

Historical Association

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Thomas Telford, Joseph Chamberlain, Burne-Jones, (Lifelines) by Rhoda M. Pearce, C. W. Hill and William Waters

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Thomas Telford, Rhoda M. Pearce
Joseph Chamberlain, C. W. Hill
Burne-Jones, William Waters (*Lifelines*, Shire Publications, 1973) each 48 pp., 40p
The *Lifelines* series of short, illustrated biographies is an attractive one, and these three books make useful additions. Thomas Telford is a familiar figure, but Miss Pearce's clear, informative text and appealing illustrations make her contribution one which young people will appreciate. The same can be said of C. W. Hill's book on Chamberlain. The inclusion of Burne-Jones marks a welcome excursion into the often neglected field of cultural history, and complements the previously published biography of William Morris in this series. It is a pity, however, that the potential readership of this particular volume is more difficult to discern, for Mr. Waters assumes a greater knowledge than is likely to be possessed by most secondary school readers. All the books have suggestions for further reading, and Miss Pearce and Mr. Waters both list places where work by their subjects may be seen.

Trevor May

Gladstone and Disraeli, Patrick Rooke
The Great Depression, Marion Yass (*The Wayland Documentary History Series*, 1973) each 128 pp., 90p
The Wayland Documentary Series deserves its success, for its approach to the history book is fraught with difficulties. Unlike other series (Edward Arnold's *Archive Series*, for example) the aim has been to use a large number of short extracts to illustrate a subject rather than a smaller number of longer ones accompanied by only brief introductory notes. Great skill is required if a 'scissors-and-paste' presentation is to be avoided. Both Patrick Rooke and Marion Yass display this rare ability and have produced books which read easily and have a flowing style. This is particularly true of Marion Yass's book on the Great Depression which is a model of its kind. She has interpreted her theme widely, and presents the reader with ample material with which to compare the experience of several contrasting countries as they faced up to the economic problems of the twenties and thirties. Britain, Germany and the U.S.A. are given special emphasis, but fresh insights are afforded by the inclusion of other, less expected examples such as the Swedish 'New Deal'. Patrick Rooke examines the rivalry between Gladstone and Disraeli, concentrating on the period up to the latter's death. This is a little hard on Gladstone, who still had a great deal to do.

The illustrations of both books have great freshness. Teachers are sometimes too ready to dismiss as clichéd material which, while familiar to them, is new to their pupils. Even the most widely read teacher is likely to find fresh delights here, however, for sources of illustration other than the old, stock ones have been tapped.

Trevor May

The British in Egypt, William K. Ritchie (Longman, 1973) 112 pp., n.p.
The *Then and There* series has provided many books useful alike to pupils and teachers, and the format, with its glossary and 'things to do' sections, is a sound one. So, too, is the determination to get good documentation and illustration; but this little volume tries to do too much (as the author seems to realize when he hurries from Cromer to the Suez Crisis in three pages); it covers the Canal building, the take over, Gordon, Kitchener and Cromer. The material is good (including a photograph of the floggings at Denshawi, and a contrasting scene of tourists on the steps of Shepheard's hotel) and a teacher could make good use of it, but only the brightest children could cope alone with so much.

John Fines

Education, Evelyn E. Cowie (Methuen, 1973) 144 pp., £2.15
Mrs. Cowie's beautifully presented (and therefore rather expensive) book in the series, *Examining the Evidence*, gives us a good picture of the development of Education in the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. The approach is to provide a continuous narrative enriched and enlightened by many quotations from documents, and for able children it would certainly work. The extracts are chosen carefully from a wide range of sources, taking careful note of more recent publications, and they provide a good basis for discussion. This book would provide a most useful preparation for a teacher who is either unsure of the subject or one who wishes to search for telling and thought-provoking documentation.

John Fines

A Social History of Education, John Lawson and Harold Silver (Methuen, 1973) 502 pp., £2.40
History of Education has for too long tended to isolate itself from the mainstream of history, and although the need to set education firmly in a social context is now clearly established, too many books continue to pay no more than lip service to the new demands of the subject. The problems are great, as the authors are ready to admit:

A 'social history of education' in the widest sense of the phrase would relate education to every possible aspect of changing social structures, relationships and ideals. Education seen as an activity in and out of society concerns not only schools and universities, teachers and pupils, but also all those social institutions which have at different times shaped it, been influenced by it or become enmeshed in it.

Vast areas remain unexplored by the researcher, so that even if thirteen centuries of history had not to be compressed into five hundred pages, the story which Messrs. Lawson and Silver tell would be less complete than one would wish. Yet they rise to