and index, but does the content justify this elaborate structure? In general, the answer is yes, but the text needs to be read with caution. She cannot disguise the fact that nothing is known about her subject until he was knighted in 1306, with over 200 others, and very little for several years afterwards. As a result, the first few chapters of the book comprise a rehearsal of the early years of Edward II's reign, peppered with speculative comments about what Hugh might have been doing, and lengthy discussions of his extensive family connections, often going back three generations.

For this reviewer the principal question about Hugh's career is how this landless knight could have risen to become the indispensable favourite of his king and *de facto* ruler of England. Warner supplies the answer, but does not seem to realise that she has done so. In 1313 Edward stayed for several weeks in France with his court. Hugh also went as part of his father's household. This was the first occasion on which he had spent a long time in the same place as the king. In her itinerary Warner highlights the occasions when Hugh's and Edward's movements coincided but inexplicably omits this crucial event. Surely the French expedition must mark the start of his rise to power. In the following year Hugh was rewarded by the king for valour at Bannockburn, and by the summer of 1315 Hugh was sufficiently confident of his reception to go in person to Edward to seek pardon for his illegal seizure of Tonbridge Castle.

However, Warner persists in claiming, without adducing any evidence, that right up to 1318 Hugh was distrusted by the king, which makes his appointment in that year as Edward's chamberlain very surprising. It is reasonable to assume that during the time since the French visit Hugh was building on his knowledge of the king gained on that expedition, to achieve this crucial role. His appointment was confirmed by Parliament and Warner quotes from the record that it was 'by counsel and at the request of the magnates' which she believes. But surely by then this was a mere formula, perhaps deriving from the now unenforced Ordinances of 1311. Hugh was evidently appointed by Edward in person which Parliament duly ratified during its next sitting.

From this point on Warner's narrative follows the well-worn path of the last seven years of Edward's reign, but she does usefully assemble as much information as she can about Hugh's

actions and personal circumstances. It is worth putting up with the often less than fluent style to have this material brought together, but the author's judgements do not always agree with those of this reviewer.

DAVID SMITH  
*Gloucester*

Clive Burgess, *'The Right Ordering of Souls': the parish of All Saints' Bristol on the eve of the Reformation*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion XLVII (Woodbridge, Boydell Press 2018). xx + 463 pp., 5 ill. Hardback, £60.00 [ISBN: 9781783273096].

The fine late medieval church architecture which is still to be seen throughout the central area of Bristol provides abundant evidence of the piety of parishioners and of their willingness to contribute to the extension and enrichment of their churches. Much evidence is likewise to be found in the unusually large number of Bristol churches which possess documentary sources in the form of churchwardens' accounts, wills, inventories, lists of benefactors and chantry records. Among the 18 parish churches which were crowded in or around the town during the century before the Reformation, none can match All Saints' or All Hallows for the range, quality and detail of its records. In a cramped situation at the heart of the medieval town, All Saints' was by no means the largest or richest of the churches, but its pre-Reformation archive is among the finest and most informative in the whole country. For many years, Clive Burgess has made a detailed study of these records and has published several books and major articles on aspects of the church life which they reveal, starting with three volumes published by Bristol Record Society. These comprise *The All Saints' Church Book*, Vol. 46 (1995), *The Churchwardens' Accounts*, Vol. 53 (2000) and *Wills, The Halleyway Chantry Records and Deeds*, Vol. 56 (2004). In this latest book Dr Burgess provides a well-written overview of his work on the records of All Saints' and on the abundant evidence which they provide for the enthusiasm of the parishioners and their massive investment in the fabric, furnishings, services and decoration of their church.

The book begins with a long introductory chapter tracing the development of religious life in England and placing the medieval parish in the context of its institutional framework. While useful as background, this takes us a long way from Bristol and from the parish of All Saints'. Thereafter, Dr Burgess begins the detailed study of the parish archive and provides an in-depth study of the way in which the parish operated in the century before the Reformation. Although some of the parishioners were wealthy, they were few in number. A list of communicants compiled in 1540 shows that there were only 180 adults, so that their expenditure on the church is even more extraordinary. The patrons of the living were successive abbots of the nearby Augustinian abbey (now the cathedral). Although generally supportive, the abbots and canons did little to contribute to the parish apart from fulfilling their duty to maintain the chancel. It was the parishioners who lavished money on the church and its services. They also maintained an almshouse, a school and a conduit bringing fresh water to the parish, while above the north aisle of the church was space for a fraternity of clergy and laity known as the Guild of Kalendars. The Guild was headed by a Prior who was a well-educated priest who could give regular sermons and lectures, refute heresy and who was responsible for administering a library of theological books housed at All Saints'.

