

Reviews

Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath (eds), *The Heritage of Rutland Water*, Rutland Record Series 5 (2nd impression with corrections, Oakham, Rutland Local History and Record Society, 2008), 167 × 220mm, 680pp, more than 700 illustrations, ISBN 978-0-907464-41-9 (hardback), £22 + £10 p&p if purchased on-line at <rutlandhistory.org>.

This book is the result of a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund Local History Initiative. The grant is made 'to carry out research into the local and natural history of an area' and includes a contribution towards the costs of publication. With the close involvement of the Rutland Local History and Record Society a two-year community project on Rutland Water was planned and this publication is the result of that project. From the outset it was decided to form an oral history group to record memories and to compile a photographic archive both of which would eventually be housed at the Rutland County Museum.

The editors of the book, Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath, have brought together thirty articles from around twenty authors and amassed a remarkable collection of illustrations, many in colour, which together have led to the production of a remarkable book. Its size alone should give some idea of the sheer scale of the task they undertook. It runs to 680 pages and is printed on a coated paper which adds bulk and weight – one-and-a-half inches thick and weighing in at just over six pounds!

The thirty chapters are interspersed with pages dealing with 'Aspects of Topography', of which there are twelve. The chapters include descriptions of specific villages as well as thematic essays on soils, geology, agriculture, archaeology, ornithology, fauna and flora, fishing, sailing and other topics. There is a useful bibliography and two indexes, one general and the other covering surnames, organisations and corporate bodies.

A single reviewer cannot do justice to the wide range of subject matter covered within the pages of this hard-backed book, but one can get a sense of the quality of many articles and they appear to be of a high standard throughout. Taking the archaeological sections as an example, these are mainly covered in chapters 18–20, although accounts of deserted villages and industrial archaeology are dealt with elsewhere in the volume. These chapters give a summary of recent work brought together by several authors and they are preceded by a map of archaeological sites in the Middle Gwash Valley, not all of which are described in the text. They describe the disparate archaeological investigations which took place in the 1960s and 1970s and the difficulties of carrying out such work when there was little finance available for archaeology and relatively few trained people around to carry out the work. They also remind us of the characters who organised excavations and also those who gave up their time at weekends to work in the field, some of whose reminiscences are included.

References are made to more recent archaeological work, including excavations carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services on

the route of the Oakham bypass and earlier work by Patrick Clay on a significant prehistoric site between Oakham and Rutland Water. These accounts of the archaeology of Rutland Water are not dry and dusty archaeological reports, but they are written to give the reader an appetite to find out more. They are a very good and readable summary of what has taken place. However, why is there no mention of the work done by Nicholas Cooper in editing and publishing *The Archaeology of Rutland Water* which appeared in 2000? The book does not even feature in the bibliography.

The design and layout of the volume is excellent and some of the diagrams, especially created, have turned out very well. It is a credit to all involved and shows what the local community can do and how local historical societies can play a vital part. No wonder that the first printing of 1,200 sold out. It is also clear that we all owe a great debt to Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath.

Alan McWhirr

Graham Jones, *Saints in the Landscape* (Stroud, Tempus, 2007), 156 × 234mm, 256 pp, 50 figs inc. 32 maps, 19 in colour, ISBN 978 0 7524 4108 5 (paperback), £16.99.

‘Santa Deodata ... was a holy maiden of the Dark Ages ... She was only fifteen when she died, which shows how much is within reach of any schoolgirl ... [In the eponymous church of Monteriano] in the fifth chapel on the right ... two frescoes of the death and burial of Santa Deodata. That is why Baedeker gives the place a star.’

In the fictional Tuscan town, the scene of much of the action of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, E. M. Forster – though with his tongue in his Protestant cheek – demonstrates the continuing impact in the modern world of the far-from-fictional patron saint: culture, art history, topography and tourism are some of the areas in which the influence of the saints may be appreciated. These and many other contexts in which Christian sainthood is relevant and important are the subjects of Dr Jones’s book. Since coming to Leicester to work on his doctoral thesis he has made the topic of saints very much his own, as a glance at the bibliography reveals, and the continued study of this important area is guaranteed by his development of the Transnational Database and Atlas of Saints’ Cults (TASC) to which many scholars at home and abroad are contributing.

The book contains a wealth of information and scholarship. It is arranged in four parts, each consisting of several chapters. The first is largely an exposé of the aims and methods of the study of church dedications, with a valuable second chapter on the sources of information. The three substantive parts vary in the extent to which they are accessible to the general reader; part four on Saints in Season and Locality is perhaps the most engaging, in particular the two chapters on saints in the countryside. Nevertheless, the vast changes in agriculture in the recent past – who, for example, can now remember when lambing traditionally

took place? – mean that the relation of the saints to the agrarian year can no longer be appreciated as a living phenomenon, so that it takes on the appearance of myth rather than reality, something to be learned rather than understood instinctively.

The thematic treatment of the material gives the superficial impression of a disparate collection of essays on different topics rather than a book planned as a structured whole. Each chapter, it is true, ends with a conclusion in which there is a link to the theme of the next, although these tend to be a little self-conscious, as if striving for a unity which is actually not there. More important, in terms of the reader being easily able to follow the line of argument, the more universally significant saints with multiple characteristics and attributes are treated several times over in different parts of the book. This would matter a good deal less if there were a user-friendly index; as it is, it is crammed into seven pages in the most minute typeface, and can only be read with ease by those with better than 20/20 vision.

Where particular saints' dedications occur is significant for the study of the Christian past. Dr Jones frequently draws attention to the 'non-random' nature of the distributions, although their significance is not always easy to understand; saints with a very localised *cultus* have distributions that are not difficult to fathom, for example the largely West Midland locations of St Chad, although a knowledge of the transfer of relics and the personal predilections of rulers and prelates is necessary to appreciate why for instance Cuthbert, the patron saint of County Durham, should be represented in several locations in the extreme south-west of England. More complex chains of historical evidence are required to explain the distribution of such dedications as St Helen, Holy Cross or St Martin.

