

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by NEIL CHRISTIE

To start the Reviews section we are pleased to present two reviews which assess the MSRG's landmark publication, *Medieval Rural Settlement. Britain and Ireland, AD 800–1600*. The first forms part of a review article from an Irish scholar's perspective and the second is from an Italian specialist.

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### REVIEW ARTICLE:

## Writing histories of medieval rural settlement in Ireland and England: an opinion piece

By Tadgh O'Keefe<sup>1</sup>

*Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape. Second Edition.* Edited by F H A Aalen, Kevin Whelan & Matthew Stout. 24 × 31 cm. x + 422 pp, 672 colour and b&w pls and figs. Cork: Cork University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-185918-459-2. Price: £55.00, €59,00 hb.

*Medieval Rural Settlement. Britain and Ireland, AD 800–1600.* Edited by Neil Christie & Paul Stammer. 19 × 25 cm. xii + 369 pp, 113 colour & b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Oxford: Oxbow Books/Windgather Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-905119-42-4. Price: £30.00 hb.

*Life in Medieval Landscapes. People and Places in the Middle Ages. Papers in Memory of H.S.A. Fox.* Edited by Sam Turner & Bob Silvester. 18 × 25 cm. vi + 296 pp, 73 colour and b&w pls and figs, 22 tables. Oxford: Windgather Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-905119-40-0. Price: £30.00 pb.

This article started life as a review of three books cited above, tied together by the happenstance of their near-simultaneous publication and the simultaneous dispatch of copies for review. It is a review article to the extent that its observations and ruminations spring from a reading of these books, two of them in particular (*Medieval Rural Settlement in Britain and Ireland AD 800–1600*, and *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*), but it is more an opinion piece on the writing of settlement-history. I have placed Ireland before England, and admittedly left Wales and Scotland to one side, in the paper's title. This is mainly because of personal familiarity with its research history, but more so because there are some important issues with respect to understanding Irish medieval rural settlement which I think require greater exposure and critical scrutiny.

### Regionality and identity

Of the three titles, *Medieval Rural Settlement*, is the best barometer of current research activity, and the most likely to have an impact on the direction of research into the future, certainly in Britain. Issued from the same stable as this *Journal*, this attractively produced volume – a bouquet for Windgather Press – will be read widely, both by students who will appreciate the overview and by scholars who are plotting research projects or mulling over interpretative dilemmas. It offers a valuable but (by its own admission) not-comprehensive overview of the current state of research on medieval rural settlement in the two main islands, first through a block of chapters dealing with matters historiographical, methodological and thematic, and then through a block of chapters dealing with the rural settlement histories of different parts of the archipelago, seven of them 'regions' and three of them (Wales, Scotland and Ireland, not unexpectedly) 'nations'. It might be noted that the geographical entity of 'region' also features as an appropriate geographical scale in *Life in Medieval Landscapes*, the collection of papers in memory of Harold Fox, although the section of that volume which addresses regions, 'Landscape Regions', is really about *types* of landscape and their associated activities, with the other section of that *Gedenkschrift*, 'Labour and Lordship', presenting case-studies which are derived from the types of place described in regional terms in that first section.

The regional case-studies in *Medieval Rural Settlement* do not represent the spectrum of regions that have been conceptualised – a more appropriate term than 'identified' – by various scholars, Brian Roberts and Stuart Wrathmell most prominent among them. The editors concede this point, but it could not be levelled as a criticism had they not. These case-studies are best read as indicative of what regionally-conceived historical-geographies and archaeologies will look

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like if approached in the manner that has characterised MSRGR research over the past two decades and more. Collectively, they serve to highlight the differential qualities of archaeological and historical source material on the one hand, and geographically-differentiated intensities of research-questioning and problem-solving on the other. Put simply, there are parts of England where one can clearly see that the later Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-Scandinavian) rural landscape was the incubating chamber of the high medieval rural landscape of Norman and Angevin ownership; in some cases one can even demonstrate continuity from before the eleventh century to the modern era at the scale of the farmstead. But there are also large swathes of the 'Northern and Western Province' of Britain (and of Ireland), especially the classic 'upland' areas, where finding evidence of medieval occupation is clearly a challenge.

If the chapters in *Medieval Rural Settlement* show *inter alia* that the chronological relationships between village-formation and open-field organisation, the issues traditionally at the very heart of the MSRGR project, remain uncertain to us even within single regions, so that what holds for one area does not hold for another, those same chapters also reveal – the point could actually be made a lot more explicitly – that 'village' and 'open-field' themselves are not in any case closed conceptual entities with consistent formal manifestations. The critical challenge in the type of comparative research which is paraded in the volume is to know when we are comparing like with like: when, as we analytically magnify the landscape to the scale of individual houses and fields, do we pass into and out of the geographic (geo-political and environmental) scales at which comparisons become *meaningful*? It is a question that needs to be asked repeatedly, not so much by readers of the scholarly literature as by researchers themselves, as part of the investigative process.

One could not suggest that, had we similar source materials and comparably rigorous research everywhere, we would identify some common 'drivers' of landscape and settlement development within large territories, not to mention between territories. But if there is a single 'driver' that explains the differential character of medieval settlement across the two islands it must surely be, judging by all of the recent literature, the tension between top-down and bottom-up impulses, the former a homogenising agent commensurate with lordship-control, and the latter an adaptive, improvising and resisting agency which originates in those lower social levels gathered under the umbrella term of 'peasantry'. The scale at which we interrogate the evidence determines which of these impulses we see as the dominant one: the larger the geographical perspective the more likely we are to see the rough-cut shapes of lordship, but the more we tunnel into individual settlements, and eventually into household spaces, the more heterogeneity we see. The fact that studies at the large geographical scales do not always yield simple narratives of landscape and settlement development testifies in general, I think, to the greater power of community over lordship.

The first section of the MSRGR volume offers an overview, already broadly familiar to many of us but still usefully articulated, of the development of the tradition of medieval settlement research in England;

the so-called 'Celtic' countries – a dreadful though common label, which is thankfully avoided here – have their own traditions of research, and I will discuss the Irish tradition below. None of us can deny, though, the vitality, longevity and influence of that English tradition. It is the tradition that took root in the work of Vinogradoff, Seebohm and Maitland, and has flowered without significant interruption since seminal early works by Beresford, Hurst and Taylor. The place of Hoskins in this tradition is a matter of some dispute. His centrality in the study of the historic English landscape has been asserted repeatedly, most recently by Matthew Johnson in *Ideas of Landscape* (2007), and most would agree that his spirit was as squarely behind the first part of recent opening ceremony of the London Olympics as Brunel's spirit was behind the second part. It is counter-asserted in this volume, however, that 'his expressions of a conservative, lapsarian regret... place him somewhat apart from the tradition' (p.5). The 'scientism' of the 'modern' (post-1950) settlement researchers, reflected in sampling strategies designed to answer specific questions, is a very strong measure of the distance that separates Hoskins from the MSRGR's immediate ancestors (back in those days when DMVs and moated sites were kept apart). But that is not to say that all sense of the romantic, of nostalgia, has departed from the culture of medieval settlement study. On the contrary, a sense of attachment to the rural landscape is what sustains our common interest in rural settlement research. Indeed, viewing it from the outside, but with many personal acquaintances within it, I would regard 'the romantic' as a core element of English landscape research, and would believe it to be far stronger in England than it is in Ireland (whatever about Scotland and Wales).

The romance of landscape aside, the marriage of a scientific approach to data collection with documentary (including placename) research characterises the methodology by which the current generation of settlement researchers, as represented in the MSRGR volume, approach the field's 'key themes and arguments', usefully summarised by Gardiner, Christie and Stamper in their introductory essay (p.9). Those themes and arguments involve the usual suspects: village origins and field systems, as noted, as well as land-use, the extent of woodland and pasture, the role of the market, and so on. So much of the agenda which informed the selection of Wharram Percy as a trial-site decades ago is clearly still on the table, even if there has been some dissipation since the 1970s of the erstwhile confidence that a 'big answer' awaited. If the agenda is as deeply rooted as it seems to be, two obvious questions arise. One, are there new questions to be asked alongside the old ones, not as replacements but as prompters of new research directions (or simply of new perspectives on the answers that we already have)? Two, are the intellectual methodologies (as distinct from, say, the methodologies of survey, prospection and excavation) capable of bringing us to new understandings of our settlements and landscapes?

I pose these questions not for now but, rather, for the next phase of our common rural-settlement-research project. However, implied in them is a mild criticism of one striking omission from *Medieval Rural Settlement*: there is very little explicit reference to (archaeological)

theory, and relatively little use made by the many authors of the abstracts published from the POMLAS seminars, the contributors to which include some scholars from within archaeology's 'theory camp'. A theoretical engagement is similarly missing from *Life in Medieval Landscapes*, although that volume does not purport to represent the current state of research. Popular though it is among sceptics, the view of theory as extraneous and distracting is unfounded. Since the 1960s there have been huge philosophical and methodological shifts in two of the feeder subjects of medieval settlement research, Geography and Archaeology, the two principal ones being the quantitative revolution and rise of logical positivism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the post-modern turn in the 1980s. When some of us speak of a need for a greater theoretical engagement in a study of any phenomenon, like rural settlement, we are not arguing an 'add-phenomenology-and-stir' approach, and we are certainly not arguing for the sort of obscurantist language that one commonly finds in 'theoretical' works. Rather, it is actually an argument for responding more rigorously and systematically to what I would describe as *the possibilities for understanding* which other disciplines in the humanities and the sciences have revealed to archaeologists and geographers; they are possibilities which, critically (and here is the point at which historians often have the greatest difficulty!), are *not* burdened by the need for definitive proof. The POMLAS series addressed specifically two of these, perception and meaning, while some papers in that series (by Kate Giles, Sally Smith and Briony McDonagh, for example) offered arguments, clearly influenced by ways of thinking in other cognate disciplines, for more nuanced readings of power and resistance, of public and private spaces, of the domestic realm, and of gender expressions. The epistemological distance between what we might regard as normative readings of landscapes and settlements, such as we find in the MSRГ volume, and these more theoretically-alert readings, is actually very short, as David Austin and Julian Thomas demonstrated 20 years ago in a paper which not cited by any of the *Medieval Rural Settlement* authors (Austin & Thomas 1990).

