THE

CHAPELS



SOCIETY

Newsletter 58

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Salem Congregational Chapel, Martin Top, near Rimington, Lancashire, founded 1816, sits in an isolated spot by the roadside on the lower slopes of Pendle Hill. The sundial on the wall is inscribed 'Time flies swift away' (photograph copyright Paul Gardner).

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

2/4 May 2015 Visit to Edinburgh (Tim Grass/Sara Crofts)

27 June 2015 Visit to Loughborough and AGM

(Moira and Peter Ackers)

12 September 2015 Visit to Cleethorpes and Grimsby (Rod Ambler)

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR NEXT ISSUE OF THE *JOURNAL*

The Society hopes to publish the next issue of *The Chapels Society Journal* early in 2016. We already have one or two contributions earmarked for the issue, including we hope one or two of the talks given at November's conference on twentieth-century chapels.

However if any member has a paper on any aspect on chapel history or architecture which they might think of publishing in the *Journal* the Editor would be very interested to hear about it. An article can have a maximum extent of 16–18 pages (as a guideline an article of 5000 words fills 10 pages, which leaves 6–8 pages for illustrations). The balance of text and illustrations can vary from article to article. The majority of illustrations are expected to be in black and white.

Chris Skidmore

All statements and views published in this newsletter are those of the contributor alone. Neither the editor nor the Society may be held responsible.

PROCEEDINGS

VISIT TO BOWLAND AND PENDLE 13 SEPTEMBER 2014

The beautiful landscape of rural Lancashire provided the perfect setting for the Chapels Society 2014 Autumn Visit: views of Pendle Hill loomed large as we went in search of six mostly small, but perfectly formed, chapels built to serve the remote communities of Bowland and Pendle.

Following a misty start from Skipton railway station we made our way to the first stop of the day, taking in a fleeting view of Providence Chapel at Colne, a Weslevan Methodist chapel built in 1880 and now a residential dwelling. At our first destination we were warmly welcomed by the current minister of the Inghamite Chapel, Matthew Butler. Located on the edge of Wheatley Lane, just



The Inghamite chapel, Wheatley Lane, from the original entrance to the burial ground (photograph copyright Chris Heaton and distributed under a Creative Commons Licence)

north of Nelson, the chapel was built in 1750 by Benjamin Ingham and registered as a Dissenting Place of Worship in 1754, leading to the connexion being organised as a separate denomination. Today this is the only surviving Inghamite congregation but the sense of a vibrant worshipping community which continues to use the building, was clear for all to see. Accompanied by morning tea, Matthew

explained the history of the chapel noting the various architectural developments including the enlargement of the building in 1897 to accommodate an organ and a choir, and more recent minor changes to the interior to enable new approaches to worship. Before setting off there was just time to explore the chapel's extensive burial ground which is still in use.

On route to our next destination we made a quick stop to look at Salem Independent (Congregational) chapel at Martin Top, before descending down a narrow lane to Grindelton. Although known as the Sawley Friends Meeting House, the building is actually located in Grindleton standing on the opposite bank of the River Ribble from Sawley itself. While the Quakers had a presence in Sawley from 1742, the meeting house and cottage were not completed until 1777. The building has enjoyed almost regular use to the present day, except for the period from 1826 to 1891. Typical in design, Sawley meeting house comprises a small single meeting room and an upper gallery with shutters to enable women's meetings. Some original benches survive, including a raised bench for those with a 'gift for the ministry' and benches for elders in the front. Ben Dandelion explained that today the congregation is approximately 15 in number, and now benefits from running water, a very recent addition! At the front of the building lies the burial ground for the meeting house and here we saw a small number of burial stones laid flat in the ground.

The next stop, Holden Independent Chapel was built in 1766, with an adjoining cottage built in 1777. With an entrance on the long front of the building and a two-storey cottage at the north end, the chapel lies on a small road with burial ground on the opposite side of the road; here are buried some of the past ministers. After lunch and tea we were welcomed to the chapel by Christine Blakey who explained that the current congregation numbers 15 to 26 and that there is a single afternoon service on a Sunday led by invited speakers. Since the 1930s, the chapel has hosted fellowship meetings with other local churches and a monthly communion.

