BOOK REVIEWS

Wingfield College and its Patrons: Piety and Prestige in Medieval Suffolk. Edited by Peter Bloore and Edward Martin. xv + 249 pp., maps, plates, plans, appendix, bibliography, CD, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015. ISBN 978 1 84383 832 6. Price: £50 hb.

This volume draws on papers delivered to a symposium held in 2012 to commemorate the 650th anniversary of the foundation of Wingfield College. A glittering array of contributors shed new light on the site and those who lived in this relatively remote location in north-east Suffolk. Readers will be fascinated to learn how closely their lives were intertwined with those of the noble families who battled over the English crown during the Wars of the Roses. In the end we are left in no doubt that the buildings were more enduring than the families who erected and patronised them.

Edward Martin begins by leading us through the landscape history from Anglo-Saxon hall-and-church complex to late medieval seat of the Wingfield family. The chantry college was founded in 1362 by Sir John Wingfield and endowed with the riches that he had accumulated as a successful soldier and director of the business affairs of the Black Prince. When Sir John died without a male heir, the manor of Wingfield, with patronage of the college, passed by marriage to Michael de la Pole. Mark Bailey explains the wildly fluctuating fortunes of the de la Poles who began as Hull merchants and, two hundred tumultuous years later, met their ignominious end at the hands of the Tudors. During that period they became first earls, and later dukes of Suffolk. Had things turned out differently, their ascent would have continued to the very throne of England. Rowena Archer and Diarmaid MacCulloch conclude the narrative by introducing us first to the redoubtable Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of the great poet, and then to Charles Brandon, close friend of Henry VIII, who risked the king's ire for love. Without Henry's permission he married the monarch's sister Mary, dowager queen of France.

Alice Chaucer was a pivotal figure. One of the villains of the Paston letters, she deployed her considerable political wit and skill to exercise great power and influence in East Anglia. She had already been twice widowed before she wed William de la Pole in 1432 and so became duchess of Suffolk and chatelaine of Wingfield. Their union was eventually blessed with a son John. Herself 'one of the wealthiest inhabitants of England', Alice was determined that the boy should rise even higher. Before he came of age, she had married him off first to the infant Margaret Beaufort and then when, on the intervention of the king, the youthful couple were divorced, to Elizabeth, second daughter of Richard of York and sister of the future Edward IV. It was a 'political gamble' that nearly paid off. Had the Yorkists won the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, then her grandson John might have ultimately succeeded Richard III as king. As it happened, John was killed in battle; his brother Edmund was executed; and a second brother, William, languished for his last thirty-seven years in the Tower of London. They were all too close to the throne for the liking of Margaret Beaufort's son Henry VII. As MacCulloch poignantly remarks, the de la Poles had 'acquired too much genealogy' to be left at large.

Against this backdrop of human drama, the college, church and castle at Wingfield remained 'desirable and well-maintained' buildings. The collegiate priests continued to say their prayers, and so speed through purgatory the departed souls of members of the Wingfield and de la Pole families. Eamon Duffy explains the purpose of chantry colleges which, in late medieval England, 'replicated the resources and in theory the religious and moral standards

of a small monastery'. He elucidates the cult of purgatory and the importance to the medieval mind of intercessionary prayer, which extended 'the obligations of friendship and family and neighbourhood into the dark world of the dead'. The adjoining church became the last resting place for several of these departed souls whose tombs can still be admired today and are lovingly described by Sally Badham. The finest is that of John de la Pole and his wife Elizabeth of York. Having lost two chances to sire a king, John enjoyed the consolation of living and dying quietly in his bed at Wingfield Castle and of being buried in style. After him, in time, the castle would also become 'the one stable home base' for Charles Brandon and his French queen.

No review of this volume would be complete without praising the accompanying DVD that provides a virtual reality tour of the college and castle. A combination of academic disciplines and sources is brought together to overcome a number of interpretative challenges and create 'a coherent vision that satisfies the viewer and draws them into the experience in a holistic way'. We can never be sure what the complex looked like in the Middle Ages, but this is a good stab at digital reconstruction. It raises the bar for anyone publishing works of architectural history.

