falling temperatures, increased storminess, rising relative sea levels and outbreaks of animal and human disease. The problems faced by communities living in this low-lying coastal landscape are reflected by the growing number of royal commissions into flooding, and Simmons estimates that from *c.* 1300 to 1400 relative sea level may have risen by perhaps 2 mm a year. Some land was lost to erosion, but new land was also gained as tidal inlets silted up, meaning that towns such as Wainfleet went into a terminal decline. Despite the increased risk of flooding, wetlands remained attractive areas in which to live due to their wealth of natural resources; these included the inland backfens that were carefully managed as a common resource. Table 3.1, for example, provides a fascinating insight into the complexities of this management by compiling a calendar of the traditional periods when certain wild plants and animals could be harvested; we see also the conditions imposed upon the commoners, such as what equipment could be used (this is a fine example of the value of interdisciplinary research, as it is only documentary sources that provide these insights). Chapter 4 then explores the early modern period (1500–1700), when communities continued to battle with the sea, while the volume is rounded off by Chapter 5 (titled 'Some Contexts') that takes a very brief look at some other wetland landscapes.

Despite the absence of a proper concluding chapter that summarises the development of the south-east Lincolnshire landscape, the book is otherwise very well written, with an engaging style; a particularly strong feature is the use of extracts from primary sources that bring the landscape – and the people who managed it – to life. A wide range of extremely helpful illustrations is also offered, including a series of phase maps showing how the landscape changed over time (although from Figure 2.1 onwards there appears to be an error in the key as the fen banks are in black, not green, which indicates the edge of the Wolds). Overall, this is a really interesting account of how human communities lived their lives in a difficult, but rewarding physical environment.

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Hitcham: A Landscape, Social, and Ecclesiastical History of a Suffolk Clayland Parish. By Edward Martin. 21 x 30 cm. vi + 146 pp, 102 colour and b&w pls and figs. Ipswich: The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2021. ISBN 978-18381223-1-7. Price: £10.00 pb.

Edward Martin, well known for his work on Suffolk's field systems (and much else), has written an affectionate history of Hitcham, a mid-Suffolk parish, long his home. It stems from a Heritage Lottery project which funded restoration of its church's bells, and a good part of the volume is devoted to the fabric of All Saints' and to its rectors, although little is said there about the church's origins. Those, however, may have been pre-Conquest, since in 1935 the remains of the chapel of St Margaret, mentioned in medieval documents, were discovered only 400 m from the parish church. Primitive delvings showed that, exceptionally, this had right of burial. Was this a case where the parish church shifted site? Or, Martin speculates, did both of the brothers who held shares of Hitcham in *c.* AD 1000 each separately found a church?

What will most interest readers of this journal is the topographical commentary on the very detailed survey of Hitcham – its landscape, territorial units, social organisation and tenants – which appears in the Ely Coucher Book of 1249–50, made for the bishop of Ely. The main headings are the demesne (fields, woods – later stripped for navy timber during the Commonwealth); knights; free tenants; customary tenants; unfree villeins; tenants holding ten acres; and those with five. The peasants' very varied customary obligations are set out in great detail, and give a vivid picture of life and landscape in the Suffolk claylands in the mid-thirteenth century.

A good deal has been written in recent years about Anglo-Saxon and later execution sites, and the Coucher book identifies one in Hitcham through the place-name *Qualmstowe*, from the Old English *cwealmstowe*, meaning a place of execution. In the nineteenth century this was the site of Gallowsfield Barn, which stood where a road entered the parish. This was a typical location for such sites, also typical being the date-span for when felons were hung here, which a fleeting reference documentary reference indicates was between the later tenth century and at least 1199.

As for the wider landscape, mapping (Figure 10.1) shows the manorial demesne lay in large blocks on the parish's best land. Copyhold tenements, probably each with its own closes, were strung out along the parish's roads – a strikingly similar pattern to that mapped for Worlingworth, 15 or so miles to the north-east in Dymond and Martin (eds), *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* (1989), p. 87. A large number of Hitcham's dispersed farmhouses date from the Middle Ages, and an illustrated gazetteer briskly introduces these and links them with the chief and customary holdings discussed earlier.

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The Archaeology of East Oxford. Archeox: The Development of a Community. (Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 43). Edited by David Griffiths & Jane Harrison. 22 x 30 cm. xx + 260 pp, 246 colour and b&w pls and figs. Oxford: Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 2020. ISBN 978-1-905905-43-0. Free download: *https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/archeox_hlf_2020/*

Community archaeology is hugely to the fore in this well-produced, informative and revealing publication, which is the fruit of a project between academic and professional archaeologists from Oxford and residents in the modern 'East Oxford' area, seeking to highlight a busy archaeological and historical past, different from the modern perception of this as peripheral, suburban and industrial zone. The zone is one part-framed by Oxford's outer ring-road through and enclosing Cowley and Headington, but extending down south to the