The influence of the widespread belief in purgatory is evident from the surviving wills of which some 40 survive for All Saints' parishioners during the period 1400-1550. The wording leaves no doubt that the bequests of testators were designed to secure the rapid progress of their souls through the torment of the first stage of the afterlife. Whatever the motivation, the result

provided the wealth to enhance the splendour of the church and the elaboration of its liturgy. In a particularly interesting section, Dr Burgess shows how four wealthy widows contributed to the church by bequests of tenements, vestments, masses, public works and largesse of all sorts, promoting 'spiritual leadership by material means'. Here and throughout the book, the study which Dr Burgess has made of these records over many years is evident from the wealth of information which he has extracted. The Church Book includes lists of benefactors, both clerical and lay, while property deeds and details show the careful manner in which church officials administered the growing property holding described as 'the livelode of the church'. Donors intended both to enhance the worship of God and to have their souls prayed for. Thus, it was important to know that their names were inscribed in the benefactors' list. The depiction of the Last Judgment above the cross aisle of the church which was rebuilt and decorated during the 1430s left no doubt of the torments which awaited the damned and encouraged gifts to the church. The crucial importance of securing the prayers of the living is evident from the example of the wealthy widow Alice Chester. Her numerous gifts to the church included a black hearse cloth to be used at funerals. The large inscription in gold letters '*Orate pro animabus Henrici et Alicie uxoris eius*' would ensure that they were remembered in the prayers of mourners.

The parish could be ruthless if it was felt that they had been wronged or defrauded. Richard Haddon, a vintner, had been a generous benefactor, as had his father before him. When his business failed and some of his gifts were reclaimed to pay his creditors, his name was expunged from the list of benefactors. Dr Burgess comments that the parish community had consigned him to 'intercessory oblivion', and that although he managed to avoid incarceration in a debtors' prison, 'his travails in Purgatory would be prolonged'.

The most ambitious bequest was the chantry founded by Thomas and Joan Halloway during the 1440s. Copious documentation survives concerning the foundation, endowment and management of the chantry until its suppression in 1548. After the death of the founders, the parish took control of the chantry, administering the property, paying the priest, supervising the services and the equipment provided. All this work fell upon successive churchwardens in addition to their main task of managing the affairs of the parish. Dr Burgess comments:

The Halloways' chantry accounts bear witness to the prodigious investment of time and attention that perpetual chantry administration demanded, the chantry's budget was either on a par with, or at times even succeeded, the monies ostensibly at the churchwardens' disposal in the parish accounts. Had the chantry accounts perished – as elsewhere so many did – one would never have assumed that successive churchwardens devoted quite so much energy to sustaining just one foundation.

The Halloways were the most prominent of a crowd of people, rich and poor, clergy and laity, whose gifts and bequests provided the means which enabled the church to support an impressive round of services. There were as many as five priests attached to the church, and inventories list the splendid vestments, altar-cloths, precious vessels, crosses, candlesticks, censers and service books which the church possessed. The services were accompanied by organs, choral singing, lights, processions and vestments all designed 'to move and excite people unto devotion', and to contribute to 'the more laud and worship of Almighty God'.

The All Saints' accounts provide many details about the liturgy, music and regular annual services of which we would otherwise be quite ignorant. Elaborate ceremonies marked occasions such as Christmas, Candlemas, Lady Day, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Day. The patronal festival was observed in suitable style on 1 November when the mayor and councillors attended, and a 'boy bishop' was chosen on the feast of St Nicholas (6 December). The accounts also contain valuable information about processions, perambulation of the parish bounds and the manner in which the feast of Corpus Christi was marked in conjunction with other churches in

the town. A notable feature of these unusually detailed records is the intimation provided about the elaborate music which accompanied the liturgy and about the musicians employed by the church. This includes a rare inventory of the collection of music for parish use bequeathed by a clerk, William Bridgeman, c.1524. No doubt other churches had similar musical accompaniment for their services, but only at All Saints' is such detail revealed.

Sadly, the dramatic changes and regulation of the 1540s, and especially during the reign of Edward VI, marked the end of gifts, bequests and endowments. Belief in purgatory was forbidden, the chantries were suppressed, and the church was stripped of valuables, images, screens and all that was regarded as superstitious. The interior was whitewashed to obliterate the illustrations of biblical scenes and pictures of the Virgin and saints. The careful research conducted by Dr Burgess over many years has enabled him to produce this impressive study of the life of All Saints' in the century before the destruction occurred. His work provides a major contribution to the ecclesiastical history of Bristol and to our knowledge of late medieval parish life in general. His work will make the unusually complete and nationally-important records of All Saints' much more widely known. The book includes plans of late medieval Bristol, the surroundings of All Saints' and a useful diagram of the church interior showing the position of the major altars, the Kalendars' house and other features. Some significant documents are given in appendices and there is a full bibliography and glossary providing definitions of terms found in 15th-century church records. This is an excellent study of an important subject and can be thoroughly recommended to all who are interested in the history of Bristol.

