

Reviews

CARMARTHENSHIRE. THE CONCISE HISTORY. By Dylan Rees. 130 × 197 mm. xii + 180 pp. 21 illustrations. 6 tables. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2006. ISBN 0 7083 1949 1. Price £9.99.

The author faced a formidable task. Carmarthenshire has a rich and diversified history, and to compress a vast amount of information into a modest-sized book is no mean feat. Dylan Rees is to be warmly congratulated. He succeeds in touching upon every aspect of the county's history in the seven chapters, which are arranged chronologically, from Prehistory–AD 42 to 1914–2005, with two chapters allocated to the period *c.* 1750–1914. The great strength of the work is that it is written by a native of the county, who identifies closely with the landscape and the people, and who is able to convey his passion for the past in elegant prose, refreshingly free of pretentiousness or jargon. Mr Rees has researched his sources meticulously and has incorporated the considerable corpus of up-to-date material available in periodical articles. The footnotes and select bibliography inspire confidence in his thoroughness, as do items such as an account of the excavations in 2005 on the site of the Roman forts in Llandeilo—one could not possibly be more up-to-date. His own background knowledge and expertise enable him to summarise and digest the salient points in a manner that should satisfy all categories of readers. Newcomers to the subject will welcome the work as an ideal introduction, while people who are already familiar with Carmarthenshire history will not only find new material, but will also be stimulated by encountering known facts in unfamiliar contexts.

Inevitably, a book of this immense scope will have pundits arguing about the interpretation of certain matters and reviewers griping about omissions. This particular reviewer is going to bemoan the fact that more attention is not paid to Carmarthenshire's illustrious printing history. Carmarthen was the first town in Wales to have an unbroken tradition of printing from 1721 to the late twentieth century, a matter of considerable import, since access to local printing facilities affected every aspect of life. The social, economic, political, religious and cultural developments that prompted Mr Rees to accord two chapters to the period *c.* 1750–1914 are unlikely to have been so efficacious without a flourishing native book-trade. Carmarthen's pioneer printer was Nicholas Thomas, who had printed several books before his publication *Llun Agrippa* (1723), which on page 75 is erroneously given as the first book to be printed in the town. He and some of his distinguished successors, notably John Ross and William Spurrell, deserve acclaim for fundamental services to Welsh history.

However, this is merely a personal gripe. Far more serious is the omission of a modern map, which could easily have been inserted as a frontispiece. Had a map been included, maybe the error of placing the Whitland forge in the parish of Llan-gain instead of Llangynin (page 121) would have been spotted. Another major omission is a list of the excellent illustrations, which sadly are also left unnumbered. They are bundled together in the middle of the book and are not linked in any way whatsoever to relevant sections of the text. The publishers have not served the author well in this respect which is a pity, as otherwise the book is produced in an attractive format, a nice pocket-size edition. The summary of the contents on the lower cover is an excellent idea. In general, the book is a classic of its kind. It is fantastic value for money and it deserves to be on the shelves of every household and school in Carmarthenshire, and copies should be acquired by all Carmarthenshire exiles. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and I keep it on hand as a reference work. Just for the record—despite sharing a surname, I am not related to the author!

GOWER. By Jonathan Mullard. 149 × 217 mm. xviii + 445 pp. 175 illustrations. 15 tables. Harper Collins Publishers, London, 2006. ISBN 0 00 716066 6. Price £25.00.

On 9 May 1956 Gower was chosen as Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (quite rightly so in the opinion of this reviewer—himself a partisan Gowerman). To mark the fiftieth anniversary of this event Collins has issued the 99th title in its prestigious New Naturalist series. It is the first to take a single ANOB as its theme; the other regionally based volumes in the series have usually taken the individual National Parks as their subjects, for example Snowdonia, which appeared as volume 47 in this series in 1966.

Jonathan Mullard (formerly the Gower Countryside Officer) describes the varied topography of the peninsula. He divides Gower into nine areas and then examines the geology and geomorphology of each. Detailed notes on the flora and fauna accompany each section, and conservation and enhancement issues are discussed when appropriate. Appendices consider Hamon's 1697 list of Gower flora, the local names for various species, a list of sites with designation as SSSIs, NNRs, etc., and the locations of geological sites and wildlife trust reserves. A list of useful contact agencies and organisations and a thorough index conclude the book. Chapter 4 provides a very basic history of the region—prehistory, the limited impact of the Romans, the restricted evidence for the Early Medieval era and finally the Norman Conquest are covered in 12 pages; there then follow notes on a selection of particular sites and regimes of exploitation: Culver Hole and the Port Eynon salt industry, Parc le Breos and medieval deer farming, the strip fields of Rhossili (which are not, as Mullard claims, unique) and Penrice and its landscaped park all receive short pen portraits. The besanding of settlements and fields, characteristic of much of south Gower in the Middle Ages, falls out of the chronological sequence and appears in Chapter 3.

The spatial extent of the volume is limited; Gower contains an equal area of inland, upland which provides a landscape in stark contrast to that of the peninsula (although it must be noted that this area falls outside of the ANOB—but then so do the north-eastern parts of the peninsula around Penclawdd which are included). The volume is profusely and beautifully illustrated with colour plates, many of which come from the collection of the noted Gower photographer Harold Grenfell. They make an excellent complement to Mullard's fluid prose.

As a historian I was not surprised to find the most interesting section of the book was the chapter which dealt with the history of the study of the area's natural history; as this was chapter 2 I found it a long way to the final chapter (14) which examines the steps that have been taken in the management and protection of the Gower landscape since the ANOB designation. There is little in this book that will interest the historian or the archaeologist, but then this was not its target market. As the author's foreword makes clear this book aims to be a detailed guide to the wildlife of the area. It seeks to bring together all that is known about the peninsula's natural history and in this respect it succeeds.

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JONATHAN KISSOCK

THE TOMB BUILDERS IN WALES 4000–3000 BC. By Steve Burrow. 192 × 223 mm. 148 pp. 100 illustrations. National Museum Wales, Cardiff, 2006. ISBN 0 7200 0568 X. Price £14.99.

This is an elegant publication, lavishly illustrated, to accompany a new exhibition at the National Museum in Cardiff. Its aim is obviously to seduce and enthuse, as well as inform the reader. The ten short chapters provide an overview of Welsh prehistory from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age with friendly explanations of dating systems and various methods of scientific analysis and their potential.

It also subtly acts as an advertisement for the National Museum and its excavation archives. The tone is simple but not simplistic, and the interpretations are broadly traditional (Mesolithic hunters are mobile, farmers are rooted and the nationwide distribution of stone axes demonstrates movement, explaining the spread of ideas about religion and architecture), but recent concerns, such as views from monuments and new findings from diet and DNA studies are included.

The book is certainly informative and will be attractive to the general reader, but detail and complex argument is eschewed. Sites are illustrated by photographs and plans are rare (and very small scale); chronology and typology are a bit vague and, though the author tackles the question of multi-period construction (in some instances wrongly implying that the original excavators recognised it), he does not bring out its value as an interpretative tool. At some sites, such as Bryn Celli Ddu and Pentre Ifan, where others have suggested it, he prefers not to comment. His final conclusion that the tombs are magic and mysterious places where possession of precise knowledge may be irrelevant is indicative of this approach, appropriate no doubt to the targeted audience.

While the discussions of tomb classification, location and construction, and the systems of burial are general, clear and brief, they include odd topics which obviously interest the author and are dealt with at greater length. He is obviously taken with the idea that the very large capstones at several sites may have been unearthed and raised on the spot; he includes a short discussion of the work of Sir Norman Lockyer and the question of midsummer orientation of sites, notably Bryn Celli Ddu; he takes time to review the bone ‘whistle’ from Pen yr Wylod, concluding sadly that its claim to be the earliest musical instrument in Wales cannot be sustained, and he discusses the awkward questions raised by the very early and very late dates obtained from bones in Parc le Breos and Bryn yr Hen Bobl.

Chapters 6 to 9 provide regional surveys with discussion of the better known tombs in greater detail. Most of these are also listed at the end of the book with directions for visiting. The final chapter brings us to the demise of the tomb tradition, a formal closure in some instances, but not all, and the social changes which heralded the Bronze Age. It also includes a discussion of early recorders of the monuments, from George Owen onwards, and some comment on early excavators, among whom John Ward is rightly lauded, and on the present structures of conservation and protection for these great and important monuments.

All in all this is an attractive book and the National Museum is to be congratulated on producing such a lavish volume which will help to spread accurate knowledge of these monuments to a wider public, well beyond the confines of the academic community.

Bangor

FRANCES LYNCH LLEWELLYN

THE ARCHITECTURE OF DEATH. NEOLITHIC CHAMBERED TOMBS IN WALES. By George Nash. 259 × 205 mm. 256 pp. 243 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2006. ISBN 1 904396 33 X. Price £17.50.

This handsomely produced volume, published in landscape format, is one of a steady trickle of books to have appeared in recent years on the megalithic monuments of Wales. Following an introductory chapter on the Neolithic monuments of the Principality, the bulk of the book provides a site-by-site description of precisely 100 sites (or multiple sites in some cases), arranged into eight geographical groups—the Black Mountains, Gower Peninsula, South-East Wales, Anglesey, North Wales, Harlech, Lleyn Peninsula and South-West Wales—plus a separate chapter on several more widely scattered monuments. The author shows admirable restraint in denying himself the obvious subtitle—‘The 100 best Welsh chambered

tombs'! The book concludes with a useful and reasonably comprehensive bibliography, a list of sites cross-referenced to earlier county-based numbering schemes, a list of relevant radiocarbon dates, together with a somewhat idiosyncratic index. Cambrians will be pleased to note the acknowledgement to 'the members either deceased or living of the Cambrian Archaeological Association. It is their inquisitive and tenacious minds that provided much inspiration to this book'.

