

also adds to our general knowledge of hamlets which are often cited as significant, but not so often excavated. The hamlet had quite a long chronology, with occupation between the tenth century and the fourteenth. Its sequence of buildings shows the transition from earthfast timber to stone foundations around 1200, and its fourteenth-century house reveals much about the lived experience of medieval peasants.

The tenth- and eleventh-century phases demonstrate the continuity of a hamlet through the period often associated with nucleation and provides a pre-Conquest context for a *wic* place-name. There was no 'Middle Saxon' phase on the excavated site, but a similar settlement in the vicinity at Wellow Lane has produced radiocarbon dates of that period. The site's social affiliations pose a dilemma, and the author proposes that, while the earliest buildings were of low status, in an eleventh-century phase the timbers were substantial enough and the building sufficiently large to link them to a thegnly lord named in Domesday. The argument is not presented dogmatically and doubts are raised by the limited size of the building (14 x 7 m), the rather shallow ditch surrounding it and the scarcity of appropriate finds. The buildings may have belonged to the villans and bordars who appear, unusually, as individual tenants in Eckweek's Domesday entries. If so, Eckweek provides the opportunity to connect Domesday peasants to particular buildings, in a rare convergence of documentary and archaeological evidence. We might add to the rewarding combination of disciplines that faunal and botanical data fill out the agrarian context of both the pre-Conquest and late medieval phases.

Useful chapters deal with reconstructions of the buildings, suggesting the possibilities of crucks forming the timber superstructure of the earthfast buildings, and the near-certainty of cruck construction in the Later Middle Ages. Plotting the findspots of artefacts and pottery in the fourteenth-century house has been especially rewarding, as it suggests the functions of two of the three rooms into which the building was divided. The use of the third room remains problematic: it may have been a store or else housed some industrial process. The numbers of artefacts apparently left *in situ* suggest that the house was abandoned in a hurry at some point in the late fourteenth century. The quality and quantity of the finds show that the last inhabitants were not impoverished: their commercial connections were not, as one might suppose, solely with the large town of Bristol, since their pottery came from the south and east, including from kilns in Wiltshire.

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'Anciently a Manor'. Excavation of a Medieval Site at Lower Putton Lane, Chickerell, Dorset. (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Monograph No. 24). By Clare Randall. 21 x 30 cm. xvii + 246 pp, 91 colour and b&w pls and figs, 28 tables. Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 2020. ISBN 978-0-900341-61-8. Price: £32.00 pb.

This publication presents the results of excavations in the Dorset town of Chickerell, undertaken by Context One Heritage & Archaeology in advance of residential development. These excavations revealed part of a manorial complex dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, identified with the documented manor of Putton – an important addition to the relatively scant corpus of excavated medieval rural settlements in Dorset. The fieldwork spanned 2016–17, so this monograph reflects a laudably efficient publication schedule, especially given the wealth of evidence it contains. It is clearly printed, amply and colourfully illustrated, pleasing to flick through and easy to navigate via a traditional excavation report structure.

Among an impressive array of small finds, two unstratified brooches stand out: one is of a ninth- to tenth-century type, hinting tantalisingly at a nearby unidentified precursor to the manor; the other is an ornate, gem-set golden plate brooch, of a rare type, which leads Schuster to venture an intriguing if perhaps fanciful context for its deposition at Putton, namely links between the English and German courts around the succession crisis of the early twelfth century.

The only human remains discovered were those of a late-term foetus or newborn, found in a thirteenth-century cooking pot embedded in the floor of one of the buildings. These are the first medieval remains of a perinatal individual discovered in Dorset, and the only medieval vessel-burial in southern England known to the authors. It is a poignant and thought-provoking discovery which gives rise to some fascinating informed speculation by Randall, who favours a ritual, apotropaic interpretation.

The closing chapter provides an excellent synthesis of the evidence, including a charming interpretative painting of the manor, and an exemplary integration of the environmental evidence, which can all too readily fall prey to superficial summary; instead, we are treated to a conjectural resource map of wild and domestic animals and plants on the manor lands, accompanying a comprehensive discussion. All in all, this book presents a very significant and admirably executed contribution to medieval settlement archaeology in Dorset and southern England more generally.

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Secrets from the Soil. University of Leicester Archaeological Services: A Quarter Century of Discoveries from Palaeolithic to Modern Times. Edited by Gavin Speed. 25 x 21 cm. 80 pp, 131 (unnumbered) colour and b&w pls and figs. Leicester: University of Leicester Archaeological Services, 2020. ISBN 978-0-9574792-7-2. Price: £9.95 pb.

This compact but smart publication is a celebration of the work and discoveries of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). It marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of their foundation as a contracting organisation within the School of Archaeology and

Ancient History at the University of Leicester, following the demise of the council-owned archaeology unit (the 'LAU'). Since 1995, ULAS has grown from three staff members to nearly 50 today and, as the co-founding directors Richard Buckley and Patrick Clay recently retired, this publication is a fitting tribute to their foresight and commitment.

