

Reviews

BEFORE FARMING. LIFE IN PREHISTORIC WALES 300,000–4,000 BC. By Julian Heath. 137 × 213 mm. 175 pp. 85 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, Conwy, 2013. ISBN 978 1 84527 456 6. Price £8.00.

Julian Heath's book *Before Farming* is a compact volume that summarizes the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeological evidence found in Wales for the period 300,000–4,000 BC. The evidence for a human presence in Wales throughout this period of time is slim with some long time gaps between those sites providing the evidence. Sometimes these gaps are caused by a lack of known evidence, others by the climate, environment and presence of ice at various times, until Wales eventually became permanently settled at the very end of the Palaeolithic around 10,000 years ago. Heath's book provides an overview of the known data, filling the gaps in the Welsh story by referencing evidence from both Europe and elsewhere in Britain. Presenting a picture of life throughout the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods in Wales is inevitably hampered by this lack of evidence at specific times so every new discovery made has the potential to shed new light on, and contribute to, a synthesis of the evidence. It is therefore to Heath's credit that some new discoveries, including work on Ynys Enlli and at Monmouth, are referenced alongside sites that have been known about for much longer.

The book commences chronologically moving from Pontnewydd Cave, Coygan Cave, Paviland Cave then Cat Hole, but skipping some key sites such as Ffynnon Beuno, Hoyle's Mouth, Little Hoyle, Cae Gwyn and Priory Farm Cave. These all appear towards the end of the book in the regional chapters that one might have expected to be devoted to the Mesolithic but which have instead become regional syntheses. This shift mid-way through confuses the volume, as by losing its chronological narrative these jumps could well confuse a reader with less expertise in the subject at whom this book is aimed.

Heath is not a Palaeolithic or Mesolithic archaeologist, as he openly admits in his introduction to the book, stating that 'his feet are planted firmly in the later Prehistoric landscapes of Wales'. So he has set himself an ambitious project to write a book which aims to summarise a highly complex and multi-faceted time period. Unfortunately this lack of expertise shows and, on occasion, it has resulted in some factual errors that a specialist in these periods would not have made. Understandably these errors are more frequent in the Palaeolithic section of the book, than in the Mesolithic where Heath is closer to his later prehistoric interests. They include, for example, the statement that the 'Red Lady' of Paviland is housed in the Natural History Museum in London whereas in fact the remains have been preserved in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History ever since William Buckland took them back to Oxford with him the day following their discovery in January 1823. Unfortunately spelling mistakes also appear rather too regularly. A few typos can be excused, but key site names are consistently spelled incorrectly—La Ferrassie has become La Ferraisse, Star Carr has become Starr Carr; and in the world of the spell-checker there is no excuse for Coygan Cave becoming Goygan Cave in one place, and inconsistent spelling of Palaeolithic with or without its diphthong (e.g. page 20).

The book is based on synthesising published sources and presenting the material together in a new interpretation that focuses on the people, rather than the environmental and climatic contexts that are more traditionally used by those writing about these periods. This is good in that the focus is on the people and looks at the periods in a way that writers traditionally follow for the later archaeological periods. By taking this different approach new ideas can be formed and flourish and Heath does have a skill in relating the personal to the past in ways that readers will engage with. His section on the 'Red Lady' of Paviland Cave looks critically at some of the many myths and legends that have been presented in letters and

publications since the day of the skeleton's discovery back in January 1823. His discussion of shamanism and analysis of some of the more romantic published theories about the 'Red Lady' are well explained and presented.

The illustrations used in the book are poorly reproduced, having mostly been reduced to a far smaller size than the linework was designed for. A few more photographs might have resolved this problem. All this said, it is a book that fills a gap and at the highly reasonable price of £8.00 will provide a taster of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods in Wales to readers who might otherwise be reluctant to pay more for a first book on these periods. It is to be hoped, though, that readers treat the book for what it is, a taster of the rich and fascinating evidence we hold in Wales for the times before farming, and use it as a pointer to some of the other available publications on this topic which are cited in the bibliography.

Cardiff

ELIZABETH A. WALKER

A LANDSCAPE OF BORDERS: THE PREHISTORY OF THE ANGLO-WELSH BORDERLAND. By David Mullin. 210 × 296 mm. viii + 159 pp. 48 illustrations. 18 tables. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 2012. ISBN 978 1 4073 1057 2. Price £31.00.

There is a considerable need for a contemporary synthesis of the prehistory of the eastern Marches of Wales, a longstanding borderland between the nations of England and Wales. Although this volume does not provide that synthesis, it does offer helpful pointers, as well as supplying some useful insights into the intricacies of the story. The book does not amount to a 'full' prehistory of the zone in question: it begins only at the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition *c.* 4500–4000 BC and does not venture significantly beyond the end of the Bronze Age. It eschews consideration of burial, avowedly because the ample evidence for mortuary activity in the Early Bronze Age is not matched for the Neolithic or for the Late Bronze Age. Instead the volume focuses upon a limited range of subjects, but treats them to some extent in novel ways. So, for example, a focus upon lithics is extended to include consideration of rock tempering agents in ceramics, and their lithography.

The Reading University PhD thesis, which the book is largely a reproduction of, posed the question: to what extent can the 'natural borderland' between upland Wales and lowland England be traced back into prehistory? This question is addressed by examining three contrasting 'classes of evidence': the use of stone in prehistoric artefacts; the circulation of metalwork (mostly bronze), in particular as found in 'hoards'; and the construction of enclosures. The relevant section dealing with the last topic focuses upon 'the changing meaning of enclosure' from the Neolithic onwards. Mullin asserts that these kinds of evidence 'have the potential to reflect attitudes to both landscape and wider areas of both social and metaphorical categorisation over relatively long time-spans'. In the same vein he suggests that 'all of these classes of evidence also demonstrate wider contacts, both regionally and nationally, and allow the ways in which people accepted or rejected new ideas to be evaluated'.

The study of 'stone' is introduced via an analysis of lithic scatters, then through a brief overview of stone axe studies, and then in reference to recent research into lithic tempers in later prehistoric pottery by Rob Ixer (who contributes an appendix here, on the petrography of 'dolerite tempered ware'). The 'metal' study centres upon Middle and Late Bronze Age hoards, 34 of which from the region were reviewed. The rapid summary of evidence for enclosures encompasses a variety of sites from the Early Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age.

The study of 57 groups of worked flints from surface collections across the study-area (although all but 15 of these groups were from Shropshire) was 'intended to gauge the scale of activity within the

landscape, its location and chronological depth'. Two biases, acknowledged by the author, unfortunately render the results highly equivocal. The first is that this total represents only half of the estimated recovered total of *c.* 27,000 'known' objects from the study area, with the unstudied half being in private collections. The second is that the bulk of this material comes from only a handful of fieldworkers: geographic concentrations of material therefore tend to represent the occurrence of collecting activity, rather than reflecting past incidence of activity. The lack of comparison of collected flints with those from excavated sites does not help clarify trends in the character of 'borderland' assemblages. Locations such as Bromfield (Shropshire) and Wellington (Herefordshire), where extensive excavation has preceded minerals extraction, might have been used to provide some landscape 'control' here.

The brief review of stone implements from the borderlands first focuses upon the findings of the implement petrology group to consider the major sources of casual axe finds. Group VI axes from Langdale have been found across the Marches, but are more common in Cheshire and Shropshire than further south. Those of Group XV from the southern Lakeland extend only into northern Cheshire. Group VII axes from North Wales also occur across the borderland region, but are most common in Shropshire as well as in Denbighshire and Flintshire. In contrast, axes of Groups VIII and XXIII from Pembrokeshire are found only in the southern Marches. But again, the situation is complicated by sampling questions, which are hardly touched upon in Mullin's review.

Towards the end of the Neolithic and into the Early Bronze Age, 'axe-hammers' and 'battle-axes' of picrite are found across the borderlands, and in a few cases beyond. They have been defined as 'Group XII' implements, and the most likely source has been given as the hills above the village of Hyssington in eastern Montgomeryshire. Field visits undertaken for the dissertation, and limited fieldwork by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust have failed to locate convincing, datable prehistoric extraction areas, however.

Mullin's discussion of stone tempering agents in late Bronze Age ceramics highlights an emerging appreciation of the diversity of sources of inclusions, and presumably therefore the exchange and use of pots from different sources, at different sites. Dolerite has been identified macroscopically in sherds from a number of sites in the Marches, and it has been assumed that these inclusions are from outcrops of this rock at Clee Hill. Fourteen sherds from Bromfield, Shropshire, excavated by Stanford in 1982, were chosen by Mullin for thin-sectioning, the selection criteria being examples from among the different decorative schemes on the pots. Although noting the highly limited and provisional nature of this exploratory study, Mullin suggests that 'the fabrics have been shown to be more diverse than previously appreciated', including material from the Malvern Hills and probably from Wales. 'It seems likely, then, that the cemetery at Bromfield was utilised both by the local population and by people from further afield who brought their dead here for burial'.

In the chapter focusing upon 'metal', Mullin makes a number of useful observations about both single finds and hoards. So, for example, of 282 implements recorded as single finds, most were deposited in the Middle Bronze Age. The commonest single finds were of palstaves, of which there were twice as many as spearheads. While swords are rare, they are nearly all from the northern Marches. Late Bronze Age metalwork mostly occurs in large hoards in the Welsh borderland, while Middle Bronze Age hoards are more diverse in composition. Hoards rarely feature weapons except, fascinatingly, in the case of those that include numbers of spearheads. The contents of nineteen large hoards, fifteen small hoards, and five caches of gold-work are outlined, and the significance of their location in the landscape adduced.

The chapter 'Acts of Enclosure' reprises the different kinds of site that feature an element of enclosure in the Welsh borderlands: causewayed and related Neolithic enclosures, cursus monuments, henges, stone and timber circles, and Late Bronze Age hilltop enclosures. The conclusion is that although the distribution of flints discussed in the previous chapter indicated 'that people were present in the Anglo-

Welsh borderland through prehistory’, ‘this chapter has suggested that these people do not appear to have undertaken the construction of any of the classic repertoire of early Neolithic monuments, including causewayed enclosures and cursus monuments’. Yet discoveries in the Walton Basin in Radnorshire, including the double-circuit causewayed enclosure around the hill at Womaston (mentioned by Mullin) and the ‘classic’ cursus monuments at Walton Green and at Hindwell (discovered, and in the former case fully published, before the thesis was prepared), surely contradict this view.

