

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Fruitful Endeavours. The 16th-century Household Secrets of Catherine Tollemache at Helmingham Hall.* By Moira Coleman. xiv + 162 pp, preface, 13 plates, bibliography, index. Andover: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2012. ISBN 978-1-86077-734-9. Price: £17.99 pb.

On 18 February 1580 Catherine Cromwell, daughter of Henry, second Lord Cromwell and great-granddaughter of Thomas Cromwell, married Lionel Tollemache of Helmingham Hall in Suffolk, gentleman. She was twenty-three and he was eighteen. For the next thirty-two years Catherine would be mistress of her husband's ancestral home. She bore him nine children, of whom seven survived into adulthood.

Lionel Tollemache was an active, ambitious man, who stood beside Elizabeth I at Tilbury Camp in 1588 and served as a JP and High Sheriff of Suffolk during her reign. On 22 May 1611 he became one of the first eighty-seven baronets created by James I, an honour for which he paid the substantial sum of £900. Less than a year later he also became a Knight of the Bath. But Sir Lionel and his wife, now Lady Tollemache, did not enjoy their new status for long: he died on 5 September 1612 and she left Helmingham shortly afterwards.

This book concentrates on the period from 1580 to 1612, during which Catherine was the mistress of Helmingham Hall. A man such as Lionel Tollemache, heavily involved in public life, needed a capable, energetic wife, a role that Catherine fulfilled to perfection. She was clearly well read and highly intelligent, and was personally involved in every aspect of the life of her household, taking particular responsibility for producing the luxury goods that displayed and underlined her husband's social standing. The main source for this book is the 'highly selective recipe manuscript' that Catherine wrote, which bears witness to her pursuit of 'refinement' in a surprisingly wide variety of spheres: she made preserves, pastry and confectionery, in addition to medicines and perfumes, pomanders and air fresheners. She even left instructions for the production of artificial fruit and vegetables, and a recipe for colouring garden flowers with 'dyers liquors'.

Catherine's recipe book is augmented by her own collection of medieval texts, which was published as *The Tollemache Book of Secrets* by the Roxburghe Club in 2001. The author also makes extensive use of household accounts from Helmingham Hall for the years 1587–89, family letters, and household inventories of 1597 and 1626. The information from these sources is particularly valuable, since the documents themselves remain in private hands. We learn much about the clothes worn by Lionel and Catherine and their daughters, and the furnishings of both the main house and the numerous service rooms.

Parts of the text are rather repetitive, and a few sections would have benefited from some pruning. Do we really need eleven pages on quinces, especially as we are told that 'the quince appears rarely in Catherine's own *Receipts*'? The memorial to Catherine on the south wall of the chancel of Helmingham church is quoted frequently, and is illustrated in the frontispiece, but the writing is very difficult to make out in the photograph. A full transcript would have been helpful.

There is much in this book to interest local historians, as well as students of Tudor country house life and household management. Catherine Tollemache deserves to be remembered, not least because modern scientists have commented on the way in which her recipes reflect observation and attention to detail. She understood what she was doing and communicated it clearly in her manuscript. She has, indeed, been described as 'an early empirical scientist', living, it must be remembered, at a time when the vast majority of women could neither read nor write.

JOANNA MARTIN

*Five Centuries of an English Parish Church. The State of Melford Church, Suffolk.*  
 By David Dymond and Clive Paine. xi + 205 pp, foreword, 78 plates, figures,  
 maps, appendix, bibliography, index. Cambridge: EAH Press, 2012.  
 ISBN 978-0-9560384-6-3. Price: £15 pb.

The remarkable earlier editions of this book, entitled *The Spoil of Melford Church*, took a while to percolate into the academic psyche, but have long since established a considerable reputation amongst the historical fraternity. At the same time, they disappointed many would-be readers, who, having heard of the book's unique attributes, found themselves unable to get their hands on a copy. The paucity of both published and unpublished churchwardens' accounts had always been an obstacle to a better understanding of the process of reformation in the English church. Despite the somewhat low-key marketing of the pioneer editions in 1989 and 1992, the book sparked a noticeable tremor in academia by managing to slake to an unprecedented extent this growing thirst for evidential witness at a parish level. For the same reasons, in 1992 Eamon Duffy's ambitious and well promoted countrywide study, *The Stripping of the Altars*, was universally welcomed, although Dymond and Paine can claim to have got there first.

