

# Books

**The Castle in England and Wales: an interpretative history**, by David Cathcart-King. *Croom Helm*, 1988. 210 pp., illus., index. £25.

CROOM HELM have a reputation for producing slim, rather expensive but high quality volumes by first-rate authorities. This volume will not damage that reputation.

David Cathcart-King is a retired history teacher who has devoted much of his long life to the study of the castle. His *Castellarium Anglicanum* appeared in 1983 and is an acknowledged standard work of reference. In 1987 a number of friends working in the same field produced *Castles in Wales and the Marches* in his honour.

The present book comprises a series of lucid and penetrating essays aimed largely at his peers and at other serious students of the topic. While they are nowhere obscurantist in the way that a growing body of archaeological literature is becoming, they are densely packed and it is unlikely that anyone who is not already reasonably knowledgeable about the castles of England and Wales will get the best out of this book. The knowledgeable will find his attention being drawn to sites about which he may be totally ignorant or, at best, only half aware. This is, of course, the hallmark of the encyclopaedic mind of this true master of his subject. The reader will also find his ideas about castles of which he is aware being frequently updated.

The essays were largely put together during the preparation of *Castellarium Anglicanum*. Unfortunately, one or two annotations have not been updated since and the reader is referred to interim statements or *in lect* sources where final publication had appeared before this volume went to press. This is a minor blemish on a most valuable book.

Dennis Turner

**A guide to the Roman Remains in Britain**, by Roger J. A. Wilson. *Constable*, 1988 (3rd edn.). 453 pp., 88 pl., 32 figs., bibliog., index. £8.95.

GUIDEBOOKS TO archaeological sites in Britain are numerous but vary considerably in their quality and usefulness. In particular, many guidebooks give sparse information about the sites, even fewer details on how to find them, and seldom a good bibliography. One of the attractions of this guidebook is that it is aimed specifically at the active visitor (not the armchair one) and so the author gives extremely useful information on how to find sites (although unfortunately only accompanied by 4-figure grid

references). It is a book that we have found invaluable when touring round the Roman sites of Britain, and this 3rd edition is therefore welcome.

The book is divided into ten regions, including south-east England, London, and East Anglia, and there is an authoritative account of the history and the visible remains of the Roman sites in each region. For the connoisseur of Roman remains, this is an invaluable compendium, as it seeks out both obscure and well-known remains in every nook and cranny of Britain, from patched fragments of city walls to villas and forts. There are small maps pinpointing the sites, as well as plans, black-and-white photographs and other drawings for selected sites. Appendix 1 lists by region other Roman sites not described in the main text, and Appendix 2 lists museums which display collections of Roman material. There is also a revised bibliography which gives general reading about Roman Britain and references linked to the sites mentioned in the text. New information on many sites has been included in the main text of this 3rd edition, but to reduce costs, longer supplementary information, and also new sites have been listed towards the end of the book to save altering the original pagination of the book, but these additions are clearly marked in the text with a double asterisk. Such inconvenience is small and has probably prevented the book from rising in price too sharply, but this will have to be rectified in a 4th edition, or the book is likely to become difficult to use.

The book is similar in appearance to the previous edition, but as Dr. Wilson points out in his preface to the new edition "If the main text of this edition looks superficially similar to that of the second edition, appearances are deceptive: more than 60 per cent of the pages have received some alteration, and in many cases this has been substantial".

At £8.95, this guidebook means that everyone can get more value out of their holidays and outings, rather than wasting time following inadequate directions to invisible sites. It is a useful addition to any archaeologist's library.

Lesley & Roy Adkins

**Anglo-Saxon Sculpture**, by James Lang. *Shire Archaeology*, 1988. 60 pp., illus. £2.50.

THIS VOLUME provides a most useful introduction to the wide-ranging subject of Anglo-Saxon sculpture. The date range of 7th century to 11th century allows for the inclusion of the large number of Anglo-Scandinavian pieces from the country. Several aspects

of the subject are outlined: form and function, ornament and date and iconography, for example. There is also a most useful handlist of several of the major sites with descriptive summaries and excellent illustrations. The final section on Places to Visit provides guidelines for interested readers, including Museums and a brief listing of some churches with sculptural remains worthy of visiting.

