

BOOK REVIEWS

These reviews are published as the views of the persons who have written them, and they have been accepted in good faith as accurate and honest expressions of opinion.

David Breeze (ed.) *The Crosby Garret Helmet* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, September 2018) pp. 102, illustrations throughout. ISBN: 9781873124796. £18

Edited by David Breeze with a number of specialist contributors, this book offers a full account of the survey, excavation and the helmet itself. Such a spectacular find as the Crosby Garret helmet deserves the attention it receives in this detailed publication which covers all aspects of the piece.

The first section by Bishop and Coulston, entitled *The Helmet and its Importance* begins with a detailed description of every aspect of the helmet, with beautiful and close-up photos to highlight specific elements. Placing the helmet in its international context, these two experts discuss other face-mask helmets from across the Empire, and their possible use by Roman cavalry.

Next, the *Discovery, Sale, Restoration and Analysis* tells the slightly fraught story of how archaeologists tried to study, and Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery attempted to purchase this significant find for the public. Despite being bought by a private collector, some access was given to the piece, allowing scientific analysis before reconstruction. Equally, the owner has allowed the helmet to be displayed on multiple occasions, both in Carlisle and London, so it is not lost to the public completely.

Complementing the information gained directly from the helmet the *Fieldwork* provides context from the findspot which is often lacking with metal detected finds. Taking up half of the book, the initial survey is discussed, followed by a report on the excavation with specialist reports on each of the groups of material, including chemical analysis of the metal fragments.

To conclude, the helmet is placed in its *wider setting* discussing the area's history, its local tribe and their relations with the incoming army. Overall, this book does justice to the helmet, recording the work carried out since its discovery and providing academic context to the 'bling' of the piece.

Frances McIntosh

Miranda Aldhouse-Green, *Sacred Britannia: The Gods and Rituals of Roman Britain* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018) pp. 256 illustrations throughout. ISBN: 9780500252222. £19.95.

Rome occupies a special place in the public imagination, long revered as the progenitor of modern Western civilisation. With Roman rule came a new language, new customs and new traditions, and the introduction of this new cultural package had a far reaching impact. It played out not only on the earthly arena but on the sacred plane too, transforming the religious landscape of the province. In crossing the Channel to the isle of Britannia the Romans did not do so alone, but brought with them an expansive and well developed pantheon of deities, each accompanied by iconographic traditions and sacred rites new to the island. But what about the indigenous deities and religious rites of those conquered by Rome? What role did they play, if any, in shaping the religious landscape of the new province? These are the

question at the heart of Miranda Aldhouse-Green's *Sacred Britannia*: the gods and rituals of Roman Britain. As an authority in the field of Romano-British religion and Iron Age archaeology, Aldhouse-Green is well placed to answer this question.

Focussing on the period spanning from Caesar's expeditions to the end of Roman rule, this exploration of the religion of Roman Britain is part of a large body of work which eschews traditional interpretations of Romano-British religion entirely as the product of Romanisation. Whilst recognising that the Romans introduced new gods and technologies of worship, namely epigraphy and iconography, the primary focus of this analysis is the two way nature of the cultural exchange between Rome and the indigenous peoples of Britain. Thus a consideration of the ways in which Classical traditions were adopted and adapted sits alongside an examination of the ways in which non-Classical traditions and deities continued to flourish under Roman rule. Across eleven thematically diverse chapters, covering topics from the Druids to religion and the Roman army, Eastern mystery cults and early Christianity, Aldhouse-Green seamlessly interweaves evidence from the Classical world, pre-Roman and Roman Britain (and the western provinces) to draw out the complex nature of Romano-British religion, its ancestry and how it changed over time.