With its considerably increased print run, this expanded 2012 edition will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of ecclesiologists worldwide. Its paradigmatic status is now even better deserved, given that an enviably comprehensive spectrum of documentation from c. 1500 to the end of the nineteenth century is now provided. Even in spite of the lack of any earlier documentation, Long Melford's records must stand comparison with all but a half-dozen other English parish churches. The historical preamble is sixty-five pages long, compared to three pages in 1989, and there is another twelve-page introduction to the 'The documents and their history' which is arranged in no fewer than thirty-four sections. The book is illustrated in black-and-white, and colour, with over one hundred plans, maps, plates and line drawings, compared to just thirty black-and-white illustrations originally. The chronological expansion of the new edition is reflected in an increase of more than a third in the number of bibliographical references compared to the 1989 edition, an increase of more than one third. This reflects both the meticulous updating and the expanded subject matter.

The kernel remains Roger Martin's 'The state of Melford church ... as I did know it', the list of church goods, 1529, and the churchwardens' accounts of 1547–48, but many more documents have been transcribed which were not previously included, particularly for the sixteenth century, thus contributing to the creation of a fuller picture. For the late fifteenth century, the will and testament of John Hill, 1495, and the testament of John Clopton, 1497, are important additions. Above and beyond are the documents relating to the period 1600 to 1900. They cover the repair of the chancel at the restoration of the monarchy; the repair of the church house; the fitting out of the Lady Chapel as a school; a churchwardens' account for 1681 and a list of church goods, c. 1683; the collapse of the tower, 1701; followed by the three major Victorian restorations by Richard Almack, 1828–38; Daniell Mills, 1853–57, and Sir William Parker, 1868–69.

Predictably, Dymond's introductory sections on the history of the church and its documents offer a narrative that is both instructive and pleasurable to read. The footnotes are also bursting with information, however detailed, ensuring this volume's suitability for further study. The editing is exemplary and adds greatly to the enjoyment and efficacy of the experience.

CHARLES TRACY

*Art, Faith and Place in East Anglia – From Prehistory to the Present.*

Edited by T.A. Heslop, E. Mellings and M. Thøfner, xvi + 352 pp,  
 17 colour plates, numerous b&w images. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012.  
 ISBN 978-1-84383-744-2. Price: £45 hb.

This attractively produced volume is the final outcome of an Arts and Humanities Research Council supported research project entitled 'Icon: 2000 Years of Art and Belief in Norfolk' and despite the 'East Anglia' in the title this is very much a Norfolk-centric volume. The essay by Elizabeth de Bièvre is challengingly entitled 'But where is Norfolk?', though from this side of the Waveney the cry could be more aptly 'But where is Suffolk?'. Of its twenty essays, thirteen are expressly on Norfolk; four are East Anglian; only two are on Suffolk and one has a wider British remit. Yes, this is a familiar Suffolk rant, but it would be good to see a volume emanating from the University of East Anglia that had a more balanced content with regard to the two counties making up East Anglia.

The general theme behind the collection of essays is beliefs and the ways these are expressed and/or experienced in objects and places, and it is perhaps the uncertainties that often lie behind adventurous discussions of beliefs, myths, magic and 'things of the mind' that led to an introductory admission that this work was 'not a conventional academic volume'. I come from the generation of archaeologists that were taught that questions regarding beliefs are amongst the most difficult to answer confidently using archaeological data. There is very rarely an explicit link between the belief that exists in the mind and the physical expression of that belief – more often than not it comes down to how the uninitiated observer wishes to interpret the material before them, inserting their own personal beliefs into an already murky world of symbols, shapes and placings. Robert J. Wallis's essay on 'Pagans in Place, from Stonehenge to Seahenge: "Sacred" Archaeological Monuments and Artefacts in Britain' is an illuminating window on the alternative views of the modern day 'Pagans' who challenge the rights of academics to hold, interpret and conserve the relics of the past. We have entered a world where an empathetic assertion is as valid as an evidence-based one: there is no 'right way', just different ways – though, of course, your own way is the only 'true' way!

Within the general theme of beliefs and their manifestations, the twenty essays range widely in subject matter and time – as the title says – from prehistory to the present. Some are firmly based in archaeological or historical evidence, while others stray, or perhaps soar, into different dimensions. An interesting book to read, but perhaps do not suspend disbelief in every case. The essays (sadly with no biographical notes on the authors – perhaps intentionally to stop us pre-judging them) are:

Sandy Heslop and Margit Thøfner, 'Introduction: On Faith, Objects and Locality'; Elizabeth de Bièvre, 'But where is Norfolk?'; Daphne Nash Briggs, 'Sacred Image and Regional Identity in Late-Prehistoric Norfolk'; Adrian Marsden, 'Piety from the Ploughsoil: Religion in Roman Norfolk through recent Metal-Detector Finds'; Tim Pestell, 'Paganism in Early-Anglo-Saxon East Anglia'; Matthew Champion, 'Devotion, Pestilence and Conflict: The Medieval Wall Paintings of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath'; Carole Hill, 'Here be Dragons: The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch and Strategies for Survival'; Elizabeth Rutledge, 'The Medieval Jews of Norwich and their Legacy'; David King, 'Late-Medieval Glass-Painting in Norfolk: Developments in Iconography and Craft c. 1250–1540'; John Peake, 'Graffiti and Devotion in Three Maritime Churches'; Nicola Whyte, 'Norfolk Wayside Crosses: Biographies of Landscape and Place'; Chris King, 'Landscapes of Faith and Politics in Early-Modern Norwich'; Francesca Vanke, 'Practice and Belief: Manifestations of Witchcraft, Magic and Paganism in East Anglia from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day'; Stefan Muthesius,