A whirlwind Introduction covers a wide and ambitious canvas in its 20 pages, embracing vegetation history, the Neolithic economy, Mesolithic/Neolithic relationships, pan-European monumental traditions, multi-phased building constructions, the form and meaning of megalithic art, stone axe distributions, population densities, the logistics of tomb-construction, burial rites, the history of antiquarian research, and the Romantic Movement. Each of the subsequent chapters begins with a two- to four-page overview with a thumbnail distribution map of the sites within a particular geographical area. These are followed by two- to four-page synopses of individual sites, which include locational details, description, antiquarian background and published references, normally accompanied by a plan and cross-section (generally from familiar published sources such as the Royal Commission Inventories, works such as Frances Lynch's paper in *Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain*, or Christopher Barker's *Chambered Tombs of South-West Wales*), together with mostly the author's own good, strong and often evocative black-and-white photographs. The latter, in particular, make a significant contribution to the value of the work as a whole. The text is generally fairly reliable, though the non-specialist reader should be wary of occasional slips and the fact that the choice of reference is sometimes not the most obvious.

In terms of a potential audience the book casts its net pretty widely. Whereas much may be familiar to the fervent prehistorian or alternatively fairly challenging to the non-specialist, the book has at least the virtue of bringing together and synthesising quite a wide range of material published in a variety of disparate sources. In this way it provides a restatement, in an attractive format, of things that have been written about the megalithic phenomenon in Wales since the Enlightenment, in what might perhaps now mostly be regarded as a fairly orthodox and traditional manner. If the author's hope that 'the book will be used to visit these most interesting of prehistoric monuments' is fulfilled, then it will have admirably achieved its purpose.

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

W. J. BRITNELL

PREHISTORIC SITES OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE. By Beth McCormack. 138 × 216 mm. x + 163 pp. 69 illustrations. 1 table. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2006. ISBN 1 904396 32 1. Price £7.95.

This is Volume XI in The Logaston Guide series *Monuments in the Landscape*. It is fair to say that some previous volumes in this series have not met with particularly favourable reviews. This volume does nothing to alter that trend. The cover blurb claims that 'for several years [Ms McCormack] has conducted independent research on the prehistory of symbolic thought and Neolithic/Bronze Age ceremonial monuments in Britain. Over the years she has become intimately acquainted with the bogs and open hillsides of Montgomeryshire': I see no evidence for any of these claims in this less than useful book.

The book's format is based on a conventional three-age chronology. The Stone Age chapter is only subdivided internally, and consequently we have an initial treatise on human evolution from (the presumably red-nosed) *Homo rudolfensis* to 2300 BC when Ms McCormack considers the Bronze Age to start. Much of this is totally irrelevant to Montgomeryshire, of course, and the discussion is largely Europe- and England-based, though to be fair some Welsh sites such as Pontnewydd and Paviland are quoted. It takes 20 pages to reach Montgomeryshire in the Mesolithic. The scant traces Ms McCormack

maps (page 21) show a markedly riverine distribution and the author makes much of this. However, she fails to realise the nature of flint scatters and their tendency to reflect areas of modern cultivation.

The author defines the early Neolithic as spanning the period 4400 (perhaps a little early) to 2900 BC (page 29). Once again, after a dip into the Aegean and a brief visit to the Middle East the discussion seems to be more Welsh and English orientated than peculiar to the supposed region of study. The lightweight discussion is also rather disjointed; thus we have Peterborough and Grooved Wares on page 26 followed by early Neolithic ceramics at Gwernvale (page 28), a discussion of likely population composition, with a little bit of flint technology in between. Montgomeryshire is barely mentioned and the only artefact illustrated is from Breconshire (page 27).

The long barrow section does at least focus on the known Montgomeryshire sites (though the second of the Lower Luggly sites has proved to have been an enclosure), but the mention of the square barrows is out of place given their likely Dark Age date. Their inclusion here, however, is later justified when Ms McCormack makes the insupportable claim that these barrows are the same date as the long barrow. Peculiarly, Ffridd Faldwyn and Cefn Carnedd are claimed to be possible causewayed enclosures. The Neolithic ditch and artefacts are mentioned as evidence at the former site but there is no cited evidence to support the claim for the latter. The claim for causewayed enclosures at Sarn-y-bryn-caled, Trelystan and Four Crosses is strange indeed. The section on chambered tombs mentions the two possible Montgomeryshire sites, but only Anglesey examples are illustrated.

Bearing in mind that we are still in the earlier Neolithic, the mention of timber circles and henge complexes (page 36) as evidence of ceremonial landscapes is somewhat out of place, and indeed this confusion of chronology, here and subsequently, suggests that the author is not at all at home with the three-age system she prefers to use, or at least is unaware of the overlaps within the not so neat chronological compartments. It leads to a great deal of repetition and confusion. Thus we have the Bronze Age elements at Four Crosses, Dyffryn Lane, Trelystan and Sarn-y-bryn-caled all discussed here and again later in the volume.

During the late Neolithic, we are not told whether King Gilgamesh of Sumeria was aware that the inhabitants of Montgomeryshire were still coming to grips with agriculture. Presumably he was not, because the pollen and other scant evidence suggest that it was not the case. The labour-intensive monuments themselves, already mentioned, suggest an agricultural surplus sufficient to support the building programmes. There are, apparently, 'many circular structures . . . measuring 4m in diameter' dating to this period. None is detailed and the bold but erroneous statement is not referenced. The Trelystan structures are mentioned later as evidence for later Neolithic settlement and again as evidence for Bronze Age settlement. None of the Grooved Ware illustrated is from Montgomeryshire, despite the rich assemblage from Trelystan, and the illustrated Beakers are also a mixed bag despite the number of Beaker finds from the county, some of which are listed on page 43. Here and on the following page, the discussion of later Neolithic burial practices is simplistic and a little old-fashioned. There is no real discussion of pre-Beaker single burial or indeed the pre-Beaker individual cremations from the county.

Despite the mention of henge complexes in the later Neolithic, they 'began to appear' with the advent of Beakers (page 43) and we are told that they were 'embellished' with timber circles (page 44). In fact, where excavation has been undertaken, it is always the timber circle that has been replaced by a henge. The statement that some henges are 'lintelled' (page 46) clearly shows that the author is confused by monument typology and terminology. I am also uncertain as to how a technique such as phosphate analysis can identify an activity as specific as the defleshing and processing of human remains. None of the Montgomeryshire henges is illustrated; instead there is an out of place photograph of the Bryn Celli Ddu passage grave.

The Stone Age section concludes with recommended site visits to two sites including the Sarn-y-bryn-caled complex, though the sites are completely ploughed flat and the landscape dissected by the main road. The timber circle is not 'nestled between the A490 and the A483', it has been completely destroyed by the roundabout, and the Coed-y-dinas ring ditch is not 'just the other side of the pond' but rather was in the middle of it, close to the island.

Your reviews editor set a strict word limit for this review and I have not yet reached the Bronze and Iron Ages. Needless to say they continue in a similar confused and garbled vein. Few Montgomeryshire examples are illustrated and factual errors, numerous so far, continue to abound.

In short, Ms McCormack demonstrates that she possesses neither the archaeological nor the local knowledge to undertake a work such as this. Which brings me to question the approach of the commissioning editors of the series. There are many people in Wales, in universities, local trusts and antiquarian societies, who are eminently better qualified to write such a book. Were any of them approached? It seems strange that the editors should have gone to such an unqualified person for a local guide such as this.

University of Bradford

ALEX GIBSON

LODGE HILL CAMP, CAERLEON AND THE HILLFORTS OF GWENT. By Joshua Pollard, Ray Howell, Adrian Chadwick and Anne Leaver. 210 × 297 mm. vi + 71 pp. 38 illustrations. 9 tables. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 2006. ISBN 1 84171 935 8. Price £27.00.

This volume reports on the discoveries made during a research excavation, undertaken in 2000, at the Iron Age hillfort of Lodge Hill Camp, Newport. The authors are to be congratulated for publishing their findings efficiently and, secondly, for setting the project within a broader regional and research context. Few of the many hillforts of south-east Wales have been excavated; therefore this project is a welcome addition, addressing a gap in current understanding.

Three trenches were located: firstly, within the western hillfort interior, secondly across the internal rampart and ditch of the south-western circuit, and finally over the lesser disturbed western entrance of the fort. It is evident that the authors were ambitious from the outset in their excavation strategy. Restrictive tree cover, damaging root disturbance, the extensive reworking of soils and an inexperienced student team also significantly added to the challenge. In the interior trench, a large rock-cut quarry hollow, probably associated with the construction of the early fort, was succeeded by a complex of postholes, a floor surface and two curving gullies. Into the terminal of one was placed an iron La Tène I brooch, associated with pottery and briquetage, probably dating to the fourth century BC. Cultivation terraces, occasional late postholes and artefacts attested Late Iron Age and Roman activity in this locality.

Excavations across the inner rampart and ditch and across the inner western entrance clearly demonstrate the complexity and scale of this monument. The inner rampart along the south-western circuit was seemingly of cellular rubble and earth dump construction, possibly reinforced by timber lacing, with a massive fronting ditch. In the western entrance trench, an early stone-revetted bank was succeeded by a second rampart of dump-type construction. A recess on the interior side of the early rampart is interpreted as part of a paired 'guard chamber' structure with a gate which, if so, is a significant addition to the limited distribution of this architectural feature across Britain.

Reports on the artefacts and ecofacts retrieved from the site are of a high standard. The material evidences are diverse and significant, undermining traditional assumptions about a materially-impoorished regional Iron Age in south Wales. The pottery and salt containers add considerably to the

regional patterns of exchange, use and deposition, these reports containing useful discussion. So too, the charcoal report provides valuable environmental context. However, the lack of radiocarbon dating of selective charcoal or cremated bone samples, and justification thereof, is a serious omission. The appended geophysical survey of the interior of Llanmelin hillfort at the end of the report is a worthwhile piece of new research. The quality of reproduction of the survey plot and the draftsmanship of the associated earthwork survey plan could have been improved.

