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### BOOK REVIEWS, 2007

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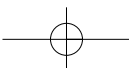
David J. Breeze, *J. Collingwood Bruce's Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 14th edition (Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2006), pp. 512. Numerous figs. ISBN 0 901082 65 1. Price £22.00 (UK), £24.00 (Europe). Order from: Oblong Creative Ltd, 416B Thorp Arch Estate, Wetherby, LS23 7BJ.

The *Handbook*, first published in 1863 as *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* but re-named when it was next published in 1889, has now, 143 years later, achieved its 14th edition. It is one of those very rare books which survives from century to century, updated and enlarged but essentially still serving its original purpose — an archaeological equivalent of texts such as Gray's *Anatomy* which has gone through 39 editions in 147 years. The longevity of the *Handbook* has sometimes been precarious. Twenty-eight years have passed since Charles Daniels' 13th edition, and without the intervention of our society and the labours of the *Handbook* editorial committee that edition might have been the last.

The new *Handbook* has been prepared by Professor David Breeze, who has taken a leading part in the study of the Wall for more than 40 years. Of all the revisions, this is the most radical. Gone are the folk-lore — King Arthur slumbering in a hall beneath the Castle of Sewingshields — and the engaging tales of travellers along the Wall — Hutton forced in 1801 to share a bed with carters at the Once Brewed Inn. Gone too are most of the colourful snippets from antiquarian writings and the effusions over the scenery and wonders of antiquity. Throughout, the focus on the Roman archaeology down to AD 410 is unrelenting, to the extent that Jarrow features as a very doubtful fort site and the origin of reused Roman inscriptions without a mention of Bede and the monastery, one of the main channels through which Roman culture flowed back into north-west Europe. However, the omission of any reference to the inscription of Hadrian's Wall as a World Heritage Site in 1987 was surely unintentional.

The re-casting of the *Handbook* has been ruthless but is entirely justified. Although much more excavation was in progress in 1978 than now, the intervening years have seen a large number of publications and the development of new techniques of research, most notably geophysics. To fulfil his aim, which was to produce 'not strictly a guide-book, but a guide to the surviving remains as well as an academic study providing information on the invisible features, bringing to a wider audience the fruits of excavation and research', B. has had to make space for an enormous amount of new material. The illustrations have also been improved by providing maps of the Wall, sector by sector, and simple plans of the various structures in a uniform style. Some of the original figures are retained but have been enhanced by digital scanning. Particularly valuable is the extensive bibliography which covers every site on the Wall.

In what is the standard survey of the Wall, accuracy is essential. B. has been able to draw on the previous *Handbooks*, corrected from edition to edition, the assistance of numerous



scholars (27 are listed in the Preface), and above all his perambulation along the Wall where he has re-examined every visible trace of its remains. Even so, in a work of this size there will be mistakes. B. states that milecastle 77 has not been found, correcting the previous edition, but unfortunately has added a spurious sighting of milecastle 12 (cf. *PSAN*<sup>4</sup>, IV (1929–30), 134). The 1776 hoard of 516 gold and silver coins found in milecastle 13 re-appears in the description of Rudchester. These are matters which can be dealt with in the next edition. Also important is the need for pithy descriptions, in view of the enormous amount of information which has to be presented. The text is very tightly written, and the only part which is repetitive is the listing of the finds from the turrets. The reader quickly realises that every completely excavated turret produces pottery and other everyday objects. All this could have been summarised in the introductory section on the turrets.

The description of the Wall provides little space to set out new interpretations of structures or sequences of occupation, but sometimes B. differs from the published accounts. The most notable instance is at Vindolanda where he merges the excavators' Periods IV and V, which means that Stone Fort 1 can be regarded as early Hadrianic (as argued by the reviewer some twenty years ago). The implication is that the excavators' Period IV ended well before Hadrian's visit in AD 122 and that tablets from those levels cannot have contained anything connected with that visit or activities to do with the building of Hadrian's Wall.