It was soon time to hop on the bus again as we made our way to Tosside, a remote hamlet with a few buildings clustered around a crossroads. Mount Sion Independent Chapel built in 1812 is located some quarter of a mile from the hamlet on the edge of the Forest of Bowland. Today the chapel is hidden behind towering trees which make the building all the more gloomy and dank. While the adjoining chapel house is still lived in, the chapel is little used, with perhaps just three services a year: the building was clearly in need of some tender loving care. In the graveyard the benches were covered with thick moss and an abandoned decaying organ could be spotted languishing to the side of the chapel. Inside, the chapel is dominated by the flue emanating from a stove in the centre of the chapel. The pulpit is on the north wall opposite the entrance with views across to the box pews and the gallery. The atmosphere was depressing and it was impossible not to feel a sense of an uncertain future for the building.

Thankfully our next destination restored my feeling of optimism as this chapel was much loved and beautifully kept. The Independent Chapel, Horton-in-Craven owes its origins to the influence of early Congregationalists working in the area from the mid-seventeenth century. Built in 1816 to replace a meeting

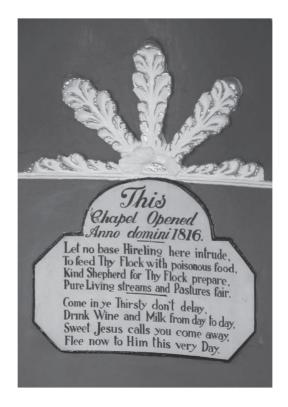




Contrasting chapels: (top) Mount Sion, Tosside, overlooked by gloomy trees (photograph copyright Delia Garratt) and (bottom) the chapel at Horton-in-Craven, much-loved and beautifully kept (photograph copyright Paul Gardner)

house which had been in operation on the site since 1717, the chapel is adjoined north and south by cottages. Inside there are galleries on three sides with singer's stands as well as an organ. There are two pointed-arched windows on the east wall which flank the pulpit, and on the wall directly behind the pulpit is an inscription which can only act as a challenge to those who come to preach:

'Let no base Hireling here intrude, To feed Thy Flock with poisonous food, Kind Shepherd for Thy Flock prepare, Pure Living streams and Pastures fair.'



Our final stop of the day was the Independent Methodist Chapel at Barnoldswick built in 1892. Known locally as The New Ship, the chapel was by far the grandest on the day's tour, with seating for 750 and extensive school-rooms. On arrival we were told the story of the chapel's survival following a long effort by the congregation, initially to raise the money for the building's restoration (a grant was obtained from English Heritage in 2004) and then to carry out the actual work, including the epic task of painting the interior. This dedication finally culminated this year when the congregation were able to have a service to mark the completion of the restoration. Today the congregation numbers around



Society members seated in the impressive interior of The New Ship. Barnoldswick's Independent Methodist chapel (photograph copyright Delia Garratt)

50, using the chapel in the summer months when the colossal effort and cost of heating the chapel is not required. In the winter months worship is in the schoolrooms adjoining the chapel, where we were treated to a most splendid chapel tea before making our way back to Skipton.

This was my first Chapels Day and I want to thank everyone for making me feel most welcome and, in particular, special thanks to Sylvia.

Delia Garratt

CONFERENCE ON THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHAPEL, 8 NOVEMBER 2014

The increasing attention to the significance of church architecture in the twentieth century was expertly laid out during a thought-provoking day conference in early November 2014 on the subject of Nonconformist architecture in England since 1900.

The setting for the day's presentations was Carrs Lane United Reformed Church Centre, Birmingham completed in 1970 to the designs of Messrs Denys Hinton and Partners, pioneers in modernist church architecture during the 1960s.

Andy Foster an architectural historian based locally opened the conference with a context-setting presentation of chapel buildings in and around Birmingham and the Black Country. This provided a well-illustrated sprint through



Carr's Lane United Reformed Church Centre, Birmingham, on a stormy day in November 2014 (photograph copyright Michael Atkinson)

regional twentieth-century ecclesiastical architecture: sadly however there was a distinct lack of significant exemplars from the latter half of the century.

