

BOOK REVIEWS

Monks Eleigh Manorial Records, 1210–1683. (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 65). Edited by Vivienne Aldous. lv + 370 pp. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Records Society, 2022. ISBN 978 1 78327 679 0. Price £90.00 hb, £24.99 Ebook.

This edited collection of Monks Eleigh documents contains a selection of manorial records, alongside charters and legal documents concerning a fifteenth-century affray, relating to the Suffolk manor of Monks Eleigh. It forms part of the Suffolk Records Society's (SRS) excellent series, which publishes volumes focused on original historical documents. The volume is preceded by three short pieces commemorating two former SRS leading lights: David Dymond (by Heather Falvey) and Victor Gray (by Harvey Osborne); and John Weller (by the editor and Harvey Osborne), the researcher responsible for commissioning much of the translation and transcription of the volume's documents. The volume is broadly split between a substantial introduction, numbering some fifty-two pages, and the translated or transcribed documents. The latter section is divided by document type as follows: charters, extents, accounts, building accounts, court rolls, rentals; with a final section relating to a petition and legal documents concerning a riot in 1481.

The excellent introduction covers a wide range of pertinent themes. It begins with a history of the manor's ownership, from Ælfgar in the tenth century, to the priory of Christ Church, Canterbury — later Canterbury Cathedral — under whose ownership it remained (excepting a hundred or so year period during the interregnum) before its transfer to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whose successors still hold the manor. Further sections focus on the priory's management of its East Anglian estates, specifically emphasising food-farm, or the maintenance of the priory's religious community; the management of the demesne, and ecclesiastical and manorial officials. Additional sections in this part of the introduction include a focus on tenants, rents and labour services; and on the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Each section offers a detailed overview, helping non-specialist readers to understand the historical background, and placing the experience at Monks Eleigh into context for the period. The introduction then goes on to present each of the document types featured in the volume in turn, explaining that their selection here was driven by the choices made by Weller during his original research. Again, each section offers a thorough, first-rate overview, helping the reader by building a rich picture of medieval and early modern Monks Eleigh — especially useful for non-specialist readers.

Notwithstanding the limitations of documents of this type, they nevertheless offer a wealth of evidence for life in medieval and early modern Monks Eleigh. We learn much about the agrarian operation of the demesne, how it was managed, and how tenants provided additional labour as part of their rents. There is detailed information, for instance on 'mondaylands', held by customary tenants who owed labour on the demesne every Monday, each holding contributing eighty works every year or the cash equivalent. These documents not only elucidate what was owed by tenants to the lord, but also what the lord was obliged to give the tenants in return for their customary labour at harvest-time, which in the later thirteenth century included a beef carcass, 200 herring, wheat and rye, cheese, peas, garlic and salt. There are references to virgin land being used for cultivation: glebe land was broken up for sowing rye and barley in 1285/6, and in 1310/11, turf was taken up to grow barley. In amongst the usual tasks that are expected to feature within manorial account rolls from this period, there are occasional hidden gems that offer up a more detailed glimpse of the work of the rural labourer, including restoring vines in the vineyard, making a ditch flanked with

poplar and blackthorn, and making cider. Separate building accounts offer an interesting window upon the manorial infrastructure, which by 1407 included both an inner and outer courtyard.

The court rolls are fairly typical for the period, offering insights into the ways in which local society was organised. It was here that officials were elected, death duties were recorded, customary land was transferred, and petty crimes were adjudicated. The business of the leet court focused on civil responsibilities, assessing such matters as the regulation of bread, ale, and the sale of other commodities such as meat and fish; affray; and the management of the infrastructure of the vill, such as roads, bridges and watercourses. There is so much here of interest to social historians: from peasants failing to perform labour services; to the tenants of ‘smytheslond’, whose rent was paid in iron each year for the lord’s plough; and a wonderfully detailed late sixteenth-century entry accusing Richard Aggas of keeping ‘a common alehowse and ... receive[ing] into the same gesses of ill behaviour, and keeping ill rule in the tyme of devine service to the prophanyng of the lordes day...’.

