



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

REVIEWS

The Long Alert 1937-1945. By Patricia Knowlden. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. vi + 48, 29 illustrations and 1 map. Hollies Publications, 69 Hawes Lane, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 ODA, 1988 (£2.60, + post and packing 30p.).

The Second World War, the fiftieth anniversary of which is upon us, conjures up many images on the home front, including air raids, gas-masks, the famous stirrup pump, Anderson, trench and other shelters and not least of all the A.R.P. or Civil Defence, personified in active volunteer male and female air raid wardens wearing 'baggy navy blue boiler suits and black steel helmets with "W" on the front and back in white' (p. 26).

The author and her father were both involved, the former being twelve years old when the war broke out, acting thereafter as a messenger before qualifying as Bromley's youngest air raid warden at the age of seventeen-and-a-half. Her father, Reginald Gedye, photographed on p. 14, was District Warden of District 1A, constituting only a small part of the Borough of Bromley, specifically an area of ordinary suburban streets containing some 1,650 houses, occupying the northern half of Plaistow Electoral Ward and the tip of Sundridge, lying on either side of Burnt Ash Lane, as shown on the map on p. 8. Contrary to the destruction of Central Control records, her father's letters and papers, bomb returns and air raid messages survive in Bromley Library as 'probably the most comprehensive record extant of Bromley's Civil Defence' (p. v). These sources and personal memories form the basis of this study, being strongly reinforced by carefully selected background reading.

The problem of dealing with the effects of enemy bombing, rarely experienced during the First World War, had been all too visible during the Spanish Civil War which had demonstrated 'the havoc and the panic brought about by [the] sudden and indiscriminate bombing of towns and villages unprepared for such an attack' (p. 9). Bromley's Civil Defence was set in motion well before the onset of hostilities. This study carefully investigates the recruitment, training, duties and achievements of the volunteer Air Raid Wardens from 1937 to 1945, *The Long Alert* being a most appropriate title.

Following the pre-1939 preparations, which included issuing gas-masks to every man, woman and child, poison gas attacks never materialized. The real threats arose from high explosive bombs, unexploded anti-aircraft shells, parachute mines, oil bombs, incendiary bombs and from 1944 the V1 flying bomb, or doodlebug, 'as it was *not* affectionately known' (p. 42) and finally the V2 rocket. All told 223 Bromley inhabitants lost their lives from over 1,000 air-raids. Resulting from the 'Big Raid' of 16/17 April, 1941, eighteen bombs fell on District 1A. During Bromley's first major concentrated incendiary attack on the night of 21 January, 1944, District 1A dealt with nearly 1,000 incendiary bombs. In reality there were hectic moments and quieter social times.

This study has a humane purpose in revealing the role of ordinary people in essential Civil Defence work. It introduces its reader to many interesting facets of the Second World War, not least of all in 29 illustrations drawn from various official C.D. training manuals and contemporary photographs, including 'Practise Putting On Your Respirator' (p. 9), the ideal 'Do-it-yourself refuge room with gas attacks in mind' (p. 17), or how to 'Escape through a window' (p. 26), not forgetting 'The Flying bomb' (p. 43).

Finally, the reader is treated to a very personal account: indeed, to living testimony which revives old memories, whether they be 'piles of cardboard gas-mark boxes lining our hall at home that summer' of 1938, or 'my father being out in the evening more often than he was in' (p. 11). This surely is the real stuff of living local history.

J. WHYMAN

Luddenham and Stone-by-Faversham. By Kenneth Merlose. 30 × 21 cm. Pp. i-iii, ix-xi, 1-40. 1 map. About Faversham no. 31. (85p from the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Faversham; £1.25p by post).

A traveller coming from the Doddington Road to the new A2 roundabout by Ospringe and glancing at the fields of the parishes of Stone and Luddenham (total population below 150) on either side might justifiably not expect much historical delight from them even though noticing the ruined Stone Church, which has attained national significance after the excavation by Lt.-Col. G.W. Meates and the Rt. Hon. Lord Fletcher (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxvi (1971), 244-5; *Antiq. Journ.*, xlix (1969), 273-94, and lvii (1977), 67-72). There is nothing further from the truth as the author shows. His diligent research work on the parish records, more especially at the Kent Record office, has produced fascinating material, and this is made still more profitable

by his amusing and tolerant outlook, doubtless acquired when he was a Royal Navy chaplain.

