

BOOK REVIEWS

Towards a New Stone Age: aspects of the Neolithic in south-east England (Council for British Archaeology Research Report 137), edited by Jonathan Cotton and David Field, 2004, Council for British Archaeology, £28. Softback, xxii+236pp, 82 figures, maps and photographs, 18 tables, index. ISBN 1 902771 39 7

In contrast to areas such as Wessex, Orkney and Yorkshire, the Neolithic of south-eastern England has long been a relative backwater in terms of investigations and publications. The last main overview is represented by chapters 2 and 3 in the regional history of England volume edited by Peter Drewett and colleagues.¹ This presented a fairly conventional cultural–historical view, drawing attention as much to the gaps in the picture as to the distinctiveness of the region. This latest volume edited by Jonathan Cotton and David Field aims to redress the balance; as Richard Bradley states in his foreword ‘here is a book that prehistorians have needed for years’.

The 21 essays brought together by Cotton and Field cover wide geographical, chronological and thematic domains. The region is broadly the same as that surveyed by the Regional History volume, although nearly half the papers here deal with sites or topics along the lower Thames between Maidenhead and its confluence with the Darent. Surrey is well served with four papers based upon sites in the county (Charlwood, Staines, Colne Valley and Franks’ Sandpit at Betchworth) as well as a handful of others dealing with the area in a wider context. Collectively, the papers span the mid-5th millennium BC (the later Mesolithic) through to the metal-using Neolithic of the late 3rd millennium BC, although individual contributions tend to confine themselves to specific phases within this long continuum.

Thematically, coverage is diverse but logical. Martyn Barber opens with a thoughtful history of Neolithic archaeology in the region, emphasising the contribution of key figures such as William Greenwell, Lt General Pitt Rivers and Stuart Piggott, and setting past work into an ever-changing pattern of interpretation and understanding. Papers by Ellaby and Holgate set the cultural background with considerations of the later Mesolithic and the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition. Ellaby focuses on Charlwood with its seven shallow pits of the late 5th millennium BC, microlithic flint industry, and more than a hint of being a special place that attracted attention for periodic visits over a considerable period. Holgate, by contrast, takes a wide view of the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic, concluding that social competition provides an appropriate model to understand the material, cultural and lifestyle changes in the late 5th and early 4th millennia BC. Three papers cover environmental aspects. Macphail and Linderholm focus on land-use, especially the evidence of soil profiles. These show evidence for herding, indications of cultivation that may have triggered soil erosion, and the development of complex soils perhaps as a result of manuring. Sidell and Wilkinson consider changes to the course of the Thames and the development of its flood plain through central London using data from boreholes; what they reveal is a rather inhospitable landscape that shows little evidence of exploitation during the Neolithic. Looking at the lower Thames downstream of Southwark, Bates and Whittaker chart the changing Holocene environment and highlight the potential for exploring buried landscapes beneath the modern flood plain.

Aerial survey as a means of discovering and monitoring Neolithic sites is emphasised by Bewley and colleagues in a chapter that includes magnificent pictures of a previously unknown long barrow at Rottingdean (Kent) and a Neolithic longhouse under excavation at Blue Bell Hill (Kent). Both result from the National Mapping Programme and serve to reinforce the need to extend this important project to the rest of the south-eastern counties as quickly as possible.

¹ Drewett, P, Rudling, D, & Gardiner, M, 1988 *A regional history of England: the South-East to AD1000*, London: Longman

Five papers deal with specific classes of Neolithic monument – oval barrows, occupation sites, causewayed enclosures, pit clusters and flint mines – but of these only Topping's account of flint mines takes a truly regional perspective. In the remainder attention focuses on a single site or geographically limited area leaving the reader to work out the bigger picture. Much the same is true of the four papers that focus on specific kinds of artefacts: a wooden club from the Thames in London, two decorated Peterborough Ware bowls from Mortlake, a bone scoop and Grooved Ware from the lower Colne Valley in Surrey, and human remains. Only the last-mentioned moves far beyond the confines of a single discovery.