The report is weakened throughout by insufficient presentation of section drawings and photographs of key stratigraphic relationships. In addition, significant archaeological deposits and features were left unexcavated in every trench opened. Many postholes, stone surfaces and floors were not excavated in the interior trench, while hollows F24 and F25, ditches F3 and F20, and posthole profiles were not adequately recorded in section. The lack of excavation of cut 110 under the internal bank is frustrating, especially given its early position in the stratigraphic sequence. Across the western entrance, more north to south section drawings and photographs of the dump rampart and of the extent of cut 152 would have proved invaluable.

Taken in combination, these absences make it difficult to assess the higher level interpretations of structures and sequence offered. It is hard to be utterly convinced of the form of a proposed ancillary rectangular building in the interior, when only part of the plan was revealed and not all of the exposed postholes and floor deposits were investigated. The confused location of gullies F3 and F20 and the unexplored extent of bank deposit 017 make the leap to a small, ditched and banked enclosure phase intuitive, rather than securely demonstrated. The identification of a recess in the western entrance, as one of a pair of 'guard chambers,' is plausible. However, only a partial plan of one recess was excavated (was it round or rectangular?) and there is no confirmation that there was an opposing twin of contemporary date. Finally, though it is possible to see that the dump rampart infilled the recess, the evidence for it blocking the entire western entrance is not presented.

In monograph format, this slim volume seems overdressed. This is primarily an account of a successful, preliminary, single field-season, yielding significant findings. These required, at minimum, a further season of consolidation and confirmation, to complete the excavation of trenches opened, to elaborate upon the western entrance form, and to clarify the sequence of ramparts and entrances and the construction technique of the inner rampart. This was sadly never pursued. The discussion section, though useful and relevant, does not amount to a comprehensive synthesis of the hillforts of Gwent, as the title of the monograph would have us think. Consequently, one is left viewing it as an interesting, but limited success, as presented.

National Museum Cardiff

ADAM GWILLT

SEARCHING FOR THE SILURES. AN IRON AGE TRIBE IN SOUTH-EAST WALES. By Ray Howell. 172 × 249 mm. 160 pp. 56 illustrations. Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2006. ISBN 0 7524 4014 4. Price £17.99.

Historically, the Silures make a dramatic appearance in the pages of Tacitus's *Annals* where they inflicted a series of notable defeats on the invading Romans and, for a time, successfully resisted the Roman advance. After the completion of the conquest the tribal name became that of the *civitas* (or *respublica*) *Silurum*, with its administrative centre at Caerwent, but beyond that, in all truth, we know very little of the Silures themselves. Ray Howell is well aware of these problems, and his book provides a succinct and very useful summary of the Iron Age, Roman period and post-Roman period in south-east Wales in which

he sees, perhaps not always very convincingly, sufficient local variations to justify projecting the idea of the Silures back into the earlier decades of the Iron Age.

After a short summary of the evidence, the book follows a chronological development through the three main periods. As Howell makes clear, we have absolutely no idea of when the 'Silures' came into existence as a political unit (page 23), and his opening chapters are perhaps better regarded as a useful summary of the Iron Age archaeology of the area than as a history of a tribe. Unfortunately, the archaeological evidence itself is rather limited. There are lots of hillforts, but few substantial excavations in them, and even those have usually produced relatively few artefacts. The fact that pottery is more common on the Monmouthshire sites than on those of Glamorgan may hint at a cultural difference, but the sample is too small, particularly in Glamorgan, to be sure. The hillforts are supplemented by a number of excavations of undefended sites, and some metalwork hoards (most notably that from Llyn Fawr) and metal detector finds, but even with a degree of special pleading the overall picture which emerges differs little from that of many other areas of Britain. One of the most rewarding areas of recent work has been on the Severn Levels where we now have evidence of rectangular buildings, but in truth we know too little of similar sites elsewhere to be sure if this is a regional pattern or is the result of the unusual environment of the Levels.

That the Silures created problems for the Roman army is undeniable, but Howell, in common with many other commentators, tends to give more credit to their military exploits than they really deserve. Their main resistance actually lasted for no more than four or five years, and after the arrival of Didius Gallus in AD 52 they appear to have been effectively controlled. The Roman failure to follow up the Silurian campaign of Veranius in AD 57 with the occupation of the area was the result of the Boudiccan revolt and events elsewhere in the Empire rather than the belligerency of the Silures themselves. The fact that the book is primarily concerned with the Silures may account for the rather summary account of the Roman military remains in Siluria which are of sufficient importance to the study of the Roman army to have justified a longer discussion. The fortresses at Usk and Caerleon are described, although in neither case is a plan of the site provided; the auxiliary forts are simply listed.

The chapter on the civilian aspects of Roman Siluria provides a good summary of the archaeological evidence, and one regrets that the constraints of the book's format prevented a more detailed discussion of the rural sites. Caerwent, the civital capital, is described in some detail, although here again the absence of a plan is a serious defect. Given the fact that their territory contained a very considerable military presence, a fuller discussion of the likely relationship between the army and the *civitas*, which is hinted at in the Paulinus's inscription from Caerwent, would have been useful.

The last section, on the 'Early Medieval Scene', discusses the developments which led to the dominance of the Christian church and the Welsh princes in the history of the area. The major archaeological discoveries are discussed, as are such rare literary sources as the Llandaff Charters, but here again one regrets that Howell was not able to discuss the key sites in greater detail.

The book is well referenced with an excellent bibliography, and the illustrations, which consist mainly of photographs with a handful of plans, are well chosen. The title of the book is *Searching for the Silures*, but despite Howell's best efforts they remain a rather shadowy people not easily distinguished either before or after the Roman period.

THE CELTIC CHRISTIAN SITES OF THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN MARCHES. By Sarah and John Zaluckyj. 157 × 236 mm. xii + 432 pp. 214 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2006. ISBN 1 904396 57 7. Price £12.95.

In this attractively presented book the authors have aimed to provide a guidebook to sites related to early Christianity along much of the Welsh border country (Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire, Breconshire, parts of Herefordshire and Gwent). It consists of a series of introductory chapters covering the origins and development of early Christianity in Wales followed by a gazetteer comprising 168 selected sites. These are mainly churches, though a number of other relevant locations are included, such as the chambered tomb at Ty Illtud (Breckn.).

As the title suggests, the heart of the book is predicated on a search for relics of that elusive beast the 'Celtic Church'. Whilst this book is clearly not intended to be a heavyweight analysis of early Christianity in Wales it does take a fairly uncritical approach to the historic and archaeological evidence, particularly in the acceptance of the historicity of the saints' lives. The authors treat these as unproblematic and use them to present a historical narrative for the growth of the early church focused on the individual acts and works of early saints, an approach owing much to John Morris and Emrys Bowen. There is little indication of an awareness of recent scholarship which is more sceptical of the value of hagiography as a direct historical resource. Throughout the book there is also wider acceptance of the basic notion of the existence of the 'Celtic Church'. Although the authors have clearly read some recent scholarship on the topic, they have not taken on board the cautionary views of writers such as Wendy Davies on the 'myth of the Celtic church'.

The criteria for inclusion in the gazetteer is not always clear. For example, it is not apparent why Llanfyllin (Mont.) is included, whilst Hirnant (Mont.) is not mentioned. Both have post-medieval church structures, dedications to early saints and nearby saint's wells, and in the case of Hirnant other sites in the parish linked to the saint. The entries themselves are generally solid. The physical descriptions of the sites are heavily based on the *Buildings of Wales* and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's Historic Churches Survey. Emphasis is given to features deemed indicative of an early date, such as inscribed stones (though Nash Williams's *Early Christian Monuments of Wales* does not appear in the bibliography), curvilinear churchyards and ancient yews. However, the evidential value of the latter two factors is not discussed in any detail. Again, there is some uncritical reliance on existing literature. For example, there are strong arguments against the carved stone figure from Upton Bishop (Herefordshire) being early medieval in date, and a later date is more likely. Despite some of these problems the gazetteer entries are extremely helpful in providing useful background contextual information about the sites of a type not usually found in traditional architectural guides. It notes useful early antiquarian observations, appearances in medieval hagiography and nearby holy wells. For example, in the entry on Meifod (Mont.) it contains a discussion and photograph of the feature known as Gwely Gwyddfarch on the intriguingly named Gallt y Ancr overlooking the better known church of St Tysilio and St Mary.

Overall, if the rather outdated introductory chapters are set aside, the gazetteer provides a useful supplement to more authoritative guides. If some of the more uncritical interpretations are treated with a healthy pinch of salt, the wider background material can certainly enhance a visit to the sites listed.

THE BUILDINGS OF WALES. CARMARTHENSHIRE AND CEREDIGION. By Thomas Lloyd, Julian Orbach and Robert Scourfield. 126 × 221mm. xxi + 661 pp. 135 illustrations. Yale University Press, London, 2006. ISBN 0 300 10179 1. Price £29.95.

This is the penultimate volume in a project to investigate and introduce the architecture of Wales. Like its recent predecessors, the book represents a considerable development on the founding ideas of the series, and readers will herein find an inclusive approach to historical architecture which encompasses the vernacular as well as the polite, the recent as well as the ancient, and sometimes the bad as well as the good.

Like its predecessors, the book provides a general essay outlining the development of historical architecture and building in the two counties, from prehistoric to post-modern times, followed by an extensive gazetteer, and it is handsomely illustrated by a freestanding photographic essay.

The introductory essay begins as a chronological account until the medieval period, but thereafter is structured thematically, leaving the historical background to be deduced from the evidence of buildings. There is a balance between providing supporting information to contextualise the buildings—as in the case of chapels, industrial structures, and the vernacular for instance—and outlining the typological or stylistic developments exhibited by the castle, country house or parish church. On the whole this balance is successfully achieved, and if occasionally architecture appears autonomous of social historical process, there are many compensations.