Mullin is dismissive of the suggestion by Steven Burrow that a number of hilltop locations featuring worked flint assemblages in Wales and the Marches may ‘represent the remains of communal meeting places’, proximal to causewayed enclosures, despite apparently having no enclosing circuits. His view was at least in part formed on the basis that ‘the composition of the lithic scatters does not, however, compare well with those from excavated causewayed enclosures’. Yet excavations in 2011 at The Knapp, Bredwardine, on just such a site (featured among the Herefordshire ‘surface’ assemblages examined in the thesis, and entirely lacking arrowheads in the recovered surface assemblage) demonstrated quite the contrary. This was a location eminently suited to such an enclosure surrounding the prominent knoll in question, directly overlooking the river Wye. It indicates that in this case, and probably others also, Burrow’s idea could well hold true.

In his concluding chapter, Mullin argues persuasively that the zone where the lowlands of the Severn valley and the Shropshire/Cheshire plain stand in marked contrast to the hills that rise, often spectacularly, immediately to their west, engenders a particular sense of a ‘frontier’ which is neither entirely upland or lowland, and which affects both culture and identity. The exact ways in which this was marked in past material practices and traditions is perhaps more difficult to gauge. Mullin sees it in the particular reference to high places, especially where these are isolated or otherwise prominent: in the attention paid to the Malverns, Clee Hill, or The Wrekin, for example. More tellingly, he observes that for the Neolithic in the Marches, there is a certain hybridity of cultural forms and constructions, for example in the style of the few known long barrows. He suggests that ‘it may be the case that communities within the borderland were in a unique position, literally between architectural traditions, and were keen to maintain a sense of difference, both from southern Britain and from the rest of Atlantic Europe. One way of achieving this may have been by assembling monuments which referred to distant origins but at the same time were recognisably local.’

Hereford

KEITH RAY

THE EARLY AND MIDDLE BRONZE AGE SPEARHEADS OF BRITAIN. By Richard Davis. 200 × 285 mm. xi + 223 pp. 137 illustrations. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2012. ISBN 978 3 515 10350 3. Price £96.64.

This is the latest ‘British’ volume in the *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* (PBF) monograph series adding to earlier volumes on dirks and rapiers (Burgess and Gerloff 1981), Early Bronze Age daggers (Gerloff 1985) and Late Bronze Age swords (Colquhoun and Burgess 1988), and sets out the relative lack of attention paid to ‘one of the primary weapons of the period’. Dealing with 1075 Early and Middle Bronze Age spearheads the volume is divided into three parts: an introduction, the material (with ten spearhead groups, sub-types and variants detailed, with Late Bronze Age basal-looped spearheads also included), distribution maps and illustrations. Closely following the monograph house style, the layout will be familiar to those who have used these corpuses before, and it is easily laid out for those new to metal artefact studies.

Much of the introduction provides a summary and review of earlier studies into British and Irish spearheads and highlights that, with some chronological and typological amendments and additions in the mid to later twentieth century, the classificatory scheme for British spearheads introduced in the early 1900s by Greenwell and Brewis (1909) remains the basis for British spearhead typology. Where Davis differs from early analyses is that he traces the development of spearheads up to the start of the Late Bronze Age as a single project. Most useful is the review of the chronological origin, date and development of specific spearhead forms, particularly as the study and classification of spearheads can cause considerable confusion. Davis is to be commended for his succinct summary of some of the issues affecting spearhead studies such as Middle Bronze Age side-looped spearheads from North Wales exhibiting metal composition more usually assumed to be Late Bronze Age. Included here is the problem of broad dates provided by radiocarbon dating that span several metalworking phases, thus posing problems associating these phases with ceramic and settlement data and continental evidence. Although identifying these issues, Davis uses the 'traditional industrial phase type-site names (Table 2)' as the basis of the volume. This 'side-stepping' may be perceived as a weakness in the text by not fully addressing typo-chronological issues in more detail, but this would require a different book, one not ideally suited to the PBF format. Crucially, Davis identifies a significant problem with the typo-chronology of pegged leaf-shaped spearheads spanning the Middle and Late Bronze Age and wisely has omitted them; he does, however, include Middle Bronze Age forms manufactured in the Late Bronze Age, suggesting either the persistence of form or an 'archaising revival'.

Davis highlights the impact of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in this volume (contributing 7% to the catalogue). This volume will be of immense use to Finds Liaison Officers, metalwork specialist and researchers alike as the section on terminology provides comprehensive descriptions for the specific parts of a spearhead, the description of which, with wide variation in terms, has led to much of the confusion referred to above. Providing for the first time a comprehensive catalogue, Davis divides the spearheads by *group*, each further divided into *type*, with pages 14–22 devoted to the development of the spearheads themselves. As with all such schemes, unique and anomalous objects exist and these are placed into a *variant* sub-category. Using analysis of over a hundred radiocarbon dates (obtained from preserved wooden hafts), metallurgical analyses and eighty 'metalwork associations', Davis places each group into a chronological sequence, thus creating a developmental sequence. This allows him to identify the late emergence of casting techniques used for the production of basal-looped spearheads. Discussion of the context and distribution of each type (e.g. Type 1, page 38) reinforces the impression that he has sought to be as comprehensive as possible when exploring the origin and development of spearheads. When combined with increasingly better dated examples and metallurgical analyses, such a discussion will be increasingly refined. This section of the volume also identifies problems of regional bias owing to metalwork hoards, lack of uptake of new forms and the likely persistence of some forms until replaced by pegged leaf-shaped spearheads. Throughout this section, the differing lengths of spearhead by group are highlighted and this informs the final section of this part of the volume on function.

As with earlier spearhead studies, Davis undertakes a brief review of the use of spears as weapons, for hunting, display and votive deposits. Citing experimental testing of three replica weapons by the Royal Armouries, Davis suggests that basal-looped spearhead would have been the 'preferred choice' between this and a rapier during the Middle Bronze Age. Experiments such as these are very useful, but here the number tested is maybe too small—possibly owing to the expense and time to create and test a larger number—to be entirely confident of the conclusions. The contribution of this section to the overall volume is thus limited, I feel, much as is the brief section on hunting. In contrast, the section on votive deposition is very succinct and is a good starting place for anyone new to studying Bronze Age hoards, with a useful table (Table 5) summarising contextual information by spearhead group. In the final section

of the introduction Davis highlights the issues he identified whilst compiling and producing his corpus. In particular, he notes the resolution of chronologies and relationship between the earliest British and Irish spearheads and the limited distribution of basal-looped spearheads.

The catalogue itself is effectively organised by group, with each group divided into types and sub-variants. Using the PBF house style, each group is comprehensively illustrated (plates 1–87; three plates illustrate spearhead moulds, *exotics* and *forgeries*). These illustrations are followed by distribution maps (plates 88–113). If there is a weakness in the catalogue it is in the order in which each group, etc., is presented—non-geographically—thus making it a challenge to quickly identify Welsh or Essex spearheads. This is, however, a minor quibble and does not detract from the clearly presented distribution maps, which make it very clear where there are either real gaps in group and type distributions, or where examples are yet to be found (e.g. Group 7 spearheads from Wales; plate 106).

Sandwiched between the catalogue and the illustrations is Peter Northover's metallurgical assessment of over 100 spearheads. Here he discusses variations in metal compositions found in the different groups, notably tin and lead isotopes, highlighting the problem of identifying metal sources and the increasing importance of imported metal as the Bronze Age progressed. Interestingly, Northover's analysis identified several forgeries that would have been less obvious from the objects themselves, a topic discussed by Davis and the inclusion of which is to be commended.

This volume will be of most use to people with an interest in metalwork. It is, as with many aspects of British Bronze Age material culture, long overdue and provides a useful addition to the body of articles and analyses of Early and Middle Bronze Age material culture.

Burgess, C. B. and Gerloff, S., 1981. *The Dirks and Rapiers of Great Britain and Ireland*, *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* IV, 7 (München: C. H. Beck Verlag).

Colquhoun, I. and Burgess, C. B., 1988. *Swords of Britain*, *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* IV, 5, (München: C. H. Beck Verlag).

Gerloff, S., 1985. *The Early Bronze Age Daggers in Great Britain and a Reconsideration of the Wessex Culture*, *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* VI, 2 (München: C. H. Beck Verlag).

Greenwell, W. and Brewis, W. P., 1909. 'The origin, evolution and classification of the bronze spear-head in Great Britain and Ireland', *Archaeologia* 61, 439–72.

Cambridge

GRAHAME APPLEBY

THE BRONZE AGE IN THE SEVERN ESTUARY. By Martin Bell. 215 × 303 mm. xxxi + 368 pp. 162 illustrations. 47 tables. Council for British Archaeology, York, 2013. ISBN 978 1 902771 94 6. Price £50.00.

The phrase 'Wetland Archaeology' reveals a frequent flaw in archaeological thinking: wetlands are often considered separately from the wider landscape in which they sit. This book certainly focuses initially on intertidal and freshwater wetland sites, primarily at Redwick and Peterstone in the Gwent Levels of Wales. However, it places these sites within a larger context, proposing models of landscape use involving both wetlands and dry-lands throughout the Bronze Age, besides wider economic links to the rest of Britain and beyond. Bell's primary thesis in this book is that, in the area of the Severn at least, a degree of settlement mobility did not end at the close of the Early Bronze Age, but persisted *throughout* the Bronze Age and beyond. Furthermore, it is just possible that this was the origin of the transhumant *hendref/hafod* pastoral system which persisted in Wales until relatively recent times. It demonstrates an exemplary grasp

of the specifics of the archaeological sites, combined with a broader, sometimes bold, interpretation of the archaeological data. The book is well illustrated with line drawings, diagrams, reconstructions and photographs, some in colour.