The task of interpreting the belief systems and ritual practices of Britain's remote past is fraught with difficulties, and Aldhouse-Green provides a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the extant literary and archaeological evidence concerning religion in pre-Roman and Roman Britain. Whilst presenting a panoply of archaeological evidence, which may arguably provide the most tantalising glimpse into what was undoubtedly a complex set of cosmologies, Aldhouse-Green acknowledges the ambiguity of much of this evidence and the need to resort to (albeit informed) speculation, at times guided by literary evidence. As a result of the proto-historic nature of the British Iron Age, we are left to depend on the testimony of Classical authors, writing with varying degrees of bias, and medieval literature produced by Christian clerics to illuminate Iron Age belief systems. Although noting the caveats of utilising these sources, Aldhouse-Green employs medieval literature to speculate on the nature of Iron Age beliefs and interpret archaeological remains, arguing that they may contain 'grains' of pre-Roman material. To this arsenal of tools and resources, the author also draws upon archaeological and literary evidence from Gaul. This approach has been adopted by many scholars, and is the result of a long held assumption that Britain and Gaul practised similar ritual traditions and beliefs. It is important to bear in mind that whilst similarities did exist, there was also an enormous degree of regional diversity in Iron Age belief systems and cosmologies (see Armit 2012 *Headhunting and the Body in Iron Age Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.). Although evidence from Gaul may reveal new connections and ways to interpret evidence from Britain, its use must be balanced by an awareness of the highly localised nature of Iron Age religion and its variance both geographically and temporally.

Whilst the two way exchange of religious beliefs and practices is the central thread running throughout *Sacred Britannia*, Aldhouse-Green's approach is built upon a recognition that religious interaction was not benign but occurred in the context of unequal power relations. Although Rome was generally tolerant of other religions, the religion of Roman Britain developed in the context of colonial authority, tensions and competitive power hierarchies. The varying degrees to which pre-Roman and Roman traditions became entangled amongst the differing social and political groups of Roman Britain is given careful consideration, from town and country dwellers, to the 'hybrid' Roman army with its 'kaleidoscope of cults and

ritual'. Detailing practices ranging from epigraphic name pairing to divine marriage; from the creation of new gods, to making visible Iron Age gods and the transformation of Roman deities, *Sacred Britannia* provides a comprehensive insight into the processes formative to the evolution of Romano-British religion. The analysis of archaeological evidence in light of these complex power dynamics reveals not only the myriad of beliefs and traditions co-existing in Roman Britain, but the potential hostilities resulting from these interactions. Demonstrative of this, the deliberate destruction of divine sculptures in Corinium, featuring both Roman and Gallic deities, is cited as a possible example of the tensions that existed between cult groups.

Engaging and thoughtfully written, *Sacred Britannia* reveals the pivotal role of religion in the processes of identity formation and negation in Roman Britain. With extensive footnotes and a substantial bibliography, alongside definitions of subject specific terms, Aldhouse-Green's book will appeal to specialists and general readers alike. Furnished with 125 high quality photographs and illustrations, it deftly illuminates the multiple, creative processes by which Roman and indigenous religious traditions were appropriated, manipulated and read anew. Although a study of the distant past, *Sacred Britannia* reveals how the tensions and ideologies underlying cultural interaction in Roman Britain straddle the ancient and the modern world, and that identity in the Roman world was as multi-faceted and dynamic as it is in the present.

Stephanie Moat

Ian D. Hodkinson, *The Ague: a History of Indigenous Malaria in Cumbria and the North* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, September 2016) pp. 74. ISBN: 9781873124741. £8.50

This is a highly fascinating and detailed little book about the history of malaria in Britain concentrating upon the old counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and North Lancashire with forays into the North-East and Scotland. It is well illustrated throughout although some of the old fliers/maps are a little hard to read due to quality of reproduction. The author starts with a succinct introduction to the ague, its causes and mosquito vectors before summarising its distribution across Britain and Ireland. He then moves onto the meat of the volume, primarily modern Cumbria, with details and descriptions of cases, by location, based upon an obviously thorough reading of contemporary accounts. There is a section about, again contemporary thoughts, as to the causes of the disease with an acknowledgement that the disease was itself immensely varied and, today, we might well see several diseases let alone causes. Two hundred or so years of medical and microbiological advances make for obvious hindsight. The following section looks at treatments ranging from charms and metal bracelets, through various herbal 'remedies' to the more worrying use of electricity! The author moves on to the more successful cures, mostly based upon extracts of Cinchona bark, although in the nineteenth century these were somewhat overtaken by many quack medicines, no doubt profitable if not always useful. Moving on to a discussion about the decline in the disease it is clear that many reasons contributed — drainage and land improvement reduced breeding sites for the mosquitoes, improved sanitation likewise and improved nutrition that led to better resistance to the disease, to name but a few. The final section was an interesting one as to whether twenty-first-century concerns about wetlands and climate change might well make conditions more favourable to mosquitoes and the associated ague. Re-wetting former wetland areas, and wetland habitat creation is favoured by many, indeed required during

