



The Archaeological Journal

Book Reviews



RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN SOUTH-WESTERN BRITAIN. PAPERS IN HONOUR OF HENRIETTA QUINNELL. Edited by Susan Pearce. Pp. iii and 173, Illus 88. Archaeopress (British Archaeological Reports British Series, **548**), 2011. Price: £32.00. ISBN 978 1 407308 84 5.

This *Festschrift* is dedicated to one of the most important figures in the archaeology of south-western Britain, Henrietta Quinnell, and it is a fitting tribute to an individual whose work has had an impact far beyond the narrow horizons of academia. Susan Pearce's generous editorial pays ample tribute to her work, charting her involvement with Rescue, to her important work at Trethurgy Round in Cornwall, and latterly as a staff tutor in the extra-mural archaeology teaching at Exeter University in the 1970s and 1980s.

The collection of papers, which derives from a joint meeting of the Cornwall Archaeological Society and the Devon Archaeological Society held at Tavistock in 2009, is fairly representative of Henrietta Quinnell's interests, and the contributions are arranged in chronological order. It is a timely volume, fleshing out a relatively sparse regional literature. Paula Gardiner's paper takes a somewhat north Somerset-centric approach to Mesolithic hunter-gatherer landscapes and highlights the paucity of quality data across the whole peninsula. Alison Sheridan contextualizes development in the Neolithic of the south-western part of Britain against wider northern French contexts. A more reflective and discursive paper by Tony Blackman examines the Bodmin Moor phenomenon of pseudo-quoits and propped stones, the sorts of seemingly naturalistic structures clearly visible on sites such as Rough Tor. Ceramic evidence is examined for the late Neolithic by Jodie Lewis and David Mullin, and for the Early Bronze Age by Andy Jones who highlights its regional flavour. Paul Bonnington introduces us to multiple cremation burials in the earlier Bronze Age, and Andrew Fleming revisits the Bronze Age field systems or 'reaves' of Dartmoor. The latter is a well-written and lively paper which engages in recent theoretical and anthropological work and provides much food for thought. Jacqueline Nowakowski's extensive paper on the biographies of Bronze Age roundhouses on Cornwall is similarly grounded in recent theoretical debate. Griffith and Wilkes' contribution on recent work on Devon hillforts is a timely synthesis of a very important topic, highlighting the great value of aerial photography in rethinking the nature and distribution of these sites, which tend to be problematic due to relatively sparse dating evidence and excavation strategies.

Moving into the historic period, Anna Tyacke, Justine Bailey and Sarnia Butcher highlight the importance of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in forcing us to re-evaluate orthodox thinking on the distribution of diagnostic artefact types, here namely Romano-British brooches. Allied to archaeo-metallurgical analysis, it is clear that some of these

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very distinctive forms of material culture may have been manufactured in the far west of Cornwall. This conclusion forces us to rethink elements of the relationship between Cornwall and the rest of southern Britain in this period. Carl Thorpe's paper on the early medieval native pottery of Cornwall, such as Gwithian-style wares or grass-marked pottery, brings much of Charles Thomas' early work up-to-date, and sets the agenda for future work. Peter Herring's chapter on ethnic identity and landscape from the Cornish perspective is ultimately not as convincing as it could be as it fails to engage in great depth with recent theoretical approaches to identity. Two brief personal memoirs and a full bibliography of Quinnell's writing complete the book.

This collection is, on the whole, an interesting, accessible and informative set of papers, as well as a useful update on many aspects of archaeological research in Cornwall, and to a lesser extent, Devon. Inevitably there is some unevenness, and lack of balance (perhaps too much earlier prehistoric emphasis when there is scope in particular for highlighting recent work in the Romano-British and early medieval periods) and whilst the emphasis on a distinctive regionality is important, some wider overall context, as demonstrated in Fleming's paper, would be welcome. There is a need to move beyond the dry data-led synthesis, and in a sense this collection may fall short in that regard. There is scope here to push conceptual boundaries more imaginatively. There are also editorial glitches; bibliographic conventions are not always consistent or strictly adhered to; some typographical errors have crept in (e.g. p. 90) and to actually misspell the dedicatee's name in the photographic caption on the frontispiece is surely a cardinal error which should be avoided at all costs in any *Festschrift*.

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