It is in the first two chapters that B. has the opportunity to present his own views more fully. Previous editors felt under no obligation to take account of other opinions: Ian Richmond, for example, ignored Eric Birley's firm denial that the Wall had any military function and in all three of his editions included the diagram which showed how he believed attacks were rolled up against the Wall by forces issuing from the fort and milecastle gates. B. has certainly taken much more account of contrary views than his predecessors and, it seems, has attempted to accommodate some of them. The Wall is ascribed a more military function than in his previous writings, although he declines to accept that there is any persuasive evidence for a wall-walk. In his view the Wall was an inert barrier that could only be defended by forces deployed beyond it, countering any attack before it penetrated the frontier works. The strength of the Wall lay not in its military engineering but in the manpower concentrated in its forts. B. has moved much closer to the position of the two previous editors of the *Handbook*, although they perhaps believed the military threat to the Wall to be greater and certainly never doubted the existence of the wall-walk.

Accumulating archaeological evidence lends ever more strength to another possibility: that the Wall was a defensible fortification and not only was there a walk along its top but it was intended to be a fighting platform, a function regarded as impossible by Collingwood in the 9th edition of 1933 who has been followed in this by all three of his successors. The new discoveries of entanglements on the berm (the space between the Wall and the ditch in front of it) and the narrowing of the berm at turrets are noted by B. but their implications are not discussed.

The new edition of the *Handbook* provides the anatomy of Hadrian's Wall essential for its modern study and crowns B.'s long record of achievement in Roman frontier studies. The interpretations that clothe the bare bones of the archaeological record will not meet with universal agreement, but alternatives that might be put forward will always be founded in the centuries of scholarship which B. has so skilfully distilled.

Paul Bidwell

P. R. Hill, *The Construction of Hadrian's Wall* (Tempus, London 2006), pp. 160. 73 ills. 5 tables. ISBN 0 7524 4011 x. Price £16.99

Some people might believe that there is little more to be said about Hadrian's Wall, but they would be wrong. The discovery of pits on the berm on both Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall has led to reconsideration of the possibility of there being a walk-way along the top of the Wall and this has raised again the question of the function of the Wall. Humphrey Welfare in this journal has offered new views on the earthworks. Meanwhile, Peter Hill has been directing us to the Wall itself, or rather the stones which formed it.

H's first paper in *AA* was over 25 years ago and others have followed. His work was consolidated in a BAR in 2005. Now we have a 'popular' account, published by Tempus.

Can anything new be said? Most certainly. The framework of the book leads us through the different elements of the building process: planning, quarrying and working stone, lime, sand and mortar, scaffolding, hoisting, transport, building operations, organisational aspects, and, finally, the relevance of changes to the building of the Wall. At every stage we are offered new insights. At every point the discussion is illuminated by H's own experience as a stone mason, supported by his experimental archaeology and underpinned by his sound common sense.

We start with a sharp reminder that 'in practice very little is known about [Hadrian's Wall]'. Relatively few milecastles and turrets have been excavated and, while all forts have been examined in some way, only one has been fully excavated. Thereafter, many of our sacred cows are slaughtered. A narrower wall would have been more, not less, stable than the 10 Roman feet wide wall initially planned and partly built. The purpose of the 'bonding courses' is not known, except to say that this is not their purpose. For H, the jury is still out on whether Hadrian's Wall was lime washed or rendered. The case for either is undermined by his own photographs of more modern walls. The relationship between the quarried stone and the standard of the finished product is emphasised (cf. MC 48 north gate). H repeats his earlier description of the nature of the Wall to good effect: it is squared rubble, a utilitarian but respectable form of building if not top notch — it is most certainly not ashlar — and it could have been built quicker than we have previously believed. The unfinished state of the stonework still visible at some fort and milecastle gateways may indicate a second dislocation in the building programme. Tools are described and the quarries noted where the style of Roman work can still be seen. The need for scaffolding and cranes during construction work is emphasised, in spite of the lack of evidence on the ground. The reason for the consistency in the length of the passage of Type 1 milecastle gates was to allow the gates to open properly. Milecastles have external rounded corners because they are easier to construct than squared corners. The weather influenced not only the number of working days, but the necessity to erect temporary shelters to protect the builders from rain and frost. It is clear that the building of the Wall was even more complex than we have hitherto appreciated, with the upper courses possibly completed by a different unit from that building the lower part. There are many surprising and fascinating nuggets of information, such as the carrying capacity of wagons and carts. At many points the sloppy terminologies employed by archaeologists are corrected.

