

BOOK REVIEWS

The Cartulary and Charters of the Priory of Saints Peter and Paul, Ipswich. Part II: The Charters (Suffolk Charters XXI). Edited by David Allen, viii + 203 pp., figures, appendix, two indices. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Record Society, 2020. ISBN 978 1 78327 494 9. Price £30 hb.

This volume is the culmination of many years hard toil by a distinguished scholar and leading authority on medieval Ipswich and its archives. Unlike the cartulary, which was published in Part I, the charters are not all deposited in the Suffolk Archives, but most of them had to be diligently tracked down across the country. They have survived to the modern day because, at some stage after the Dissolution, they were seen to be favourable to someone's legal interests.

The charters are divided into five broad sections: royal grants in favour of the canons; private grants in favour of the canons; grants by the prior and canons; leases by the prior and canons; and exchanges and other agreements. In total we have two hundred and thirty-five charters, of which thirty-six, being those already copied into the cartulary, were included in Part I. The royal grants are, in fact, writs, one of Henry I and the other of Stephen. They are addressed to 'the canons of Ipswich', and only after much academic debate was it concluded that this meant Sts Peter and Paul rather than Holy Trinity. So, the history of the priory can be unequivocally traced back to 1133, and probably further to the Anglo-Saxon period when, as a minster, it served the whole of the surrounding area. This made it the senior of the town's five religious orders.

As for the private grants, Allen contends that 'The general impression is of multiple grants by unlinked individuals [...] The overwhelming majority of the benefactors of St Peter's would have been in no position to establish their family foundation. The story is largely one of many small gifts'. This bolsters Mark Bailey's view that Suffolk was more a county of lesser lay lords, than of great magnates. Good examples in this volume are grants by the Bramford family of Sproughton and the Maukel family of Hintlesham. For a variety of reasons, not least disillusionment with the lavish lifestyle enjoyed by wealthy churchmen, from the late thirteenth century onwards the number of these grants went into marked decline. With just one exception, no acquisitions are recorded after 1347.

The number of leases of farmland granted by the priory increased after the Black Death of 1348–9 as the seigniorial economy in general shifted from direct exploitation to rentier management of estates. One poorly preserved lease, granted at some time between 1349 and 1355 for just two years to William Andreu of land in Sproughton, was unusually sophisticated, including many of the terms that one might expect to see in a modern agricultural tenancy agreement.

For the economic and social historian, particularly one like myself who is interested in medieval Ipswich, Allen's volume is a godsend. It offers a rare window into the Anglo-Norman society of the county and town in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, an age before the appearance of manorial documents. We witness the priory settling differences with leading burgesses, such as Vivian, son of Silvester Wakelin. Humfrey Starling, surely a forebear of the Starling family who dominated late fourteenth-century Ipswich, witnessed a grant in the 1190s of a message in the parish of St Nicholas. Some of the local men with whom I have become acquainted through my studies make cameo appearances in the charters. The wealthy merchant John de Whatfield was a witness to a number of early fourteenth-century ones. His contemporary, John Halteby, a notorious rogue who ultimately met an ugly end, made a grant in perpetuity of lands and tenements in Sproughton.

The charters also shed light on the religious practices of the priory. One refers to a fragment of the true cross and another to holy relics. Several make provision for the burning of oil lamps and candles before the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary. William of Ash, Robert the Butler and Agatha widow of John Costent' made gifts in return for the entry of their names in the book of obits or martyrology so that the canons would forever after send up prayers for their souls.

The two indices, one of persons and places and the other of subjects, cover both Parts I and II and are indispensable for a proper understanding of the two volumes which do need to be studied together. To reap their full benefit some knowledge of medieval Latin is a definite advantage because although all the charters are summarised in English, some of them are only written out in full in Latin.

The number of academic studies of medieval Ipswich is disappointingly small, but both this and Allen's first volume on the priory make invaluable additions to a growing corpus.

NICHOLAS R. AMOR

Keeping the Peace in Medieval Suffolk. By Nicholas R. Amor, with a foreword by Mark Bailey. xx + 148pp., plates, maps, glossary, two appendices, bibliography, index. The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2021. ISBN 978 1 8381223 0 0. Price £10 (members) / £12.50 (non-members) pb.