NICHOLAS R. AMOR

A Dictionary of Suffolk Place-Names. By Keith Briggs and Kelly Kilpatrick. xl + 177pp, figures and plates. Nottingham: English Place-Name Society and The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2016. ISBN 978 0 904889 91 8. Price: £14 pb.

We have waited a hundred years for an up-to-date place-name volume for Suffolk, and then, like London buses, two turn up almost simultaneously – the subject of this review, and A.D. (David) Mills' *Suffolk Place-Names: Their Origins and Meanings* (Lavenham 2014; ISBN 978 0 9930363 0 9). This review concentrates on the former, Volume 6 of the English Place-Name Society's (EPNS) Popular Series. David Mills brought out his concise but clear and very readable volume in 2014 knowing it would eventually be superseded by the more comprehensive EPNS volume, but perhaps not as quickly as turned out to be the case.

There is much common ground between the two books in terms of their introductions, description of sources, résumé of linguistic features and influences, glossary, and lists of Anglo-Saxon and Danish personal names. Both cover a similar core of some 700 names – towns, villages and hamlets, rivers and other topographical features which appear on the 1:50000 OS maps. In addition, Briggs and Kilpatrick include the names of the county's hundreds and a selection of names of 'lost' Domesday vills (I would have liked to have seen them all, not least because they do not feature in any of the national dictionaries; and the important woodland with a 'haga' name – *Briticeshaga* in Stonham Aspal/Crowfield – is amongst those overlooked). Mills includes a selection of later names, mostly from Hodskinson's county map of 1783. Thus there are about 60 names in Mills which are not in the *Dictionary*, and over 70 in the latter which are not in the former. Both books include the villages in north-east Suffolk which are now in Norfolk, although Thetford (which was once partly in Suffolk) is in neither.

A Dictionary of Suffolk Place-names was a collaboration between the EPNS and the SIAH, compiled by SIAH Council member Keith Briggs assisted by Kelly Kilpatrick, and was part-funded by the SIAH. It offers a comprehensive list of the earliest spellings of each name, and, where there are doubts, a selection of possible interpretations. Interestingly, their interpretation of the second component of Wickham Skeith (which Mills and all the national

dictionaries interpret as 'racecourse') is 'border', with (surprisingly) no reference to the racecourse as an alternative. Thief Glemham is an intriguing name which merits more explanation.

Books of this type, with so much finely tuned detail, need meticulous proof-reading, and it is clear that much care has been taken in the compilation of both. Inevitably a few typographical errors affecting core material have crept into the *Dictionary* but nothing of real consequence. Lack of local knowledge may have led to references to the *River Mill and the *River Butley rather than the Mill River and the Butley River; and to *Parva Stonham (which has an historic precedent, but is never heard nowadays), rather than Stonham Parva (or Little Stonham). Hasketonians will be disappointed that their village has been inadvertently omitted (the only major omission as far as I can see), while those seeking to discover where the Gipping becomes the Orwell have a choice between Handford Bridge (page 64) and Stoke Bridge (page 106). Perhaps the most obvious editorial error in the book is the description of Brandeston Hall (near Framlingham) under the wrong 'Brandeston'. Although the 'Gipping Divide' gets a mention, it is not cited as the geographic limit for 'tye', the name for many greens to the south, but just one (Thorney Tye) to the north. However, for me the most disappointing features are the '-hām' and '-tūn' maps on page xv, which, because of their small size, are far too cluttered and therefore not at all clear. But all these are issues which the keen historian can readily bypass through other sources, and overall they do not detract from the scholarly thoroughness of the work.

It is clear from the number of names in the book which have no conclusive derivation that there is still much scope for research into Suffolk's major place-names, although inevitably much of it requires a high degree of specialist linguistic ability. However, there is much that can be done locally by those without such knowledge, for example, to try to identify with more certainty the topographical features which occur in place-names: which hill in Clopton? Which valley in Framsden and Monewden? Does the use of these and other elements in Suffolk chime with the more precise definitions suggested by Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, or do they have slightly different meanings here? At a minor place-name level, every town and village in the county has the potential for a volume of its own, covering hamlets, greens, farms, roads, woods, fields, even ponds. It is through such local work that 'lost' names are often discovered, and we still have a significant number of those hiding somewhere in the county.

