BOOK REVIEWS

Living by the Sword: the Archaeology of Brisley Farm, Ashford, Kent. By Jim Stevenson. 399 pp. 275 figs. 70 tables. Spoilheap Monograph Series No. 6, 2013. Paperback, £35 + p&p from Archaeology South-East (01273 426830, fau@ucl.ac.uk). ISBN 978-0-9558846-8.

Quite simply, this is a top-notch archaeological publication of excavation results, and hopefully nothing said at the end of this review detracts in any way from this opening statement! Funded by Ward Homes and commissioned by CgMS Consulting, Archaeology South-East excavators clearly rose to the challenge of the difficult conditions of the site, on notorious Weald Clay. In post-excavation work, the author and contributing specialists have also coped well with the challenge of a large body of data, from which they have unpicked a rich site narrative of developing prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval landscapes. Part of this story was the important discovery and careful recovery of two very significant late Iron Age 'warrior burials', hence the title of the work, but other findings, like the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century farmsteads, should not be overlooked. All is given appropriate and equally impressive treatment. Moreover, the book is very well written, entirely readable and engaging throughout, graced with very clear and aesthetically pleasing illustrations and very nicely designed, too. This reviewer particularly liked the use of an integrated narrative, bringing in all salient finds and environmental analyses as part of the description and analyses but not getting bogged down in particular specialist concerns; the specialists have their say in a separate chapter, a neat way of incorporating this often more technical content in a book format. The discussion of the findings is as comprehensive as it needs to be in establishing significance and understanding the archaeology within local, regional and wider research frameworks, with the notable prehistoric findings particularly well situated within current knowledge. One point worth making, however, is that the author and at least one contributor are too ready to think of the local late Iron Age and 'Roman' elites as separate entities, when there was most likely some continuity between the two.

There are also one or two more significant matters of interpretation worthy of further consideration. First and foremost, how far can we 'push' the evidence, and exactly when does interpretation become conjecture? (And what part should conjecture play in archaeology?) It must be pointed out that the author is most careful throughout the text to add caveats as to suggested reconstructions of ancient actions and ideas, particularly when interpreting aspects of ritual in the prehistoric period, where this difficulty is often acute. Unfortunately however, some of the more conjectural elements of the text have been overly reified by

working them into a table or annotating them on a plan, their speculative nature, perhaps accidentally, thereby being lent the weight of 'interpretation', which is frankly not justified by the evidence. So, for example, the fact that both late Iron Age warrior burial rites seemed to have involved the final lodging of a spear in the grave could be interpreted as an act of completion of some sort, but it is surely only conjectural that the spear was 'used for symbolic "killing" of the "power" of the ... elite occupant' of the grave. We go even further out on a limb by proposing that the same spear was 'used to kill "feasting" animals?' (Tables 6.1-2). Can these meanings and actions really be 'inferred' from the evidence, as the tables indicate? Similarly, that the surely mortuary enclosures associated with the burials had multiple entrances and some internal partitions could well suggest ritualised control of access and segregation, but even tentative designation of different 'entrances' as 'public?', 'for private/religious specialists?' or for the 'funerary cortege?' must be more clearly emphasised as speculative rather than interpretive. This is again true of the speculation that the two burials were of father and son on page 170.

The latter is not a trifling distinction, since the common accusation that the archaeology of ritual often involves unfounded flights of fancy on the part of archaeologists has become almost prosaic (perhaps largely thanks to *Time Team*). Those of us drawn into this fascinating area of study must continually question assumptions about the evidence, including our own. Finally then, it was good to see reconstruction of the funerary process in this report, which really is 'cutting edge' stuff in this subject area. As is often the case, though, the reconstruction here can be critiqued on the basis of assumptions driving interpretation. The shield bosses represented in at least one but possibly both of the burials are thought to have been placed within the coffin (or 'container', but we'll stick with coffin for now) at the graveside, because that was where they were found: within the coffin. Yet they are surely more likely to be the remnants of larger shields that might well not have fitted in the coffin? Coffins could equally have been closed with a lid (long since decomposed) *before* they travelled to the grave; a shield therefore, and, more conjecturally, a sword, could have actually been placed on top of an already closed container, the fact that they and other objects were now consigned to the grave perhaps being 'underlined' by that final action with the spear?

