

# REVIEWS

## INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY: A HANDBOOK

Marilyn Palmer, Michael Nevell & Mark Sissons  
CBA Practical Handbook 21  
ISBN 978-1-902771-92-2: 326pp  
CBA (York) 2012: price £20

The archaeological study of the physical evidence of recent industrial activity has arguably been one of the most important developments in archaeology, at least in Britain, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As an undergraduate in the 1970s expressing an interest in this field, I remember having met with mild amusement from staff in a department where archaeological studies began with the Palaeolithic and ended at the Norman Conquest. How times have changed!

As with previous CBA handbooks, this publication sets out to provide a background to the study of industrial archaeology, and to provide “an essential handbook for professionals, academics, students and anyone with an interest” in the subject. Simon Thurley’s foreword emphasises the key role played by the CBA in promoting the study of our industrial heritage, a theme taken up in greater detail in the first chapter, which provides an overview of the development of industrial archaeology, its scope, methodologies, related legislation, and a section on the adaptive re-use of industrial structures, with case studies, and on industrial landscapes and conservation. A list of useful web addresses is provided, and a comprehensive bibliography appears at the end of the chapter.

Subsequent chapters of the handbook provide a convenient framework to present the vast range of study areas covered by industrial archaeology, dividing them into eight major headings. Each chapter follows broadly the same format, with a general introduction followed by a section on each industry or group of industries falling within the chapter. Headings within each section cover the historical development, key elements and plan forms for each industry, with notes on key sites and suggestions for further reading. Each chapter is

illustrated with a range of good-quality photographs and line drawings, with detailed captions. The final chapter examines the future for the study and practise of industrial archaeology, and for the industrial heritage.

Inevitably, in a book attempting to cover such a broad subject there are a few omissions and errors. Cress beds, with their related water management and processing structures, once a common feature of the agricultural landscape of the Chilterns, are not mentioned. Narrow-gauge railways, mentioned only in the context of stone quarrying, were also constructed for agricultural, industrial or military use in a wide range of locations. The earliest post mills were constructed on trestles, though these were initially set into the ground, often leaving a characteristic mound with a cross-shaped trench at its centre. Other readers with different interests and experience might have similar issues. These, however, are minor points: for the reviewer, the one major omission is that of paper making, first recorded in England in 1495 and subsequently established in several areas of the country, perhaps most notably in north Kent and south-west Hertfordshire.

Despite these issues, all of which could be easily addressed, this publication provides a comprehensive overview of the background, methodologies and areas of study that fall within the general description of ‘industrial archaeology’. Moreover, unlike a seemingly increasing number of archaeological publications nowadays, it is readable, and should be of interest to anyone with an interest in the subject.

*Bob Zeepvat*

SECRET DAYS: CODE-BREAKING IN  
BLETCHLEY PARK

Asa Briggs

Published 2011 by Frontline Books

ISBN 978-1-84832-615-6 (Hardback)

978-1-84832-662-0 (Paperback)

202 pp with photographs. Price £16.99.

Asa Briggs dedicates this memoir of his days as a code-breaker at Bletchley Park to his wife Susan, “to whom *all* is now revealed.” Such was the culture of secrecy during, and after, the life of Bletchley Park (known as BP to its inhabitants), that even wives and husbands knew nothing of the work their other halves had undertaken until the secrecy rules were finally relaxed in the 1970s. Even then, Briggs was reluctant to tell the full story.

The disjointed opening chapter might well be ignored, or at best be skim read, for the book only gets into its stride with the author’s arrival at BP. His war had begun with his callup in June 1942 when he was told to report to Catterick Camp. There he set about learning Morse code and was introduced to the intricacies of radar before being transferred to the Intelligence Corps at Trowbridge. There he began his ‘Y Service’ training as a radar interceptionist; a training that was to prove invaluable when he was suddenly transferred to BP to join the work being undertaken in Hut Six – a move that Briggs never really explains.

While paying due respects to the genius of Alan Turing and Dilly Knox – “men around whom legends cluster” – Briggs highlights the contribution made to BP’s success of men like Gordon Welchman. It was Welchman who had devised the ‘Hut’ system, beginning with Hut Six which Welchman led himself. Briggs maintains that it was Welchman’s leadership that “made BP what it was, a flexible institution capable of adaptation and development.” Due credit is also given to more of the lesser known heroes, men like John Herival whose “brilliant idea of the ‘Herival Tip’ dramatically narrowed down the number of likely ring settings that German operators might employ” on their Enigma machines; or Max(well) Newman and Donald Michie who worked on breaking the German teleprinter cipher system; or Colonel (later Brigadier) John Tilman who is often described as the greatest cryptanalyst of his, or perhaps any, time.