The latest book by our retiring chairman and now general secretary illuminates a fascinating but neglected aspect of the county's history, and is an important contribution to the study of Suffolk during the fourteenth century. He includes a very useful glossary of terms and modestly suggests the book might serve (merely) as an introduction for the lay reader, but it is certainly more than that. The detail is firmly based on new research (conducted in support of Mark Bailey's 2020 series of Ford Lectures at Oxford University, now published under the title *After the Black Death: economy society and law in fourteenth-century England* [see below]). It is also a very timely reminder of what can be achieved using resources available online, in particular the wealth of images of original documents on the Anglo-American Legal Tradition (AALT) website, and others such as that of the Hathi Trust, all available for free without visiting the repository where they are held.

Although Amor includes numerous examples of the offences that appear in the rolls, his subject is not the perpetrators or victims of crime. A study of the majority of criminals (whether semi-professional thieves, drunken brawlers, or those involved in national unrest), and those they preyed upon would require detailed knowledge of all the relevant communities and the people living in them. I am certain Nick Amor would be delighted if local researchers are inspired by this book to take such a project forward. Meanwhile his own focus, by contrast, is on those who kept the peace in various capacities, as justices, lawyers, jurors, and officers of the law.

Part One, 'Law and Order' gives a masterly summary of the different crimes, courts of law, jurisdictions and justices already existing and introduced during the 1300s, and who better to guide us through this maze than an historian whose 'day job' was as a solicitor? Later chapters also have helpful introductions tracing the development of courts, offices, and institutions. Amor then focusses on homicide as one example of the crimes (about 10 per cent) committed in an eight-year sample of gaol deliveries between 1308–16. These fifty cases are analysed in several graphs and tables. A total of 367 killings recorded in various sources, mainly coroners' rolls which survive for the period 1351–64, are also discussed. It is important to bear in mind

that other gaol deliveries and justice rolls survive for Suffolk in the fourteenth century, and also that those of Norwich Castle gaol include cases from northern parts of Suffolk, but Amor has wrung a great deal of detail from those he has analysed.

Patterns in age, gender, occupation and social standing of victims and perpetrators, the location of crimes and their timing are charted. Amor makes no apology for using statistical techniques and explains his method in doing so, being careful throughout to compare his findings with those of previous researchers both published and unpublished. He concludes that in a typical Suffolk village there might be just one homicide per lifetime, and reminds us that many of those who died after a fight in the Middle Ages would probably have recovered with the benefit of modern medical care, so that direct comparisons with modern crime rates are dangerous. This exclusive focus on homicide between 1308 and 1316 for detailed consideration, whilst totally understandable in terms of making the task manageable, brings with it limitations. For instance, the town of Bury St Edmunds is excluded: although royal justice was exercised over the rest of the liberty from the gaol at Henhowe, outside the town, 'neither justices of gaol delivery nor the county coroners had jurisdiction ... within the town' (made clear in Appendix A). Analysing one specific category of crime inevitably leaves out others being suffered in the same communities at the same time. Gangs of professional thieves certainly operated (for instance the campaigns of thefts led by Robert Adam in the 1330s and William Fynch in the 1340s in the Hollesley area, or the Kesgrave beer-house keeper Agnes dil Fen, tried no less than three times for fencing stolen goods in the 1330s).¹ These particular examples are known from confessions, which, as Amor rightly says, should be treated with caution, and often resulted in alleged accomplices named in them being acquitted. But the crimes themselves, listed with details of dates, victims, exact weights and volumes of stolen goods, etc., were surely not merely invented or the presentment juries would have dismissed them. It is of course possible that the men confessing, and accusing others of helping, may have been induced to take responsibility for unsolved 'cold cases' as well as their own (the numerous thefts recorded also beg the question of how dozens of sheep, sacks of grain, household goods, clothing, and so forth were moved, often by night under curfew, by what network they were sold, etc.). Whilst correctly noting that many thefts were of items valued at pathetically small amounts, Amor accepts that 'sheep rustling was widespread', surely a cause of many a farmer's sleepless night in the countryside.