JAKE WEEKES

Stairway to Heaven. The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces. By Toby Huitson. 268 pp. Over 130 illustrations, most of which in colour. Oxbow Books 2014. Paperback Edition: £35 ISBN 978-1-84217-665-8.

All too often PH.D. theses are only tweaked a little to make them publishable in book form with the result that they can be heavy-going. That is not the case with this book, although it did indeed start life as a doctoral thesis. Dr Toby Huitson has, of course, made good use of his original research but he has added to it as well as making it a very approachable. He also made good use of the KAS Hasted prize money that he received in 2009, which enabled the publishers to print so many illustrations in colour.

How many of us have spotted a staircase or remains of one in a church and

wondered where it leads? If it is close to the chancel, we nod sagely to ourselves and think, 'A rood stair'. Or if it is near a tower, we think, 'That's how you get to the bells'. We may be right but this book offers many other explanations and possibilities.

Stairway to Heaven is more than a list of medieval upper spaces and in some ways the title might be thought to do less than justice to the content of the book. The author first considers the architecture of the stairs and of the upper spaces themselves before dealing with how they may have been used (Chapters 2-6). In considering the possible uses of the spaces, the reader learns much about the communities populating the buildings and how they operated over the medieval period. There is a section dealing with building methods and, of particular interest, about the building of staircases. The descriptions are accompanied by photographs and drawings to clarify the text; a good example of which is 'joggled ashlar' and Fig. 1.15. Throughout the text there are examples of upper spaces from Kent and elsewhere. In addition to well-known upper spaces in Kent like Brook, near Wye, there are some lesser known ones, such as Lynsted, as well as many new insights into the possible use of spaces. A more rigorous approach to the 'old bakery' in Canterbury Cathedral, the 'Lapidarium' in Rochester Cathedral and the 'watching tower' at St Mary of Charity, Faversham, should lead to reappraisal of those buildings.

After considering the various devotional ways in which the spaces might have been used, there are two chapters dealing with aspects of liturgical use, both performance and support for such uses. Many readers will feel that they are on secure and familiar territory in these chapters but may feel less so in the next two chapters, 'Behind the Scenes' and 'Beyond the Everyday'. The former covers a lot of ground about how and where a monastic community operates while the latter deals with some ideas that are familiar but often with different conclusions than expected. For example, church towers, particularly round ones, are regularly assumed, especially in local guide books, to be 'defensive'. And yet there is seldom evidence to support that hypothesis although the author deals kindly with the perpetrators of the myths. There is more empirical support for the use of such spaces as prisons or refuges.

The penultimate chapter brings together the evidence of the preceding chapters in a consideration of the form and function of medieval upper spaces. The author first reviews conventional approaches to these questions and then suggests six 'tests' to apply: the date of the building; the building's status; specific forms and locations of the spaces; frequency of occurrence of the type of space; possible multi-functionality; and the fittings and fixtures. He then presents a number of case studies where some or all of these 'tests' are used. The concluding chapter suggests some of the buildings whose medieval upper spaces deserve reconsideration. In some cases, the author offers convincing evidence for a particular interpretation but in others he simply proposes further research, for which there is plenty of opportunity. There are useful appendices and more detailed explanations within special text boxes for those who seek them. The notes and the index are comprehensive and user-friendly.

Stairway to Heaven is not an exhaustive survey of medieval upper spaces in England, Britain or Europe but the survey of documentary evidence is very thorough. The Internet has facilitated such surveys in a way that earlier historians

could only dream about and the author has not only found the references but also the texts themselves. It is possible to 'visit' texts in far-flung places and many of these wonderful resources are free. We must be thankful to all those who have painstakingly digitised and scanned books, charters and other records in recent years. This is an approachable book that provides a great deal of useful reference material. It is the author's hope that his work will prompt others to look at medieval upper spaces in a new way. This reviewer certainly will.

MARY BERG

Architecture of Canterbury Cathedral. By Jonathan Foyle, with a chapter contributed by Heather Newton. 208pp. Nearly 200 plans and illustrations; colour throughout. Scala Publications in association with Cathedral Enterprises Ltd, 2013. Softback, £25. ISBN 978-1-85759-701-1.

