

BOOK REVIEWS

Landscapes and Artefacts: Studies in East Anglian Archaeology Presented to Andrew Rogerson. Edited by Steven Ashley and Adrian Marsden. xiii + 250pp., figures, graph and tables. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2014. ISBN 9781905739752. Price: £40 pb.

This volume is presented in honour of Andrew Rogerson, one of the most influential archaeologists in East Anglia. It contains twenty-one eclectic papers written by his colleagues and contemporaries, arranged in broadly chronological order. These scholars give the reader a fascinating insight into the archaeology of East Anglia. Although each paper stands alone, offering an admirably concise and informative snapshot of its subject area, there are overarching themes that tie them together and reflect Andrew Rogerson's interests over the years.

A large number of the papers focus on metal small finds discovered by amateur metal detectorists. These finds have often been initially identified and recorded by Andrew Rogerson and his colleagues as well as being collated from further afield. Essays on Bronze Age hoards by Andrew Lawson and Alan West, and on Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval material culture by John Davies, Jude Plouviez, Adrian Marsden, Helen Geake, Edward Martin, Steven Ashley and Martin Biddle, are the result of the triumph of open-minded professional archaeologists, of which Andrew Rogerson is one.

These professionals, unlike many elsewhere in the country, were quick to recognise the value of working with amateur metal detectorists, and to realise that when best practice is followed metal detecting can make a huge contribution to archaeological knowledge. This is especially important in East Anglia, an area ravaged by modern arable agricultural techniques. Their pioneering liaison with metal detectorists led the way for the creation of the National Portable Antiquities Scheme, and many of their papers contain examples involving accurate recording, exploration of find spots and ultimately the deposition of artefacts in local museums. As well as focusing on the objects themselves, these papers often expand outwards, analysing distributions and placing groups of artefacts in their landscape, and economic, social and political contexts.

Another theme is the examination of the excavated sites, landscapes and churches that Andrew Rogerson has worked on. Andrew has a particular interest in the Anglo-Saxon period. The 'Spong man' from the Anglo-Saxon site of Spong Hill and the burials from Morning Thorpe, which lacked gender indicating grave goods, are put into context by Catherine Hills and Kenneth Penn respectively. I also enjoyed Anthony Thwaite's poem, 'Digging a Saxon cemetery,' which is reminiscent of their work at Morning Thorpe. Tim Pestell provides a stimulating account of the productive site at Bawdsey, and Stanley West pulls together the archaeological evidence for, and considers the significance of, the area around Icklingham, Suffolk during the Roman and early Anglo-Saxon periods.

For the medieval period, pre-urban Norwich is innovatively explored by Brian Ayers. Medieval churches and their origins are reassessed using a variety of architectural, documentary and excavation evidence: Stephen Heywood discusses the private chapels erected by Herbert de Losinga at North and South Elmham; Tom Williamson places Norfolk's isolated churches into a wider national context; and T.A. Heslop focuses on late eleventh-century churches around Great Dunham.

Historical research, also a passion of Andrews', is represented by the contributions by Elizabeth Rutledge on the enigmatic chapel of St Ann, Norwich, and a study of a newly discovered 1820s painting of New Buckenham by Paul Rutledge. Bob Silvester presents the fascinating life and work of Thomas Badeslade. Finally, Peter Wade-Martins charts the development of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust in its early years. This paper highlights the

long tradition that exists in Norfolk of promoting and conserving its archaeology, and Andrew Rogerson's work represents a more recent chapter in this.

All in all, this volume contains something for everyone with an interest in the archaeology and history of East Anglia, be it in small finds, landscape history, urban or ecclesiastical archaeology. It also reflects the amazing contribution Andrew Rogerson has made, and continues to make, to the understanding of the archaeology of East Anglia. I strongly recommend it.

FAYE MINTER

The Buildings of England: Suffolk: West. By James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner.
xx + 635pp., figures and plates. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015.
ISBN 9780300196559. Price: £35 hb.

The Buildings of England: Suffolk: East. By James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner.
xx + 677pp., figures and plates. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015.
ISBN 9780300196542. Price: £35 hb.