some developments, and clearly is invaluable for wildlife conservation. Houses continue to be built on river flood plains. All increase the opportunities for mosquitoes to flourish and perhaps the ague too. We might have modern anti-biotics but are becoming aware of their limitations — nature is not sitting still — and would be wise to learn lessons from the past. This little book can add strongly to these lessons. The book itself ends with a thorough bibliography and reference section — 15 pages of small print in a 56 page book. An admirable and very useful end.

Jacqui Huntley

Patricia and Robert Malcolmson, *Wartime Cumbria, 1939–1945* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society extra series, 46: 2017) pp. xviii + 174, 1 map and 8 illus. ISBN: 9781873124758. £18.

In 2019 it will be 80 years since the start of the Second World War. Although that conflict still looms large in the British collective memory and world view, 80 years is a lifetime away from the present day, enabling objective investigation of how the conflict affected the lives of people in the British Isles. This excellent book does just that. It is not a story of the battles on land, sea and air; instead it examines the impact of the war upon the people of Cumberland and Westmorland, an area that was geographically distant from the fighting, and apart from the bombing of Barrow-in-Furness in 1941, saw no military action. Despite this inaction relative to other areas directly affected, the war had profound effects upon the ordered world of Cumbrians. The two counties were sparsely populated beyond their county towns, and were seen by the Government as safe areas to send evacuees and war industries, to train soldiers and airmen, and to maximise food and timber production.

Thousands of strangers were sent to the area throughout the war, and the resident population was expected to house, feed, employ, entertain and educate the in-comers. The authors have skilfully revealed the tensions and hardship resulting from this peaceful invasion at a time of strict rationing and scarcity of basic resources. What strikes the reader is what should be obvious, that as many young men were called up for the Armed Forces much of the war effort was done by women. The authors detail the role of the Women's Institutes and Women's Voluntary Services in welcoming and caring for evacuated schoolchildren, young mothers and babies, bombed-out people from Blitzed areas of the country and refugees from Occupied Europe, despite the often ad hoc arrangements available. The leadership of these efforts by female members of the county families is noted, as is the harsh agricultural and forestry work undertaken by the Land Girls to provide the food and war materials required by a nation at war. The influx of service personnel under training placed strains on transport and accommodation, led to new relationships, often at the cost of earlier marriages, whilst war industries brought opportunities for different employment and skills in counties that were predominantly agricultural before the War.

The book examines the effects of the War through the words of those affected. The redoubtable Barrovian Nella Last, whose diaries in the Mass Observation Archive have been published by the National Archives, is a guide to many of these effects, but other voices recovered through diary evidence, newspaper articles and interviews also bring a very close and human appreciation of living conditions to this book. The authors are to be commended for the range of sources employed in their analysis, and for producing a very readable and evocative account of communities adapting to wartime demands.

Richard Pears

Les Turnbull, *The Early Railways of the Derwent Valley* (North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, 2017) pp. 80 ISBN: 9780993115134 £10

If only they'd known, the giants of literature could have amassed source material by the waggon-load if the conniving, politicking and downright violence surrounding the creation of the embryonic industrial rail network in the Derwent Valley had been more fully documented. Thanks to this short (eighty pages) but very detailed book by Les Turnbull, a specialist in early industrial activity in the North East, the background is now more fully understood.

