REVIEWS

G. Bennett, E. Clavering and A. Rounding, *A Fighting Trade—Rail Transport in Tyne Coal, 1600–1800*, Portcullis Press, Gateshead, 1990. Volume 1. *History*, Pp. IV + 192; Volume 2. *Data*, Pp. VI + 112, figs. 57 pls. 10. Price £25.00. ISBN 0 901273 147.

WHEN M. J. T. Lewis' book *Early Wooden Railways* was published in 1970, it was rightly hailed as a classic work on the development of the horse-drawn waggonway for the overland transport of coal. His selected brief was broad, no less than the history of the wooden railways of Britain and Europe from the middle ages to the 1790s. For the history and development of waggonways of north-east England, Lewis provided, and still provides, a useful outline, a skeleton, albeit with some bones missing and a few connections out of joint. He had relied heavily on archives and the printed word and advised that those readers who sought a precise account of the route and history of each wooden railway would be doomed to disappointment. Now, but 20 years later, readers seeking precisely that kind of information for some of the Tyne-based waggonways, will be well pleased with *A Fighting Trade*. . . .

Bennett, Clavering and Rounding have chosen to concentrate their investigations on the development of the waggonways up to about 1770, in the adjacent parishes of Gateshead, Whickham and Ryton, for them the "heart of the original Newcastle coalfield", though some might question their meaning of the word "original". Mostly claiming to be "amateur local historians", the authors have brought a thorough and refreshingly holistic discipline to bear on their chosen subject, combining the available archives, maps, and printed sources with a detailed examination on the ground of every Way under consideration; their patient searches in record offices and libraries, and their legwork searches, apparently aided by Jeanie the dog, are to be commended.

Their historical context is rightly rooted in the "ambitions, the calculations, the intelligence, cunning, mistakes of men and women who paid out for the construction of the way, or for its obstruction".

The introduction and development of waggonways to the north east was not, they persuasively claim, the outcome of a belief in the merits of technical progress, nor one in the virtue of economic growth, but rather "it was an attempt by the great mineral and land owners to maintain their established market when incomer entrepreneurs, and exhaustion of their own supplies, threatened their former dominance". It was, in other words, the result of social, economic and political attitudes with which we are familiar today, attempts by a favoured few to maintain and sustain their economically favoured positions by the creation of oligarchic and monopolistic structures—notions of free-marketry were a mere chimera.

The first volume of this work commences with a short, critical historiography followed by discussions on the comparative values of wain and waggonway transport, the economic viability of waggonways, and the nature of landholding and Tyneside society. These two extremely useful chapters do, however, present some irritations to the impatient reader; reference is

frequently made to special factors relating to a particular event or waggonway, but they remain unidentified until they reappear in the main body of the text. For example we are told in p. 13 that in 1716, half of a colliery's output was demanded as rent for a 300 yard wayleave, but it is not until p. 119 that we learn that this was on the Western Way and that the perpetrator of such extortion was the dastardly William Cotesworth.

Successive chapters detail each waggonway chronologically, all the available documentary evidence being presented and set within the context of the coal trade and the families which dominated it; the lengthy and gripping "War of the Waggonways", (Chapter 6), is surely awaiting the "film of the book". Here especially, the role of women in the trade is highlighted. The Way-women and the staith-women are known to have existed but in common with ordinary working women of the time, their voices are silent. But in the "War", the leader of one side was a woman owner, Lady Jane Clavering, and at one time her principal ally was Elizabeth Blakiston of Gibside. Together these two women built a waggonway in the teeth of cartel opposition organized by Sir Henry Liddell and William Cotesworth, and by wayleave sabotage, they destroyed a way of their opponents.

Lewis had found conclusive evidence for only one Tyne waggonway before 1660, and tentative evidence for another in 1656, but suggested that there might have been more "could we but find them". The present authors claim to have found four waggonways in being before 1640. The evidence does not always appear to be strong, depending in one case, the Winlaton Way, on the assertion that the words "Cole Carriages" in a document of 1632, supported by another of 1650 with the word "Waggons", scratched out three times but left unaltered on a fourth occasion, implies a pre-1640 waggonway. For the Stella Grand Lease Way the main evidence stems from an un-dated map to which the authors convincingly attribute a date of 1728, whereon it is described as having been built "about Ninety years ago". Confusingly, and presumably in unintentional error, the authors also suggest the possibility of seven waggonways before 1640 (p. 53).