Likewise, JPs occasionally had to be rebuked for neglecting abuses of power which had taken place. Richard de Amoundeville appealed to the King's Bench that 'the keepers of the peace in the county of Suffolk' had done nothing about the refusal of the sheriff, Thomas de Battisford, to arrest men accused of felonies in 1341, but on the contrary retained them 'in his company'.² Three years later the same sheriff and an armed group of ten knights 'and many others' occupied Stowmarket church for nearly a month.³ This sort of behaviour by the chief royal officer in the county cannot have enhanced popular trust in authority. Nevertheless Amor concludes that, at least in terms of homicide, 'Norfolk and Suffolk were among the safer counties in England', and repeatedly questions whether the lawlessness alleged in the preambles to statute after statute (including those widening the powers of justices of the peace), though perhaps genuinely felt, was actually the case.

Part Two moves on to the men who applied and enforced the law. Chapter 4 is the heart of the book, and in Table 4.1 Amor presents the 108 men chosen to serve as justices of the peace over the century, showing the many other hats they also wore, from escheator to commissioner of array, sheriff to tax collector, or nobleman's steward, and their role in the Peasants' Revolt and its aftermath. This deceptively simple table represents a remarkable synthesis of information from numerous sources, which alone occupy half a page in very small print (a minor regret is that it does not include the role of coroner, which several of these men

did in fact also perform). The justices fall into several categories: magnates, their retainers/surrogates, lawyers and gentry, and each group is discussed in turn.

Of the magnates, Amor points out that their appearance in the lists of those commissioned does not necessarily mean they actually attended the sessions, or took an active part even if they were present. Examples are John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, who were appointed to Suffolk commissions despite being simultaneously preoccupied with rebellion, the death of Richard II and usurpation of Henry IV. Amor sketches the careers of the earls of Suffolk, both Uffords and de la Poles, who did take part in person, and speculates that the Uffords in particular were conscientious as JPs.⁴ He also reports that magnates' stewards, attorneys, and other retainers substituted for their masters on the bench, a practice the House of Commons made several unsuccessful attempts to forbid. These resident officers, such as John and Edmund de Lakenheath and Ralph de Bocking, held offices under more than one duke, liberty and/or the Crown, and emerge as a class of professional administrators. They would of course be more directly involved in local politics and business than their lords, and some of them were personally targeted in the Peasants' Revolt.

Professional lawyers were the second group; twenty-four were commissioned in Suffolk. One experienced lawyer joined every commission from 1348, and two from 1368, to assist the 'amateur' justices, and lawyers like John Cassy, John Holt or John Glemham were appointed more than ten times. Some of those on the Suffolk bench rose to the top of the legal profession including six chief justices and two lord chancellors. The Lord Chief Justice himself was famously one of those killed by the rebels in 1381, though probably not for any actions of his on the county bench.

The largest group of justices of the peace was chosen from 'gentlemen', one way of being shown to be 'the most worthy of the county', in the words of a statute of 1361. Amor's thorough analysis confirms, 'it was the gentry who were the true workhorses of any commission'; some served many times over decades, whilst also serving as MPs, sitting as justices of labourers or of gaol delivery, or in other offices. Here Amor brings to bear his intimate knowledge of the elites of Ipswich and the Suffolk cloth industry and he has been able to sketch the careers of many of them, giving detailed accounts of the careers of several. Colour plates show some of their homes, and their tombs, memorial brasses, fragments of brasses, and even places from whence brasses have been removed. The 'lower orders' may have doubted their impartiality, as fourteen Suffolk JPs were targeted in 1381, but we should be cautious about ascribing motive at 600 years' remove, and as Amor says, 'the reasons for the rebels' choice of targets remains obscure'.

Chapter 5 tackles the even more demanding task of identifying the jurors who presented cases to the JPs. All candidates had to be free and to hold land yielding at least 40s *per annum*, thus excluding many 'ordinary people' by definition. Seventy-five Suffolk jury lists survive for peace sessions, listing panels for each hundred from which twelve would be selected, a total of 651 different men. Amor presents several tables and shows that many also sat on several other juries, such as those of gaol delivery and the county tourns. He has managed to identify a remarkable number of them and shows they were higher-status members of village or urban society, holding offices such as constable or sub-collector of taxes. They may have already been working with or for the JPs.

