

Book Reviews

Printers and Publishers in Deddington, 1840-2004, Brian Carter (A5, 40pp).

Published by the author, 13 High Street, Deddington, Oxon OX15 0SJ. 2004, £4.00 (incl. p&p).

This is a gem of a booklet in that it confines itself to the media products of a decayed Oxfordshire market town, but in such a manner that it smoothly connects with the products of the last generation, since the production of *Deddington News* in 1976. The pressure from other centres, in particular of Banbury with Cheney and Rusher as competition at the general level, and Potts at the newspaper level, is indeed noted. In this light, some initiatives seem positively heroic: the best example would be John Samuel Hiron's *Woodstock Union and Deddington Directory*. The author deduces from the third issue for May 1841 that the first may have dated from 1839, revealing a swift emulation of Potts' *Banbury Guardian*, which began in 1838 as a monthly four-page sheet exploring Poor Law Union issues, and only moved to a weekly, paying the Stamp duty, in 1843. Undaunted, Hiron launched a monthly newspaper, *The North Oxfordshire Monthly Times*, in July 1849, which ran through at least 132 issues until June 1860, although alas only the first run of 62 issues to 1854 appears to survive. The use of the scrapbooks of the local solicitor George Coggins is excellent primary evidence in this booklet. Janet Cooper suggested as much in the *Victoria County History* vol. XI when she cited two minute cuttings, both of 1860, in the Coggins collection at the Bodleian Library, as evidence for this survival.

Comments on the preponderance of printed matter emanating from the church and the clergy in Victorian times is just, but perhaps the author understates the ferocity of religious controversy in the town between 1848 and 1878, which Thomas Boniface and Maurice Frost managed, in 83 years' stewardship, to alter. It follows that the fortunes of the three predominant printers, Hiron, Caulcott and Whetton, are only partly determined by economic factors of the market, and business acumen. Hiron's fall owes much to the defaulting payment of Vicar Brogden, causing him to move his business to New Street where, with a second wife (and mother-in-law enumerated in the 1861 census) he struggled until Rev William Risley ensured he lost the Stamp Office position for daring to vote (at Hornton) in the 1862 parliamentary election. Many of these details relating to the Coggins material (though this covers largely the last third of the nineteenth century) are validated by the Risley diary volumes mentioned by the author, which we trust will see the light of published day in 2005.

A section on papermaking, which flourished in Deddington until the 1860s, is greatly served by the use of private deeds held locally, and therefore adds to the *VCH* account. So many artefacts are at large in any parish: here paper with