

series of storm breaks (seen in the archaeological sequence as flood deposits) partially destroyed the structure and it was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. In conclusion, the authors propose, based on extensive documentary analysis, an interpretation of the main building as a warrener's house (p.218).

Although the broad developmental sequence of the site is established, there is an unfortunate lack of a precise and coherent narrative for the site, mainly because of problems of phasing several of the identified features, due to 'mixing' of material following the various storm and flood events that resulted in a high degree of artefact intrusion and residuality (outlined in Chapter 3). This is a shame, as there are some significant artefact and ecofact assemblages from this site (Chapters 4–7), including thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery, imported Cornish roofing slate, animal bones that suggest a transformation from an animal economy dominated by cattle to one dominated by sheep (p.212), and a number of fishbones. Nonetheless, Naomi Field and the other contributors should be commended on extracting as much insight as they have from what was evidently a problematic site to interpret.

GARETH DAVIES
York Archaeological Trust, York

Great Bricett Manor and Priory. Lords, Saints and Canons in a Suffolk Landscape. By Edward Martin. 21 x 30 cm. ix + 173 pp, 63 colour and b&w pls and figs. Ipswich: The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History, 2021. ISBN 978-1-8381223-2-4. Price: £13.50 pb.

A number of years in the making, this well-researched volume was prompted by the owners of Great Bricett Hall (who formerly held the title of Lord of the Manor, purchased by auction in 1996, but transferred in perpetuity to Great Bricett Parochial Church Council in 2017). The first lords, detailed in Chapter 3, were Norman knights: Ranulf Peverel was a high-ranking tenant-in-chief for William the Conqueror for lands between Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Oxfordshire – sizeable holdings, though Ranulf is only ranked as a 'Class C' magnate by modern scholars (p.13); at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 one Ralph fitz Brien appears as Ranulf's tenant, holding the manor at Bricett, displacing a Saxon lord, Leoftsan. Ralph and his wife, at the encouragement of the bishop of Norwich and others, established a nearby priory of Augustinian Canons between 1114–19 (figs. 6.9 and 6.10 illustrate the priory's foundation charter and a seal of c. 1190). In a charter of 1152–54 the market at Great Bricett was granted by King Stephen to the priory (pp.73–4; charter illustrated as fig. 6.11). Always a small establishment, only six canons are recorded here in 1381; Martin states how while most priors' names are known, 'none appear to have been of any importance outside their priory' (p.73). From the early fourteenth century, the Bohun family oversaw the manor, though in the 1330s this was transferred to the priory. Under King Henry V the properties of this 'alien priory' and others like it were confiscated; Great Bricett Priory endured, however, and was passed with its possessions to the new royal college (King's College) at Cambridge in 1444. A subsequent range of tenants, such as the Longe,

Methwold and Hubbard families, tended the manor across later centuries (detailed in Chapter 4).

The manor or hall is itself attached to the north-west flank of the priory church, which survives as a long (33.5 x 6.2–6.8 m), aisleless church, dedicated to St Mary and St Lawrence, but originally dedicated to St Mary and St Leonard; the present co-dedication to St Lawrence may denote an early nineteenth-century borrowing/transfer of the St Lawrence from the lost church of Little Bricett (pp.80–81). The cult of St Leonard and the mother-house of Saint-Leonard-de-Noblat, near Limoges in central France, are discussed on pp.59–67. Chapter 6 also outlines the origins of the Augustinian order, while the brief Chapter 7 summarises 'Daily life in an Augustinian priory'.

Martin does a careful job exploring the form, features and fittings of the church, tracing, for example, the late twelfth-century western extension and likely west tower location. But there are issues understanding the layout of the priory, with the old assumption being that the manor overlies or replaced the former prior's house – this based on the other assumption that the priory was laid out in typical monastic format with central (northern) cloister and associated rooms around (see fig.8.6, p.85). However, magnetometry survey in 2016 failed to trace any signals for such an arrangement (p.101), and in Chapter 8, Martin asks whether a much simpler plan prevailed here, perhaps with an unrecognised timber range. Key is a reconsideration of Great Bricett Hall by John Walker, recognising a medieval aisled hall of fourteenth-century form; this dating fits with dendrochronological results from a set of oak timberworks (doorways, arches, trusses, joists) within, some first revealed in house restoration works in 1956 and dated then to the mid-thirteenth century, but now seen to relate to winter-felled trees of 1325/6, alongside some elements that may be a generation older (pp.94–100). Martin offers the attractive possibility that these timbers denote a (re)building of the manor under the Bohuns (who bought the manor/site in 1318), upgrading from an older manor structure which may have lain to the west, within the moated area known as 'Nunnery Mount'. As discussed in Chapter 5, this oval earthwork of 50 x 60 m, now set in open fields just 160 m from the church (and very nicely captured in the volume's snowy cover image), originally had an attached trapezoidal ditched enclosure, whose entry aligns with the church (and with the manor's west wing, which joins the church at an awkward angle). Why and when the label 'Nunnery' was applied is unknown, especially since Bricett never had a nunnery; instead, the enclosure is interpreted as a twelfth-century 'forcelet', a compact defended castle-cum-manor set up in the Anarchy. While a 2016 magnetometry survey picked up no clear signs of any internal units in the trapezoidal area, fair hints of a rectangular structure emerged in the oval zone – but only excavation would reveal if this could relate to the first, pre-Bohun manor.