What a magnificent gift James Bettley has provided for all those who love Suffolk and its history in these two volumes in the *Buildings of England* series, replacing the single volume which first appeared in 1961 and was then lightly revised in 1974. The only gripe that we all have about the revised *Buildings of England* volumes of the last two decades is that they no longer fit in the pocket, but no doubt a visit to a top-quality outward-bound store on the High Street or on the Net will reveal some specially-designed 'Pevsner jacket' which is not only rain- and storm-proof but Pevsner-capacious. Those more elderly among us who retain a mental map of the pre-1974 administrative division of Suffolk between east and west will have to update our memories in a different respect, because these two volumes observe their own (frankly more equal) division of the county, and it will be as well to keep an eye on the introductory maps to see which volume contains the object of consultation before heaving one of them out of the car for a perambulation.

My own engagement with the predecessors of these two volumes dates back nearly half a century, for at the end of the 1960s the late Norman Scarfe had sent out a call to the SIAH for corrections to the first edition, and I duly submitted my own memorandum. I forget now how many items it contained, and indeed I completely forgot about it until I belatedly bought the 1974 second edition, and to my surprise, found myself in two footnotes as 'Mr D.N.J. MacCulloch writes', both at Wetherden and at Brockley. Together, these additions to Pevsner represent my earliest scholarly appearance in print, and naturally I regard it as the only flaw in James Bettley's revision that the information in those footnotes is now anonymously digested into the flow of the text. Yet there is so much compensation, not least the splendid colour pictures which replace the black and white photographs of a Bakelite-era Suffolk retained from 1961 in the 1974 edition, to say nothing of a lavish extra provision of plans and line drawings in the text. The colour photos reach as far forward chronologically as the audacious Balancing Barn at Thorington of 2009–10, but it is typical of the judicious aesthetic sense of Bettley's text that a footnote at the appropriate place draws attention to the fact that this remarkable concept replaced 'an interesting group of C17–C18 timber-framed farm buildings' (*Suffolk: East*, p. 546n).

It is fitting that Suffolk's most ambitious contribution to modern church architecture dominates the front jacket of the western volume: the triumphantly traditional crossing tower of Bury Cathedral, which supplanted to general relief Stephen Dykes Bower's own proposals, of which Pevsner had in his first edition been notably critical. Never an enthusiast for Gothic

as a living style, he commented of the proposed concave-sided flèche that 'it will look odd at Bury', and he additionally called the mooted strainer arch for the crossing 'a strange enrichment'. Dykes Bower clearly resented these observations, and they disappeared in 1974, to be replaced by a fulsome footnote thanking the architect for his help, and carefully saying nothing of the proposed crossing tower, which was in any case by then intended to take a different form, still not nearly as effective as what has now emerged from a rethink by Warwick Pethers (compare the 1961 text, pp. 126–27, with that of 1974, pp. 141–42). The eastern volume bears on its jacket a much older monument, Freston Tower, also an appropriate symbol of what is old and new in Bettley's text, because thanks to the detective work of our much-lamented late President John Blatchly, it has been assigned a new patron, the Ipswich merchant Thomas Gooding, rather than the Latymer family, and a new date and context, as a folly to impress Queen Elizabeth on her royal visit of 1579, rather than being given a vague date in the 1550s.

If Pevsner was himself capable of revising his commentary as well as incorporating factual emendments, the great challenge of a reviser in the now archipelago-wide series of *Buildings* is how far to preserve or pastiche the salty character of the Master's original prose. I was pleased to see that St John's Church Bury St Edmunds (architect William Ranger, 1840–41) still possesses 'an ignorant spire', which whether or not you find that uncompromising piece of townscape endearing, is no less than the truth. It is worth considering a more extended example of what Bettley has done to an equally emphatic previous judgement in earlier editions of *Suffolk*. Pevsner took strongly agin the exterior ensemble of Long Melford parish church. He spoke of its 'many curious impurities' and of 'the strange Lady Chapel – a long, low attachment with three parallel pitched roofs, that make no sense with the very flat pitches of the church roofs and cut painfully into the E window. Bodley, who ... replaced the C18 brick tower by one designed by himself, knew more about purity than the builders of the late C15.' (Pevsner, *Suffolk*, 1974, pp. 343–44.)