The rentals are of particular interest. The first one in this collection — dated 1379/80 — not least because the expenses for its production are included in the accounts featured in the same volume, and from which we learn that the document took ninety-four days to produce, offering a rare glimpse of the production process for documents of this type. The collection takes us from the late fourteenth century to the late seventeenth century, and it is possible to trace several of the holdings over the course of this three hundred year period. The final set of documents relate to a local riot in 1481, and will no doubt interest both local readers and historians interested in disorder.

The volume concludes with a very useful glossary, which includes key saints’ days alongside an explanation for medieval and early modern terms found within the text. Occasionally, I felt that more could have been added to this. What, for example, is a ‘tye’ (p.144)? This is possibly a word that is well known to Suffolk readers (*The English Dialect Dictionary* suggests ‘an extensive common pasture or field; a large common’, a term common to Suffolk, Essex, Kent and Sussex), but is less likely to be known more generally. Whilst the analysis is generally careful and thoughtful, a reference to rights of ‘herbage’ on an alder-holt being described as ‘coppicing’ jars slightly, since coppicing would usually be referred to as ‘underwood’ (pp.xxxv and 5). Spread throughout are many plates featuring Weller’s hand drawn maps, which occasionally also include sketches of the landscape. Whilst these are a wonderful addition, some of them can be quite difficult to read, and may have been better as fold-outs. Overall, though, this is a very well-produced and edited volume that is a wonderful addition to the series, and that has much to offer readers of all kinds, whether their interest is local or general.

SUSAN KILBY

Viking Migration and Settlement in East Anglia: The Place-Name Evidence.

By David Boulton. xvi + 224pp., maps, tables, bibliography, index. Oxford: Windgather Press, 2023. ISBN 978 1 91442 725 1. Price £39.95 pb.

This is the first book-length study of Scandinavian influence on the place-names of East Anglia, here defined as the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. The place-names analysed are (with one exception) at least one of the following: names recorded in Domesday Book, parish names, names of modern settlements, or names of lost settlements recorded by the thirteenth century.¹ The corpus of names on which the book is based is not included in the print book, but is freely available via the Archaeology Data Service.² The book complements

Fellows-Jensen's surveys of Yorkshire, the East Midlands and the North West, which similarly focus on settlement-names.³ However, Fellows-Jensen's works focus more on establishing a corpus of names, and accordingly etymological discussion (including novel suggestions) is more prominent in her works. In Boulton's work, there is instead a comprehensive investigation of the chronological, physical and social contexts in which names were formed. Boulton asks whether exploring the geographical and archaeological contexts of different types of Scandinavian-influenced place-name can reveal different contexts of formation. Boulton is particularly interested in whether the renaming of pre-existing settlements can be distinguished from the naming of new settlements, and whether this supports existing interpretations of different name-types and phases of Scandinavian settlement and migration.

The introductory chapters discuss East Anglia's history and explain Boulton's methods of analysis. Chapter two provides an up-to-date survey of textual and archaeological evidence for Scandinavian political control, landholdings and material culture in East Anglia. Important points made in this chapter are that there is more evidence for Scandinavian material culture and political control in northern East Anglia than in southern East Anglia, and that there is artefactual evidence for migration from Scandinavia throughout the tenth century.⁴ Chapter three describes patterns in the distribution of different types of place-name and contextualises them by relating them to the physical geography of East Anglia and to social and agricultural changes taking place in the early medieval period. These changes, including agricultural intensification and associated expansion onto the clayland areas of inland East Anglia, coincided with the period of Scandinavian settlement. We learn that the Scandinavian-influenced place-names of East Anglia are mostly found in two broad areas: the catchment of the Broadland rivers of Norfolk and north-east Suffolk, and along the rivers Deben, Orwell and Stour.

Four chapters analysing the Scandinavian-influenced place-names of the region then follow. These chapters are similarly structured: each summarises the place-name evidence, then analyses the contexts of the place-names looking in turn at geographical context, landscape setting, soils, history of the land unit (focussing on parochial status and parish boundaries), Domesday Book data, and archaeological evidence for pre-Viking-Age and Viking-Age settlement. For example, chapter four begins by looking at the place-names of Flegg (Norfolk) with Old Norse (ON) *bý* [farm, settlement]. Boulton's investigation reveals that *bý*-names with Scandinavian personal names tend to be non-estuarine, larger parishes with higher fiscal values and more sokemen recorded in Domesday Book. The other *bý*-names tend to be estuarine smaller parishes with lower fiscal values and more Domesday freemen recorded in Domesday Book. Boulton hypothesises that the two groups were formed in different circumstances: the former group would be good candidates for parts of a pre-Viking estate 'shared out' by a Scandinavian elite, while the latter group might instead have named settlements developing as areas of former marshland were brought into agricultural or pastoral use.