Stuart Leadley followed and spoke of his personal research project to visit, record and categorise the life's work of George & Reginald P. Baines, exponents of Baptist church architecture in a free perpendicular design. This will include a considerable existing built resource of two hundred chapels dating from 1851 to 1934.

Past-president of the Chapels Society, Chris Wakeling, then spoke about the relevance of the Puritan tradition of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in influencing the architecture of the early twentieth century. A waning enthusiasm for the gothic style and a pronounced beauty found in unadorned simplicity with plain forms created a restful architecture and influenced the Unitarian, Quaker and Baptist traditions.

The final paper of the morning's session examined the influential work of Edward Mills, Methodist, architect and writer. Architectural historian and general editor of the *Survey of London*, Andrew Saint, gave a thought-provoking account of the importance of Mills' architecture and his pioneering use of materials most notably of curved concrete roofs. Examples of his Methodist churches were illustrated. Mills' writing is highly significant and always gave clear practical design approaches. *The Modern Church* published in 1956 is still a must read for many church architects today.

An opportunity over lunch for a chapel visit was taken by many of the delegates. The visit was to the nearby Methodist Central Hall completed in 1904 to the designs of Ewan Harper & James A. Harper, a grade II* listed building of three storeys constructed from red brick and terracotta.

The afternoon session opened with Elain Harwood, a historian with English Heritage specialising in post-war architecture, speaking passionately about the role of Nonconformist buildings in the creation of New Towns during the latter part of the twentieth century. Case studies were presented of the important role that the church had as a centre for new development and establishing new communities. This had been evident in such places as Stevenage. Newton Avcliffe. Harlow and Hemel Hempstead.

A short but nevertheless fascinating insight followed from Charles Brown. architect in charge of the design and construction of Carrs Lane United Reformed Church Centre. He gave an invaluable lesson into the architect's approach to creating a church for the modern day including the importance of learning from precedent (through a project trip to several German churches), use of natural light, identifying important views both in and out of the building, living in and adapting to an aggressive urban environment (but not shutting off from it) and involving the client in all design discussions — illuminating!

Finally Elizabeth Williamson, Pevsner reviser and author, presented for discussion an argument as to whether there is a future for Nonconformist architecture? The paper highlighted the principal issue within the existing Nonconformist traditions today — not enough members. This inevitably leads to the principle of sharing church resources and buildings with other religious traditions and faiths. However in establishing more multi-faith buildings there is the potential that the character and distinctiveness of the Nonconformist tradition could be lost. Is this a genuine threat to the identity of the sacred space?

The occasion provided a perfect setting with an excellent set of speakers discussing a series of thought-provoking and relevant themes. A grand day out!

Michael Atkinson

NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL — CHARGES FOR NON-MEMBERS

Among the items considered when the Council last met in November was the issue of the attendance of non-members at Chapel Visits. Policy recently has been to give preference to members in booking. However, where numbers are limited, this means that those wishing to accompany members on a visit are left in uncertainty as to their booking status until bookings close, an awkward situation if accommodation and travel need to be booked in advance.

The Society has experimented in its conference programme with charging extra for non-members. The Council thought that this was a simpler way of differentiating between members and non-members and agreed to extend it to the visits programme. Members will find that the flyer for the Edinburgh visit, enclosed with this issue, therefore quotes different changes for members and nonmembers.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The membership secretary writes:

It is with sadness that we report the death of the following member: Andrew Worth, Wembley (see obituary in Newsletter 57)

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new personal members to the Society:

John M Bowdler, Lillington, Leamington Spa Kenneth John Cole, Preston David Firth, Barnoldswick Christine Edwards, Hastings William King, Telford Valerie Grist, Hastings David Pickett, Swindon

Can I ask that you get in touch with me if you have moved house or any of your contact details have changed recently?

Paul Gardner

CASEWORK NOTES

Former Methodist Preaching House, Acre Street, Stroud Gloucestershire, 1763 (II*)

News has reached the Society of a notable chapel at risk in Stroud, Gloucestershire. One of the earliest surviving octagonal Methodist chapels built in 1763 and extended in 1796 it was the centre of burgeoning Methodism in the late eighteenth century. There are several existing Octagon Chapels: Norwich (1757), Rotherham (1761), Yarm (1764), Aberdeen (1764) and Heptonstall (1764). The chapel currently falls under the responsibility of the Salvation Army and has been the Citadel in Stroud for some time.