The book is formed in an unusual way. It consists of fifty-five numbered paragraphs, which make it like a commonplace book with sections of varying length, ideal for random dipping into. They deal with subjects as diverse as 'Scenery and Geology', 'Beacons', 'Parish Registers', 'Rector's Dress in Church', 'Emigration' and 'Boatyards'.

As might be expected, the author goes deeply into many aspects of ecclesiastical life. For instance, he enlarges on the woes of churchwardens from Tudor to Jacobean times. At Archbishop Warham's 1511 Visitation, Stone Church was described as a ruin so that the churchwardens probably became redundant. In 1580, Luddenham's churchwardens received an order to pray for the prevention of earthquakes. They had trouble with the rectors who sometimes held livings in plurality and did not bother to fulfil their obligation to repair the chancel or to put in an appearance. In 1581, they complained that 'our chancel lacketh mending but Mr Barrett [the rector] that at times promised that it shall be mended but it is not yet done'. In 1593, 'our Minister hath often omitted service on Wednesday and Fridays and hath not read the Commination but once this year . . . we have had little catechising since Easter last'. In 1615, 'our minister doth never read a Homily. Does not pray for the Queen and the Prince. He serveth a cure at Oare . . . wherebye our service is neglected. He doth catechise the youth in the time of Lent and not at any other time. Our minister is somewhat given to strong drink.' Another task was to make quarterly returns concerning those who did not come to Sunday service. In 1584, they could levy fines for this offence, but inevitably there was a Gilbert Parkinson who refused to pay. In 1586 and 1590, they reported that the executors of wills were not paying legacies left to the poor and for church and parish road repairs. However, in 1616, they could be happy that there were no recusants in the parish.

There is a *bonne bouche* – two pages about Luddenham Court and Ashley Stevens, its owner until 1938. This is written by Timothy Stevens, formerly Director of Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery and himself a native. In addition, most of the local buildings, ancient and modern, including churches, schools, hospitals, boatyards and business premises are described succinctly.

Profits from the sale of this book will go to the Faversham Society's work for the care of the local environment.

ALLEN GROVE

REVIEWS

The House on the Hill. By J.R.V. Thompson. 20.5 × 14.5 cm. Pp. 154 with numerous illustrations. Published by Thompson Associates, 1988. Price £5.95 plus 46p. postage.

Petham is a village lying south of Chartham Downs and approximately four miles from Canterbury. Its church stands on an elevated site and is the House (of God) referred to in the title, and it forms the main subject of this well-researched work of local history. The sub-title, *A Petham Record 1086–1986*, informs us in advance that the topics treated extend beyond ecclesiastical matters, and indeed there is reference to twenty-six localities – mainly of ancient origin – in the Petham Hundred. Most of these are shown on a useful folding map inside the back cover, containing unusual details such as the spots where bombs and landmines fell in World War II.

Care has been taken to list the sources from which information has been derived and there is a bibliography and full index. With a view, seemingly, to assisting readers whose knowledge of history is limited, the author has introduced discursive passages on past social and political conditions, particularly in the early sections. This may be helpful to some, though a distraction to others.

In 1922, Petham church caught fire, and we are given a graphic account of the disaster and told how the fire-fighters were hindered by a lack of water until a supply was eventually obtained through 800 yards of piping.

The illustrations are of mixed quality: the drawings and maps by George Maynard are well executed, but some of the nineteen photographs are disappointing as, due to the method of reproduction, some areas are so evenly black as to lose much of the detail. A curious little diagrammatic sketch-plan of the church on p. 27 hardly does justice to the subject.

There are some factual errors, such as describing Archbishop John Peckham (*d.* 1292) as an Augustinian friar (p. 16) when in fact he was an illustrious member of the Franciscan Order. On p. 38 it is stated that one of the changes brought about in the time of Henry VIII was 'the conducting of the whole mass in our tongue for the first time.' Henry died in 1547, and the change mentioned did not come into effect until 1549 in the reign of Edward VI.

Copies may be obtained from the author at Tapley, The Broadway, Petham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 5RX.