The remaining chapters, each on a category of place-names, similarly distinguish between names with Scandinavian personal names as first elements and other names, with interesting results. Chapter five presents evidence in partial support of Cullen, Jones and Parsons' arguments that place-names in *thorp* [secondary settlement] were new settlements in areas well-suited for arable farming. The *thorp*-names without Scandinavian personal names are (like the names with ON *þveit* [clearing] discussed in chapter six) mainly to be new settlements associated with Late Saxon arable expansion onto the clayland plateau of inland East Anglia.⁵ However, the *thorp*-names with Scandinavian personal names seem more often to be names of pre-existing settlements in river valley locations and thus may have developed in different circumstances. The Grimston-hybrids investigated in chapter seven are more widely

distributed than other types of Scandinavian names and are argued to have more diverse origins than has previously been appreciated.⁶ Some Grimston-hybrids are associated with pre-Viking settlements and seem therefore to be new names for existing settlements. However, many seem to be new settlements on marginal land, some perhaps of post-Conquest origin. These findings — and the lack of unifying characteristics — run contrary to what would be expected from existing interpretations of the Grimston-hybrids as new names for settlements taken over by Scandinavians.⁷ Overall, Boulton's investigation problematises several existing interpretations of Scandinavian place-names in England.

Chapter eight ties the different strands of evidence together. Relationships between name-types and the presence or absence of pre-existing settlement are summarised. The *bý*- and *thorp*-names with Scandinavian personal names and Old English names modified by Scandinavian speakers tend to be associated with pre-existing settlements whereas *bý*- and *thorp*-names without Scandinavian personal names and names with the elements *toft* [building plot] and *þveit* do not. The Grimston-hybrids are only sometimes associated with pre-existing settlements. Boulton then presents a model through which the toponymic and archaeological evidence might be interpreted, which draws upon findings from migration studies. Boulton hypothesises that names associated with pre-existing settlements relate to land seizure, estate fragmentation and land purchase by members of the Great Army and their associates (who might be the 'pioneers' and 'primary migrants' of migration studies). Subsequently, 'secondary migrants' who were less integrated into East Anglian society might have formed new place-names without personal names (following models then current in Scandinavia) in more marginal areas and newly cultivated areas. Chronologically, this is the reverse of Fellows-Jensen's argument that *bý*- and *thorp*-names without personal names were formed earlier than *bý*- and *thorp*-names with personal names.⁸ Boulton's interpretation has the merits of being based on systematic analysis of settlement chronology. However, fuller consideration of the chronology of the Scandinavian artefactual evidence and further maps showing the distribution of the relevant place-name categories would help the reader judge the geographical and chronological correspondences between the two categories of evidence.

This book offers novel and convincing insights into Scandinavian naming in East Anglia and has important implications for the interpretation of Scandinavian names elsewhere. The evidence examined is at times incomplete by its nature (the archaeological material), at others perhaps subjectively interpreted (*e.g.* the parish boundary evidence), and in a few cases perhaps pushed too far (*e.g.* the interpretation of anglicised forms of Scandinavian personal names as representing name formation in the tenth-century or earlier on p.154).⁹ Overall, however, the data underlying the interpretations have been carefully investigated and are explained sufficiently fully for the reader to see that multiple incomplete strands of evidence often point to similar contexts of formation for different groups of names. Many maps illustrate distributions of place-names against other evidence, though it can be difficult to perceive patterns on these maps due to the amount of information displayed on each. Analysis by subgroupings of place-name elements proves especially fruitful as it is often at this level that patterns emerge. This approach also raises important questions about the interpretation of Scandinavian place-names elsewhere in northern and eastern England. Would similar distinctions between subgroups of Scandinavian place-names be found elsewhere, if a similar approach were applied?

