

Books

English Heritage Book of Hadrian's Wall, by Stephen Johnson. *B. T. Batsford Ltd./English Heritage*, 1989. 143 pp., 97 illus., 11 colour plates, index. £9.95 paperback.

English Heritage Book of Avebury, by Caroline Malone. *B. T. Batsford Ltd./English Heritage*, 1989. 144 pp., 109 illus., 11 colour plates, index. £9.95 paperback.

THESE TWO BOOKS are the standard-bearers for a new series on specific aspects of British archaeology published jointly by Batsford and English Heritage.

Johnson's book on Hadrian's Wall begins with an account of the circumstances of the wall's construction. It then concentrates on the history of the Wall, with the ever-changing policies and deployment of troops, including moves to and from the Antonine Wall. There are also descriptions of civilian settlement in the Wall area, and a discussion of the fate of the Wall towards the end of the Roman period and beyond, right up to recent times (including the problem of the notorious thieves and robbers living at Housesteads who frightened off antiquarian researchers such as Camden). The book is concluded by a consideration of the management of the Wall in today's landscape.

All in all, this is a highly readable, well-written, informative and up-to-date book. The photographs and line drawings are of a consistently high quality, and most striking are the colour reconstructions by Frank Gardiner. It is a pity, though, that full credit was not given to the illustrators in the captions rather than being tucked away in the acknowledgements.

The most splendid feature of the Avebury book is the superb black-and-white and colour reconstructions by Judith Dobie, which is the one reason why this book should be bought. Some of the other illustrations are mediocre, while others are not of a publishable standard (such as fig. 2, where London has rotated and the Thames has altered its course). The book gives the impression of having been hurriedly written and published; spelling errors include (p. 19) Devrill-Rimbury (for Deverel-Rimbury) and (p. 27 and throughout) Kennett Valley (for Kennet Valley). These errors are repeated in the index, emphasising the need to employ indexers with a good knowledge of the subject. Although it incorporates much recent information on Avebury, the narrative is often disjointed, causing the reader's attention to flag. The book will inevitably be compared with Aubrey Burl's *Prehistoric Avebury* (1979), still in print in paperback at £8.95, though seldom seen in bookshops. Burl's

book remains unchallenged as the standard work on the subject.

The new series has an irritating and unexplained method of referring to figures – just a number in brackets which at first glance appears to be a footnote. Unfortunately there are no footnote references – just further reading sections for each chapter. The use of footnotes would make the series of greater use to students and researchers, without unduly affecting the concentration of general readers.

As the first two books flying the flag for the new series, *Hadrian's Wall* and *Avebury* are poles apart. Hopefully, the next publications will follow the standard of *Hadrian's Wall*.

Lesley Adkins
Roy Adkins

Fortress, the Castles and Fortifications Quarterly. Issue No 1. *Beaufort Publishing Ltd* (PO Box 22, Liphook, Hants) May 1989. 64 pp., illus. 10⁵/₈ by 7⁷/₈ in. £18 per annum by subscription.

THIS NEW JOURNAL is intended to help the work of specialists to become better known to both the general reader and to other specialists. The five articles in the first issue range chronologically and geographically from Hadrian's Wall to 19th century artillery forts in Bermuda. Promised for the next issue is an article that will take us back to the neolithic. The journal also contains editorial comment, reviews and listings.

The authors are academically well-qualified, the tone is serious. The well-illustrated magazine format (black-and-white only) is attractive. More adverts might help to pay for colour or reduce cost but these are at present at a minimum. Given the large and increasing interest in the many aspects of fortifications, the journal ought to find a market. Most of the interest tends to be focussed on less than the whole range and the journal will help to fill in the background in an authoritative way as well as to occasionally illuminate the foreground.

Dennis Turner

The Spanish Armada, by Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker. *Hamish Hamilton*, paperback edition 1989. 296 pp., 54 colour illus., 100 figs. £10 paperback. ALTHOUGH THE Armada quadracentenary year is now past, it is still possible to give a warm welcome to the paperback edition of Martin and Parker's exemplary account of the events of the year 1588.