### Drawing maps and writing in the margins: a look at Ireland

The other book of the three on which I want to comment is the second and substantially revised (though still sumptuously produced and illustrated) edition of *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*; note that the title is prefaced by neither a definite nor indefinite article. The first edition of this volume in 1997 sold out its print-run in Ireland. Its commercial success back then, while entirely deserved for its many qualities as a work of wide-ranging scholarship, tells us something about the 'Celtic Tiger' years, when expensive books were less of a luxury and every second house in Ireland seemed to have a four-wheel drive parked outside, even in the city. Appropriately, the new volume, produced in a recession, has a section devoted to Ireland's post-Tiger 'ghost estates', our own contemporary 'deserted villages'. A discussion of the cultural significance of this book – it is, in a sense, Ireland's very own 'Hoskins' – lies beyond the scope of this *Journal*, but I would

add to a brief comment made elsewhere (O'Keeffe 2009) two additional observations. For a volume that is not unsympathetic to the post-colonial membrane in which much critical thinking in Ireland is now wrapped, the term 'atlas' has colonial connotations, and the sequencing of its chapters on the natural and cultural landscapes recalls the sequencing of chapters in early modern *colonial* accounts of Ireland (see Klein 2001).

The *Atlas* covers a wide chronological range on either side of the period c.1200-c.1500, with a not-ungenerous coverage of the early medieval material and a fairly generous coverage of the early post-medieval material. The evidence of the 13th to 15th centuries is dealt with more briefly in this second edition than in the first. We know a good deal more than is captured here, and it is worth reviewing here the development of that knowledge. As a preamble, though, it should be said that the *Atlas* understates the contribution of the medieval landscape to the modern landscape of Ireland, and plays to the view, which I think could be contested, that relatively little survived the ruptures of the late 16th and 17th centuries.

Interest in the settlement archaeology of that high medieval period (12th century to 15th) really only developed in earnest in Ireland in the 1960s, and the fact that it developed with respect to 'Anglo-Norman' (actually, Angevin) settlement, which is much better documented than native Gaelic-Irish settlement, reflects the influence of historians on its early stages of growth. There was a significant body of cross-disciplinary work produced in Ireland in the 1970s and early 1980s, and it was distributed far more widely across all of Ireland than Audrey Horning's contribution to the MSRГ volume might suggest, but it then petered out for some reason. Those who, like me, joined the medieval settlement conversation in the latter stages of that brief *floruit* of interest – Niall Brady, Mark Hennessy, Kieran O'Connor, and others – will recall that the big question repeatedly asked at that time concerned the location and character of medieval Gaelic settlement. It was left unanswered when general interest in medieval settlement waned somewhat in the mid-1980s. Kenneth Nicholls, the eminent historian of Gaelic Ireland, left little ground for optimism anyway once he asserted (in language almost redolent of Elizabethan colonists) that the patterns of Gaelic-Irish secular settlement in the later Middle Ages should "be seen in the light of a highly mobile population and of the *flimsy* and *insubstantial* nature of the *typical* Irish dwelling, which, representing a *minimum of investment* in either labour or materials, could be erected with facility and *abandoned without regret*" (1987, 403; emphases added).

In retrospect, I think that an equally big question was not asked during that flowering of interest in the 1970s and early 1980s: what was the rate and scale of *rural* immigration, aristocratic and peasant, into Ireland from contemporary England and Wales? There was a presumption – and I think the proof can be found implicit in the scholarly literature of the period – that the invasion was followed very quickly by fairly large-scale immigration, not just to new towns (where burgess status was an inducement to potential settlers) but also to the countryside. Few would have disagreed with R.R. Davies in his vision of 'caravans of the settlers... arriving in the castle bailey on the morrow of

the imposition of military domination' (1990, 43), but nobody really thought out the implications of rapid and massive in-migration for our understanding of parts of Ireland under Anglo-Norman control.

The interest in medieval settlement was not really picked up again in Ireland until the later 1990s when the Discovery Programme formulated a research project on the island's medieval rural settlement pattern. The old question of Gaelic settlement has been on its agenda from the outset, and the Programme has broken some new ground with its work in Roscommon (although it has to be said that we cannot fully evaluate yet just how new, or radical, that work is when measured against the interpretations of earlier publications of the same Roscommon landscapes). The Programme's interest in Anglo-Norman settlement clearly picked up where we left off 25 years ago, but I suggest that the issue of the rate and scale of immigration still needs greater attention. For example, the consensus interpretations of Anglo-Norman ringwork castles and moated sites among Irish medieval archaeologists are predicated on an assumption that there was a large population of settlers needing protection in the late 1100s and then needing to be fed in the late 1200s. Yet, it is possible to counter-argue, as I have done in other publications, that the number of Anglo-Norman earthwork castles in Ireland has been exaggerated upwards by mis-identification, and that many of the moated sites were connected to the export rather than local consumption of grain. Moreover, the results of recent excavations of medieval rural settlement sites (see Corlett & Potterton [eds] 2009) are hardly consistent with the image of a countryside teeming with settlers.

Anyway, back to the *Atlas*. Suffice it to say here that there is no evidence in the *Atlas* of the digestion of the Discovery Programme's outputs. Indeed, there is little evidence that other research conducted independently of that Programme in the period since the first edition of the *Atlas* has been considered.

More critical than content is conception. The *Atlas*'s coverage is conceptually very old-fashioned indeed, with the model of ethnic separation between the 'English' (the Anglo-Normans, basically) and the 'Irish' not merely left unproblematised but reinforced. That model, for which Audrey Horning valuably invites a critique in the MSR volume mentioned above, is worth a closer look. I would suggest that the Discovery Programme has also reinforced the model in its choosing of major projects: its research in the Dublin hinterland and in the north Carlow area has addressed Anglo-Norman or colonial Ireland, while the project in the Tulsk area of Co. Roscommon is based geographically in what was Gaelic Ireland right through the Middle Ages. In other words, the projects reproduce the perceived ethno-geography of the medieval island; the projects target 'core' areas of one group or the other.

In traditional narratives of Irish history the year 1169 was regarded as the watershed between Gaelic-Irish autonomy (a good thing) and Anglo-Norman dominion (a bad thing), and the point from which the trajectory of Irish history was powered by ethnic (and, from the sixteenth century, religious-ethnic) conflict. That idea of 1169 as a year of cultural-political rupture was nourished by a belief that pre-1169 Ireland was

a place where for centuries the forces of continuity trumped processes of change. Even the Vikings had succumbed to these powers, being hibernicised within decades of their (re-)appearance in Ireland in the early tenth century. The Anglo-Normans demonstrably bucked the trend sufficiently long for their first arrival in Ireland to be viewed as cataclysmic, but they too are regarded as having fallen eventually under the spell of an acculturation that positively discriminated in favour of Gaelic culture. Now, while one can understand the rationale of this model of dual (and duelling) ethnicity, or dual nationhood, from an historical perspective – Anglo-Norman rule did not extend across the whole island after all, so 'native' polities survived – the model is less easily understood from a cultural or anthropological perspective, despite its pervasiveness. The problem is partly a lack of appreciation of the transformative effect of the Anglo-Norman arrival on both the Anglo-Normans themselves and the 'native' Irish. Gerald of Wales even seems to have recognised that transformative affect when he assigned this speech to Maurice FitzGerald during the siege of Dublin in 1170: "We are now constrained in our actions by this circumstance, that just as we are English as far as the Irish are concerned, likewise to the English we are Irish, and the inhabitants of this island and the other assail us with an equal degree of hatred" (Scott & Martin 1978, 81). In other words, the Anglo-Norman community of which Gerald himself was a member was neither English nor Irish as soon as it settled in Ireland but was instead something in-between, something different. An even greater problem with the ethnic model is that it presents Irishness and Englishness as separate cultural orbits, each with its own essential character, and it therefore interprets any perceived blurring of the edges of 'Irishness' or 'Englishness' as evidence of acculturation. Thus the English are perceived to have been gaelicised (it is popularly asserted that they became "more Irish than the Irish themselves"), and the Irish anglicised, as if the condition of being Gaelic or English was fixed in the first instance. Such an essentialised view of culture has long been abandoned by scholars in other fields, but it persists in Irish medieval scholarship.

The severe view of ethnic differentiation in Ireland, almost racist in its historical fixation on essentialised differences (which is the ultimate irony, given how sensitive we Irish have been to the racism of Gerald of Wales and Edmund Spenser), brings me to what I think is the major difference between medieval settlement scholarship in England and Ireland: the importance afforded the concept of continuity across the 1066/1169 boundaries.