This new volume provides a solid base for future place-name work in the county. The authors of this book (and, indeed, David Mills) are to be congratulated on their endeavours; theirs are works which should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in our fascinating county.

STEPHEN PODD

Before Sutton Hoo: The Prehistoric Remains and Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Tranmer House, Bromeswell, Suffolk. By Christopher J. R. Fern. xiv + 244 pp, plates, figures, maps, tables, appendices, bibliography, index. Bury St Edmunds: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, 2015. East Anglian Archaeology 155. ISBN 978 0 9568747 5 7. Price: £25 pb.

It would seem that archaeological monographs are like buses, in that you wait for ages and then several of them turn up at once! Following hot on the heels of the excellent account of the Middle Saxon settlement excavated at Brandon (reviewed in 2015),[1] this latest Suffolk offering in the East Anglian Archaeology monograph series presents the results of excavations

undertaken in the year 2000 before the construction of the National Trust's new visitor centre at Sutton Hoo.

One of the county's, if not the country's, most iconic archaeological sites, the story of Sutton Hoo's discovery and the findings of the excavation campaigns of the 1930s, 1960s and 1980s are well known to the readers of this journal and need not be rehearsed here (but see Carver 2005 for the definitive summary).[2] The Sutton Hoo estate passed into the ownership of the National Trust in 1997 and this was quickly followed by a planning application and Heritage Lottery Fund bid to construct a new visitor centre and car park focussed around Tranmer House, to the north of the main burial complex.

Given the sensitivity of the site, these applications precipitated a multi-stranded archaeological investigation, including a desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and a trial-trench evaluation, which were all carried out between 1997 and 1999. The results of these initial forays led to the stripping and excavation of the main development area early in 2000. This new volume presents the two main phases of activity which were identified during the work, the first dating from the prehistoric period and the second being a major Anglo-Saxon cemetery which provides an immediate context for the famous burial mounds.

Evidence for prehistoric activity spanning the Neolithic to the Iron Age was recovered from the site, complementing the features identified during the main Sutton Hoo excavations. The Tranmer House area was relatively lightly settled during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, while the later Bronze Age was represented by the ring-ditch of a barrow containing a central cremation burial. Traces of an Iron Age co-axial field system have been identified running across both sites, with evidence for the fields having been subdivided over time, although the whole system seems to have fallen out of use by the Roman period. All of this evidence is presented in a single, tightly-focussed chapter which contributes to our growing understanding of the prehistoric exploitation of the Deben valley. The rest of the book is given over to the detailed assessment and analysis of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery which overlay these earlier features.

As is sometimes the case in archaeological evaluation, the geophysics and trial-trenching completely failed to identify the presence of the Early Saxon cemetery, although hints of what was to come had been suggested by fieldwalking undertaken by John Newman in 1984 and the later discovery of the 'Bromeswell bucket', a rare sixth-century Mediterranean copper-alloy vessel. The excavation phase revealed part of an Early Saxon cemetery comprising thirteen cremations, many of which were enclosed by ring-ditches. One cremation was of particularly high status, having been buried in a copper-alloy hanging bowl. Nineteen inhumations were also revealed, almost all of which were furnished with grave-goods, and the bodies of the corpses were represented by dark soil-stains reminiscent of the 'sand-men' identified during the 1980s excavations. The cemetery clearly continues to the north-west of the excavation area, as is evidenced by the earlier surface finds and objects found during a metal-detector survey, also carried out in 2000. All of this material is presented and discussed alongside the excavated evidence.

