

Review

BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY: A BOOK LIST. *Council for British Archaeology*. 10, Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5, 1960. 44 pp. 5s. 6d. (5s. 10d. including postage).

The new *Book List* supersedes the now out-of-print *Book List for Teachers*, compiled by Lady (Aileen) Fox and issued in 1949. As the title implies, the scope has now been widened to cater for all 'amateur archaeologists, students and teachers of history, geography, local studies and Latin' as well as making specific provision for school children.

There appear to be altogether approximately 1,000 titles listed, grouped into four parts: of these Parts I and II cover respectively general and regional studies for adults, while Parts III and IV (specially compiled by Mr. R. Douch of the Institute of Education, Southampton University, make corresponding general and regional provision for children. All four parts are minutely subdivided by topics, and an extremely generous view is taken of the scope of British archaeology and especially of its background studies.

By the nature of the case, the List is highly selective, being especially concerned with the needs of the beginner, frequently (and rightly) to the exclusion of the standard work and the specialised monograph. In no case has any inadequate, tendentious or misleading book been included, and criticisms of omissions must necessarily be matters of personal judgement. By and large, the List appears to be most conscientiously selected and lucidly presented under well-chosen headings.

To be fair to the compilers, any item whose omission is queried should be at once popular, recent, inexpensive and, of course, authoritative. Among these surely we must rank G. J. Copley's *Archaeology of South-east England* (Phoenix), J. Brøndsted's *The Vikings* (Penguin) Batsford and Fry's *English Cottage* (Batsford) and H. H. Hansen's *Costume Cavalcade* (Methuen)—with nearly 700 accurate colour illustrations of costumes from contemporary sources for one guinea! The reviewer would also apply the same epithets to Jack Lindsay's two fascinating studies *The Romans Were Here* and *Arthur and his Times* (Muller), both here omitted. Mr. F. W. Robins is represented only by his book for children *On the track of the past*, which surely deprives the adult reader of a whole range of excellent books on 'domestic' archaeology.

There are many illustrations in this list of the difficulty of selection between books of approximately equal status. Thus R. Dutton is represented by two of his three books on country houses (omitting the highly important volume on interiors). Of two Batsford books on Castles, R. A. Brown is included but not H. Braun. W. D. Simpson is represented by his *Exploring Castles* but not by his pioneering *Castles from the Air*. S. Toy, with his measured drawings, is in a class by himself: he is not represented.

In Part III, Mr Douch has provided a heading for Geology and has expanded the scope of Prehistory to cover Palaeozoology. No such provision has been made in the adult Part I, which tends to impose an unnatural restriction on the background studies. Thus, many useful ecological studies in Collins's *New Naturalist* series find no place here, and no place can be found for that invaluable quarry for the student of early buildings, D. C. G. Shore's *Stones of Britain* (Hill).

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Mention of the last item raises again the question of criteria. Is Shore's book too advanced? (There is no alternative listed.) Similarly, with L. F. Salzman's *Building in England* (Clarendon Press): his two other books are included. Again, all books specialising in such topics as archaeological dating, or the identification of soils, bones or pottery seem to have been omitted as a matter of policy. One is immediately prompted to ask why Leeds's highly specialised monographs are supposed to provide easier reading for beginners than Zeuner or Cornwall.

In the matter of Regional studies, Hampshire is included among the 36 titles for Southern England in Part II and among the 14 titles which in Part IV cover a larger Southern England including London. It is a little surprising that new students of London are not recommended to use the indispensable catalogues of the London Museum. Another outstanding Regional omission is W. Rees's *Historical Atlas of Wales* (Faber), with its generous coverage of pre-historic and Dark Ages Wales.

The noting of omissions cannot, however detract from the impressive achievement of this List, which can be unreservedly recommended to all Club members for purchase and systematic use.

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