JOSEPH BETTEY  
*Bristol*

Joyce Moss, *Tradition, Reformation and Reaction in the Forest of Dean, 1450–1603: church and people in the Forest Deanery*. (Lydney, Lightmore Press 2018), 176pp., 41 ill., 1 map, cardcovers £15 [ISBN: 9781911038504].

This is a very worthy, really quite exhaustive, local study of a fascinating and slightly mysterious part of the country. Even today, people talk in hushed tones of the 'Forest' as a special place with its own customs and traditions – a law unto itself. This book is well presented and richly illustrated; it has been compiled from a wide range of primary and secondary sources and is set within a logical chronological framework. Divided into three sections, Part 1 covers the pre-Reformation Church, Part 2 the Reformation and reaction for the period 1540–58, and Part 3 the reign of Elizabeth I. A running theme in each section is discussion of what we might learn from wills, in which Joyce Moss traces the impact of the Reformation on the nature of preambles and bequests. She finds that Forest folk were shrewdly ambiguous throughout the period after the Reformation in terms of their preambles, while the nature of their bequests to their own churches, the poor and good works held up well; and some bequests were still being made to the 'mother church' of the cathedral even in the 1590s. That mother church was quite clearly Gloucester after the 1540s, but one wonders how easily and swiftly that switch from loyalty to Hereford occurred?

Another running theme is the inefficiency and corruption of Gloucester's diocesan courts, a topic made humorous and sadly notorious by the late F.D. Price on whose work Joyce Moss leans heavily and sensibly. The problems of the administrative machinery of the new diocese, which lasted throughout this period, dogged efforts of early evangelical reformers like Bishop Hooper on the one hand, and cowed less reputable bishops like Richard Cheyney and John Bullingham later. Corruption under diocesan Chancellors Thomas Powell, and then the even worse William

Blackleech, was endemic, and was even reported to the Elizabethan Privy Council to no avail. Archbishop Grindal's Metropolitan Visitation of 1576 shed most light on the state of religion in the Forest, as one would hope with an archbishop's visitation, but we can never be confident of the reports of churchwardens, whether they be about the survival of Catholic recusants, the presence of Puritan evangelicals or downright disobedience in the face of all authority.

A strength of this book lies in the way in which Joyce Moss provides full details of material arising from episcopal visitations, with references to the excellent Hockaday Abstracts held at Gloucestershire Archives. This will provide treasure trove for local historians working on individual parishes within the Forest. While an attempt has been made to place this in historiographical context, more could have been done to provide greater explanation of the significance of findings. This is also true when lists are given of the several surveys of the diocese which attempted to gain details of clergy and the state of the livings as in 1584 and 1592/3. Joyce Moss has laboured through this difficult material and it is a pity that we do not learn more of her judgements as to how far we can rely on the findings and what we can really deduce from them. Indeed, more could have been said about the nature of the often-conflicting jurisdictions operating in the Forest at this time, the complexity of which helped people to evade the authorities and have bedevilled investigations since. This has not been an easy book to write and more could have been said about difficulties relating to survival of sources, what we can and cannot hope to find.

A royal forest containing an area controlled by 'freeminers' – and numerous claims for rights to common land – was only made more complex to administer by the fact that supervision of the parishes was shared with the diocese of Hereford, from which the area had been plucked when the new diocese of Gloucester was formed in 1541. This shared jurisdiction of a deanery was unique, and sadly, the records for Hereford diocese do not match those surviving for Gloucester. It is thus no accident that our surviving court cases stem chiefly from the results of episcopal visitations; the more routine, lower-level work of the archdeacons of Hereford and the diocesan Chancellors of Gloucester has largely been lost. Caroline Litzenberger's, *The English Reformation and the Laity in Gloucestershire, 1540–1580*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1997 offers a more cautious assessment of what we can really discover about what was going on in the Forest. It probably had many more Catholic recusants than occasionally revealed here, and many more dissident Protestants, and an even larger number of people who simply kept under the radar of the authorities. From what Joyce Moss has discovered about the generally low standard of the clergy throughout the period, it is not clear what level of theological and moral leadership was ever really available to the people of the area. The Forest was a backwater even within its own diocese, and by and large its livings were not wealthy enough to attract highly qualified ministers.