Records of Medieval Newmarket. Manor Court Rolls 1399–1413 and Manor Account Rolls 1403–1483 (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 66). Edited by James Davis and Joanne Sear. xxxix + 318 pp., illustrations, appendix, two indices. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Records Society, 2023. ISBN 978 1 83765 012 5. Price £85 hb, £24.99 Ebook.

As a place that experienced growth in both physical infrastructure and commercial activity during the fifteenth century, Newmarket to some extent bucked the trend among small towns of the late Middle Ages, many of which suffered economic problems and stagnation. Newmarket was a ‘late developer’; as James Davis and Joanne Sear explain in their valuable editorial introduction to this volume, although a trading venue was established on the site around 1200, it was not until the fifteenth century that Newmarket fully established itself. It did so through its role as an important marketing hub for producers and consumers living within its immediate hinterland as well as for traders from further afield. Newmarket’s success was due in large part to its transport links — its place at the centre of a relatively dense network of roads is obvious to any visitor today — and to the presence of institutional structures which, as Davis and Sear argue, were especially well suited to encouraging trade. The town’s fifteenth-century fortunes can be traced in great detail thanks to the survival of the excellent series of court rolls and account rolls relating to the manor of Newmarket that are presented in this volume. These are prefaced by an Introduction which describes the records, provides essential background on medieval Newmarket (including several excellent maps), and picks out important topics illustrated by the sources such as the development of the town’s marketplace and the presence of women among its traders and property holders. The volume also features as an appendix two royal charters granted to Newmarket’s lord; a helpful glossary; and indices of persons and places, and of subjects.

The chronological overlap between court rolls and account rolls is slight, since the court rolls cover the years 1399–1413, and there is just a single comparatively short account roll for the year 1403/04. The next account roll in date is that of 1428/29, the first in a run that extends to 1439/40. The majority of the other surviving accounts form a sequence of ten extending from 1473/74 to 1482/83. Despite this, the two types of record can provide a complementary perspective on life in the town. The account rolls also shed some light on the frequency and revenues of the courts, through the detail in their ‘profits of the courts’ sections.

There are rolls for four different types of Newmarket court: a general court, a market court, a leet court, and a fair court. In their introduction the editors discuss the matters typically dealt with in each type of court, as revealed by its rolls, and point out that the division of business is not quite what one might expect on the basis of standard discussions of local court jurisdiction.

Perhaps the most important areas on which the court rolls shed light collectively are interpersonal litigation (mainly about debt), trading offences, and the transfer of shops and stalls. The trading offences are very various, covering matters such as prices, weights and measures, forestalling, regrating, and the illegal reheating of food. As one would expect, there is also a good deal of information concerning the enforcement of the assizes of bread and ale. The court rolls provide abundant evidence of the involvement of residents of Newmarket’s hinterland in exchange, both in the records of trading offences and in the civil litigation. Many lawsuits feature outsiders as both plaintiff and defendant. Litigation falls mainly in the market court, which of the four was the court held most frequently, and the one which has left fullest records. This court evidently enjoyed the power to secure the appearance of non-residents of Newmarket via the processes of attachment and distraint. Many of the goods seized in attachment and distraint appear to have been of relatively high value, such as the three horses and a cart worth 40s by which Thomas Tapstere and his wife Agnes were attached to answer a claim of 14s 10d

in 1409. This feature suggests the efficacy of the Newmarket courts in enforcing agreements. Claims in excess of the 40-shilling jurisdictional limit which prevailed in most 'ordinary' manor courts are common in Newmarket's market court. The records of the leet courts feature numerous entries concerning assault, which are characterized by interesting variations in format, and by the presence of people — both assailants and victims, described as 'servant'.

The particular strength of the account rolls is the high level of detail that is given in the dense sections that concern stalls and shops. The fullest of these sections detail the holders and former holders of the stalls and shops, the location of the relevant properties, and the rents they paid. This rich information permits the researcher to track Newmarket's retailing infrastructure over time, something that the editors make a start on in their introduction. In the later accounts this detailed information on shops, stalls and on plots of land held from the manor disappears, as it was evidently preserved in a separate rental.