The TASC atlas provides a series of distribution maps to illustrate the significance of specimen dedications. Many of these are in colour, which helps in reading the different symbols when more than one saint is represented on a given map. Both colour and monochrome maps have an indication of relief but without any statement of the height of the contours chosen as the basis for it. In one area of the country at least, the contour it set too high: the topography of the south-east of England is poorly represented, for while the North Downs are shown reasonably well, the South Downs are not. This is not just gratuitous criticism: the influence of the hills on the settlement patterns in Sussex is an important aspect of local historical topography. A glance at Domesday Book map reveals how early settlement was restricted to the coastal plain south of the Downs and a strip only a few miles wide to the north of them; beyond is the Weald, which had no permanent settlement until a much later date, and thus no early medieval churches. The topographical element in the mainly downland and coastal distribution of St Andrew (pl.16) compared with the almost exclusively Wealden distribution of St Bartholomew (pl.12) is not brought out, nor the point that the latter must have arisen at a later date than the former. This then prompts the question of how this observation sits with the discussion of Bartholomew as the converter of pre-Christian cult sites and the implication of an early date for his invocation (pp.107–12).

Many telling points are made about the times and seasons at which saints' festivals occur, and Dr Jones's vast knowledge of the subject leads him to see signs of significance which would pass most of us by. On occasion this can amount almost to over-interpretation. A case in point is 'the significance of 8 May' (St Michael): this, we are told, 'coincides with the eve of the earliest possible date for Pentecost (Whit Sunday), the seven-times-seventh day from 21 March, first possible date for Easter ...' (p.76). This is of particular interest in this year, 2008, when Easter fell on the second earliest day possible, 23 March, causing a certain amount of reflection on the movable nature of the feast (last occurrence in 1913). Between 597, the arrival of St Augustine, and 1547, when the chantries, the last remnants of medieval devotion, were dissolved, a total of 950 years, Easter fell on the earliest possible date of 22 March on only seven occasions; the interval between occurrences averaged around 135 years, though the typical interval was just less than one hundred – at all events, well outside the memory span of two or three generations (the last occurrence in modern times was in 1818). The man in the street would surely not appreciate the significance of this occurrence, particularly in relation to the Whit festival. If the proposed coincidence between St Michael and the eve of the earliest date of Pentecost was more than a random one, then it had significance only for those ecclesiastical 'anoraks' with a more than passing interest in arcane calendrical matters.

The author has managed to pack an enormous amount of information and interpretation into a small compass; he necessarily had to leave out a huge amount but one wonders, though, at some of the omissions. Where are the epoch-making twin monasteries of Wearmouth and (Bede's) Jarrow, famous in their own right but also contributing potentially to the discussion of the role of saints Peter and Paul, to which they were respectively dedicated in the late seventh century? Readers in Leicestershire and Rutland (who will find frequent references to their area throughout the book) will look in vain for St Egelwin of Scalford, a rare saint mentioned in Hugo Candidus's version of the list of saints' resting places; but they will be amply compensated by the extensive discussion of the bottle-kicking and other festivities at Hallaton, where the equally obscure St Morrell had a *cultus* with an independent well and chapel. It is only through the researches of Dr Jones that we know anything about this saint at all.

David Parsons

Brian K. Roberts, *Landscapes, Documents and Maps: Villages in Northern England and Beyond AD 900–1250* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2008), 180 × 255mm, xvi + 336pp, 82 figs, 7 tables, ISBN 978–1–84217–237–7 (hardback), £48.

'Æthelflæd got into her power, with God's assistance, in the early part of the year, without loss, the town of Leicester; and the greater part of the army that belonged thereto submitted to her.'¹

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 920 (for 918).

Brian Roberts, Professor Emeritus at the University of Durham Department of Geography is one of the most influential scholars of the form and development of the medieval village. He thinks that what we know as Leicestershire occupied a key place in the process by which the planned village came to dominate the champion landscape of Midland England, and that the transformation began with the (re-)conquest of the Danelaw. (Although here in the Midlands we customarily use the term ‘nucleation’, for Roberts this represents one end of a catena or gradation of settlement types. He generally avoids it and it does not appear in the index.)

His key ‘testable hypothesis’, is that ‘even before the re-conquest of north-eastern England by English kings’ (this is a book principally concerned with Yorkshire northwards, as the title makes clear, and particularly County Durham), ‘planned villages may well have accompanied the establishment of planned *burhs*, used in fact as instruments of re-conquest, throughout the inner Midlands’ (p. 295). These, we remember from our readings of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, included Buckingham, Warwick, Tamworth, and Stafford. In a series of maps, three of which accompany this review, he shows how the tide of village planning may have flowed north in the wake of Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd’s victories. He associates an early phase of that tide with the area of Leicestershire most typified by Anglo-Scandinavian place-names, and estates held by both Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror.

This is clearly an idea of the greatest importance for the study of Leicestershire’s origins. What the author appears to be implying is that the ground was already prepared for this revolution, thanks *inter alia* to the achievement of a driving central authority. This would fit very well with some of the ideas put forward at the Medieval Archaeology of Leicestershire conference earlier this year. Tony Brown, for example, spoke of ‘Offa’s heavy hand’ as a probable factor in the laying out of the open fields of some south-east Leicestershire parishes.² The reviewer, too, mentioned Offa, in drawing attention to his visits to a large royal estate underlying what David Roffe has called ‘the Bowden *regio*’ – and suggesting that this territory might have had its origins in a Roman imperial estate.³ He even wondered out loud whether such a territory could have been willed to Rome by the Corieltavian owner of the parade-ground helmet found in the south-east Leicestershire hoard. Brown and the reviewer both noticed evidence for long strips of the type observed by Susan Oosthuizen in the Bourn valley near Cambridge and which she interprets as an Offan imitation of Frankish colonisation patterns.⁴ Such strips are discussed here (p. 265, and Fig. 9.5, p. 264) and compared with those observed at Middleton near Pickering, North Yorkshire (p. 101, and Fig. 4.6, p. 100).