Landscape archaeology is currently one of the most topical approaches within the discipline and four contributions follow this path. The paper by Allen and colleagues focuses on the Dorney area between Taplow and Eton south of Slough where large-scale excavations provide rich insights into the development of a riverside landscape through the Neolithic period. Hollows and middens are among the most enduring features and at times were used as sources of material for recycling. Lewis and Welsh discuss the work by Framework Archaeology on a 21 ha landscape at Perry Oaks (otherwise known as Heathrow Terminal 5), where ceremonial and sacred structures dominate the use of the Taplow Terrace east of the river Colne. Moving to higher ground, Russell focuses on the monumental architecture of the South Downs, questioning conventional classifications such as long barrows, causewayed camps and flint mines. He suggests that monument building in fact represents a series of subtly different elements of the same desire to imprint cultural attributes and identity upon the landscape. The most successful and stimulating landscape study for this reviewer at least is the paper by Field. He takes three simple and archaeologically sustainable domains – forest, coast and rivers – and examines them in relation to general ideas drawn from ethnography as well as the archaeological evidence from south-eastern England. The creation of special places in the landscape, imparted memories of distant times, and the incorporation of ancient structures into the mindsets of each successive generation begins to give our pictures of the landscape human dimensions and take us beyond the familiar period-overlays.

The final paper in the volume, by Ian Kinnes, considers relationships between south-eastern England and the near Continent. This is especially important because parts of Kent and Sussex are closer to northern France and the Low Countries than to many inland parts of the British Isles. Kinnes' trot through the evidence of cross-channel similarities in material culture, monuments, economy and settlement leads him to propose an essentially insularist view; after the initial transmission of Neolithic lifeways to these islands there is rather little sign of large-scale cross-channel contact until the Beaker period.

As we have come to expect with CBA Research Reports, the volume is well edited and neatly presented within the confines of the format adopted for the series as a whole. One slight irritation is the way the bibliography for each chapter is brought together at the end of the volume, not as a single consolidated bibliography, which might have been rather useful, but as a collection of separate listings.

There is much in this volume that expands our understanding of the archaeology of the 4th and 3rd millennia BC in south-eastern England but, with a few exceptions, it is left up to the reader to do the work of joining it all together. Indeed, some of the papers, for example Williams' piece on Franks' Sandpit, has seemingly been prepared with such a narrow field of view that even the author seems unaware of the wider context of the material being discussed. In a sense then it is a volume mainly for specialists and should be taken at face value as a 'research report' setting out results from particular projects that others can glue together. But there is synthesis too, and for the general reader the papers by Barber on Neolithic studies, Topping on flint mines, Russell on monumental architecture, and Kinnes on Continental contacts, could save much time in the library as they represent distillations of much larger published works or substantial bodies of literature.

Comparing Cotton and Field's 'New Stone Age' with the relevant chapters in the 'History of England' volume much change is evident in the decade and a half between 1988 and 2004. This is especially notable in the wider distribution of oval barrows now known in the region,

in the recognition and excavation of cursus monuments and henges which had long been missing from the archaeological record of the South East, and of course the wealth of information about the ancient environment. Many of these new insights derive from developer-funded investigations following the integration of archaeology with the town and country planning system in 1990; more than half the papers in this volume could not have been written without results from development programmes of one kind or another. Moreover, as the editors note in their introduction, several other large-scale projects yielding important evidence for Neolithic occupation could have been included, for example the excavations at Runnymede Bridge west of London and along the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in Kent.

As the title suggests, these are essays that take us towards a revised understanding of the 'New Stone Age' by exploring aspects of the Neolithic archaeology of south-east England. And what it says on the label you get in the can. This is not a definitive all-embracing study, nor does it set out to be. There is plenty of meat here for sure, but, like many good books, it leaves the reader hungry for more. In due course there is scope for further reports on specific projects, and perhaps a wider synthesis too. In the meantime there is much here that deserves to be absorbed and digested.

TIMOTHY DARVILL

Greta A Turner, *Shottermill its Farms, Families and Mills*.