Constructed from coursed and squared stone with a slated pitch roof the chapel had originally been designed as a regular octagon, its early extension doubling its length. The interior is galleried, inserted as part of early nineteenth-century alterations all with a panelled front and supported on decorative cast iron columns with Roman Doric capitals. It is understood that little else remains of its internal furnishings and fittings.

In the autumn of 2014 a decision was reached for the planned closure of the chapel, citing spiralling repair and maintenance costs as the primary reason for this action. The beginning of 2015 marks the redundancy of this important chapel.

The former Methodist preaching house remains under possible threat of future sale however no confirmation of the Salvation Army's intentions has yet been received. The Society is maintaining a careful observation of any further development.

The former Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel, Midland Road, Bristol, 1849 (Unlisted)

Following reports earlier in 2014 of an anticipated stripping of the interior of the chapel, the Society can now report the distressing news of the wholescale demolition of the former Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel. The Society in 2011 had previously contributed to an unsuccessful application for listing for this rare and striking example of Primitive Methodism.

The chapel dated from 1849, accommodating 250 congregation members and appears to have been the Primitive Methodists' first purpose-built chapel in Bristol. Congregational decline in the twentieth century together with the destructive impact of wartime led to its closure just prior to the Second World War. The chapel however did not remain unoccupied, its last use being as an architectural salvage business. It was the only surviving example of these midnineteenth-century places of worship in the immediate area.

The building was a competent example of the Norman revival style, constructed in coursed Pennant sandstone rubble with ashlar surrounds to windows and doorway, pitched slate roof over. The interior had retained many features from its time as a chapel, including the pulpit and timber galleries set on cast iron columns with neo-Norman arcading on the front panels dating from 1867.

Weslevan Chapel, Nenthead, Alston Moor, Cumbria, 1873 (II)

Located in a small mining village five miles south east of Alston and on the banks of the river Nent there is a fine Weslevan Chapel, Built in 1873 to an Italianate style it is remarkably an intact exemplar of its type, the only significant exception being the loss of the gallery seating. The chapel has great historic and social



The Wesleyan Chapel, Nenthead, Cumbria (photograph copyright Michael Atkinson)

interest as Methodism was strongly linked to the nineteenth-century mining communities within the North Pennines.

Externally it is constructed from sandstone with a Lakeland slate roof: internally it contains exquisite cast-iron work which is unusually ornate, decorative and brightly coloured.

It is currently redundant and showing signs of deterioration, principally through the roof covering. It is currently owned by a property developer who had previously submitted both planning and listed building consent applications for a failed conversion into residential.

New life is hoped to be created by the diligent and passionate support of local volunteers who in 2014 had been successful in securing £135,000 grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is intended to convert and reorder the chapel into a café to serve the local community and visitors alongside an art gallery for local artists

Planning and listed building consent applications have recently been granted full approval by Eden District Council for the project. More good news is expected from the project to save this chapel during 2015.

Former Wesleyan Methodist Church, Blackhorse Road, Kingswood, Bristol, 1843 (II)

Once an integral part of Blackhorse Road Cemetery the chapel now exists as a standing ruin and shell following a devastating arson attack in 2004, now only the masonry walling remains. It was built originally in 1843 adjacent to the original chapel and school both begun by John Wesley.

In the late 1970s the cemetery closed to new burials and as such subsequent years of neglect and exposure to developers led to various cycles of land sales and change of ownership. Today the chapel together with a small section of the cemetery all are in the hands of a private owner. Awkward access issues contribute to a difficult site demonstrated in 2007 when a plan for conversion to residential was withdrawn.

Local interest and concern is evident, headstones and memorials exist within the immediate vicinity of the chapel but of increasingly deteriorating condition. The former Wesleyan Chapel remains under possible threat of future sale, currently on the property market for development.

Former Catholic Chapel, Bowling Cemetery, Rooley Lane, Bradford, 1889 (II)

Early in autumn 2014 news of a listed building consent application for the somewhat severe alteration of Bowling Cemetery Chapel was brought to the Society's attention.