² A. E. Brown, ‘Fields and Village in Southern Leicestershire’, in *The Archaeology of Medieval Leicestershire* (Leicester, Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group, forthcoming).

³ Graham Jones, ‘“Bartholomew entered a temple”: Worship, lordship, and the origins of Leicestershire’, in *ibid.*

⁴ Susan Oosthuizen, *Landscapes Decoded: The origins and development of Cambridgeshire’s medieval fields*, Explorations in Local and Regional History 1 (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006).

One of Roberts' key conclusions regarding Scandinavian settlement in Midland England is that 'the bulk of Danish Viking settlement was essentially concentrated within the anciently cleared [and well-populated] lands', even if occupying land of poorer quality (p. 290). He sees the period during and following the Viking invasions of England as 'a time of social, economic, tenurial and landscape ferment' (p. 293). 'The village with its extensive communally organised field system represents a concentration of people, of tenants, of lordly control and of the capacity to sustain grain yields under all but the worst conditions of warfare and weather.' The warfare, by no means ceased by the Edwardian (re)-conquest, of course, was typified by plunder of 'a rich and well-exploited country': 'We can reflect on the implications of the fact that the 40,000 Anglo-Saxon coins known from finds in Scandinavia represent a larger total than the number known to have survived in England... England paid in gelds between 991 and 1014... a sum equivalent to thirty-six million coins.'

The author's proposal that the origins of the medieval planned village lie 'in contexts of devastation and colonisation' (p. 295) will be contested. Nevertheless, he has opened out the debate with fresh ideas informed by long years of research which have already led to the hugely influential atlas with Stuart Wrathmell and its accompanying analytical and discursive volume.⁵ Even though the focus of this book is on northern England, the last two of the ten chapters ('Planned villages in Europe and England', and 'Planned villages in England – a national perspective') are essential reading for the Leicestershire historian and there is much more besides. Our ideas about the *-by* settlements of High Leicestershire or the arable manors of Gartree Hundred, for example, can only profit from the images aroused by the author's speculation, his 'testable hypothesis'. We are urged to see human need, as well as powerful personalities, in our planned and managed landscapes and villages. 'Where land was available for resettlement or colonisation, even destitute refugees could be given a new beginning.'

Three of the maps, Figs. 10.3 to 10.5, on pp. 287–9, appear in this review by permission of the author.

- The double line on all three maps delineates his 'Central Province' of nucleated settlements. Leicester is represented by the small black square just north-east of the point where Watling Street (the northern section of the conjectured Danelaw boundary) turns south.
- The solid circles show the *burhs* fortified against the Danes by Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd in the course of the Danelaw's re-conquest.
- The tinted area with its tentacle-like, pointed extensions (Maps 2 and 3), associated in Map 2 with 'Conflict Zone 915–17', is the author's postulated zone of origin of the medieval planned village and the directions in which the phenomenon expanded outwards. Note particularly that north of the Danelaw

⁵ Brian K. Roberts and Stuart Wrathmell, *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (London, English Heritage, 2001), and *Region and Place: A Study of English Rural Settlement* (London, English Heritage, 2002).