What Pevsner did not grasp was that he was not looking at the visual intentions of those late fifteenth-century builders. The remarkable Lady Chapel was admittedly very unusual in conception, but that original conception is now only recoverable inside. It was designed as a giant-scale reliquary, a central Marian shrine chapel, probably with a clerestory bearing a flat roof to match those of the main church, which projected above and was surrounded on all sides by a flat-roofed ambulatory. It would be fascinating to discover the architectural prototype for this concept, but it was a rectilinear version of the round churches of three centuries earlier, and it would have shouted 'goal of pilgrimage' to whoever saw it for the first time. By the early seventeenth century, the Lady Chapel had become a village school, and it long remained so. Perhaps to remedy structural weakness in the central unit, but possibly also from a dislike of the Popish implications of the building's exterior, in 1680, the roofing was radically altered, as Bettley notes, to three parallel pitched roofs with emphatic eastern gables. This did not alter the original ambulatory ceilings inside, and they remain in position to this day under the later gabled roofs. At Melford Bettley has retained some of Pevsner's pejorative tone, but he divides up his critical remarks, no longer putting the blame on the fifteenth-century builders, and he is not so kind as Pevsner to Bodley's recasing of Melford's Georgian tower. There is much more literary detective work along these lines for the reader to pursue, to match Pevsner's and Bettley's detection on Suffolk's architectural treasures. Once antiquaries have profited from their day out with Bettley's two volumes, they will have an absorbing parlour game for the evenings to see how subtly and elegantly he has transformed and extended the great enterprise of *The Buildings of England* for a new generation.

Isaac Johnson of Woodbridge. Georgian Surveyor and Artist. By John Blatchly. 124 pp., numerous illustrations in colour and b&w. Ipswich: J.M. Blatchly in association with the Suffolk Record Office, 2014. ISBN 97809564584-4-5. Price: £15 pb.

It is perhaps appropriate that John's last book should be on antiquarian maps, prints and drawings of Suffolk, a subject that brought him great pleasure and where his knowledge was unsurpassed. It is also fitting, perhaps, that it should focus on Isaac Johnson, for Johnson was the subject of one of John's first Suffolk publications, a slim but glossy booklet entitled *Isaac Johnson of Woodbridge 1754–1835*, published by the Suffolk Record Office way back in 1979. A comparison of the two publications shows how much work John did in the last thirty years in tracking down, with great zeal, examples of the work of Johnson, who ranks as one of Suffolk's most prolific mapmakers of the Georgian period. The result is an evocative window on Suffolk (and Norfolk and occasionally elsewhere) in the decades either side of 1800. But Johnson was more than just a mapmaker, he obviously took great joy in drawing and painting, not only the churches, halls, monuments and countryside of Suffolk, but also its gardens, flowers and people, including a glimpse of Johnson's own private life in the painting of him at work in his house with his family grouped around him. Delving into the book one has the visible delights of Johnson's drawings and maps, but accompanying them one also has John's ever-erudite commentary. There are unexpected things like Johnson's illustrations of great trees, including the giant Helmingham Elm and cobbler-inhabited Worlingham Common Oak. The churches include the views of the near-ruined church at Letheringham with its wealth of Wingfield monuments – a research subject that John also took forward in exemplary fashion in our *Proceedings*. Johnson luckily had a strong antiquarian leaning and his sketches and drawings are an important source of information about sites and objects that are now lost, such as All Saints church at Dunwich and the College Gate at Sudbury. The depictions of halls include a fascinating view of Helmingham in its short-lived (thankfully) white-stuccoed phase, but also an engaging selection of unidentified buildings – a challenge from John to those who follow in his footsteps. And it is a challenge for us now that John is now no longer there to do the identifying for us – something that he was doing with great precision a week before his death. In all, this book is a delight to dip into, to discover, and to remember John by.

EDWARD MARTIN

The Abbey and Mint of Bury St Edmunds from 1279. (The British Numismatic Society Special Publication, No. 11). By Robin J. Eaglen. xi + 249 pp., 21 b&w plates. London: Spink, 2014. ISBN 9781907427374. Price: £45 hb.

This is the second instalment of Robin Eaglen's extensive study of the ecclesiastical mint at Bury St Edmunds and its relationship with crown, church, and town. In the first part, *The Abbey and Mint of Bury St Edmunds to 1279* (2006), for which he was awarded the 2008 North Book Prize by the British Numismatic Society, Eaglen examined the foundation of the mint in the mid 11th century through to the end of the Long Cross coinage in 1279. The current volume focuses on the new sterling coinage introduced by Edward I in 1279 and issued for half a century at Bury prior to the demise of the mint in c. 1329 during the reign of Edward III. From the outset (p. x) Eaglen is clear that the volume of surviving Bury mint sterling coins makes a comprehensive corpus of all known examples impractical. Rather, he presents a detailed, die-linked study of almost 2500 examples drawn from his own personal collection; a range of private collections; hoard data; and the collections of several major

public institutions. The result is a thorough and representative catalogue of some 499 die combinations intertwined with comprehensive historical narrative that presents the latter stages of the Bury mint in its social and ecclesiastical setting.