Areas like the Forest were notoriously difficult for the authorities to police, and a further indication that all might not be as it seems lies with the survival of parish registers. Fewer than half of the parishes of the Forest have parish registers dating back to the 16th century; even fewer have glebe terriers; none possesses surviving churchwardens' accounts. These are major blows to the local historian, which emphasises what Joyce Moss has achieved from the diocesan archives, but does pose problems about what we can really learn of the area. Paradoxes abound, for while we gain quite good information on a regular basis on the condition of the Forest churches and chapels, what we learn about neglect and disorder must have made uncomfortable reading for the ecclesiastical authorities at Gloucester and Hereford, who were the impropiators of so many of the livings, and thus responsible for the state of the church chancels.

This book will prove very useful to local historians, and with one or two cautions the bibliography provides good guidance on further reading in primary sources and secondary literature. Alas, the famous historian Diarmaid MacCulloch seems doomed to have his name spelt in many different ways! A work missing from the bibliography that sheds useful light on the Forest is the excellent

*Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parsons c.1700*, edited for the Gloucestershire Record Society series of BGAS, volume 19, by the late John Fendley in 2005. Pages 145–94 provide the notes of that eminent church lawyer and antiquary on the Forest.

This book is a labour of love that draws attention to a beautiful part of the country that possesses a rich history – much of it handed down by oral tradition – and much of it largely impenetrable to outsiders even to this day!

ANDREW FOSTER

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Eric L. Jones, *Landed Estates and Rural Inequalities in English History*, Palgrave Studies in Economic History (Palgrave Macmillan 2018). xi, 129pp. Hardback, £44.99 [ISBN: 9783319748689].

Landed interest has long been central to history, affecting personal fortunes and bolstering inequality. The book reviewed proposes that since the mid 17th century the landed estate has ‘captured’ the development of the English countryside, including its social structure, economy and environment. That happened despite major political events starting with the Restoration and the ‘Glorious Revolution’, and change brought about by industrialization. The idea touches the multiplicity of themes known to the student of English local history. The wide-ranging text is supported, chapter by chapter, by short bibliographies including online publications. It provides a reminder of how far the study of the countryside has travelled since the days of W.G. Hoskins and H.P.R. Finberg. It is a cogent synthesis and interpretation of details known to both local historians and more specialist writers. I worked on a project, the Gloucestershire Victoria County History (VCH), in which the descent of landownership and more particularly of manorial title was central, governing many aspects of life, religious, social and educational. Jones sets a much wider context in which his characters operated.

Landowners used legal and parliamentary means to safeguard their social and economic position. That included their physical separation from other countryside dwellers, both neighbours and more immediate dependants, ensuring social segregation particularly with the poor kept out of sight. Country houses were given not only imposing façades, but also plans designed to ensure that masters and servants were kept apart as far as desirable. We learn that in a few places the personal names of employees were changed to suit the aspirations of their masters.

Roads and more especially footpaths were diverted to ensure the privacy of landowners’ houses. Cottages were moved to limit views on and enhance views from the dwellings of the wealthy. In some places whole villages moved to enable the creation of scenic parkland. It could be added that occasionally the routes and visibility of railway lines were varied to suit the owners of country houses. Sometimes stations were sited to benefit the occupants of a large house rather than those of a nearby village. As late as Edward VII’s reign the Great Western Railway provided its first stop on its new main line between Castle Cary and Taunton in Somerset close to the tiny village of Alford, where the Thring family long had had its seat. My late brother-in-law used the halt (closed 1962) when travelling between home in the nearby village of Lovington and college in Taunton.

In its broad sweep, embracing subjects as diverse as religion and rural industry, the book reviewed passes over details important for rural history. In an era when estate tenants living in tied cottages made up only part of the rural population, housing for the poor was generally limited and inadequate. Although a feature in many villages, almshouses provided by landowners and others benefited few, usually tenants or servants once aged or disabled. In the sphere of education village schools before the advent of the National and British Societies were often small affairs

depending on charitable gifts. The role of female members of established landed families in eleemosynary and educational charities is a subject suitable for the student of gender history. In places the enclosure of swathes of countryside was brought about by leading landowners to their own benefit. The disappearance of open fields and common meadows and pastures enabled the consolidation of their holdings at the expense of lesser landowners and those with few common rights. Consequent changes in the agrarian economy included reordering of demesne and tenant farms and innovation in farming practice.