As is standard for reports of this kind, an extensive grave catalogue and site chronology are presented, along with detailed analyses of the Anglo-Saxon material culture and burial rites. However, what is not standard about this report is that all of these phases, features and artefacts are clearly illustrated and explained, with colour photography used extensively throughout to create an effective and visually impressive record of the site. The lack of surviving bone meant that little can be said about the demography of the buried individuals, but much useful information is gleaned from the cremated assemblages, which include a high proportion of cremated animal bone alongside the human. It would also seem that *in situ* traces of a funeral pyre were identified, a real rarity from sites of this period, and the

impression of a feather preserved in the iron corrosion of a spearhead is a particularly exceptional and striking image.

The discovery and comprehensive analysis of a mixed-rite cemetery predating and adjacent to the famous 'Burial Ground of Kings' is important in its own right, but also contributes greatly to our understanding of the spatial and temporal contexts of Sutton Hoo. Many of the Tranmer House burials contain hints of the burial practices and cultural ties which were later to be writ large in the Sutton Hoo burial record, and it would seem that the cemetery represents the earlier generations of the local elite from whom the Wuffing dynasty emerged in the later years of the sixth century.

Ultimately, Christopher Fern – the principal author, illustrator and editor of the volume – and the extensive team of contributing specialists are to be congratulated on the production of an informative and academically rigorous volume which is a fitting companion to the existing Sutton Hoo reports and opens our eyes to a new chapter in the history of this most famous of sites.

RICHARD HOGGETT

Down by the River: Archaeological, Palaeoenvironmental and Geoarchaeological Investigations of the Suffolk River Valleys. By Benjamin Gearey, Henry Chapman, and Andy Howard. x + 226 pp., maps, plans, diagrams, tables, plates, bibliography, index. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2016. ISBN 978 1 78570 168 9. Price: £25 hb.

The archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential of river valleys has long been recognised and East Anglia has an extensive history of research into Holocene riverine evidence. A considerable amount of work has been in carried out in the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk Fens, with the early work of the Fenland Research Committee followed by the Fenland Survey and number of important excavations, including those at Flag Fen and Must Farm. In comparison, the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental resource stored within Suffolk's river valleys has been relatively untapped. By summarising over eight years of work along the Waveney, Gipping, Stour and Lark, and on the east coast, this monograph aims to address this imbalance.

The publication describes the methodology, results and conclusions of a series of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental projects that were active between 2005 and 2012. These include two phases of the English Heritage funded Suffolk Rivers Valley Project (2006–8); commercial investigations tied to development; two seasons of excavation and follow-up work on a prehistoric timber alignment north of Beccles; and investigations of prehistoric timber alignments at Barsham and Geldeston. The wide range of approaches described is impressive: coring, excavation, assessment and analysis of wood, pollen, beetles, molluscs, plant macrofossils and diatoms, radiocarbon dating, dendrochronology, geophysical survey, preservation assessment, water table monitoring, laser scanning and public engagement are all covered. One of the real strengths of many of the projects is how a large number of these approaches were used in tandem. For example, we know so much more about Holocene landscape development at the Stowmarket Relief Road than any other site in Suffolk, something that is largely down to the wide range of techniques applied.

A theme running throughout the monograph is a desire to try and test innovative approaches. Although largely unsuccessful, the attempt to use a number of geophysical techniques (including earth resistance, induced polarisation and electrical imaging) to search

for timbers along the Beccles alignment is significant; it provides further evidence of how difficult it is to identify structures within floodplains. Timbers from the Beccles and Geldeston alignments are amongst the first of their type to be recorded by laser scanning and the images presented (Fig. 7.10) are impressive. As it is almost impossible to objectively record waterlogged wood, and long-term storage and conservation can be both difficult and expensive, it is easy to see other projects following this lead. The use of multiple fractions to overcome inconsistencies in radiocarbon dates (caused by formation processes, disturbance and/or sampling errors) and secure robust chronologies at Beccles and Hengrave should be followed elsewhere.

It is likely that the monograph's observations and conclusions on Holocene landscape development will be referred to for some time to come. Although different changes were identified at different locations at different times, a number of patterns were observed. At a number of places, it appears, fast flowing water was replaced by slower standing water. Evidence for prehistoric tree clearance was recorded at Ixworth; Neolithic and Bronze Age open habitats were identified at Bury St Edmunds and Sizewell; and hints of Neolithic or Bronze Age grazing animals were found at Stowmarket. Evidence for cultivation and/or processing of flax and hemp was discovered at Great Blakenham and Stowmarket, with that at the latter site amongst the earliest known in the east of England (later Bronze or Iron Age).