Jonathan Foyle's new book on Canterbury Cathedral is structured as a chronological history of the cathedral church and cloisters from its origins to the present day. It sits alongside an existing collaborative volume by the publishers on the *Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral*. One is immediately struck by the large and wide format, approximately 240 x 280mm, which presents the images to best effect. The specially-commissioned photography by Robert Greshoff is simply excellent; the subjects are always immaculately well-lit, sharp, and dramatic, with many wide-angled showpieces featuring iconic crisp lines against cloudless blue skies. The interior images of the choir (and especially the crypt) are also skilfully handled, with a good balance between interior and exterior light, with the stained glass windows always retaining their colour without appearing washed-out. The double-page spreads such as those featuring the cloister bosses and the pavement roundels are particularly impressive as abstract compositions, a visual feast to delight the eye. The book also includes some of Foyle's own architectural drawings made when he worked as a junior surveyor here in the 1990s, and historic photographs and drawings, which in total number nearly 200 images, an average of one for every page.

Foyle, who is best known for abseiling down historic buildings while describing them to television cameras, has a direct, confident tone and a refreshing objectivity. His style is sometimes disarming and often studded with superlatives, showing an obvious affection for the subject. For instance, describing the fan-vault in Bell Harry tower, he writes 'This triumph was merely Wastell's first large-scale fan-vault, establishing a type that would be developed for the spectacular completion of one of Britain's best-loved buildings: the vault of King's College Chapel, Cambridge', adding 'But Canterbury came first'. The author has a nice turn of phrase, such as describing the Treasury vault as 'spidery', and creates a sense of an unfolding story through the chapters. These chapters represent major structural markers, with five in total covering the building's origins into the twenty-first century. The text is clearly well-researched and shows knowledge of recent scholarly discussions. He includes plenty of biographical details about the patrons and personalities and amply sketches in the political context, always keeping an eye on important precedents and implications in Britain and further afield. As an architect, he brings

an emphasis on technicalities such as point-loaded frames, quantities of materials and costs, but concepts are explained clearly so that the most general of readers will not find anything to stumble over.

Naturally, the main focus is on the High and Later Middle Ages, although Foyle also considers the evidence for the Anglo-Saxon building in detail. There is a final chapter by Heather Newton on modern conservation and repairs, a readable and interesting addition which surely deserves some acknowledgement on the front cover. This extra chapter blends seamlessly into the others and lucidly explains the changing conservation techniques and rationales applied to the cathedral even in the decades since 1945. There is also an appendix on the medieval and early modern tomb monuments to 1650 which, although necessarily descriptive, will doubtless form a useful body of reference for future researchers.

Interestingly, Foyle points out that thirteenth-century work is largely absent from the main building (with the main exception of the Martyrdom door), although had the survey extended to the Prior's chapel, refectory and the Archbishop's Palace, the apparent imbalance would have been redressed. This is also a book which focuses on the main public areas of the Cathedral rather than the complex as a whole. He sometimes politely disagrees with other scholars' interpretations (such as Colin Dudley's ideas about the Corona floor), but – and this is the one main criticism the reviewer would have – it would have been nice to have seem more of his ideas coming to the fore. What are his own original thoughts on the subject? Despite its length, the book contains only thirty-eight references. However, as Foyle acknowledges, the book is intended to be, and is very successful as, a synthesis of historic and modern scholarship. There are many suggestions for further reading, and a useful index covering people as well as technical aspects, although it is puzzling why the outgoing Surveyor to the Fabric, John Burton, receives as many mentions as Gothic arches, and the Index is printed in a very small font which some ocularly-challenged readers may find themselves squinting at. Nevertheless, the book is a handsome, informative volume on the architecture of Canterbury Cathedral, and one which represents excellent value for money.

TOBY HUITSON

Folkestone to 1500: a Town Unearthed, edited by Ian Coulson. Vi + 202 pp. Colour and b/w illustrations, photographs and maps throughout. Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 2013. Paperback £14.99. ISBN: 9781870545273.

As the title indicates, the theme of this very accessible volume is the excavation and historical rediscovery of the history of Folkestone, a town with an ever-changing character. The book is the published result of a Heritage Lottery Funded Project which took the form of a tri-partite partnership between Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Folkestone People's History Centre. After several years of hard work and planning, the project formally started in 2010. It was guided by professional archaeologists and historians, but with the input and support of specialist amateurs and an army of volunteers of all ages, was able to uncover a remarkable story of Folkestone from its prehistoric beginnings to the sixteenth century. The co-operative nature of the project is reflected in the

production of the book which has been designed to offer something for the widest range of interested readers.