The volume can be broadly divided into two halves. In the first half, Chapter 1 provides an overview of the origins and early years of the mint, as presented in the first volume, followed by an exploration of the social context and historical development of the mint, as well as analysis of the successive dies and die combinations, in use during the reigns of Edward I (Chapter 2) and Edwards II and III (Chapter 3) respectively. Finally, Chapter 4 examines the demise of the mint through to the dissolution of the abbey in 1539, with brief comment on the surviving remains of the abbey precinct through to the present day. The second half of the volume presents the core numismatic dataset and largely comprises Eaglen's die-linked catalogue. Beginning with the slightly unusual Robert of Hadleigh reverse dies, and continuing with those naming the Bury mint, each combination is presented chronologically based on J.J. North's classification of Edwardian sterling issues. The catalogue is clearly organised, cross-referenced to examples present in Eaglen's study group, and aided by individual photographs of each die link in 21 plates at the end of the volume. The three appendices at the end of the volume offer very useful visual overviews of English sterling issues (Appendix 1), as well as summaries of the corpus (Appendix 2) and the known die combinations (Appendix 3).

For the non-specialist audience the great benefit of Eaglen's study lies in its integration of numismatic with historical and ecclesiastical datasets. This is more than simply a dry numismatic die study, and for those interested in medieval Bury instead makes accessible a range of historical sources presented in a clear and very readable format. Equally, it affords an excellent introduction to the development and identification of Bury's coinage against the backdrop of broader national monetary change, while for more serious numismatic study of the Bury mint the die-linked catalogue and associated analysis should be the first point of reference.

ANDREW BROWN

A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds 1257–1301: Simon of Luton and John of Northwold. By Antonia Gransden. xxiv + 349 pp., figures, maps, bibliography, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015. ISBN 9781783270262. Price: £60 hb.

The tradition of books and learning in Bury St Edmunds stretches back more than seven hundred years. At the end of the thirteenth century the abbey was the centre of historical writing in eastern England, and by the close of the Middle Ages prided itself on one of the country's largest libraries, owning some 2100 books. Over the past fifty years Antonia Gransden has done more than any other scholar to breath fresh life into that tradition and to explore the history of one of our greatest Benedictine houses. This volume is her latest offering.

Two of the books in that library, the *Bury Chronicle* and the *Gesta Sacristarum*, are among her principal sources. They record life under abbots Simon (1257–79) and John (1279–1301), and John's able sacrist William of Hoo. It was a time of financial stringency with many contemporary echoes. William was 'excessively rigid and austere' in his economy measures. He needed to be. The abbey was burdened by taxation and other heavy expenditure and, at times, was grateful for the low cost of borrowing. Both Simon and John had to travel to Rome to seek confirmation of their appointments from the Pope at a combined cost of nearly £2500 – an enormous sum in those days. Simon fought expensive legal battles with the Greyfriars to force them out of town, and with the earl of Gloucester to retain the manor of Mildenhall. The parliament of 1265 extracted 800 marks, more than £500, as a penalty for his alleged

complicity in the Barons' war against king Henry III. Henry's son Edward I was in constant need of funds to fight his many wars and the rich abbey was a soft target. In addition to regular taxes, his *Quo Warranto* campaign threatened the Liberties of St Edmund until the saint himself intervened by appearing to the king in a dream and so helping to broker a compromise and restore harmony.

The abbey responded to these challenges and remained solvent in a variety of ways, though the monks and their servants did not escape entirely. New rules promoted economy in the running of their domestic affairs. William of Hoo restricted their 'pittances, allowances of food and the like'. Even their allocation of hazel nuts was limited. Both abbots spent time abroad in order to avoid the cost of entertaining important guests, such as the king who was a regular and demanding visitor. But the real sting of austerity was felt outside the monastic precincts. Vigorous reform of estate management enhanced efficiency and profitability, generating the earliest of the abbey's accounts and court rolls. Money rents rose, the burden of labour services increased, and renders of produce and other servile obligations were exacted in full. Sheep replaced arable crops on some manors to exploit the growing demand for wool. The commercial prosperity of Bury, its markets and fairs, provided another ready source of income. As Gransden reminds us 'St Edmunds demanded as big a share as possible in the profits of trade within the Liberty'. Such measures did not, of course, make the abbey popular with townspeople or rural tenants and contributed to the resentment that was to explode more than once in the 1300s.