P.J. TESTER

REVIEWS

Villages in Roman Britain. By Robin Hanley. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 64, with 39 illustrations. Shire Publications Ltd., Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, 1987. (£2.50, limp).

Later Prehistoric Pottery in England and Wales. By Sheila M. Elsdon. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 68, with 20 figs. and 11 pls. Shire Publications Ltd., Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, 1989. (£3.50, limp).

Roman Military Equipment. By M.C. Bishop and J.C. Coulston. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 76, with 57 illustrations. Shire Publications Ltd., Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, 1989. (£3.50, limp).

These three recent additions to *Shire Archaeology* continue the impressive list of very informative introductory booklets issued over the years by their publishers.

Villages in Roman Britain surveys the evidence for the occupation of the Romano-British countryside other than by villas. After a short section on the transition from Iron Age to Roman Britain, this brief study is divided into villages in highland and lowland areas, smaller and larger villages, and villages in sub-Roman Britain and other provinces. There is also a section on 'small towns' which, at first sight, strikes as anomalous in a book dealing with villages, though I can share the author's difficulty in this respect (p. 39) and understand his use of the term 'small town' – where, in present-day Britain let alone in Roman times, does one draw the line between 'large village' and 'small town'? The subject of this book is vast, the little that is known about it is constantly being added to and not much can really be condensed within the format of this series. All the same, the author deserves appreciation for introducing the subject in a comprehensive survey that should act as a starting-point for further study.

As the author of *Later Prehistoric Pottery in England and Wales* readily acknowledges this 'is a very large subject' and this book 'only an outline sketch' (p. 5), yet a very welcome and worthwhile attempt to present an outline of the mass of material scattered in a very large number of books and papers not always ready to hand. Ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the first decades of the Roman occupation, the pottery is illustrated by many figures and plates, and the various fabrics and styles of decoration are discussed as far as space allows. Particularly of interest are the sections on methods of manufacture and the processing and reporting of pottery, and the glossary which could have been even more extensive; suggestions on further reading and museums where such pottery can be seen complete this valuable introduction to later prehistoric pottery.

Roman Military Equipment is a veritable Pandora's box of

REVIEWS

information: it is well introduced and illustrated, with its subject matter arranged in chronological order from Republican times to the fifth century A.D. The equipment of the Roman army is here discussed in some detail and in a manner to make its complexities easily understood by the non-specialist, and the illustrations from a wide range of sites throughout the Roman empire are a valuable aid to understanding the manufacture and usage of the many items that composed the equipment of the Roman soldier. On a personal note, it is interesting to see again the Corbridge *lorica segmentata* whose excavation I completed under car headlights some twenty-five years ago (see also L. Allason Jones and M.C. Bishop, *Excavations at Roman Corbridge: The Hoard*, H.B.M.C.E. Archaeological Report no. 7, London, 1988).

A.P. DETSICAS

The Kentish Justice 1791–1834. By (Ed.) Shirley Burgoyne Black. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. iv + 40, 2 pls. Darenth Valley Publications, 1987 (£2).

This is a listing of all those placed upon the commissions of the peace for the county of Kent in 1791, 1799, 1814, 1820 and 1830. There are about 1300 names of whom, we learn in the Introduction, about three quarters took out their dedimuses enabling them to act as justices of the peace. They were the nominees of the Lord Lieutenant, and it was rare for the Lord Chancellor to veto his recommendations. The system, as the Webbs have pointed out, engendered class exclusiveness and was heavily weighted in favour of the Tory party.¹ Business men, bankers, lawyers and a surprisingly large number of the clergy took their place upon the Bench. Members of the aristocracy make a token appearance, but the backbone of the commissions comes from the gentry; for instance, there are no less than nine members of the Dering family. At one time the issuing of a new commission of the peace was regarded much as we now view the Birthday Honours list – not so much to see who is in, as to notice who has been left out. For those who took their duties seriously the honour could be onerous. There were both criminal jurisdictions and administrative functions to perform. In fact, it was during this period that the local government of England showed signs of breaking

¹ S. and B. Webb, *The Parish and the County*, 1906, reprint 1963, 383, 386.

down.² 1834 marks the point at which the poor law, the most exacting of their administrative duties, was taken away from the justices and given to new authorities subject to central control.