Volume 2 "The Data" comprises statistics of the coal trade, the routes of the waggonways usefully superimposed over extracts from the $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch Ordnance Survey maps, detailed route descriptions with comments on surviving structures, copies of 57 archive plans, 18 half-tone photographs, (not all well reproduced), and 18 pedigrees, in all an indispensable compilation for the student of waggonways and their history.

Not unexpectedly in a work of this sort there are some minor errors; for example the Clavering pedigree gives Lady Jane's date of death as 1723 whereas elsewhere the year 1735 is implied. There are also some typographical errors, and in this reviewer's copy some production problems were clearly encountered—two faded and two reproduced pages.

This will not, it is hoped, be the last work to appear on the subject of the horse-drawn waggonways of the north east, but it sets a standard for similar examinations of the Ways north of the Tyne and to the Wear. In addition, more field and archaeological work would be welcome, to include, for example, the production of gradient plans, measured surveys of cuts and embankments, excavations to indicate constructional methods, etc.

A Fighting Trade . . . is a rewarding and stimulating, if not always an easy read; at least two words were not recognized by my word processor dictionary. It adds immensely to our knowledge of the waggonways and the coal trade of an important part of the north east coalfield. More than any earlier writers on the subject, the authors have demonstrated that markets, geography, geology, technical constraints and imperatives, provide only some of the dimensions for a history of the coal industry and its waggonways. For equally, and perhaps more importantly, the industry was shaped by "the dynamics of a restless, striving, but closely-knit people". Moreover, as is made clear, waggonways are a good, but greatly neglected, economic indicator. The authors, and Gateshead MBC their publishers, are to be congratulated on their work; it will stand by my

copy of Lewis's book, together indispensable to a study of the waggonways of north-east England.

STAFFORD M. LINSLEY

Karen R. Dixon and Pat Southern, *The Roman Cavalry From the First to the Third Century A.D.*, B. T. Batsford Ltd., London 1992, 256 pages. 84 figs. 35 plates. £30.

THIS book is the combined effort of two authors and incorporates 14 chapters, each dealing with a specific area of the Roman cavalry. Approximately half deals with the human element, the balance with the equine partners. Some chapters viz: three on equipment, and six on training deal with both parts of the partnerships.

The line drawings by Karen Dixon are excellent and complement the text admirably. The plates depicting parade equipment for horse and rider are good, but some pictures of actual horses with reconstructed equipment would have been welcome. The range of cavalry tombstones fills this lack to a degree, but the three distinct poses they are shown in—levade, gallop, and long reining—would have benefited from some explanation as to equestrian techniques and reasons for same in the text.

The chapter on sources is helpful, giving an overview of where the evidence on which the book is based lies, and the relative value of the sources used. Chapter two on Origins, Organization, and Titulature sets out the background to Roman cavalry and gives a concise, clear view of rankings, duties, and career advancement, and all known variations of unit strength.

Chapter 3 is an in-depth look at equipment. Text and illustrations on gear for the men gives a good picture of an accoutred and armed Roman cavalryman. The section on archery equipment (p. 53ff) would have benefited by line drawings of the Mongolian and Mediterranean releases as the two are so different, and visual aids do clarify why they were necessary with different types of bow. The section on horse equipment is reasonably well constructed, but it lacks the stamp of authority when describing the uses of certain pieces of equipment. Some important statements are wrong—e.g. (p. 63) "In battle however, Roman cavalrymen would have relied on leg control, since their hands would have been occupied holding a shield and spear or sword, rather than the reins." No sane trooper discarded reins unless he absolutely had to. Certain Roman cavalry bits were designed to operate while the trooper held a shield high to cover himself, and retained the reins in the left hand. While it is true that snaffle bits are designed for two-handed use they can easily be used one-handed on a schooled horse. The description of curb bit action is inadequate and partially incorrect; and the statement that hackamores are muzzles is incorrect. Hackamore derives from the Spanish *jaquima*, and is designed to act much as a modern drop noseband, but with more severe action in the Roman variety—the *psalion*. Muzzles cover the entire nose and are used for a horse that bites (pp. 63/64). A martingale (p. 68) is attached to either reins or noseband, and runs under the chest to the girth, not as shown. A crupper goes round and under the dock, so Roman harness for the hindquarters should be noted as breeching straps.

