

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

series of storm breaks (seen in the archaeological sequence as flood deposits) partially destroyed the structure and it was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. In conclusion, the authors propose, based on extensive documentary analysis, an interpretation of the main building as a warrener's house (p.218).

Although the broad developmental sequence of the site is established, there is an unfortunate lack of a precise and coherent narrative for the site, mainly because of problems of phasing several of the identified features, due to 'mixing' of material following the various storm and flood events that resulted in a high degree of artefact intrusion and residuality (outlined in Chapter 3). This is a shame, as there are some significant artefact and ecofact assemblages from this site (Chapters 4–7), including thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery, imported Cornish roofing slate, animal bones that suggest a transformation from an animal economy dominated by cattle to one dominated by sheep (p.212), and a number of fishbones. Nonetheless, Naomi Field and the other contributors should be commended on extracting as much insight as they have from what was evidently a problematic site to interpret.

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***Great Bricett Manor and Priory. Lords, Saints and Canons in a Suffolk Landscape.*** By Edward Martin. 21 x 30 cm. ix + 173 pp, 63 colour and b&w pls and figs. Ipswich: The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History, 2021. ISBN 978-1-8381223-2-4. Price: £13.50 pb.

A number of years in the making, this well-researched volume was prompted by the owners of Great Bricett Hall (who formerly held the title of Lord of the Manor, purchased by auction in 1996, but transferred in perpetuity to Great Bricett Parochial Church Council in 2017). The first lords, detailed in Chapter 3, were Norman knights: Ranulf Peverel was a high-ranking tenant-in-chief for William the Conqueror for lands between Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Oxfordshire – sizeable holdings, though Ranulf is only ranked as a 'Class C' magnate by modern scholars (p.13); at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 one Ralph fitz Brien appears as Ranulf's tenant, holding the manor at Bricett, displacing a Saxon lord, Leoftsan. Ralph and his wife, at the encouragement of the bishop of Norwich and others, established a nearby priory of Augustinian Canons between 1114–19 (figs. 6.9 and 6.10 illustrate the priory's foundation charter and a seal of c. 1190). In a charter of 1152–54 the market at Great Bricett was granted by King Stephen to the priory (pp.73–4; charter illustrated as fig. 6.11). Always a small establishment, only six canons are recorded here in 1381; Martin states how while most priors' names are known, 'none appear to have been of any importance outside their priory' (p.73). From the early fourteenth century, the Bohun family oversaw the manor, though in the 1330s this was transferred to the priory. Under King Henry V the properties of this 'alien priory' and others like it were confiscated; Great Bricett Priory endured, however, and was passed with its possessions to the new royal college (King's College) at Cambridge in 1444. A subsequent range of tenants, such as the Longe,

Methwold and Hubbard families, tended the manor across later centuries (detailed in Chapter 4).

The manor or hall is itself attached to the north-west flank of the priory church, which survives as a long (33.5 x 6.2–6.8 m), aisleless church, dedicated to St Mary and St Lawrence, but originally dedicated to St Mary and St Leonard; the present co-dedication to St Lawrence may denote an early nineteenth-century borrowing/transfer of the St Lawrence from the lost church of Little Bricett (pp.80–81). The cult of St Leonard and the mother-house of Saint-Leonard-de-Noblat, near Limoges in central France, are discussed on pp.59–67. Chapter 6 also outlines the origins of the Augustinian order, while the brief Chapter 7 summarises 'Daily life in an Augustinian priory'.

Martin does a careful job exploring the form, features and fittings of the church, tracing, for example, the late twelfth-century western extension and likely west tower location. But there are issues understanding the layout of the priory, with the old assumption being that the manor overlies or replaced the former prior's house – this based on the other assumption that the priory was laid out in typical monastic format with central (northern) cloister and associated rooms around (see fig.8.6, p.85). However, magnetometry survey in 2016 failed to trace any signals for such an arrangement (p.101), and in Chapter 8, Martin asks whether a much simpler plan prevailed here, perhaps with an unrecognised timber range. Key is a reconsideration of Great Bricett Hall by John Walker, recognising a medieval aisled hall of fourteenth-century form; this dating fits with dendrochronological results from a set of oak timberworks (doorways, arches, trusses, joists) within, some first revealed in house restoration works in 1956 and dated then to the mid-thirteenth century, but now seen to relate to winter-felled trees of 1325/6, alongside some elements that may be a generation older (pp.94–100). Martin offers the attractive possibility that these timbers denote a (re)building of the manor under the Bohuns (who bought the manor/site in 1318), upgrading from an older manor structure which may have lain to the west, within the moated area known as 'Nunnery Mount'. As discussed in Chapter 5, this oval earthwork of 50 x 60 m, now set in open fields just 160 m from the church (and very nicely captured in the volume's snowy cover image), originally had an attached trapezoidal ditched enclosure, whose entry aligns with the church (and with the manor's west wing, which joins the church at an awkward angle). Why and when the label 'Nunnery' was applied is unknown, especially since Bricett never had a nunnery; instead, the enclosure is interpreted as a twelfth-century 'forcelet', a compact defended castle-cum-manor set up in the Anarchy. While a 2016 magnetometry survey picked up no clear signs of any internal units in the trapezoidal area, fair hints of a rectangular structure emerged in the oval zone – but only excavation would reveal if this could relate to the first, pre-Bohun manor.

The volume features eight appendices, opening with Bricett in the Domesday Book (Appendix I) and a selection of charters (II) – very usefully with translations (and an explanation of the DB entry) – followed by lists of priors and curates of Great Bricett (III, IV) and rectors at Little Bricett (VI), plus place-names (VIII). Readers may well appreciate the glossary (pp.148–50), which includes tidy entries for the oft-used