FRED LANSBERRY

Roman Chichester. By Alec Down. 24.5 × 18.5 cm. Pp. x + 118. 81 illustrations (both plates and line drawings). Phillimore and Co. Ltd., Chichester, 1988 (£9.95, cased).

After six volumes (two more are forthcoming) of *Chichester Excavations*, Alec Down has now written a book of what the French describe as *haute vulgarisation*, an account ('not primarily for archaeologists', p. x) for the general public of his dedicated work over the last thirty years in the Roman city of Chichester and its surrounding countryside.

In six chapters, Down examines the background of Roman Chichester and its hinterland before the invasion of A.D. 43, the development, first under Cogidubnus, of the original settlement into a fully-fledged *civitas* capital, the life of its inhabitants, trade and industrial activity in the town and the countryside, and concludes with a chapter continuing the story of Chichester from sub-Roman into Saxon times.

Though this is a well documented and profusively illustrated volume, one is left with a clear impression that its author is on more secure grounds when he interprets the evidence that he mostly uncovered himself than in speculation, some of which may not find general acceptance. This is particularly obvious when Down discusses military arrangements immediately following the landing at Richborough (not 'somewhere near Richborough', p. 2, later contradicted by 'at Richborough', p. 14). It is not likely, nor necessary after the battle of the Medway and the flight of the Britons, to suggest that the second legion under Vespasian was sent westward after the crossing of the Thames, marching down from Camulodunum (p. 6). There is no evidence, documentary or archaeological, for this suggestion, and the accepted view of a drive to the west straight after the battle of the Medway makes better sense on all counts. The mention of the Cantiaci in a first-century B.C. context (p. 1 and Fig. 1) is incorrect: for, apart from the certainty that Caesar would have referred to them

² G. Cross and G.D.H. Hall, *Radcliffe and Cross, The English Legal System*, 1964, 208.

rather than his four kingdoms, the Cantiaci were a Roman grouping of the tribes inhabiting Kent and part of East Sussex *after* A.D. 43.

This interesting book would serve well enough the readership it is aimed at, but it could well be improved if, for a second impression, some time was spent removing several inconsistencies and correcting some glaring printer's errors (e.g. 'principle' for 'principal' on p. 2, 'Nijmegan' on p. 22, worse 'Caracella' and 'Posthumus' on p. 109 and so on) and the unbelievable 'Javelins (pilae)' (*sic*) for 'Javelins (*pili*)'!

A.P. DETSICAS

Foots Cray. By Gertrude Nuns. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 46 with 16 illustrations and a map. Published by Bexley Libraries Service, 1982.

During the last fifteen years the London Borough of Bexley has published a series of short histories of the various districts within its boundaries. Amongst them has been a commendable contribution by Mrs. Gertrude Nuns who until recently lived at Sidcup adjoining Foots Cray and spent two years researching its history. One can only regret that – as stated in the introduction – publication requirements have necessitated compression of the material.

Foots Cray takes its name from Godwin Fot who owned the place in Norman times. The village grew up at the intersection of the River Cray with an old route (now the A211) from London to Maidstone. Its physical identity has been submerged in the outward straggling growth of the Metropolis, but there are those alive who can remember it as a village. The survival of the remains of a medieval hall-house and the Seven Stars public house – once a coaching inn – are reminders of times past.

This little book has been admirably researched and contains a wealth of historical detail not previously available. Some of its chapter headings are indicative of its scope: the Manor, the Church, Fields and Farms, Roads and Transport, Mills and Industry, Education and the Post Office; and a lot more, bringing the account up to date with references to Public Services and Social Activities. The illustrations are well chosen and include pictures of Foots Cray Place, – a remarkable eighteenth-century Palladian mansion regrettably destroyed by fire in 1949. One cannot help feeling moved at the fate of poor Mr John Rogers whose monument in the churchyard records that 'This man of God was in the act of filling a camphire lamp in the school-room; an explosion occurred – he was incurably burnt . . . his body was interred in this burial ground amid the regret and tears of a numerous assembly'.

Mrs. Nunns' contribution to local history helps us to enter into the joys and sorrows of this Kentish community in former times, and she has earned the gratitude of all who find pleasure in the study of the past.