Part 1: early times to the 1700s, published by John Owen Smith, 2004, price £9.95, 274pp. ISBN 1 873855 39 7

Part 2: 1730 to the early 20th century, published by John Owen Smith, 2005, price £14.95, 420pp. ISBN 1 873855 40 0

Both are softback and include many illustrations, tables and maps.

The two information-packed volumes cover a very detailed investigation of the 700 years of history of this small isolated community situated in the valley of the southern Wey, on the borders of west Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire. They represent ten years of the author's meticulous research to obtain the details that make up the local history of Shottermill.

Part 1 describes the growth of farmsteads along the Wey valley from the earliest days, with the effects of plague, the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Civil War, the influences of the manor of Farnham and the bishopric of Winchester on the area, right through to the decline of the iron industry. Many farms were owned by wealthy local families, some of whom also helped to finance the building of water-powered mills in the Shottermill area. By the end of the 19th century the mills had been put to a variety of uses, such as corn milling, ironworking, paper making, fulling, leather dressing and military braid manufacture. The author describes how the upper reaches of the Wey, where the river is little more than a stream with a meagre but reasonably constant flow of clean water rising from the Lower Greensand layer, required good water management to meet the demands of small industries and agriculture. Consequently intermittent operation of the mills was necessary throughout a 24-hour period to build up reserves in adjacent pen ponds. Conflict frequently broke out between mill operators and water meadow users, who diverted the flow at particular times of the year to improve pastures and gather hay crops.

Part 2 concentrates on many local family histories, successive property ownership and the effects they had on the community. One prominent family of paper makers, the Simmons, initially bought Sickle Mill, followed by Pitfold Mill and New Mill. James Simmons III wrote more or less daily diary entries of his experiences, finances and family relationships from 1831 until his death in 1868, giving an interesting insight into social history, local industry and working conditions during the period. The arrival of the direct railway from London to Portsmouth in 1859, passing through Shottermill, had a significant effect on the development of the area.

The author also explains the background to some interesting local legends and dismisses some longstanding myths. For example the function of Shotter Mill has been wrongly described as an ironworks or a shot mill over a long period. Culprits are named.

The extensive references in both volumes result from researching many archives, wills, contacts with industrial historians and local history groups and interviews with surviving family members of the Shottermill community. At times the family histories are so protracted that it is easy to lose their connecting threads.

The maps are clear and concise but the reproduction of some of the illustrations lacks clarity when compared with the originals. The two volumes are essential reference works for historians and researchers as well as providing a very interesting and readable history of this area.

TONY GREGORY

David Bird, *Roman Surrey*, Tempus, 2005, £17.99. Softback, 192pp, 85 monochrome illustrations, 16 colour plates. ISBN 0 7524 2889 6

This is the book we have all been waiting for. David Bird is to be congratulated. It is well written, well illustrated and best still, the text links up with the index and the bibliography, so that as soon as the reader comes across the mention of a particular site he can find out where it is located and exactly what has appeared in print about it. This book is a joy to read.

The Surrey Archaeological Society is one of the most active amateur archaeological organisations in Britain. Its publication record is outstanding and this book from Tempus is a leading new contribution to this corpus. The eleven chapters deal in logical sequence with the problems which any student of the subject will wish to address, such as: environment and geology, its history, rise and decline; its artefacts and monuments; the status of the area within the Roman province, and so on.

This book is written by a professional archaeologist. It is one of the joys, quietly acknowledged, that in one society the amateurs and the professionals work together in harmony, so that the interests of both are aimed in one direction: that is, the identification of areas where more research is needed and the accurate publication of existing knowledge.

This book is a 'must' for all students of our area, but it is much more; it should play an important role in the growing acknowledgement of the significance of Roman Britain in the history of the Roman Empire.

Well done, David!

ROSAMOND HANWORTH

C M Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England*, Yale University Press, 1999, price £33. Hardback, ix + 254 pp, 6 figs, 11 tables, 2 maps, and 76 plates including 20 in colour. ISBN 0 300 07687 8

This is an excellent, lively, accessible, well-illustrated and modestly priced book that ranges widely and authoritatively across periods and topics. Dr Woolgar skilfully integrates literary, documentary and physical evidence and moves thematically from size, membership and hospitality to food and drink, cooking and the meal, and, finally, to travel, horses and other animals. The book presents a feast of information and provides well-reasoned and substantiated answers to all kinds of questions. Many changes in behaviour are charted as a by-product.