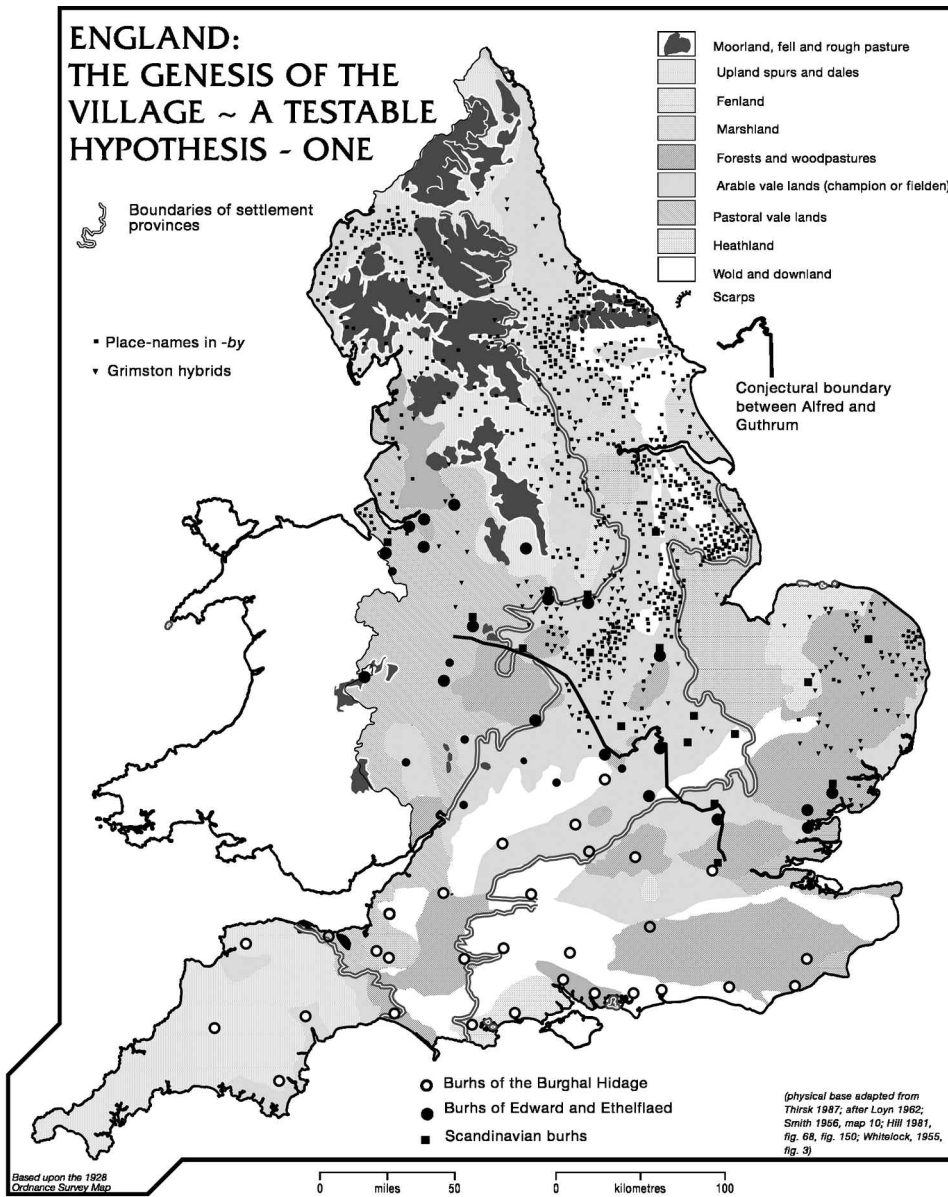


Fig. 10.3. The Genesis of the English Village – One.

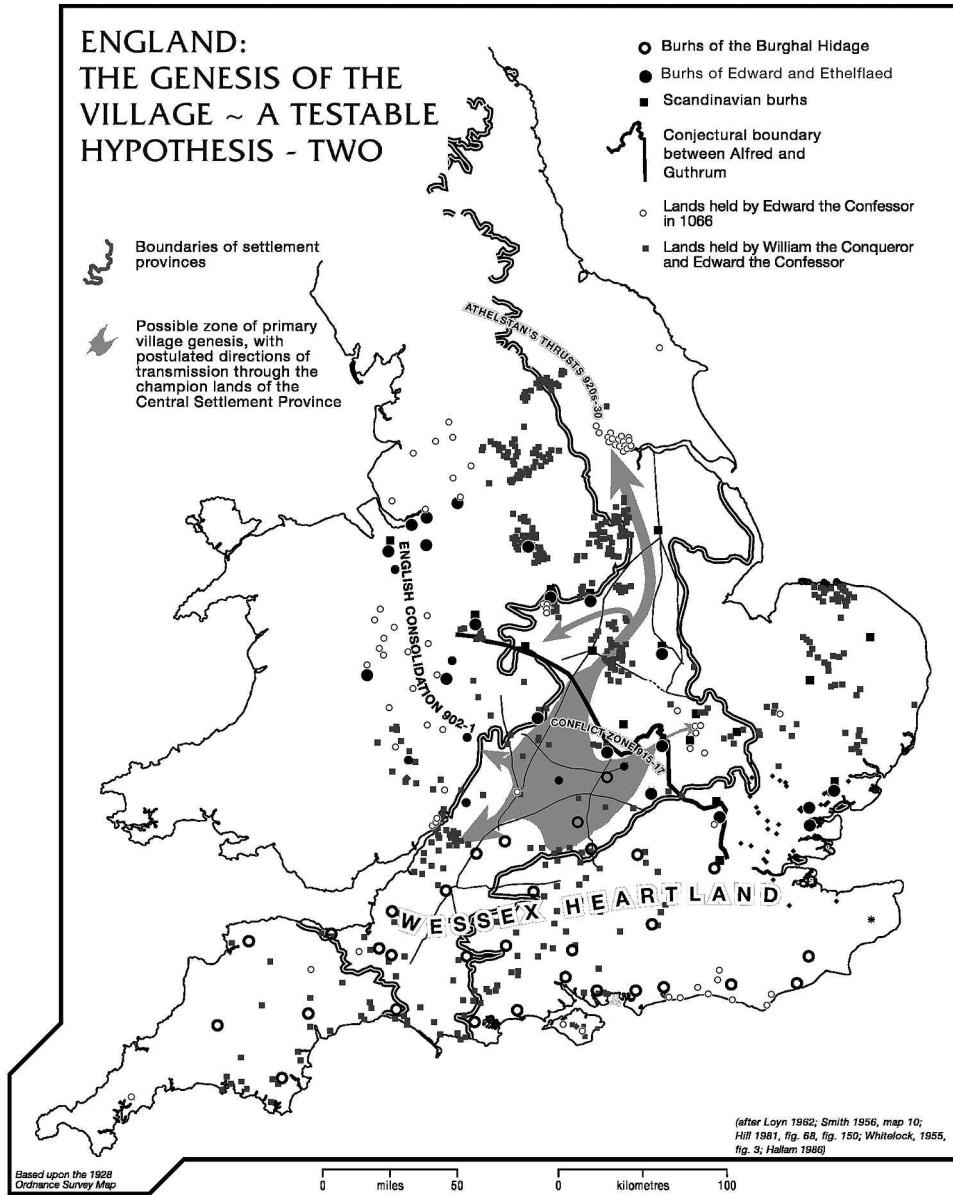


Fig. 10.3. The Genesis of the English Village – Two.