English scholars have long recognised the origins of villages and open-fields in the Anglo-Saxon and/or Anglo-Scandinavian periods, and have long understood the 'Englishness' of the peasantry of the 11th and 12th centuries. The invasion of 1066 changed the political map very dramatically, but cultural practices of the pre-Conquest period continued, transforming Norman culture in ways that justify the phrase 'Anglo-Norman', but also transformed in themselves. One could argue, of course, that the concept of continuity, alluded to in a good many papers in *Medieval Settlement Research*, requires much greater theoretical probing and greater rigour in its deployment: for example, does the term

'continuity' describe *meaningfully* the major spatial reconfigurations that are observed archaeologically in and of nucleated settlements (hamlets as well as villages), or the structural and functional changes that are observed archaeologically to individual buildings, mainly houses? Nevertheless, the key point is that in English scholarship 1066 is not seen as a barrier year.

In Ireland, by contrast, the discussion of continuity has run along a very different line. Yes, there is a tradition of seeking evidence of continuity within Gaelic Ireland between the pre-1169 and post-1169 periods, much of it centred on the use and reuse of ringforts. However, except with respect to towns, there is no strong tradition of seeking continuity (of location or of site-morphology) before and after 1169 in those parts of Ireland which fell under Anglo-Norman control. We simply do not know the extent to which the settled landscape of 'feudalised' Anglo-Norman Ireland was shaped by the pre-1169 population, itself similarly 'feudalised'. We do not know if native settlements of high-status are widely concealed under the mottes which we traditionally regard as Anglo-Norman. We do not know if any of our evidence (fairly meagre but real) of ridge-and-furrow in reverse-S selions might pre-date 1169. We do not know if rural settlement agglomerations for which we can only *assume* 13th-century Anglo-Norman foundation in eastern Ireland have pre-Norman tofts below them.

In a nutshell, we have no Goltho/Bullington. It is not because none ever existed. Rather, it is because nobody has thought to look for one. I think personally it is a pity that, for all that it has achieved, the well-funded Discovery Programme retreated to the classic, core areas of 'English' and 'Irish' Ireland for its medieval projects, rather than prioritise the search for settlement-sites where we might reasonably expect to find occupational continuities across the temporal and cultural barrier which we have allowed 1169 to become.

### Additional References

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***Medieval Rural Settlement. Britain and Ireland, AD 800–1600.*** Edited by Neil Christie & Paul Stamper. 19 × 25 cm. xii + 369 pp, 113 colour & b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Oxford: Oxbow Books/Windgather Press: Oxford, 2011. ISBN 978-1-905119-42-4. Price: £30.00 hb.

It is a pleasure for me to offer a review of this MSRG volume and to offer a view from an Italian perspective.

*Medieval Rural Settlement*, edited by Neil Christie and Paul Stamper (Honorary Secretary and former President of the MSRG respectively), is structured in three parts. The first is both a brief history of the study and exploration of medieval villages and landscapes and also a weighing-up of the current data for further developments. I think this is crucial in 2012, because the future of our past has not been granted any specific place in current, major European development planning (see *Horizon 2020: The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation* – [http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm)). Therefore, new strategies, new methods and a closer relationship among all who care are the vital routes and targets. Otherwise, we shall spend the rest of our life regretting those lucky days. The volume's second part is made up of three papers that provide useful and clear overviews of the data, the debates and the methods applied in research focused on middle Saxon to Norman period sites, landscapes and landowners. Thus, villages, churches, field systems are shown to play the same game and to relate to each other on a wider scale. Part III comprises a collection of ten regional studies. One can appreciate in these the decision to provide both highlights and insights as 'feature boxes', which are focused both on key themes and key sites. This is a good route for establishing a sort of hierarchy among the great amount of data available. Indeed, these boxes are also a good example of the 'Anglo-Saxon style' (as perceived from outside of England): it is nowadays crystal clear that no one can deal with all the subjects, all the sites, all the periods in full depth. The choice is a matter of honesty and a way to share thoughts and research paths. Indeed, it is a method that can be applied to all collective works whose goal is to go beyond the local scale and the local audience. The book closes with a useful appendix which is geared to offering a practical guide to how to investigate medieval rural settlement – from the computer to the ground.

I would argue that this book is important for at least three reasons. Firstly, it throws much new light on a period (or periods) – the high and late Middle Ages – that have, on many levels, been neglected in the last two decades in favour of (potentially the more challenging, or at least the less visible) Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. It is worth remembering that Europe's landscapes, that were first detailed and recorded by the 19th century mapmakers, is a palimpsest, whose main shaping occurred in the centuries this book deals with. These landscapes have been profoundly transformed and partly erased by contemporary and often rather unworthy development. Therefore, this kind of book should play a role in conservation and evaluation projects too. A second reason to thank the editors and all those who contributed to *Medieval Rural Settlement* is the permanent link they stress with the tradition of "deserted medieval village research". From an Italian point of view, one cannot fail to recall the contribution it gave to the beginnings of medieval archaeology in Italy. Therefore, while reading the papers collected together in this book, I remembered the lectures and the debates I attended and the readings I made when I was a student.

The third reason is the wide range of regional case studies presented, that cover almost the whole of the British Isles and which provide up-to-date research and

data as well as lively debate about crucial topics (it is highly appreciated that the editors clearly welcomed different points of view from their contributing specialists). But there are some gaps, and in particular I think that the relationships between people – a theme that has produced an enormous amount of literature for the period AD 400–800 – merit much more attention for the period AD 800–1200. Nonetheless, the pages of this book do take some steps in this direction. But we should ask, for example, how the Vikings and, later, the Normans, related and responded to the landscapes and farmers they found? Did they behave differently in the Anglo-Saxon regions and in the British ones? How did newcomers like French merchants and religious landholders work with or against natives? One can easily see how such questions are appropriate for southern Italy, where the Normans established a new and powerful kingdom, or for the Balkans after the Turkish conquest, just to mention two cases. In reality, we do not lack papers on these topics but bringing such together is crucial. In many ways, this book could be an opportunity to establish closer links among scholars in many European regions, in order to discuss the dynamics and the outputs of these events. In other words, I think that *Medieval Rural Settlement* could be the forerunner of a new chapter in the history of European Archaeology, whose focus will be no longer be on the end of the Roman world, but much more on the making of contemporary Europe.

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***Archaeological Landscapes of East London: Six Multi-period Sites Excavated in Advance of Gravel Quarrying in the London Borough of Havering.*** (Museum of London Archaeology Monograph 54). By Isca J Howell, Dan Swift & Bruce Watson, with Jon Cotton & Pamela Greenwood. 22 × 30 cm. xv + 144 pp, 99 colour and b&w pls and figs, 25 tables. London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2011. ISBN 978-1-907586-00-2. Price: £14.00 hb.

This well produced and affordable volume presents the results of fieldwork at six sites in the London Borough of Havering undertaken between 1963 and 1997. More a landscape history of the area than excavation report, it uses the results of the fieldwork within a broader framework to explore Havering's development.

Beginning with an assessment of the underlying geology and summary of the early prehistory, the book then concentrates on post-Palaeolithic landscapes. This, unsurprisingly, shows progressively greater activity over time and by the late Roman period agricultural exploitation was intense and on two sites Roman to Anglo-Saxon continuity was probable. Anglo-Saxon activity included settlement and cemetery evidence (although much was truncated) and the broader discussion which follows paints a picture of the area as one of dispersed farmsteads with little access to wider networks of trade and communication, although some rich local burials are known. The archaeology of the later medieval period was restricted to a single farmstead and manorial enclosure but the local importance of the

ceramic assemblage is highlighted in a useful section. The final chronological chapter, exploring the modern landscape, shows the effect of quarrying in Havering since the 1930s indicating the value of these excavations. The final chapters detail methodologies and access to the online archive of reports.

As a landscape history the book works well, though the six excavations are sometimes swamped by other details from the area and some, notably the Anglo-Saxon burials at Hunts's Hill Farm and manorial enclosure at Great Arnold's Field deserve fully published excavation reports. However, it does summarise the fieldwork nicely, placing what can be relatively sparse evidence into a well rounded narrative and so should be useful to anyone interested in the archaeology of the Thames region.

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***Iron Age and Middle Saxon Settlements at West Fen Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire: The Consortium Site.*** (British Archaeological Reports British Series 538/ Northamptonshire Archaeology Monograph 2). By Andrew Mudd & Michael Webster. 21 × 30 cm. xi + 138 pp, 84 b&w pls and figs, 42 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011. ISBN 978-1-4073-0825-8. Price: £33.00 pb.

This volume describes the results of a developer-funded excavation undertaken in 1999–2000 on the western fringe of Ely, Cambridgeshire. The site produced extensive evidence for a range of periods, with the main elements being later Iron Age and Middle Saxon settlements that are thoroughly and competently reported upon. In the specific frame of reference of developer-funded archaeology the book can be considered a success, yet it also serves to highlight some of the fundamental flaws inherent in British developer-funded archaeology. While both the Iron Age and Middle Saxon settlements are important there is nothing beyond simple spatial proximity to link the two and as it is unlikely that the majority of readers will be interested in both periods, so separate publications would probably have been advisable. A more serious problem is that the area where the site is located is something of a hotspot for development, leading to a considerable number of archaeological investigations. One in particular also covered a substantial area of the same Middle Saxon settlement and has already been published (R. Mortimer, R. Reagan & S. Lucy, *The Saxon and Medieval Settlement at West Fen Road, Ely: The Ashwell Site*. East Anglian Archaeology 110, Gressenhall, 2005. One might note that this was published in the East Anglian Archaeology monograph series, which, despite some flaws, is markedly superior to the British Archaeological Reports series where the current report appears. It is also notable that despite this lower production quality, the current volume costs more than the earlier one, and indeed is over twice as expensive on a page for page basis!) The interpretation of the Middle Saxon settlement presented here is substantively the same as in the earlier volume and while the current volume takes account of the 2005 publication it fails to fully grasp the

nettle of the implications that the archaeology of such sites is essentially a cumulative process. This means, for instance, that even if the Middle Saxon pottery from both sites has been published by the same specialist (in fact, of the 16 contributors listed for each volume six are the same which provides a useful overlap that partially ameliorates the work being undertaken by two separate organisations), one must consult both volumes to discover how much pottery has been recovered in total!