The physical, legal, political and technical battle to establish rail routes to carry coals from the Derwent Valley to the River Tyne (and later the Wear) is told with relish by the author. Indeed, there are bold claims made that could trigger many a heated debate, such as 'Tyne-side was not just the first northern powerhouse but the world's first powerhouse.' Was Ambrose Crowley's ironworks operation, set up in the Derwent Valley late seventeenth century, really the key development that sparked the Industrial Revolution? Over to you, Yorkshire and Lancashire — and the rest of the world!

The author supports his assertions with a fine array of maps and photographs that are a real strength of the book and are definitely required to illustrate the complex web of agreements and technical innovations that underpinned the early activity in the Derwent Valley. From horses to mechanical locomotion, the book explains how the developments allowed increasing amounts of coal to be transported, not just locally but nationally too.

Perhaps the only criticisms of the book are an occasional repetition and a feeling that the narrative could flow a little more smoothly at times. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable addition to the canon explaining the development of industrial activity in the North East, with students now having a sound overview as to the part played by the Derwent Valley and its railways. It is a role that had an impact on the landscape that can still be seen today; indeed, on-going archaeological exercises continue to unearth stunning examples of early railway activity. Almost four centuries of innovation and intrigue; surely, it is time for a television series?

Stephen Allott

Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie (eds) *Economy and Culture in North-East England* (The Boydell Press, Suffolk) pp. xxiii + 285, extensive maps and illustrations throughout. ISBN: 9781783271832. Hardback £65, ebook £19

This collection of essays presents a range of studies on the economy and culture of the North-East on the cusp of the great expanse of industry in the nineteenth century. The theme running through this work is that the period 1500–1800 was not a precursor or preamble to industries such as the steel industries of Bolckow and Vaughan on Teesside, James Hartley's Wear Glass Works in Sunderland, or shipbuilding on the Tyne and Wear. This period can be studied very much in its own right as the region entered a period of increasing civic and political stability. Importantly the work highlights that the infrastructure (both social infrastructure and physical infrastructure) of industrial and cultural growth in the period 1500–1800 would be radically altered or swept away in the 19th century, and therefore perhaps not as iconic in the public imagination as might be warranted. The papers are very much from an academic perspective (the editors have assembled an impressive cohort of authors) and will go a long way to help anyone with an existing interest in the history of the region.

The papers by Brown on rural elites in the Durham Cathedral Estate, and Green's study of commercial agriculture remind us that the urban workers needed to be fed. The strength of these essays is in reminding us that this was not a passive process but part of a rural culture which influenced and was influenced by developments in industrial centres. Skelton's paper on urban sanitary improvements in Berwick compliments her other extensive work on this topic (such as her PhD thesis from Durham University, and her recent book 'Sanitation in Urban Britain 1560–1700') and reminds us that 'culture' is not merely art and architecture. Other cultural topics addressed include a study of the print trade by Crosbie and an economic consideration of Quaker networks by Houpt-Varner. More 'traditional' topics for industrial study are also addressed such as Wright's paper on changes to seaborne trade in the 18th century, or Greenhall's study of North-East/Scottish trading connections through the period. The vignette of Brown's examination of the Lead Mining Concessions of the Bowes family is one which I had thought had been presented thoroughly before; however, I found the presentation of data and study methods very engaging and a reminder that no paper in this book can be considered the last word on any of the topic covered. This can also be seen in the paper by Burn on the demographics of Newcastle in the 17th century; a reminder of the diversity of trades and occupations which we need to consider in the region, not just those from the better known industries. A final paper by Morgan and Rushton is an excellent book-end to the introduction by Green and Crosbie as it raises questions about what we mean by regional identity in this period. Too often a modern cultural mindset is projected back into the past, but would our contemporary identities be recognizable to those in the past.

I found this an excellent book, both for the range of papers, and also for highlighting the major gaps in my knowledge for the region in this period. There is a lot to digest in this work, and many excellent references to be chased up at a later date. At the very least it shows the great wealth of information and research that still needs to be undertaken in this region.

Don P. O'Meara

Victoria Ridgway and Jennifer Proctor, *'Parterres Bright with Flowers': A history of the walled gardens of Alnwick Castle as revealed through excavations and standing building survey* (PCA Monograph 21) (Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2018) pp. 248, 241 figs . ISBN: 9781999615505. £28.00.