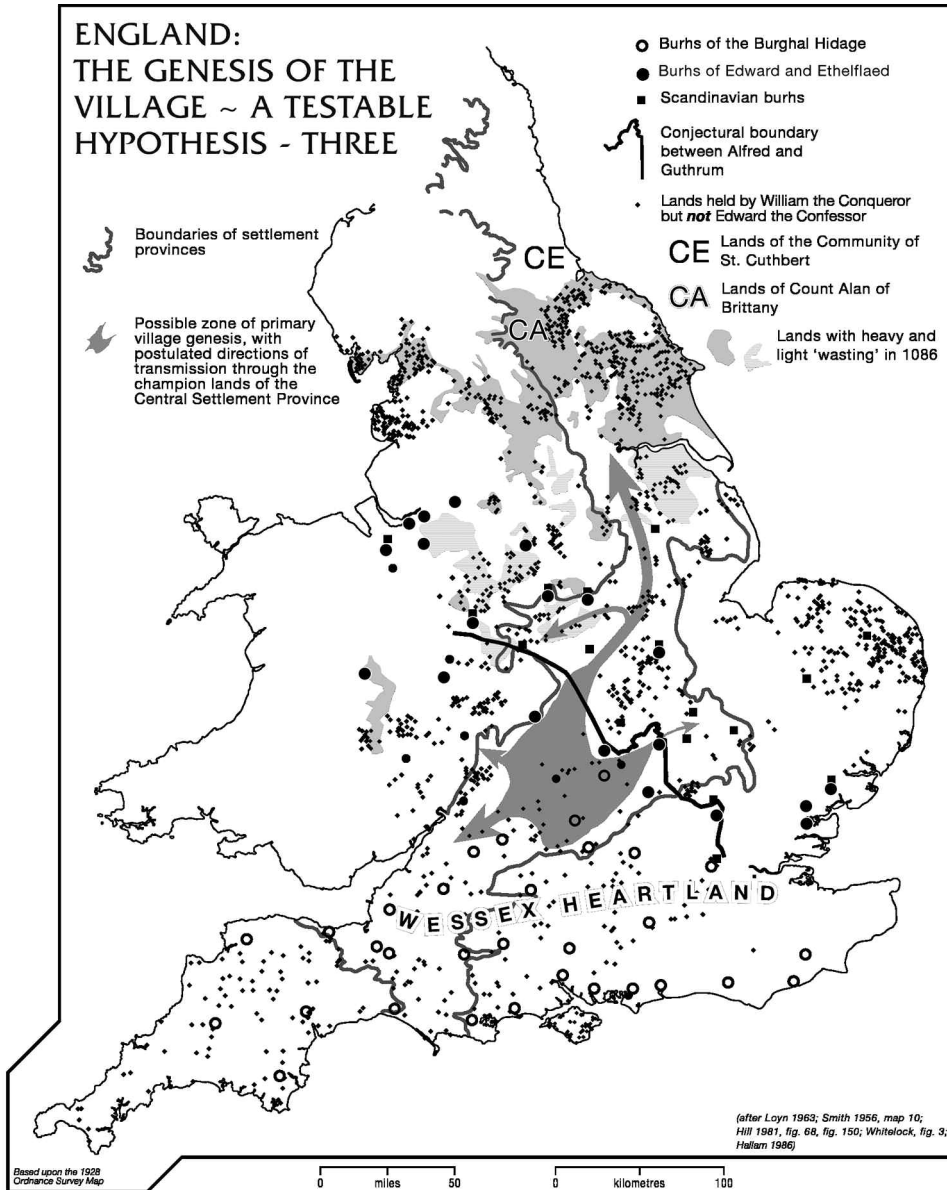


Fig. 10.3. The Genesis of the English Village – Three.

the 'tide' is shown passing east of Leicester through a concentration of tinted squares which represent lands held by both Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror (Map 2). The same area on Map 1 is occupied by a concentration of small black dots representing places of probable Danish settlement with names in Anglo-Scandinavian *-by*.

Graham Jones

Angela V. John, *War, Journalism and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century: The Life and Times of Henry W. Nevinson* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2006), xvi + 248 pp, ISBN 1 84511 081 1 (hardback), £35.

You can tell a great deal about someone by the rituals that follow their death. On 11 December 1941 at Caxton Hall there was a Memorial Meeting for Henry W. Nevinson. In his lifetime he was known as 'the King of Correspondents' but the event shows that he much more than that. The great novelist and quintessential literary liberal E. M. Forster presided. The Anti-Slavery Society, The Rationalist Press Association, The Royal Society of Literature, the Suffragette Fellowship, the Labour Party and many other progressive and literary organisations were represented. Other distinguished guests included Professor Gilbert Murray and Vera Brittain.

Here was a man of radical instincts, of intellectual bent and of great integrity. In these celebrity-ridden times when even newspapers that like to consider themselves 'serious' think nothing of printing salacious gossip and seem unaware that what they consider significant is actually trivial in the extreme, it seems extraordinary that Nevinson was a journalist. One indeed whose prose was praised by Thomas Hardy.

Angela V. John's readable biography recovers for us a figure who does not deserve the oblivion into which he passed. He was born in 1856 in Leicester and although he left the town of his birth early in life he carried with him ever after the imprint of a certain kind of radical Midlands high-mindedness. He was passionate about what today we today call human rights, a humanist soaked in the prose of the Authorised Version and dogged in pursuit of the truth.

As a foreign and war correspondent he wrote the first draft of history. As Angela V. John says: 'He covered civil wars, national struggles and total war, witnessing in the process many of the seminal conflicts that helped mould the world as we know it today.' All this during a period when travel could be traumatic and getting your copy home a challenge.

He wrote for the Liberal press of his day including the *Daily Chronicle*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News*. My one complaint about the book is that we do not get enough of Nevinson's vivid prose. He produced a number of books based on his experiences and it would be good to read some of them. They sound as though they should be considered minor classics.

John is not just concerned with her subject's professional and public career. His personal life was unsatisfactory, his marriage unhappy. The other side of his principled career was a certain self-absorption. With some courage he noted that a

passage in a book by Havelock Ellis seemed describe his own character. This referred to, 'the sanguine but variable mind, the energy, the love of fame, the love of beautiful women, the sexual passions, the disregard of common morality'.

Angela V. John takes us back to a time when journalism was an important activity because it could enlarge human understanding. William Howard Russell of *The Times* is still remembered in these terms. I hope this biography restores Henry W. Nevinson to his rightful position as a journalist and free-thinker whose example should still inspire.

John A. Florance

Robert F. Hartley, *The Medieval Earthworks of South-West Leicestershire: Hinckley & Bosworth*, ed. Kathleen E. Elkin, Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group (LMAFG) Monograph 2 (Leicester, LMAFG, 2008), 207 × 297mm, 4 + 4 + 86pp, 53 b/w figs, 1 half-tone, 15 maps, ISBN 0-9548200-1-0 (paperback), £6.