The time lag of over a decade in publication also means that important subsequent fieldwork has taken place, which is not taken into account effectively. This includes a small high status later 7th-century cemetery with two well furnished female graves, potentially linked to the monastery founded by Etheldreda in AD 673, and with major implications for the foundation of the West Fen Road settlement (S. Lucy *et al.*, *The Burial of a Princess? The Later Seventh Century Cemetery at Westfield Farm, Ely*, *Antiquaries Journal* 89, 81–141). Even more directly relevant to this volume, our understanding of the Middle Saxon settlement at West Fen Road has been significantly expanded by an evaluation and excavation further to the east in 2010, which demonstrated that the settlement was significantly more extensive. While these investigations admittedly took place too late to be incorporated into the current volume they nonetheless do emphasise how fleeting and transient any publication on the West Fen Road settlement is likely to be.

Quality, like beauty, is largely in the eye of the beholder. Although this publication more than adequately fulfils its function from a development control perspective, as part of the wider academic discipline it is of much more restricted value.

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*The Archaeology of the East Anglian Conversion.* (Anglo-Saxon Studies 15). By Richard Hoggett. 18 × 25 cm. xiv + 207 pp, 48 b&w pls and figs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010. ISBN 978-1-84383-595-0 (ISSN 1475-2468). Price: £50.00 hb.

The 7th century AD in Britain is a crucial and fascinating period of change: kingdoms become more firmly fixed, royal names become more than names, continental connections expand, and while Christianity blunders in from the south east there is also a sprinkling of missionaries and monks from Ireland. It is therefore a time when monasteries and royal seats start to gain visibility and when old towns start to think about re-emerging. As importantly, it is a period when burials – the staple *fayre* of early medieval archaeologists – change in intriguing ways: inhumations oust cremations; grave goods perhaps take on new meanings and offer new expressions; there are bursts of special display (e.g. Sutton Hoo, Prittlewell); and then ‘Final Phase’ cemeteries appear as grave goods fade away and burial grounds and even settlements relocate. Too often looked at in isolation, Richard Hoggett here does a grand job in making us look at all of these aspects together, to question how far we can correlate changes in burials, place and expression with conversion. He centres his

exploration on East Anglia and duly draws on a wide range of excavated and surveyed sites to try and track evidence for the conversion of the East Angles. Central questions relate to our ability to ‘read’ the archaeology adequately, whether we are too hesitant to see religious expressions at work, whether royalty can be seen as prime players, and whether we can trace ‘resistance’ on an ordinary level.

Five core chapters are presented. Throughout there is a clear exposition of questions, materials and debates and the whole is well supported by examples, reflecting a strong familiarity with the archaeological data and the region’s landscape as a whole. Chapter 1 considers wider issues of conversion, including processes of missionising and scales of take-up; a second chapter then provides the historical framework for 7th-century East Anglia, detailing royalty, missionaries (chiefly Fursa and Botolph) and the location of the documented sees (*Dommoc* and Elmham). Valuable is the determination of presumed missionary stations in Chapter 3: core was the strategy of reuse of Roman sites, including forts such as Walton Castle (the likely *Dommoc*) and Burgh Castle with ready-made precincts and prominent material ties to the Roman past and being sites seemingly owned by local royalty; but other, earthwork enclosures and natural prominences perhaps also came into play. Slightly problematic here, however, is being able to tie sites and related burials to early missionary and monastic seats; and more is needed to question who the burials might relate to – whether monks, people who bought into the site, local farmers, etc; likewise actual, clear archaeology of any 7th-century buildings is awaited. Presumably such sites acted both as magnets to attract and encourage conversion and then as islands of monastic focus. Chapter 4 focuses on the burial data and a questioning of the progression from cremation to ‘Final Phase’ cemeteries. This covers much ground but could have delved more into the changing types of grave goods in inhumations and discussed particular key cemeteries in more detail. Hoggett then integrates in useful fashion in Chapter 5 the burial sites with their landscapes, attempting to relate graveyards with settlements, although this is countered by a lack of excavated settlement data. He works hard to draw on fieldwalking surveys, such as those centred on the Deben Valley and Launditch Hundred, to seek evidence from villages and from around village churches; however, emphasising pottery scatters as vital and reliable guides to Middle Saxon creations seems incautious – but is something to be followed up!

Hoggett’s conclusions are enjoyably bold, stating that ‘it is safe to say that the surviving documentary sources merely provide and outline of the conversion of East Anglia which the archaeological evidence fleshes out, confirming the details of this sketch and indicating that the true picture of the East Anglian conversion is one of immense scale and variety... the conversion of the wider population was a significant and wide-reaching process which occurred very quickly and was exceedingly successful at grass-roots level... and [all this] precipitated a wide-scale restructuring of the East Anglian landscape’ (172). In part this is a provocative set of statements which the archaeology can help support; but more can and should be done to test and challenge

this model, both in East Anglia and, of course, in other regions and early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England.

NEIL CHRISTIE  
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***Landscapes of Cult and Kingship.*** Edited by Roseanne Schot, Conor Newman & Edel Bhreathnach. 16 × 24 cm. xviii + 322 pp, 14 colour pls, 33 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-84682-219-3. Price: £45.00, €50.00 hb.

Medievalists around the world know about the royal sites of Ireland, the most famous of which is Tara. The outcry associated with a road-building scheme which runs along the valley floor below the Hill of Tara became one of the most contested cultural heritage planning issues during the recent boom years, and two of the present volume's editors, Newman and Bhreathnach, are closely associated with that campaign. The series of 13 essays that make up *Cult and kingship* demonstrate the importance of landscape when trying to wrestle with the cultural dynamic of our inherited past. It is a truly engaging read to see how archaeologists, ethnographers, historians, and placename specialists position their datasets within the complex web of information that survives for study. Hard factual material such as artefacts and monument types sit alongside early Law Tracts and ancient myths that were recorded across the Middle Ages. One leaves the book with a sense that the concrete knowledge presented by archaeologists and their related scientific specialists is not as certain as it may have appeared to be; in fact, it is always subject to variation. In contrast, the written sources – especially the ancient myths which are so often dismissed by mainstream historians because of their open-ended nature – are of central importance when exploring the importance of Kingship in later prehistoric and medieval Ireland. There is a cultural depth that cannot be reached if one ignores belief and dismisses the seminal importance of land to the peoples of early Ireland. Newman's own maps (pls 1–2) reflect this heightened perception, where he attempts to demonstrate the importance of the relative association of rivers and streams to the sites of known monuments where he choreographs the narrative of sacral kingship across the wider landscape or stage of Tara. Lecomte-Tilouine's companion paper on a sacred landscape in the Himalayas demonstrates the validity of this anthropological approach.

Sites of assembly are a fashionable research topic today and there are at least two major projects looking at the medieval period in England and across Northern Europe. For Ireland, it is clear that continuity with the past was critically important, and the evidence exists to demonstrate the varied manner in which the hills and lakes of ancient sovereignty were reinvested by early medieval kings and again by later medieval Gaelic families. Tara was by no means unique and, in addition to the three other provincial centres, the island is filled with similar sacral places on smaller scales, reflecting the importance of even minor kingship at the local level. The book does assume certain prior reading and affinity with the subject matter. Readers who are not familiar

with Irish sources will find it perhaps a little difficult at first, and would be wise to read a general introduction to medieval Ireland before dipping into this book. But once invested in its reading, it is hard to put the volume down. All the papers are robust and there are some particularly strong archaeological essays, including Ger Dowling's study of closely-spaced multivallate earthworks, where he consciously looks outside Ireland for comparisons and is reengaging with the issues surrounding the role of Ireland in the Roman World. Schot takes the reader through the archaeology of Uisneach; Brian Lacey looks at local sites in Donegal, while a consortium of Elizabeth FitzPatrick, Eileen Murphy, Ronan McHugh, Colm Donnelly and Claire Foley present a most useful study of the *Sgiath Gabhra* landscape – the 'shield of the white mare' in Fermanagh focused on the later medieval period. John Waddell's reflective piece on 'Continuity, cult and contest' is a splendidly composed essay from a prehistorian with long-held interest and research on royal sites, demonstrating the ease with which he brings the reader across time, dematerialising those chronological periods that we seem to otherwise relish. There are lessons in *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship* for us all.

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***Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia.*** (The Medieval Countryside, 9). Edited by Bjørn Poulsen & Søren Michael Sindbæk. 16 × 23 cm. xvii + 337 pp, 36 b&w pls and figs, 7 tables. Turnhout: Brepolis, 2011. ISBN 978-2-503-53131-1. Price: €95.00 hb.