Amongst these, the naming of provincial architects is particularly valuable: both counties have their share of works by major British figures—John Nash, William Butterfield, J. L. Pearson and others—but architects like J. R. Withers and George Morgan arguably did more to imprint the architectural character of the region. Identification of local names in the building of Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Llanelli, for example, is particularly to be welcomed, and of course the book also celebrates the unnamed builders of the vernacular, whether the traditional craftsmen working with local stone and earth, or the imaginative builders who used industrialised components to create the charming corrugated-iron Rhydlewys stores.

If the book's first duty is to inform, it may also inspire. Gazetteer entries are necessarily summary and can be dry. But they are leavened by delight in architecture for its own sake—perhaps even relish in bad examples—by the occasional stylish evocation of place (Borth's 'silhouette reminiscent of the American west in its arbitrariness'), and by quirky asides (Great House, Llangadog, whose builder was 'sensationally murdered' in 1770; the nineteenth-century wizards of Pantcoy, Cynwyl Gaeo).

The book aims to set out the architectural identity of the region, but also to provide on-the-spot guidance to the curious observer. In doing so, it treads a fine line between architectural identity and sense of place. Gazetteer entries are perforce selective and focused on what is most easily seen: the scatter of rural building is not readily gathered into its settlement-based structure, and vernacular building traditions are sometimes elusive. As a result, it can be difficult to capture a sense of the typical rather than the unusual. Whereas some entries provide a pithy overview of the character of a place, others merely single out notable buildings. There are some distinctive settlement types which barely warrant a mention: the smallholdings of the lead-mining uplands for example.

Where the book goes further in permitting an understanding of place is in its treatment of towns: they are given their own section in the introductory essay, and each has a historical summary, a list of key buildings and a perambulation in the gazetteer. This enables a shift in focus from the exceptional to the commonplace, and documents the poor as well as the good. In Llanelli, for example the 'delightful' Stepney Arcade of 1894 and the 'sad market' of 1969, are both identified in the perambulation of the town. In Aberystwyth, the perambulation traces the layout of the medieval town, and draws the eye to its comprehensive nineteenth-century rebuilding and growth as a resort. So whilst the character and history

of urban settlements is very strongly represented in this volume, the same depth of understanding is not so readily available in the rural landscape. This imbalance is the almost inevitable consequence of combining the gazetteer structure with a lingering emphasis on architectural quality, and an emphatic (and valuable) focus on specific sites, names and dates.

There is another aspect of the architectural identity/sense of place question, which is the decision to treat the two counties in a single volume. This approach emphasises their undoubted common characteristics, but does it also under-represent their differences? But it is at least arguable that the differences within each county are more important than any differences between them. The strong contribution of local geography, and political, economic and cultural circumstance, to building character is touched on in the introduction but perhaps deserves more attention than it here receives. Once again, the gazetteer structure does not easily foster appreciation of broad areas with common characteristics—the upland block of the Cambrian Mountains, the more prosperous river valleys, the coast.

What this volume does achieve, however, is a celebration of quality in the architecture of its region. The fine photographs help to document its long chronology of building on the one hand, and the remarkable coherence of survival after *c.* 1800, as witnessed here in Aberaeron or Llandovery, for example, on the other. The introduction concludes its optimistic picture of conservation by noting also the damage wrought by the high tide of harsh repair. It may be hoped that this book will play its part in helping to turn that tide.

Cadw

JUDITH ALFREY

THE BUILDINGS OF ENGLAND. SHROPSHIRE. By John Newman and Nicholas Pevsner. 126 × 221mm. xviii + 787 pp. 67 illustrations. Yale University Press, London, 2006. ISBN 0 300 12083 4. Price £29.95.

The architecture of Shropshire has received more attention recently than most English counties. For many years the only reliable guide was the admirable predecessor of the volume under review, Nikolaus Pevsner's *Shropshire* published in 1958 by Penguin. Recently two volumes have appeared which have added immensely to our knowledge of the architecture of this border county: Eric Mercer's *English Vernacular Architecture: the Shropshire Experience* (2003) and Madge Moran's *Vernacular Buildings of Shropshire* (2004). A long-running programme of tree-ring dating has transformed understanding of the chronology of medieval domestic buildings. Now we have the revised 'Pevsner' for Shropshire which takes account of Mercer and Moran, and many other contributions, and is as comprehensive as one could wish for. It has been compiled by an experienced Pevsner hand, John Newman, and matches his *Glamorgan* (1995) and *Monmouthshire* (2000) in scope and for sheer competence.

The book follows the tried and trusted Pevsner format. Newman and colleagues—Gavin Watson, Michael Watson, and Roger White—provide overviews of the architecture, archaeology and industrial archaeology of the county. The heart of the volume is the gazetteer of numerous localities from Abdon to Yockleton, with towns having the additional feature of perambulations. The usual glossary and the indispensable index of people and places rounds off the volume. Special mention must be made of the carefully selected colour photographs by James O. Davies of English Heritage.

The tone is generally measured and benevolent. Newman is neutral about many prominent but undistinguished buildings. He has kind things to say of most places, though he concedes that he finds the hidden industrial heritage of greatest interest in Telford (recently voted one of the dreariest towns in England). This even-handed inclusivity is surely the right approach, but one misses the occasional

quirkiness of Pevsner (1958), who knew an architectural carbuncle when he saw one, and said so. Newman prefers to challenge rather than denounce: he sees merit in some difficult twentieth-century structures, including Ludlow's 'tactful' Tesco supermarket, a building that many visitors and townspeople find jarring. Newman is at his best when dealing with set-piece and iconic monuments: Stokesay, Ludlow Castle, Ironbridge, among other complex structures. Country-house devotees will enjoy the descriptions of mansions and villas, many by a surprising number of architects working in their home patch. Nash (though his forbears came from Broseley) was something of an interloper though he contrived to produce some of his best work in Shropshire, including the ravishing Cronkhill, considered the earliest Italianate villa in England. Newman notes mischievously that the inspiration for Cronkhill may have been Eyton-on-Severn rather than Tuscany. Church enthusiasts will relish the professional assessments of Shropshire's many ecclesiastical buildings, the most comprehensive since Cranage (c. 1910). There is sympathetic treatment of oddities like the church designed by the Reverend John Parker (whose drawings of medieval screens are so important) at Llanyblodwel, whose extraordinary tower still impresses. At the opening of his new church, Parker apparently hid in order to overhear honest opinions on the design of his completed church. Fortunately they were favourable.

It hardly needs saying that this volume will be essential for Salopians, but a review in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* provides the opportunity to emphasise its wider appeal. Shropshire does provide a glimpse of what has been lost from medieval Wales. In particular the pre-1400 houses are revealing. The numerous crown posts in Shropshire may be contrasted with only one or two survivors in Wales. Cruck Cottage in Upton Magna and Stokesay Castle show that cruck construction was under way in the Marches in the later thirteenth century, though mysteriously fourteenth-century crucks have yet to be identified. The numerous fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century Shropshire crucks and their decoration are much like their counterparts in Wales. Architecture shows that material culture was no respecter of political and language boundaries, and that the English and Welsh of the March shared a very similar vernacular architecture.

Newman's reflections on changes since 1958 are among the most interesting parts of the book. Here one gets the sense of heritage under pressure during the last half century with church and chapel closures, urban redevelopment, farm-building conversions, and so on. Pevsner was forced to note the demolition of two country houses while his text was in the press. The situation is difficult to imagine occurring now. A positive conservation climate has been established by active conservation officers and by the listing of significant buildings. The Shropshire listing is extensive (though we learn that Bridgnorth has not been revised although the 'great relisting' was deemed completed years ago) and we know that listing is the best way to protect a building at risk. Nevertheless, there have been preventable losses: the destruction of the unlisted Padmore Hall, Onibury, was a deplorable episode. Country houses have been altered rather than destroyed, but the dispersal of the contents of Pitchford Hall was a painful incident of the early 1990s that could have been handled better for general benefit.

When comparing the relatively slim Pevsner of 1958 with the present heavyweight Pevsner (2006) one has to note that after fifty years the revised edition is suffering from comfortable middle-age spread, partly brought on by a heavy diet of dates and attributions. The two- or three-line notices of numerous chapels and houses giving architects and construction dates are now very much the backbone of the book. These facts and figures are immensely valuable but they are not referenced. Omniscience is all very well but one needs the reassurance of a simple system of referencing which brings the back-stage research in dusty volumes of *Building News* and the like to the front of house. All that is needed is the abbreviated journal title, volume and page numbers, and there is generally room for this at the end of an entry. One may also add that while the guide to further reading is reliable and up-to-date, key references need to be cited within the text. This is sometimes recognised, but not consistently. This is sometimes recognised,

but not consistently. Why is Gomme footnoted in the entry on Hawkstone Hall but not (say) Tyack on Longner Hall and Cronkhill? But these are reservations prompted by consulting the latest Pevsner in the office and library. The main thing is to enjoy this book in the field, preferably by taking it on several long perambulations during a Salopian summer, contriving to take refreshment at one of the independent pubs that (the introduction assures us on page 61) has resisted the blandishments of the major breweries and continues to brew its own ales.

RCAHMW, Aberystwyth

RICHARD SUGGETT

CHEPSTOW CASTLE. ITS HISTORY & BUILDINGS. Edited by Rick Turner and Andy Johnson. 204 × 261 mm. xix + 300 pp. 228 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2006. ISBN 1 904396 52 6. Price £17.50.

Since the later 1990s Andy Johnson of Logaston Press has been publishing on a variety of historical, archaeological and architectural subjects, mainly relating to the Welsh Marches. The strength of the press has been its architectural studies, and amongst the titles that stand out are those edited volumes that contain a number of contributions from a wide range of scholars. Here one thinks of the studies that have been made of the abbeys of Dore and Tewkesbury. The first castle to be made the subject of this in-depth treatment was Ludlow, recently reprinted with revisions, and now we have arguably the second greatest castle in the Marches, Chepstow.