With the publication of this long-awaited volume, Fred Hartley's monumental recording of Leicestershire and Rutland's eleventh- to eighteenth-century earthworks, together with maps of the ridge-and-furrow, is almost complete. Only Harborough District is left, most of the earthwork surveys for which Fred has done. For the impatient, copies of these (together with all the published surveys) are lodged in the Historic Environment Record at County Hall.

The Medieval Earthworks of Rutland was the first volume, published in 1983. It was followed by volumes covering the administrative districts of *North-West Leicestershire* (1984), Melton (as *North-East Leicestershire*, in 1987), and Charnwood, Leicester, Blaby, and Oadby and Wigston (*Central Leicestershire*, in 1989). Now we have Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, covering most of what was Sparkenhoe Hundred.

As with the previous volumes, the bulk of the present survey describes and illustrates the earthworks of each parish in alphabetical order. The evidence, from vertical photos taken by the RAF in the 1940s and by others since, along with the author's field surveys, is mainly of farming systems and settlements of the period 1000 to 1500 and landscape gardens of 1500 to 1750. There is generally at least one plan per parish and sometimes also an image from John Nichols' *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (Vol. 4:2, 1811). The ridge and furrow of the district is mapped on 15 sheets, one to a page, at a scale of 1:32,680 (1.94ins to the mile and 3.06cm to the kilometre). Each sheet has a maximum mapped width of 153mm, providing an east-west coverage of up to 5km.

These maps are uniquely valuable, since almost all of the ridge-and-furrow has now been ploughed up. There is much to observe, such as furlongs interlocking and running across parish boundaries. Perhaps they reflect, for example, the centralised planning evident in the names of neighbouring Congerstone, Barton(-in-the-Beans) and Carlton (respectively, 'king's *tūn*', 'barley or grain store *tūn*', and 'ceorls' *tūn*'). Other earthworks have fallen victim to

'large-scale landscaping to form amenity parks around a new generation of mansion houses' (Introduction, p. 1). Almost every village has the site of abandoned cottages or farms, if not a deserted or much decayed settlement, so that the carefully drawn village plans are a wonderful resource for tracing the morphology of villages, and hence their chronology,

In 1985, Leicestershire Museums published Hartley's survey of cropmark evidence, so that the two sets of material can be usefully studied side-by-side. *Past Worlds in a Landscape: Archaeological Cropmarks in Leicestershire and Rutlan'* was co-written with the pioneer aerial archaeologist James [Jim] Pickering, to whom the latest volume is dedicated – appropriately, since Pickering, who died in 2004, was born in Hinckley. The acknowledgements are followed by an appreciation of this remarkable man, whose sorties, particularly in the dry summer of 1976, changed the shape of our counties' archaeological record. This volume is almost as much a tribute to him as it is to the dedicated and meticulous work of Fred Hartley.

Graham Jones

SHORTER NOTICES

Elaine Jones, *The Oakham Parish Field Walking Survey: Archaeology on the Ploughland of Rutland* (Uppingham, Elaine Jones, 2007), 211 × 295mm, 96pp, 23 figs, ISBN 978-1-905933-03-7 paperback, £14.50.

Between 1984 and 1997, the Rutland Field Research Group, later the Rutland Local History and Record Society, walked 33 contiguous field 'modules' in an arc around the east and south of Oakham, the county town. They covered about 500 acres, representing more than one-fifth of the parish's total area, and almost all of it concentrated in the North and South Fields of that part of the parish known as The Lord's Hold. Although described by its author as an 'interim' report into the results of this field-walking this book nevertheless has much to engage the lasting interest of archaeologists and historians.

The volume is organised in three short scene-setting chapters (landscape and geology, summarised in four paragraphs; the archaeological background; and aims and methods), and four which are chronological (Prehistoric; Late Iron Age and Roman; Anglo-Saxon; and Saxo-Norman with later medieval)]. There are then two appendices, one a glossary of medieval terms by Alan Chinnery. The other is Richard Pollard's report on the Roman pottery from the 'villa' near Oakham, and the Late Iron Age and Roman pottery on the hillside near Grange Farm.

Oakham sprang to archaeological importance in 1984 when plans for a bypass and new housing prompted the Field Research Group to field-walk in the area of a pit circle which had shown up north of the town in one of Jim Pickering's aerial photographs from the dry summer of 1976. Flint material collected by the group confirmed its significance and two years later the site was excavated by a

Leicestershire Archaeological Unit team led by Patrick Clay (pp. 30–1, inc. Fig. 10).⁶ Pit circles are often early elements of ritual complexes, so while there is no evidence that the circles themselves were used as mortuaries (though places of exposure prior to burial has been suggested), the insertion into one of them of the Early Bronze Age grave of an adolescent (radiocarbon dated to 1,890–1,520 cal. BC) ‘seems significant’ (p. 31). Indeed, fast forwarding through three millenia, an attempt might be made to trace a line of ritual succession linking these circles with Our Lady’s Well, a place of pilgrimage in the sixteenth century and doubtless earlier.⁷ This sacred spring and an associated building occupied an enclosure half-a-mile out of the town on the Burley Road next to the modern field in which the pit circles were found. Notes on the well by the late Cuthbert Casson (pp. 79–80) point out its proximity to Romano-British wells ‘near’ by. In fact these wells were just south-east of an enclosure ditch which itself abutted the pit circles. The ditch had Romano-British grey-wares in its fill, and within it was a shallow circular pit containing charcoal, fourth-century pottery, and fragments of human bone (p. 43, and again p. 31, Fig. 10).⁸

That the medieval pottery, beginning with Stamford ware, is all interpreted as field scatter appears to indicate, as the author points out (p. 72), that Oakham was already nucleated by around 900. Stability was a characteristic of the locality. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that its Anglian population were aware of a Romano-British ritual site, and that Our Lady’s Well, whenever it came into Christian use, was the latest in a long line of devotional foci at what looks like an exceptionally significant site.