Briggs is at his best when describing the work of the Huts, and particularly Hut Six. He quotes from Stuart Milner-Barry who edited the first official, but for a long time still secret, account of BP’s code breaking work; “Hut Six,” Milner said, “was fortunate in its birth, and more fortunate in the job it had to do: most fortunate of all in that by a series of coincidences and lucky chances, mistakes galore by the enemy mixed with his super efficiency, it was enabled to do its job.” The traditional story of BP is the breaking of the Enigma ciphers and the building of the nascent computers that laid open to allied eyes the entire military signals traffic of the Germans, but it was not just Enigma that was broken; other Huts were breaking the non-Morse-based Fish and Tunny ciphers that both helped to bring the war to an earlier end than might have been the case.

The size and scale of the operations at BP take the breath away. Bletchley Park was essentially a country house with not very extensive grounds in what was then a village, or at best a small town. Yet in the late spring of 1943, when Briggs joined Hut Six, BP employed 2,640 civilians and 2,430 service personnel. Many were billeted in surrounding villages and others were eventually housed in hastily constructed camps built in fields on the edge of Bletchley. While acknowledging that BP was male dominated, Briggs rightly points to the large number of hugely gifted women such as Ann McLaren and Gwen Watkins, to whom he gives fulsome praise.

The final chapter deals with the creation of the Bletchley Park Trust, set up by the Bletchley Historical and Archaeological Society, which was to save the Park from falling into total decay and being lost to the nation forever. The struggle to raise the profile and raise the money to save and preserve the Park as a fitting memorial to the work undertaken there, is a story well told. If you have not visited you must, for the story told there, and told in this book by one of its star recruits, is a story that stirs the heart.

If you find you enjoy *Secret Days* then you will also enjoy Asa Briggs’ second volume of memoirs; *Special Relationships: People and Places* that was published by Frontline in August 2012.

Graham Parker

IRON AGE RITUAL. A HILLFORT AND EVIDENCE FOR A MINSTER AT AYLESBURY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Michael Farley and Gillian Jones

Oxbow Books, Oxford UK 2012

xvi + 173 pp, including 87 figures and 35 tables, appendices and bibliography

Hardback: ISBN 978-1-84217-484-5 £30

This is a very readable account of a complex archaeological excavation and interpretation of exposed structures and finds. The excavation took place in 1985 close to St Mary's Church in Aylesbury and in an area within the grounds of the Prebendal House once known as 'Pleasure Grounds'. Investigation of the site was prompted by an imminent office development at the location and the uncovering of a large ditch, clearly of ancient origin, by the developer. Open area excavation revealed a complex site history which included the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon periods with medieval and later intrusions. The authors have focussed on findings relating to the Iron Age and Saxon periods, with later periods described only in summary. Appropriately interspersed reports from specialists in mollusca, pot, human bone, animal bone and charred charcoal and plants etc; together with detailed appendices, form a vital part of the evidence on which the authors have built a convincing picture of past human activity on this hill top in Aylesbury.

The first seven chapters deal largely with the Iron Age period and provide well-structured descriptions of the excavations of two unexpected and important Iron Age features revealed. The inclusion of excellent plans, relevant section drawings and photographs makes for a comprehensible and interesting read. In brief the first unexpected structure was the large ditch, mentioned above, which proved to be an Iron Age hillfort ditch running north-south across the site. Evidence of re-cutting showed that the ditch and its accompanying rampart (which had not survived) were modified at least once during the Iron Age occupation. A notable item recovered from here was an intact human skull deliberately deposited in the base of the ditch. Radiocarbon dating and detailed examination, indicated that the skull dates to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, belonged to a young man and was deposited shortly after the hillfort ditch was dug for the first time.

In addition a large, oddly shaped, pit with a dense deposit of human and animal bone was uncovered not far away and to the east of the ditch. Amongst the human remains were five incomplete, partially articulated skeletons as well as the incomplete, unarticulated remains of four other individuals. An important observation was that articulated animal bones, several from lambs, were associated with the human remains. The authors argue convincingly that these arrangements appeared to demonstrate purposeful positioning of the animals relative to human burials, suggestive of ritual internment. In order to explore the frequency of such ritual activity the authors make a fascinating review of Iron Age human pit burials in southern and central England which concludes that while pit burials of human remains were common they are only rarely accompanied by intact animals or joints of meat.

The hill fort ditch and ritual pit proved to be remarkably fortuitous finds since most other Iron Age features seem to have been removed during subsequent intensive use of the area. Analysis of the radiocarbon dating sequence indicated that the ritual pit was excavated not long before the excavation of the hillfort ditch. Commendably the authors with other colleagues provide a discussion of the Bayesian approach to interpretive chronological modelling in their chapter dealing with radiocarbon dating. They have also been thorough in the broader interpretation of their Iron Age discoveries, setting them in context by comparison with similar sites in England.