The first part of the volume is a well-written and clear account of the excavations of the Roman villa site on East Cliff overlooking East Wear Bay as well as other important peripheral sites. Keith Parfitt, the author of most of this section, is the master of providing detailed archaeological evidence and argument in a clear and unambiguous style for the specialist and novice alike. He tackles challenging questions and gently debunks historical myths. Interleaved with the main text are several two-page spreads illuminating the wider context of the area and specific sites on the geological origins of the Dover Straits, the prehistoric trackway, the evidence for a Roman port and quernstone production. These supplementary insets which are continued throughout the whole volume are excellent stand alone pieces, but unless the reader is strong-minded, can distract from the flow of the text.

The shift from an archaeological to a more historical approach is bridged by Andrew Richardson's section on 'Late Roman and Anglo-Saxon Folkestone (*c*.AD 300-900)'. The establishment of the monastic foundation at *Folcanstan* (the first reference to the name that later became Folkestone), between 616 and 640 in the reign of Eadbald, provides the early evidence for land ownership and control and gradually moves the story forward to the subjugation of Kent to Mercia in the eighth century and later to Wessex in the ninth century. The dearth of early Anglo-Saxon written sources is compensated by the wealth of archaeological finds and the picture emerging by the start of the period covered by Phil Dalton, 'Folkestone *c*.900-*c*.1154: lords, churches, burgesses and castles' is the historical supported by the archaeological. Dalton uses the evidence researched during the project to argue for the positive influences and effects of the Norman invasion on the growth and early medieval success of the burgeoning town of Folkestone and, despite the lordship struggles during the reign of Stephen, the potential of a mainly agrarian hinterland and even more the fishing and trade in the 'port' led to the later inclusion of Folkestone within Dover as part of the Cinque Ports.

Ian Coulson's short essay on 'Later Medieval Folkestone 1250-1500' is a sound, more traditional, social and economic survey of the evidence for the town and its community. The dominance of the castle, the manor and the priory are examined alongside the emergence of an urban infrastructure serving the people: the churches, the guilds, the farmers and the fishing community. The disaster of the Black Death in the fourteenth century and the problems of longshore drift led to only a slow recovery up to 1500.

The final section of the book is an essay 'A Morsel Too Hard for Time to Chew' by Lesley Hardy on the historiography of Folkestone, examining the contemporary influences on the writers, whether antiquarian, historian, archaeologist or collector, all mainly amateur specialists until fairly recently, with S.E. Winbolt and his early twentieth-century work always lurking in the background. In many ways this is a somewhat frustrating section. Much of it could very usefully have been the Introduction as it explains the changing process of historical and archaeological research on which the *A Town Unearthed* project built. But it is also a reflective summary of the project, highlighting some of the main threads and suitably placed at the end. Perhaps there were two chapters here?

The volume is lavishly illustrated, but on a number of pages the relevance of the

pictures to the text is not always clear. There are some useful maps, but although those familiar with Folkestone will understand locations cited in the text, those less familiar would benefit from a full page locational map at the beginning. This volume deserves to reach far beyond the knowledgeable local audience. Similarly the discussions on the pre-historic trackway and possible Roman routes would be greatly enhanced with the addition of maps.

A Town Unearthed has resulted in a volume which does what it planned to do: providing an attractive and readable account of the excavations and research undertaken by a committed and enthusiastic group of professionals and volunteers. It not only answers questions about Folkestone's past and its development, but also points the way for other similar projects and the need for co-operation between a wide range of people, institutions and, not least, funding bodies.

ELIZABETH EDWARDS

The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665, edited by Germaine Warkentin, Joseph L. Black, and William R. Bowen. Xiv + 406 pp. University of Toronto Press, 2013. Hardback £102. ISBN 978-8020-4293-4.

The major part of this book is a transcription of a catalogue of nearly 6,000 works found in the library at Penshurst Place in the years around the Restoration. Readers of *Archaeologia Cantiana* will probably be less interested in the detailed bibliographical identifications of each of the catalogue entries than in the forty-page Introduction which investigates the origins and location of the library, its successive owners, and its eventual dispersal in the eighteenth century. Little of the library survives today; an Appendix lists thirty-six books which have been identified in public and private collections including some at Penshurst. The publication of this volume will no doubt stimulate further identifications.