There have been a number of such detailed studies of individual castles in the last few years, for example Brougham and Carlisle in the north-west of England, increasing our knowledge of each building's architecture, as well as its history, and also related matters, such as pictorial sources. Although the arguments currently in vogue with castellologists regarding the role of the castle—military, domestic, symbolic and so forth—are important, the more that individual structures are analysed in minute detail by a range of scholars, the better. Architectural history does not stand still, and the amount of new knowledge emanating from such publications as the Cadw guidebooks, as well as monographs, means that the subject of castle studies is now flourishing, as opposed to heading towards a moribund state, which seemed at one stage to be the direction it was taking.

Chepstow was the subject of three very successful one-day conferences organised by Cadw and Chepstow Museum (1999, 2002 and 2006), one of the highlights of which was the showing of the film *Ivanhoe*, scenes of which were filmed at the castle in 1913! This book of essays on the castle appeared just in time to be launched at the third conference. Some of the papers have appeared elsewhere, such as the late Richard Avent's chapter on the outer gatehouse, whilst reference is made to other, more detailed studies; in particular there is the very important paper in *Antiquaries Journal* on the great tower.

The book consists of twenty-four chapters by seventeen scholars, and these range from the foundation of the castle in the reign of William I to the castle in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For this reviewer, it is the later chapters that have proved the most informative. We have, for example, Turner and Priestley's work on the hunting preserves associated with the castle, with the first modern studies of the hunting lodges of Cas Troggy and the Old Lodge. The former, a small castle-like structure, was built by Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, shortly before his death in 1306. The Old Lodge has the appearance of a circular ringwork or moated site, with the fragments of a drystone revetment and the remains of two internal buildings, a modern one built within a much earlier structure. The authors argue for the ornamental Old Lodge being associated with hunting and the re-enclosure of Chepstow Park by the Worcester family of Raglan and Chepstow on the eve of the English Civil War.

The town, priory and the urban defences known as the Port Wall are studied by Shoesmith, and then Turner *et al.* examine the castle during the Tudor period, concentrating in particular on the hitherto little known work undertaken by Charles Somerset, 1st Earl of Worcester (d. 1526), sometime head of the king's household. The refenestration of the castle, the wooden doors that survive in Marten's Tower, as well as additional fireplaces, all indicate Somerset's programme of works undertaken to convert the castle from a medieval to a modern home.

Priestley's examination of the documentary sources for the castle in the seventeenth century has firmly placed the conversion of the walls and towers to take musketeers and gunners to the post-Restoration period. £500 was granted in 1662 to assist in the repair of the castle. Two inventories taken in the 1670s detail a considerable quantity of munitions held in the castle, and the 1679 survey is given in full in the chapter 'After the Restoration'. Of heavy ordnance, besides two mortars, there were nine bronze/brass cannon and eleven iron ones, all of mixed calibres, a considerable armament, although at the time of the survey the cannon were either mounted on decayed gun carriages or not mounted at all. A feature of this chapter is the reconstruction of the gun position in the lower bailey curtain.

A chapter that this reviewer was looking forward to was the pictorial evidence of the castle in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and although a huge number of drawings and engravings exist, a list of the key views would have been invaluable, similar to that compiled in the study of Brougham Castle. Rainsbury's chapter is a useful contribution, but so much more could have been done in this study, and an opportunity has been wasted.

The publisher and contributors deserve our thanks for this truly important book. I hope that it is as successful as its sister publication, *Ludlow*, for there are signs that *Chepstow* was rushed to make the day school deadline, and there are numerous typographical errors and inconsistencies that should be corrected before it is reprinted.

Llandaff

JOHN R. KENYON

THE CISTERCIANS IN WALES. ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY 1130–1540. By David M. Robinson. 205 × 267 mm. xii + 388 pp. 193 illustrations. Society of Antiquaries of London, London, 2006. ISBN 0 85431 285 4. Price £55.00.

Despite the lateness of its conception, the modern boundary between England and Wales forms a convenient archaeological and historical division even in studying such an international movement as the Cistercian order. With a certain amount of leeway (*e.g.* for Dore Abbey), it allows David Robinson to consider here all the major Cistercian abbeys within those areas 'far from the concourse of men' which cluster around the Welsh massif. This is, however, a book which takes us far beyond the boundaries of Wales. The author's considerable knowledge of Cistercian sites across Europe is brought to bear upon the major Cistercian abbeys of Wales and we rarely lose sight of this European dimension. The list of contents reveals four parts, but the book really falls into only three. There is an introductory section concerned with the early history of the Cistercian order itself, and of the settlement and location of the Welsh abbeys. The core of the book considers the buildings of the major Welsh houses, first development of the churches, then claustral and other inner court structures, considered range by range and building type by building type. Finally, there is a catalogue which summarises the history and remains of each site.

Throughout there is an emphasis on establishing the link between Welsh developments and those which affected the order as a whole. Nowhere is this clearer than in the sections on the abbey churches

themselves, where links with such seminal buildings as Clairvaux II and the upstanding abbey church at Pontigny are discussed along with many other examples. An intriguing subtext, never fully spelt out but always apparent, concerns the subtle interplay of influences on church design. Clearly the liturgical needs of the order as a whole played an important part, especially in determining the ground plan, and we see changing needs in changing plans. However, ideas of a Cistercian architectural style need considerable modification when considering the appearance of the church as a whole. In matters of décor and in matters of detail, there is considerable influence both from patrons and more especially from the gangs of masons who actually built the churches and who may well have moved between many churches bringing ideas and details from other places and orders. Perhaps, one day, we will see this theme worked out in connection with the architecture of Tintern, which David Robinson has studied in considerable detail, as careful reading of the book makes very clear.

The claustral and other buildings are considered largely in the context of upstanding examples, meaning that the inner core of the monastery receives the great majority of the attention, and there is little mention of the outer court which must have formed the economic powerhouse of the community but which has survived less well. Again, local diversity amid internationally identifiable patterns comes to the fore. After initial experimentation, the Cistercians clearly found the claustral plan most practical for their purpose. Indeed, it is a practical streak which can be seen in their attention to water supply and drainage, as surely as in that archetypal (though not universal) Cistercian feature, the north-south refectory. In large establishments where the numbers to be accommodated were so large that they necessitated elongated east and west ranges, a refectory at right-angles to the cloister was the most practical solution if a claustral plan was to be retained.

The catalogue section occupies approximately a quarter of the main text and provides succinct summaries of the history, architectural development and visible remains, along with plans and a site bibliography. This seems destined to be a place of first resort for those wanting information on specific sites and should prove immensely useful, especially if used in conjunction with the excellent index.

Readers who compare *The Cistercians in Wales* with the articles which appear in last year's journal will notice an omission from David Robinson's book. There is scarcely a mention of nunneries. One would not expect a great deal, given the near invisibility of sites, but total silence seems like an act of misogyny, worthy of St Bernard himself, and one which can give an incomplete picture of Cistercian Wales. Those whose grasp of the monastic geography of Wales is less comprehensive than that of the author may like to know that the map showing all houses (and even nunneries) is on page 26. It would have been better as a frontispiece.

The book draws extensively upon the visual resources of Cadw and other public bodies. This is perhaps to be expected from the author, one of whose major contributions to Welsh heritage has been oversight of the new Cadw guides, as important for the present generation as the blue guides were to an earlier one. A number of the illustrations first appeared in the guides. These and other illustrations, probably originally in colour, appear in black and white in this monochrome production. Am I alone in feeling cheated by books which use colour illustrations only on their dust jackets? Here, it is certainly a pity that the advantage of colour to sales on the sites themselves was not explored.

The book is produced to the standard which one would expect of the Society of Antiquaries. One wonders quite why it was published in a series conceived in the early years of the twentieth century to publish major excavation reports, something which it did exclusively until at least the 1970s. This is not, nor does it pretend to be, a major excavation report. It is a major work of synthesis and it deserves to appear in a series which immediately conjures up the image of the research monograph, rather than the excavation report. But that is a minor matter. The amount of information assembled, the quality of the

discussion and the breadth of vision applied to the subject is truly impressive. Both the author and publishers are to be congratulated on a major contribution to our appreciation of the Cistercians in Wales which will, one trusts, render our very varied remains considerably more visible at a European level.

Cardiff University

PETER WEBSTER

CARDIFF. ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MEDIEVAL DIOCESE OF LLANDAFF. Edited by John R. Kenyon and Diane M. Williams. 175 × 247 mm. xv + 214 pp. 137 illustrations. The British Archaeological Association, 2006. ISBN 1 904350 81 X. Price £24.50.

The problems of conference organisers are many and varied, matched only by those of editors seeking to encapsulate the conference between covers. The Cardiff conference of the British Archaeological Association in 2004 appears to have been no exception. Some papers given at the conference have been published elsewhere, a few were never delivered. The result, as the editors admit, is a distinct absence of castles but an interesting mix of articles which all relate to south Wales, even if any distinct Cardiff connection is somewhat hard to find. To cover all 11 contributions would be to risk producing little more than a list and one must admit that selection follows personal preferences. Omission is by no means an implied criticism.

The volume opens with a survey of the Roman art of south-east Wales by Martin Henig, one of several authors to emphasise the links between south Wales and south-west England which have become less obvious with the (recent) severance of water links across the Bristol Channel. The piece deserves a wider audience among Romanists than the book's title is likely to attract.

