

- 3 T. S. H. Elwyn, *The Northamptonshire Baptist Association, 1964*; F. Buffard, *Kent & Sussex Baptist Associations, [1964]*. For discussion of wider issues, cf. my 'Assembly and Association in Dissent, 1689-1831', in *Studies in Church History*, vii (1971), 289-309.
- 4 Rippon's diary for 1759-60 (I h 26), a letter of 1793 to Sutcliff (II a 18.148) and other Rippon papers (II c 6) are among MSS. in the Congregational Library (now at Dr Williams's Library and in process of being recatalogued).

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REVIEW

SOME RECENT LOCAL HISTORIES

The Beechen Grove Story. A History of Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Watford by Walter Bennewith. 1983. Available at £1.45 from Mr A. F. Rogers, 40 The Avenue, Watford, Herts., WD1 3NS.

Slightly 'dated' in that it is a reprint of articles originally written for the Beechen Grove magazine 25 years ago, this is nevertheless a highly useful summary of the church's history, beginning with Baptist origins in Watford in the 17th century. Bennewith is as entertaining as he is informative, and always manages to relate the local scene to the wider context of religious and social developments. He is also able to tell the story as an education in Baptist belief and practice - highly necessary these days. The continuity that can be discerned in the character of the church for over three centuries is quite striking as told here - firm conviction on essentials, openness to the future and an often prophetic address to the community at large.

The Baptist Story. South Street Baptist Church, Wellington by Pam Marshall. 1983.

The booklet was written to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the present church building at South Street, but the story of this Somerset church reaches back nearly two and a half centuries. Anglican-dissenting feuds feature well in the story, not least in the 19th century. As so often with local histories, the author has had to cope with the unevenness in quantity and quality of first-hand records at different periods in the history. But she refers to 'very detailed records' by the son of Rev. G. W. Humphreys (minister 1862-1900) and W. D. Haddon, a deacon. We ought to know more about such material, and it would add greatly to the value of local histories if full bibliographical details were included.

From Friars Lane to Castle Street. A Fragment of Inverness History by J. S. Fisher. Inverness Baptist Church, 1983. Available at £1 (including postage) from the author at 16 Overton Avenue, Inverness IV3 6RR.

This is an unusual and welcome piece of work - a detailed and vivid account of just three years in the life of the Inverness Church, 1930-33, when it transferred to entirely new premises. It is not so much about the buildings as about the people who built, and why - 'their hopes, struggles, problems and achievements at a singularly difficult time in the economic life of the nation'. The booklet is but part of a longer-term project by the author into the history of the church - a task rendered difficult by the almost complete lack of records prior to 1941. That he has been able to unearth so much by recourse to Baptist Union of Scotland records, and files of the local press, is highly commendable and augurs well for still more to come. The present volume has some nice incidental touches, including evidence of the wary but increasingly cordial relationships between Baptists and the Church of Scotland during the events described.

Adelaide Place Baptist Church During World War II by J. Stewart. 1983. Available from the author at 187 Clevedon Road, Kelvin-dale, Glasgow, G12 0JY.

Once again from Scotland, a booklet deals with a short but highly significant slice in a church's story this century. Anyone seriously interested in local churches in wartime will be seeking information on at least two levels - on the effects of war on the 'normal' activities of the church, its numbers and so on; and the outlook of the members towards the war itself, and the great moral and theological questions posed by it. On the evidence supplied here, this Glasgow church certainly did express concern on such matters as aerial bombing and the plight of European refugees (especially Jews) before the war itself. But the dominant impression given is that the sudden and irreversible drainage of younger, able people became the overriding concern as the war proceeded, and determined still more the immediate post-war attitude. A highly useful survey which could stimulate comparative studies elsewhere.

Brassey Green and Tarporley. A Baptist History by Margaret Thomas. Tarporley Baptist Church, 1984. Available at £2.75 (including postage) from Mr K. Wallace, Newsteads, Four Lane Ends, Tarporley, Cheshire.

This is a very well-produced and highly readable account of one of the oldest Cheshire Baptist communities, from Civil War times to the present. The 18th century Brassey Green Chapel near Tarporley has recently been restored, and this has provided the stimulus for the production of a new history. The research has been wide and painstaking - indeed much wider use of denominational and public records has been made than is often the case with work on this level. Many will find the earliest stages the most interesting, not least because so much remains tantalisingly just on the far edge of certain knowledge. There is a generous supply of excellent photographs, maps, diagrams and genealogical tables - the latter being of more than usual significance since more than one present-day Tarporley Baptist family name can be traced to the 17th century!