The author was previously known for his magisterial, if more than somewhat technical,

two-volume edition of *Household Accounts from Medieval England*, but here Dr Woolgar has trawled far more widely and, trawled to great effect. Much of the information given comes from southern England but the picture is a national one: regional variations have been somewhat smoothed out. This was probably inevitable – the publishers must have imposed some constraints on the potentially infinite length of the book.

Some of the generalisations made by the author may seem to rest on inadequate examples or on insubstantial evidence. His use of ordinances may be questioned as there is a shortage of evidence to show the extent to which these were applied – or, indeed, were capable of being applied. Such caveats are relatively minor and this volume deserves to find a place on the shelves of everyone seriously interested in the period.

DENNIS TURNER

Eric N Montague, *Lower Green West, Mitcham*, Merton Historical Society, 2004, £5.95, (MHS Members £4.80), plus postage. Softback, x + 169pp, 35 figures, index. ISBN 1 903899 45 1

This is the fifth of fourteen books to be devoted to specific areas of the historic parish of Mitcham that Eric Montague is issuing under the imprint of Merton Historical Society (MHS). The present study focuses on just one-tenth of a square mile centred on Lower Green West, and its depth may be gauged by the fact that the book runs to nearly 170 pages of text distilled from notes and articles written over a period of some 40 years. All this is copiously illustrated with maps, photographs and reproductions of early views, the sources of which are meticulously attributed, although one is left to assume that the photographs, taken mainly in the 1970s, and for which no acknowledgment is made, are the author's own. The series is called *Mitcham Histories*, and the MHS is to be congratulated, firstly on its commitment to getting the author's material into print, and secondly on achieving such a high standard of production. The A5-size books, each in a uniform, illustrated, glossy coloured card cover, look pleasing on the shelf and invite the reader to dip frequently into their contents.

The editorial team of the MHS has generally succeeded in turning Eric Montague's notes into clear and seamless prose, although evidence of its original form is sometimes intrusive. There is the occasional repetition, and a notable instance of contradiction that deserves some explanation. We are told (p 95) that 'the bishop of Winchester's registers for 1345–1366 are said to be missing – an indication perhaps of the dislocation caused by the pestilence to the administration of his diocese'. However, a footnote to the statement (p 96) that in 1348 or 1349 Henry de Strete obtained a licence from the bishop of Winchester for a chapel at his house (Hall Place) at Mitcham correctly ascribes it to *Winton Epis. Reg. Edington*. In fact, Bishop Edington's register has survived, and it has been used for many years as a primary source for the effects of the Black Death on the clergy of the Winchester Diocese. Furthermore, an edition of the register has recently been prepared by Dom Hockey and published by Hampshire Record Office, 1986–7.

Local history writing falls broadly into two categories: the descriptive and the analytical, and Eric Montague's *Mitcham Histories* lie somewhere between these extremes. Chapter 9 on the Sunday School and the National Schools in Mitcham is a good example of the skilful way in which the story of the foundation and development of these institutions is viewed within the context of national trends in elementary education. It is skilful because the author does not burden the text with an explanatory essay on the history of education that the reader could easily obtain elsewhere, but he weaves the information into his narrative. Discussing the map of Lower Green, Eric Montague observes that not only is the land on which The Cricketers, Vestry Hall and the fire station stand an encroachment on the common land of Lower Green West, but 'it is conceivable that much of the block of property that now includes the White Hart and the former bank building at the corner of London Road and Lower

Green West occupies an ancient enclosure'. Unfortunately these important observations are not pursued, as a study of the progress of encroachment on the common at Upper Green West could well shed light on the origins of Hall Place, the settlement near the church and the relationship of these sites to the 5th–6th century AD cemetery immediately to the south. Another topic that would certainly repay further study is Roman Catholic recusancy in 16th and 17th century Mitcham (p 101). At least three families, the Fromonds, the Talbots and the Treshams, all of whom were well known for their staunch adherence to the 'Old Faith', possessed property in Mitcham, and this, together with reports of individual visiting recusants, strongly suggests that Mitcham, like nearby Cheam, was a place of particular significance in 'Penal Times'.

