though it formed a pre-Conquest *burh* founded in 913 by Æthelflæd Lady of the Mercians, it was never a county town. Its large medieval church, dedicated to St Edith, lay (just) in the Staffordshire half and its castle with its liberty lay (just) in the Warwickshire half. Its citizens enjoyed burgage tenure in the later Middle Ages. Many of the surrounding townships in its large parish were named as 'cotes', thereby perhaps exhibiting a relationship and pattern of support to the town that fits a late pre-Conquest model which Chris Dyer has helpfully explored. Yet there is no Domesday Book entry for Tamworth – either as a single place or in two parts – to give an indication of whether it was truly urban by the 1080s. Its single church might suggest not, since the tenurial heterogeneity characteristic of mature urban development normally produced multiple ecclesiastical provision. Its castle was presumably the Conqueror's; but, since it lacks any plausible bailey of a conventional sort, we might ask whether its bailey was initially the whole defended enclosure of the *burh*, as at Lincoln. We have very useful, well-informed accounts of both those buildings here; but such questions can tend to fall between the volume's different sections as they concentrate on their own agenda.

The big question, moving backwards in time, must be 'Why was Æthelflæd's *burh* sited here?' That might be formulated as 'Did the burghal defences, as they have been encountered in excavation, follow and refurbish a distinctively earlier enclosure?' or 'Can we presume that the well-documented Mercian pre-Viking royal residence of '*Tomtun*' was the direct predecessor of Æthelflæd's *burh*?' The weight of previous opinion (i.e. Gould, Rahtz, Haslam, Bassett, Meeson) has answered both in the affirmative. This VCH account essentially confines itself to reporting views on this difficult question, but does properly acknowledge the doubts recently raised by Martin Carver, writing principally about nearby Stafford. Much information relevant to any fresh discussion of the issue can be found in these pages, although perhaps the volume's thematic structure and organisation mean that such can be dissipated in various sections – on settlement, tenure, topography, etc. Confined to the town and one adjacent parish, too, the volume's restricted scope may afford the wrong – i.e. too limited – framework for such a question.

This is volume XII in the VCH's series on Staffordshire and the fifteenth published in the intended coverage. The enlightened interest and continuing sponsorship of Staffordshire County Council and Keele University that have brought the series so far place us greatly in their debt. But the notable landmark of this volume is its being the last of its diligent and resourceful editor, Nigel Tringham. It is a splendid end to a forty-year career.

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A History of English Placenames and Where they Came from. By John Moss. 16 × 24 cm. xix + 388 pp, 10 b&w maps. Barnsley: Pen & Sword History, 2020. ISBN 978-1-52672-284-3. Price: £25.00 hb.

This is an excellent piece of work for anyone with more than a passing interest in English place-naming. It is of course not as comprehensive as the county publications of the English Place-name Society but is by no means lightweight. The primary audience will be those wishing to examine place-names more closely than simply in their local area.

It begins with a very useful glossary of terms – not a full dictionary but more than enough for the enthusiast or anyone with an academic interest – followed by a brief resumé of English history from prehistory to the Norman Conquest, the history and origin of place-names and their main elements. The last section of the Introduction covers land ownership and the social structures which gave rise to the naming conventions of each period.

Thereafter the country is dealt with in broad sections: North-east, North-west, West Midlands and so forth. Each section deals with a broad sample of name types, most of which are uncontroversial, though there were a couple of locations where I felt a slightly fuller explanation, if only a few extra sentences, would have added greatly. For example, the entry for Bawtry on the boundary of Yorkshire with Nottinghamshire, covers only one of the possible interpretations, whereas A.H. Smith (*The Place-names of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Part I: Lower & Upper Strafforth and Staincross Wapentakes*, Cambridge, 1961) details several. And Hagworthingham in Lincolnshire is considered to derive from a personal name *Hagubeard* but this interpretation is missing.

There are a few small issues which disappoint in the historical summary. The unquestioning acceptance of the idea of 'invasion' as an explanation of cultural change and the use of 'Celt' for the pre-Roman population may grate with some. Similarly, to suggest that Anglo-Saxon women 'had few if any rights of land ownership' is incorrect: in the will of *Leofflad*, wife of the *thegn Oswy*, she bequeathed land in her ownership to the church at Ely and *Wulfric Spott* left land to female relatives. That there are few examples is more likely a case of documentary survival: absence of evidence is does not constitute evidence of absence.

Although lacking a bibliography, happily the book has a comprehensive index – a rarity in many publications of late. Overall, my criticisms are minor issues which relate to only a few pages in a significant and otherwise well-researched piece of work: this is not a Gelling & Cole nor an Ekwall, nor is it intended to be, but it is a tidy detailing of place-names in England and their origins, both readable and generally quite comprehensive as a summary. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in how we named our towns, villages and countryside.

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Deer Parks of Suffolk, 1086–1602. By Rosemary Hoppitt. 18 × 25 cm. xvii + 331 pp, 128 colour and b&w pls, figs and tables. Needham Market: Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2020. ISBN 978-0-9521390-9-6. Price: £18.50 pb.