In the intricacies of local government estate owners were not the first to deal with the rural poor. That was often left to communities as represented by farmers and craftsmen in their role as parish officials. As churchwardens and overseers of the poor they decided on questions of settlement and relief and on provision of poorhouses and workhouses. Landed interest, firmly represented in the legislature, did have a pivotal role in government at the local level. As justices of the peace, a role that emerged from the 14th century, landowners worked as magistrates, administering the late Elizabethan poor law, adjudicating on matters of settlement and from the later 18th century effecting *ad-hoc* unions of parishes. They adjudicated on poorhouses and workhouses and on road and path diversions. Their role continued after the reform of the poor law in the 1830s and in the countryside was bolstered by the later introduction of sanitary authorities and elected county and district councils. Landowners also played a significant part in the operation of turnpike trusts introduced from the later 17th century.

The book relates how sporting interests transformed the appearance of, and steered social interaction in, the countryside. Landowners planted woodland for material and commercial reasons and for shelter screens but also as covers and places for rearing game birds. Gamekeepers pursuing poachers became members of estate staff. A recent account of the last days of the war poet Edward Thomas (d. 1917) dwells pointedly on a reported confrontation with a keeper in woodland near Dymock while Thomas was walking with the American Robert Frost, another of the 'Dymock poets' (Matthew Hollis, *Now All Roads Lead To France*, 2012). It is possible that the contrary keeper was an employee of George Stacey Albright, an industrialist settling at nearby Bromesberrow Place with the lifestyle of a country gentleman, a fancy that fits the sporting theme outlined by Jones.

One chapter, 'Cotton Into Land', looks at the investment of industrial wealth in landownership with particular reference to Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. In the Cotswolds south of Cheltenham, flourishing as a spa and educational centre by the mid 19th century, the discussion might have been broadened to include fortunes garnered by manipulation of capital markets as represented by the investments of the stockbroker James Hutchinson and the financier Sir Francis Goldsmid. They built Italianate houses in place of the main dwellings on their new possessions respectively at Cowley and Rendcomb. James Horlick, the malted milk magnate, enlarged the mansion at Cowley considerably and provided several pairs of cottages for the estate's housing stock.

Established landowners took steps to counteract what they perceived as a threat to their privilege. Among them the chapter mentions Viscount Bledisloe. He, Charles Bathurst (d. 1958), inherited extensive estates in Gloucestershire. The chapter's theme continues today with the investment in land of wealth accrued by popular musicians and sports and media personalities, some to use the land acquired for a specific culinary intent. Not discussed is the use of wealth derived from Caribbean plantations. Under way by the 18th century, slave owners became influential figures in the countryside, being compensated generously in the 1830s on the abolition of slavery. Consider the Codringtons at Dodington. The 1980 sale of their papers generated furore at Gloucester.

In places the text introduces unnecessary value judgements, Describing the reformer William Morris as a 'champagne socialist' tells more about the present. Also how can the wool merchant held responsible for building a new church at Fairford be placed among the 'nouveaux riches'? His

namesake, John Tame of Fairford, was appointed to collect a subsidy in Gloucestershire almost a century earlier, in 1416.

The book's argument suggests questions for my VCH research. For example, why did Lady Dorothy Lygon want the pair of traditional Cotswold cottages she was having built in Sevenhampton in the late 1940s to have outside pumps and not an inside water supply? Was she motivated by reverence for the past and/or a notion of the entitlement of lesser folk? On the continuing involvement of landed interest in the body politic, an MP prominent in moves in 2018 to outlaw 'upskirting' has the surname Hobhouse, that of a landed family prominent in south-east Somerset over a century earlier?

JOHN (aka ALOIS) JUŘICA  
Cheltenham

Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: the political life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton University Press 2015). xxiii + 1001pp., 9 figs., 2 maps. Cardcovers, £24.00 [ISBN: 9780691175652].

Reviewing Jesse Norman MP's 2013 biography of *Edmund Burke* (*Transactions* 132), William Evans described it as 'a readable introduction', which it would be unfair to dismiss as 'Burke Lite for Beginners'. Such a tag could not even be contemplated with reference to the work presently under review, which is light neither in volume (weighing in at 1,001 pages) nor in content. And Professor Bourke is certainly not writing for the beginner. Richard Bourke is a Professor of the History of Political Thought and from this fact may stem both the many strengths, and some significant weaknesses, of *Empire and Revolution*.

Political history frequently takes a back seat to political thought. The historical events are all there, but are frequently skimmed over, particularly in the earlier part of the book. Blink, and you are liable to miss for example a change of Ministry or a crucial campaign in the American War. The 18th is never the easiest of centuries and Professor Bourke does not make it any more accessible. A detailed chronology at the start of the volume makes only partial compensation.