H's challenges to long-held views are supported by the illustrations, practically all prepared by the author. These 'challenges by illustration' also start at the very beginning with figure 2 offering a new diagram to illustrate the differences in the foundations of Broad Wall and Narrow Wall.

H carefully distinguishes between evidence and supposition: the evidence is clearly stated and discussed before a conclusion is offered. Throughout, all is placed within a wider context, both archaeological and documentary, the latter including medieval documents and British army regulations as well as Roman sources.

It is rare that one can quibble. On the matter of the foundations of the Wall I find myself in disagreement. In discussing the question of whether the foundation or the Wall builders constructed the footing courses, H does not cite the evidence visible at Planetrees. Here the drain was laid out over the foundations to be incorporated in footing courses which were never built because the Wall was narrowed. This suggests to me that the footings courses below the offsets were constructed by the Wall builders and not the foundation gangs. H prefers the, to this reviewer, ambiguous testimony of Warburton, interpreting his 'what is underground' to include the footing courses as well as the foundations. At this point there appears to be a discrepancy between the representation of the foundations on figures 2 and 51. The flags of the Broad Wall foundations appear to have been drawn too wide on the south side of the Wall in figure 51.

Some of H's work was familiar to those closely involved in the Wall, but author and publisher are to be congratulated for bringing this mass of information to a wider audience. It can fairly be stated that anyone who wishes to study Hadrian's Wall seriously must have this book on his or her shelf.

David J. Breeze

Al Oswald, Stewart Ainsworth and Trevor Pearson, *Hillforts: Prehistoric Strongholds of Northumberland National Park* (English Heritage, 2006). pp. vii + 131. 162 pls. ISBN 10 905624 09 3 & ISBN 13 978 1 905624 09 6. £19.95

The 'Discovering our Hillfort Heritage' project, initiated by the Northumberland National Park in 1998 as an EU/HLF funded partnership with English Heritage, Durham University and the Northumberland Archaeological Group, had many notable achievements in its five-year span. Focusing upon the hillforts within the National Park, it combined condition assessments with analytical surveys and aerial photography to provide the foundation for a series of management agreements that would permit open access to sixteen hillforts in private ownership. These were supported by waymarked heritage trails, interpretive panels, booklets and leaflets, which were specifically designed to promote their interpretation and enhance the enjoyment of the public.

The achievements of this project were advanced in no small measure by the detailed survey of thirteen hillforts at a scale of 1:500 by English Heritage, each publication being accompanied by a detailed review of previous research, a rigorous description of the surviving remains and a skilled interpretation. It is to the credit of the authors of these specialist reports that they have now chosen to expand on these core surveys and broaden their audience by drawing upon a wide range of additional sources, including Peter Topping's excavations at Wether Hill in the Breamish Valley. The outcome is this engaging, fluidly written and lavishly produced overview, which while 'aimed primarily at walkers and other visitors', is sufficiently successful in reflecting current perspectives that it is likely to stimulate new insights in even the most serious student of the subject.

The book is structured in a conventional way with an introduction followed by seven chapters. These begin with a summary of the local research effort since the late 18th century

and this is then followed by a review of the developments in the landscape that occurred prior to the introduction of the forts. Thereafter, the character, the function and the internal arrangements of these imposing structures is explored in some detail. This is followed by a brief account of the daily round, before an outline is offered of their role in the wider landscape, their subsequent demise and the various episodes of their re-use up until the present. There then follows an afterword detailing the threats to their well-being, some notes on their conservation and on their enduring value, the whole being drawn to a close with a short bibliography and an index. However, this brief litany does not do justice to the full range of the authors' subject matter. Each chapter is sub-divided by between three and nine strap-lines, many of which are used to introduce discussions on such commonly asked questions as whether hillforts were really military monuments, whether round houses were really houses, what constituted the contemporary diet, where the inhabitants collected their water and whether they believed in God or an afterlife to name but a few of the topics. These questions are not only of intrinsic interest, but the strap-lines are also useful in breaking up the density of the text and guiding the reader through the book's content.