An introductory chapter reviews the study area, its Bronze Age archaeology and chronology, besides outlining the history of research in the area, its geological context and Pleistocene/Holocene sediment sequence. The latter is of special significance since the Holocene sequence, some 10–15m thick, of peats and estuarine silts, registers changes in relative sea-level and coastline morphology, within which the archaeology can be placed. The development of a raised bog at Redwick provided a surface on which a Bronze Age settlement was established, at a time when there was transgression resulting in salt-marsh development, which was exploited for grazing.

A detailed account of the Redwick site follows in Section I. This site, on the Welsh shore, is of Middle Bronze Age date (1600–940 cal. BC) comprising four rectangular buildings, with some limited artefactual evidence and surrounding footprints of cattle, sheep and humans. It was originally found by a volunteer worker, the late Derek Upton, with subsequent assessment by Bell's team in 1995–98 and detailed investigation in 1999–2000. A chronology for the sediment sequence is provided by an extensive suite of radiocarbon dates: for present purposes the fourth, or main, peat is the surface on which activity took place. The chapter includes an account of excavation methodology and a detailed record of the individual buildings, footprints, artefacts and faunal remains. Other sites at Redwick and Cold Harbour Pill included artefacts, trackways and wooden structures interpreted as fish traps. A subsequent chapter by Nigel Nayling *et al.* describes the wooden artefacts—mainly hazel, oak and alder from semi-managed woodlands and consisting of roundwood and young oak—which implies that the buildings were not intended to have a long life. Dendrochronology indicated cutting during autumn/winter. Other artefacts are illustrated and discussed. Astrid Caseldine *et al.* provide a review of palynological and plant macrofossil evidence over the raised bog/salt-marsh transition and from 'dung' samples. Emma Tetlow *et al.* discuss the insects, foraminifera, and animal bone assemblages, dominated by cattle and sheep. Bell discusses the footprints, which include those of children. This section is concluded by a review of dating and rectangular building construction, drawing parallels with other British and north-west European sites. This may suggest a continental origin for 'rectangulars' in the East of England and the Severn region.

The palaeochannels at Peterstone are considered in Section II. These channels, related to successive marine transgressive phases include wooden alignments dated 2580–2200 cal. BC, interpreted as fishing structures, and later channels, 1500–1040 cal. BC, containing wooden elements, again possibly fish traps, with the deposition of ritually broken artefacts. As in the Redwick section the stratigraphy, structural evidence, other artefacts, faunal remains, wooden components, woodworking waste and tools are all fully described. Oak was the main wood used in the Early Bronze Age, together with more shrubby species, but with hazel, largely in hurdle structures, predominant in the Middle Bronze Age. Ceramics and stone and bone artefacts are considered, and the palaeobotanical and animal bone evidence (dominated by cattle, with few mature females) presented and reviewed.

Stable isotope evidence (C, N and O) from the faunal remains is given by Kate Britton *et al.* in Section III, providing a relatively new source of information on grazing practice. The cattle and sheep samples showed a ^{15}N enrichment compared to samples from other British Holocene samples, interpreted as indicating grazing on salt-marsh, whilst a post-weaning increase in $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ in dentine serial sections suggests that this grazing was on a temporary seasonal basis. Alex Brown *et al.* review the vegetational history of the Llandevenny area and the wider estuary, focusing attention on the Bronze Age, with evidence for more intensive clearance in the Middle Bronze Age.

The sound evidence base provided by the collaborative team in earlier sections is interpreted further in the final section (IV) by Bell. He begins by reviewing the Bronze Age wetland and dry-land Bronze

Age archaeology of the region, and its chronology. This is an exemplary review of a substantial body of evidence, including data from the most fully investigated site at Breaun Down in Somerset. Seasonal settlement of salt-marsh locations is indicated, on both the Welsh and English shores, with pastoral mobility from sites of more permanent residence inland or on the wetland edge. Bell moves on to address current site erosion, the formation processes of the archaeological evidence and environmental change. Pastoral mobility throughout the Bronze Age is proposed, especially in the Middle Bronze Age, combined with stationary fishing and salt production. He then presents a model of landscape exploitation linking wetlands and dry-land sites, together with a hypothetical model of the annual cycle of activities, using the evidence base from earlier chapters. The notion of regional identity is addressed, based on ceramics (Trevisker-style pottery) and South Wales/Stogursey-type socketed axes. Coastal contacts around the United Kingdom and Bronze Age maritime trade by boat are reviewed, and there is a comparison of the Severn evidence with other parts of England. Bell suggests that the Late Bronze Age shows a degree of continuity, but with some innovations, partly related to climate change, in the pattern of field systems and the appearance of wooden platforms of presumed 'ritual' function and middens.

This work is strongly recommended for all investigators concerned with the Bronze Age in Wales and England and is likely to become a standard text for the foreseeable future.

Portsmouth

PETER MURPHY

THE LOST LAKE. EVIDENCE OF PREHISTORIC BOAT BUILDING. By Stephen Clarke. 167 × 238 mm. 120 pp. 78 illustrations. Monmouth Archaeological Society, Monmouth, 2013. ISBN 978 0 9558242 2 7. Price £15.00.

Those of us fortunate enough to live in the Monmouth area are well aware that Steve Clarke is not a man to shirk a challenge. We have watched (and occasionally participated in) his excavations over decades, working in difficult, often waterlogged, conditions in the middle, or on the outskirts, of the town. He has played no little part in the process of Rescue Archaeology assuming its current professional status as a necessary concomitant of development in Monmouth and its environs, as his work has spread awareness of the rich archaeological deposits underlying the current townscape.

During his excavations, however, various peculiarities emerged. The stratigraphy encountered was often very odd; prehistoric flint and charcoal would be found underlying apparent natural geological layers. Gradually we developed a greater understanding of the complex archaeology created by man's relationship with hydrological and glacial occurrences as we became aware of the former existence of a huge lake in the low-lying basin where Monmouth now lies. Fed by the rivers Monnow, Wye and Trothy after the melting of the glaciers, the lake was held in place by a blocking moraine at Redbrook and appears to have survived until the Iron Age; the periodic rise and fall of the water levels affected the exploitation of the lake by prehistoric man, resulting in the complex archaeology we now find.

It is really only by decades of work in one place that any one archaeologist can understand this complex archaeology. Fortunately Steve Clarke was there to take on the challenge of yet another waterlogged site as development was mooted for Parc Glyndwr, to the north-west of the town. Here it is worth noting that normal pre-development trial trenching to assess the archaeological potential of the site might well have been completely negative. But Clarke's knowledge of the area resulted in large-scale excavation on the development site, an area which appears to have been on the very edge of the lakeside. This book, aimed at the non-specialist, takes us through the exciting process of excavation and subsequent analysis that has resulted in a greater understanding of the lake and its use by prehistoric man.

The archaeological features encountered on the site were fairly easy to see but difficult to interpret. The remains of a Mesolithic campsite and Bronze Age burnt mounds, both site types commonly associated with the water edge, were straightforward enough. But over the top of one of the burnt mounds were three channels, straight and parallel to one another, clearly visible as light-coloured clay streaks in the darker clay. They passed across what must have been the lakeside and into the lake itself. The stratigraphy and fill of the channels suggested that on land they were hollows in the lake margins while in the lake they appeared to have held some items, probably of wood, that had then decayed. Two had deeper, round-bottomed profiles while the third was shallower, and accompanying them were pieces of flint, evidently used as tools.

So far the story is factual enough with excavated evidence clearly illustrated in the numerous colour pictures in the book. Then, of course, comes the exciting—if sometimes controversial—bit, that of the archaeological interpretation. The excavator must always draw breath at this point, knowing that, at the interface between fact and interpretation, challenge will be inevitable. Clarke does not shirk his responsibilities. He interprets the features as the remains of a prehistoric boat-building site, the flint being the remains of the post-Bronze Age woodworking, the lakeside channels being the launch of the boats into the lake, and the lake-bottom channels the rotted remains of a boat that had been abandoned. The three channels, he suggests, are best interpreted as the remains of a twin-hulled boat with outrigger, the latter being the shallowest of the three. He gives examples of such boats being used in the Bronze Age, citing the celebrated Swedish rock engravings as evidence of contemporary construction. The similarly sized boat from Lurgan in Ireland and a medieval boat-building site in Kent are used as supporting evidence as, frankly, they are all that we have, such is the limited evidence for prehistoric British boat-building yards.

So there we have it. To this reviewer the evidence seemed compelling, but of course as yet unproven. Taking a leaf from Clarke's book, the reviewer took up the challenge and travelled to Hawaii to look at Polynesian twin-hulled canoes with outriggers, stable vessels in which the Polynesians travelled extraordinary distances across uncharted waters. The measurements tally, save that the outriggers in those vessels are slighter and probably would not have made the same depth of marks in the soil when dragged through the lakeside. But the challenge is now with those who would venture to disprove the hypothesis. What else could these features be?

Raglan

SIAN REES

ARCHITECTURE, REGIONAL IDENTITY AND POWER IN THE IRON AGE LANDSCAPES OF MID WALES. THE HILLFORTS OF NORTH CEREDIGION. By Toby Driver. 210 × 296 mm. xi + 181 pp. 206 illustrations. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 2013. ISBN 978 1 4073 1123 4. Price £33.00.

Toby Driver's volume tackles several main aspects of hillfort settlements in North Ceredigion. The clear—and self-admitted—focus of the study is a detailed examination of the architecture of the hillforts. However, the study sets this architectural analysis in a much broader landscape context, and thus increases considerably our understanding of how Iron Age communities in North Ceredigion were structured and worked.

Following an introductory chapter reflecting on general themes of Iron Age archaeological discourse (not least the debates about how better to understand Iron Age societies), the first major analytical chapter examines the landscape of the study area and gives an overview of previous research. The next chapter deals with the significant problem of establishing a chronological framework, which still remains a

major issue for all studies of the Iron Age in Wales, and examines settlement patterns, providing both an overview and a more detailed examination of several zones, particularly in the lowland areas. It also, as a first hint of the focus of the study on architectural aspects, examines rampart morphology and phasing. The next chapter concerns itself with movement through the landscape, trade and cultural contact.