This describes archaeological work, in the form of earthwork survey, building recording and excavation, undertaken in 2000 and 2004 during the most recent transformation of the walled garden at Alnwick Castle. This transformation has created the 'Alnwick garden', which the report shows to be the seventh major redesign of the space.

The work has revealed a series of changes in the layout of the garden which both mirrors trends and fashions in garden design, and the methods and technologies involved in the food production for a great estate, and the cultivation of exotic collections. It is not often that an archaeological report can be described as 'beautiful', but this is one of those occasions. Lavishly illustrated, the book is exceptionally well produced, right down to the floral endpapers, based on illustrations of 1796. Throughout the book, early maps and plans and documentary sources are skilfully woven into the structural and archaeological narrative to give the most detailed possible account of the successive phases.

An introductory chapter details the background to the fieldwork, and the historical and landscape context of the garden. A summary timeline is presented, and two very useful 3D reconstructions are introduced. These allow reconstructions of views of the gardens in the

1830s and the 1870s to be illustrated from various viewpoints, and extracts from these models are used throughout the relevant descriptions.

Chapters 2–7 are descriptions of the archaeological remains of the six identified garden phases. Unsurprisingly, there are scant remains of the earliest of these, built by the first Duke of Northumberland, 1766–1786, however the enclosing wall on three sides with its arched gateways, a heated wall for fruit growing, the remains of a hothouse and a central pond were recorded. The remains are consistent with the depiction of the garden on early plans. The garden of the second Duke (1786–1817) owed much to the desire to cultivate exotic fruits, and included a pine stove, for the growing of pineapples, vineries and a mushroom house. This was the first phase in which excavation is an important source, revealing a major heated structure with associated furnace. Surviving structures include hothouses and the gardener's house, which remains in use. The third garden (1817–1847) is the first for which a reconstruction model can be created. The heated structure of the earlier phase was demolished and replaced with a building known from early and detailed plans to be a hot house and conservatory, reflecting a more recreational aspect to the garden. Older hothouses were changed, and new ones built, as was a crenellated water tower in Gothic style.

The fourth Duke (1847–1865), while retaining earlier elements in the garden, went for a major redesign on Italianate lines, with terraced parterres and a formal symmetrical layout of paths, garden beds and borders extending southwards of the original garden, and arranged around a large central pond. Original plans of the garden layouts of this phase form part of Chapter 8. A major new conservatory replaced part of the original north wall. More alterations took place to the heating systems of hothouses. The fifth garden plan (1867–1899) did not involve a great deal of new construction, but did involve the re-planning of the parterres, as revealed by excavation. The northern conservatory became a palm house, and one of the hothouses was converted into a garden staff bothy. The 20th century largely saw the decline of the garden, reflected in Chapter 7.

Chapters 8–10 comprise the wider discussion of aspects of the garden. Chapter 8 brings the structural, archaeological, documentary and cartographic evidence together into a narrative describing the development of the gardens. Chapter 9 details the technological developments through time, with particular emphasis on the heating systems, variously employing hot air and hot water piping and steam. Systems of glazing and ventilation and water supply are described. The extraordinary lengths to which the garden designers went in order to create precise growing conditions for particular plants are described at length.

The final chapter looks variously at the types of plants and produce cultivated, the people responsible for the cultivation, and the wider landscape context of the gardens. Documentary sources are useful for this, but direct archaeological evidence is provided by 19 lead tags, all but one of which were recovered by metal detector survey, and labelling 13 varieties of fruit trees, from the familiar Conference pear, to the Pineapple Nectarine (this tag dated 1872). Garden staff are listed in paylists, and included women and children. Working conditions and tasks are described. At the other end of the social scale, the 18th-century notebook, from which the endpaper illustrations are derived, demonstrates the interest in exotics of the second Duke. Finally, the way in which the walled garden fitted into the wider landscape of the Alnwick estate is discussed, referencing the contribution of local man, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

The archaeology of gardens and designed landscapes is an expanding field, and the authors of this report can be congratulated on producing an exemplar of such work.

Tony Wilmott