The introduction states that “compared with the surviving Anglo-Saxon brooches ... the contemporary sonework represents a much larger class of pre-Conquest artefact”. It is also a class of artefact which can commonly be seen at its original location or at least in its vicinity – the impracticalities of moving large stone blocks as opposed to small brooches are obvious! The author, Jim Lang, one of the members of the team preparing the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture based at Durham, has played a large part in bringing to the general public a wider understanding of the sculptural record available. This very large topic has been distilled surprisingly effectively here.

The range of decorated stone, architectural fragments, church furniture and, the largest group of all, the stone crosses are discussed, and the regional variants noted. In addition, the reader is provided with an insight into the complexities of interpretation of sculptural and iconographical details. Country-wide examples are cited and provide a most useful anthology section towards the end of the book.

The useful bibliography would provide even the most interested reader with further information and avenues for exploration. I have few quibbles with the finished product; it is attractively produced as usual, but a small slip in the typesetting on p. 48 does lead to a tantalising omission ...

This is a most attractive and useful addition to the series and will add greatly to the knowledge of the general audience if not to the specialist.

Colleen Batey

**Sheldra: a child in Neolithic Orkney**, by Teresa Woodbridge, illustrated by Jane Glue. *Tempus Reparatum Archaeological and Historical Associates*, 1988. 25 pp., illus. in watercolour. £4.50.

THIS IS a short book which reconstructs an episode in the life of a young girl living in the Orkneys during the Neolithic period. It revolves around her activities while she is temporarily left on the island with her grandmother as the rest of the tribe go to some important ceremonies elsewhere. In the book you follow her progress as she learns to make pots and to observe the rituals to her ancestors and as she finds

out about what her life will be like as an adult through the experiences of her grandmother.

The book is presumably aimed at nine- or ten-year-olds if one judges by the content and the size of print. The pictures are numerous and complement the text, and the story is interesting and informative, including archaeological interpretation without being overwhelming in its detail. It aroused two differing sets of emotions in those who were shown it. On the one hand, some nine-year-olds became upset at what they perceived was the hardship and repetitiveness of her life. On the other hand, other nine-year-olds became excited at the skills she had to learn, especially the pottery, and the open-air and communal life she led. Both responses showed how well the book was written, because of the empathy it aroused with the subject, Sheldra: both points of view would prove good starting points for any teacher eager to encourage further investigations into life in Neolithic times. Certainly a book to be recommended, and a useful addition to any school library.

Dodie Brooks

**The Dartmoor Reaves. Investigating Prehistoric Land Divisions**, by Andrew Fleming. *B T Batsford Ltd*, 1988. 135 pp., 75 illus., bibliog., index. £14.95.

DARTMOOR IS the topic of this book, and in particular the field boundaries known as *reaves* – miles of low stone walls which are apparently of Bronze Age date. The author discusses how the reaves have long been recognised, and how local fieldworkers recently published their discoveries that the reaves were of prehistoric origin: these discoveries were published in a county-based journal but were not exploited by other archaeologists. The first five chapters give a history of the study of the reaves and describe the development of the reaves project. The different ideas and new discoveries are given in the order in which they happened over different parts of the moor, and this provides a narrative thread that makes the book more readable. Chapter 6 discusses another development of the project – the excavation of stretches of reave and associated hut circles, and the discovery of previously unsuspected timber buildings. The final chapters explore the social role of the reaves in a local context and more widely in Britain, and the book concludes with a list of relevant places to visit on Dartmoor.