They also call attention to the careful planning that underpins the book's design, for these are one amongst several devices that have been introduced to disarm and encourage the general reader to engage with this potentially complex subject. Others include the employment of plentiful white space, the choice of a two-column layout allowing the captions to occupy the broad outer margin of the page and the use of one hundred and sixty two illustrations, most of which are reproduced in full colour. Indeed, excluding the bibliography and index, only nineteen of the pages of text are unbroken by at least one image and some contain as many as four. Yet despite this, few seem superfluous and only a handful have been printed at a scale that is too small to convey their information properly (figs. 2.1, 2.5, 6.10 and 8.13). Although they are perhaps the most immediately arresting element of the design, the illustrations take many different forms. Those in black and white are largely restricted to items that can be characterised as historical documents and are largely found in the chapter devoted to previous research, but they also include a scaled timeline that simply defines the different era. However, the majority are coloured photographs reproducing either elements of fort architecture, or aspects of their siting and associations in the wider landscape; but their range is diverse as they also include some historical map extracts, an artefact, a graffito, a model, some portraits (real and imaginary), in addition to a number that depict the archaeologists at their work or others simply enjoying the countryside. There are also a number of well-chosen vertical and oblique aerial photographs, as well as a wide variety of colourful distribution maps and diagrams, besides ten artist's impressions of life in the past from the hand of Victor Ambrus.

A few minor quibbles can be cited: for instance, while the reader is correctly informed that the names given on the tribal map (fig. 1.7) are derived from various sources, it is not hinted that they cannot necessarily be accorded equal value. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as it allows the authors to eschew a host of sterile arguments, but it is a reminder of the compromises that have had to be made to enable the text to be freed from the bibliographical interruptions that are the by-product of tendentious academic disputes. Another is the colour coding of the surveys, in which graduations of light to dark green are used to denote graduations in elevation. This takes a few moments to come to terms with, as there are no numerical values on the plans and the sequence is directly opposed to the more normal carto-

graphic convention. However, once the adjustment is made these illustrations work very well on their terms.

By contrast, diagrams are scarce, but those that are included have been well chosen — an especially successful one resulting from the composite of a photograph, a plan and a cross-section conveys how a surveyor perceives an earthwork, in order to transmute it into a two dimensional plan using the convention of hachures (fig 2.18). This is something that can be very difficult to put across in words, but an understanding of the conception is essential to the reading of many archaeological plans.

For the most part, the captions accompanying the illustrations are accurate, informative and effective in enhancing the text. Some might be contested, such as that illuminating the graffito of the supposed godling at Chesters Roman fort, for without further knowledge of its context, it looks for all the world like a representation of a mortal soldier. But this is something of an exception and they are invariably well considered. However, the authors, the designers and their publisher must have been surprised, disappointed and embarrassed at the necessity of adding roughly forty additional words to some in order to comply with the copyright requirements of the Ordnance Survey (figs. 1.7, 1.9, 4.28, 6.17). The result simply looks completely mad.

So 'accessibility' is the thread that is woven through every page of this book and there is no doubt that the text, which is never less than interesting, also successfully fulfils this remit. Although every chapter makes its own distinctive contribution to the authors' story, some may prove of especial interest to members of this Society. Chapter 2 contains much that will seem familiar, as it reviews the researches of many of the individuals and organisations whose work has significantly added to our understanding of these earthworks. It is useful to be reminded of the pioneering work of Maclauchlan and Tate, in addition to the support offered to them (and others) by Algernon, fourth Duke of Northumberland — although it is a little surprising to find no reference to Sir David Smith's surveys for his forebear, which are preserved in the manuscript of 'Camps and Castles' at Alnwick. However, a section here on the evolving language of the Ordnance Survey is a thoughtful touch, when the book is at least partly *'designed to be used in conjunction with Ordnance Survey walkers' maps'*. Downman's surveys of 1909 will be new to many and so the inclusion of his plans of West Hill and Yeavinger is very welcome; unfortunately however, Hogg's role in sustaining interest on the English side of the Border is overlooked. By contrast, the important contribution made by RCAHMS to the north and the excavations that their work inspired is duly acknowledged. Moreover, the significance of the 'Hownam Sequence' in developing and deepening our knowledge of these earthworks is summarised, although a reference to Ian Armit's paper outlining its eventual failure as a model could have been included in the bibliography; and Dennis Harding's recent overview of the Iron Age in Northern Britain is also a notable omission.<sup>1</sup> The role of George Jobey, whose papers on the earthworks of the period have adorned so many of the volumes published by this Society and whose memory is still held in such special affection, is also rightfully acknowledged. Some distance now separates us from the time when he and Jock Tait could complete a couple of plane table surveys in a little more than a single day, but he would have been the first to recognise how high the bar has now been raised and appreciate the advances that are represented by the surveys that lie at the heart of this book.