Ideally, it would have been stimulating to have a Spaniard as one of the authors in order to glimpse 'the other side of the hill', but in Professor Parker we have a very near semblance. He is an author with five books to his credit dealing with the Spanish side of the events of the period, and is a Fellow of the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid). On the other hand, Martin is from a different discipline, whose work has included directing the archaeological recording of three Armada wrecks.

The authors have produced a book which not only well covers the history and background of the Armada but also is bursting with interesting facts ranging from the weekly ration lists of both navies to a detailed discussion of the various cannon used and their relative potency. The profuse illustrations, often in colour, include many contemporary maps and illustrations of the events, plenty of finds from the wrecks and some splendid depictions and plans of ships.

The author also consider the possible sequence of events should the Armada have been able to transport the Duke of Parma's men from The Netherlands to England. The country was unready and the military often potentially untrustworthy and generally incompetent – a boom across the Thames broke on the first flood tide. Parma's record in the Low Countries suggests that within a week he could have reached London, whose delapidated Roman and medieval walls could have been of little obstacle to the Spanish siege artillery.

Overall this is a fascinating account of an attempted invasion which came so close to success but whose failure was caused largely by bad communications and contrary winds.

Nicholas Fuentes

Surrey Whitewares, by Jacqueline Pearce and Alan Vince. *London Middlesex Archaeol Soc Special Paper no. 10*, 1988. 160 pp., 115 illus., bibliog. £14.95.

THE FOURTH part of 'A dated type-series of London Medieval pottery' covers the four types of whiteware used in London from the mid 13th to the late 15th century which are collectively known as Surrey Whitewares. Three of them come from geographically distinct areas and have been called kingston-type ware, Coarse Border ware and Cheam whiteware, while the fourth, the incorrectly-termed 'Tudor Green' ware appears to have been a minor fine ware product of all three industries. The volume deals with this complex subject in depth and with a clarity we have come to expect from an excellent series.

The source material comes from both excavated sites within the City of London, which provide much of the dating evidence, and from the large collections of

complete vessels in the Museum of London and the British Museum, many of which have been used to provide the corpus of forms.

The first chapter begins with the terminology – specifically the nomenclature – of the different wares, some of which the authors have wisely (in my opinion) decided not to update from the original publications, in spite of subsequent discoveries. It goes on to cover methods of manufacture, fabrics, sources, distribution and dating.

The second chapter deals with each ware in turn, dividing it into classes of vessels based largely on usage, for example jugs. Classes are subdivided into forms, e.g. baluster jugs, conical jugs etc., which are further subdivided when required. Each of these divisions is dealt with in some detail, giving such information as frequency of occurrence and more specific information on manufacturing. This chapter contains some excellent photographs both in colour (whole vessels) and black-and-white (details of manufacturing methods and elements of decoration).

Chapter III covers the origins and affinities of the Surrey whitewares, the end of the industry and a short conclusion. There are useful diagrams showing the classes of each of the three main ware types, when and for how long they were produced, and a few black-and-white photographs of groups of pots.

The second half of the book contains 80 pages of drawings and the six appendices. The relative numbers of figures apportioned to each ware is quite interesting – Kingston-type ware 57, Coarse Border ware 16, Cheam whiteware 6 and Tudor Green 2. They mirrors the numbers of findspots shown in the distribution maps of the City of London (Figs. 5-8), reflect the different production periods of the wares and also highlight the current lack of later 15th century material in the City (pp. 18, 88). The illustrations are excellent and like the photographs show both whole vessels and decorative elements. A couple of minor quibbles though; it would have been useful to have a list of the figures rather than have them just dumped in the List of Contents as 'catalogue', and it seems a bit odd that features of the forms which are described as distinctive and 'gives a good clue as to its origin', such as the skewered handle attachment of Cheam biconical jugs (which was worth mentioning twice in the text, pp. 73-4, 85-6) are not illustrated.

For anyone working on medieval pottery this book is well worth more than a glance, and for those working in London and the south generally it will be an essential tool that has been eagerly awaited.

Sarah Jennings