As the sub-title makes clear, the author has aimed to produce not a pure biography but a *political* life. We learn nothing of Burke's marriage beyond the fact thereof, and his son Richard only assumes prominence when he embarks on a political career in his own right. Samuel Johnson and The Club, of which Burke was such an ornament, receive only passing mention. Much can be said both for and against biography of this sort; suffice it here to remark that the private and the public cannot always be neatly compartmentalised and that much more could usefully have been said of, for example, Burke's chronic indebtedness in youth and early middle-age, and consequent need for a seat in parliament to avoid arrest whilst the Commons was in session.

Burke's connection with Bristol is adequately sketched, but for a fuller recent account, the reader should go to the relevant chapter of Poole and Rogers' *Bristol from Below* (2017).

Professor Bourke is at his best in his treatment of his hero's (I do not think the term is too strong) thought. We have here a veritable compendium of Burke's writings and speeches throughout his career, enriched by the commentary of a philosophical historian at the top of his game and at home not only with Burke's near contemporaries but with the Ancients and medieval thinkers also.

A strong case is made for the consistency of the subject's approach throughout many political changes. The author does not shrink from the problem of squaring Burke's eulogy of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688-9 and support for the American colonists, on the one hand, and his detestation of the French Revolution on the other. Burke, we are told, always upheld the right of subjects to resist tyrants. James II he saw as a tyrant, and he viewed George III and his ministers

as tyrannically using the Americans. The government of Louis XVI, however, he saw as flawed but not tyrannous and susceptible to organic change. It is possible to take issue with any or all of these positions, but if we accept Burke's views as honestly held, his character for consistency is established. Similarly, the condemnation of Warren Hastings' uprooting of traditional Indian institutions is seen as of a piece with that of the *Jacobins'* conduct in France.

The case is powerful, and well argued, but may not be the last word on the subject. Here again, too little weight is given to political exigencies. Might not the Whigs' taking up of the crusade against Hastings in the 1780s be seen as grabbing the nearest stick to hand with which to beat Pitt's government (an attack deftly turned when Pitt himself agreed to the impeachment proceeding)? Might not even the anti-French revolutionary crusade derive from Burke's wish to put clear water between himself and Charles James Fox following George III's recovery in March 1789 and the consequent stalling of the Regency campaign? The debate will no doubt continue.

Burke has long been seen as an (if not *the*) English conservative thinker. It was not always thus. During the 19th century he struck as many chords with party Liberals as with Conservatives, and Lord Salisbury (viewed by Maurice Cowling as 'the giant of conservative doctrine') was distinctly cool. Burke's statue in Bristol was the gift of a scion of a noted Liberal (and dissenting) family.

Opinion shifted in the 20th century, with Lord Coleraine in 1970 calling Burke 'the first, as he remains the greatest, of conservatives'. More recently, Jesse Norman appears to have seen Burke's 'little platoons' as providing a valedictory background to the 'Big Society' theme which was briefly peddled by the Cameronian Conservative Party.

It is Professor Bourke's crowning achievement to demonstrate the eclecticism of Burke's thinking, and of the influences thereon, who include John Locke and Adam Smith to name but two. Locke was certainly not a conservative; nor, *pace* Lady Thatcher's enthusiasm, was Smith.

But at the end of the day, conservative or no, Edmund Burke is undoubtedly a seminal figure, about whom Mr Norman has much to say and Professor Bourke much else. Keen Burkeans should read both.

JOHN STEVENS  
*Bristol*

Graham Lockwood, *Concordant Cheltenham: The Making of a Musical Town, 1716–1944* (Gloucester, Hobnob Press 2018). 148 pp. many b/w ill., paperback, £9.95 [ISBN: 9781906978532].

The late Graham Lockwood's enthusiasm for music, and for Cheltenham Music Festival after he retired to the town, led him to research in depth the history of local music-making. He was interested in antecedents to the modern music festivals. The choice of dates in this account was carefully made: 1716 marked the start of Cheltenham's development as a spa, briefly sketched in the first chapter, and 1944 brought the story up to the Borough Council's decision to hold a music festival as a stimulus to cultural renewal, as the Second World War was coming to an end. Some readers may be disappointed that the story of the modern festival is not included in the book, but he had already published *Cheltenham Music Festival at 65* in 2009, an affectionate and thoroughly researched account of the period from 1944, and *Concordant Cheltenham* expands on the brief introduction to that earlier publication, making the case that music has been part of Cheltenham for at least three centuries.

The author was extraordinarily diligent in searching for advertisements and reviews of musical events, and he uncovered a really surprising number occurring week by week. From the start of its publication in 1833 until its demise in 1920 the *Cheltenham Looker-On* was a major source. Names, dates, programmes, ticket prices and attendance numbers are all detailed, woven into a pleasant narrative, though occasionally the amount of detail is overwhelming. Well-known names are here, but so are many not well-known. There is some analysis of the social position of visitors and later of inhabitants; at several points there are comments about the upper-class nature of audiences, and about attempts to widen the appeal of musical events (a familiar refrain).