Having thus established the wider context, the volume then focuses on the architecture of the hillforts in three major analytical chapters. The first of these investigates entrances into and annexes to hillforts. In the following one, the study analyses the architectural complexity of the hillforts and the schemes employed by hillfort builders to enhance the monumentality of the hillfort architecture by strategically using, as Driver calls them, 'façade schemes'. The final analytical chapter then serves to analyse how hillforts work when experiencing their architecture while moving through the landscape, covering such aspects as commanding prominent locations in the landscape, controlling passes and trackways, and how sites are revealed to the traveller when being approached.

The final chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the results and conclusions that can be drawn from the study. In this, Driver discusses architectural traditions in North Ceredigion in terms of two principal regional façade schemes, the symbolism of hillfort architecture, and the spatial and social organisation of the landscape and the societies inhabiting it. This is followed by an appendix listing all hillforts in the study area (though this is slightly disappointing, since a full gazetteer of all sites would have been even more useful), the usual bibliography, and a very helpful index.

Driver thus contributes a wealth of information on a number of important sites and their wider landscape context that had previously been seriously under-examined and largely overlooked. His study sits well with the recent increased interest in Welsh and more generally British hillforts and later prehistoric settlement, with a comparable study for north-west Wales by Kate Waddington also recently published and a major research project, 'An Atlas of Hillforts in Britain and Ireland', currently ongoing. Driver's magisterial overview of the Iron Age hillforts of North Ceredigion fills an important gap in our knowledge about Iron Age settlement in Wales and is certainly a must-have for anyone with an interest in later prehistory in Britain.

Bangor

RAIMUD KARL

THE SETTLEMENTS OF NORTHWEST WALES FROM THE LATE BRONZE AGE TO THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD. By Kate Waddington. 193 × 252 mm. xiv + 317 pp. 131 illustrations. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2013. ISBN 978 0 7083 2666 4. Price £90.00.

Settlements of the Later Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and early medieval periods retain a remarkable visible presence within the landscape of north-west Wales. The principal site types are hillforts, enclosed and unenclosed hut groups, and isolated and clustered roundhouses, sometimes associated with relict field systems. The region has a long history of research by fieldworkers such as W.O. Stanley, Bowen and Gresham, and staff of the Royal Commission. In addition, much new information has been obtained in recent years from aerial photography, fieldwork and geophysical survey, notably by staff of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) on behalf of Cadw and as a result of developer-funded rescue excavations.

This volume by Kate Waddington of the School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology, Bangor University, stems from a one-year research project carried out in 2009–10 and conceived as a follow-up to the Welsh Roundhouse Project, the report on which is now freely available online in *Internet Archaeology* (<http://dx.doi.org/10.5284/1000322>). In this instance the study is restricted to sites in the modern counties

of Anglesey, Gwynedd, and west Conwy, over a thousand of which are recorded in the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by GAT. The study also makes use of a significant amount of unpublished material contained in grey-literature reports by staff of the Trust. The volume is detailed, well illustrated and thoroughly referenced. Its principal market will no doubt be research students, teaching staff and professionals with particular interests in settlement archaeology.

The Introduction summarizes the long history of research on the settlement sites of north-west Wales. Chapter 1 provides a useful social and economic overview of the first millennium BC and first millennium AD, set in the context of the British Isles as a whole. Chapter 2, entitled 'Settlement forms and classification', looks at the character of the different types of settlement. It is accompanied by numerous thumbnail plans and graphs but is not for the faint-hearted. Typologies have become increasingly elaborate over time and the new scheme proposed here has no less than fifty types and sub-types, though well over half of the sites are isolated, dispersed or unenclosed roundhouses. The study also takes account of military *vici*—the civilian settlements attached to Roman forts. The varied topography of north-west Wales has had a marked impact upon land use and thus provides a good opportunity to test the potential social and economic significance of the different settlement types. This is analysed in Chapter 3 with the help of numerous distribution maps which, as well as revealing settlement foci and regional differences, begin to hint at the economic basis of the different forms of settlement. Many sites show complex patterns of use and reuse, though the dating of many sequences remains speculative because of the absence of dateable finds or the lack of radiocarbon dates. Largely missing from the record are structures built of timber or cob. These have generally only been found by aerial photography or by chance and a lack of recognition is likely to have skewed some distribution patterns. Chapter 4, entitled 'Settlement biographies', provides a welcome narrative which explores the social aspects of settlements, looking at sequences of building, abandonment and rebuilding. A trend towards increasing nucleation and monumentality is evident over time, at least up to the Roman period. It would be interesting to know the potential role played by population growth and inheritance traditions in this process but these are not examined. Chapter 5 briefly highlights some of the outstanding problems that need to be addressed, including better dating of many of the settlement types and associated field systems, further analysis of the spatial relationships between sites, and the dating of the largely unexplored rectangular structures associated with some settlements. One can only but agree with the author's concluding remark, that 'there is still much to fascinate people for years to come'. Chapter 6, which occupies almost half the book, is a gazetteer of just over 100 sites in the region excavated during the last century and a half, which provides a valuable summary of location, sequence, dating and finds, together with plans and references. A list of all known settlements in the region is given in an Appendix, together with HER numbers (PRNs), which enables readers to explore for themselves the wealth of live data now available online via *Archwilio* (<http://www.archwilio.org.uk/>).

The visible evidence for later prehistoric and early historic settlement archaeology in north-west Wales is largely a consequence of the solid geology and the predominant use of stone as a building material. The implications of this for the settlement archaeology of the rest of Wales is immense, especially with regard to unenclosed and dispersed roundhouses. In many other areas of Wales the use of earth and timber was the norm and it is probably because of this that unenclosed settlements of the later prehistoric and early historic periods are elsewhere relatively few and far between.

WROXETER, THE CORNOVII AND THE URBAN PROCESS. FINAL REPORT ON THE WROXETER HINTERLAND PROJECT, 1994–1997. VOLUME 2; CHARACTERIZING THE CITY. By R. H. White, C. Gaffney and V. L. Gaffney. 210 × 297 mm. xii + 227 pp. 174 illustrations. 22 tables. Archaeopress, Oxford, 2013. ISBN 978 1 905739 61 5. Price £15.50.

This second volume of the final report on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project completes the writing up of that study. Volume 1, *Researching the Hinterland*, was published in 2007 as no. 68 of the Supplementary Series of the Journal of Roman Archaeology. This second volume is very different in layout and feel; its double columns are easy to read and it is generously and colourfully illustrated. Of the five chapters, it is the Atlas, an *insula* by *insula* gazetteer for the town, that stands out—and for which alone the volume would be well worth its very reasonable price.

Chapter 1 sets out the research context of the Hinterland project, which became ‘the vehicle for one of the most ambitious programmes of archaeo-geophysical survey carried out at the end of the last century’. It summarises the outcomes of previous geophysical and other remote sensing at Wroxeter and considers the need for further prospecting within the town. There is also an extensive review of the techniques used over the years at Wroxeter—from Houghton’s magnetometer surveys of the nearby Ismore Coppice tility in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to the extensive and varied techniques experimented with in the second half of the 1990s as part of the Hinterland Project. The general theory and practice of the various techniques are explained and illustrated, along with an assessment of their relative effectiveness at Wroxeter. The best-known end result of the intensive survey in the 1990s is the visually dramatic geophysical base map of Wroxeter. The authors conclude the chapter with some suggestions about how future research could enhance this, given, in particular, the potential for applying modern computation to existing geophysical datasets.

The second chapter—Excavations—reports on two evaluations carried out at Wroxeter at the end of 1999 and in 2005. The first, necessitated by the re-lining of an existing watermain running along the main north-south street of the town, gave the opportunity to excavate and record nineteen lining holes whose location was decided by engineering rather than archaeological needs. These were generally 2m by 1.7m across, and afforded a ‘random sample of the deposits across the Roman city’. The second was a research evaluation in *insula* X, towards the south-west of the town, by Birmingham University’s Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity. The purpose of the excavations was to determine the character, state of preservation and potential significance of any buried remains. The authors begin the chapter with the statement that ‘some justification for including these rather slight excavations in this volume is in order here’, and indeed the chapter does sit uneasily within what is otherwise a more interpretative and analytical text. The justification given is that ‘such is the dearth of archaeological work in the town that every intervention properly excavated adds to the sum of knowledge’.

The excavators of these two ‘interventions’ have had the luxury of getting much fuller and wider publication in this volume than might find welcome or funding in a county journal. This seems acceptable for the watermain lining pits, which were dug down to a depth of up to about 1.7m into the deep stratigraphy across the width of the town. They appear to have been well observed, are clearly described and are well illustrated. The appreciable amount of cultural material from the pits is also extensively reported and illustrated, and includes specialist analysis of faunal, pollen and plant remains. It is regrettable that the reporting of the 2005 research excavations struggles by comparison. The excavations consisted of three 2m-wide trenches: two 30m and one 10m long. The report is succinct and plentifully illustrated, but it has been poorly checked before publication, with mistakes in figure captioning (page 79), one wrong image (page 78) and trenches 2 and 3 numbered the wrong way round on the location plan (page 75). There are also inconsistencies in the text in the use of brackets with context numbers.

This poor editing stands out, particularly because of the otherwise consistent good editorial quality of the rest of the volume.

We move on with relief to the heart of the volume—the Atlas—which occupies the 69 pages of the third chapter. The blurb on the back cover claims that this is the ‘first *insula* by *insula* description of all the visible buildings in the town, the first time that this has been attempted for a Romano-British town, and one of the few attempted anywhere in the Empire’. This is indeed a tour de force that offers a descriptive and interpretative gazetteer for each of Wroxeter’s forty-eight *insulae* to a standard format in the text and illustrations. The chapter opens with introductory sections, firstly on the depths of stratified deposits (generally from 1 to 2 metres across the town that must hide much of the evidence for buildings belonging to its earlier phases), and secondly on interpreting the aerial photography and geophysics. This is followed by the admirable Gazetteer. For each *insula* there is a brief, referenced, summary of the geophysical, aerial photographic and excavation evidence with a corresponding standard set of illustrations—an aerial photograph and its interpretation, and colour-coded magnetometer and aerial photo plots. This evidence in each case leads into a discussion and interpretation of the character of the buildings of each *insula* (public, residential, religious, commercial, workshops) or its use (industrial; uninhabited; market gardening etc), with an occasional suggestion of the social status of those buildings identified as residential (high, mixed, low). The writing is clear and the illustrations uniformly good and informative. It will doubtless be the reference point for much future discussion and research.