The catalogue was started in about 1652 or 1653 by Gilbert Spencer, the secretary to Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester (1595-1677). Spencer remained in the service of the Sidneys until his death in 1707, latterly as political agent to the second earl's youngest son, Henry Sidney, Earl of Romney (1641-1704). Leicester was clearly a considerable collector: the catalogue already contained almost 5,000 entries when Spencer started it in 1652/3 and more were added on the blank facing pages over the years. However, it is not entirely possible to identify his own contribution to the collection, as it also contained books from earlier generations of Sidneys, though not those of the poet Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). The library remained largely intact for a further ninety years, with additions by some of the later descendants. It was eventually sold by the last member of the family, the seventh Earl, Jocelyn Sidney (168?-1743) for the sum of £120.

The catalogue may not tell us the whole story of books owned by the Sidneys in the seventeenth century. Other members of the family residing at Penshurst will have had their own collections, housed in their own apartments which did not form part of the much larger library of the second earl. A further problem is posed by the multiple residences of noble families like the Sidneys. Henry Sidney, Earl of Romney, had a house on St James's Square in London as well as other properties in Kent, which will have contained books in addition to those he inherited from his father.

A further question arises as to where the earl's library was located at Penshurst. The house has undergone much alteration, especially in the nineteenth century. The Introduction contains an excellent study, based on work by the architectural historian Susie West, attempting to reconstruct the layout of the library rooms in the main buildings in the second earl's time. A diagram on p. 31 shows the 'President's tower with library bedroom above', a 'loggia with library room', the 'study in Sidney's Lodging', the 'Record Tower', the 'north porch with study above', not to mention the Long Gallery, the chapel and the apartments of the earl's daughter, Lady Dorothy Sunderland (1617-1684). Susie West has recently published a wide-ranging analysis of the country house library of the following generation ('An Architectural typology for the early modern country house library, 1660-1720', *The Library*, seventh series, 14 (2013), 441-464) which offers much information to help with the interpretation of the Penshurst example.

The catalogue itself provides a literal transcription of Gilbert Spenser's original, which is preserved with the Penshurst papers in the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone (shelf mark CKS U1475 Z45/2). The editors have, heroically and over many years, fleshed out the brief entries with a full bibliographical identification of each item. Greatly helped by the invention of the internet and electronic mail, this quest has benefited from the assistance of many international collaborators (including the present reviewer) who are thanked in a very long list of acknowledgments. The book is beautifully produced by Toronto University Press and is a pleasure to consult.

DAVID SHAW

Slavery and the British Country House. Edited by Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann. 180 pp. Colour and b/w illustrations and maps. English Heritage, 2013. Hardback £50. ISBN 978 1 84802 064 1.

Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) influentially argued that capital from the Caribbean slave economies significantly funded early British industrialisation. Williams' thesis was exaggerated and has been convincingly challenged by a succession of scholars. The profits from the slave trade and slave-produced goods were considerable but, as Simon D. Smith says in one of the essays in this collection, 'accounted for only a small proportion of British domestic capital formation between the mid eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries' (p. 57). Nevertheless, individuals and families benefited from the brutal exploitation of black labour which enabled them to buy, build, extend, and maintain fine houses and estates in Britain. Many of those houses have been demolished, but many remain, evidence in the British landscape of an age of moral indifference to gross human suffering.

The twelve chapters in this splendidly produced and well-edited book, products of a conference held at the London School of Economics in November 2009, offer firm evidence of how some slave-created wealth was invested in prestigious houses and estates. At the same time the essays challenge local historians to use their skills to explore further the histories of families and houses so that the extent of use of slave-based wealth can be better understood. The connection between slave-derived profits and the country house are often visible, in the form of architecture,

toponyms, and the presence of black servants in family portraits. Of greater value are primary sources which are relatively rich and plentiful although they require careful and judicious analysis.