This important collection of articles by leading scholars analyses the socio-political development of Scandinavian society from the Viking Age to the high medieval period. The volume's aims are ambitious: not only does it seek to bridge the gap between archaeological and historical approaches and between Viking and medieval scholarship respectively, it also promises to relate the Scandinavian research tradition more firmly 'to similar issues elsewhere in European medieval history and archaeology' (p 11). Fitting in with a much broader trend that sees an increasing use of English as the *lingua franca* of European scholarship in the humanities, all papers are in English. In this context, Poulsen and Sindbæk's concise summary of the debate on settlement and lordship from the 18th century onwards deserves special mention, as this provides an invaluable insight into the history of the discipline that is otherwise inaccessible to those who have not mastered any of the Scandinavian languages.

The book has four thematic and multi-disciplinary parts. Part I, focusing on the changing nature of the aristocracy, includes four chapters demonstrating a wide range of disciplinary approaches, written by Jesch (revisiting the linguistic detail of runic inscriptions), Pedersen (funerary deposits), Hermanson (historical analysis of 12th-century documentary sources) and Hansson (a landscape-based investigation of social power). Part II, 'Settlement and Social Differentiation',



incorporates five chapters that broadly fall under the banner of settlement archaeology. Nevertheless, Tollin's rather substantial chapter on demesne farms and parish formation in western Östergötland (Sweden) is exemplary in its interdisciplinary approach, and Jakobsen's brief quantitative analysis of settlement geography in high-medieval NW Sjælland (Denmark) showcases an innovative and interesting methodology on which the last word has probably not yet been said.

Part III, 'Magnates and Manors', starts with an excellent theoretically-informed discussion of landholding and centrality in 8th- to 9th-century Scandinavia by Skre, focusing on such well-known sites as Ribe, Kaupang, Hedeby and Birka. The remainder of Part III deals exclusively with Danish material. Ulsig's discussion of 11th- and 12th-century Danish charter evidence is followed by two interesting summaries of ecclesiastical and royal landholdings, by Hybel and Rasmussen respectively. The final part, entitled 'Lords, Slaves, and Tenants', provides a fitting close to the book. Iversen's discussion of thralldom and 'the way out of it' (p 264) involves an intelligent discussion of servitude, which is neatly complemented by Myrdal's chapter on the gradual disappearance of slavery in the high medieval period, these papers flanking Poulsen's balanced consideration of the relative significance of gifts, tributes, taxes and land rents.

In brief, despite its price, *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia* offers a wealth of stimulating discussion that should ensure its importance as essential reading for both students and scholars of early-medieval Europe.

LETTY TEN HARKEL

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***Britons, Saxons, and Scandinavians. The Historical Geography of Glanville R. J. Jones.*** Edited by P. S. Barnwell & Brian K. Roberts. 16 × 24 cm. xix + 477 pp, 42 figs. 2 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011. ISBN 978-2-503-53207-3. Price: €115.00 hb.

The publication of the collected papers of eminent scholars generates mixed feelings, at least in this reviewer. Ashgate do it well with their *Variorum* series, as at one time did the Hambledon Press. The research of Professor Glanville Jones (1923–96) – or GRJJ as Brian Roberts refers to him throughout this volume – offers ideal raw material because of his preference for publishing in continental conference proceedings that are difficult to get hold of for anyone without the benefit of a university inter-library loan system. Here then an opportunity to make some of those papers more accessible, but, regrettably, it has not been taken. Of the ten which fall into the 'continental' category, only one appears in this volume.

Instead the reader is presented with a weighty tome whose focus is the multiple estate. At its heart is a hundred-page essay on the concept of the multiple estate concept prepared by Brian Roberts with, on the basis of the citation, some assistance from Paul Barnwell. It is a subject that will be familiar to most readers of this journal to some degree. Roberts examines the multiple

estate model, considers the arguments of those who have criticised it, and then launches into an assessment of the various criteria that support it. It is absorbing and detailed, but in the latter perhaps overly so. Is more than half a page devoted to a single footnote on the existence of a Germanic language before the Anglo-Saxons arrived really necessary?

Supporting the introductory essay is a selection of GRJJ's papers, spanning nearly his entire career, during which time he authored over 60 papers. Here there are ten of them, nearly 300 pages worth. But it is not a balanced collection. The paper from which the main title of this volume is adapted finds no place, while GRJJ's contribution on the field systems of north Wales to the classic Baker and Butler compilation of 1973, though typically erudite, is an unsatisfactory advert for his academic achievements, revealing how his own preoccupations could override the requirements of those commissioning the study – in its comprehensiveness it compares poorly with Margaret Davies' companion paper on south Wales. To be fair, in their Introduction the editors stress that it is GRJJ's thinking on the multiple estate that influenced their selection of his published works, and herein lies the problem, the bipartite nature of GRJJ's scholarship. A Welshman by birth, he spent his entire academic career at Leeds, but a majority of his publications were on Wales and they focused broadly – though far from exclusively – on the north-west of the country. To English historians, GRJJ's name seems to be synonymous with the multiple estate. But in Wales, the multiple estate (*maenor*) was just one of a range of admittedly interlocking themes that occupied him throughout his academic life. Beverley Smith, covering these in an introductory appreciation of GRJJ's work on Welsh topics, alludes to the multiple estate only once. Instead we have the emergence and development of early Welsh society and its agrarian environment, tenurial development, the evolution of kindred groups, field systems, the royal courts and their bond settlements, all themes that GRJJ worked on. Smith writes with his customary fluency and the only regret is that this inaugural chapter could have been three or four times longer and of commensurate value in appreciating GRJJ's work. Contrary to this expensive book's subtitle, then, this is more an academic primer on a single theme than a celebration of an eminent Welsh historian's wide-ranging research.

BOB SILVESTER

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***Nogara. Archeologia e storia di un villaggio medievale (Scavi 2003–2008).*** (Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento Tempo, Spazio, Immagine, Società dell'Università di Verona. Serie Storico-Archeologica, 1). Edited by Fabio Saggiaro. 17 × 24 cm. xi + 372 pp, 100 colour and b&w pls, 61 b&w figs, 25 tables. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 2011. ISBN 978-88-7689-261-5 (ISSN 2239-9801). Price: €80,00 pb.

An excavation report in book rather than monograph form (suffering image-wise through this reduction from A4 and lacking colour site photos), *Nogara. Archeologia*

*e storia* details a project of excavation and survey near the locality 'Mulino di Sotto' on the Tartaro river in the Veronese plain, c 35 km south of Verona, in north Italy. The site lies close to a castle founded in AD 903 and one aim of the project, which ran from 2003–08, first under the University of Padua till 2007 and then by Verona University, was to consider the relationship between this and the excavated site (A good documentary record, detailed by Castagnetti, usefully identifies villages and landholdings from the 9th century onward). Waterlogging meant the preservation of timbers from four houses and their platforms and pathways, enabling close dendrochronological and C14 determinations, and recovery of a large botanical assemblage, helping to show the insertion of a rural habitat (Phase 2) into a reclaimed marshy zone from c AD 814, construction of embankments, cutting of woodland and varied cultivation. This was followed after the 11th century (Phase 3) by a progressive drop in activity and a return of marshland (Phase 3 lacked related structures but featured dumping of waste). The fairly tight date range means important insights into 9th- to 11th-century community via wood-working evidence (higher quality work occurs in the platform construction than in the houses themselves), and especially in the finds assemblages (discussed in six specialist papers), such as the coarse-wares, soapstone (*pietra ollare*), glazed vessels, weaving finds (related items including 33 glazed spindle whorls) and metalwork. Three very useful and full papers/reports explore the good faunal data (showing varied wild and wetland resource exploitation) and rich botanical material (for both site activity and environment). A wider setting is considered through the results of two landscape surveys in the territory, before the editor's intelligent closing discussion, which duly integrates the finds analyses and documentary evidence to consider this intriguing site's local role and identity – an embryonic village, a formalisation of older exploitation of royally-owned natural spaces, a connection with the monastery of Nonantola and ties to the emergent castle of Nogara.

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***Processing, Storage, Distribution of Food – Food in the Medieval Rural Environment. Ruralia VIII. 7th-12th September 2009, Lorca, Spain.*** Edited by Jan Klápště & Petr Sommer. 21 x 30 cm. vi + 433 pp, 318 b&w pls and figs, 16 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011. ISBN 978-2-503-53661-3. Price: €82,00 pb.

Diet and cuisine are receiving increasing levels of attention by medieval archaeologists. This volume, and the conference from which the contributions are drawn, make a major contribution to our understanding of these areas at a Europe-wide scale. The title somewhat sells the book short, however, as papers deal not only with the rural environment, but with towns too, with several papers comparing urban and rural evidence. Papers are also not limited to discussions of the processing, storage and distribution of food, but also its consumption.

As to be expected from a volume dealing with food, many of the papers deal with environmental or artefactual

evidence. Of these two stand out as particularly important. The first is Paolo de Vingo's consideration of eating and cooking vessels from two sites in northern Italy, which is exceptional in its consideration of vessels in multiple materials (ceramic, stone and glass). Similarly, Ingrid Øye discusses the artefactual evidence for cooking practices, placing her findings into their social context and using residue analysis to relate the vessels to the foodstuffs processed within them – themes also addressed in Dominique Allios's discussion of the emergence of new ceramic forms. Of the papers dealing with environmental evidence, Elisabeth Marti-Grädel and Richard Frosdick's detailed examination and analysis of faunal remains from north-western Switzerland stands out, both for its rigorous statistical approach and the enlightening conclusions regarding the social role of animal consumption in the medieval period. A similar approach is taken in Vianney Forest and Isabelle Rodet-Belbari's consideration of faunal remains from Languedoc. Many papers synthesise the faunal and environmental remains from various regions, whereas others are noteworthy for their attempts to bring together environmental and artefactual data. While the focus of the papers is largely regional, those by Thomas Meier and Rainer Schreg attempt to use food studies to answer bigger questions relating to economic systems and environmental change respectively.

