

BOOK REVIEW by Mary Siraut, Editor, Victoria County History of Somerset

NORTH CURRY - A Place in History by Angela Dix

This is a substantial book which sets the history of North Curry in the context of English history. Not content as are many local historians to begin with the Domesday book the author takes us far back into prehistory to provide an understanding of the environment that shaped the settlement. This is a work based on an extraordinary amount of detailed research and a knowledge of the area.

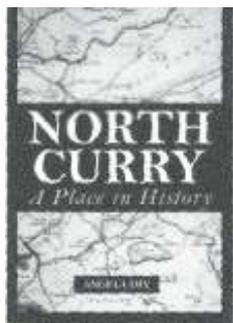
The book is profusely illustrated with maps and drawings as well as many photographs. There are also copious extracts from documents including rentals, deeds and court records.

The book opens with a broad sweep of history with timelines relating North Curry's history to national events. It then continues by examining various themes in the history of North Curry before looking closely at some of the many surviving records.

This is an invaluable book not only to everyone who knows North Curry but for those who might be thinking of embarking on a history of their own community. It covers all aspects of the parish's history using a wealth of sources. There are fascinating accounts of the Reeve's Feast, North Curry's many fine houses, and local families. For those who are not familiar with them there is a detailed examination of North Curry's parish records as well as a discussion of trade directories, censuses and maps.

Several substantial appendices complete the volume with information drawn from the county Historic Environment Record and a large glossary. The work is rounded off with a very valuable bibliography, a comprehensive index, and an index of surnames which will be invaluable to genealogists. It is a book which deserves to be on the bookshelves of every resident of North Curry.

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North Curry: A Place in History,

by Angela Dix, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-9531141-1-5. Hardback, 240pp., illustrated, appendices, maps, indices. £20.00+ p&p.

This book will appeal to all those who are interested in the history of the English village. The history of North Curry is set out in the context of English history. It is good to see that we do not begin with the *Domesday Book*, instead the author takes us far back into prehistory to provide an understanding of the environment that shaped the settlement. This is a work based on an extraordinary amount of detailed research and an intimate knowledge of the

area.

Angela Dix provides a detailed and up-to-date study of the evolution of the parish and, in the process, has given us a fine example of village history. The book is at its best when dealing with the village itself, as the sketch of English history which accompanies the village's story is basic. It was a good idea to include timelines displaying important people, places and dates in the history of England and North Curry, although their layout might perhaps have been clearer.

The book examines various themes in the history of North Curry before looking closely at some of the many place names and describes the customs and administration of an evolving community, together with details of buildings, families, institutions and infrastructure, drawing on much research. Part Three examines the various parish documents, national censuses and maps that have recorded the lives of North Curry inhabitants and shows how these sources have evolved over the centuries.

The book is profusely illustrated with maps and drawings, as well as many photographs. There are copious extracts from documents, including rentals, deeds and court records. Also included are some very helpful appendices: Census occupations for North Curry, 1841 to 1901; Bragg's Directory of Somerset - entry for North Curry, 1841; Kelly's Directory of Somerset - entry for North Curry, 1939; Historic Environment Record for North Curry, 2005, and a glossary. The book also contains a helpful bibliography, sources and references, as well as a general index, followed by an index of Somerset surnames, all of which will be a great help to those tracing Somerset ancestors.

The book is unique as a modern history of this village and, as such, is very helpful for those studying village life in Somerset. It is likely to be the standard work on North Curry for the foreseeable future. If you are studying your family history, you will surely sooner or later want to know about the village in which your ancestors lived and worked and this book should be close by you if you are researching Somerset ancestors. Further information is available on the book's own website at www.dixuk.com.

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