

## REVIEWS

C Barringer (ed), *Aspects of East Anglian prehistory (20 years after Rainbird Clarke)*, 189 pp, 57 figs and tables, 2 pls. Published by Geo Books, Norwich, 1984. Price £12.50 hardback, £7.50 paperback

This, the latest offering in the current round of regional archaeological surveys, is timely not only in its stated purpose of reviewing developments since the presentation of Rainbird Clarke's *East Anglia* in 1960 but also as it comes for review during the 50th year of the Prehistoric Society, formerly of East Anglia.

The form is now familiar: a conference, followed by publication of a series of papers from individuals, each a specialist in his/her chosen field. This volume though, covers only the early periods discussed at the conference and it remains to be seen whether contributions on the later periods will find their way into print. A noted and unexplained exclusion from the present volume is any contribution on the Iron Age, and while the editor may have felt that Iron Age continuity is best served by including it with the Roman and Saxon periods, the traditionally arbitrary division comes between Iron Age and Roman periods and its omission here will be seen as irritating to those who study the period.

In general contributions are of a high standard. Paul Ashbee opens by providing an adequate synthesis of the history of East Anglian prehistoric research and is followed by Peter Murphy on prehistoric environments and economies, a fully worthwhile essay since it is perhaps this aspect that has seen the most dramatic change in archaeological thought over the last 20 years, and it is noteworthy that East Anglia was amongst the leaders in this with the studies of Godwin.

John Wymer and Roger Jacobi give good accounts of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods respectively. Wymer's is more in the nature of a synthesis of his major *Palaeolithic sites in East Anglia*, also published by Geo Books (1985), which will become the standard work on the subject for many years to come, while Jacobi's contribution considers in detail much new or previously inadequately published material.

Of the recent county surveys, Frances Healy provides by far the best contribution on the Neolithic period and this is clearly based on original research rather than a quick search through the literature. Hers is the longest essay, though a couple more pages to pull the article together would have been in order. By contrast, Andrew Lawson's account of the Bronze Age, whilst adequate, could have seen closer editing. The frequent comparison of evidence between modern political areas is irritating: Norfolk has 625 round barrows, Suffolk 249, Cambridgeshire 262; Norfolk has 228 extant, Suffolk 110, Cambridge 113 – this approach for field monuments and artefacts alike. Much better to put this into table form, or at least to use geographic or geological areas for comparative purposes.

An interesting feature of three of the essays is the question of territory. This is first raised by Jacobi in discussing the distribution of a type of core axe, and followed by Healy and Lawson, the latter comparing the Bronze Age evidence with territories suggested by Icenian coinage. An Iron Age chapter could have usefully followed this through.

Finally, a comment on presentation. In many respects, illustration, cover design, indices of subjects and of site and place names, presentation is reasonable. The chosen typeface, however, is extremely difficult to follow. Correctly spaced type would have made a great difference as would, though less important, right hand justification.

Henry Cleere & David Crossley, *The iron industry of the Weald*, 395 pp, 74 figs. Published by Leicester University Press, 1985. Price £47.50

For half a century, Straker's *Wealden iron* has been the handbook for those interested in this subject; much has been learned since its publication, especially since the formation of the Wealden Iron Research Group in 1967. This new book presents the current state of knowledge of the subject in a most informative and readable manner, with an 80-page gazetteer giving concise details of each site and its National Grid reference.

The book starts with an introductory chapter entitled 'The geology of Wealden iron' by Bernard Worssam, followed by a clear explanation of the bloomery process. Prehistoric, Roman and medieval ironmaking in the Weald are described in detail, followed by an account of the introduction of the blast furnace around AD 1500, the maturing of the industry and its decline. Various technical aspects of the ordnance industry are discussed, including the boring of cannon; in fact it would have made an absolutely first-class Christmas present for any medieval iron master, who would probably have been most surprised to learn what is now known about his profession, including how much he and his rivals earned and spent!

This volume will be compulsory luggage for the modern student of Wealden iron who tramps around trying to appreciate the activities of his medieval forebears. The word tramps is used advisedly, as anyone who has purchased a copy will probably be unable to afford a bike as well, but he will be rewarded with the wealth of information within its covers. It is well thought out, well written, well illustrated and produced with both the interested amateur and the professional in mind, even including a list of abbreviations which are often omitted from lesser volumes. This is a detailed reference book and needs to be taken on site to be appreciated to the full.

LAURENCE DRAPER

Anthony Fletcher, *Sussex 1600–1660: a county community in peace and war*, 445 pp, 12 figs. Published by Phillimore, 1980. Price £9.95

Although somewhat tardily, I would like to review this book and commend it highly. As the title states, it is far more than an account of the Civil Wars in Sussex; indeed, of 346 pages of text, only 34 deal with the wars themselves. Since the publication of Alan Everitt's *The local community and the Great Rebellion* in 1969 (which concentrated on Kent), there has been a shift of emphasis away from purely military history towards the investigation of local communities and their reactions. Fletcher's book is one of the finest of these, analysing a wealth of manuscript sources to produce a picture of a county and its organisation in a formative period of English history. Distance made it hard for a country magnate to be a courtier as well, but while Everitt emphasises the detachment of the rural gentry from national affairs, caring more for their 'country' – the area around their homes – than their nation, Fletcher shows that many Sussex gentlemen – and even tradesmen – were well informed about events in London and had opinions about them. The classic way in which existing rivalries – between the cathedral and the merchants of Chichester, for example – polarised into support for King or Parliament is demonstrated. Examination of the protagonists' motives reveals few dedicated Royalists or Parliamentarians, but rather a neutral majority, some of whom were reluctantly obliged to take up arms when the fighting broke out. In Sussex, as elsewhere, divisions were not along class lines – indeed, social loyalties cut across political divisions – but on the degree to which the king was trusted to defend the liberties of his subjects and the Protestant religion. However, it would be misleading to concentrate on the war years: this volume is a *tour de force* of historical research and Anthony Fletcher has made a major contribution to our knowledge of 17th century Sussex. Who will now do the same for Surrey?

MATTHEW ALEXANDER