Perhaps the most significant site reported on is the prehistoric timber alignment at Beccles. A good, if summary, account of the 2006 and 2007 excavations is provided (a full account having been published previously in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*). Full details are given on the subsequent English Heritage funded research, which included additional dendrochronology that confirmed the use of timbers felled in spring 75 BC, examination of trackways stratigraphically later than the timber alignment, and the discovery of timber artefacts (such as a possible 'rope runner') and Iron Age pottery. Until the Beccles structure was revealed, no prehistoric timber alignments were known in Suffolk. The discovery of another at Barsham in 2007 takes the current total to two, and there is potential for others to be found.

The publication is very well illustrated, with numerous maps, plans, charts, photographs and drawings throughout. A significant number are in presented in colour, including many colour-coded maps and plans. The repeated use of small scale maps to locate study areas alongside large scale insets showing site details is really useful, although some of the insets are sadly missing the rivers shown in the accompanying main map and referred to in the text (Figs 2.7, 2.8, 2.10, 2.13, 3.2, 3.6, 3.10 and 3.14). One puzzling inclusion is the photograph of the Ludham medieval boat (Norfolk) on the front cover. As this site is only mentioned briefly on the very last page of Chapter 7, and was not found in a Suffolk river valley, it seems a strange choice.

It would have been relatively straightforward to present the results of the various projects in this monograph in a number of journal articles. The decision not to do this, but to draw together their wide-ranging research in extensive detail in a single publication, is to be commended. By taking on this challenge, without doubt, the authors have achieved their aim to place the rich archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential of Suffolk's river valleys on a par with those of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Not only this, but their multi-disciplinary approach should inform future development-led and research projects, and therefore inspire future discoveries.

DAVID ROBERTSON

The Cult of St Edmund in Medieval East Anglia. By Rebecca Pinner. ix + 276 pp., map, plates, figs, tables, bibliography, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015. ISBN 978 1 78327 035 4. Price: £60 hb.

On Christmas Eve 1433 King Henry VI, then a boy of twelve, arrived at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds and stayed there, and at the abbot's palace at Elmswell, until Easter. By now Bury was one of the richest abbeys in England, its great church second only to Winchester Cathedral in size. The shrine of St Edmund, containing his apparently incorrupt body, dominated the interior. It was a fitting site for one young English king to venerate the most saintly of his predecessors.

To commemorate the visit, abbot William Curteys commissioned the poet John Lydgate to provide a life of St Edmund. Lydgate's *Life of Edmund* starts with his Saxon parentage and his arrival in England, and proceeds to his wise rule and martyrdom, which is presented as if it mirrored the Passion of Christ. The manuscript survives and is especially notable for its many miniatures of scenes from Edmund's life.[3] The scenes include Henry himself worshipping at the tomb that can be seen in all its opulence. The shrine will, of course be destroyed at the Reformation just a century later.

In her thorough and scholarly study of the cult of St Edmund, Rebecca Pinner presents Lydgate's *Life* as the culmination of 'the textual cult' of St Edmund. Yet, as Pinner notes, virtually nothing is known of Edmund other than that he ruled in East Anglia in the 850s and died in battle with the Danes. There was a long process by which he was constructed into a saint, and Pinner describes it well. By the tenth century his body was in Bury. A legendary life was first related by Abbo, a monk from the Benedictine house at Fleury but residing at Ramsey Abbey, in the late tenth century, in which he claimed to draw on eye-witness accounts of Edmund's martyrdom. Century by century more details were added, and these evolving narratives are described in detail in Part One of this book.

