

Letters

LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNITS

WHILE we appreciate Gromaticus' exhortations to action, I hope your readers will not accept Ralph Merri-field's suggestion in the last issue that there are Surrey hawks waiting to swoop on Middlesex doves. Members of both Societies are already hard at work as co-operative beavers, for example on the S.A.E.C., on the LAMAS/SAS working party, in Spelthorne and in Wandsworth.

I am sure that the lodges they build will be archaeological units and groups on a local basis—well chosen locations and stability with the support of local authorities and the DoE are more important than emulation or speed.

21 Evesham Road
Reigate,
Surrey.

D. J. TURNER,
Hon. Secretary,
Surrey Archaeological Society.

OIL JARS

Several letters from readers have been received on this subject giving further locations of oil jars (London, Ramsgate and Plymouth) together with other information pertinent to the article in the last issue. John Ashdown will include a short note in the Winter issue correlating this additional information. (Ed.)

THE SAXONS AND OUTER LONDON

I WAS INTERESTED in the article in the last issue by Keith Bailey about "The Age of Arthur", and especially in his discussion of the London area in the early Saxon period. Mr. Bailey makes some use of place-name evidence based on ideas which now appear to be untenable as a result of Dodgson's article of nearly ten years ago (*Med. Arch.* 10 [1966] 1ff.). This demonstrated beyond doubt that names in *-ingas* and *-inga-* were not evidence for early Anglo-Saxon settlement. The fact cannot be ignored that these names and other evidence for pagan Saxon settlement are almost mutually exclusive. (Indeed Surrey and Middlesex are themselves examples of this.) They should therefore be avoided in any discussion of early Saxon settlement.

For this reason it seems to me that in our present state of knowledge, the archaeological evidence is all we can use with safety. (The reliability of the historical evidence is questionable, both to the dates and to the details of the stories themselves.) Archaeology, as Mr. Bailey himself notes, provides very little evidence for early Saxons in Middlesex. In the area he discusses almost all the evidence is for settlement in Surrey (the main exception, Shepperton, being only across the Thames), and mostly in north-east Surrey. Under the circumstances any idea of the name 'Surrey' meaning "the southern district of Middlesex" must be erroneous. One would rather expect the name "Northrey" for Middlesex! All agree that the name "Surrey" is of early type, and implies that it lies to the south of some other power; what more natural that that it should refer to the City of London itself, especially as the establishment of the original Surrey settlements only ten miles to the south is usually now accepted as part of a defensive scheme for the City.

Why then the name Middlesex? Most of the region to which it refers seems to have been avoided in all archaeological periods until the medieval; there is no reason why the Saxons should have been attracted to the heavy subsoils. In that case the name was probably no more than a convenient and obvious term for the area between Essex and Wessex, a name which must necessarily come into use

after the establishment of those two kingdoms, and probably describing a region never really having a true corporate identity.

Mr. Bailey's suggestion that south-west Surrey was settled from Sussex also interests me. I have seen no single shred of evidence for this idea and would be grateful if someone could tell me why it is so often suggested. Mr. Bailey's idea that this part of Surrey, fertile and well-settled in the Romano-British period, should have been "empty" and thus attractive to Saxons "hemmed into Sussex" is surely not tenable, and is certainly not evidence.

Two final points. The most up-to-date reference for the Mitcham cemetery is John Morris's article in *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 56 (1959) 51ff.; the same volume has a useful — although now out-of-date — survey of pagan Saxon Surrey. "Watsingham" should be Washington (as in the English Place-Name Society's volume for Surrey and the article by Dodgson referred to above.)

D. G. BIRD

Flat 10
Sutton Lodge
Clandon Road
Guildford
Surrey GU1 2DS

Mr. Bailey writes:

I have read with interest Mr. Bird's comments on my review article on Dr. Morris's book "The Age of Arthur", and would like to make brief reply thereto.

I agree that the work of Dodgson and others has, over the last decade or so, led to a radical reappraisal of pagan Saxon settlement studies. I would point out, however, that my article was based on Dr. Morris's interpretation of *-ing* names, and it was an omission on my part not to say that these views were no longer in vogue. It is undeniable, however, that in north-east Surrey there is a strong correspondence between the pagan remains of the Wandle valley area and the names in *-ing* and *-ingham* mentioned in my article. Tooting moreover has a recorded history from at least 675, and *Watsingham* (so-called in the charter, *pace* Messrs. Stenton *et. al.*) from 693, even though there is not a shred of archaeological evidence from either area which would suggest a 7th-century settlement on the site. The random nature of finds from the built-up area does not justify any generalisation about the correlation between place-names and 5th- and 6th-century Saxon settlements. In Essex, for example, we have many *-ing* names but very few pagan remains, even though the area had been formed into a cohesive kingdom prior to the end of the 6th-century. In view of the late dates at which most of the place-names appear in print in Surrey and in Middlesex, it will not be possible to make a definite chronology of Saxon settlement over wide areas until the archaeological evidence becomes much more plentiful.