The remaining papers focus more on architectural and landscape evidence for food production and storage. The volume begins with a number of Spanish contributions discussing the evidence for granaries, irrigation, salt exploitation and mills. Importantly these papers also set to discuss the social role of these structures, having a role in mediating community relations and power structures. This is an area which promises much in the future. A major theme across the volume is the integration of archaeological, ethnographic and historical sources, and nowhere is this more prevalent than in discussions of storage and processing structures in Spain, Scotland, Switzerland and Germany. This integration serves to place the archaeology into context, as well as informing the approaches taken to understanding these structures. Several papers deal with what we might call less savoury issues, including the archaeological evidence for pest control and Richard Jones's eye-opening discussion of manuring patterns in English medieval villages.

Although the content is interesting, varied and important, the volume is unfortunately let down by the standard of editing. There are a number of typographical errors and inconsistencies in referencing. The majority of papers are in English, with a small number of contributions in French and German, but there is massive variability in the length and quality of the foreign language summaries provided, with some papers providing none at all. The reader is urged to look past these issues, though, as the papers not only provide a valuable set of reference materials relating to food consumption across medieval Europe, but also provide an interesting cross-section of modern approaches to its study. They will hopefully provide the basis for new pan-European developments in the field.

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*Thorps in a Changing Landscape.* (Explorations in Local and Regional History Vol. 4). By Paul Cullen, Richard Jones & David N. Parsons. 17 X 25 cm. xviii + 224 pp, 47 b&w pls and figs, 9 tables. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-902806-82-2. Price: £14.99 pb.

This is an intelligent, very readable book that provides a model of how place name evidence should be used by landscape historians and archaeologists. The significance of one particular element – *thorp/throp* – is systematically analysed by examining not just its distribution but also the character of its associated prefixes, while a range of historical and archaeological evidence is employed to throw light on the chronology and morphology, status and function, of the places to which it is attached. The authors are then able, very effectively, to challenge the old orthodoxy that thorps simply represent small, ‘late’ settlements on marginal land – on uplands away from the ‘good’ soils of the river valleys – in the way that Cameron and others have argued. Such places may indeed have been small, and with simple plans, and mainly ‘late’ – most originated in the 9th, 10th or 11th centuries. But there is often evidence for earlier settlement near to them, so they were not pioneers on marginal soils. Indeed, the authors emphasise that in national terms thorps are closely associated with ‘arable’ soils and – as a particularly striking map on p 143 reveals – with areas of open-field agriculture. The authors therefore argue that thorps were specialised arable settlements: ‘arable farming may well have been the mainstay of the thorp economy’ – amounting to ‘heavy emphasis or total specialisation’ – a revolutionary suggestion.

In a more speculative conclusion the authors ponder what all this might mean. They note that thorps came into existence when nucleated villages and fully-developed open-field agriculture were emerging in England; thorp was ‘an element in the vocabulary of that revolution’. Thorps were associated with extensive open fields but perhaps as ‘outposts’ established by large estates ‘near the margins of their landholdings associated with the new field systems’. Thorps may in fact represent (if I understand their argument at this point) survivors from a transitional stage in which ‘many of the fields, or every field’ had its own thorp – they originated as ‘settlements – perhaps no more than temporary or seasonal shelters – for workers in the distant fields, for ploughmen or even perhaps slaves tied to the demesne’.

An immensely enjoyable and stimulating book but not without its problems, some of which are implicitly or explicitly noted by the authors. The relationship between thorps and soils is mainly made on the basis of national, rather than local or regional maps: taking a more locally-focused view it is possible to argue that thorps do often occupy *relatively* marginal locations. One might ask how useful modern MAFF classifications of land capability are anyway for our understanding of early-medieval agriculture. More importantly, what *was* a specialised arable establishment in the early Middle Ages – were there really places without, or with only small numbers of sheep, cattle, oxen? And does the proposed chronology of thorps – mainly 10th century or later – really suggest that they are contemporary with ‘nucleation’, which, if

it actually happened, must have been complete in most Midland areas by the time that Saxo-Norman pottery, which fails to occur on the outlying, ‘abandoned’ sites discovered by fieldwalking, was introduced in the later 9th century? Above all, to me at least the argument concerning the relationship of thorps to the emerging open fields is not so much unconvincing as unclear. One wonders, in fact, whether – as the authors note at one point – there are dangers in seeking a single or predominant explanation for an element employed in place-naming over a period of several hundred years.

So, an invigorating read, highly recommended, as much for the new agenda it implicitly sets out for place name studies as for the specific argument concerning the significance of a particular element. It deserves to be on the shelves of all readers of this journal.

TOM WILLIAMSON  
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*The Field Archaeology of Dartmoor.* By Phil Newman. 22 x 28 cm. xii + 264 pp, 224 colour and b&w pls and figs. Swindon: English Heritage, 2011. ISBN 978-1-84802-03-7. Price: £30.00 pb.

A contributor to 20 years of survey and other fieldwork on Dartmoor by RCHME, and later English Heritage, coupled with research and publication on Dartmoor’s tin industry, Phil Newman is well placed to compile a new overview of the moor’s archaeological heritage. In so doing, he also acknowledges the valuable contributions of his Ordnance Survey predecessors since the 1880s and his former RHCME colleagues. The volume benefits from a wealth of excellent survey and interpretative plans, aerial and ground photography from the recent fieldwork programme, although sadly numerous typographical errors have eluded proof-readers.

What Newman terms the ‘story of Dartmoor’ is deliberately circumscribed by an emphasis on Dartmoor’s present accessible moorland; by exclusion of ‘most aspects of the built environment’ (taking in towns, villages, farms and vernacular architecture) and of ‘movement through the landscape’ (including droveways), and by little engagement with ‘the social history of Dartmoor’ (pp 10–11). The result overall is a very ‘traditional’ materialistic approach focussing on disused upstanding features – the ‘Field Archaeology’ of the title – rather than discussion of that material heritage as indicative of people’s developing attitudes and responses to the moor and its roles: a context which, for most periods and themes, extends far beyond Dartmoor. But context does creep in, as in discussion of the roles fulfilled by Okehampton Castle (see Ch 6) and of the medieval tin industry (Ch 8), the latter a highly readable and well-illustrated discussion of the field evidence arranged by the chief processes involved. Chapter 14 on ‘Security and defence in the modern period’ also provides a valuable first summary account of features arising from the moor’s military uses up to the Cold War and briefly discusses their contemporary strategic and social contexts.

A problematic outcome of the book’s approach is a cursory regard for the influences of Dartmoor’s primary agricultural role, since at least the middle Bronze

Age, as a summer grazing resource integrated within a transhumant economy that, certainly by the later medieval period, extended across much of Devon. Even while mentioning pollen evidence for sustained early medieval grazing on Dartmoor, the implications for that period's land use continuity are not developed, noting disparagingly that settlement 'may have been restricted to seasonal occupation associated with summer grazing' (p 101). The book's self-imposed restrictions leave discussion of medieval settlement dominated by deserted and excavated sites, omitting their context within the largely medieval character of Dartmoor's present settlement at broad and detailed scale – a considerable inheritance of medieval settlements still in occupation, many with extant late medieval features and associated land subdivision.

The book's parameters appear defined for an audience of the interested public. It will certainly provide a useful, attractive entry point for those wishing to learn more about the clearly artificial features they encounter on their walks on Dartmoor. But, for this book, the interest in the past lies in its separation from the present, rather than its role in shaping the present and our place in that continuity. Engaging the public as players in the stories of Dartmoor may give more resonance for most.

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***A History of Wharram Percy and its Neighbours.*** (Wharram. A Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds, XIII/ York University Archaeological Publications 15). Edited by Stuart Wrathmell. 22 x 30 cm. xiv + 403 pp, 155 colour and b&w pls and figs, 24 tables. York: Wharram Research Project and University of York, 2012. ISBN 978-0-946722-22-8. Price: £33.50 hb.

In 1950, a remarkable piece of archaeological research began, which in 2012 achieved a major milestone: the completion of its extended publication programme. *A History of Wharram Percy and its Neighbours* is the thirteenth and final volume of the 'Wharram. A Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds' monograph series. Wharram is not just the best known deserted medieval village, but, as Christopher Taylor has observed, perhaps the most important archaeological excavation in post-War Britain: it pioneered new techniques, was at the forefront of emerging research agendas, and helped to train several generations of academics and other professional archaeologists. After monographs on the domestic houses, church and churchyard, water resources and their management, manorial complexes, and the preceding late prehistoric, Romano-British, and early medieval occupation, this volume brings all these archaeological results together with a study of the wider landscape.

Part One describes 'Old Excavations, New Surveys', starting with an extremely useful mapping and summary of the 100 separate excavations within the village, which is followed by a fascinating account of the connections between Wharram and the Danish archaeologist Axel

Steensberg who pioneered open-area excavation. Two remarkable new surveys carried out at Wharram in 2002 are then presented: that of the earthworks is a simply stunning piece of cartography that leads to some important new conclusions (for example a revised sequence for the North Manor complex), while the magnetometer survey revealed a previously unsuspected Middle Saxon enclosure complex that we can now see provides the context for the many finds and features of that period that were found dotted across some of the excavations.