The volume features eight appendices, opening with Bricett in the Domesday Book (Appendix I) and a selection of charters (II) – very usefully with translations (and an explanation of the DB entry) – followed by lists of priors and curates of Great Bricett (III, IV) and rectors at Little Bricett (VI), plus place-names (VIII). Readers may well appreciate the glossary (pp.148–50), which includes tidy entries for the oft-used

terms ‘open hall’, ‘cross-wing’, ‘crownpost roof’ and ‘demesne’.

NEIL CHRISTIE
School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester

Burton Dassett Southend, Warwickshire. A Medieval Market Village. (The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 44). By Nicholas Palmer and Jonathan Parkhouse. 21 x 30 cm. xii + 250 pp, 164 colour and b&w pls, figs and tables. Abingdon & New York: Routledge & The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2021. ISBN 978-1-032-43001-0; ebook 978-1-003-36527-3 (ISSN 0583-9106). Price: £34.99 pb.

30 years’ delay preceded publication of this very significant volume, but it was worth the wait. Non-stop excavation between May 1986 and September 1988 took full advantage of an abundant workforce supplied by the Manpower Services Commission and the landowner’s generosity in permitting sufficient time before construction of the M40 Oxford-to-Birmingham motorway extension, with results more closely resembling those of a research rather than a rescue project.

Supplemented by earthwork survey and a fieldwalking programme, a sample (c. 5,400 m²) of a well-preserved medieval village in the Warwickshire Feldon district was subjected to open-area excavation either side of an E–W street which may have served as a marketplace. Ten tenements with plans of 25 houses, many of which went through phases of expansion and adaptation, were recorded in great detail made possible by shallow, but largely undisturbed, stratigraphy. Walls were both timber-framed on stone sills and of stone up to eaves level. Numerous outbuildings served a variety of functions including a possible dog kennel, and some were constructed with earth-fast posts, even in the fifteenth century.

One of five settlements within the present parish of Burton Dassett, Southend was most closely associated with a weekly market and annual fair granted by charter in 1267. It soon gained a reputation as a commercial centre, as shown by its place-name Chipping Dassett, in use by 1295. Occupation had begun in the twelfth century but a first phase of laying out plots based on modules of the perch occurred in the early thirteenth, some time before the charter. After further phases of planned expansion towards the end of the century, the settlement reached optimum prosperity in the early fourteenth when it would have closely resembled a town. Slow decline set in during the fifteenth century, but occupied properties remained healthy and in a quite wealthy state until a sudden extinction through enclosure in 1497, resulting from collusion between the manorial lord and the lessee of the demesne.

Part 1 contains highly informative introductory chapters on the project’s aims and origins and on the geological, archaeological, historical and toponymic backgrounds of Burton Dassett. In Part 2, the excavation sequence unfolds – with remarkable clarity given the complexity of deposits – over almost 100 pages, with the aid of numerous well-chosen illustrations, maps, plans and photographs, but strangely without the use of any section drawings. Many are illustrated in the very

full online archives hosted by the Archaeology Data Service, and it is regrettable that none appears in hard-copy where the provision of a few would have afforded the reader more appreciation of the site’s triple dimensionality, an aspect so lacking on most rural sites. It is also unfortunate that no excavation of the E–W street was possible. A chapel, founded in the late thirteenth century, stands to the east of the main excavation. Details of its excavation and architectural recording in 2003 before conversion to a house are included here.

There is much worth reading in Part 3, which firstly deals with spatial organisation: plot and building layout, boundaries, yards, drainage, forecourts, streets, rubbish disposal and the distribution of various categories of objects. Following discussions on many aspects of the buildings, this part concludes with a summary of the metalworking residues from the one property interpreted as a smithy – important because it ‘was the first medieval site which was systematically sampled for hammerscale in Europe’.

Part 4 is equally useful, examining many aspects of everyday life and the economy through animal and plant remains, artefacts, agriculture, craft activities, trade and commerce. There follow stimulating discussions on the status of Chipping Dassett as an urban settlement, on why its market failed and on how and why the settlement rose and fell. In the conclusion, Part 5, the project’s results are set in context against changes in research directions taken by medieval archaeology since the late 1980s, and judgements are made on the degree to which the original research aims have been met. The final paragraphs, on ‘cautionary tales’ and future directions, should not be missed.

ANDREW ROGERSON
Great Fransham, Norfolk

The Victoria History of the County of Oxford: Volume XX. The South Oxfordshire Chilterns: Cavesham, Goring and Area. Edited by Simon Townley. 21 x 31 cm. xx + 509 pp, 8 colour pls, 117 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for the Institute of Historical Research, 2022. ISBN 978-1-904356-54-7. Price: £95.00 hb.

The Victoria County History project was founded in 1899 as a national project to write the history of every English county. Its stated aims are, according to the website of its host the Institute of Historical Research in London, to produce ‘authoritative, encyclopaedic histories of each county, from the earliest archaeological records to the present day, as well as topics such as topography, landscape and the built environment’. Over the course of more than a century, the iconic red volumes have continued to appear. The series was re-dedicated in 2012 to Elizabeth II, whose death was announced late on 8 September 2022, only hours after the publication of the most recent red book, the two-part volume XX of the Essex County History, was tweeted by the IHR team. Though with many volumes still to be completed, the series is an established national treasure, the starting-point for any local history research and a much-used *vade mecum* thereafter.

Volume XX in the Oxford series is the seventh under