As regards the "south district" problem, I said in my article that Surrey was the south part of a "Greater Middlesex", and did not deny that London could have been the focus of the area, which after all had to be administered from somewhere. One would indeed assume that the strength of the Britons in the London area in the 5th-century would enable them to control both banks of the Thames, and that the reason we do not have a "Northrey" is because such a name was replaced by Middlesex after the consolidation of adjacent Wessex (itself once known as

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In a few places where some technical difficulty may be encountered, very clear annotated diagrams are provided and these in conjunction with the clear concise general explanation make everything comprehensible. To illustrate the point, after reading the book the reader should find it perfectly easy to set a windmill's sails ready for work or to understand the geology of coalmining.

While there is no general bibliography, and how could there be without confusion, each chapter has a list of from six to ten books directly related to it for further reference if required.

Thus here we have a book containing the essentials of Industrial Archaeology, the photographs, drawings and details of recording, which may mean that perhaps more may be saved as at least one of the items photographed has now gone, but many not shown are being protected both *in situ* and in the new industrial museums. So although *The Archaeology of the Industrial Revolution* appears expensive in money terms, it is not so when the contents and use are considered and a word in the right quarter at Christmas may produce results.

DAVID PETCHEY

The Fulham Pottery; A Preliminary Account (Occasional Paper No. 1), by V. R. Christophers, D. C. Haselgrove and O. H. J. Pearcey. 50p (post free).

A Report on Some Archaeological Work in the Borough of Hammersmith (Occasional Paper No. 2), by G. L. Canvin. 25p (post free). *Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society Archaeological Section*. (Obtainable from Sandra Spire, 9 Barnes Avenue, SW13 9AA.)

THESE TWO recent publications make useful reference works for all interested in the post-medieval period. Occasional Paper No. 1 is a preliminary account of the historical research into, and the excavations on, the site of John Dwight's stoneware pottery at Fulham. A concise description of the main features is followed by what can only be described as a foretaste of the incredible variety of wares and kiln furniture made at the factory from the late 17th century until the late 1950s. Minor printing errors in the first edition of this interim report cannot detract from the excellence of this report.

Occasional Paper No. 2 is essentially a description of the post-medieval finds recovered during the observation of three building sites in the Borough of Hammersmith between 1971 and 1973, with a brief description of the associated features. This paper by Gale Canvin admirably illustrates and describes a number of dated groups typical of such sites in London. Although the paper is limited in its interpretation and parallels it provides useful information for the dating of the later post-medieval wares especially the coarse earthenwares.

BRIAN J. BLOICE

Suburbia by David Thorns. *Paladin paperback*. 1973. 60pp.

A FRESH, if professional orientated, look at the 20th century suburb in Britain and other industrialised countries. Since suburbs of all types are the fastest growing type of residential development, the interpretations presented in this book should be interesting to many. A tough read though.

JOHN ASHDOWN

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Gewissae) and Essex, as Mr. Bird suggests, and I would certainly not disagree with him.

Can it not be that the early settlements in Middlesex, mostly along the Thames bank and in the tributary valleys, are also federate plantations by the Britons to protect the west and north-west flanks of London from attack by Saxons who had circled round the Croydon area to the south, or who came from their early settlements in the Icknield Way-Middle Thames area?

While I agree with Mr. Bird's strictures about the unattractiveness of most of Middlesex for the Saxon pioneer farmer, we must not overlook the fact that Harrow — the shrine of the *Gumeningas* — must pre-date the year 625 or thereabouts, and that the Saxons were firmly established in the central Brent valley at Wembley before 825, and had reached places such as Yeading and Ealing even earlier, before 700 in many cases. As in the eastern parts of the Netherlands they no doubt found suitable sites in an essentially forested and wet landscape.

My "suggestion" about south-west Surrey is, like those who have gone before, mere conjecture, based on a reasonable interpretation of the "non-evidence". The Saxons who

had settled in the Mole and Wey valleys prior to 675 must have come from somewhere, and there seem to be four likely contenders: 1) that they came from the Kent/Surrey borders during the expansion of Saxon settlements after 550, which assumes that all the riverside sites between Battersea and Walton had already been taken; 2) that they were "west" Saxons, either from the Middle Thames in Berkshire, or from Hampshire, also arriving c.550; 3) that they were outposts of the federates settled by the Britons to guard the south-west flank; or 4) that they came from north-west Sussex in the manner suggested. By "empty", I meant that had they come from Sussex in the first half of the 6th-century, the area would have been something of a political vacuum. The absence of any place-names associated with the Britons, together with the pure pagan names Peper Harrow, Thursley and *Cusn Weoh* should suggest that there had been considerable Saxon settlement in the area, certainly before 675 when Chertsey abbey appears, and probably long before, in the 6th century. Again, only further archaeological evidence from this area will help us to resolve the semantic problems created by place-name and circumstantial documentary material.