A long chapter and two appendices devoted to Hall Place tend to dominate the book, but, given the importance of the site and its earlier buildings, this is justified. The medieval house with its open hall and 14th century chapel was demolished in 1867, but fortunately members of MHS were able to conduct two seasons of excavation on the site in 1968 and 1970. The appendices bring together the evidence from early 19th century views of the house and the excavations. The site of Hall Place appears to have been occupied from the 12th century or earlier, and it was probably the centre of a Saxon and post-Conquest estate that was ultimately absorbed into the manor of Vauxhall.

Eric Montague is very well qualified to write Mitcham's history. His acquaintance with the parish, according to biographical information gleaned from another of his publications, goes back to around 1930. In 1947, having qualified as an environmental health officer, he took up a post with Mitcham Borough Council. He later left Mitcham for a short period, but returned on the reorganisation of local government in London in 1965. He retired in 1983. Eric Montague's official duties would have allowed him access to many of the historic sites and properties that he describes in his book. If we add to this first-hand knowledge an interest in local history and archaeology over a period of half a century, and a number of formal qualifications including an MA in Local History, and Diplomas in Archaeology and Medieval History, his popular sobriquet 'Mr Mitcham' will not be denied.

Although the author has recently moved away from Surrey, his interest in the *Mitcham Histories* project appears undiminished. Five books in the series have appeared at the rate of about one each year, and, already, the book under review has been followed by a sixth. With another eight volumes promised, we must congratulate Mr Montague and the MHS editorial team on what they have achieved so far, and encourage them to bring this most worthwhile project to completion.

Mitcham Histories: 5, the other available books in this series, and a wide range of other MHS local history publications may be purchased by post from Peter Hopkins, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4JF. Send an sae for a list of publications and an order form.

JOHN PILE

Isca Howell (ed), *Prehistoric landscape to Roman villa. Excavations at Beddington, Surrey, 1981–7*, Museum of London Archaeology Service Monograph **26**, 2005, price £10.95. Softback, xiv + 135pp, many illustrations. ISBN 1 901992 56 X

The site at Beddington was excavated in the 1980s by the Society's South-West London team in advance of development plans for the area, but unfortunately it did not prove possible to complete a satisfactory report. Over time, the work was inherited by the Museum of London Archaeology Service, and it has finally been prepared for publication. Writing up someone else's excavation is inevitably difficult and this report needs to be used with care, but it is a tribute to Isca Howell that it can be used to suggest alternative interpretations (which the report makes clear are possible). Some of the finds reports are rather old, and were apparently not always left as prepared by the specialists.

As might be expected from its terrace gravel situation near the Wandle, this was a multi-period site, although it was difficult to date many of the features with precision. There were finds from the Mesolithic onwards, with the earliest identified features being part of a possible Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age field system. There was good evidence for more than one phase of later Iron Age enclosures with probable associated structures, and a general sense of continuity into the Roman period. An early Roman field system with indications of nearby occupation was followed by a villa complex with detached bath-house, three barn-like structures, probably in sequence, and a well with surviving organic material (especially shoes) with clear evidence for ritual termination. Pottery and other finds from the 3rd century BC onwards show links with west Kent as would be expected. It is considered that there was a disappointing lack of evidence for the early Saxon period in view of the known cemetery only 350m away. We may note, however, that the buildings are thought to have been systematically demolished in the early 5th century, and the site has three shallow sub-rectangular pits, with pottery dated to AD400 and probably later (44); these are comparatively small and no postholes were recorded, but they do call to mind Saxon-period sunken-featured buildings.