Part Two explores 'Wharram and the Wolds in Prehistoric, Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon Times', and includes a report on work carried out in 2005 on the North-West Enclosure. A combination of aerial photography, geophysical survey and historic landscape analysis across the wider area reveals a late prehistoric landscape characterised by long sinuous trackways and ladder-plan settlements that in the late Roman period appear to have been replaced by discrete enclosures. Beyond the immediate hinterland of the settlements there are only occasional field-boundary ditches suggesting a managed pastoral landscape, while the scarcity of Early Saxon evidence from the Wolds would imply that the whole area became seasonally managed grazing that was linked to the adjacent lowland communities through a network of trackways, many of which have persisted through to the present day.

Part Three looks at 'New Communities in the Middle and Late Saxon Periods'. An analysis of township/parish boundaries and their associated place-names provides the spatial framework for this discussion of the re-colonisation of the Wolds, the key archaeological evidence for which is a series of curvilinear enclosure complexes ('Butterwick-type' settlements) that were first identified through aerial photography, and of which a further example has now been revealed through the geophysical survey at Wharram Percy. There follows a summary of the various trenches at Wharram that found traces of this Middle Saxon settlement, discussions of the Middle Saxon material culture and faunal assemblage, and a note on another of these Butterwick-type sites at Burdale. There follows a fascinating discussion of how this evidence should be interpreted, with Stuart Wrathmell arguing that the Wharram 'Butterwick-type' site was a permanent settlement, while Paul Everson and David Stocker prefer to see it as 'a seasonally occupied sheep-management station, rather than anything [they] would wish to describe as a "settlement"'. Attention then turns to the Late Saxon period when it is now clear that the village plan we see today came into being. The context for this reorganisation of the landscape appears to have been a series of Anglo-Scandinavian controlled estates, and in another interesting debate, Wrathmell argues that it was strong lordship that led to Wharram's laying out, while Everson and Stocker suggest that it was driven by the community.

Part Four explores 'Wharram and the Wolds from the 12th to the 16th centuries', and includes a manorial history, a new discussion of the evolution of the church based upon a survey of the standing fabric, and an analysis of the evolving settlement plan, including the reasons why the manor house moved to its northern location in the 12th century when the church appears to

have been greatly enlarged, and the watermill appears to have been enlarged/refurbished. There follows an analysis of the field systems and settlements of Wharram and its vicinity, and a discussion of the agricultural economy and daily life which includes an account of the inventory of William Akclum – a 15th-century tenant of Wharram le Street – which has been used to inform the preparation of two artists' impressions of what the interior of a late medieval peasant's house may have looked like. The final chapter presents the evidence for Wharram's desertion in the 16th century.

Although research in the area of Wharram is continuing, and Part Five suggests some future research potential, the publication of this volume undoubtedly marks the end of an era. There are so many points of interest it is impossible to list them all, but for this reviewer two linked, key highlights are firstly the geophysical survey that revealed, for the first time, the Middle Saxon settlement (for surely a permanent settlement it is), and secondly the way that the editor has been bold enough to contain papers that present some sharply contrasting views. Indeed, while the publication of this volume is an appropriate moment to remember the remarkable contribution of Maurice Beresford and John Hurst, we must also acknowledge the huge contribution of Stuart Wrathmell in bringing the project through to publication. No one interested in medieval settlement and landscape can afford not to read this outstanding piece of research.

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***Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands. Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages.*** By Harold Fox, edited by Matthew Tompkins and Christopher Dyer. 18 x 25 cm. xii + 291 pp, 22 colour pls, 44 b&w pls and figs, 7 tables. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-85989-865-2. Price: £30.00 pb.

When Harold Fox died in 2007 he left the manuscript of this final book unpublished. His colleagues and friends at the University of Leicester's Centre for English Local History, where he had worked for over 30 years, realised the importance of the work and resolved to bring it to publication. With help in various forms from Fox's colleagues, friends and family, Matt Tompkins and Chris Dyer have completed what must have been a most difficult task. In common (apparently) with many academic writers, Fox only composed his footnotes after the main text was complete, which means the editors have had to reconstruct references from notebooks, articles, and other sources. They have done an admirable job whilst maintaining the wonderfully idiosyncratic quality of Fox's skilful prose.

The book is written in typical Fox style, which is to say both elegant and richly learned. The reader is quickly aware of deep currents of knowledge that lie beneath a sparkling, bubbling flow of fascinating chapters. The author's modest self-parody belies the depth of his scholarship:

'... as a young man, over many a summer vacation, I forsook the bright blue skies above Chancery Lane,

the birthday-cake towers of the Public Record Office silhouetted against them, and with a mixture of resentment at loss of July days, and excitement, and diffidence, entered through that building's doors to create another world far away ...' (p.61)

We are very fortunate that he overcame his hesitancy. His vivid writing brings the hills and rivers to life and fills them with fascinating characters. As someone who grew up on the moors Fox describes, I found this a compelling read.

Of the seven substantive chapters, most had been fully drafted by the author before his death (minus footnotes), though the editors have added and filled out text in various places, especially towards the end. They also provide a helpful introduction and conclusion. Although the title defines Dartmoor as the book's main focus, the text is underpinned throughout by Fox's broad knowledge of comparative material from both Britain and other parts of medieval Europe. It begins by outlining its subject and the nature of transhumance. The story of transhumance to Dartmoor is told working back from the later Middle Ages and begins with two chapters on what Fox calls 'impersonal transhumance'. This was the system whereby lowland farmers paid others who lived on or near the moor to look after their livestock whilst they grazed the summer pastures. Chapters 4 and 5 move back in time to reconstruct 'personal transhumance', when according to Fox early medieval farmers accompanied their livestock to the hills. As we should expect, the author has discovered previously unknown and unappreciated references in the medieval documents, but supplements this information with other material from archaeology, place-names and topography. Two final chapters present an analysis of the changing patterns of transhumance and the manifestations and consequences of the practice in the historic landscape.

Fox makes important contributions to scholarship in several areas, which are helpfully summarised by the editors in their conclusion (p.224 ff.). Firstly, he casts welcome light on the importance of pastoral farming and (with 'informed speculation') its potential profits in the later Middle Ages. Linked to this, he highlights Dartmoor's role as a particular kind of farming landscape. Rather than explaining its use in terms of marginality or remoteness, he shows that as a distinctive Devon *pays* it provided a range of important resources and was well-integrated with the rest of the region's farming system. He identifies and describes the difference between 'personal' and 'impersonal' transhumance, and reconstructs (with some speculation) the earliest, pre-Conquest, patterns of transhumance. Finally, he suggests a context for the demise of 'personal' transhumance and links it to the demarcation of properties and territories around the Moor in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

*Alluring Uplands* not only provides us with a highly original analysis, but also points the way to future research. The editors identify various topics that Fox probably wanted to include but had not yet addressed, such as turf-cutting, millstone-making and wildfowling. Fox's final chapter highlights the possibility of mapping the surviving networks of droveways, greens and other features linked to the movement of livestock, a task

he had begun but by no means systematically carried out. Although the book draws on various types of evidence, Fox's extensive work on the documents lies at its core: fundamental contributions on the subject of transhumance remain to be made by archaeologists, and the place-names of Devon and Dartmoor (including minor ones) would surely repay systematic research. Finally, there is much scope for further comparison with other parts of Britain and Europe where transhumance took place.

There will be time for this in the future. For now, we must remember and thank Harold Fox for leading us along new roads to Dartmoor and beyond.

SAM TURNER  
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***Willoughby by Norwell Deserted Village.*** (Norwell Heritage Booklet 6). By Michael & Elisabeth Jones. 15 × 21 cm. 64 pp, 56 colour and b&w pls and figs. Nottingham: Norwell Heritage Group, 2012. ISSN 2040-2406. Price: £5.10 (with p&p) pb.

This is a small, attractively produced booklet on the history and archaeology of a deserted settlement that now forms part of Norwell, some 8 km north of Newark. It provides a survey of the surviving earthworks and re-examines the results of a limited excavation in 1954/55 by the Nottingham University Archaeological Society on the platforms south of the moated site, that marks the position of the manor. A geophysical survey was carried out in 2010 which also helps in the interpretation of the hollow ways and crofts. The moated site contained a house until 1771 and the abandonment of the village, church and manor was a long process, which complicates the earthworks with ridge and furrow ploughing and post-medieval features, but the documentary evidence suggests that the settlement never contained more than 15 households and that it was gradually abandoned in favour of Norwell. Although there are references to three fields belonging to Willoughby these are not clearly identified on any of the plans, and the reproduction of the enclosure map of 1832 is too small to be certain of their location. The booklet is completed with a glossary and index – both thoughtful additions to help the general reader. This is a useful publication to have on the shelf and could serve as a model for other parish histories as a complete and literate description by local, and obviously energetic, authors.

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***Extraordinary Inundations of the Sea: excavations at Market Mews, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.*** (East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 142). By Mark Hinman and Elizabeth Popescu. 21 × 30 cm. x + 108 pp, 56 b&w pls and figs, 22 tables. Bar Hill: Oxford Archaeology East, 2012. ISBN 978-1-907588-04-4. Price: £12.00 pb.

*Extraordinary Inundations* presents small but significant excavations by the archaeological field unit which was,

in 1996, a part of Cambridgeshire County Council (now transformed into Oxford Archaeology East). The site is important one for several reasons. These were the first excavations in Wisbech that used modern archaeological practices and had direct, contextual evidence for episodic flooding which can also be matched to documented flood events. There were well-preserved artefacts and organic remains, as well as evidence for industrial working. All of this has added much-needed knowledge about the nature of medieval urban life in the Fens, and allows us to speculate on what it must have been like to endure this somewhat precarious environment.