Of particular interest to the reviewer, was David Crouch's piece on Cardiff before 1300 (the only article specifically on Cardiff). It was a relief to find an alternative to the oft-quoted Norse derivation of the name 'Womanby Street', where excavations have (twice) failed to find any archaeological trace of occupation prior to the twelfth century. Equally attractive is a proposition which makes sense of the medieval street plan: a Norman borough bounded by Womanby Street, Quay Street, Church Street and St John's Street (not Working Street, as stated here, as this, like High Street, changes name on the putative original boundary). This core was expanded to the town familiar from the later Speed plan by Earl William of Gloucester, 1173–83, who records a 'new Borough . . . where my gardens were outside the town of Cardiff'.

David Park and Sophie Stewart show us just what we are missing from the majority of surviving medieval churches. Ewenny Priory yields evidence for two schemes of decoration, one twelfth- and the other thirteenth-century. Both are masonry styles, but the earlier includes a fictile pattern which, it is suggested, was the backdrop to statuary (presumably itself also painted). The visual effect of such schemes is difficult to extend to the bare stonework which is usually all Reformation zeal, post-Reformation neglect and Victorian restoration has left us.

Underscoring a number of the papers (especially Malcolm Thurlby on late Romanesque and early Gothic Llandaff, and Richard K. Morris on late Gothic south Wales) are the links between the architecture of the region and that of south-west England. Somewhat dimly visible are master masons and their attendant lodges moving from project to project at the behest of specific patrons. The transmission of ideas and details is at least discernible here. One would dearly love to know how the Abbey at Tintern arrived at an architectural scheme for its thirteenth-century cloister (as revealed by Stuart Harrison) which derives apparently from Benedictine sites in Normandy. Did the Abbot take time off from travelling to and from the General Chapter at Cîteaux for some architectural tourism?

Other reminders of what we have lost appear in Charles Tracy's discussion of three rood lofts. Here, however, the culprit may not be the Reformation which appears to have encountered a certain reluctance to change, particularly in rural areas. More potent was the neglect of fabric which appears to have typified the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (but see Evans on post-Reformation, pre-Victorian building to see that it was not all dereliction). One is reminded that it is all too easy in the twenty-first century to regard churches simply as ancient monuments, but they survive because they were and are used. If an element ceases to be relevant to liturgical requirements, be they brought on by the Reformation or Vatican II, it will be neglected if not removed.

The BAA Conference Proceedings format works best where the subject of the conference is a single building. It works less well, as here, when dealing with a region. One feels the lack, both of some lectures which never made it to this volume, and to the links which an itinerary with its guided tours would have provided for the conference delegates. This is not to detract from what is here, which is excellent, but rather to suggest that the multifarious subject matter will encourage readers to pick out the plums which interest them rather than feel the need to consume the whole cake.

The editors have not been assisted by the general format of these proceedings. It is surely not acceptable in the days of computerised indexing to publish an academic volume like this without an index. The reviewer also found the referencing unduly cumbersome. References reduced to an author and single word at the end of a piece can often be enlarged only by tracking through all the references to the very beginning. Surely this is what the Harvard system was designed to avoid—and it would easily adapt to a single bibliography saving considerable space and providing a valuable academic tool. But this is to complain about something which is clearly beyond the remit of the editors of this particular volume who are to be congratulated on assembling such an interesting pot-pourri of pieces on the region.

Cardiff University

PETER WEBSTER

WALES'S BEST ONE HUNDRED CHURCHES. By T. J. Hughes. 145 × 210 mm. 304 pp. 62 illustrations. Seren, Bridgend, 2006. ISBN 978 1 85411 426 6. Price £19.99.

Until recently, Wales's parish churches and chapels have received much less scholarly attention than her castles and ruined abbeys. We now have the magisterial *Buildings of Wales* series, supplemented by older accounts in the summer meeting reports of the Cambrians, but these leave ample room for approaches which go beyond plan types and architectural descriptions. The present book brings a different and fresh approach to a select number of churches, nonconformist chapels and ruined monastic houses. Drawing its inspiration from Simon Jenkins's *England's Thousand Best Churches*, it includes, as befits a volume from the book imprint of Poetry Wales Press, the many literary associations, both in Welsh and in English, of individual places. The introduction begins with a quotation from Vernon Watkins and closes with one from William Williams, Pantycelyn. Elsewhere we meet R. S. Thomas at Eglwysfach, Burne Jones at Hawarden, Felicia Lady Hemans at St Asaph, Shakespeare at Gresford, John Cowper Powys at Llangar and a wealth of Bardic poets.

Hughes relates some churches to wider horizons—art nouveau at Brithdir, Italian baroque at Gwydir and York-style glass in the churches of Clwyd. His descriptions, with maps and grid references, are good on medieval art—misericords at Beaumaris or Gresford, sculptures and wall paintings, rood screens and timber roofs. He also has a sharp eye for post-medieval vernacular art. Inevitably, there are a few unimportant mistakes. The strange, unfinished effigy at Grosmont is certainly not Hubert de Burgh, Cadw (not CADW) is not an acronym, and it is surprising to be told that 'almost nothing remains of

(Haverfordwest) Priory'. However, with the book's knowledgeable, scholarly appreciation of Welsh churches, few, if any, readers will not find a great deal here that is new to them.

The numerous colour illustrations show the wealth of photographic talent currently available in Wales. Many will have their memories stirred by photographs of particular churches and details such as the angel-bagpiper from Wrexham, the glass at Gresford, Hawarden and Old Radnor or the named seats at Llangelynin in Meirionydd are a delight. The captions are often apposite and witty—'From the menu of architectural features they (the minister and architect of Morryston chapel at Swansea) ordered the lot'. There is a good index, but the 'List of Churches Included' (which do not appear in the main index) classifies them, oddly, not by place-names, but by dedications. Thus Patrisio appears under 'I' as 'St Issui, Patrisio'. It can be difficult to find particular churches in this list unless one knows the dedication. My initial impression was that Patrisio, one of the most interesting and numinous churches in south Wales, had been omitted. Choosing which churches to include must in any case have been difficult. No Gower churches made the final list for example. However, the maps include many others, often equally rewarding to visit. Bettws Newydd made the final list, but not nearby Llangwm, though it is at least shown on the relevant map.

At a time when so many churches and chapels in Wales are falling into decay, becoming redundant or are being sold off for a variety of uses, Hughes has performed an invaluable service in reminding the people of Wales, particularly non-churchgoers and those outside the scholarly community, of the huge spiritual, literary, artistic and historical wealth, gathered over many centuries, that is at risk here.

Caerphilly

JEREMY K. KNIGHT

ANGLESEY CHURCHES. By Geraint I. L. Jones 142 × 210 mm. 129 pp. 61 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2006. ISBN 1 84527 089 4. Price £6.50.

This small guide contains a useful summary of the history of some 115 churches on Anglesey. It describes not only churches of medieval origin, but Anglican churches that have been established since the Reformation, and Roman Catholic churches. A brief historical introduction is followed by a short section on the names of churches, and a definition of technical terms used within the text. Chapter 4 is a gazetteer of churches in alphabetical order and forms the major part of the book. There is no index, but secondary names are put into alphabetical order, with a pointer to the primary name. The text is accompanied by 11 figures and 20 pages of black and white photographs. The figures include plans of some of the more important churches, though the plans are diagrammatic only, and are neither to scale nor accurate.

Though the book contains much of interest, there are flaws, both in content and presentation. A major omission is any discussion of source material. There are no references, no indications of sources, and no reading guide for the interested visitor.

The introduction is very general and, though no more could be expected in the seven pages allocated, it does not present an accurate picture of current academic thought. The description of the early establishment of the church is largely that propounded by E. G. Bowen, and there is no mention of more recent research that examines the origins of the church as a movement formed from within contemporary society. The author is obviously happier on nineteenth-century and later developments, relegating the Middle Ages to less than half a page. There is no description or discussion of architectural development.

Chapter 3 on technical terms is very limited: it fails to describe a number of the terms used within the text and incorrectly defines other terms. For example 'aisles' are defined as a 'passage between rows of

pews' and no mention is made of its definition as a lateral structure parallel to the nave, though this sense of the word is used several times in the following text. The 'bulwark' as defined is a 'parapet', and an 'arcade', described as a roof support, would be better defined as a structure designed to separate the nave from an aisle.

The gazetteer in the fourth chapter describes each of the churches, usually in terms of chronological development. However, there is very little description of architectural features and the text is in stark contrast to the formulaic Pevsner style. Neither is there any contextualisation of features. For example, whilst the Pabo and Iestyn stones are described under their respective churches, the reader is not informed that they were carved by the same sculptor and commissioned by the same family. Similarly, no attention is drawn to the near identical groups of late fourteenth-century windows that adorn several of the churches. Occasional errors occur, for example Penmon was Augustinian by the early thirteenth century, not the early fourteenth century, and the representation of death on the screen at Llaneilian is very unlikely to be sixteenth-century. There are, however, few errors of significance, although the information is far too often qualified with unnecessary adjectives, while church foundation dates are all too often stated as fact. For example, Llanbeulan is described as being founded in AD 630 by St Peulan, brother of St Gwenfaen, yet Llaneilian church, for which there are construction dates carved within the masonry dating from the 1480s, is described as 'believed' to have been built in the late fifteenth century. The descriptions come more into their own, however, when the nineteenth-century and more recent history is described, with many small gems of information included.

The book works as a basic introduction to the individual churches of Anglesey, and is particularly useful in having all post-medieval churches included. However, the absence of any references, and the lack of architectural description limits its usefulness.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

ANDREW DAVIDSON

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH SCREENS OF THE SOUTHERN MARCHES. By Richard Wheeler. 247 × 176 mm. x + 310 pp. 298 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2006. ISBN 1 904396 51 8. Price £17.50.

For those archaeologists and historians aware of the wonder, splendour and variety of surviving screenwork from Wales and the Marches, the series of papers published by F. H. Crossley and M. H. Ridgway in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* between 1946 and 1962 have for many years been essential reading. For work in this field, Crossley received the G. T. Clark prize in 1946. This informative new publication gathers together information on the screenwork of the southern Marches of England and Wales from a number of sources. The author deserves thanks for giving this area his attention and providing the sort of guide enjoyed by other areas, such as south-west England and East Anglia.