The sections on recruitment and conditions of service are instructive, concise and give a good insight into what a young cavalryman could expect in his army career, as does the section on training the cavalryman, with one important exception: on the Horse-Archer (p. 120)—a rider's knees are not in the region of the horse's flanks but just behind the shoulders, and it is the lower leg that controls the animal, and which keeps the animal moving straight. Even when twisting in the saddle a supple rider would not be prodding the horse with his knees. Far from performing "antics" Totila (p. 121) was executing skilled manoeuvres. In the section on training the horses (pp. 123ff) there are too many "probables" used, and evidence from 19th and 20th century sources could easily have been exchanged for Roman evidence available in literature (Virgil,

Varro, both Plinys, Aelian, plus various notes in works on military campaigns).

An introduction to Arrian's cavalry manoeuvres gives a welcome window onto the glamorous side of a top cavalryman's life: however the quote from Ars Tactica 34 on the horse's sides being protected by armour should have read "by saddlecloths".

The employment of cavalry in peacetime and wartime is dealt with in an efficient manner, but again too much use of 19th century tenets. On the Roman Military Records for pertinent cavalry data the book is on safer and illuminating ground, but on horse "losses and replacements" there is yet again too much about French, British, and American cavalry which although interesting should not have been used. Acquired equestrian knowledge properly applied would have been more acceptable.

Chapter 10 on Roman Cavalry Mounts is comprehensive, although some misunderstandings are apparent, such as equating an ass with a mule (167/8), and a few inaccuracies on conformation. I just cannot imagine any trooper riding an 11 hand—i.e., 3′ 8″ high—pony. He would have done better on foot! But the point over the efficiency of a 14–15 hand mount is very well made.

The section on stabling is also comprehensive, but as the author points out conclusive proof about Roman buildings used as stables is lacking in all but a few instances. Routine care and maintenance of horses are well discussed. Basic nutrition is reasonably discussed, although reference to Pelagonius (or any other veterinarian of the era) would have supplied a deal more contemporary information. The final chapter discusses baggage animals, and although the evidence is scant the text highlights the dependence of ancient armies on its beasts of burden, and the part, other than carrying and traction, such animals were occasionally called on to perform.

The book has many good points presenting the known evidence from Roman records through the centuries in a clear manner well illustrated. However the subtitle "*From the First to the Third Centuries A.D.*" might just as well have been dropped as it is a little misleading, evidence being used from both sides of this period to a marked degree. It is far stronger when dealing with the human element of cavalry. In the treatment afforded to the equally important equine half, although the text as a whole presents much of what is available from Roman evidence there are, from a horseman's point of view, serious omissions and misunderstandings. However the author of this section does point out her lack of first hand experience of equines and has made a strenuous effort to supply this lack by reference to cavalry manuals of the 19th and 20th centuries. This aspect, again to a horseman, does jar as the evidence is contained in Roman literature and works on military campaigns which can be analysed for their specific equestrian content.

ANN HYLAND

The Buildings of England: NORTHUMBERLAND, N. Pevsner and I. Richmond. Second edition revised by J. Grundy, G. McCombie, P. Ryder and H. Welfare. Industrial Buildings by S. Linsley. Penguin Books. London 1992. Hardcase £30.

THE first edition of the Northumberland volume in this series appeared in 1957. Much has changed in the county and in Newcastle since then, and an even greater change perhaps has occurred in our outlook towards what buildings remain and what we wish to know about them. In 1957 we expected to find in Pevsner's volumes only buildings with some pretension to architectural merit, with an occasional digression into archaeology. The line as to what constitutes a building had to be drawn somewhere and from a footnote (p. 11 in the Introduction) it seems to have been drawn at bridges. Even then so artificial a division was difficult to observe. In the interval the upsurge of interest in industrial archaeology and in vernacular architecture had greatly widened what the reader might seek to find in a work claiming to cover the buildings of the county, and a generation of intensive research, in surveys of buildings, in archaeology and in local history has greatly augmented the body of

relevant knowledge. The time was ripe for a revised edition.