The penultimate chapter is a 42-page chronological study of Wroxeter and its immediate hinterland, based on the detailed analysis in the Atlas. The authors ‘offer at least one image of what the Roman town in Britain looked like, permitting comparison both with other towns in Britain and elsewhere in the Empire’. A brief overview of pre-Roman occupation in the area, leads into an analysis of the Roman fortress and then on to a full consideration of the phases of the civilian life of the town over some 300 years. This discussion is well illustrated with good quality plans, colour and black and white air and ground-level photographs and a useful, colour-coded, table and plan analysing respectively the ‘visibility’ and density of buildings in the 48 *insulae*.

The last chapter—‘Building an interpretation of Wroxeter’—reviews the evidence assembled in the foregoing chapters, using it to draw conclusions from the resulting ‘broad-brush understanding of how the town developed’. Four sections under the heading ‘Becoming Roman’ discuss successively the impact of the military, the first civilian town, the mature town and the late antique town. Finally, recommendations are made for further study using geophysical and geochemical prospection but also arguing for new excavation and reconstruction within those already much damaged areas of the town such as the forum and its southern neighbour *insula* VIII, intensively dug over by Bushe-Fox in the early twentieth century.

Overall, the content and quality of the volume make it one warmly to be recommended, my copy is already well thumbed and will be returned to frequently.

Shrewsbury

JENNY BRITNELL

THE PLACE-NAME EVIDENCE FOR A ROUTEWAY NETWORK IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. By Ann Cole. 210 × 296 mm. viii + 344 pp. 133 illustrations. Archaeopress, Oxford, 2013. ISBN 978 1 4073 1209 5. Price £48.00.

Although much of the material in this book has already been published elsewhere, this is the first time the author has had the opportunity to explain in detail the methodology she has used, a methodology refined over some twenty years or more of painstaking fieldwork. The expressed aim has been to use place-

names to identify the major routes that were in use by travellers in the early medieval period. Basically, the distribution of certain place-names has been investigated in order to identify those which occurred in close proximity to such a road to such an extent that the use of the road in this period seems to be confirmed. Obviously there is a danger here of employing a circular argument, something the author has, however, attempted to avoid.

The author starts with a base map showing Roman roads but has been able to add later recorded routes from the place-name evidence. It is now clear that many 'Roman' roads were on a different alignment to those that later developed but this was rarely so different as to cause serious problems in the argument. Charter evidence, too, can be more useful than the author seems to suggest—the long-distance Midland saltways, for instance, can be reconstructed from such evidence (but this source of evidence is not ubiquitous and has therefore been omitted). While some terms such as those describing roads, trackways and river crossings are obvious contenders for identifying long-distance roads, others may be more contentious. An accompanying map (as a coloured fold-out and on a CD) presents the combined evidence for the terms covered set against the reconstructed early medieval routeway network revealed by this investigation, including the relevant Roman roads, prehistoric, early medieval and medieval tracks. In addition, a number of local maps illustrate the location of specific terms such as *hyth* ('port, landing place') in particular areas.

The author has already made the case for including references to *mere-tūn* settlements as places known to offer sources of water for travellers and also perhaps as being a source of fish and wildfowl. While *welle*, the most common term for 'spring', is discounted as being too liberally scattered, other 'spring' terms have been found to occur close to routeways and the author here includes *byden-welles*, *æwiell/æwielm*, and *funta*: 'they would be known to travellers as sources of water and places to pause for a rest if not an overnight halt' (page 44). A similar approach has been attempted to identify terms signifying possible lodgings en route, even those indicating sources of fodder for animals—it is argued that *mōr-tūn* and *mersc-tūn* ('marsh') settlements might have been expected by travellers to have a surplus of hay or provide scope for grazing. *Draeg-tūns* might provide assistance to travellers requiring extra traction up steep hills or across areas prone to flooding. Approaching the thesis from a different angle, it is argued that *grāf-tūns* needed to be close to routeways for their woodland resources (perhaps from coppiced woods) to be transported. The author continues by presenting arguments for regarding some settlement names as particularly significant: especially the term *wic-ham* and, for some uncertain reason, *cumb-tūn*. Moreover, the evidence is included here for the reader to check. All these terms are fully covered in a series of appendices which allows the reader to explore the evidence him/herself.

Using the same methodology, the author presents the argument for some terms acting as landmarks on routeways. It is argued that *ōra* was not just used to describe any kind of riverbank, hill-slope or sea shore but, in common with other hill names, as suggested first by the late Margaret Gelling, was one with a definite shape when seen from a distance: flat-topped hills with a rounded shoulder, whether seen from the land or sea. If the latter, such named places promised a port and haven while the inland places might 'probably act as a warning that a place of importance/significance to the traveller is close by' (page 70)—a marker when maps were not yet available. The term *ofer* was used to describe a similar flat-topped ridge but its distribution was different and largely complementary to that of *ōra*; it is suggested that in some regions it may have been associated with mineral resources, as in its occurrence close to Midland saltways or Derbyshire lead-mining districts. However, the discussion of these latter terms, although backed up by detailed examples set out in an appendix, is tortuous.

It is the synthesis, used in association with the coloured map, that brings all this information together and is likely to be of greatest use. Undoubtedly detailed local studies can add more routeways to the pattern, something the author has herself tried out in a number of more detailed maps, but the constraint

here is the distribution of the selected place-name terms. The results are explained regionally and valuable suggestions made, including the evidence for the dating of the major road system. A final, fairly ambitious, chapter highlights the conclusions that might be drawn from the findings. The impression is that a high proportion of Roman roads continued in service at the end of the eleventh century and that the increasing use of *tŷn* as a place-name element points to the development of facilities along established routes rather than the creation of new routes. But additional routes such as saltways or across chalk downland were added to serve all needs (an argument could be made that some of these pre-dated the Roman roads).

Is one convinced? The end map is particularly thought-provoking but this reader didn't feel entirely confident about its import. Is the place-name evidence indeed an adequate source for recognising early medieval routeways? Obviously the author rightly sticks to her thesis and presents the evidence as she finds it. It would be useful if regional studies could, by using additional techniques, further investigate the evidence for early medieval long-distance routeways.

Birmingham

DELLA HOOKE

CUNEDDA, CYNAN, CADWALLON, CYNDDYLAN. FOUR WELSH POEMS AND BRITAIN 383–655. EDITIONS, TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARY. By John T. Koch. 170 × 239 mm. 327pp. 3 illustrations. University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 2013. ISBN 978 1 907029 13 4. Price £19.95.

As the title indicates, this book focuses on four early Welsh poems, *Marwnad Cunedda* ('Cunedda's elegy'), *Trawsganu Kynan Garwyn* ('A eulogy for Cynan Garwyn'), *Moliant Cadwallon* ('In praise of Cadwallon'), and *Marwnad Cynddylan* ('Cynddylan's elegy'), each of which is edited, translated and discussed with copious notes. In addition the book contains a text, translation and discussion of the poem *Gwaith Gwen Ystrad* ('The battle of Gwen Ystrad'), which Koch continues to regard as identical to the battle of Catraeth portrayed in the *Gododdin*, but seen from the victorious side. This view is far from universally accepted.

Of the four figures who are named in the book's title Cunedda was traditionally identified as the founder of the dynasty of Gwynedd who lived in the late fourth and first half of the fifth century; Cynan Garwyn probably lived in the later sixth century; Cadwallon's career reached its peak in the early 630s; Cynddylan was prominent in the following years, possibly dying *c.* 642 or in 655. In discussing the historical value of these poems as evidence for the times of their subjects the first point to bear in mind is that they survive only in much later (fourteenth- to eighteenth-century) manuscripts. The surviving texts may thus reflect corruptions, accretions and omissions resulting from the process of transmission. Koch adds to the complexity of the situation by insisting (page 14) on the working hypothesis that the poems' 'starting point was not a fixed text, but one or more of the multiforms of an oral-formulaic performance/composition' so that 'a song going back to the 7th century might be impossible to distinguish from one of the 10th.'

The book is not easy reading, and is hardly suitable for the general reader, for whom the necessarily complex nature of some of the linguistic work would be daunting—as would be the five pages that are required to set out the orthographic and typographical conventions employed in the text.

Koch's subject, centred on the issue of 'how the information in the poems relates to the other documentary sources for the same people, places and events', is a large one—even allowing for the fact that the emphasis on documentary sources precludes sustained treatment of archaeological evidence—and is frequently dealt with in controversial fashion. Koch's long-standing conviction that *Marwnad*

Cunedda should be dated to the fifth century is challenged by the work of Marged Haycock. Particular disquiet at the speculative nature of Koch's approach has been expressed by Patrick Sims-Williams, who has dismissed for example the theory (most clearly advanced on page 134) that the Cadelling, the ruling dynasty of early Powys, originated in modern Herefordshire, which he sees as solely dependent on Koch's debatable interpretation of a single phrase in *Trawsganu Kynan Garwyn*.

A tendency to draw unwarranted conclusions from very thin or problematic evidence may be exemplified by the treatment of Cadwallon of Gwynedd's career in the aftermath of his victory, in alliance with Penda of Mercia, over Eadwine, ruler of the Northumbrian kingdoms. Koch quotes (page 184) an episode in the *Vita Columbae* relating to Cadwallon's subsequent death at the hands of Oswald of Northumbria who, returning from the battle, 'was ordained by God as emperor of the whole of Britain'. He then makes (page 185) the emphatic statement that 'victory in the battle would not in itself have made Oswald 'emperor of the whole of Britain' unless that was the power that Cadwallon held before Oswald wrested it from him.' Koch backs up this non sequitur by noting that Bede's 'words are also consistent with this interpretation. Caedualla killed Eadwine and then stepped into his office; Eadwine was the fifth king to hold the *imperium Britanniae*. Oswald then killed Caedualla and stepped into Caedualla's office; Oswald was the sixth king to hold the *imperium*. Caedualla is not counted, but Bede explains that this is so. The Welsh king's reign is counted as part of Oswald's.' Now this passage, involving as it does a reference to Bede's words, sounds as though it is very closely based on Bede. But Bede says nothing of the sort. He does not mention a process of succession, or 'stepping in', to an 'office'. These concepts are the product of unsupported assumptions.