A number of other points may be made, for example: the latest Iron Age enclosure ditch 116 is supposed to go out of use in the earliest Roman period and then come back into use again (figs 21, 25 and 30). This is unconvincing, not least because the ditch system then postulated south of the villa is pointlessly awkward; if an old ditch has to be reopened, why not dig a new one where it is more useful? The theory is only required because later Roman material was found in the upper fills of the ditch. It is, however, quite clear that this is common across the site and is the result of later material sinking into the fill of earlier cut features (as in fact is suggested in some cases, eg 21; cf 26). If ditch 116 is left where it belongs in the Iron Age, ditch 67 can be linked with the other ditches of the earlier Roman period field system where it makes more sense.

Much of the bath-house was lost in earlier excavations, in the 19th century. The contemporary report is no worse than usual for the time but raised various questions. Unfortunately it was not possible to answer many of these in the 1980s. Curiously, this part of the site was not completely excavated at that time, which is unfortunate as most of the villa had been destroyed by the adjacent sewage works. The bath-house and villa cannot be closely dated but are thought to start in the late 2nd century, with changes perhaps 100 years later, the villa then becoming a winged-corridor type with a corner heated room. Finds of tile etc suggest an earlier hypocausted building perhaps of the mid-2nd century (p 25), although there is no obvious reason why this could not be the result of earlier phases of the known bath-house. As usual, the latter evidently went through several changes, but some of the interpretation inherited by Isca Howell is not always convincing. For instance, it is unnecessary to postulate a wrongly shaped bath-house apse (it is based only on a stain from the wall material: fig 32), or the supposed separate room (fig 40; connecting walls, for which there is no surviving evidence, are postulated for the earlier phases (figs 32, 34, 35), so it seems perverse not to postulate them later). A section drawing through the bath-house would also have been helpful together with a plan of the surviving remains of the villa.

Other buildings (B3, 4 and 5) are postulated to the south of villa/bath-house but only B3 is reasonably convincing; in particular B5 is only represented by a large spread of ceiling plaster that looks more like dump from an adjacent building. It might be argued that the deep pit 66 (only partly sectioned) and the wall W17 south of the bath-house represent robbing of more heated rooms (why else create a large pit and quickly backfill it with left-over rubble (41)?); and the ceiling plaster colours seem to match those known from the bath-house. It is a shame that the ceiling reconstruction was not presented in colour (for example on the book's cover); Roman ceilings are not that common, especially in Surrey! The reconstruction has no indication of what was actually found.

The three aisled structures (B6, 7 and 8) are an important addition to our knowledge of Roman buildings in the county. It is unfortunate that they cannot be well dated, although

in general terms they may be assigned to the later Roman period. Only the aisle postholes survived to represent B6 and B7, but there can be little doubt that they did have outer walls that have left no trace. This is an important reminder of the difficulties of finding timber buildings in our area. One interesting question that cannot be answered is the reason for the misalignment of villa and bath-house. Oddly, the other known or suggested buildings and related features often seem to conform in alignment to either one or the other: bath-house + W17 + B4 + ditch 370 + parallel posthole line + B7 + B8; villa + B3 + D50 + B5 + B6 (figs 30 and 41). This is presumably coincidence, as the features are intermingled across the site, and it does not seem to be possible to explain the two different groups by different dates, even given the lack of good dating.

The main report concludes with a summary of current knowledge of the upper Wandle valley that makes clear the comparative archaeological riches of this area, much unfortunately lost now to development. The map, figure 50, lacks symbols for villas at Carshalton, Chelsham, Ashtead church and Headley, all as convincing as those indicated to the north of London, with the first two especially adding to the local context.

Although not without importance for other periods, this report is particularly welcome as an addition to our knowledge of Roman-period sites in Surrey. We have very few villas excavated in modern times and very few with any evidence for their ancillary buildings, or with environmental evidence for crops and animals. Isca Howell is to be congratulated on rescuing this important excavation from oblivion.