The chapel dated from *c*. 1889 to the designs of architects Morley and Woodhouse of Bradford, contemporary with the design and layout of the cemetery. After standing vacant since 1987 the condition of the chapel had deteriorated badly, so much so that a significant programme of repairs and maintenance were necessary.

Its isolated location within the cemetery setting had over the years brought many incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Bradford Council had investigated marketing of the chapel and searched for a new use, all of which to date had been unsuccessful

The listed building consent proposals were considerable and significantly harmful, removing the roof covering and structure in its entirety and lowering all standing walls to a height of 1.2 m. A memorial garden is to be created within the remnants of the chapel.

It would seem much more appropriate that the badly damaged roof together with glazing be removed and the remaining standing masonry be consolidated as a ruin

Latest update received from the planning authority confirms withdrawal of the application after interest from two unnamed parties.

The Society will continue to monitor the chapel's progress.

Christ Church Baptist Church, Spring Lane, Tanworth in Arden, Warwickshire, 1877 (II*)

The variety of the Society's casework is demonstrated by an invitation in 2014 to comment on the proposed upgrading of listing of the Baptist Chapel, received kindly from the Historic Chapels Trust.

The chapel dates from 1877 designed by Birmingham architect, George Ingall and is the last surviving major chapel of his life's work. The client was George Frederick Muntz Inr of Umberslade Hall, a successful industrialist of German origin and a Baptist convert.

It is designed in a strong decorated gothic style, adorned with pinnacles, finials and buttresses and a slender tower and spire. This style is somewhat unique and unusual for a Baptist chapel which are traditionally simpler and in the classical style. Its interior is richly appointed and mainly intact.

English Heritage has since confirmed the upgrading of the chapel to grade II*.

Michael Atkinson

NEWS AND NOTES

Champing — the next chapel trend?

The Churches Conservation Trust are promoting champing — camping in churches — as a new way of experiencing the churches in their care. This updates the concept of glamping — a de luxe form of camping, for those not in the know — by adding the heritage element. The CCT website (http://www. visitchurches.org.uk/champing/) describes it as 'the ultimate in experiential tourism'. Some Quaker meeting houses already provide simple hostel-type accommodation for holiday makers and there are a number of chapels converted into holiday accommodation. However perhaps this idea provides another way in which redundant chapels might be put to use without losing their historic interiors?

Wesley Historical Society Annual Meeting and Lecture

The Annual Meeting on Saturday 4 July 2015 will focus upon the history and influence of Primitive Methodism with opportunities to explore its historic origins and legacy through the Englesea Brook Chapel Museum and its environs. There will be a tour of the Museum in the morning, the AGM after lunch and the Annual Lecture at 2.30 pm will be given by Revd Dr Stephen Hatcher on 'Prims in Print: the changing character of Primitive Methodism as seen through its literature'. For further information contact Dr John A. Hargreaves, General Secretary Wesley Historical Society; e-mail: johnahargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk.

Government money for roofs and gutters

In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced a new, one-off grant scheme for roofs and gutters of listed places of worship. Fifteen million pounds is available, for grants of between £10k and £100k but applications have to be in by the end of January. A dedicated website is available at http://www.lpowroof.org.uk/ where further information can be obtained.

Chapel of the month

Members who access our website regularly at http://www.chapelssociety.org.uk/will have noted that it is now headed by a featured 'Chapel of the month'. The chapel for January is a mystery photograph sent in by an enquirer — you may like to make an effort to identify it.

However, in order to maintain this feature, our secretary would be very grateful for nominations for 'Chapel of the month'. These should be sent to Sara at chapelssociety@googlemail.com together with a digital photograph and, ideally, a few words describing the chapel and why you consider it important.