In practice, little information is given on how these were conducted, but the illustrations suggest that the earthworks were plotted with a GPS kit, drawn up with the aid of a computer

and then checked for their accuracy in the field. The results form the kernel of the synthesis offered in Chapters 4–7. This is founded partly upon four analytical surveys of the landscapes surrounding Lordenshaws, Old Fawdon Hill, Wether Hill, West Hill and St Gregory's Hill and partly upon the dissection of the architectural palimpsests represented by the earthworks at Castle Hill (Alnham), Fawcett Shank, Glead's Cleugh, Great Hetha, Harehaugh, Humbleton Hill, Mid Hill, Ring Chesters, St. Gregory's Hill, South Middleton Dean, Staw Hill, Wether Hill, West Hill and Yeavering Bell. It should be noted, however, that both forms of survey are printed at several different scales and while this has the merit of promoting clarity, it makes direct comparisons rather difficult.

The reader should also be aware that there is no way to assess from the illustrations whether the interpretations offered are correct. This has to be taken on trust, as the nature and quality of the field evidence can only be re-evaluated in the hills. However, all the sites can be readily visited and so those who are interested should take copies of the plans and venture out to observe and appreciate for themselves the often subtle character of the supersessionary relationships that obtain between the differing elements in these palimpsests. Indeed, this is a book that positively invites one outdoors.

Members of this Society will also recognise the plan of Lordenshaws, as it appears to be based upon the RCHME survey that was published in this journal, but in this rendition it contains the significant addition of the three tri-radial cairns that are situated roughly south-south-west of the fort (fig. 3.6). Here the relationship between the cairns and the rig-system is not easy to discern and, over recent years, both the function and the chronological horizon to which this class of antiquity should be attributed has been the subject of much local controversy. Despite this, the key is surely correct in defining these as 'post-medieval', although in this instance the confirmatory evidence may derive from elsewhere. Their utility as artificial windbreaks associated with sheep farming in the uplands, is neatly illustrated by an otherwise unrelated photograph that shows a pair of ewes seeking comparable shelter in the lee of a natural scar (fig. 8.7). Yet the lesson remains: if it is sometimes difficult to establish a relationship between elements of comparatively recent date, this can be even more problematic when they reach even further back in time and have experienced centuries of weathering.

Although this may have implications for the evolution of an individual fort and its chronological relationship to other elements in the landscape, the discussion of the individual monument types is generally very well handled. The permanency and length of the forts' occupation is still not very well understood, but the argument that their defences were largely intended for display is cogent. And the implications of the gradual revelation from aerial sorties that similar structures were once even more plentiful on the lower ground stretching to the coast is also well expressed — although it will probably be some time yet before the term 'hillfort' is finally laid to rest. The map representing their currently known distribution shows a notable lacuna between the Coquet and the Wansbeck that requires an explanation (fig. 4.28), although it is possible that the evidence here may already have been lost to centuries of opencast coal working.

The discussion of the different forms of round house and their internal arrangements is also well executed and the comparatively lengthy treatment given to the evidence for pastoral and arable agriculture is fully justified by the remarkable survival of the remains — especially the extensive swaths of cord rig and the 'smooth areas' that denote the zones where this has been deliberately knocked down. However, it is by no means certain that every cross-ridge dyke has its origin in prehistory (although this may prove to be the case) and there is even

less agreement that every well-developed series of agricultural terrace should be attributed to this horizon. In addition, the role of hedges in the landscape remains opaque. It seems reasonable to infer their presence, especially from the sinuous little linear earthworks that are also associated with the settlements of the Roman Iron Age, but a tightly packed layer of stone that did not have the character of clearance overlay those that subdivided the plots of cord rig at Greenlee Lough to the north west of Housesteads.