DAVID BIRD

Oliver Harris, *The Archbishops' Town: the making of medieval Croydon*, Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, **18** (9) (August 2005), 245–302, £3.75. Softback, published as a booklet. ISBN 0 906047 20 4

The existence of planned elements in English medieval towns and villages and new settlements both large and small has been appreciated for many years, but it is only quite recently that the new towns and planned villages of Surrey have been studied in any detail. One of the great pioneers in this field was Maurice Beresford, who identified Haslemere as a new town founded by the bishop of Salisbury and confirmed that Reigate, to the west of the earlier settlement of Crechefeld, was a new town created c 1170 by the earl of Warenne. The purpose of these foundations was invariably to provide new sources of revenue especially from burgage rents and market tolls.

Oliver Harris's thesis is that the archbishops of Canterbury created a new town at Croydon, complete with a large triangular market-place and a fair-field, to the east of the old settlement in the vicinity of the parish church and manor house. The evidence assembled by the author suggests that this did not happen at a stroke, but the new town had tentative beginnings and a period of consolidation. The earliest mention of a market dates from 1236–7, but it is not possible to say with certainty whether this was held near the church or on the new site to the east. Subsequent records suggest that something approaching an urban settlement had arrived by the middle of the 13th century and the author believes that the final 're-planning' of the new town – to use his term – occurred around 1276. Croydon New Town evidently flourished, but it failed to achieve borough status before 1883. It is clear that by 1300 Croydon possessed many of the characteristics of a borough including those of a well-defined area of jurisdiction marked in the case of Croydon by five crosses; regularly planned tenement plots; and a market-place. Its tenants were free of the services that marked villein tenure; they paid cash rents for their properties; and there was some form of town court or portmote. However, successive archbishops stopped short of allowing the townspeople complete self-government. A section on the archbishops' other towns forms a useful gazetteer of market towns, boroughs and ports, mostly in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, with which Croydon may be compared.

The Archbishops' Town is an excellent and very well-documented account of the origin and growth of the new town, but the subtitle promises something more. The medieval Croydon of the subtitle is largely the new town and, although there is a fairly detailed discussion of the old settlement, this would have benefited from a plan showing the layout of the old town in more detail. I would also have welcomed a map of the whole of the archbishops' Croydon estate showing how the old and new towns fitted into the wider area. The suggested location of the boundary crosses also calls for further explanation, as does the line of the boundary between the crosses. The point is taken that the position of the cross at the southern end of the town is uncertain, but why was part of the old town taken into the area of privilege? Also, one might expect to find a cross at the southern end of Back Lane (Park Lane), but this is likewise unexplained. These are mere quibbles. The fact remains that Oliver Harris has given us a first-class account of the development of medieval Croydon and he certainly succeeds in convincing me of the validity of his thesis. *The Archbishops' Town* will, I hope, form a model for further studies of village and town planning in Surrey, coming as it does when the Society's own Surrey Villages project is gaining momentum.

Copies are available from the Sales Officer, CNHSS, c/o 68 Woodcote Grove Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2AD (£3.75 including postage and packing and cheques should be made payable to CNHSS).

JOHN PILE

Gordon Knowles, *Surrey and the Motor*, published by the Surrey Industrial History Group, 2005, price £10.99. Softback, x + 225pp, illus. ISBN 0 9538 122 3 5

From the early motor pioneers to Formula One and from the bicycle to the bus, Surrey has a continuing history of involvement with the motor vehicle. With this in mind, Francis Haveron began to gather material for a book in the early 1990s. Gordon Knowles took on the task after Haveron's death, and continued his researches with the assistance of members of the Surrey Industrial History Group culminating in the publication of this book.

The north-south road systems in Surrey were important because of the need for communication with the coast for both military and pleasure purposes; the east-west routes were notoriously poor. The opening chapters tell of the growth of these systems, both of the legislation and the experiments with newer surfacing materials. Improvements in self-propelled vehicles, coupled with better surfaces, raised the matter of speed. Surrey roads became notorious for speeding fines, largely as a result of the speed traps organised by Captain Sant, the Chief Constable. These were the major factor in the formation of the Automobile Association, whose scouts refrained from saluting members in the presence of traps. By doing nothing, they could not be accused of 'obstructing'.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with the development of the Surrey roads before and after the Second World War respectively. In the latter period there has been a great upsurge in traffic; for example, in 1915 the A3 through Esher carried 2000 vehicles a day, whereas the A3 and the by-pass currently carry some 80,000 vehicles a day. Gordon suggests that Captain Sant would have relished the modern multiplicity of various speed limits. The modern motorways – the M3, M23 and M25 – all cut through the county.