Happily the interests of abbey and town sometimes coincided. By increasing the spiritual benefits available to the faithful through the sale of indulgences, and by building a spacious and colourful new Lady Chapel to tap into the popular Marian cult, Abbot Simon attracted more pilgrims. They donated to the abbey's shrines and spent money in local shops and stalls. Nearing the end of his life, Abbot John noticed that the cemetery, in which previous generations of townsfolk were buried, was in a shocking condition. Their bones lay bare, uncovered and scattered over the ground. He was thereby prompted to build a charnel chapel, the remains of which can still be seen in the Great Churchyard. The chapel served a dual purpose, one to provide a more seemly resting place for the remains of the dead, and another to accommodate two chaplains who would pray for the souls of the departed including, in due course, John himself.

No-one has the same encyclopaedic knowledge of the medieval abbey as Gransden, and this her latest volume is full of brilliant nuggets of information on which one can completely rely. When, for instance, she says that the *Bury Chronicle* dates two lunar eclipses by reference to the Mohammedan era, and explains why, you know it to be the case. If I had any criticism of her work it would be that the abundance of such nuggets sometimes makes the page difficult to digest. Nevertheless, anyone interested in medieval Bury St Edmunds will be well rewarded by the read.

NICHOLAS R. AMOR

Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest. Edited by Tom Licence. xi+266 pp., plates, figures, maps, tables, appendixes, index. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014. ISBN 9781843839316. Price: £60 hb.

Bury St Edmunds preserved the cult and memory of the last East Anglian king. By 1100 Bury was known as a centre of learning with an incredibly rich archive, and St Edmund, England's patron saint, was known in France and Italy. This collection is largely based on lectures delivered at a conference held at the cathedral in Bury St Edmunds in March 2012 and benefits

from several of the collaborators working on the extensive eleventh-century archive simultaneously. As the title suggests, the book investigates the concerns and relationships of this community after the Norman Conquest.

The contributors have considered the effect of the Conquest in terms of the changes it accelerated, in many ways personified by the tenure of Abbot Baldwin (1065–97), but also in terms of the pre-Conquest trends it curtailed. They argue that these shifts are best explained through the study of major religious houses ‘partly because their involvement in those changes sharpens our understanding of processes at work, partly because their many-layered archives demand complex analysis’ (pp. 2–3). Similar collections published in the mid 1990s act as precedents (*Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066–1199*, and *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093–1193*). This book goes further than those studies by extending its range to Bury’s interest in medicine.

The abbey at Bury was a memorial to a previous conquest, and the community imagined and articulated their identity with reference to invasion and resistance. Wide-ranging yet focused, this collection invites us to consider the impact of the Conquest from a range of perspectives, taking in liturgical evidence, architectural history, manuscript transmission, and medicine. The chapters here range from the impact of the French physician-abbot Baldwin and hagiographer Herman the Archdeacon on the development of the cult, to the role of the women, as recluses and peasants, in the community. As a group the chapters work together exceedingly well, with several themes running throughout (such as the relationship with the community of St Denis, through comparisons of the use of charters to establish privileges, manuscript traditions, and cult development) and several chapters explicitly drawing upon each other. This is exemplified by the final three, which discuss the state of medical learning before and after Abbot Baldwin’s tenure and draw upon the same group of eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts.

The balance of the book presents an interesting overview of the different impacts of conquest. Each topic is framed within the wider context of the community, and eleventh-century politics and society more generally. This volume will be of interest to scholars interested in the politics of the Anglo-Norman empire and post-conquest attitudes to Anglo-Saxon saints, especially Bates’ chapter which places Bury’s history within the historiography of English saints’ cults. Van Houts’ chapter draws attention to the unusual scale of the female presence at Bury. Those studying the individual careers of Abbot Baldwin, Herman the Archdeacon, and Goscelin of Saint-Bertin will also find much of value, especially the chapter concerning the new works attributed to Herman (which follows up on Licence’s 2009 *English Historical Review* article and emphasises Herman’s borrowing from early Frankish chronicles and the hagiography of Sigebert of Gembloux). The chapters drawing on liturgy and palaeography, while of principal interest to specialists, are presented in such a way as to be engaging to those without advanced training.

This book is notable for its wide-ranging use of plates, figures, tables and appendixes, which are uniformly helpful. Maps and diagrams are employed to explain the sequence of construction of the abbey church, illuminated initials, palaeographic examples and musical extracts are included, as are tables showing the origin and provenance of manuscript fragments in the Bury Library, and number of lay women and free peasants on the estate in 1066 and 1086. There is a thorough index and detailed footnotes.