The agencies that led to the abandonment of the forts and their replacement by new forms of overlying settlement are still not well understood. However, the evidence adduced by the authors in favour of a hiatus is important and cries out for further elaboration. Some degree of environmental degradation may have had a part in this, but other factors may also have been involved. An instrumental role for the Romans seems doubtful; but whether or not they came to influence the events that unfolded, not everyone would necessarily accept a revisionist interpretation of Jobey's excavations at Burnswark (p. 101). That said, the authors' discussion of the later developments at Yeavinger Bell is of interest and could be usefully tested by excavation at some point in the future.

This then is an important synthesis that is not simply a credit to the authors, but also to all who have had a hand in its production. The data on which it draws are the seeds that will drive the research agendas of the period in this region for much of the remainder of this century and the book will continue to hold an honoured place for many years to come. But in addition, it also represents a potentially important educational resource and we trust that both English Heritage and the Northumberland National Park will continue to make good use of it and the supporting documentation to enhance the knowledge and enjoyment of everyone who chooses to explore the Cheviots. After all, this is one of the best-preserved and most instructive historical landscapes to be found anywhere in the British Isles.

One final word: every project has an initiator who has the vision to set all the pieces into motion and then quietly await the outcome. In this instance, it is Paul Frodsham, the author of the final chapter in this volume and it is to him we owe a special debt of gratitude.

Adam Welfare and Roger Miket

<sup>1</sup> Armitt, I. 1999: 'Life After Hownam: the Iron Age in South-East Scotland'; in Bevan, B. (ed.) *Northern Exposure: Interpretive Devolution and the Iron Ages in Britain* (Leicester University Monographs 4), 65–79; Harding, D. W. 2004: *The Iron Age in Northern Britain: Celts and Romans, Natives and Invaders* (Routledge: London and New York)

Thomas Faulkner, Peter Beacock and Paul Jones, *Newcastle and Gateshead: Architecture and Heritage* (The Bluecoat Press, Liverpool, 2006), pp. 383; 336 colour and 19 b&w ills. ISBN 1 904438 29 6. £25

For me, describing and illustrating the heritage of Newcastle and Gateshead has always been a delight, and, clearly, the authors of *Newcastle and Gateshead: Architecture and Heritage* share my enjoyment. The reason for this group pleasure is really quite simple: there is so much historic fabric and space in these two places to write about. As they say in their *Foreword*, 'few areas in the country can boast such an ancient and diverse architectural heritage' as Newcastle and Gateshead. So, it is not surprising in our current heritage conscious times, that we are now witnessing a rush of new heritage publications, of all kinds and sizes, onto the bookshop shelves.



Why do we need another one like this? Helpfully, the authors took the trouble to answer this question and I am in agreement with their conclusions. Few of the current publications cover the whole timescale of architecture, or architecture itself in much depth either. In addition, few of these new offerings combine both settlements in a continuous development.

The format chosen by the authors to present this pageant of architectural heritage is to describe about 250 buildings or groups as representatives of eight historical periods, from Medieval to the present day. Readers with long memories will recall that in the 1960s (1967 to be precise), local architect and academic Bruce Allsopp, pioneered this format in his *Historic Architecture of Newcastle upon Tyne*. Unsurprisingly, Allsopp's work is now dated. The authors also remembered Allsopp's publication too, as it is item three in their excellent Bibliography.

To overcome the one particular disadvantage of this format (i.e. that concentration on individual buildings can fragment the continuity of the development narrative) the authors have wisely added a short historical and architectural introduction at the start of each of the eight periods, which helpfully captures the spirit and style of the times in a nutshell.

