

*Lost Landscapes* should be seen as a stimulus for further research, as well as a memorial volume to what we have lost: a starting point for deeper studies of the drastic and profound changes of the recent past.

And for some appalling misprints, the author deserves every sympathy.

Nicholas Cooper

[*Note. A brief notice appeared in the previous issue of 'C&CH'.]*

**Village Chapels: Some aspects of rural Methodism in the East Cotswolds and South Midlands, 1800-2000**, by Pauline Ashridge (94pp., illustrated). Kershaw Publishing, Hook Norton. ISBN 0 9546632 0 9. £6.99.

This book encompasses a great deal of research on the small village Methodist chapels in what is essentially, despite its title, north Oxfordshire (or dare I say Banburyshire). The little houses of worship Dr Ashridge describes are all miraculous survivors, having seen the steady decline in worship in the twentieth century and, in many cases, suffering the indignity of being taken into secular use – as offices, storerooms and of course house conversions. She writes about her subjects with affection, putting a human face to the stories of these modest buildings.

In the introduction she sketches out a concise history of the Methodist movement. This is followed by a brief history of twenty-three small chapels from Cropredy north of Banbury down to Kingham just south of Chipping Norton – plus a very small scattering in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire and just one in Gloucestershire.

Excellent footnotes are provided with detailed documentary sources for the piece on each chapel. I do feel that this interesting book would benefit from a short bibliography of the general books used for background. Nevertheless it will be a useful tool for any historian writing local village history in this area or to someone who is curious to know a bit more about a movement that was so influential, at one time, that it was described as 'a second national church by the side of the first'.

This book complements the HMSO booklet, published in 1986, entitled *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses: Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire*. This records very bare historic information but much architectural detail and is very well illustrated.

Nicholas J. Allen

'Within the Shelter of the Old Elm Tree: Oddfellowship and Community in North Oxfordshire, 1871-2002', by Malcolm Bee, *Family and Community History*, Vol. 6/2, November 2003. Maney Publishing, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL.

'North Oxfordshire' in this context is Chipping Norton. More social than local history, nevertheless the human side breaks through to offer, despite its dedicated intent, an entertaining view of the importance of Friendly Societies. J.G.