This edition has been prepared with immense care. The text is essentially an English translation of the originals, but alongside the translations of the earliest example of each of the four types of court roll, and of the earliest account roll, the editors provide photographs of the original documents plus a Latin transcription. Elsewhere the editors sometimes give the Latin for some difficult phrases but, as is perhaps inevitable with a translation of record material of this kind, there are a few oddities or obscurities in the English text where one would like to be able to see the original in order to tease out the meaning for oneself. However, the reader cannot have everything, and the editors and the Suffolk Records Society are to be congratulated for making this rewarding and unusual material accessible to a wide range of readers and researchers in such a scholarly yet user-friendly format.

CHRIS BRIGGS

The Franciscans in Medieval Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk Charters XXII).

Edited by Francis Young, xv + 174pp., maps, figures. Woodbridge:

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Price £40 hb.

The Franciscans (Friars Minor or Greyfriars) reached England in the late summer of 1224, when nine penniless friars stepped ashore at Dover. By c.1255–57 there were 1,242 friars living in forty-nine friaries. They made foundations the length and breadth of England, with small clusters of friaries in Wales and Scotland. They were an urban phenomenon; they went wherever there were people, settling in the cities and the major boroughs. Their principal purpose was to preach the Gospel by word and by example. They lived in groups ranging from twenty-five to forty-five and they preached in their own churches, in the local parishes and in the adjacent towns and villages; pairs of friars were sent out on preaching tours, taking them to parishes as far afield as thirty or thirty-five miles from their base. They also took the Gospel to the streets and open places. Each friary had a school headed by the lector, who was responsible for the continuous education of the entire community and for the programme leading to ordination. The friary belonged to the custody of Cambridge with its friaries at Cambridge, Dunwich, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Norwich and Walsingham. The friars made three attempts to obtain a foothold in Bury St Edmunds between 1233 and 1263, but they were thwarted by the monks.

Dr Francis Young has introduced and edited two types of document: one, the monastic records pertaining to its disputes with the friars. The second group is miscellaneous and concerns the friars' presence at Babwell, just outside the north gate between 1263 and 1539.

This group of miscellaneous documents illuminates aspects of the friars' lives and ministry. While the monastery's muniments were teeming, the friars' archives did not survive the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century and only disjointed fragments remain. For instance, Gervase of Canterbury recounts the dramatic episode of Thomas de Weyland, the disgraced chief justiciar of Edward I, seeking sanctuary at the friary on 1 November 1289 and even taking the Franciscan habit; he was eventually starved out of the friary and abjured the realm. There is evidence of good relations between the two religious communities with reciprocal access to the respective libraries. Henry of Kirkstede, formerly novice master of the monastery, transcribed a copy of St Francis's Rule (British Library, MS. MS.Royal 8 F.xiv, fols. 132r, 161r–162b) at Babwell. Henry Costesy (Cossey), the forty-sixth regent master in theology at Cambridge, was a well-known commentator on the Bible and a student of Hebrew. He was especially interested in discovering the literal and historical senses of the Scriptures. He died in 1336 and was buried at Babwell, as was Robert Windell, a friar and bishop of Emly and suffragan in the diocese of Norwich, who compiled his will on 30 June 1441. Parishioners at Glemsford, Brockley and Stanstead enlisted the intercession of Richard Morall, a friar of Babwell on 5 February 1460, 26 November 1461 and 8 October 1462. Peter Brynckley was one of fourteen friars of Babwell dispensed from their vows on 10 March 1539 at the Dissolution of the friaries. Readers will be immensely grateful to Dr Young for his translation of the Latin and French texts and his introduction of the disparate materials.

MICHAEL ROBSON

NOTES

- 1 *Heythorpe* appears to have been included in error as it is neither a parish name nor the name of a surviving settlement, and it is not recorded until the fifteenth century.
- 2 Boulton 2023.
- 3 Fellows-Jensen 1985; Fellows-Jensen 1972; Fellows-Jensen 1978.
- 4 Kershaw 2013.
- 5 Cullen *et al.* 2011.
- 6 Place-names combining a Scandinavian personal name with Old English *tūn* or a Scandinavian borrowing of this word.
- 7 *e.g.* Cameron 1996, 74–5; Fellows-Jensen 1978, 327.
- 8 Fellows-Jensen 2013, 85–7.
- 9 See Insley 1999, 54–5.

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