Dave Postles, *The North Through Its Names: A Phenomenology of Medieval and Early-modern Northern England*, English Surnames Survey Vol. 8 (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2007), 176 × 248 mm, pp. xii + 243, 47 figs. (maps), 21 tables, ISBN 978 1 84217 176 9, £35.

A book with this title and a map of the East Riding of Yorkshire on its cover is not an obvious quarry for information about Leicestershire and Rutland. Nevertheless, both counties figure here in text and maps, and not just through some organisational quirk of the English Surnames Survey, to which this volume belongs. They are included together with other more northerly Midland counties in order to demonstrate that rather than a cultural frontier separating northern and southern England, there was, in the Middle Ages at least, a gradation to ‘Northern-ness’, that elusive concept which the author aims to pin down through the records of how people were known in taxation records and other sources.

⁶ Patrick Clay *et al.*, ‘Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pit circles and their environs at Oakham, Rutland’, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 64 (1998), pp. 293–330.

⁷ James Wright, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Rutland* (1684).

⁸ Patrick Clay, ‘Neolithic-Early Bronze Age pit circles and later activity at Burley Road, Oakham, Leicestershire’, *Leicestershire Archaeological Unit Report* 93/12 (Leicester, 1993), Phase 5, Fig. 14.

It is sad to read that the author feels his book marks ‘both a new departure’ for the survey and ‘a move to its dissolution’, since for several decades it was an adornment of Leicester University’s Department (now Centre) of English Local History. It grew out of conversations between a principal benefactor, Marc Fitch, whose interests included genealogy, W. G. Hoskins, then head of the department, Sir Anthony Wagner, a member of the College of Heralds and a supporter of the department, and the archivist Francis Steer. The Survey set out to produce county volumes like the English Place-Name Society based at Nottingham. However, it became evident by the late 1980s, in the words of the author, who was Marc Fitch Fellow with the project until relatively recently, that the ambition could not be realised, although several volumes were published.⁹ It was therefore decided to move to a regional approach in which name distributions could be seen in a regional context. Work had been done on Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire and so it was sensible to begin with the North.¹⁰

This new volume moves away from a dictionary approach. The author aims to show that personal names incorporated dialect speech that defined a Northern consciousness and identifies many distinctions including the longer continuity of insular personal names in the North which implies a cultural dissonance with the South perhaps in terms of a residual culture, but equally perhaps in terms of a resistant or oppositional culture.

Leicestershire comes into the picture as a significant outpost of surnames indicative of the northern speech community. For example, records of female householders in the 1372–81 Poll Tax records (pp. 60ff, and Figs. 22, 23) show the county as a ‘transitional’ zone having more unmarried women called *-daughter* and widows called *-wif/wyf* than anywhere else south of the Humber (though records for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire are sparse). Such kin names included Emma *Wylkynwyf* at Welby, Alice *Prestsyster* at Illston-on-the-Hill, and Matilda *Rosedautter* at Bagworth. Occupational by-names are marked by similar distributional salients into Leicestershire and Rutland. Recent experience makes us associate ‘Thatcher’ with the nearer parts of Lincolnshire although this is a Southern name. In the Middle Ages roofers were usually known here as ‘Thacker’, the Northern term (p. 79 and Fig. 27, p. 81). Similarly, Leicestershire and Rutland were on the southern limit of the region extending into West Yorkshire in which cow-men were called ‘Nethird’ (Old English *neat*, ‘ox’, + ‘herd’) (Fig. 40, p. 169).

With names in *-son*, too, Leicestershire and Rutland had more in common with Lancashire and Yorkshire than with counties to the south, at least on the evidence of the 1377–81 taxes (Fig. 19, p. 36). Those of 1327–32 show more general distribution of *-son* through from Lincolnshire to the West Country, with

⁹ G. Redmonds, *Yorkshire, West Riding*, English Surnames Survey [hereafter ESS] 1 (Chichester, Phillimore, 1973); R. A. McKinley, *Norfolk and Suffolk Surnames in the Middle Ages*, ESS 2 (London, Phillimore, 1975), *The Surnames of Oxfordshire*, ESS 3 (Oxford, Leopard’s Head, 1977), *The Surnames of Lancashire*, ESS 4 (London, Leopard’s Head Press, 1981), and *The Surnames of Sussex*, ESS 5 (Oxford, Leopard’s Head, 1988); D. Postles, *The Surnames of Devon*, ESS 6 (Oxford, Leopard’s Head Press, 1995), and *The Surnames of Leicestershire and Rutland*, ESS 7 (Oxford, Leopard’s Head Press, 1998).

¹⁰ McKinley, *Lancashire*, and *Yorkshire, West Riding* (see previous footnote).

significant numbers in counties north and north-east of London (Fig. 18, p. 35). This alerts us to a major problem with studies of medieval naming: the variable survival of records. Even so, there is no denying the evidence at more local levels. Looking further north, in Craven in the sixteenth century 16 to 18 per cent of male taxpayers bore *-son* surnames; in the uplands of Westmorland 28 per cent in the mid-seventeenth century; in Crosby, Ravensworth and Patterdale 56 per cent.

The tendency of names to form distinctive local clusters is nowhere more clearly exemplified than with the isolated concentration of ‘elliptical topographical bynames’ in Rutland, just lapping over into Northamptonshire, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (pp. 97–8; Fig. 34, p. 95). These are names identifying the bearers as living in distinct or off-shoot settlements within their home parishes. Thus there were taxpayers named *BiWestoun* at Morcott in 1296, *Bynortheton* at Caldecote, and *ByEstoun* at no fewer than nine places in the county.