In terms of format, the book works chronologically by period (e.g. Palaeolithic, Iron Age, Roman, Post-Medieval, etc.) and provides a series of short 'signposting' summaries on key sites and themes (36 in all). Some of the most significant summaries include, of course, the discovery of the remains of Richard III – the King under the car park – a project which combined research, commercial archaeology and public engagement in exemplary fashion. But other nationally or internationally significant sites are also included, such as a Palaeolithic hunting site at Bradgate Park, a Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Husbands Bosworth and a unique Iron-Age bark shield from Enderby. Later summaries detail the intensive exploration of Roman Leicester, and the discovery of the Civil War defences around the town. Although ULAS do undertake work beyond Leicester and Leicestershire, this book is restricted to this city and county, where their discoveries have made the most significant research contribution.

For readers of this journal, key site summaries include, for the Anglo-Saxon (AD 410–1066) period, fifth- to sixth-century buildings cut through collapsed Roman walls in Leicester, which provide fascinating evidence for continued occupation in the town, and a largely unbounded rural settlement with halls and sunken-featured buildings at Eye Kettleby in the Wreake Valley. Early medieval re-use of prehistoric monuments for burials at Cossington and Rothley is also considered. For the medieval period (1066–1485) a range of investigations within the historic core of Leicester are summarised, including on merchants' houses, evidence for industries such as tanning and brewing, and the rediscovery of three lost parish churches and their cemeteries during the Highcross redevelopment in the 2000s. This section is testament to the importance of good development control, systematic investigation and funded publication of archaeological sites in urban centres as part of the planning process. In rural Leicestershire, important investigations of medieval sites include those at Leicester Abbey, a preserved Saxo-Norman bridge at Hemington Quarry and community excavations at Oakham Castle.

There is much to recommend in this book and the well-illustrated presentation of the sites is a fine valorisation of the work of ULAS. It will not satisfy the specialist in search of site-specific details, but there is at least a *Further Reading* section provided for those who want to delve further. For this reviewer, this publication really highlights the important benefits (from local knowledge through to civic engagement and research/teaching benefit) that a regionally focussed archaeological organisation, operating within a University can bring. As such, in an age of increasingly fragmented professional archaeology, the 'ULAS case-study' should be considered as both an exemplar and a challenge to

the commercial sector, proving that different models of archaeological practice are possible.

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Whaddon and the Longs. A West Wiltshire History. By Pamela M. Slocombe. 16 x 24 cm. x + 610 pp, 108 colour and b&w pls and figs. Gloucester: The Hobnob Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-906978-98-3. Price: £25.00 pb.

The fortunes of Whaddon, a hamlet of Hilperton situated in western Wiltshire between Melksham and Trowbridge, rose and fell with those of the cloth industry. This book charts the growth of a small medieval farming community, its expansion to include small-scale cloth producers and a resident lord, contraction in the seventeenth century and a return to an agricultural base. It is an enormous and detailed history of a very small parish by a local history researcher determined to explore every avenue and delve into every document.

Whaddon and the Longs is divided into three sections: first, a short introduction and summary of medieval evidence from Domesday Book, archaeological reports, published calendars and the *Victoria County History*; there follows a history of the Long family, manorial lords from the mid-sixteenth century, whose correspondence is at times entertaining and brings colour to their biographies; finally, a description of the village, farms, fields and inhabitants is compiled from detailed examination of the archives. Each section is heavily – although sometimes imprecisely – referenced.

Without medieval manorial accounts or court rolls those looking for evidence of changes in the fifteenth-century cloth industry will turn elsewhere. The site of the fifteenth-century village is known only by house platforms and scattered pottery. From the sixteenth-century piecemeal Tudor enclosures, the newly built manor house and field names receive as much attention as the documents allow. The changes in use of the mill demonstrate the shifting economic base of the settlement: a corn mill in 1086, it was a fulling mill by 1307 and in the fifteenth century at the centre of a dense concentration of fulling mills on Semington Brook; in the seventeenth century it was converted back to a corn mill and also used for malt; it was still serviceable in 1911 it was used in the twentieth century as a kennel. The story ends with a description of the mill as it stands today: a two-and-a-half storey stone tower with a hipped roof and slot for an undershot wheel.

The strength of this book is the tremendous amount of research that underpins the narrative: almost every possible archival resource has been checked, both at county and national archives, and combined with a detailed knowledge of the landscape and standing buildings. At times the archival knowledge is not supported by literature-based critical analysis and some conclusions are more credible than others. However, this does not detract from this book's value to researchers in west Wiltshire and east Somerset who will surely mine its contents for their own comparisons.