The first third of the book places the church screens in their wider context—from their origins and the Great Rood, to the development of rood-screens in England and Wales. Other chapters summarise the impact of the Reformation and the post-Reformation histories of rood-screens. Mural partitions and minor screens (such as parclose screens) are also briefly surveyed.

The main part of the book is taken up with a gazetteer covering Breconshire (14 churches), Monmouthshire (17), Radnorshire (17), Herefordshire (48) and parts of Montgomeryshire (5), Gloucestershire (3), Shropshire (6) and Worcestershire (3). The low numbers for Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (a total of 12 in this study) reflect the area of study, which confines itself to the eastern edge of the southern Marches. Some terms such as 'lierne' vaults, unfamiliar to many

readers, are usefully explained in an end glossary, and a location map, site index and general index are provided. The gazetteer is not as comprehensive as that by Crossley and Ridgway, who included stalls as well as screens and lofts. Some screens which no longer survive (such as the former Monmouthshire examples at St Peter's, Bryngwyn, destroyed in the nineteenth century, and Holy Trinity, Christchurch, lost by fire) are omitted. In focusing on those screens which have survived, the author provides in this book a welcome companion for those wishing to seek these glories out for themselves.

Some generalisations should be treated with caution. The author's evolutionary view of the development of woodworking is not reflected in the quality of early woodwork. The claim that the thirteenth-century woodworker was an artisan of 'more modest abilities and pretensions' (page 35) is based on partial survival and regional variation, and is contradicted by the subtlety and beauty of extant work. Britain has one of the finest collections of thirteenth and fourteenth-century ecclesiastical woodwork in Europe. Polychromy and quality are evident in both sculpture and furniture, such as the late thirteenth-century Kemeys rood figure, the fine oak effigies of John, 2nd Baron Hastings (Abergavenny) or Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (c. 1250; Gloucester Cathedral) and the late thirteenth-century chest from St Mary's, Newport, Essex (to name but a few). Nor does the construction of church chests by 'hollowing out a solid tree trunk' confirm the low standing of the woodworker prior to 1250 (page 35). Such chests had a specific function and were a type intended to stay put; there were more elaborate kinds, many of them decorated. The high standing of master carpenters in the fourteenth century suggests that the carpenter was not necessarily in the shadow of the mason in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as implied in the book. In fact, the impetus may at times have been the other way around. Certainly there is evidence that during the early medieval period, when wood remained the primary architectural medium, masons in Wales adopted woodcarvers' and carpenters' techniques (illustrated in the pillars from Llantwit Major church, and their possible function within a mural partition). The dynamics of the relationship between stonemason and carpenter, their mutual interdependence, and their growing tendency to experiment, are issues not really considered. The extent to which both crafts later discarded traditional conventions while using a common stylistic currency, and the relationship between patronage and the autonomy of the craftsman in later elaborate commissions, provide ample room for further thought.

Some interpretations have moved on since the publication of this book. For example, the wooden female figure from Mochdre (Mont.) can no longer be identified as Mary and part of the rood group with the surviving figure of Christ. The figure is too small and her stance inappropriate. Saintry attributes are missing, and she is more safely described as the figure of a female saint, probably from the body of the church.

The book is richly illustrated, and includes excellent colour plates. The format was presumably chosen to allow full-page illustrations of complete screens. Surprisingly, this opportunity has not always been taken (for example, full images of the Bronllys and Brecon Priory screens would have been beneficial). The quality of reproduction for black and white photographs is fine, though some readers may find it difficult to make out detail at times. Certainly some of the plates which appear in Crossley and Ridgway are more informative and better lit (compare those of Gwernesney, Llangwm Uchaf and the bresummer at Llangattock Lingoed, all in Monmouthshire). The reviewer would have found illustrations of more of the screens cited in the survey of the development of the rood screen in England and Wales useful, but perhaps beyond the remit of this particular book.

Medieval Church Screens of the Southern Marches does not supersede the rigorous, detailed entries of Crossley and Ridgway, but it should only be judged by its stated intentions. The author and publisher have served church archaeology well in making readily accessible material otherwise only available in diverse, scattered sources. At a very modest price it is extremely good value, and it contains much for both

specialists and general reader. Stated aims of the book are to encourage the exploration and discovery of the screenwork of the region and to provide a resource for the curious. In these, I am certain it will succeed.

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LOST FARMSTEADS. DESERTED RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN WALES. Edited by Kathryn Roberts. 211 × 297 mm. xx + 236 pp. 83 illustrations. 31 tables. Council for British Archaeology, York, 2006. ISBN 1 902771 63 X. Price £25.00.

Between 1995 and 2001 the remains of nearly 3000 deserted settlements, some of them previously unknown, were recorded under the aegis of the Deserted Rural Settlement Project. This all-Wales field-based study aimed to enhance the current level of understanding of upland rural settlement and record these sites which are increasingly vulnerable to destruction. This work was funded by Cadw and was conducted by the staffs of the four Trusts. The results of this study are presented in this attractive volume.

The introductory chapter presents an overview of the history of research into deserted rural settlement in Wales and outlines the objectives of, and the methodology used in, the study. There then follow a series of four, quite different regional surveys. First, Bob Silvester provides a morphological analysis of settlements throughout central and north Wales; he differentiates between platforms and long huts and places them within a context of enclosures and fields. This forms the basis of a consideration of settlement change across the late medieval and post-medieval periods and to a discussion of seasonal settlement. Second, Martin Locock discusses the distribution, types and dating of the deserted rural settlements of south-east Wales before moving on to consider the role these settlements played in the utilisation of upland pastures by the region's major monastic institutions. A re-evaluation of Lady Fox's pioneering work on deserted settlement and an examination of the evolution of the longhouse conclude this chapter. Third, David Longley's consideration of sites in Gwynedd looks at settlement character and location before moving to examine function as both *maerdrefi* and *hafotai* within the *ffridd* landholding system. The fourth and final regional study is the result of Paul Sambrook's lengthy study of Dyfed. Once again the focus of the work is on the uplands, which is of course, where much of the evidence is found and hence the probability that some of the settlements have a seasonal function and/or origin is considered.

The second section of the book turns to general themes. George Smith and David Thompson describe the five excavations that were undertaken as a part of the Deserted Rural Settlement Project. The possibilities for palaeoenvironmental studies are discussed by Astrid Caseldine. This wide-ranging chapter demonstrates the potential of work of this type in answering many of the questions others have posed; hence it considers *inter alia* the issues of marginality, the impact of changing climate and of various grazing regimes, seasonal versus all year-round occupation of the uplands. It concludes with an extensive discussion of the results from one of the excavated sites: Ynys Ettws, near Llanberis. The third thematic study is Judith Alfrey's beautifully illustrated examination of domestic architecture and vernacular building traditions.

The editor contributes two of the three chapters in the third section of this volume. In the first chapter she draws together the various strands developed in the early regional studies and briefly analyses the threats to the long-term preservation of these sites. In the second she considers protection and management strategies and the practicalities of scheduling and non-statutory registration. David Austin concludes the volume by taking a step back from the minutiae of individual sites in order to survey both

the past and future of rural settlement studies in Wales. He concludes by calling for a move away from approaches which seem to confirm what is already known to one or more in-depth studies which will contribute to a 'biography of place'. This volume concludes with three appendices: a glossary, the names and addresses of the main curatorial bodies and an analysis of the 1587 Badminton manorial survey. An extensive reference section and an index bring the book to a close. Summaries are also provided—in Welsh, French and German.

Sadly, throughout the book are many minor errors which careful proof reading should have eliminated. Examples include: this reviewer's given name spelt wrongly on page 3 (but correctly on page 60) Owain Glyndŵr appearing both with and without his circumflex on page 27 and references on page 34 to a page 00 and in Austin's chapter to pages of what may have been earlier typescript drafts of certain chapters. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* is just that—it is published by the Cambridge University Press but Cambridge is not in its title (page 195.) The large-scale maps are not always clear—reduction has rendered the text unclear at times (page 7 for example.) This is a pity because elsewhere the quality of illustration is excellent and the front cover photograph of Hafod Eidos quite spectacular.

The Deserted Rural Settlements Project was an ambitious undertaking, which seems to have met most of the objectives it set itself. However, there were inevitably problems, as the editor herself admits—the different Trusts began with different definitions of site types (initially using inconsistent terminology) and with different systems for condition reporting. This should have been resolved before the project began and may lead to certain problems with the database. Is the marked preponderance of longhouses in Dyfed real or nothing more than a product of the way in which the data was gathered? Dyfed also took a different time span to the other contributions—it is claimed that this was in the hope that it would open up new avenues for research, but did it? One needs a greater pan-Wales perspective—instead we are offered four markedly different studies of the four regions.

Many of the papers acknowledge the pioneering work of Sir Cyril and Lady Aileen Fox who surveyed and excavated numerous sites in south Wales in the late 1930s. Then Wales was almost certainly far ahead of the other British nations in the understanding of its rural settlement—in the English Midlands scholarship was still divided over the very existence of deserted medieval villages. Towards the end of an exceptionally long life Lady Fox wondered why the work she had begun had not been taken in new directions by others. This is not that work. New initiatives now need to be taken if we are to advance rural settlement research in Wales. I firmly place myself alongside David Austin in believing that Wales urgently needs one or more major programmes of research; as a first step Wales should have its own version of the Whittlewood Project in England. This is the way forward to return Wales to a position of pre-eminence in rural settlement studies

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CAERWENT ROMAN TOWN. By Richard Brewer. 211 × 256 mm. 56 pp. 123 illustrations. Cadw, Cardiff, 2006. ISBN 1 85760 216 1. Price £3.50.

