

village and likely lost both chancel and apse as a consequence, leaving the chapel to become an isolated building; striking then is its ongoing survival, aided much later by its agricultural conversion. The chapter by Kevin Bruce and Christopher Thornton (Ch. 7) does a thorough job in charting the missing medieval centuries, exploring evolving lands, owners, farms and fisheries, to which St Peter-on-the-Wall will have been a quiet, neglected witness.

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***Surveying the Domesday Book.*** By Simon Keith. 19 x 25 cm. xiv + 153 pp, 7 b&w figures, 32 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Windgather Press, 2022. ISBN 978-1-91442-710-7; epub: 978-1-91442-711-4. Price: £34.99 pb.

The data-rich Domesday Book has been explored in many ways, from the detail of each entry to its meaning and intention. In this new publication, Simon Keith, a retired Chartered Surveyor, aims to study the timeframe for the creation and compilation of the Domesday Book (DB) from the viewpoint of someone who has first-hand experience of valuing land. Keith sets out at the start how he views the DB as a 'fiscal failure', since he sees the purpose as fiscal in nature, particularly looking at arable land. Although he acknowledges there would be secondary value in the information recorded, taxation was its key focus. As it was never used directly to gather the taxation, he therefore deems DB a failure.

This book is very much a personal journey, using the professional experience of a lifetime as a surveyor to seek to travel back into the mindset of the compilers of the DB. The structure follows the journey of setting forth on such an endeavour, looking at why it might have been undertaken, what it records, the method of valuation and the logistics of the survey. It reflects that the task of compiling the finished copy of the DB would have taken at least three years (against the more usual estimated time of a year). And these three years would have been for a re-evaluation of a current system – not starting from scratch, which supports the notion that Domesday was based on an already recorded system.

Some interpretations arise more from reflections on modern perspectives than from historical evidence. While discussing the purpose of the survey and how some scholars have dismissed it as a tax document, Keith notes 'I am that taxman... the survey provides me with exactly the three essential items of information that I would require for each manor' (p.22). Keith also notes that the lack of recording of buildings seems to have been a massive omission compared to modern taxation methods.

Although this provides a fresh approach to the DB by reflecting on current practice, transposing this back to eleventh-century England does not come without issues. The lack of a full understanding of various elements of medieval settlement and landscape makes some of Keith's assertions not as fully developed as they could be. While noting that much has been written on the DB, he does not consider all this much in detail,

acknowledging that this would increase the length of his own publication considerably. However, without some of this material properly considered, the contested nature of the DB record cannot be appreciated. Thus, although often convincing in tone and experience, this book is certainly not the final word on – nor a wholly watertight reading of – the DB's compilation.

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***A Vanishing Landscape. Archaeological Investigations at Blakeney Eye, Norfolk.*** By Naomi Field. 21 x 29 cm. ix + 226 pp, 109 colour and b&w pls and figs, 71 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2021. ISBN 978-1-78969-840-4; epub: 978-1-78969-841-1. Price: £45.00 pb.

This well-illustrated volume reports on a series of archaeological excavations undertaken at Blakeney, north Norfolk, on behalf of the Environment Agency in advance of a policy of managed retreat along this stretch of coast. Within this area a notable feature was an extant building constructed of flint pebbles and known locally as 'Blakeney Chapel'; this formed the main target of later excavations.

Following the decision to allow coastal erosion to progress in this area, a programme of archaeological evaluation (comprising geophysical survey, 56 trial trenches and a borehole survey) was undertaken in 2002–03. These surveys established that, in addition to the later medieval and post-medieval building activity on the Eye, Neolithic activity was evident. A stunning find during trial trenching – sadly a stray find, even if associated with a buried soil horizon (p.19) – was an early Anglo-Saxon bracteate, which adds to a gently growing corpus of these enigmatic finds, with possibly Kentish or Jutish links, from Norfolk (see A. Rogerson and S. Ashley 2023: 'A selection of finds recorded in Norfolk in 2022 and earlier', in *Norfolk Archaeology*, Second Series, Vol 1, pp.239–48, at p.255).

Subsequent excavation in 2004–05 targeted two areas: to the south, Area 1 identified Neolithic and Bronze-Age pottery, associated with several pits and postholes, indicative of settlement activity of an uncertain character; additional (probably residual) worked flints were recovered in Area 2 to the north, in association with an early land surface. The borehole surveys demonstrated that the early prehistoric coastal landscape comprised a ridge separated from the higher ground south of the saltmarsh by a freshwater channel, which later became tidal (p.208).

The main chunk of the fieldwork and artefact reports concern the results from the Area 2 excavation. Here, investigation around the noted extant flint building revealed an intriguing sequence, comprising fragmentary remains of a thirteenth- to fourteenth-century possible farmstead which was then replaced by the two-celled building of 'Blakeney Chapel' in the later sixteenth century. This structure, viewed by the excavators as most likely a secular structure, was occupied until the seventeenth century; at this point a