Copies are obtainable from branches of the Bexley Libraries Service or from Hall Place, Bourne Road, Bexley, price 95p.

P.J. TESTER

West Wickham and the Great War. By Joyce Walker, 22 × 14 cm. Pp. xiv + 160, 4 appendices, 59 illustrations and 6 maps. Hollies Publications, 69 Hawes Lane, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 ODA, 1988 (£8.95 cased, + post and packing 90p.).

During October 1914 *The West Wickham Parish Magazine* concluded that 'September has, indeed, been a sad and anxious month', when 'things have happened, terrible and awful, which we little thought could happen' (p. 62). After a century of more or less continuous peace a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany which it was mistakenly thought would soon be over. Four years later those who were fortunate to survive the horrors of the First World War 'came home to a life that would never be quite the same again, . . . having endured searing experiences'. Indeed, 'a grievous swathe had been made through their ranks' (p. 125). Sadly the price paid for victory by 1918 was all too clear in 'too many empty chairs in too many homes', quite apart from 'too many men wounded physically or scarred mentally' (p. 42). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that *West Wickham and the Great War*, commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the end of the First World War, is firmly 'dedicated to all those who were party to those momentous years' (p. 132).

What happened to West Wickham and its inhabitants during 'four long bruising years' is the basic question posed on the first page of this study. From this predominantly rural village of about 1,300 people the War absorbed over 300 of its menfolk. Chapter 7 presents a 'Roll of Honour' (pp. 85-120) which contains 329 entries supported by 73 photographs. There were the four Millington brothers (pp. 104-5), sons of John Millington, butler, the eldest of whom, 2nd Lt. John Millington, born 1884, was awarded the Military Cross in 1916 (also see p. 123). Another foursome were the Percival brothers (p. 108), sons of Richard Percival, labourer of Nash, whose youngest son, Pte. Richard Percival, born 1896, was killed in action on 26 September, 1915, during the Battle of Loos (also see pp. 20, 23 and 140). Of West Wickham's 329 serving menfolk 76, or 23 per cent, lost their lives

during the First World War and their names are faithfully recorded in Appendix 2 (pp. 139–41). The first Appendix (p. 137) lists the names of eleven who became prisoners-of-war, beginning chronologically with Pte. Edward Woodhouse who, being captured during October 1914, was not released until January 1919 (also see pp. 9, 120 and 125).

Reported deaths, individual and family bereavements or worries and singular acts of gallantry worthy of official recognition became dominant themes in the social life of West Wickham between 1914 and 1919. The human tragedies that befell this Kentish community are faithfully recorded in this study, as are any awards and mentions in despatches. Chapter 5 (pp. 61–82) reproduces news reports extracted from *The West Wickham Parish Magazine*, which recorded every month news of serving soldiers, sailors and later airmen, as well as domestic events occurring within the parish and often growing out of the War itself. Chapter 8 (pp. 121–4) lists 24 service personnel who received awards or were mentioned in despatches.

How the War impinged immediately and continuously on the everyday life of West Wickham is illustrated in Chapter 2 entitled 'West Wickham at War' (pp. 7–42). On 13 October, 1914, Red Cross hospitals were opened overnight in Warren House and Hayes Grove, Belgian soldiers being among the first patients. The beneficial contributions of the British Red Cross Society, the West Wickham Voluntary Aid Detachment and the Langley Park Working Party are examined and assessed in some detail in Chapter 3 (pp. 43–55). The public houses of 1915 were closed in the mornings and afternoons, beer was reduced in strength and became more expensive and 'for the first time within living memory there was a shortage of labour on the land' (p. 19), following which Land Girls and the Forage Corps appeared on the farming scene. Once conscription had been introduced in January 1916 the West Kent Tribunal sat in the Bromley Court House to hear 'many appeals for exemption from military service', not all of which were successful (pp. 24, 29 and 37). The introduction of British Summer Time partly compensated for a discontinuance of street lighting. Military traffic damaged the roads of West Wickham. When, as part of a national project, an allotment was set aside for 'growing herbs for medicinal uses' the parish magazine expressed the hope that it 'may give work to some of the women who are anxious to work for the good of the country' (p. 71).