Amor goes on to highlight six examples for whom detailed biographical evidence can be found; one was the lord of a minor manor, another had thirty acres of land and 100 sheep, and the Ipswich jurymen held offices such as MP, coroner or bailiff of the town. Two of these, Robert Waleys and Geoffrey Starling, were rich and amongst the town's leading figures. Jurors like these may not have had Norman ancestors, knighthoods or coats of arms like the gentry

justices, but they still had a lot to lose. As Amor has shown, their instincts and interests would both lead them to see the enforcement of the law as their natural role. He also refreshingly balances the picture by including one ‘rogue’, William Rous of Dennington, who used his position as chief constable of Hoxne hundred to further his own interests and extort money from those amerced in the courts he presided over for ‘diverse lords’, including the earl of Suffolk. These six may have been more prosperous than other more obscure jurors, given that more prominent and successful people are inevitably easier to trace, but Amor provides a convincing picture of these upper-echelon businessmen, securely founded on many years of research.⁵

The fourteenth century started with deadly famine and continued with the violent deposing of two ineffective kings, two devastating outbreaks of pestilence and armed popular protest. The reigns of stronger leaders were dominated by a futile war financed by debt and ever-rising taxes demanded of a smaller population. This book is an important contribution to current historical efforts to move beyond a model suggesting social conflict was simply between peasants and lords, and to identify the emerging groups, whether employer or employed, who sought to keep the king’s peace in an extremely challenging time.

One or two trivial errors have unfortunately slipped through the proofreading process: e.g. Bawdsey is in Wilford hundred, not Colneis (p.111), and Richard de Amoundeville’s *Hukenhulle* was Oaken Hill, not Uggeshall (p.18). Perhaps more serious is the surprising statement that ‘£1 equalled 12s and 244d’ (p.xvii).

VAL DUDLEY

After the Black Death: Economy, Society and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England.

By Mark Bailey. xv + 376pp., figures, tables, appendix, bibliography, index.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. ISBN 978 0 19 885788 4. Price £35 hb.

In the early fourteenth century England was a relatively backward country on the margin of the known world. A little over four hundred years later, it had become the first industrialised nation and the most powerful on earth. With the benefit of hindsight, the Black Death of 1348–9 proved to be a major watershed in English history and set us on a new course. Mark Bailey assembles a remarkable range of primary sources, many of them from Suffolk, as well as secondary ones. He focuses on the decade immediately before, and the five after the pandemic, and analyses the swirling economic, social and legal cross-currents that ultimately caused this sea-change in our fortunes. His volume, which builds on the Ford Lectures that he gave at Oxford in 2019, is a genuine *tour de force*.

The eight chapters are headed ‘Introduction’, ‘Old Problems, New Approaches’, ‘Reaction and Regulation, 1349 to 1380’, ‘A Mystery within an Enigma. The Economy 1355 to 1375’, ‘Injustice and Revolt’, ‘A New Equilibrium? Economy and Society, 1375 to 1400’, ‘The Decline of Serfdom and the “Little Divergence”’ and ‘Conclusion’. Subdividing the period in this way enables Bailey to reconstruct institutional changes over shorter timeframes. He makes a series of ground-breaking and persuasive arguments.

Even before the Black Death, land, labour, commodity and capital markets were already larger, and manorial lordship (commonly known as feudalism) was already weaker than historians have previously thought. Both pre- and post-plague, contracts based on market forces, not the arbitrary or coercive power of lords, shaped the allocation of resources. Villeins enjoyed considerable economic freedom, and labour services were relatively light and fixed. The development of the common law had crystallized the distinction between free and unfree

peasants, but, well before 1348–9, its processes and procedures had spread into the manor court. So, everyone enjoyed relatively secure property rights and a comparatively cheap, accessible, and impersonal system of dispute resolution and contract enforcement. For example, in the 1340s two enterprising villeins of Redgrave, John Docke and Roger le Reve, were able to lease from their lord, the abbot of Bury St Edmunds, and run the busy market in Botesdale.

Nevertheless, a combination of market forces and high population pressure had caused a splintering of landholdings which created a huge underclass of smallholders and landless living in chronic rural congestion and poverty. Persistently high taxation, sustained warfare, extreme weather, and epidemic disease made their sorry plight even worse.

