

### Book Reviews

Highmore, George Bathurst, and Hannibal Potter. Another group of Royalists at All Souls “esteem’d themselves either virtuosi or wits”, and met to drink coffee at Tillyard’s apothecary’s shop next to All Souls. They included Peter Pett, Thomas Millington, Timothy Baldwin, Christopher and Matthew Wren, George Castle, William Bull and John Lamphire. In the aftermath of wartime bitterness it is reasonable to suppose that sub-groups of natural philosophers were drawn together by their shared political, religious and collegiate allegiances. It is possible that further research may show that the Oxford Philosophical Club was, in effect, made up of several smaller working groups. This diversion does not, however, alter Webster’s main thesis. Nor does his doubtful assertion that “equilibrium was restored at both universities with remarkable speed under the new regime”. After the Civil War the Royalist University carried on in the Laudian tradition exactly as before. Unyielding Royalists saw no reason to change either their religious convictions, their academic standards or their political allegiance simply because their army had been defeated in the field. University Independents tried to “re-educate” them by preaching, but their rantings were dismissed with jocular scorn: it took two years before Parliament was able to assert its authority in Oxford, and then only by imprisonment and forcible ejections. But these minor quibbles are unrelated to Webster’s main theme which he develops with impeccable scholarship. There is a succinct conclusion, eight appendices, an extensive bibliography: the footnotes are where they should be at the end of each page, and there are the useful references to those currently working in the field of seventeenth-century medicine and science. Original, stimulating and scholarly, Charles Webster’s *The Great Instauration* is a seminal contribution to our knowledge of the seventeenth century, and will long remain essential reading for scientists and historians alike.

R. M. MACLEOD, J. R. FRIDAY and C. GREGOR, *The Corresponding Societies of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1883–1929. A survey of historical records, archives and publications*, London, Mansell, 1975, pp. xxii, 147, £5.95 (\$15.00).

Dr. Roy Macleod, whose research unit in the social history of science at Sussex University is becoming increasingly well known, now provides us with a most useful book. He and his colleagues have selected the 160 local scientific societies which became “corresponding members” of the Conference of Corresponding Societies, created by the British Association in 1883, and which retained membership for at least one year between 1883 and 1929. Together they encouraged a great deal of provincial interest in science, more than was hitherto thought to exist.

There has been so far no overall survey of these local societies, but in the present book only archival material is presented. Each society is listed, with information arranged under the following headings: current address (if applicable), history, archives, publications, lists of members, and there is a very brief introductory description. There are also appendices containing a chronological list of the societies; the number founded each decade; and the growth in membership. Medical societies are not included.

A remarkable amount of data is here made available and it will provide historians with years of research into a topic which so far has been much neglected. It is to be hoped that Dr. Macleod will also be able to provide similar details of medical societies in Britain.