The impact of the First World War on the village community of West Wickham is the purpose of this study. The end result is pleasing in terms of its interesting textual detail supported by 59 relevant illustrations, apart from the 73 photographs within the 'Roll of

Honour'. Information drawn from conversations and correspondence supplements a wealth of primary and secondary sources. How dysentery spread from servicemen to the local community in 1915 is accounted for wholly through oral history (pp. 19 and 147).

It was my pleasure in Volume CIV of *Archaeologia Cantiana* (1987) to review favourably *West Wickham Past into Present* by Patricia Knowlden and Joyce Walker. It is no less a pleasure to recommend this work, which equally deserves an extensive readership on grounds of interest alone, coupled with the hope that it will serve as a model for other studies investigating the impact of the First World War at the local level.

J. WHYMAN

A Farningham Childhood. Edited by Shirley Burgoyne Black. 21 × 15 cm. Pp. 126 with 10 illustrations. Darent Valley Publications, 1988. £7.50.

In 1834 there was born in the village of Farningham, on the banks of the Darent in north-west Kent, Mary Ann Hearn who, despite her relative poverty in early life, lived to achieve a reputation in the world of literature. This book is about her childhood and the place in which she grew up, and is based mainly on her own recollections in her autobiography entitled *A Working Woman's Life* published in 1907. In the first part, the editor has prefaced the account with a description of social conditions obtaining in the period before Mary left Kent in 1859 to spend the rest of her life in Northampton. In childhood she was greatly attached to the Baptist church in Eynsford, which provided her early sparse education. Her natural ability enabled her to obtain a place in the Home and Colonial College in the Gray's Inn Road, and from 1857 she taught for some time at a school in Gravesend.

At that period she began her writing career, using the name Marianne Farningham, and by the time of her death in 1908 she is described as having contributed over forty works to the Victorian literary scene, including poems, articles, and stories, many reflecting her lifelong Nonconformist attachment. She travelled widely abroad and these experiences coloured some of her writings.

The second part of the book is a reproduction of the first four chapters of Marianne's autobiography relating to her childhood in Farningham, and this account is of considerable interest and value. Some of her poems are given in an appendix and are of a somewhat homely character.

REVIEWS

Towards the end of her career she summarised one aspect of her work as follows:

'I am very glad to have been able to be of any service to teachers, because in my opinion, they are the finest, most useful and least appreciated class of persons in the kingdom'.

There are no doubt some readers to whom these sentiments will be thought to apply as much today as they did nearly a century ago.

P.J. TESTER

Chichester Excavations VI. By Alec Down. 28 × 22 cm. Pp. xii + 302, 32 pls., 156 figs. and 30 tables. Phillimore and Co. Ltd., Chichester, 1989 (£36.00, cased).

At first sight, Volume VI of *Chichester Excavations* is a massive record of the excavation of eight sites (two large and six small) within the Roman town of Chichester, but it is much more than this. For, in these days of rampant professionalism, it is also an equally large tribute to the dedicated work of Alec Down and his band of helpers in all weather conditions.

The record of the excavations occupies the first part of this report (pp. 1–83, including an updating of the period gazetteers), and the finds, in the hands of several specialists, are discussed in the major part (pp. 87–276), with much having to be relegated to the Level 3 archive which, unfortunately, has meant that some reports have had to be split and published partly here and confined to the archive. There is also contained in this book a cumulative index of all the six Chichester reports, which should prove of great assistance.

There is much that has been added to the archaeological record of Chichester as a result of these excavations. Of particular interest, at least to this reviewer, is the additional evidence from the County Hall site for the presence of elements of the *Legio II Augusta* and, at the Cattlemarket site, for Early Bronze Age occupation, Late Iron Age trading links with the Roman world and the defensive ditch dug under Cogibudnus. Though three sections of this report contain some discussion (in two cases of only a brief paragraph), there is lack of a general discussion of the excavated sites and their incorporation in the overall picture within the town setting.

Chichester VI is extremely well illustrated. The line drawings are consistently excellent; however, the contrast of some of the plates is variable, and some of the tables are copies of word-processor or typewriter tabulations which makes them look out of place. The

jacket illustrator has clearly enjoyed herself with her attractive, composite 'samian' design. A small point, perhaps, but the use of different and rather less heavy paper would have made this volume much easier to handle.