Especially valuable is Pinner's readiness to explore the wider contexts in which the cult grew. The incorruptibility of Edmund's body was advertised as a sign not only of his saintliness, but of his chastity. The body acquired a spiritual potency. When one of Bury's abbots, Leofstan (1044–65), aimed to prove that this was indeed Edmund by attempting to pull the head from the body, the outraged corpse struck him blind. As these legends were disseminated, Edmund furthered his own cause through miracles, most of them of healing or rescue. One group of pilgrims brought offerings to the shrine after they had been saved by Edmund from shipwreck on a voyage back from Rome. Edmund could always be relied on to destroy anyone attempting to violate his tomb or to challenge those threatening the privileges of the abbey. Surviving pilgrim badges from the shrine suggests that most pilgrims were from East Anglia, with few from further afield.

Pinner concludes with a study of the known images of St Edmund, most of them again from East Anglia. Before the Reformation there must have been hundreds, but ninety remain in Norfolk and Suffolk, sixty of which are on painted glass or on chancel screen panels. Edmund is recognised from the arrow he is carrying, but some images show him with the head of the wolf that tradition says guarded his severed head after his martyrdom. It is the completeness of Pinner's study (originally her PhD thesis) that impresses and will make this book a valuable companion for fans of Suffolk's patron saint.

CHARLES FREEMAN

Suffolk 1775–1845: Conflict and Co-operation. By Michael Stone. 176pp., illustrations in b&w, figures, maps, tables, appendices, bibliography, index. Cambridge: EAH Press, 2015. ISBN 978 0 9576147 0 3. Price: £12.95 pb.

Suffolk during the period of the long war against France and its aftermath is the main focus of Michael Stone's book. This was a time nationally of great social and economic upheaval, taking place against the context of war, feared revolution and invasion. The seventy years covered by the book saw Suffolk decline from relative prosperity to become one of the counties with the highest percentage of paupers. Geographically focused on the rural south-east quadrant of Suffolk, the book has at its centre the parish of Coddenham, the home of the Revd John Longe, who lived in the splendid new vicarage built by his predecessor Nicholas Bacon. Longe came to Coddenham as his curate and married his sister-in-law. Bacon was a rich man, inheriting Shrubland Hall and its estate from his brother and selling it to William Middleton and, since he had no children, he made John Longe his heir. When he died in 1796, Longe became a wealthy gentleman-parson and it is his life, and his records, including his Diary, published by the Suffolk Records Society in 2008, that the author uses 'to open up a more extensive view of his times'.

Over a period of forty years John Longe made a huge contribution to society, devoting much time to the public good. With the lord lieutenant acting as the link with central government, Longe, together with many of the gentry, provided the necessary infrastructure for the efficient operation of the county at a time of minimal bureaucracy. This was particularly important during the twenty years of the war against France, when Longe and many others organised their villages, provided the needed leadership and took part in the various volunteer groups, both cavalry and infantry, which were formed to defend Suffolk from the feared invasion of the coast by the French. He acted as justice of the peace, both on his own for minor misdemeanours, and together with others JPs at Quarter Sessions for the more serious cases. He served on the boards of the House of Industry and of the Turnpike trusts.

Chapters in the book are based on the various facets of Longe's life. They include ones on the church, the poor, the magistrates, the gentry and the wider turmoil, but each of these chapter titles conceals a much wider range of material than might be supposed. There is an excellent one on the Church of England, including a detailed consideration of the part played by Longe at parochial level from the viewpoint of a gentleman-parson who was a resident and active vicar. As a wealthy man, Longe kept ten household servants, together with the workers on his Home Farm, and the author draws on Longe's records to provide a detailed investigation of his home, estate, servants and tenants, together with an insight into the work of those employed on the Shrubland Home Farm in the 1840s.