The text is well organised and in clear type, although in some of the maps various symbols are not easily distinguished. More importantly, a publisher like Oxbow should be ashamed of producing a book about names without an index. The absence of a list of illustrations is a further irritant. Nevertheless, the text is written with the scholarly insights and meticulousness we have come to associate with the author and it urges on further studies. Does this really have to be the last we hear of the English Surnames Survey, with Family History seemingly carrying all before it? How might Leicestershire look on a map of medieval Southern-ness? The concept would first have to be isolated and defined, but this underlines the author’s success in identifying a ‘mosaic’ North rather than a monolithic North opposing a monolithic South. The attention he draws to localised differences shows how useful surname studies should continue to be in deconstructing the largely illusory ‘England’ of politicians and romantics.

Christopher Dyer (ed.), *The Self-Contained Village? The social history of rural communities 1250–1900*, Explorations in Local and Regional History 2 (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007), 171 × 245mm, xii + 148pp, 19 figs, 21 tables, ISBN-10 1-902806-59-X, ISBN-13 978-1-902806-59-4, £14.99.

‘John Salter and his pregnant wife Isabel were... successful in forcing the consciences of the parish officers at Sileby (Leicestershire) in 1637. Isabel had been dismissed from her job as a maidservant earlier that year, suspected of pilfering, and expecting a child which in fact turned out to be twins. Hastily married and forced to do public penance in Sileby church for fornication, the Salters sought accommodation in John’s native parish of Seagrave, but were prevented from settling there, So they squatted in the church porch at Sileby until Isabel’s former mistress brokered an agreement with the parish officers for two rooms rent-free in the town house.’

This book brings together papers presented to a conference held at the University of Leicester in July 2004 to explore the extent to which villages

historically had a self-perpetuating population and a self-sufficient economy. Did the inhabitants have a strong sense of the village's own separate identity? Were they cut off from the outside world? Was in-migration resisted, as at Seagrave, tolerated, or encouraged?

Steve Hindle's cameo of the Salters in Sileby church porch ('Destitution, liminality and belonging: the church porch and the politics of settlement in English rural communities, c.1590–1660', pp. 46–71, at p. 57), is one of relatively few references to Leicestershire. Rutland does not appear. Nevertheless, issues addressed in all six papers bear on how the social profile of a village or villages should be investigated and interpreted.

When a village like Kibworth Harcourt experienced the survival of 27 per cent of the inhabitants' surnames between 1412 and 1527, a turnover of 0.63 per cent annually (Christopher Dyer, 'Were late medieval English villages self-contained?', pp. 6–27, at p. 16, and Jane Whittle, 'Population mobility in rural Norfolk among landholders and others, c. 1440 – c. 1600', pp. 28–45, at pp. 34–5, esp. Table 2.3, p. 34), it looks at first glance like stability. However, on a longer perspective, Dyer points out, of 39 surnames in 1289, only seven survived in 1527. Were Leicestershire families on the move, or were names later in crystallising? It probably matters that Kibworth Harcourt was a single-manor village with only a limited land-market (pp. 40, 44).

Similar ambiguous responses could be made about the declaration by the people of Peatling Magna in 1265, expressing loyalty towards the insurgent barons in pursuit of 'the welfare of the community of the realm' (p. 26). On one reading it looks like the voice of the *demos*; on another one is left wondering what persuasion might have been brought to bear through peer pressure and seignorial arm-twisting.

Peter Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography of England's M1 Motorway*, Royal Geographical Society – Institute of British Geographers Book Series (Oxford, Blackwell, 2007), 152 × 230mm, xiv + 305pp, 38 figs, ISBN 978-1-4051-3073-8 hardcover, 978-1-4051-1 paperback, £24.99.

'Heroic' may not have been the first adjective to spring to mind if one thought about the sand-hopper towers at motorway maintenance depots like the one just south of Junction 19 on the M1 near Lutterworth. Yet that is exactly the word chosen by Raymond Spurrier in an article in the *Architectural Review* in December 1960 in which he favourably compared the sand-hopper towers' functionality with the 'nondescript' service area at Newport Pagnell.

Stuck in an accident logjam on the M1 or in a queue on the Leicester slip road, the driver thinks back with nostalgia to the post-war period in which the motorway was a piece of the tapestry of a hopeful, 'modern' Britain emerging from austerity and the ration book. A young Queen, Sir Edmund Hillary on Everest, Whittle's jet engines and the international speed records on air and land... for those of us old enough to remember these icons it all seems a world away.

Merriman confirms this with an excellent account of the motorway's genesis and early years which draws on a surprisingly wide and rich array of sources.

This is primarily a social history that pulls us up sharp with the realisation of how much has changed since the M1 was opened as far as Watford Gap in 1959. Midland Red coaches, usually with lots of day-trippers on board, paced steam-drawn express trains along the section just south of Watford Gap. Service stations were venues for a 'night out'. So light was traffic that in looking for the causes of accidents the Road Research Laboratory was obliged to publish a report on the imagined 'motorway phantoms'. There was even a 'seven-inch single', 'M1', recorded in 1960 by the Ted Taylor Four, which got three hits and a miss on BBC's *Juke Box Jury*.

Merriman's account concentrates on the early period of the M1 before it was extended through Leicestershire between 1965 and 1968, and only his final chapter is devoted to 'Motorways and driving since the 1960s'. Nevertheless, it helps us to see this element of the county's topography in its historical context: how, for example, it helped to cement Leicestershire (literally) into Britain's still developing central industrial-commercial corridor.

Though it is customary to think about motorways in the context of Post-War Britain, the first routes for the construction of motorways were actually proposed by a civil engineer, B. H. Thwaite, in August 1902, astonishing though that may seem. The same year, H. G. Wells (who else?) suggested that Britain's road network should include 'specialized ways restricted to swift traffic'. It is not without relevance that the Great Central Railway through Leicester had opened to passenger traffic three years earlier. Britain might already have entered its long economic decline, soon to be hastened by the First World War, but in raw terms output was still expanding and the internal combustion engine was there to be exploited. The wonder is that, with a few exceptions such as the rag-and-bone man, the horse-and-cart did not disappear from our Midland streets until the very same decade that saw the opening of the M1.

Graham Jones