
Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCVIII
for 2009



**Proceedings of the
Cambridge Antiquarian Society**

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

**Volume XCVIII
for 2009**

Editors

David A Barrowclough
Mary Chester-Kadwell

Associate Editor (Archaeology) Professor Stephen Upex

Published by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society 2009

ISSN 0309-3606

Contents

Mary Desborough Cra'ster, 1928–2008 John Pickles, Peter Gathercole, and Alison Taylor	7
A fen island in the Neolithic and Bronze Age: excavations at North Fen, Sutton, Cambridgeshire Leo Webley and Jonathan Hiller	11
A fen island burial: excavation of an Early Bronze Age round barrow at North Fen, Sutton Aileen Connor	37
The Bartlow Hills in context Hella Eckardt with Amanda Clarke, Sophie Hay, Stephen Macaulay, Pat Ryan, David Thornley and Jane Timby	47
Senuna, goddess of the river Rhee or Henney Stephen Yeates	65
A reappraisal of the evidence for the 'northern arm' of the Fleam Dyke at Fen Ditton Scott Kenney	69
An excavation at Station Quarry, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire Laura Piper and Andrew Norton	73
Excavations at Scotland Road/Union Lane, Chesterton Duncan Mackay	77
A curious object from Firs Farm, Caxton Aileen Connor	89
A morphological analysis of Ickleton, Cambridgeshire: an admission of defeat Christopher Taylor	91
Funerals, the final consumer choice? Ken Sneath	105
The 'Age of the Windmill' in the Haddenham Level N James	113
Upware and Bottisham sluices K S G Hinde	121
Changes in the landscape of west Cambridge, Part V: 1945 to 2000 Philomena Guillebaud	127
The CAS Collection of Cambridgeshire 'Sketches' John Pickles	143
Fieldwork in Cambridgeshire 2008 Tom Lyons, Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu and Sarah Poppy	147
Reviews Christopher Taylor, Christopher Brookes, Evelyn Lord and Sam Lucy	163
<i>Index</i>	167
<i>Abbreviations</i>	173
Recent Accessions to the Cambridgeshire Collection Chris Jakes	175

Index to the Contents of the Cole Manuscripts in the British Museum

George J Gray with a preface by John Pickles 2003
CUP facsimile reprint 170pp. with illustrations £5.00

William Cole of Milton

W M Palmer with a foreword by John Pickles
CUP facsimile reprint 178pp. with illustrations £16.50
Both available from Dr J Pickles, 27 Cavendish Road,
Cambridge, CB1 3AE

In *The Tyranny of the Discrete* John Marshall (1992) describes antiquarianism as 'negative, anti-human, escapist, killing curiosity as it romanticises the past', and antiquarians according to Marshall are 'uncritical, unselective, and lacking in conceptualisation' and today the term antiquarian is often used as an insult. Perhaps because of this opprobrium levelled against antiquarians, a recent book celebrating William Dugdale, the Warwickshire Antiquity, is careful to describe him throughout as a 'historian' (Dyer and Richardson 2009). However, W.G. Hoskins starts his definitive work, *Local History in England*, by discussing the work of antiquarians, who he sees as being at the root of academic local history. We could ask where would the local historians of today be without the descriptions, transcriptions and collections of the antiquarians of the past? Of particular relevance to Cambridgeshire was William Cole of Milton, whose biography was written in the 1930s by another antiquarian, Dr William Palmer M D.

Palmer starts by describing Cole's life, habits and his house, based on Cole's own manuscripts with referencing in detail. We see the antiquarian at work visiting every church in the county, copying monumental inscriptions and transcribing manuscripts in the University Library. Cole's interest was not confined to Cambridgeshire and in 1738 he travelled to Lisbon, Flanders, Normandy, Paris and Scotland. He was rightly celebrated in his time.

The book includes extracts from his diary for 1765–1770, and an account of his library, but perhaps his best known and most valuable contribution to the history of Cambridgeshire is his 'parochial antiquities', which are reproduced in this book. These consist of descriptions and drawings of the parish churches as he saw them in the eighteenth century, an invaluable record of Cambridgeshire parish churches at that time, which show Cole as an assiduous recorder of his time.

The index of the contents of his manuscripts shows the other side of the antiquarian, as a collector. The manuscripts, which are now in the British Library are an eclectic collection that not only contains a great deal of information about Cambridgeshire but also covers a wide range of antiquities from England, Scotland and abroad; and includes records of plays, surveys of cathedrals, pedigrees of noble families and much else besides. The entry for Dr Palmer's home town of Linton in Cambridgeshire, for example, includes arms and inscriptions; antiquities; extracts from the parish registers; notes on the estate map; accounts of priors,

rectors and vicars; notes and pedigrees on the Coney family and verses on Mrs Coney.

Cole and Palmer's work are evidence that antiquarians played a crucial role in the formation of local history as both an academic discipline and a popular pastime. Dr Pickles is to be congratulated on arranging for these reprints to be published, and for his scholarly preface and foreword to them.

Evelyn Lord

Fellow of Wolfson College
University of Cambridge

References

- Dyer C and C Richardson (eds) 2009 *William Dugdale Historian, 1605–1686* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.
Hoskins, W G 1959 *Local History in England* Harlow: Longman.
Marshall, J 1992 *The Tyranny of the Discrete* London: Scolar Press, 2.