In the immediate aftermath of the Black Death, the persistence of high rentals and grain prices has led some historians to suggest that the pandemic caused little immediate change. A 'seigniorial reaction' enabled manorial lords to continue with business as usual. Not so, says Bailey. The period was one of extraordinary turmoil and upheaval. High rentals reflected an abandonment of marginal land and the conversion of dominant, non-commercial service tenancies to cash-based tenancies, most of them leases, set at a commercial rate. As early as 1352–3, three-quarters of customary holdings at Loudham were either held on leases or were derelict, and over 90 per cent in the 1380s. The same happened in many other Suffolk villages. Brandon evidence shows that empty fields soon became weed infested. Grain prices were pushed higher by extreme weather, including four back-to-back harvest failures between 1349 and 1352, and a shortage of cereals available for sale on the open market.

By the early 1370s, these high grain prices had helped to lure peasants back into cereal production. Brandon's fields, once empty, were tenanted again. Higher production levels and better weather contributed to a decline in those prices and lower financial returns. This, in turn, encouraged many manorial lords to abandon direct management of their estates, which they could no longer run at a profit, and to lease out their demesnes. In due course, a small minority of peasants and townspeople, soon to become known as yeomen, acquired substantial holdings of both free and unfree land, and later consolidated and enclosed that land. The close association between tenure and status was irretrievably severed. The result was a growing social stratification and polarization within village communities. This process of consolidation is well illustrated by a fifteenth-century rental of Fornham All Saints and Fornham St Martin and the acquisitiveness of two residents Walter Spalding and John Lunden.

Serfdom was in headlong retreat on many manors from as early as the 1350s, and absent from some by the 1380s. By 1400, as few as one in ten people was unfree. Around 40 per cent of week works and 80 per cent of harvest works had been used in the 1340s at Brandon, but from the 1350s week works were no longer used and just 10 per cent of harvest works continued to be performed. In the final twenty years of the century, some manorial lords, such as the abbot of Bury St Edmunds at Hargrave, tried to turn the clock back by reasserting a right to week works. If ever there was a seigniorial reaction, it was then. Ultimately, the meagre return in revenue and labour services for the abbot and many other more conservative lords did not justify the significant administrative effort of a crackdown. Serfs had a choice of escape routes both into towns and into rural settlements elsewhere. Austin Crembell of Aldham was one who spent his life migrating between various Suffolk towns and villages.

The labour legislation enacted after the Black Death extended state control, caused resentment and was an important factor in igniting the Peasants' Revolt. It bestowed upon local officials considerable discretion to enforce sweeping but loosely drafted legislation. The resultant inconsistency in decision-making caused widespread offence. The problem was addressed in 1388 by a tightening up and more careful targeting of the law against able-

bodied beggars. Bailey's arguments resonate with the reviewer's own research.

By 1381 there is clear evidence of a swing from grain production to pastoral husbandry, and from agriculture to industrial and service occupations. Some estimates place an extraordinary 43 per cent of the labour force in non-agricultural employment. The woollen cloth industry grew rapidly in Suffolk and in some other regions. The consequence was a sustained rise in both GDP per head and levels of consumption.

By 1400 the country had finally settled into a post-plague equilibrium. The end result of all these different trends was an economy with a broader base, both geographically and across sectors. In the longer term, this meant that when, in the sixteenth century, the population began to recover, the masses did not slip back into poverty as they did outside north-western Europe. England became the only European country to exhibit consistent growth across all the main indicators of development between 1300 and 1800. Ours was the great success story of the 'Little Divergence'.

As Bailey is at pains to stress, this was not a lineal progression, but one that zigged and zagged, back and forth, amid the complexity and contradictions of the late Middle Ages. As market forces of supply and demand grew ever more powerful, many sectors of the economy experienced a cycle of boom and bust. Close analysis reveals that the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were far from an undifferentiated and homogeneous economic period. Real life is always messy. Bailey does not seek to simplify or dumb down. This is not an easy history to follow, but it is one of enormous consequence that repays the time and effort of reading and digesting it.