A major source are the Slavery Compensation Commission records of the 1830s when, following emancipation, a sum of £20 million was paid by the British exchequer to slave interests to 'compensate' for the loss of 'property'. Emancipated slaves received nothing. Dr Nicholas Draper, one of the historians at University College London working on slave-ownership 1763-1834, is a principal scholar in this research (see the searchable database 'Legacies of British Slave-ownership project'). His chapter in the book offers good guidance on the complexities and limitations of the Compensation records which dealt with direct claimants who owned estates and slaves, mortgagees, annuitants, and others, indicating the pervasive network of West Indian monies in the British economy. What is not directly shown are the names and interests of those who formerly traded in or owned slaves, those who once benefited from plantation profits, nor the income derived by large numbers of people from involvement in West and East Indian commerce as bankers, insurers, producers, and consumers. The tentacles of the slave business ran deep in British society. These are areas of research in which local historians can make an important contribution.

The essays in this book provide direction and encouragement to researchers by detailed studies of individual houses in the West Country, Liverpool, Rutland, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, London, the Isle of Wight, and the Borough of Bexley, part of historic Kent. In addition to the several grand houses in Bexley (notably *Danson House*) and the Cray valley, other substantial properties in Kent could be added, several in Greenwich, Blackheath, Lewisham and Bromley, at Halsted, Knockholt, and West Kingdown on the North Downs, *Valence* east of Westerham in the Vale of Holmesdale, *Shoreham Place* in the Darent valley, and at *Mote Place* Maidstone, Chilham, Patrixbourne, and Dover. (See further the articles in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 127 (2007), 107-25; and 133 (2013), 1-32).

Professor Madge Dresser and Dr Andrew Hann have edited a splendid and stimulating collection of essays in a beautifully illustrated volume which has been a delight to read and think about. Several of the essays link British houses to Caribbean estates; the final three detail the way in which local authorities have presented certain houses to the public and the responses and reactions of visitors. There is much in here to provide thought for those interested in architecture, ornamentation, furnishings, landscaped estates, curatorial display, and, pre-eminently, in the source of wealth that produced such houses. The conference that stimulated the book was a call to assist in the important task of adding to the body of knowledge on slave-derived investments across the country. May it lead to a response in Kent.

DAVID KILLINGRAY

The Royal Engineers at Chatham 1750-2012. By Peter Kendall. Xi + 178 pp. 171 figs. English Heritage, Swindon, 2012. Hardback, £50. ISBN 978-1-84802-098-6.

Although the naval dockyard at Chatham was closed in 1984, the Royal School of Military Engineering remains, home of the Corps of Royal Engineers. It was founded in 1812, as the Royal Engineer Establishment, this book being produced

to celebrate its bicentenary. It is printed on thick, shiny paper, and equipped with a useful glossary, helpful bibliography and index.

The landward, east side defences of the dockyard created by the Ordnance Board involving fortifications, barracks and guns began in the 1750s during the Seven Years War when Britain feared a French invasion; at the same time similar defences were built for the naval dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth. The military engineers created the Chatham Lines. They were a continuous earth rampart with projecting bastions made from digging a broad ditch in front, and eventually lined with brick. Beyond the ditch there was a sloping ground rising towards the rampart, known as the glacis, to hinder potential attackers. In front all the land called 'the field of fire' was cleared to remove obstructions giving them shelter. Inside the Lines there was ample room for separate barracks for five regiments and the growing civilian suburb of Brompton which lay on high ground behind the dockyard buildings. The soldiers in working parties of 200 men dug the ground, each man being paid 8*d*. a day as well as accommodation. The costs and particularly the structures are described.

The Lines were reinforced in 1779-86 when Britain was again at war, work including barracks for magazines. These eighteenth-century developments are illustrated by many coloured plans and pictures of buildings, such as Hugh Debbieg's 1756 survey showing the new Lines, the purchased land and troop encampments with Brompton and the dockyard (Fig. 3.6), and the site of the infantry barracks and buildings for the Ordnance Board troops in 1795 (Fig. 4.8).

Between 1803 and 1813, with the continuation of the French war begun in 1793, Royal Engineer officers under Thomas Nepean, then Robert D'Arcy supervised a greater variety of works in more Lines, Forts Amherst, Pitt and Clarence, barracks, military hospitals and magazines. The cost and types and numbers of craftsmen and soldiers involved in building are stated. Fig 7.1 shows the defences in 1819; underground there were now countermine 'listening galleries' and other tunnels (Figs 7.3, 7, 10, etc.). To train soldiers, sappers and miners for sieges the Royal Engineer Establishment under C.W. Pasley was set up at Chatham in 1812. The expansion of the military presence hindered the growth of private house building in Brompton and especially forced it southwards in the Brook. In the early nineteenth century major siege exercises and races on the Great Lines watched by the public led to riotous behaviour and even fights with bayonets.