Over the last forty-odd years, Alec Down has done a great deal to demonstrate that not only 'professionals' can achieve 'professional' results and, just as important, to communicate his obvious enthusiasm for archaeology, and for this we are in his debt. I look forward with eager anticipation to the next two forthcoming volumes.

A.P. DETSICAS

The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. By (Ed.) Steven Bassett 16 × 24 cm. Pp. 300, 39 figures and 2 tables. Leicester Studies in English Local History, Leicester, 1989. (£30.00, cased).

This is another in the excellent series of English local history published by the Leicester University Press. It is impeccably produced and admirably illustrated by maps; but the penalty is its price. It would be a pity, if this restricted its readership mainly to academic circles since it deserves a much wider public.

There are as many as 13 contributors, each expert in his (or her) own field. The aim has been to relate the disciplines of historians, archaeologists and place-name scholars, in so far as the material allows; but in dealing with particular kingdoms the professional bias of the individual contributors cannot fail to show, in a few instances rather too obtrusively. The major theme, running through the entire work, is the meaning of kingship and its development during the fierce internal struggles of the fifth–seventh century. This led by the end to the over-lordship of a handful of kingdoms – a pentarchy rather than a heptarchy – with Mercia threatening to engulf all others, even Northumbria and Wessex. Although in this process there is something to be learned from contemporary kingship and kingdoms in Celtic Britain, in Ireland and on the Continent, and these are treated in preliminary chapters by Thomas Charles-Edwards and Edward James, the circumstances there were sufficiently different to require any models to be approached with caution. At least this is so until the influences imported into England by the Christian conversion gave the still largely inchoate kingdoms new direction and structure.

Some of the most enlightening contributions in the book are those dealing with the small proto-kingdoms. Those of Steven Bassett on the *Hwicce* of the Cotswolds and lower Severn, Barbara York on the

Jutish enclaves of Wight and south Hampshire, John Blair on the origins of Surrey, and Kate Pretty on the *Magonaeta* of Herefordshire, are models of their kind. The study of Lindsey by Bruce Eagles is less informative, but through little fault of his own: early material for this small kingdom, later tossed between Northumbria and Mercia, is too scanty.

Of the so-called 'heptarchic' kingdoms Sussex, an isolated entity which lends itself to individual treatment, is well handled by Martin Welch. Essex, perpetually under the domination of its more powerful neighbours, is sufficiently covered in David Dumville's account of the south-eastern expansion of Mercia, culminating in the subtraction, as a separate province, of Middlesex with London. Michael Carver's study of East Anglia seems somewhat too partially directed, and in concentrating so largely on the material and social structure of the kingdom seems – to this reviewer at least – unaccountably neglectful of such previous work as that of G.C. Homans¹ which bears directly on this subject. The early history of Deira and Bernicia, the constituents of Northumbria, is embogged in Celtic legend, but David Dumville extracts the utmost out of it. The attention given by Barbara York (with such excellent results) to the Jutish provinces surrounding Southampton Water has left her little space to deal with the kingdom of the *Gewissae*, the progenitor of Wessex, which should surely have had a chapter of its own. This is a serious lack, which deprives us of any account of English expansion into the south-west.

Readers of this review will be particularly interested in Kent. It is fortunate that this section of the book is contributed by Nicholas Brooks. Among much else it contains a masterly correction of the dates of Ethelbert's reign; and it focuses on all those cardinal issues around which argument has centred. They include the trustworthiness or otherwise of the foundation legends and early king list; when the oral traditions were first committed to writing and with what possible slant; how deep-rooted and significant was the division between east and west Kent; the validity of the early institutional framework proposed by Jolliffe; and, bound up with that, the antiquity of the *sulungs* as they appear in Domesday Book. On all these matters argument will no doubt continue, as it is right that it should. Alan Everitt's work on the evolution of Kentish settlement² – which in correcting Jolliffe's theories also in a sense underpins them –

¹ G.C. Homans, 'The Frisians in East Anglia', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser. x (1957), 189–206.