The book, as David Dymond so aptly describes it in his foreword, is a distillation of Michael Stone's research, based on the author's work published in recent years, such as Longe's Diary, and articles in the *Suffolk Review*, the Journal of the Suffolk Local History Council. At times this leads, inevitably perhaps, to a lack of cohesion, with some rather abrupt changes in subject matter. There are also some misconceptions about the usefulness of the Volunteer defence groups, who did in fact have basic training because exemption from the Militia ballot depended on attendance at training sessions. Nor were the cavalry units raised by single noblemen. The Yeomanry Cavalry were an organised volunteer corps and the four, later nine, Troops were raised in different Hundreds throughout the county. That said, these are very minor points. The book is the result of much detailed research and is extensively referenced. It covers a period about which there has been limited research in Suffolk and as such will be welcomed by the local historian. Michael Stone, himself a former priest-in-charge of Coddenham, has certainly achieved his stated aim which was to make the material more accessible to the general reader.

MARGARET THOMAS

The Gages of Hengrave and Suffolk Catholicism 1640–1767. Edited by Francis Young. xxxiv + 229 pp., map, pedigree, plates, appendices, bibliography, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Catholic Record Society, 2015.
ISBN 978 0 902832 29 9. Price: £50 hb.

Rookwood Family Papers, 1606–1761. (Suffolk Records Society vol. 59). Edited by Francis Young. lx + 117 pp., pedigree, plates, bibliography, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016. ISBN 978 1 78327 080 4. Price: £25 hb.

It takes a certain type of mentality to write a book which is both academically rigorous and, sufficiently well written to engage the casual reader. Francis Young has pulled this off not just once, but twice, in the books under review. A Culford School alumnus, he obtained his doctorate in history from Cambridge, and is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and council member of the Catholic Record Society.

Each of the books charts the path of a Suffolk recusant family during the times of political unrest of the seventeenth century, drawing on family papers in Cambridge University Library and in private hands. Joy Rowe is acknowledged as being instrumental in encouraging the study of the Gages and as general editor for the Rookwood family papers. The Gages of Hengrave Hall were socially well connected, wealthy, pious, and quietly well respected members of wider society. Young tells us that at one time Hengrave was the largest private house in Suffolk and the family one of the wealthiest. They appear to have been largely successful as a result of keeping their heads down and supporting both the Catholic cause and the Catholic community in west Suffolk, whilst retaining the respect of the country gentry at large. Young's work examines the family's own history within the wider context of recusancy in west Suffolk, from the life of Sir Edmund Gage to whom Charles II bequeathed the baronetcy in 1660, up to the death of Sir William Gage the fourth baronet in 1767. The four chapters discuss the family's fortunes within distinct chronological periods, with a helpful summary at the end of each. Appendices include the valuation of Hengrave Hall with a description of rooms in 1661; lists of Catholic non jurors in 1745; and the Jesuit mission registers of baptisms and marriages from the middle of the eighteenth century, published here for the first time. There are five illustrations, one of them in colour, seven appendices, a good bibliography and indexes of both names and subjects. The book lacks a plan of the Hall which would have helped to make more sense of the 1661 valuation for those unfamiliar with the building, and there is only a passing mention of John Wilby the eminent madrigalist.

Although linked by marriage to the Gage family by 1718, the Rookwoods were a very different entity. The papers begin with Ambrose Rookwood who was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1606 for his part in quartermastering the Gunpowder plot. His namesake suffered a similar fate almost a century later for conspiring to murder William III. Nevertheless they were able to hold onto their estates in Suffolk and Essex, and to thrive to a certain extent, in spite of their royalist and Jacobite sympathies and the recklessness of individual family members. The Suffolk Records Society volume, though thinner than we have become used to, contains a fascinating selection of thirty-seven of the family papers mined largely from the same sources as those supporting the companion volume on the Gages. They are preceded by a sixty-page introduction to contextualise them, and indexed by both name and subject. The volume has twelve plates, six of them in colour, and a genealogical table, and concludes with an obituary to Dr John Blatchly.

TONY REDMAN

NOTES

1 Tester, A., Anderson, S., Riddler, I. and Carr. R., *Staunch Meadow, Brandon, Suffolk: a High Status Middle Saxon Settlement on the Fen Edge*. East Anglian Archaeology 151 (Bury St Edmunds, 2014).
2 Carver, M., *Sutton Hoo: A Seventh-Century Princely Burial Ground and its Context* (London, 2005).
3 It can be accessed online at Harley 2278 in the British Library.