As a result of British shortcomings during the Crimean War a War Department was created under a Secretary of War replacing the Ordnance Board. The officer-only Corps of Royal Engineers and the Royal Corps of Sappers and Miners started in 1813 for artificers became the Royal Engineers, with other ranks. The condition of the barracks was now considered and condemned for overcrowding and lack of ventilation. The dockyard was extended for building ironclad steamships. In 1856 the Woolwich depot of the Royal Engineers was shut and Chatham became the headquarters. Its military school there, called from 1869 the School of Military Engineering, gradually became more important, using the former Brompton barracks, and the Royal Engineers Institute built in 1873 for a museum, library, teaching rooms and offices. Kendall describes the various forms of training, with as usual many illustrations. The barracks were much improved in the 1860s by giving each soldier more space, and the provision of purpose-built married quarters. A

Soldiers Institute was erected for entertainment, leisure and a military gymnasium. Drink and prostitution caught the soldiers when they entered the town, the quality of local life said to have been lowered by it serving a garrison of 6,000 or 7,000.

With firepower becoming greater more forts as bases to mobilise defenders were built when money was available at Sheerness, the Hoo Peninsula, islands in the Medway and east of the Chatham Lines down to 1899. A magazine was set up at Chattenden on the Hoo Peninsula. In the First World War, when there was a huge expansion of the Royal Engineers, Chatham was a principal training depot. The defences were strengthened against possible invasion, and anti-aircraft guns and shelters set up in the Second World War.

Some of the buildings showing the long history of the military engineers remain. Arguably a little more historical information about the fortifications at Portsmouth and Plymouth would have added to the significance of the works at Chatham. Understandingly, as it is primarily a study of buildings, physical space and organisations, personalities – except those of the leading military engineers – are largely missing. It is a clear, detailed and well-balanced survey, and the illustrations on nearly every page make it an exceptional pleasure to read.

CHRISTOPHER CHALKLIN

Sevenoaks & Around through Time. By Russell Harper. 96 pp. Amberley, Stroud, 2013. Soft back, £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-1837-1.

The books in this series are deservedly popular for those who have a good knowledge of the particular area covered. The format in each volume is common for each location: on the top half of each page an old photograph of streets and buildings and below a recent modern image offering the reader/viewer the opportunity to compare 'once upon a time' with 'now'. An accompanying date, e.g. '*c.*1890', and a few lines of text identify the place and offer a few comments. In this Sevenoaks book the contrasting photographs are well presented, the older images from local photographic collections and occasionally, for the post 1890s, locally produced postcards. Each page is pleasing to look at and for the most part the text is accurate, although the former Bligh's Hotel was not used by the Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane. More care might have been taken in dating the historical older images; for example, 'London Road, Riverhead' is given the loose date '1900s' when a notice indicates a public telephone, not available until much later, and the photograph of London Road with two motorbike combinations is also of a later date than the caption suggests.

Under Shrub Hill: A Chestfield Childhood. By Christopher Scoble. xiv + 205 pp. 60 colour and b/w illustrations. Maps. BMM (SportsBooks Ltd) 2012. Hardback £16.99. ISBN 9781907524325.

This volume is a gentle and thoughtful first attempt at autobiography from Christopher Scobie about his family's move to Kent in the late 1940s finally ending in a small house on a large plot in the newly developing village of Chestfield. Scobie has thoroughly researched the background to his childhood memories of

home, family, neighbours, schools and sports and disarmingly mixes both the adult's and the child's questions about his environment. The incongruity of the Blue Anchor bus stop in Seasalter and the village of Blue Anchor in Somerset struck a chord with this reader. Scobie manages to convey a strong sense of location as the child's world spreads from the orchard and field beyond the garden to Canterbury and London. The book ends with what is in part a nostalgic return visit to east Kent, occasioned by a 'rain stopped play' cricket match, but is in the end more an understanding of the nature of change.