Some general consideration of the background to the musical story is contained in the Preface. The account is then mainly chronological, though there are considerable overlaps between the chapters. The author starts by drawing attention to church-going and bell-ringing as a long-standing musical experience for townsfolk, but although 1714 is the starting date for the book, the story really begins with George III's arrival, greeted with a peal of bells. A small group of musicians played at the first spa while the water was being drunk and society was promenading; an illustration shows a rather cramped musicians' gallery.

An account of visitors to the town, and of its development in general, creates a picture of the early 19th century. There are many pointers to its musical life, for example in the Assembly Rooms, the spa buildings each of which had a band, and the theatre. Humphrey Ruff, the printer of the *Chronicle*, in 1806 provided a new, 'spacious and elegant' Music Room. The *Cheltenham Chronicle*, which started publication in 1809, carried advertisements for musical events, and playbills, several illustrated in the book, also give details. Francis Close arrived in the town in 1824; he was hostile to secular music in church, but his work in promoting church building and the provision of organs is considered to be some compensation, and perhaps more important, in the founding of schools and colleges where music teachers were employed.

From 1833 more information is available. Surprising details have been uncovered, like special trains being run to bring people to concerts, and the fixing of concert times to fit with the train timetables. Visitors it seems came from all over the country. The author concluded that the railways were a significant factor in the development of music in the town. While there were national or international performers who visited Cheltenham, local and resident musicians were important and were also teachers, and there was music in the home as well as in public concerts; the concertina was apparently popular as a parlour instrument after its introduction to the country in the 1830s.

Much was owed to a small number of businesses promoting music and selling instruments and scores. Hale & Sons was one such; a Cheltenham store had been opened at the beginning of the 19th century. Some decades later Charles Hale promoted a large number of concerts. He tried publishing a weekly newsletter from late 1859, though it lasted only a short time. He also took a wide interest in the state of the town generally, and became the town's Surveyor of Highways. After Hale & Sons became bankrupt, Dale Forty succeeded to the business in 1873. A notice in the *Cheltenham Looker-On* detailed future arrangements. Mr F. Forty and Mr H.J. Dale were the new partners joining the music publisher Finlayson & Co. Mr Dale was 'a piano tuner and repairer' who had worked for Broadwood & Sons for 20 years. (It is interesting that by 1909 H.J. Dale Esq was proprietor of Leckhampton Hill quarries; was this the same man or his son whose closure of the well-used footpaths caused Miss Beale, principal of Cheltenham Ladies College, recorded by Lockwood as a strong supporter of music in the town, to remove all Dale Forty's pianos from the school?) Enterprising promoters experimented with series of subscription concerts and with Triennial festivals.

Important musical events outside Cheltenham are described, such as the foundation of the Hallé Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Orchestra (later Symphony Orchestra), and several

London orchestras, and the careers of a number of well-known musicians are summarized. There is discussion of the decline in home music making in the 20th century, attributed to the enormous toll on young men in the First World War, the depression which followed the end of the war, the development of broadcasting and gramophone recording and the loss of cinema music as films ceased to be silent. There was a suggestion that Cheltenham was spoilt by the number of famous musicians giving recitals and concerts in the town, so that home music-making was not necessary.

Lockwood notices key events in Cheltenham's history, for example the acquisition of a royal charter in 1878, the same year that the Winter Gardens was opened; in 1887 the Mayor and Corporation appeared fully robed for a performance there of *Elijah*. There are some touches of humour, as when the performers in the Winter Gardens in 1902 had to battle with heavy rain beating on the glass and the noise of workers next door constructing the Town Hall. The Corporation had purchased the Winter Gardens in 1895 (and incidentally Pittville Pump Room five years earlier, both erected by private enterprise); Lockwood reports just one review of a professional musical performance in 1845 in Pittville Pump Room (not in the index), possibly because it was just outside Cheltenham's boundary, the reviewer deploring the acoustics; he notes that in the 1850s Pittville Spa had a popular band (which is in the index).

Following these purchases, the Council established a Corporation Entertainment Committee. Amongst its activities, the Committee promoted music in the Montpellier Gardens. Numerous national and international musicians gave concerts in the town. In the 1930s the Council appointed George Wilkinson as Spa Entertainments manager and Arthur Cole, a musical entrepreneur in the town, as Music Director. These two men played an important part in the decision in 1944 to start a Music Festival, where the book's story ends.