BLAENAVON IRONWORKS AND WORLD HERITAGE LANDSCAPE. By Peter Wakelin. 210 × 255 mm. 64 pp. 155 illustrations. Cadw, Cardiff, 2006. ISBN 1 85760 128 8. Price £3.50.

CHEPSTOW CASTLE. By Rick Turner. 210 × 255 mm. 56 pp. 120 illustrations. Cadw, Cardiff, 2006. ISBN 1 85760 229 3. Price £3.50.

These three, beautifully produced, little volumes form a worthy addition to Cadw's new guidebook series. All are written by leading experts in the field and copiously illustrated by photographs and reconstruction

drawings. They follow the same format: a section on the history is followed by a tour of the site, both sections being enlivened by inset features on various aspects of the site, with a select bibliography at the end. There is a map of the area on the outside of the back cover and a more detailed plan on the inside, and a high-level perspective view inside the front which numbers and describes the more important features. A site summary is given on a fold-out at the front, and a list of key dates at the back.

Whilst the illustrations in the other two books draw largely on material from the sites themselves, *Caerwent* includes a wide variety of material from elsewhere to bring out the significance of what the visitor can see on the ground. The historical section covers both what is known of the interaction of the Romans with the local tribe of Silures, whose capital it became, and more general social history. Not only does it place the town in the context of Roman south Wales, but it also includes more general information on various aspects of urban life. The tour includes all the remains visible above ground, with detailed plans making it possible for the visitor to unravel the history of the more complicated sites, particularly the Pound Lane shops. It also provides very clear directions as to how to get from one part of the town to the next, with due regard for the needs of the users of wheelchairs and buggies. I was pleased to see a couple of pages at the end devoted to the hillfort at Llanmelin, overlooking the Roman town, picking up on the short account of the Silures in the Iron Age provided in the historical overview. I hope that this will encourage more people to visit this interesting site.

The Chepstow volume, as might be expected, draws heavily on the comprehensive programme of study that Cadw carried out between 1998 and 2006. This comprised studies of the building stone (which here appears as an inset feature) and a minutely detailed examination of the fabric and its decoration, coupled with documentary research. The documents, some of which appear as photographs, have been combined with dendrochronology on the surviving timber doors (which is presented as an inset feature in the historical section) to allow a comprehensive picture to be built up of the development of the castle under some of the wealthiest magnates in the kingdom. All this has been distilled down to its essential elements to produce a guide that informs the castle's visitors without overloading them. Again, the opportunity has been taken to provide short guides (by Jeremy Knight) to two sites nearby, the Bulwarks camp on the outskirts of the town, and Runston Church a few miles away at Crick. This approach is less successful than those in the other two volumes and has more the appearance of a space-filler, as these sites are linked to Chepstow only by geography.

Whilst I am very familiar with Caerwent and Chepstow, I have to confess that I had never previously visited the Blaenavon ironworks, which gave me the opportunity to see how well the book functioned as a guide for someone new to the site. In this guidebook, the plan of the site is in the middle between the historical section and the tour, less easily placed for reference than in the other volumes. In practice this mattered less, as the site is well labelled making reference to the plan unnecessary, especially as small inset plans for each of the installations have been provided next to its description. The site at Blaenavon is still under restoration, and is likely to be so for years to come. Not everything described in the tour is currently visible, but the guide is designed to accommodate these sections as they are opened up to the public. Archive photographs of the ironworks during their working life combine with the photographs of it in its current state and reconstruction drawings to illustrate the clear account of the workings of each element of the site, and the inset features include social history as well as the more technical aspects of iron-smelting. The pairing here is with the industrial landscape which lies around the ironworks (the subject of the map inside the back cover), so that the visitor is encouraged to visit not only the town of Blaenavon, but also the mines, quarries, transport system and ancillary works that help to make this a World Heritage Site.

THE IRON INDUSTRY OF THE FOREST OF DEAN. By John Meredith. 156 × 236 mm. 160 pp. 111 illustrations. Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2006. ISBN 0 7524 3596 5. Price £15.99.

The Forest of Dean in west Gloucestershire is one of those rare locations where, by a quirk of past geological and topographical events, all of the key resources for human industrial invention have been concentrated. Iron, coal, stone, wood and water abound here and have been harnessed by man since prehistory.

This volume traces the history of just one of these industries, the iron industry, from the prehistoric period through to the late nineteenth century. The text is presented in chronological chapters liberally sprinkled with black and white photographs, plans and drawings, and a central section of 29 colour plates.

If you previously knew nothing of the iron industry in the Forest of Dean and treated this volume as a simple chronological guide to the industry, relying wholly on facts derived from secondary sources, then you will probably enjoy reading it. If, however, you were expecting an up-to-date, concise, well referenced work by a specialist in the subject you will be sorely disappointed.

Other than information from two recent biographical works by other authors on the nineteenth-century metallurgist Robert Mushet, cited in the woefully inadequate bibliography of just nine books, this volume effectively represents our knowledge of the iron industry in the Forest of Dean as it was in 1992. Some more recent studies could have been included such as the work by Paul Wildgoose on early iron mining and the extensive survey by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Section on the early iron-mining landscape features known as 'Scowles'. The author has contributed nothing new himself to this field of study and this book should really be seen as an amalgamation of edited highlights from previously published works.

The problems with a non-specialist writing this type of book are evident throughout. From the preface onward we meet an array of problems that are repeated consistently, suggesting that little or no time was given either to proofreading or to peer review of a draft. Typographical errors abound in every chapter: e.g. Lyn instead of Llyn on page 7; ar\ea instead of area on page 15; Brian Waters on pages 24 and 25 should be Bryan Walters; hematite instead of haematite, and many more. In Chapter 1 the geological explanation of the origin and occurrence of iron ore is confused and inaccurate. For some reason the author concentrates on the Drybrook Sandstone as a source of iron when in fact it chiefly occurs as a replacement mineral in the Crease and Whitehead Limestones and in the Drybrook Limestone. It never occurs in the Drybrook Sandstone. This error is compounded by the Drybrook Sandstone being highlighted as a source of iron in Figure 3. Further on we find that Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 of various smelting furnace types are clearly lifted directly from Tylecote's *Prehistory of Metallurgy* without any direct acknowledgement in the figure captions. Curiously, there are references to Tylecote in the intervening body text, but the references cannot be chased up because Tylecote does not appear in the bibliography and there is no list of references in any case!

The latter problem of no traceable references is a serious one in a book which draws so completely on secondary sources, and there are numerous examples of short references in the text which are both inconsistently cited and cannot be found in the bibliography. There really should have been a list of references at the end of each chapter, or at the end of the book in the bibliography. There are also far too many images lifted from other books which have not been properly acknowledged.

By page 120 the author appears to have exhausted his narrative and we are greeted with no less than eight appendices of information which should either have been included in the main chapters or are completely irrelevant to the theme of the book. Quite why we have to read about three castles in Monmouthshire in Appendix 5, I have no idea! Appendix 8 is a group of five maps which have been lifted straight out of Cyril Hart's *The Industrial History of Dean* with absolutely no acknowledgement, and

which are completely useless without a key map, or an intimate local knowledge of the locations shown. These appendices are nothing more than a disjointed and poorly arranged collection of topics designed to pad out the volume to the requisite 160 pages.

Overall, I have to say I found this volume a frustrating read. As a simple historical introduction to the iron industry in the Forest of Dean it represents a good concept and the story does need to be told. The execution of the concept is, however, sloppy and flawed. The book is full of silly mistakes and errors which better quality control from Tempus Publishing should have corrected.

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MARK WALTERS

Other books received

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS, BART. By R. W. D. Fenn. 157 × 234 mm. x + 374 pp. 15 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2005. ISBN 1 904396 29 1. Price £14.95.

Published while he was President of the Cambrians in 2005, Dr Roy Fenn has penned a solid biography of a politician, successively Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary in the 1850s, yet one whose other claims to fame included the fact that he only ever won uncontested parliamentary elections and that despite his Welsh ancestry, he had little sympathy for the Welsh people or their language. The work draws very heavily on Cornwall Lewis' own diaries and other papers in the Harpton Court collection in the National Library of Wales, and whilst demonstrating that the politician had many other wide-ranging though apparently short-lived interests, yet leaves some questions unanswered, as for instance why Lewis was elected a fellow of the Geological Society at the early age of 28 in 1834.

THE QUARRYMEN'S TYDDYNNOD. By Dewi Tomos. 148 × 210 mm. 124 pp. 31 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2006. ISBN 1 84527 088 6. Price £5.75.

Now in English translation, this little book was first published in Welsh in 2004 and was reviewed by Gerallt Nash in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 153 (2004), 169.

SLATE QUARRYING IN WALES. By Alun John Richards. 125 × 182 mm. 256 pp. 33 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2006. ISBN 1 84527 026 6. Price £8.95.

One of a number of books by the author on the Welsh slate industry, the original edition of *Slate Quarrying in Wales* from 1995 has been updated and expanded. It traces the history of slate quarrying and use from the Roman period to the present, focusing particularly on the heyday of the industry in the Victorian era, with the geographical emphasis inevitably on north-west Wales.

It is a small but substantial volume which makes the absence of an index the more regrettable.

WELSH SHIPS AND SAILING MEN. By J. Geraint Jenkins. 138 × 215 mm. 294 pp. 81 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2006. ISBN 0 86381 962 1. Price £8.90.

Welsh Shipping and Sailing Men is 'an attempt to explain the character and qualities of coastal communities and the generations of Welshmen and women who over the centuries have depended on the sea for their livelihood' (page 9). The first part of the book touches on the Welsh maritime tradition, the shipbuilders and the types of ship they built, the owners, the nature of trade, the sailor's life and smugglers and pirates, with the emphasis very much on the nineteenth century and to a lesser extent the eighteenth century. Part 2 comprises thumbnail sketches of some 64 ports around the Welsh coast.