NICHOLAS R. AMOR

Deer Parks of Suffolk: 1086–1602. By Rosemary Hoppitt, with a foreword by Tom Williamson. xvii + 331 pp., plates, gazetteer and map, glossary, bibliography, index. The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2020. ISBN 978 0 9521390 9 6. Price £12 (members) / £15 (non-members) pb.

As an active member of the Institute for many years, Rosemary Hoppitt needs no introduction here. She began her deer park research way back in the 1980s, culminating in a PhD thesis in 1992. Since then further research has added much more detail to what was clearly a huge undertaking and, as Rosemary says herself in her conclusion, 'This book is not the end of the subject'. Comprehensive as it is, there is still much more to discover. We get a glimpse of the breadth of this fascinating study in the very first paragraph of Chapter One, when we learn that Suffolk was one of the most imparked counties in the period studied, with one hundred and thirty-two known or implied parks. Of this total, we are treated to individual descriptions of fifty-one, including all fifteen known to have been in existence before 1200 even though seven of those, as far as Rosemary has established, have just a single mention in the records. Undaunted, she uses her deep knowledge to suggest possible locations and reasons for their disappearance. Importantly, the text clearly differentiates fact and hypothesis.

However, the book is much more than a description of certain parks. The broad-ranging introductory chapter discusses a number of important background issues, including the defining features of a deer park, a synopsis of the history of the study of parks, an overview of the different forms of hunting, and a discussion of key documentary sources. By using local records as well as national ones, Rosemary has been able to push the first known date of a number of parks back well beyond the date found in the national records. Topographical evidence is also considered, including the contribution of archaeology and ecology.

Chapter Two focusses on the chronology of Suffolk's parks from Domesday to the end of the Tudor period, illustrated by clear and simple histograms. The subject of possible pre-Domesday parks is touched on only very briefly, perhaps wisely so, as it is still a matter of debate.⁶ The lifespan of the earliest parks is discussed, many apparently disappearing relatively quickly; but this is tempered by the caution that in many cases a lack of evidence makes accurate dating of creation or disappearing difficult, if not impossible. What is clear is that few of Suffolk's post-1600 'landscape' parks have medieval precursors, the majority of the earliest parks disappearing before Rosemary's cut-off date of 1602.⁷ The final section of the chapter deals with 'patterns and processes', setting park creation, management and disappearing in the context of changing social structure and evolving economic circumstances across the centuries. A histogram clearly illustrates the effects of these changes on the rise and fall of park numbers in the period under discussion.

Rosemary is first and foremost a geographer, so the next chapter, 'Understanding the geography of Suffolk's parks', comes as no surprise. Suffolk's deer parks were predominantly on the clays and in the earlier part of the period on the high interfluves close to parish boundaries. It would be easy to dismiss such peripheral locations as taking advantage of 'waste', poor land of little agricultural value, which was the main location of many deer parks in Midland counties and royal forests. But Rosemary's conclusion is that here these 'waste' areas, with their woods and wood pastures, had long been an important resource for a parish or manor, ideal for deer and other livestock; establishing a park here was in fact making optimal use of the location. The income from grazing, hay, timber and underwood went a long way towards the considerable running costs of the park. But siting also involved other decisions. Villages with multiple manors and a complex holding structure would have been largely unsuitable, as control of a consolidated block of land was a prerequisite; hence parks were usually associated with larger demesne holdings. Where a choice of such demesnes was available, those offering additional economic opportunities such as fairs or markets were favoured. A substantial residence was often part of this package, close to the park if not in it, be it a castle for the Norman aristocracy, a bishop's palace or a fortified manor house, as imparking moved down the social hierarchy. The earlier parks were part of a conscious economic strategy, contrasting with the later parks of Tudor lawyers and merchants which were increasingly solely aesthetic status symbols.

The detailed discussion of individual parks fills chapters four to nine. These are set out in logical themes – the Domesday parks; parks of the aristocratic landholders and those of the *religiosi*, principally the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, to 1200; and a similar breakdown of lay and ecclesiastical parks up to 1450. A discussion of post-1450 parks brings the book to its conclusion. By this time the fashion for parks had migrated down the social hierarchy to the *nouveaux riches*, and park location had begun to move away from the peripheral 'waste' to the area around the house; the transition to the landscape park of the next centuries had begun.