Early Anglo-Saxon Communities in the Landscape of Norfolk

Mary Chester-Kadwell 2009

BAR British Series 481 Archaeopress, Oxford xii + 235pp, illustrated throughout with figures, maps, plans, inc. 6 colour plates; ISBN 9781407304168 £50.00

This volume represents publication of Chester-Kadwell's recent PhD thesis, slightly slimmed down for a wider audience, and is a valuable contribution to the fields of early Anglo-Saxon landscape, settlement and burial research. Focusing her efforts on a defined geographical area, she employs a wide range of evidence in order to address topics as diverse as the inter-relationships of cemeteries and settlement, the interpretation of different forms of archaeological data, and the nature of Anglo-Saxon communities. Among the innovative aspects of the research is the considered use of the excellent metal-detector finds data for which Norfolk is renowned (built up over the course of the last thirty years through close communication with local detectorists; a pioneering approach now adopted nationwide through the Portable Antiquities Scheme). This data is critically treated, and given extra value through Chester-Kadwell's interviewing of Norfolk metal-detectorists, as she has attempted to determine where has and has not been detected (*i.e.* does a lack of known finds correspond with a lack of detection, or is it, in fact, a real pattern). A key finding is that metal-detector scatters have 'signatures': over 25 metal finds from a site very strongly suggests the presence of a cemetery, for example. This data is then combined with information on sites and monuments as recorded in the Norfolk HER through the medium of a geographic information system (GIS).

Before embarking on detailed analysis, a balanced and useful overview is given of early Anglo-Saxon archaeological evidence and its possible interpretations; this is followed by a 'case study' chapter that reviews a number of the major sites nationwide in terms of their

landscape context (including their relationship with prehistoric and Roman remains) and how cemeteries are placed in relation to settlements. This enables the formation of a number of research questions to be addressed analytically through the Norfolk data, with a theoretical approach that raises questions of communities: what they represent, and how they might have operated. This perspective is thus grounded in an approach that sees large-scale patterning as comprised of lots of small-scale decisions, and it is this local patterning that can be interrogated archaeologically. What follows is a detailed and nuanced interrogation of the data, which reaches a number of interesting conclusions. One pattern confirmed is the locational tendencies of early Anglo-Saxon settlements and cemeteries: the former have a strong tendency towards the slopes of river valleys, where they are best placed to exploit a range of environmental habitats, while the latter tend to lie further upslope (cremation cemeteries more so than inhumation). In each case, though, local considerations seem to have been at work, particularly in the relationship with previous sites and monuments. These general patterns are then explored through a series of more detailed localised studies, where the GIS mapping is employed to good effect. Editorially, the volume can barely be faulted, with attractive page-setting and excellent use of graphics.

This is certainly an approach that could be used elsewhere in Britain, and further afield; the national record is slowly catching up with the pioneering recording work encapsulated within the Norfolk HER, and such approaches are now becoming viable. Moreover, the rapid incorporation of developer-funded work into HERs means that regional studies such as this can proceed even before final publication of the sites in question, if the level of reporting through schemes such as OASIS is high enough. Chester-Kadwell is to be congratulated on a monograph that moves so seamlessly from detailed data analysis to nuanced interpretation.

Sam Lucy
Post-Excavation and Publications Officer
Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Department of Archaeology
University of Cambridge

Where most Inclosures be. East Anglian Fields: History, Morphology and Management

Edward Martin and Max Satchell 2008

EAA vol 124 xviii + 270pp., 44 figs, 38 tables, 19 charts, 72 plates ISBN 978 1 86055 160 7, £30

The principal purpose of this book is yet one more attempt to solve the problem of the origins of medieval common fields. At its core is a survey of ten small areas, mostly single parishes in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, plus one each in Hertfordshire and in Cambridgeshire (Dullingham). Using archive maps, documentary sources and fieldwork, the authors divided each area into 'land types' based on physical

characteristics, field shapes and names, historic land use, tenure etc. The collated results are illustrated by superb colour fold-out maps on 1st edn OS 1:2500 map bases. The results are then applied and analysed in relation to the land of the rest of the region.

The conclusion is that 'block holdings', or land in individual ownership, were more common in the south than in the north, where common fields, usually farmed in strips and in multiple ownership and/or occupation, predominated. Such results are of considerable interest to all agricultural historians.

The book includes much else of value. It contains an analysis of the so-called co-axial field systems recognised in East Anglia and concludes that they are less extensive than previously claimed and are not necessarily pre-Saxon. It also has an extensive glossary of agricultural terms both ancient and modern. If the difference between Inland, Bordland and Warland is needed, or the exact definition of stretch ploughing is required, the answers are here. There is also a good bibliography.

In the end, however, the real value of the book must depend on its conclusions about the origin of common fields, and block holdings. And here doubts begin to emerge. The authors decide that while the southern block holdings are probably older and even may have originated in Roman times or earlier, the common fields of the north are likely to have been the result of social and tenurial reorganisation caused by the Viking invasions of the late ninth century, or possibly by the English re-conquest in the early tenth century.

Despite much supporting evidence being provided, your reviewer is unconvinced. The effect on the landscape of the Scandinavian settlement in East Anglia remains poorly understood. The actual numbers and cultural impact of the incomers are also uncertain. And the suggestion that the complete and very rapid re-organisation of inherently conservative farming methods were the result of political, social or tenurial changes is not easy to take on board.

Behind these worries is another that concerns the methodology. Many of the eighteen different 'land types' that were identified from a mere twelve case studies and then applied to the whole region are very subjective. Further, to a considerable extent they are based on the Historic Landscape Characterisation Scheme (HLC) developed by English Heritage for management purposes. The value of HLC for heritage management is not in question, as the excellent last chapter of the book shows. But its use as an academic tool has caused serious divisions amongst scholars. Some see it as a new and objective way of advancing landscape studies, others as merely a reworking of old-fashioned geographical determinism. The book does not attempt to address this disquiet, or to clarify the problem or to satisfy the doubters.

Christopher Taylor
Formerly head of the Archaeological Survey for England
RCHM