² A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: the evolution of Kentish settlement*, Leicester, 1986.

needs to be fully digested; and I hope that a recent article of my own³ may help to remove the obstacle that Nicholas Brooks sees to accepting the *sulungs* as legitimate counters in tracing the embryonic divisions lying behind the Domesday Book lathes.

But the most impressive part of the book is the account given in a number of related articles by Nicholas Brooks, David Dumville, Margaret Gelling, and contingently by others, of the expansion of Mercia from small beginnings in the Trent valley to dominance over virtually the whole of middle England from the Humber and Mersey to the Thames. This was largely the achievement of the great warrior king Penda. In tracing it all available sources of evidence have been brought fully to bear; Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; place-names and archaeology; with a most effective use of that mysterious document the Tribal Hidage. To the north, east and south the story is of the absorption of numerous small settlement groups, the subordination of larger kingdoms like East Anglia and Essex, and the spawning of new provinces like Middle Anglia and Middlesex. To the west up to the Welsh border it seems to have been the result not of conquest over the British but alliance with them against the arch-enemy Northumbria, accompanied by steady inter-penetration. No study has been more urgently needed, as the Mercians gave almost no account of themselves, and it is difficult to see how any could have been better achieved.

Altogether, this is a fine book which all those interested in Dark Age England should certainly read, whether or not they feel able to buy it.

K.P. WITNEY

Urban Archaeology in Britain. By (Eds.) John Schofield and Roger Leech. 29.5 × 21 cm. Pp. x + 234. 103 illustrations (both plates and figures). C.B.A. Research Report no. 61, London, 1987 (£19.50, limp).

The Prehistoric and Roman Settlement at Kelvedon, Essex. By K.A. Rodwell. 29.5 × 21 cm. Pp. vii + 145, 9 pls. and 98 figs. C.B.A. Research Report no. 63 (Chelmsford Archaeological Trust Report 6), London, 1988 (no price, limp).

The first of these two reports, submitted for review by the Council for British Archaeology, is 'a review of current work and research

³ K.P. Witney, 'The Period of Mercian Rule in Kent, and a Charter of A.D. 811', *Arch. Cant.*, civ (1987), 87-113.

priorities' and 'part of the research programme' initiated by the Council (p. ix). It contains papers by 17 contributors, arranged in three sections under the general headings of general, period and topic surveys, with an introduction by the editors. The range of coverage will satisfy most appetites, both in the overviews of the general and period surveys, which are valuable by themselves as a statement of current knowledge on the subject, and in the topic surveys that cover a great diversity of subjects. This last section includes papers on urban defences during the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, urban castles, public and domestic buildings of the Romano-British period, medieval domestic buildings and monastic houses, churches and waterfront archaeology, not forgetting the ubiquitous pottery recovered in town excavations. The report also contains summaries in French and German which should be of use *outré Manche*, though it has to be said that the French text, at least, has as usual defeated in parts both compositor and proof-reader.

In the short space available here it is not possible, even if it were desirable, to attempt an evaluation of the material contained in the various contributions, and this is better left to interested specialists in the fields they cover; however, it is fair to add that, as a progress report of a continuous process of research into town archaeology, this volume is a valuable addition to the literature of its periods and topics.

The second report concerns itself with rescue excavations in 1968 and 1973 on the prehistoric and Romano-British settlements at Kelvedon. It contains, apart from an introduction, the detailed publication of the excavations and their features (pp. 4-52), a gazetteer of the sites (pp. 54-6), the finds (pp. 57-131) and a discussion of the evidence (pp. 132-7), with an appendix correlating the excavated contexts with the published plans and sections; it also includes the inevitable, though thankfully now becoming outmoded, microfiches.

The excavations are fully described and discussed, with first-class plans and sections; the finds, too, receive ample treatment in the hands of twelve specialist contributors. All in all, this is quite an impressive excavation report, easy to follow and understand and, in many respects, a model of its kind.

Both these reports are published in the now familiar house-magazine C.B.A. style, in two columns and omitting, Civil Service-like, much punctuation, which some may well find unprepossessing, others positively ugly. As for pricing, where known, that continues to baffle and witnesses to a policy of high marking-up which, sooner or later, if not already, will ensure that such valuable reports can be purchased only by institutions – in present financial circumstances, even they may well have second thoughts!

A.P. DETSICAS