The later chapters concern features and finds dating to the Saxon period. Discussion of the excavation here is set against documented references to settlement at Aylesbury, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Domesday Book. The principal archaeological find was a boundary of the Middle Saxon period which consisted of a ditch cut into the infilled Iron Age hillfort ditch. In its earliest form this was a narrow slot-like ditch, housing a palisade, while the later structure consisted of a wider ditch, probably once associated with a bank. A sceatta found on top of one of the palisade post-holes provided an early 8<sup>th</sup> century AD date, and dating of other finds suggested that the final infill was completed by *c.*AD 750. Detailed descriptions of Saxon finds and consideration of the animal remains were combined to throw light on the likely subsistence economy and local environment during this period.

Given the hilltop position and proximity to the present-day St Mary's church and earlier churches, the authors propose that the overlaid ditches were boundaries for the Saxon church and associated buildings. With this in mind they broaden the discussion to consider old Minsters mentioned in the Domesday survey and what life at the early Minster would have been like. In addition they review the positions of previously excavated, inhumation burials within Aylesbury town; taken together these could provide evidence of an extensive cemetery typical of an 'old Minster'. The final short chapters consider the Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

This book is to be highly commended. The illustrations are a well-chosen mixture of site photographs, plans of excavated features and drawings of finds. All are relevant and readily related to the text. The structure of the book is well-organized, provides an enjoyable and instructive read and sets the narrative, based on the evidence from excavation finds, into a picture of what was happening locally and further afield.

*Yvonne Edwards*

**BISHOP WAKE'S SUMMARY OF VISITATION RETURNS FROM THE DIOCESE OF LONDON 1706–1715**

Part 1 Lincolnshire; Part 2 Outside Lincolnshire (Hunts, Herts, Beds, Leics & Bucks.)

Edited by Dr John Broad.

ISBN 978-0-19-726518-5 (vol. 1);

978-0-19-726519-2 (vol. 2).

Published 2012 for The British Academy by Oxford University Press as Records of Social & Economic History New Series 49.

In times to come economic, social and local historians will be grateful to Dr Broad for the assembly and publication of Bishop Wake's visitation summaries in a coherent format. These two volumes generate extensive new information to researchers into demography and religious belief in the early eighteenth century.

Bishop Wake was a strong supporter of a pastoral ministry so he took a direct interest in the condition of the Church Established within his Diocese of Lincoln. This Diocese at that time was extensive, taking in 1,272 parishes in Lincolnshire, Hunting-

donshire, Leicestershire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. He was inspired to base his visitation returns on a printed questionnaire which was completed by the local clergy.

The political and religious tumults of the seventeenth century had passed but the dramatic consequences persisted within the wider community. However, the Church of England had by the early eighteenth century at last attained the political stability on which Bishop Wake wished to build so that it could better serve the spiritual condition of his often wayward flock. The visitation returns are a report on religious conformity, the quantity and nature of Protestant dissent, the number of Roman Catholics, the amount of charitable provision and the availability of education.

Dr Broad in his excellent introduction makes reference to the Compton Census of 1676 and uses this earlier document to observe on changes within the population. It would seem that all communities had experienced population growth but the more urban parishes were growing the fastest. It also appeared that the number of dissenters had grown dramatically since the passing of the Toleration Act. The counter-availing decline in the membership of the Roman Catholic faith appears connected with the decline in elite estates in the region.

At a local level it is observed that dissenting congregations tended to assemble close to parish and county boundaries and, as in Ivinghoe, lived away from the village centres. The Baptists, who appear the strongest in the Chilterns, are disappointingly all lumped under the category of Anabaptist, so we are mainly unable to determine whether they are General or Particular Baptists. In Berkhamsted an anti-paedo-Baptist is recorded.

It is a delight to note that there are no dissenters in Maids Moreton at all. Sheehan tells us that this parish was persecuted by iconoclastic puritans during the Civil War and practised an underground Anglican communion throughout the Commonwealth period. Bishop Wake seems to have intuitively understood that such devotion can only be a direct consequence of good pastoral leadership.

These two volumes are solid reading but provide a huge insight into the state of the public mind in this part of the country some three hundred years ago. It includes references to other sources which will in turn also prove useful to the researcher.

*Nigel Robert Wilson*

THE CHRISTOPHER TOWER COLLECTION  
AT ASHRIDGE

History by Major Alastair Tower & Rupert  
Kinglake Tower

Art compiled by Michael Burrell

Published 2003 for the Trustees of the Christopher  
Tower Collection by The Burlington Magazine  
Publications Ltd.