This handsomely illustrated book (126 maps, histograms and photographs) is completed by a glossary; a map and gazetteer of all one hundred and thirty-two parks, together with their first recorded dates and the source of that information; and a comprehensive bibliography. Having been decades in the making, this book will surely be referred to for many decades to come, and be a source of inspiration and methodology for others researching the deer parks of their own counties. And at just £12 / £15 plus postage, it is a book that no one cannot afford to have on their bookshelf!

STEPHEN PODD

East Anglian Church Porches and their Medieval Context. By Helen E. Lunnon.
299 pp., plates, appendix, glossary, bibliography, index. Woodbridge:
The Boydell Press, 2020. ISBN 978 1 78327 526 7. Price £60 hb.

Suffolk and Norfolk have a wealth of medieval churches and in this book Helen Lunnon's fascination with the medieval church porch is apparent as she explores both the buildings and extant documentation, as well as published sources. Although the book widens its field to include a few major examples outside Norfolk and Suffolk, it primarily considers those in these two easternmost counties of East Anglia and thus within the medieval ecclesiastical diocese of Norwich.

A recurrent theme throughout the book is the relationship between people and porches in the English Middle Ages; it sets out to answer what sort of building a church porch was, how was it used, and who influenced its building and ornamentation. Porches are places of territorial passage and ritual transition, marked by decorative and architectural detailing of both facades and interiors. Even though many porches are a major architectural feature, not only have they been little studied, but they are often overlooked as mere convenient door coverings by those entering in anticipation of inner treasures. Porches function as open, accessible entrances introducing the large building beyond; as facades communicating the social and doctrinal sensitivities; as protective canopies to shelter and edify those who stand within, for whatever purpose. Each is also evidence of a relationship between people, money and material.

After a general introduction the first chapter debates at some length the use and meaning of the word *porticus* as used in Anglo-Saxon writings and the architectural influence of King Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 4 and Ezekiel 40) on the dimensions of porch building. Solomonic elements such as the ratio 2:1 were even applied to the Court Gate (i.e. Abbey Gate) of the abbey at Bury St Edmunds which can be considered to be a 'porch before a porch'. The next chapter, on function, explains that a porch is a transitional space between the outer secular and the inner sacred worlds. The chapter explores certain functions involving parishioners which took place before the threshold and thus gave porches a powerful significance. These included preparatory rites, such as those for baptism and marriage, Palm Sunday processions, the purification of women after childbirth, confession, penance, reconciliation, dispute and judgement, burial (including some in the porch itself) and the giving and receiving of alms. Taken together, these made the church porch an important feature in parish life. To accommodate such usage, and with the enhanced status of matrimony and the other sacraments (notably baptism and confession) from the second half of the thirteenth century, major building programmes were occurring across northern Europe.

Chapter three analyses East Anglian church porch architecture, materials and decoration from c.1240–c.1540 so as to understand the design and function of porches. It studies various examples to illustrate that the porch entrance increased in significance from around 1390, becoming increasingly ornamented and designed to be the focus of attention. Porches built before c.1420 are notable for their variety, after which a greater number of porches were built which present a greater degree of architectural conformity. Various examples are analysed and illustrated with photographs of the subjects, but unfortunately most of these show only one plane of the porch exterior and none of the details described. A discussion of timber porches is included, together with a table of thirty-six tower porches (thirty-seven if Barham, Suffolk, is included). King Solomon appears again in the discourse of vaulted porches and the iconography of burial. Upper chambers in some porches, such as at Mildenhall, were dealt with in the previous chapter.

The fourth chapter compares architectural detail with documentary evidence from c.1370–

c.1540. 136 East Anglian samples from mainly testamentary instructions (not always carried out!), antiquarian records, inscriptions and burials are itemised and analysed, together with the key components of entrance arches, window apertures, side walls, buttresses and base courses. This chapter demonstrates that porches of this era are varied in their form, size and architectural design. The final chapter explores the 'patrons' share', the relationship between people, whether patrons, benefactors or donors, and the building or decorating of associated porches. What was the nature of their involvement, and to what extent did they influence the building and the form? In particular, the churchwardens' accounts for the church of St Mary in Saffron Walden provide a remarkable source of information for understanding how a church porch was planned and realised by the local community.