'Provincialty and the Victorians: Church Design in Nineteenth-Century East Anglia'; Catherine Hesketh-Harvey, 'Maharajah Duleep Singh, Elveden and Sikh Pilgrimage'; Karl Bell, 'Supernatural Folklore and Popular; Imagination: Re-reading Object and Locality in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Norfolk'; Elizabeth A. Mellings, '*Pro Patria Mori*: Christian Rallies and War Memorials of Early-Twentieth-Century Norfolk'; Robert J. Wallis, 'Pagans in Place, from Stonehenge to Seahenge: "Sacred" Archaeological Monuments and Artefacts in Britain'; Trevor Ashwin, 'Art, Spirit and Ancient Places in Norfolk'; Elizabeth A. Mellings, 'Sacred Sites and Blessed Objects: Art and Religion in Contemporary Norfolk'.

EDWARD MARTIN

*Victorian Protestantism and Bloody Mary: the Legacy of Religious Persecution in Tudor England.* By Peter Wickins. 378pp. Bury St Edmunds: Arena Books, 2012. ISBN 978-1-906791-95-7. Price: £17.99 pb.

Peter Wickins's book is simultaneously a contribution to two separate areas of the historiography of Suffolk: the reign of Mary I and the Victorian church. The serious study of Victorian Christianity is beginning to flourish in the twenty-first century, and Wickins's detailed account of the disputes that surrounded the erection of a monument to Reformation 'martyrs' in Bury St Edmunds in 1903 is a timely contribution. Little has been written on Marian Suffolk, an area of research hampered by an absence of source material beyond Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, since the publication of Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Suffolk and the Tudors* (1986). Wickins's study is doubly welcome therefore, and is an intriguing analysis of the narratives that lay behind the surprisingly brittle civic identities of Edwardian Protestants.

The book begins with a general account of conflicts over the Church of England's 'Protestant' identity in the 1890s between ritualists and their opponents, a story hilarious at times and with obvious parallels in the present day dispute over episcopal authority in the General Synod. Those who question the Church of England's survival as an established church in the twenty-first century need only consider the miracle of its survival as a single institution at the end of the nineteenth. Wickins goes on to examine the disputes that erupted in Bury following the suggestion that a monument to martyrs of the Marian era should be erected; the inscription, size and site of the structure were all fiercely debated, revealing differences not only between Protestants and ritualists but also between various shades of Protestant opinion. I have often wondered about this monument, which stands at the edge of St Mary's churchyard facing the Norman Tower, and this book finally provides thorough answers. Wickins's illumination of the subtleties of the religious positions adopted by the townsmen is perhaps the book's most significant achievement.

From chapter three onwards Wickins devotes himself to an examination of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and attempts to define the precise nature of the beliefs of people martyred during the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary, before examining the evidence from Suffolk in detail. Wickins offers an even-handed and objective treatment of the evidence that is free from confessional bias or academic tribalism, acknowledging the limits of our knowledge when it comes to the eccentric personal beliefs of individuals prepared to die for a spectrum of heterodoxy from Lollardy to Lutheranism. However, it is regrettable that Wickins does not engage with some of the more recent scholarship on the reign of Mary Tudor, such as Eamon Duffy's *Fires of Faith* (2009) and some of the more recent work of David Loades (like his chapter in *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor* (ed. John Edwards)). Duffy's *Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition* (2011) probably appeared too late for Wickins to consider it,

but has much light to shed on the Marian restoration in East Anglia, arguing that Mary was less interested in restoration than Wickins suggests. Wickins's analysis is certainly stronger when dealing with the heretics themselves than with the motivations and processes of their persecutors.

The religious history of early modern East Anglia has been the object of intense attention from some of the most formidable historians of the last twenty-five years, including Patrick Collinson, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Eamon Duffy and John Walters, yet Wickins's book is evidence that there is still new material and new perspectives to be elucidated. Even if Wickins's research and conclusions on the early modern period are not entirely original, his comparison of the real beliefs of early modern radicals with perceptions of those beliefs in late nineteenth-century Britain offers a fresh synthesis, and it is to be hoped that there will be further studies of historical perception in Victorian East Anglia.

FRANCIS YOUNG