Altogether the book adds a new chapter to the history of Cheltenham. There are some interesting illustrations of buildings and people. A short bibliography lists the sources for the study, and an index lists societies and orchestras, people and buildings referred to in the text, but does not move beyond these to mention for instance Cheltenham Corporation or Council, the cinema and films, *The Looker-On* or the concertina. Lockwood's previous book on the *Music Festival* had a reproduction of one of P.J. Crook's painted cellos on the cover; for *Concordant Cheltenham* he commissioned a painting from the same artist. It is a lively, colourful and unusual eye-catching presence.

ANTHEA JONES  
*Cheltenham*

Carol Clammer and Richard Clammer, *Beachley and the First World War: the story of a shipyard and the transformation of a rural parish* (Lydney, Lightmoor Press/Tidenham Historical Group 2017). 192 pp., many b/w ill. Hardback, £25.00 [ISBN: 9781911038269].

The centenary of the cessation of the First World War, and subsequent peace treaties, has very much focused the mind of the British public and raised national awareness of the conflict. It is often all too easy to focus attention on individual battles and distant theatres of war, but it is crucial that we continue to explore the impact of conflict on the home front, and in particular on those that were affected by indirect enemy action. This work does so most admirably.

The First World War required the production of military materiel on an unprecedented scale and the ability to both manufacture and supply was critical to British military effectiveness in the field. Consequently, rural communities many miles from front-line action found that the demand

for wartime hardware impacted upon their lives in ways that they could never have imagined at the outbreak of the conflict.

Construction of airfields throughout the British countryside for the purposes of pilot training is often cited as having the most significant impact on rural life both in terms of visual pollution, associated noise pollution and the terrifyingly exciting introduction of aerial technology to the populace. In Shropshire, for example, the Royal Flying Corps airfield at Shawbury was equipped with electricity long before the neighbouring village received connection to the mains. However, despite the inconvenience of airfield construction to the local populace, they were ultimately allowed to remain in their homes and the land was swiftly returned to agriculture once the need for military flying had decreased post-war. However, the government intervention at Beachley had a rather more significant, long-lasting and dramatic effect.

Even today it is difficult to conceive that the fate of the Beachley peninsular was intrinsically linked to German U-Boat activity, so one can only imagine how the news of evacuation was received by the local residents. However, this was an evacuation indirectly necessitated by the rate of loss of Allied merchant shipping inflicted by German U-Boats and was instigated by the British government which was so concerned that it developed a National Shipyards programme to counter the threat.

Under the Defence of the Realm Act, the government effectively took control of industry and created two National Shipyards on the River Wye. The first of these, National Shipyard No.1, amalgamated the established yard at Chepstow and was operational in August 1917. The following month letters of eviction were received by residents on the opposite bank of the river so that the construction of National Shipyard No. 2, and associated railway, could commence at Beachley. Despite the vast capital investment and associated disruption, the armistice was signed long before any ships were completed but the impact upon the landscape was irreversible.

Carol and Richard Clammer have produced a publication that not only encapsulates the impact that demands of industrialized warfare can have on home-front communities, but also puts the development into a much broader social context. The publication is well researched and utilizes a wealth of primary sources that greatly enhances the experience for the reader. The illustrations are genuinely outstanding and curated in a method that allows for the exploration of not only the construction of the military installation and its associated infrastructure, but also the unique social history of a community irreversibly altered by a non-violent military intervention.

One of the most important achievements of the work is that it avoids the temptation to simply cease the investigation once the disposal of surplus machinery and materials commenced in 1919. The inevitable series of compensation claims and associated valuations that followed throughout the 1920s makes most interesting reading and is a consequence of War Office strategy that is often overlooked. This remained all the more poignant for those who had been evicted in September 1917.

However, with any large-scale military infrastructure investment there is often a repurposing of the facility and recycling of built infrastructure. At Beachley this resulted in the opening of the Central Training School for Boys which eventually closed as the Army Apprentices College in 1994. Beachley's association with the military continued through the 20th century. Firstly, the camp at Sedbury was further expanded to house the additional military personnel required for the Boys Technical School. During the Second World War the site was once again in use as a prisoner of war camp, although they were mainly employed in agricultural work, unlike their First World War comrades who were directly involved in construction of the National Shipyard some 25 years previously.

The author's evaluation and guide to the surviving structures and installations in the landscape is a valuable resource for historians and archaeologists alike and reminds us of the importance of

preserving and recording such military archaeology before we lose them to future development and pressures of planning. The recent announcement that Beachley Barracks has been designated for closure in 2027 only strengthens the importance of this work in documenting the relationship between the local community and the military.

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