There are times when one may question the degree of elaboration accorded to discussion of different topics. The treatment (page 106 and the long note 6) of the identity of 'Cetula', one of the kings mentioned in the *Annals of Tigernach* as having fallen at the battle of Chester, appears to this reviewer to be somewhat laborious, while overlooking the tempting identification of Cetula with Catgual/Cadwal of Rhos. On the other hand little space is accorded to Alex Woolf's argument that the Caedualla of Bede, generally thought to be Cadwallon of Gwynedd, is actually to be identified as a completely different character, 'Catguallaun liu', a descendant of Coel Hen from north Britain. This is an important issue, as Koch realises, when he states that if this were so 'not only would 'Moliant Cadwallon' be misleading on the basic historical facts, but so would *Historia Brittonum*, *Annales Cambriae*, and probably the Gwynedd lineage of the Old Welsh Genealogies, as well as later sources, such as the Triads.' Koch '[a]lthough finding value in several aspects of Woolf's study' discounts the latter's argument. He does so first by quoting Thomas Charles-Edwards's comment that Woolf's proposal 'depends on an approach to the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae* which I would not share.' Secondly Koch aligns himself with Charles-Edwards by advancing what he calls 'three general reasons' for opposing the Woolf argument. These general points are sensible, but do not engage with Woolf's case in any detail. The present reviewer is also sceptical about Woolf's identification of Caedualla as Catguallaun liu, but given the importance of this to Koch's analysis it surely demands more detailed scrutiny than it is accorded in this book.

A large part of the importance of this book lies in the stimulus that it will provide to further thought, to essays in rebuttal, and to the pursuit of lines of enquiry and argument that it opens up. In spite of the reservations expressed here Koch's book will be required reading for all serious scholars confronting the many problems of early Welsh poetry as evidence of historical developments.

THE HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOL OF ROMANESQUE SCULPTURE. By Malcolm Thurlby. 211 × 240 mm. xx + 299 pp. 401 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2013. ISBN 978 1 906663 72 8. Price £17.50.

When the first edition of this book appeared in 1999, it provided an admirable and accessible account of this local school of Romanesque sculpture. Thurlby has now updated it, with colour photographs of high quality using the latest techniques of printing technology. A new account by Bruce Coplestone-Crow of the role of magnate rivalry in Herefordshire in the anarchy of Stephen's reign, contemporary with the carvings, explores its relevance to the historical background. This alone is a significant contribution to our knowledge of the Anglo-Norman March. Another welcome addition is a gallery of illustrations showing the characteristic stylistic features of the school.

The Chronicle of Wigmore Abbey relates how Oliver de Merlimond, chief steward of Hugh de Mortimer of Wigmore went on pilgrimage to Compostela, leaving funds for the completion of Shobdon church, which was dedicated by Robert de Bethune, bishop of Hereford in 1135–1143. In 1134 Kilpeck was granted to St Peter's Abbey Gloucester and had probably been begun, if not completed by that date. George Zarnecki associated the western French elements at Shobdon and elsewhere with de Merlimond's pilgrimage to Compostela and recognized two major sculptors in the work of the school—the 'Aston Master', named from the church near Wigmore and 'the Chief Master'. After Aston, the two worked together at Shobdon and Kilpeck. However, Thurlby points out that Shobdon was already under way before the pilgrimage and Kilpeck may well pre-date Shobdon. De Merlimond, a scholarly man, was presumably from Merlimont in the Pas de Calais. Two early thirteenth-century coins from this same area of northern France have recently been found near Hen Domen. He also had Parisian links. In the following century connections between Aquitaine and western Britain were common and not confined to religious pilgrimages, as the careers of men like Hubert de Burgh show. We do not know when or where de Merlimond met Hugh de Mortimer or when he came to England, but he could have known Aquitaine and Poitou earlier in his career.

Thurlby provides a wealth of artistic parallels with Romanesque art and sculpture in southern England and further afield, but the low survival rate of fine metalwork and other influential media, combined with the Norman diaspora from Ireland to Italy makes it difficult to put even such close parallels as for example those between the Kilpeck figures and those on the metalwork of St Manchan's shrine in County Offaly into context. Recently, there has been interest in pattern books (in the broadest sense) and collections of medieval architectural working drawings. Thurlby structures his work around patterns of lay patronage and the most economical explanation of the genesis of the Herefordshire school might be a Poitevin sculptor introduced, at whatever date, via de Merlimond's French connections, working alongside one or more local sculptors who learnt their trade in the mason's yard at Hereford cathedral, were aware of the latest work at Reading, Salisbury and elsewhere, had access to a range of artistic models in whatever media, and were able to draw on the tastes of travelled lay patrons and clergy.

Though Shobdon and Kilpeck are usually linked, there are significant differences. Shobdon suggests a controlled intellectual programme drawing on western French and perhaps indirectly on Byzantine models. Its tympana sculptures of Christ in Majesty and the Harrowing of Hell offer a positive message of salvation, whilst its rich decoration recalls fine metalwork. Kilpeck has a different programme. The corbels suggest an anarchic external world of the flesh. At the south door, soldiers battling serpents guard the interface between this world and the interior, where saints and apostles around the chancel arch offer spiritual protection. Bruce Coplestone-Crow's account of the civil war raging in the county at just this time and of the churches newly founded as places of sanctuary for refugees show how relevant this was.

Away from Shobdon and Kilpeck Thurlby provides a finely illustrated corpus of the sculpture of the school and related pieces, including recently discovered carvings and, importantly, of the churches which contain it. The high quality of the photographs makes this book, quite apart from the scholarly text, a visual delight. He relates the architectural and artistic background to the patronage of the secular lords who commissioned and financed the work. As he points out, the richness of decoration was determined by the patron as purse holder, though the use of this to date individual carvings can lead to circular arguments, whilst away from parish churches, monastic patronage would also have been significant. Thus the chronology of the tympanum carvings at Llanbadarn Fawr (admittedly marginal to the school) may relate more to conflicts between the Welsh canons and the monks of St Peter's Abbey Gloucester after the latter's expulsion in 1136 than to the secular descent of Maelienydd. Similarly, the decorated twelfth-century voussoirs at Longtown Castle are clearly re-used from some earlier structure, with carved faces sometimes concealed in their present locations. They indicate a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century date for the circular keep, rather than the much earlier one tentatively suggested by Thurlby on the grounds of likely patronage, but which most castle scholars would find surprising.

Ideally, this book should be read in conjunction with Thurlby's *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, with its accounts of contemporary works outside the school. Andy Johnson, in a brief 'Publishers Note' explains his own role in encouraging this new edition. Logaston Press have long been noted for their high standards of book production and their output of scholarly and user-friendly works giving comprehensive (that is 'definitive') accounts of towns and monuments at affordable prices. This handsome volume maintains that reputation.

Caerphilly

JEREMY KNIGHT

OWAIN GWYNEDD. PRINCE OF THE WELSH. By Roger Turvey. 139 × 215 mm. 158 pp. 16 illustrations. Y Lolfa Cyf, Talybont, Ceredigion, 2013. ISBN 978 1 84771 694 1. Price £9.95.

With this volume Roger Turvey extends his writings on the Welsh princes by presenting a 'short, popular study' of the twelfth-century ruler of Gwynedd. To do so he draws on a wide range of specialized studies, and himself makes extensive citation of original sources to illustrate his text. Discussion is presented in narrative form, in the manner in which works for a general readership are by custom written, but the author's composition suggests that he might well have chosen, had he so wished, a more thematic manner of presentation.

Important themes can be traced through successive chapters, one being that which tells of the relations between Owain Gwynedd and his younger brother Cadwaladr ap Gruffudd. Their joint campaigning in Ceredigion soon revealed divergent objectives, Owain probably intervening at the behest of the dynasty of Deheubarth and intending to maintain good relations, while from the outset Cadwaladr seemed bent upon pursuing his own advantage. Not only did he embark upon the creation of a lordship in Ceredigion, but ominously he entered into marriage with Adeliza, the sister of Ranulf, earl of Chester, and widow of Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, the lord of Ceredigion killed by the Welsh in 1136. There followed Cadwaladr's collaboration with the earl in the civil turmoil in England during the reign of Stephen, even as Owain was pressing upon the frontier with Chester, and adherence to Henry II followed. All this had a bearing upon Owain's need in his settlement with the king in 1157 to ensure that his brother would return to Gwynedd only on terms which ensured that the integrity of the kingdom was not imperilled. Relations between the brothers mattered immensely in the first two decades of the reign when the security of Gwynedd was put at risk, and the problems that coalesced in those years themselves bring coherence to the historical interpretation.

Although the author takes the more conventional approach, the study presents in book form a creditable garnering of the conclusions that historians have reached on a reign of great interest. Apart from the problems within Gwynedd, the narrative embraces Owain's dealings with fellow princes and, in the person of Henry II, a powerful English monarch, and the prince's diplomatic initiative in broaching a political relationship with Louis VII of France, as well as other important topics. In doing so the author accesses a range of original material that enriches his account. This includes quotations from *Brut y Tywysogyon*, although there needs to be a caveat to make clear that the resonant passages quoted are the work, not of a twelfth-century chronicler, but of a later thirteenth-century author who sought to enhance the terse entries of the annals that formed his raw material by resorting to literary elaboration. The splendid encomium to Owain Gwynedd is thus not a tribute phrased 'at his death' but one made a century or so later by a writer who strove to provide a fitting rhetorical celebration of a prince of true renown. For contemporary literary eulogy we have to depend on the court poetry, and in citing *Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr* the author quotes an authentic twelfth-century remembrance. The volume offers a commendable introduction to a major figure among medieval Welsh rulers and lends his reader encouragement to pursue further study.

Aberystwyth

J. BEVERLEY SMITH

MONASTIC WALES. NEW APPROACHES. Edited by Janet Burton and Karen Stöber. 142 × 222 mm. xix + 273 pp. 13 illustrations. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2013. ISBN 978 0 7083 2582 7. Price £80.00.