ISBN 0-9511350-4-x. No price stated.

This is a catalogue of paintings displayed at the Ashridge Management College. As a catalogue it is exquisite: as a statement for a collection of paintings accrued by one family over more than three centuries it is both a historical and cultural commentary.

This catalogue is enhanced by a brief description of Ashridge, the house and the gardens. The family trees that connect the Tower family with the Egerton family, who as the Dukes and Earls of Bridgewater owned Ashridge for over two centuries, are also clearly set out. This provides context to where and why these paintings are displayed as the Tower family was related to the Alford family who inherited Ashridge on the death of the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bridgewater.

The Towers were originally merchants who made their money in shipping in the early seventeenth century. The first Christopher Tower acquired the lucrative position of Deputy Collector of Customs in the Port of London in 1709. In turn, his sons became Members of Parliament and Justices of the Peace. The family, now well established as gentry with estates at Iver, Bucks, and Brentwood in Essex, continued to serve their country and share in its prosperity throughout the following two centuries. It was the tragic deaths of the two sons, Christopher & Hugh, in 1915 & 1916 respectively in the First World War that crippled the Tower estate with death duties.

Having thus lost his father as an infant, the last Christopher Tower was raised by his mother and diplomat stepfather. The Tower family home in Essex was requisitioned in the Second World War and burned down in 1950. Fortunately, by then this collection was safely in store. Tower made a career in the Middle East as a diplomat and military adviser, working with both the Arab Legion and the Libyan monarchy. He later resided in Spain and then Greece. When he died he left the paintings in trust. It was the Trustees who offered them for

display at Ashridge Management College. Tower was also a published poet who founded a Fellowship at Christ Church, Oxford in the art of English poetry.

The paintings are largely portraits and miniatures of the family and those connected to them. There are also some interesting landscapes of the family homes at Huntsmoor Park, Iver and Weald Hall, Brentwood. The two most remarkable portraits are a delicate rendering in chalks of Viscount Alford by Margaret Carpenter and an utterly splendid Sir James Shannon of Hugh Tower as a boy: a truly fitting memorial to a courageous man who was shot down whilst serving in the Royal Flying Corps. Other notable portraits are by Sir William Beechey, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Henry Wyndham Philips.

This catalogue helps to add valuable context to the long, rich and varied story of Ashridge and those who have lived and loved there.

*Nigel Robert Wilson*

AYLESBURY THEN & NOW IN COLOUR

Karl Vaughan

Published 2012 by The History Press

ISBN 978-0-75246623-1. Price £12.99

This very engaging small volume is déjà vu as it is meant to be. Karl Vaughan is a local historian and photographer who has contrived to match photographs of Aylesbury in bygone times with the contemporary view in full colour.

With ring roads, wartime air raids and changing technology the townscape evolves so this is a very illustrative way to show just what has happened in Aylesbury. What is more, the simple photographs that speak for themselves are accompanied by detailed descriptions of those buildings and what has happened to them since. A most interesting example is a picture of Bicester Road where a flock of sheep can be seen taking up the entire width of the road just having passed in the middle distance a row of Victorian houses which still exist to this day but with certain modifications.

The old Aylesbury used up the available space in a cosy hugger-mugger which possessed a human scale. Now with the aid of reinforced concrete we can allow our architecture a broader expression. The photographs taken at the Top of Buckingham

Street illustrate some of the sad loss of character and style in recent years. The two photographs of the ruined Quarrendon Chapel demonstrate destruction evident in the last century or so which verges on vandalism.

Aylesbury was for centuries a county town serving as a market and an industrial centre for the surrounding countryside. The view up Market Square taken around 1860 before the clock tower was built shows cattle and horses for sale. Also the 1878 photographs for Kingsbury show six public houses and a water-pump for the refreshment of both four and two legged visitors. The 1897 photograph of the public baths in Bourbon Street, which were kindly funded by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild for the use of the town, reminds us of a time when hygiene was important but not readily available to all.

The 1913 picture of cycle-cars parked in Buckingham Street near Kingsbury warns of changing times in which the small boys following the works band in Temple Square in 1902 may have marched off behind another band in 1914 in something other than school uniform.

The only place in Aylesbury that does not seem to have changed much is Church Street which between 1885 and 2012 seems to have only lost some ivy from the walls of Ceely House whilst gaining a line of parked cars.

This is an evocative record of Aylesbury in photographs. It has an agreeable continuity, which allows the reader to pick it up and put it down without losing the flow of the story. Priced at £12.99 it is excellent value.

*Nigel Robert Wilson*