Overall, this volume is a welcome addition to the discussion surrounding the impact of the Norman Conquest and the historiography of English saints, as well as an authoritative account of the response of one abbey to the events of 1066 and the development of St Edmund’s cult.

Staunch Meadow, Brandon, Suffolk: A High Status Middle Saxon Settlement on the Fen Edge. By Andrew Tester, Sue Anderson, Ian Riddler and Robert Carr. xiv+440 pp, plates, figures, maps, tables, appendices, bibliography, index. Bury St Edmunds: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, 2014. East Anglian Archaeology 151. ISBN 9780956874740. Price: £45 pb.

We are told that patience is a virtue and that the best things come to those who wait. The full publication of the high-status Middle Saxon (AD 650–800) settlement excavated at Staunch Meadow, Brandon, between 1980 and 1988 has been eagerly awaited by Anglo-Saxon specialists for more than a quarter of a century. Until now, anyone wanting to know about the site has had to refer to the short interim article published in the journal *Antiquity* at the end of the excavations¹ and personal communication with the excavation team, all of whom, it must be said, have been very willing to share their thoughts and unpublished data with interested parties. The publication of this much-anticipated volume marks the end of a protracted period of post-excavation analysis, but has it been worth the wait? The answer is an emphatic ‘yes’.

The archaeological significance of the earthworks at Staunch Meadow was confirmed during the 1970s, when a metal-detectorist discovered the iconic gold plaque bearing an image of St John the Evangelist, presumed to derive from the cover of an Anglo-Saxon Bible, which has since become well known throughout Suffolk and beyond. Subsequent plans to level these earthworks and create playing fields triggered a programme of archaeological excavation which spanned the best part of the 1980s and resulted in the excavation of a vast swathe of Middle Saxon settlement nestled on an island of windblown sand in the Little Ouse. From the earliest days of the excavation the Staunch Meadow settlement was recognised as being nationally important, in terms both of the extent and preservation of the features excavated and of the completeness of the finds assemblage. This monograph therefore presents a plethora of archaeological riches.

The foundations of at least thirty-five rectangular timber buildings were identified, representing one of the largest samples of such features nationwide, and their analysis has added greatly to our understanding of early timber architecture. Foremost amongst these buildings was the most complete example of an Anglo-Saxon wooden church, with its associated cemetery, so far excavated in England. This church was replaced at least once during the occupation of the site, and part of a second cemetery extending out of the excavation area was also revealed. Complete plans and full discussions of each building and the skeletal remains from the cemeteries are included in the report and make for fascinating reading.

The finds assemblage from the site is equally impressive, comprising over 157,000 fragments of animal bone, 24,000 sherds of pottery and 416kg of metalworking slag. Window glass, vessel glass, coins, pins and other dress accessories (including several made from precious metals) were also discovered in relatively large quantities. All of these artefacts are illustrated and described in the extensive specialist reports contained within the volume, and will doubtless be a rich source of *comparanda* for many years to come. Of particular interest is the evidence for various forms of literacy on the site, with three styli, several fragments of glass inkwells, an antler inkwell and three objects with runic inscriptions having been recovered. All of these artefacts are indicative of the site’s high status, but issues of interpretation have always dogged the Staunch Meadow settlement and others like it, with much debate about whether the site was a secular establishment or perhaps an early monastic foundation. The excavators have not shied away from these issues, and the final discursive chapter considers the arguments at length. They conclude that there *was* a clear monastic

presence on the site during the first half of the eighth century and that this grew into a more complex and highly controlled monastic site, perhaps under a strong secular patron, during the later eighth and ninth centuries. The infamous overwintering of the Vikings in Thetford in AD 869 and ensuing events are seen as a direct cause of the decline of the site, one that the archaeological record would seem to support.

Although some 11,750sqm of the site were excavated, this only equates to about one-third of the total settlement area. This exceptional monograph gives us a tantalising flavour of what might still remain to be discovered: the complementary gold plaques depicting Saints Matthew, Mark and Luke remain elusive. Fortunately, the remaining portions of the site are now legally protected as Scheduled Monuments and arguably constitute one of the most important archaeological sites in the region. It is commonplace in archaeology to mock the length of time that can elapse between the end of an excavation and the publication of its results, but some things are worth waiting for – this monograph is one of them.

RICHARD HOGGETT

NOTE

- 1 Carr, R., Tester, A. and Murphy, P., 1988. 'The Middle-Saxon settlement at Staunch Meadow, Brandon', *Antiquity*, 62, 371–77.