This book is also the place to find your favourite Newcastle and Gateshead buildings. We all like the great and the mighty Tyne Bridge, the Sage and Newcastle Civic Centre and are re-assured to find them here. But what about Shilling House on Newcastle's West Road? What's Shilling House when it's at home? Well, if you go to page 256 you will find that it was a pioneering concrete house of 1925 which was offered by the *Newcastle Chronicle* as a raffle prize to raise money for the families of the 38 men and boys killed in the Montague Pit tragedy in March of that same year. It is great to be re-assured that history is also made by modest buildings too. So, for each building featured, you will find a short descriptive piece and at least one recent photograph — and the photographs are an absolute delight!

I have long been familiar with the excellent quality of Graeme Peacock's photographic collection — examples of his work pop up all over the place because it's that good. But I am thrilled to see more splendid images from the camera of Dr. Tom Yellowley. Tom has been skilfully capturing the great and the small endearing features of urban Tyneside for a good many years now and it is good to see more of his images appearing in print these days.

For the text, as you would expect with authors who all have a background in academia, it is strong on information, historical anecdotes and local colour. The odd slip does occur — such as a slight error in the name of a trust — but these are minor and in no way take away from the achievement of the authors. So, if you are looking for a well illustrated and accessible chronology of the architecture of Newcastle and Gateshead, one that will direct you (as well as entice you!) to visit the best, the most interesting and attractive places of each period, then you need to look no further than this book. Although it is a bit heavy for the pocket, it is an invaluable source of reference or as preparation for an expedition into the magical realms of the architectural heritage of Newcastle and Gateshead!

I have kept my final comment for Councillors and for officers in the Conservation Departments of the two local Councils involved. Please could you check if the 250 buildings featured in this book, have statutory listing protection to safeguard their future? If any do not, then appropriate action should be taken as these buildings are a vital part of the Newcastle/Gateshead story; they should not be left to fend for themselves as straws in the winds of history.

David Lovie

Wendy Prahms, *Newcastle Ragged and Industrial School* (Stroud, Tempus, 2006). pp. 95; 41 ills. ISBN 0 780752 440880. £12.99

Victorian society is strongly reflected in the information given in this book. Newcastle Ragged and Industrial School opened on 11th August, 1847. Large numbers of immigrants to the town are given as the reason for increased numbers of neglected children roaming the streets but a more likely explanation is the huge national increase in population, from approximately 10,500,000 in 1801 to 21,000,000 in 1851. Ragged and Industrial Schools were founded to help children gain basic literacy and numeracy, and to learn how to work.

Newcastle Ragged School was opened in Sandgate, initially for boys, to teach the three Rs and Scripture. Very soon, matchmaking was introduced and hair-teasing for younger pupils. Activities such as these, although perhaps not educational, brought welcome income to the school. A move to part of Gibson Street Chapel in 1848 was followed by girls joining the school in the next year. Now the boys were also engaged in shoe-making and, later, tailoring, with oakum-picking for younger pupils.

On 24th January, 1855, a new school building opened near the New Road (now City Road). Fifty boys and thirty-three girls were now in residence. Industrial occupations included sack-making and firewood-chopping. The girls were heavily engaged in laundry work, a practical occupation for future housewives, though heavily criticised in a report of 1909, and by the author herself. The School's daily life is well described in chapter six.

Particularly after the Education Act of 1870, Ragged Schools were doomed because Board Schools would eventually take over their function. The end came in July, 1922, when the School moved to Axwell Park, Blaydon on Tyne where it became a school for young offenders, 'in essence, just what the Home Office wanted' (p. 88). The Children and Young Person's Act of 1933 was finally to end the Industrial School concept.

This book is well illustrated and written with passion, though the emotional outpourings of the author can be slightly irritating to the reader, and there is repetition. However, much valuable information is given which could be a valuable source for a post-graduate student in Education.

Much that was done in the School reflects present thinking in education. Just as the Industrial Schools attempted to encourage a work ethic, so our present education planners are reported to be considering raising the school leaving age to eighteen for pupils who have not found a job, and providing vocational courses. One hopes that these will not be mundane, twenty-first century versions of matchbox-making, firewood chopping, oakum-picking or sack-making! Perhaps 'schooling' will one day become truly 'educational'!

Elizabeth Ashton