One criticism of this book is that there is no good overall map of Dartmoor portraying relief, place names, reaves, and reave names – the map on p. 54 being far from adequate. This makes the first half of the book difficult to follow since the reader cannot easily locate the reaves under discussion. The

bibliography and references are also difficult to use, since full titles are not given in the reference if they are in the further reading, yet the further reading is set out under topic, not in alphabetical or date order.

The author attempts to squeeze as much as possible in the way of wider interpretation from his evidence, giving the reader a clear impression of the current state of knowledge of the reaves, but indicating that many questions remain unresolved. For instance, the discovery of timber buildings pre-dating the "stone" buildings is described, but despite the use of pollen analysis to demonstrate fluctuations in local vegetation cover, the part played by timber in the construction of these "stone" buildings, and the possibility of wooden fences or hedges pre-dating the reaves themselves do not yet appear to have been investigated in depth. Consequently, the possibility that the reaves are a durable replacement for earlier "perishable" boundaries is not discussed in detail, and the idea of these boundaries being earlier than Bronze Age in date is touched on, but not fully considered.

Apart from its importance for those interested in Dartmoor, in land division, and in landscape studies generally, the book has a wider significance. The author demonstrates the value of fieldwork, even with restricted financial backing, and the necessity to integrate fieldwork and excavation with research into published sources. It also raises the serious issue of the failure of archaeologists to assimilate information published in local journals (even county journals), and highlights the urgency for a well-funded, compre-

hensive bibliographical service, and the necessity for archaeologists to use it. The main value of the project to archaeologists throughout the country, though, is to show that the local landscape should be studied in its entirety. Without such a thorough approach, features are easily taken for granted as part of the landscape when they may never have been adequately recorded or identified – a case of not seeing the trees for the wood.

Lesley & Roy Adkins

## Also received

**The Secret of Crete**, by H G Wunderlich. *Souvenir Press*, 1988. 367 pp., 90 illus. £9.95

THIS IS ONE of those books by a non-archaeologist showing how the archaeologists have got it all wrong. Prof. Wunderlich, a geologist at the University of Stuttgart, claims that the Minoan palaces were not residences of living kings, but funerary palaces for the dead. This paperback re-issue was first published over 14 years ago, but I am not aware that the author's ideas have made any impact during this time. He is rather overwhelming with his show of scholarship ranging far and wide, from mummification in Australia to mystery plays, from Michael Ventris and Linear B script to the cult of the Virgin Mary. Not always to the point are far as I could see, this actually makes the book quite interesting for dipping into. I recommend it for holiday reading.

Colin Bowlt

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## Excavations & Post-Excavation Work

**City**, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to DUA, Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN (01-600 3699).

**Croydon & District**, processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Enquiries to Mrs Muriel Shaw, 28 Lismore Road, South Croydon, CR2 7QA (01-688 2720).

**Greater London** (except north-east and south-east London), by Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology. Excavations and processing in all areas. General enquiries to DGLA, Museum of London (01-600 3699 ext. 241).

Local enquiries to:

North London: 3-7 Ray Street, London EC1R 3DJ (01-837 8363).

South-west London: St. Luke's House, Sandycombe Road, Kew, Surrey (01-940 5989).

Southwark and Lambeth: 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH (01-407 1989 or 403 2920 – office – and 928 0778/9 – finds).

West London: Town Mission Hall, Mission Square, Pottery Road, Brentford, Middlesex (01-560 3880).

**Hammersmith & Fulham**, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham

Palace Road, SW6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, SW6 (01-731 4498).

**Kingston**, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Marion Shipley, Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston (01-546 5386).

**North-east London**, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E15 4LW (01-534 4545).

**Surrey**, by Surrey Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey (01-541 8911).

**Vauxhall Pottery**, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, SE17 (01-703 3324).

*The Council for British Archaeology produces a monthly British Archaeological News (9 issues a year). It gives details of conferences, extra-mural courses, summer schools, training excavations and sites where volunteers are needed. The annual subscription of £7.50 includes postage, and should be made payable to C.B.A., 112 Kennington Road, SE11 6RE (01-582 0494).*