No history of motoring in Surrey would be complete without mention of John Henry Knight of Farnham. On returning from his apprenticeship in Deptford in 1868, Knight (1847-1917) began building a steam carriage, which he ran contrary to existing laws until 1877, when it was sold. He then turned his attentions to patenting a steam digger, inventing a brickmaking machine, a wooden tyre and a speedometer. His most successful invention was the 'Trusty' paraffin engine, which he used, in 1895, to power a motor tricycle. A year later the vehicle was fitted with a larger engine and another wheel; it was the only British car exhibited at the first British Motor Show.

Frederick (not Charles) Simms was another pioneer, importing Daimler engines and, later,

becoming involved with Bosch in the development of the magneto. He was also co-founder of the Royal Automobile Club.

The inability to close roads for motor racing, as in Europe, resulted in the building of Brooklands under the benefaction of the Hon Hugh Fortescue Locke-King in 1906/7. Three chapters are then devoted to car racing and the deeds of Parry Thomas and other record breakers. A fourth chapter deals with the 'Loose ends and Post 1945'. This includes a mere mention of motorcycle racing, even though it was included at Brooklands from beginning to end. The British Motor Cycle Racing Club awarded a gold star to anyone who lapped the outer circuit at 100 mph; recipients included two ladies, which shows that this was achieved before the 1939 closure (p 87).

The two manufacturers who have both survived for over a century despite numerous financial troubles, namely Dennis and AC, share a chapter. Dennis began with cycle building, progressed to cars in 1900 and turned their sole attention to commercial vehicles, charabancs and fire engines soon after. In 1901, they constructed the Rodboro Building, reputed to be the oldest extant multi-storey motor factory in the world. Over the years Dennis moved several times, all in the Guildford region, with their present works being at Slyfield.

AC had its roots in the commercial market with a three-wheel 'Autocarrier' which could be seen well into the 1930s. This was followed in 1907 by a passenger version, the 'Sociable'. After moving to Thames Ditton, the first car was produced in 1913 and six years later John Weller designed the ohc 'light six' which survived into the 1950s. It powered both the 16/80 of 1936 (not 1939) and the 1954 Ace (p 120); they were my father's and my cars in their time and both are still preserved. While Dennis concentrated on commercial vehicles, AC went into the production of sports cars, holding several records at Brooklands and making the high-performance Cobra.

After the Second World War, Surrey became the home of a number of small-production sports and racing car manufacturers. The history of these firms and their involvement in motor sport are dealt with alphabetically and among the names are HRG, Cooper, Tyrrell Caterham (Lotus Seven), McLaren and Lister. There is a short chapter on the two significant coachbuilders, Abbott and Weymann. The other coachbuilders are dealt with in following appendices on Vehicle Manufacturers and Component Manufacturers. Over 120 are listed: some well known and some who probably only designed one vehicle. The motorcycle is more or less ignored, as it is throughout the book, though a number of firms began with these, for example ABC (All British Engine Co). Some made only motorcycles, such as Meeten's Motor Mart, which took over the SOS (Super Onslow Special) from Vale Onslow and Surrey Sidecars.

A further appendix of Surrey motoring worthies would be interesting. It would no doubt include Rob Walker, for whom Stirling Moss and Jack Brabham raced, Sammy Davis (racing and rally driver and Sports Editor of *Autocar*) and R J G Nash, holder of motorcycle records, to name but a few. In the same vein, it is a pity that names appear with no explanation of who they were.

Throughout this book there is an obvious lack of editing and checking. The term chauffeur (p 6) was first applied to steam carriages using solid fuel; the steam cars were all liquid fuelled and the petrol engine was 'warmed' rather than 'heated' up. The 'demise of Surrey in London' (p 9) did not lose Surrey two-thirds of its area. These are examples of errors that tend to make one wish to check other statements in a book that otherwise usefully fills a gap in the history of the county.

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