The most obvious change in this new edition is the increase in the number of pages from 360 to 704. Moreover the format is deeper allowing 54 lines to the page in place of 43 in the former edition. The size of type has also been slightly reduced. So it is a reasonable guess that there is twice the matter in the new edition. Many places not included in the first edition appear in this and former entries have been greatly expanded. Ashington, for example had one line before; now it has 54. A vast array of functional buildings—road and rail bridges, gingangs, kilns of all kinds—are now noticed as well as structural features and materials. The expert knowledge required to achieve this is beyond the capacity of any one author and the revision could only have been carried through by a team with a range of specialized knowledge.

The names listed in our heading are sufficient assurance that such a team, with the addition of the late Dr. Douglas Robson for geology, was assembled. A valuable by-product of this is that each has contributed an introductory essay in his own field, lucid summaries of the state of knowledge on building materials, on prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains, on domestic and fortified buildings, and on industrial and agricultural buildings, all of which are a pleasure to read.

For the difference expert excavation can make in the interpretation of a single site, see the transformed account of Edlingham Castle. For the difference a systematic survey can make to the coverage of a city see the expansion of the entry for Newcastle from 43 pages to 110. The difference between the two editions can also be expressed in personal terms. The character of the first was determined by one man, Pevsner himself, who stamped his personality and values on the whole volume. The present edition has more the character of an encyclopedia, a systematic compilation presented impersonally by experts. The difference is strikingly illustrated by looking at a specific entry.

To choose Cragside for this comparison is perhaps to load the dice as few entries in the 1957 volume have been more admired. With characteristic percipience Pevsner (or possibly Honeyman—no mean critic) seized the truth that the essence of the place is in the landscape and that the merit of the house itself consists solely in its being a very effective feature in that landscape. This appraisal he presents with subtlety and wit, conveying a whole range of meanings by applying the adjective "Wagnerian" to the landscape, as something heroic, if not larger-than-life, not strictly indigenous, like Wagner's music not to everyman's taste but a considerable presence notwithstanding. At every point he emphasizes the positive aspects of his response, deftly leaving the reader to fill in the implicit negatives. To the contents of the house Pevsner gave one dry sentence which is as dismissive as if he had asked "What might Sir William Burrell have achieved with a comparable expenditure?"

In the new edition this brilliant thumb-nail essay has disappeared: we have lost a work of art and gained an encyclopedic entry. This is no reproach to the reviser who is working thoroughly and consistently to different terms of reference. In effect this is a different book from the 1957 edition, which bore the stamp of Pevsner's judgements and interests. We have in the new edition a work more comprehensive, more systematic, and more up-to-date, concerned rather with facts than with aesthetic judgements. There is no question it will prove an invaluable tool for anyone interested in the county. I would recommend however that if you have the 1957 edition you put it back on the shelf alongside this.

JOHN PHILIPSON

Stephen Wass, *The Amateur Archaeologist*, B. T. Batsford, London, 1992. 160pp with index, hardback, £14.99.

THE author states that the book aims to be "a comprehensive and practical guide to developing an interest in archaeology". The book in itself does not inspire an interest in archaeology, its approach being too practical

to fire enthusiasm, but given that the interest is already there, it is an excellent guide to what archaeology is all about. It is noteworthy that the author stresses the point that archaeology is not just about excavation which attracts most public attention, but also includes fieldwalking and reading the landscape as well as visiting museums and heritage sites and as such allows everyone to participate on different levels.

This is a well constructed book written by an amateur archaeologist with 25 years' experience of "digging". The six sections deal respectively with what archaeology is about, basic fieldwork, field survey projects, ways of joining an excavation, excavating and the support services for excavations. All sections are divided into sub-headings giving quite detailed information on the particular subject. Altogether there are 153 illustrations either line drawings or good quality photographs. The numerous drawings cover the main archaeological features which are likely to be encountered by the budding archaeologist together with diagrams illustrating the principles of basic surveying, and graphic examples of all the up-to-date scientific aids to archaeology.