Whilst the church's dedicated saint is frequently represented in some form on various East Anglian church porches, images of other saints and donors, animals and wild men can also be found, together with heraldic devices (of patrons and donors) and attributes to the Virgin Mary and to Christ. However, the example given of Christ in Majesty on the battlemented pediment of Yaxley porch (p.253) is nowadays a seated skinny lion, whilst the central boss of the vaulted ceiling, said to be Christ displaying his wounds, is the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, now unceremoniously pierced by an electric light fitting.

The author's overarching conclusion also includes the repeated influence of King Solomon's building, and the possible conflation of his throne with the womb of the Virgin Mary as the root of East Anglian Marian imagery, which seems to stretch a point. References are given as footnotes on each page and also included is an appendix of written evidence of individual East Anglian porches which is set out according to the date of construction rather than alphabetical order. There is also a glossary of architectural terms (but not a scholarly dictionary) and a full bibliography.

This is a widely and deeply researched book which shines a spotlight on a familiar, but mainly ignored feature of the medieval church. It gives a broad cultural outline and discusses the commissioning and design of church porches, their architecture and decoration, and the uses and meanings displayed on these buildings. Any reader now approaching an East Anglian church porch will have a great awareness of the significance of the building they are entering and the deep involvement of those concerned in its construction and decoration.

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NOTES

- 1 T[he] N[atational] A[rchives], JUST3/64/3 m16, JUST 3/125 m4; these cases are from deliveries of Melton gaol, where all those accused of felonies in the Liberty of St Etheldreda (all the hundreds of Carlford, Loes, Wilford, Colneis, Plomesgate and the half hundred of Thredling) were detained and tried. Amor's sample under-represents offences from the liberty, as just one delivery of Melton gaol is included. Although no doubt the denizens of Walton, Woodbridge and Wickham were at least as unruly as those of other Suffolk towns, Map 4.1 shows that only one of the seventy-two JPs was resident in the liberty, which leads Amor to give less coverage to this eastern side of Suffolk than to the Liberty of St Edmund or to the 'Geldable'.
- 2 *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 16 July 1341.
- 3 *Law Reports, King's Bench Division*, 27/343, mm. 113d, 121d.
- 4 Amor notes that both Uffords had a history of service as soldiers in the king's wars, optimistically suggesting they were also conscientious justices who 'took [their] local responsibilities seriously and made time to attend', and that William was the natural leader of Suffolk society. However, since both his life and his property were specifically targeted by the rebels in 1381, one might equally conclude that he and his officers were particularly resented. The trial of the leaders of the Wilford rebel band was the second

case heard in Suffolk. De Ufford held it in the very manor of Hollesley where they had sacked his house and burned his court rolls, and he condemned their leader John Reynold to be beheaded there as well; TNA, KB9/166/1 m 3, 24, 45 and 29-30. This perhaps added to local tensions leading to one of the few attempts at a 'new insurrection' there in 1383 (just after de Ufford's death), one of whose leaders was also executed; TNA, JUST 3/164 m 33.

- 5 Inevitably Amor can only give an overview reinforced by selected examples for detailed discussion. One he was not able to include is William Fraunceys, the receiver/bailiff of the Liberty of St Etheldreda, whose administrative base was Melton, near Woodbridge. One of the bailiff's chief responsibilities was the running of Melton gaol. In 1381 Fraunceys' 'mansion' and barns were ransacked and emptied of 100 marks' worth of goods, and he personally was forced to flee, pursued to Ipswich, captured and 'feloniously and maliciously decapitated'. Among the fourteen justices commissioned to hear this case were William de Ufford, William Wingfield, Edmund de Lakenheath, Thomas de Morieux, and Robert Hotot; TNA, KB9/166/1 m 24, 129-30.
- 6 See Rackham 1987, 122-29; Liddiard 2003, 4-23; Fletcher 2011, 56-63; Wager 2017, 167-93.
- 7 This end date was chosen as it coincides with the list of parks in *The Chorography of Suffolk* of that date. It also enables the evidence from Saxton's 1575 county map to be taken into account, together with a list of parks made in 1560.

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