As one expects from the EAA series, the book begins with a detailed contextual chapter (Chapter 1) which is followed by a well-presented description of the archaeological sequence (Chapter 2), finds (Chapter 3), and the zooarchaeological and botanical remains (Chapter 4). In addition, and crucial to explaining the stratigraphic sequence and identifying the periods of flooding from the structure floor surfaces, a chapter on the micromorphology is also included (Chapter 5).

Chapter 6 brings the book to a conclusion, though this reviewer felt there was some disconnection with the detailed contextual and archaeological evidence reported previously. One wonders how the people who erected the thirteen structures found on this deeply stratified site negotiated this environment and indeed why the space was used repetitively over a period from the thirteenth to the late sixteenth century. These questions are only partially answered and the detail of the excavations is extrapolated out towards generalized themes such as craft and economy, rather than the possible interpretations arising from the wonderful empirical data. As one of the excavators who debated the minutiae of each context presented in this volume on site, I would have loved to read more interpretative detail in this final chapter.

Nevertheless, the volume makes up for this small shortcoming with excellent presentation of the medieval artefactual and environmental assemblages. There is valuable new evidence here for life in Fenland towns, and interesting discussion of the systems that linked England to Europe across the North Sea. Those interested in these subjects will benefit greatly from this valuable report.

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***Limerick and South-West Ireland: Medieval Art and Architecture.*** (British Archaeological Association Conference Transaction Series, Volume XXXIV). Edited by Roger Stalley. 18 × 25 cm. xvi + 270 pp, 20 colour pls, 163 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2011. ISBN 978-1-907625-07-7 hb (978-1-907625-08-4 pb). Price: £76.00 hb; £36.00 pb.

This handsomely produced volume, edited by surely the most distinguished art historian of medieval Ireland, Roger Stalley, is the product of the Limerick meeting of the British Archaeological Association in 2008. It examines the medieval art and architecture of the Province of Munster, and many of the 18 substantive papers are either by Roger's former students or

colleagues – a testament to his impact on the subject. The volume features also eight pages of superb colour plates at its front, with many fascinating black and white plates illustrating each paper. All the contributors attempt to contextualise the architectural remains of the study area within either an English or European framework; Roger himself sets the wider context in place in his Introduction, followed by an historical introduction by the eminent medieval historian, Robin Frame.

In this short review it is impossible to do justice to all the papers, except to stress that the architectural treasures of this region of Ireland that are discussed in this volume are often not well studied or understood elsewhere. For the pre-Norman period, O Carraghain expertly surveys the importance of the Dal Cais Kings of Munster (c. AD 950–1050) and their churches and round towers. A major structure surveyed is Limerick Cathedral, with Richard Gem examining its fabric, while two articles by the late Christa Grossinger and John Cherry consider its important misericords; in a separate chapter, Cherry also studies the crosier and mitre of the bishops. Then follow several contributions on some of the more distinctive remains of medieval Irish heritage, such as Hiberno-Romanesque sculpture and architecture, while Aisling O'Donoghue discusses the beautiful cloisters of the Franciscan friaries of Munster (a view of those at Askeaton grace the cover of this volume).

Next come papers on the military architecture of the region, such as that by Donnelly on the ubiquitous tower houses of County Limerick. McNeill covers the many larger medieval castles of the region in a comprehensive chapter, while Sherlock produces a fascinating paper on the architectural history of arguably the most famous castle of the region, that of Bunratty; the latter is considered also by Scott on the different remains of medieval stained glass that were inserted into Bunratty when it was being restored in the 1950s.

Stalley's introduction states that one of the major benefits of such conferences was 'the opportunity they allow for discussion and debate between locally based scholars and those coming from afar, looking at sites with fresh eyes' (4). This was certainly achieved by this set of inspiring and informative papers, and Roger Stalley is to be congratulated on its production.

TERRY BARRY  
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**Lough Swilly.** *A Living Landscape.* Edited by Andrew Cooper. 20 × 27 cm. 208 pp, 131 colour pls and figs, 4 b&w pls and figs, 21 tables. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010. ISBN 978-1-84682-307-7. Price: £29.95 hb.

W.G. Hoskins set a standard for archaeological landscape interpretation in the 1950s that continues to receive applause. In *Lough Swilly*, readers have the opportunity to absorb something a little different. The Swilly is one of Ireland's largest sea loughs, located on the north coast, forming part of County Donegal and framing the western shore of the Inishowen peninsula. The editor and many of the contributors are based at

the University of Ulster, Coleraine, and are geographers and environmentalists concerned with coastal studies and the environmental sciences. Consequently there is a wealth of information by specialists on aspects of the landscape that pure archaeological approaches tend to avoid giving too much detail on, such as geology and geomorphology (Chapter 1); living habitats of the coast and seabed (Ch2); fluvial dynamics of the waters that feed the lough (Ch 3); and there is a masterful range of chapters on the maritime culture associated with fishing and marine resources in the present day (Chs 8–10). The book is a product of the Interreg Northwest Europe project concerned with Innovation Management for Europe's Changing Coastal Resource (IMCORE), and this explains in part the scope and range of disciplines that have come together to publish a well illustrated volume whose audience will be a wide church of specialists and the public alike. The photographs are lavish and ample space is given to make the most of them. There are many maps and all to a similar GIS full-colour standard, although to this reviewer they are a little 'heavy handed' in terms of line thicknesses for borders and the use of a dark green to show topography. There are two chapters that members of the MSRГ will find most useful: those by Thomas McErlean on the Archaeology and History of the lough (Ch 4) and its Maritime Heritage (Ch 5). As a principal scholar of the Strangford Lough intertidal archaeology studies (published in 2002), McErlean continues to impress and gives a most engaging overview of the medieval imprint on the Swilly in this volume. There is perhaps an absence of mapping and illustrations of particular sites and site types, but this is because archaeologists have yet to deal directly with the lough as a study area in its own right. McErlean's contribution is by way of an accessible overview, with some sense of the potential that lies within and around the Swilly for future scholars. This is a good book!

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**The English Medieval Roof. Crownpost to Kingpost.** (Report of the Essex Historic Buildings Group Day School 2008). Edited by John Walker. 21 × 30 cm. 162 pp, 277 colour and b&w pls and figs. Needham Market: Essex Historic Buildings Group 2011. ISBN 978-0-9530946-1-5. Price: £15.00 pb.

This volume is the result of a conference held by the Essex Historic Buildings Group marking the 50th anniversary of J T Smith's 1958 article 'Medieval roofs: a classification' (*Archaeological Journal* CXV, 111–149). It contains seven individual papers examining aspects of the development medieval roof construction in different parts of England, produced by leading researchers in those areas, plus an introductory paper by John Walker, past president of the EHBG. The volume is quite specific in its remit, dealing with smaller secular buildings of non-cruck construction (though some papers do consider the regional development of crucks alongside other medieval roof forms). Much research has occurred since 1958, though not all of the information has been

widely available. This, coupled with the development and widespread application (in some areas) of tree-ring dating, makes the present volume a timely addition to the corpus of published information on medieval building studies.

Inevitably the geographical coverage is uneven, reflecting to some extent the focus of research undertaken by regional groups and/or tireless individuals; hopefully it will prompt researchers in other areas. Walker's Introduction attempts to provide a national overview, highlighting trends such as the apparent uniformity of medieval roof types across the country up to c1300, with the considerable regional diversity demonstrated in other papers only developing after that date. Walker also produced the very informative illustrated glossary. Indeed the volume as a whole is copiously illustrated with line drawings, photographs and maps, many in colour; a small number, however, have lost something of their sharpness in digital translation. As space does not allow for detailed critique of all the papers, suffice to say that anyone with an interest in secular medieval buildings in any of the regions listed below should read the relevant paper and will probably find much else besides to interest them: Essex (David Stenning); Hampshire (Edward Roberts); West Midlands (Bob Meeson); Devon (John Thorp); Northern England (Robert Hook); Yorkshire (Barry Harrison) and East Anglia (Philip Aitkens). The volume should in fact be recommended widely to medieval archaeologists, particularly those contemplating reconstructions of excavated buildings. Meeson's paper is especially worthy in this respect for his attempt to reconcile the evidence from archaeological excavation with that of surviving medieval buildings, spanning the divide between the disciplines of archaeology and architectural

history. The volume is likely to become a standard work of reference for students of medieval buildings.

NEIL FINN

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*New Directions in Local History since Hoskins.* Edited by Christopher Dyer, Andrew Hopper, Evelyn Lord and Nigel Tringham. 16 x 24 cm. xx + 276 pp., 12 col. plates, 46 b&w pls and figs. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011. ISBN 978-1-907396-12-0. Price: £16.99 pb.

This book presents selected papers from a conference at Leicester University organised by the Centre for English Local History and the British Association of Local Historians to mark the 50th anniversary of W.G. Hoskins' *Local History in England*. As the editors note in their introduction, the book's aim is not to provide a conclusive overview of the subject, but instead to give a flavour of the kind of work undertaken by local historians through some stimulating case-studies. With the exception of one paper on Skye, the contributions focus on England. Medieval and early modern studies are represented in several chapters including Sheila Sweetinburgh's contribution on Kent butcher-graziers, Claire Cross's paper on Salisbury during the Reformation, and David Hey's exploration of the Derbyshire houses of people associated with the lead industry. A stimulating introductory section reflects on the practice of local history and its development.

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