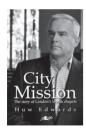
A chapel in New York

Our member Frank Law wrote last year to bring my attention to the opportunity to buy a Wesleyan chapel in New York — that's the New York in Lincolnshire, north of Boston. The chapel, shown below, was being sold as a 'development opportunity' and already came with the attached church hall converted for residential use



BOOK REVIEWS

City Mission: the story of London's Welsh chapels by Huw Edwards. Y Lolfa: Talybont, 2014. 368 pp, illustrated, hardback. ISBN 978 1 84771 905 8. £24.95



Huw Edwards, the writer and broadcaster, has written a book which attempts to honour the importance of religious life, and particularly Nonconformist religious life, in the history of one of the oldest of London's ethnic communities — the London Welsh. Since at least Tudor times, migrants from Wales have been heading to the capital in their thousands to find work, education, advancement and success. Until the twentieth century, the vast majority of them had Welsh as their first and, often, only language. So it is not surprising that communities of Welsh

speakers arose in London and that for two hundred years these communities were centred on churches and chapels where Welsh was the language of worship. What is perhaps more surprising to the chapel historian is that there is little evidence of preaching in Welsh in London before the arrival of the evangelist Howell Harris in 1739 and no evidence of a settled meeting house until the report of a meeting in the 'Great Room over the Earthenware Shop, in Cock Lane, West Smithfield' in 1773. This latter was the cause that gave rise to Jewin Chapel, which now worships in a building of 1961 designed by Caroe and Partners in the shadow of the Barbican development and which was visited by Chapel Society members in July this year.

From these beginnings Huw Edwards traces the development of Welsh chapel culture to its height in the late 1930s when there were 31 Welsh chapels and churches throughout London, several of which boasted memberships in excess of 1000. The post-war story is unhappily one of sharp decline and of missed opportunities for much-needed reorganisation until in 2014 the number of functioning causes has dropped to seven: Edwards is sensitive to the causes of the decline but rightly critical of the failures to grasp a wider vision.

The book is organised as a series of histories of the individual chapels. Whole chapters are devoted to the large and successful causes such as Jewin, the Welsh Independent chapel at Kings Cross (now home to the Ethiopian Christian Fellowship Church), the Welsh Presbyterian chapel in Charing Cross Road (with its notable building by James Cubitt now being restored as an arts venue) and the Welsh Baptists in Eastcastle Street. Smaller causes are treated together, linked either by denomination or, less successfully, by geographical area. And finally there is a whole chapter devoted to Anglican efforts to meet the need for services in Welsh, fatally compromised by Welsh disestablishment in 1914 and the incomprehension of the diocese of London.

It was the social and cultural history, however, which in the end made this book appeal strongly to me. It is clear that the chapels set out 'to provide a spiritual home for newcomers from Wales, surrounding them with goodly influences': in addition to chapel services they provided a wide range of other opportunities including literary societies, youth clubs and Welsh tuition together

with the whole gamut of Welsh musical culture — male voice choirs, cymanfa ganu (hymn singing festivals) and eisteddfodau. The annual Eisteddfod y Plant (children's eisteddfod) in which all the chapels took part, embracing preliminary auditions before the festival itself, was clearly a major event not only for the children who took part but also some ambitious parents. Pastoral care was impressive with the organised greeting of young people as they arrived for the first time at the London terminii, the offer of initial accommodation as well sometimes of jobs and, at the other end of life, the provision of funeral services on the station platform before the bodies of the dead were repatriated.

The book also contains other insights. There is that London institution, the local family dairy shop and the provision of milk deliveries (even in a silk hat for the households of Pimlico), so long a Welsh prerogative, and the dispute over whether it was permissible to prepare for Monday's deliveries without sabbath-breaking. Account is given of the efforts to provide shipboard sermons in Welsh for Welsh sailors in the pool of London which led to the formation of the Cambrian Union Society for Seamen in an old Quaker meeting house in Southwark. And at the other end of the scale we are reminded of the high regard in which the London Welsh became held, with the award of the Companion of Honour to more than one minister, royal patronage of festivals in the Albert Hall, not to mention the celebration of the society wedding of 1917 (that of Olwen Lloyd George) in the Welsh Baptist Church in Eastcastle Street!

Huw Edwards has certainly worked hard to bring all this together from the original written sources, many of which would be inaccessible to those of us without fluency in Welsh. But he has also gone back to the archives to tease out some of the knottier problems, has collaborated with academics in the field and has produced a valuable thread of oral history from those still alive who knew the chapels in their heyday. This together with the provision of an excellent range of illustrations makes this a valuable resource for anyone interested in London chapel history and architecture.

Chris Skidmore

The Editor has received more than one copy of this book for review and would be very happy to see a copy go to a good home for a donation to Society funds. Please contact him, if interested, as given on page 2.