As David Austin points out in the opening chapter of this book, monastic communities have shaped both the Welsh landscape and our sense of identity. It is ironical, therefore, that we still have no comprehensive history of the religious orders in medieval Wales. This book does not set out to provide that history: but it indicates the ground which needs to be covered, and the perspectives which will need to be considered.

The book has a good balance of overview and detail. There are general chapters on the politics and patronage of both Benedictine and Cistercian foundations, the economics as well as the politics of daughter houses in Ireland, and the role of monastic houses as dynastic mausolea and the focal points of pilgrimage. These overview chapters nevertheless break new ground. Austin and Stöber, for example, emphasise that, in the conversion of *clas* communities to the Augustinian rule, it was in several cases the more remote Culdee communities that were first reorganised.

The definition of 'monastic' has been set as widely as possible, at one point even including secular colleges and cathedral chapters. While there is no one chapter on the friars, they feature strongly in the chapter on urban monasticism. There is also a welcome emphasis on the 'other monasticism'—hospitals and pilgrim hospices, and the military orders.

There is also a welcome change in the approach to late medieval monasticism, often written off as stale, complacent and even corrupt. In a detailed and theorised discussion of the changing dynamics of sacred space in cloister and dormitory, Anne Müller suggests that the move towards individual cells might represent not luxury but 'a new awareness of the interior self and the ways to approach God'. Dafydd Johnston points out that poets praised the spirituality and learning of monastic communities as well as their hospitality; and Ceridwen Lloyd Morgan considers both the wealth of learning in monastic libraries and the scale of loss at and after the Dissolution. In a close reading of Huw Cae Llwyd's request poem for Abbess Annes of Llanllyr, Jane Cartwright argues that (*pace* Roberta Gilchrist) strict enclosure was not so highly valued for Welsh female religious, but that, like their male counterparts, they were part of a wider cultural world.

Inevitably, even in a book as wide-ranging as this, there are additional themes one would like to see developed. There is surely a need for a more sustained approach to gender. The very limited scope of the religious life for women (one small Benedictine community, two Cistercian houses and a possible short-lived third) is one of the great puzzles of medieval Welsh history. This is a field Jane Cartwright has made very much her own, but she has explicitly taken a self-denying ordinance for the purposes of this book, having as she says discussed the question at length elsewhere. The problem could, however, have been considered in chapters on the politics of foundation of the various orders. Was it that religious houses were seen as part of the process of conquest and resistance, and that male houses were viewed as having more standing? Or that the Cistercians, who became the order of choice for new foundations in Wales, had such difficulties with women?

This leads us to the other theme which might have been developed further. How much of this is distinctive to Wales, and how much of the Welsh experience here is distinctively shaped by the religious orders? The politics of conquest and (re)foundation in Wales were clearly different from England—but why were they so different? Was it simply the process of conquest, which was so much more long-drawn-out, or were there deeper cultural issues at work? What is distinctive about monastic pilgrimage shrines, monastic road maintenance and burial at monastic sites as opposed to cathedrals? And how do these distinctions change over time?

The final problem is, of course, the price. If *Y Lolfa* can produce Martin Crampin's sumptuously illustrated *Stained Glass in Welsh Churches* at £29.95, why is this much smaller format book so much more expensive? If we are going to communicate important things about Welsh culture and identity, we need to find a more accessible way of doing so.

Newport

MADELEINE GRAY

FIELDS OF PLAY. THE SPORTING HERITAGE OF WALES. By Daryl Leeworthy. 246 × 254 mm. 182 pp. 155 illustrations. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2012. ISBN 978 1 87118 445 7. Price £14.95.

This interesting and well-researched paperback concentrates upon the locations used or created for sporting endeavour. It does not provide a record of any specific sporting achievements. The large square format allows many of the historic photographs to be reproduced at full-page size. Many of the colour photographs are air photographs of modern stadiums. This work's origin in a doctoral dissertation ensures that the text is well supported by references and that the source of every illustration is meticulously cited.

The first five chapters concentrate upon particular types of venue, whilst the final chapter concerns the various sports and leisure activities which used the countryside but did not need a specialised arena. In many of the five chapters the pattern of provision develops from Victorian noble or civic enterprise passing through Edwardian and mid-century public authority expenditure to post-1945 financial hardships, which saw the decay and disrepair of many facilities. The last fifty years are marked by public outlay on the Empire Pool in Cardiff (1968) and also by private initiatives at the leisure centres of Afan Lido (1965), Swansea (1977) and Rhyl Sun Centre (1980). Football and rugby grounds have also been upgraded by the clubs themselves or by private benefactors.

The first chapter on 'public parks' illustrates this historical transition. Initially provided in Victorian times for genteel walks and 'rational recreation' amid fountains and flowerbeds, these examples of civic pride soon provided facilities for tennis and for boating on lakes. Later still they were opened to a wider range of ball games, including baseball and bowling, and attracted working-class participants. In the inter-

war years where parks and playing fields were created from industrial tips or on the wastelands abandoned by factories, then the local initiatives and volunteer labour are praised. Other sports grounds or children's play areas were laid out by international cooperation or voluntary service overseas, mainly French and Swiss. The south Wales valleys, badly hit by unemployment, benefitted from such assistance. Welfare grounds were largely a twentieth-century phenomenon. Here the impact of miners' unions and voluntary labour for the public good were recurrent features.

Swimming pools followed a similar historical course with Victorian civic provision of indoor pools at Newport, Cardiff, Penarth and Wrexham. The number soon grew in the inter-war period of the twentieth century: some were covered baths, a few were even heated, but the vast majority were open-air lidos; often these were of Art Deco design. Such lidos were expensive to maintain by local councils with falling incomes after 1945 and the last open-air lido, at Maesteg, closed in 2010.

Attention is given to less popular sports such as golf, hockey and lacrosse. Handball had a long history and a few courts remain. More unusual was the sport of push-ball, propelling a giant leather ball, some 2 metres in diameter, across a large field by opposing village teams. Horse racing occurred at distinctive courses which are well illustrated. The growth of stadiums for the major sports of football, rugby and cricket is also carefully charted. In contrast to the impressive stadiums were the minority sports which used the countryside and, especially in the National Parks included rock climbing and caving. Other sports, such as cycling time trials, motor-car rallying and motor-bike hill climbs, used public roads and dirt tracks.

If there is a drawback to this study it is that the apparent socialist outlook of the author colours the assessment of the various endeavours. Other readers may see this simply as giving credit where it is due. The motives of the landowners or mill-owners in providing public parks, recreation fields and sporting equipment might be seen as further evidence of the exploitation of the masses, though the earl of Plymouth is applauded for his many initiatives. The choice of sports under discussion omits any elitist preferences, so there is hurling but not fox-hunting, and rambling but not rowing. Public schools, such as Llandoverly and Brecon, are ignored as nurseries of sport.

The wealth of historic photographs of places and people is always instructive. The coverage both in example and photograph favours Glamorgan and Gwent. By contrast north Wales was poorly served for sporting venues, except in the seaside resorts and Wrexham. There is scarcely a mention of mid-Wales, apart from Aberystwyth and Presteigne. The index is comprehensive and detailed. This guide to recreational spaces can be warmly welcomed.

Cambridge

LAWRENCE BUTLER

RADNORSHIRE FROM ABOVE. IMAGES OF LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGY. 216 × 232 mm. 113 pp. 115 illustrations. The Radnorshire Society and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in collaboration with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Welshpool, 2013. 978 0 9927215 0 3. Price £12.00.

Following 2011's excellent *Montgomeryshire Past and Present from the Air*, this fine collaboration between the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), the Radnorshire Society and RCAHMW is the latest in Chris Musson's series of county publications, reprising the same winning format of high quality, often very beautiful images and thoughtful narrative. As with the previous volumes in the series the photographs and accompanying extended discursive captions are arranged into a series of geographically arranged and loosely themed sections such as 'Rhayader, Romans and the Elan Valley' following a short but concise introduction covering the principles of aerial photography and the history and archaeology of the county.

Sparsely populated, predominantly pastoral and in swathes wild and remote, Radnorshire is perhaps Wales' least known district to those who live outside its boundaries. Accordingly, beyond the fundamental work of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the Royal Commission over the past few decades, its archaeology has received comparatively little wider attention. With the exception of a number of churches, industrial features and townscapes, this volume is rather dominated by earthwork monuments, a selection dictated by the nature of the archaeological record rather than any bias on the part of the author. Radnorshire has few major houses, only one great medieval abbey at Cwmhir, and all but two fragments of its masonry castles lie robbed out and buried within huge mounds of their own rubble. Nevertheless, the sheer diversity of the archaeology on display here still impresses, ranging from the widespread upland remains of prehistoric funerary monuments and abandoned encroachment settlements, to the shrunken castles boroughs of the more densely settled river valleys and the great dams, reservoirs and remote mines in the desolate west of the county. For the sake of contrast with the many green images of mounds, ditches and undulations the book would perhaps have benefited from a little more of the latter, the admittedly limited industrial heritage of the county being restricted to a few pages and single views of Dolyhir Quarry and the evocative Cwm Elan lead mine. However, such aesthetic contrasts are provided by spectacular views of cropmarks and soilmarks, inevitably and rightly focused on the staggering and internationally significant palimpsest of Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual, Roman military and later monuments in the Walton Basin. Here, the author briefly lands in order to explore on the ground the carefully targeted survey and excavation work of CPAT, which continues to confirm and extend the features identified from the air, gradually enhancing our understanding of the date and function of these monuments and their sometimes ambiguous physical relationships.

Highlighting discrepancies between the complex cropmarks and geophysical anomalies associated with the Hindwell Barrow II, Musson illustrates the role of aerial photography in forming part of a broader suite of investigative techniques and sources. Indeed, a prevailing quality throughout the text is the author's balanced consideration of the nature and limitations of the evidence presented by aerial photographs, resulting in a populist book which at no point condescends by simplifying complex monuments or avoiding difficult interpretative issues. Where complimentary evidence is lacking, speculation is always measured and poses rather than answers questions for the reader, an approach neatly illustrated by the discussion of the diverse hill forts of the county. Themes broached include possible sequences of development as suggested by the elongated and apparently phased defences of Castle Bank, differing function, when such larger forts are compared to smaller enclosures such as Llethrau Camp, Beguildy and the potential chronological relationship between pairs of contrasting sites at Llandegley Rocks and on Cefn y Gaer above Llanddewi Ystradenni.