The amount of scientific detail in some of the sections might possibly daunt the potential recruit. It may be too optimistic to give the impression that in the "high-tec" archaeology of today an amateur can make much impression on his own in the field of excavation. Gone are the days in the 50s and 60s when enthusiastic amateurs might obtain permission to excavate a site, working in the summer evenings and at weekends without remuneration. Excavation now is firmly in the hands of the professional archaeologist, and the amateur although still welcome to become involved, is often excluded from participation by the limitations of present day working hours on sites.

The author's experience is based on areas further south, especially Bordesley Abbey. It is regrettable, nevertheless, that when, in his introduction he mentions early archaeological societies among which he includes The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, he should have failed to include our own society, The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, founded in 1813.

The book is pleasant to read and well set out and together with its comprehensive list of useful addresses and a bibliography of books for further reading should appeal to the young potential archaeologist or sixth-form student studying for a certificate in archaeology. It may also appeal to the older generation of amateurs who have here an easy reference work on all the archaeological techniques and scientific aids which are now available, and be of general interest to members of local antiquarian societies.

J. W. THORNBORROW

Staindrop Meeting House by Professor J. C. Mann, ISBN 1 85072 1181, 16 pages, York 1992. Available post free £2.00 from either the author at 28 St. Catherine's Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 5FF or The Ebor Press, York, YO3 9HS.

PROFESSOR Mann has stepped well out of his accustomed period to produce this short account of the Staindrop Meeting House, or more exactly of the Friends' Meeting gathered first at Raby, later and longer at Staindrop, of their burial ground at Staindrop, of some of the people buried there, and more especially of the Dixon family. The Dixons were middle-class and educated and of non-conformist stock; the men practised as surveyors and civil engineers; they were enterprising and successful. They became coal-owners, bankers and railway engineers; they built railways here and overseas. One of them was sent by the Royal Society to the South Atlantic in 1761–2, with another mathematician and astronomer called Mason, to observe the transit of Venus; the same pair later surveyed the boundary between the colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland and established what we know as the *Mason–Dixon line*.

The Dixons were the sort of people who in the 19th century raised Britain to pre-eminence. For the general reader and for the social historian this glimpse of their history gives much food for thought. Of Staindrop Meeting and of some of its people Professor

Mann has produced a valuable and succinct account which has been given an attractive presentation by Sessions of York at a very reasonable price.

JOHN PHILIPSON

BOOKS RECEIVED

J. J. Vickerstaff, *A Great revolutionary deluge? Education and the Reformation in County Durham*, Papers in North Eastern History, Department of the Humanities, University of Teesside, TS1 3BA, £2.50 post free.

This, the second in the series of Teesside Papers in North Eastern History, gives a lucid and interesting account of the educational provision in 1530 in County Durham, examines the impact on this provision of the Reformation, and investigates the influence on education in the county of the doctrinal changes of the 16th century.

Ed. Willies and Cranstone, *Boles and Smeltmills*, Historical Metallurgy Society 1992. Available from Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire DE4 3PS. £10 plus p & p.

The report on a seminar on the history and archaeology of lead-smelting held at Reeth, Yorkshire, in May 1992. Twenty-two papers, mostly illustrated, in a field very relevant to the study of the history and landscape of the Northern Pennines.

C. J. Morris, *Marriage and Murder in eleventh-century Northumbria: a study of* "De Obsessione Dunelmi". Borthwick Paper No. 82. 31 pages. From the Borthwick Institute, St. Anthony's Hall, York YO1 2PW, £2.00 plus 35p p & p.

This paper is centred on a study of "De Obsessione Dunelmi" of which tract only one copy is known to have survived. It examines the fate of the native English nobility in Northumbria in the years before and after the Conquest. It includes a translation of the tract itself and a pedigree of the House of Bamburgh. It can usefully be read in conjunction with Forest Scott's paper on "Earl Waltheof" in *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4 xxx (1952).