There are a few minor niggles, notably the slightly cloudy quality of reproduction of a few images such as Offa's Dyke on page 51, the Knucklas Viaduct at the top of page 61 and the view of Llandrindod on the following page, although none of these detract from any understanding of the subject matter. As with any such overview there will always be arguments for the inclusion or omission of specific monuments; for example the selection of Builth, across the Wye in Brecknock is curious, whilst the impressive hillfort of Gaer Fawr above Llanellwedd appears clearly in the background of a view of neighbouring Caer Einon but is not mentioned in the text. However, such details are trivial ones for a book never intended as a comprehensive survey but presented as a 'tribute' to Radnorshire, and it succeeds through its stunning images and sweeping narrative in providing a representative and thought-provoking introduction to this beautiful county and its frequently overlooked archaeology.

SEARCHING FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HISTORY IN WALES. Edited by Rheinallt Llwyd and D. Huw Owen. 137 × 214 mm. 319 pp. 95 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2014. ISBN 978 1 84527 466 5. Price £12.00.

This is the English-language version of *Olrhain Hanes Bro a Thelu* (2009), edited by the same authors, not merely translated but for the most part revised and updated by the original contributors. It consists of twenty chapters, each devoted to a specific area that researchers might wish to consult. All the authors manage to convey enthusiasm for their subjects, many now being retired from professional positions in their areas of specialization. The book attempts to combine two functions, first as a list of sources and secondly as a broad introduction to each topic under consideration. The balance of emphasis between these two aspects varies very much from chapter to chapter.

The first two chapters, written by the editors, review the various sources but rather oddly the locations of these same sources only appear separately in the last chapter at the end of the book. Much emphasis quite naturally is placed on the National Library of Wales and an introduction to that institution's holdings is provided in a new section by Beryl Evans, Research Services manager at the Library. Here the statement that the Tithe Maps were drawn up prior to the Industrial Revolution (page 63) is somewhat misleading. In the chapter 'Welsh Pedigrees and Heraldry' Michael Siddons bravely attempts to distil his four-volume *magnum opus*, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry*, into a mere dozen pages. There is a surprisingly extensive literature and range of source material on both the Established and Nonconformist churches in the chapter by J. Gwynfor Jones, hardly 'a good read' but nonetheless a useful reference guide for genealogists and social historians. One doubts though that 'copies of all wills . . . are deposited in Somerset House' as surely it is many years since this was the case. In contrast, Gerald Morgan's 'Probate Documents and Local History' makes fascinating reading but provides a limited number of sources, while the very short chapter on 'Family Knowledge and Records' by Evan James focuses largely on selected memorial inscriptions but provides little detail on the extraordinarily extensive recording which has taken place in graveyards and cemeteries throughout Wales in recent years. Glyn Parry's excellent 'Criminal Records' and Helen Palmer's comprehensive 'Local Government' both include a discussion of Manorial Records and Quarter Sessions with some inevitable duplication of material, but readers using the book selectively will not be put off by this. In the further discussion of the Tithe Maps (page 150) it should be noted that these did not include areas of land such as sheepwalks that were non-titheable. Beryl Evans on 'The Census' brings out the problems posed by inaccuracies, for example those encountered with monoglot Welsh speakers where the householders had to complete the returns themselves but the final entries had to be in English. Internet sources such as *Ancestry* and *Findmypast* now dominate this field.

David Howell's 'Estate Papers' describes the early foundation of landed estates from the time of Henry VI to the amalgamation through marriage of the great landholdings of the Wynnstay and Powis Castle estates. In this context yet again we get a discussion of manorial courts and records. The extensive cataloguing of rentals at the National Library and elsewhere represents a largely untapped source of local information. For those with ancestors having maritime connections William Troughton's brief survey of 'Maritime Sources' will be of interest as there are often extensive records of voyages, officers and crews. D. Huw Owen, previously Keeper of Maps and Pictures at the National Library, succinctly reviews the considerable literature on maps including estate maps; perhaps some more discussion of the map-makers themselves would have enhanced this section. No one is better qualified than the same author to describe pictures of the landscapes and portraits of Wales and his problem must surely have been what to leave out. William Troughton's 'Photographs and Postcards' makes fascinating reading despite there being no mention of 'Naughty Postcards' of which there must have been many thousands. The large stock of historic houses in Wales is described by Richard Suggett, rightly drawing attention to the work of Peter

Smith and the Pevsner *Buildings of Wales* series but strangely omitting any mention of Thomas Lloyd's important book, *The Lost Houses of Wales*. Again, in the section on 'Aerial Photography' the books by Chris Musson *Montgomeryshire from the Air* and *Radnorshire from Above* are notable by their absence. Richard Morgan, the doyen of Welsh place-name studies, provides a critical analysis of a difficult subject complemented with a descriptive list of relevant websites. One would have to take issue though with his claim (page 255) that the David and Charles facsimiles of the early Ordnance Survey maps omitted parish boundaries; some have parish and even township boundaries shown. Tegwyn Jones' chapter on 'Folk Poetry' is an informative but often overlooked source of local and family history and Rheinallt Llwyd's 'Oral Testimony' gives us an important reminder of the crucial necessity of collecting oral accounts before these are lost forever.

Near the beginning of the book is a series of fine colour prints, but readers will have to work out for themselves how these relate to particular parts of the text. There are a few typographical errors missed by the proof-readers but these are not frequent enough to disconcert the reader. There is a short index at the end which includes only the main topics.

The whole book is replete with references to websites and this is both a strength and a weakness. If websites are constantly maintained and updated they will represent an essential tool to the genealogist and local historian. Sometimes, however, one may be frustrated to find they are well out of date or have simply disappeared. This brings up the question of the dating of the book itself. At present it provides a comprehensive and valuable reference guide, as the rather cumbersome title suggests, but in a fast-moving field, books of this sort do quickly lose their value, especially as the internet rapidly generates new material. For now it is a good buy at a modest price.

Guilfield

PETER BARTON

THE PLEASURE OF UNRAVELLING SECRETS. By Bernard Morris. 177 × 247 mm. 335 pp. 175 illustrations. Gower Society, Swansea, 2013. ISBN 978 0 902767 49 2. Price £15.00.

This handsome volume is a fitting tribute to Bernard Morris, whose many articles and books on Swansea and Gower will be familiar to most Cambrians. Bernard, who died in 2012, was a Gower man, and for many years a pillar of the Gower Society, in which he held many offices, including those of publications officer and editor.

An introduction by Prys Morgan, on the history of antiquarian studies in Wales, is followed by an appreciation of Bernard Morris by Malcolm Ridge. Over forty of his notes and articles follow, many of which first appeared in *Gower*. Bernard made excellent use of his professional architectural knowledge as City Estate Agent to record many of the buildings of Swansea and Gower, large and small, and some no longer existing. The articles are divided into three sections: archaeology; architecture and industry, and art and topography. They cover a writing span of almost sixty years and in many cases a brief tailpiece by Edith Evans or others brings the information in them up to date.

The first section deals with Bernard's early work as a field archaeologist, studying Iron Age fortifications and medieval platform houses, together with articles throwing important new light on the castles of Oxwich, Oystermouth, Swansea and Penard and an excavation report on a post-medieval pottery kiln in Gower. A collection of his studies of the farmhouses and cottages of Gower, a subject he made particularly his own, follow, together with notes on working-class and other housing, Swansea potters and the city's industrial monuments.

The many fine illustrations are a highlight of the book. They include Bernard's plans of buildings and an outstanding collection of early topographical drawings of Swansea, many from the holdings of the Royal Institution of South Wales (Swansea Museum), discussion of which form the final section of the book. His encyclopedic knowledge of the history of the city's buildings and industry is very evident, whilst the cover picture, a witty eighteenth-century cartoon of the steward of the Duke of Beaufort standing in Swansea's Wind Street is particularly well chosen. An appreciation of his long association with Swansea Museum and his quest through dealers and salerooms for art works of Swansea to add to their collections, a list of his one hundred publications, and a brief appreciation conclude a book of which the Gower Society can be justly proud.

Caerphilly

JEREMY KNIGHT

Other Books Received

A SUMPTUOUS CEILING. By Richard Hellon and Sarah Codrington. 241 × 267 mm. 16 pp. 41 illustrations. St Davids Cathedral, 2013. ISBN 978 09573842 2 4. Price £6.00.

According to the Pevsner *Pembrokeshire* (2004) 'one of the most spectacular pieces of carpentry in Wales', the nave ceiling in St Davids Cathedral dates from the first half of the sixteenth century. This small booklet celebrates in a set of superb colour images its remarkable craftsmanship, and succinctly describes both its appearance and its history, as well as considering what influences lay behind its intricate design.

WILLIAMS THE LLAWNT. ROBERT WILLIAMS: A NEGLECTED CELTIC SCHOLAR. By Derek R. Williams. 140 × 214 mm. 92 pp. 26 illustrations. Y Lolfa Cyf, Talybont, Ceredigion, 2013. ISBN 978 1 84771 667 5. Price £7.95.

Over the last couple of centuries a number of academically inclined clergymen have made significant contributions to the history of north and east Wales and beyond. To D. R. Thomas, Ellis Davies and at the present time, David Williams, might be added a number of others. The Revd Robert Williams, though, is not a name that comes to mind. Successively curate at Llangernyw (1833–36), curate of Llangadwaladr and rector of Rhydycroesau (1837–79), both in Denbighshire, he then moved to Culmington in Shropshire but died two years later. Williams' main interests were early Welsh language and literature and the Cornish language; but his first publication was *The History and Antiquities of Aberconwy* (1835), and he contributed to *Archaeologia Cambrensis* on several occasions. He is now largely forgotten, but drawing on his diary, this small volume attempts to bring his life and work to a modern audience.