

Review

Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands by Marilyn Palmer and Peter Neaverson.
Chichester: Phillimore, 1992. 208pp.; 243 plates. £25.00. ISBN 0 85033 829 8

The popular image of Leicestershire is of a rural landscape of small fields, with sheep and cattle grazing, and fox-hunting: an image which W. G. Hoskins because of his dislike of industrialisation did so much to encourage in his volume on Leicestershire in the *Making of the English Landscape* series. In the *Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands*, Marilyn Palmer and Peter Neaverson demonstrate the diversity and importance of industry in the development of Leicestershire and the other three counties they study. The book, by two experienced industrial archaeologists, is well organised with two introductory chapters covering the history and diversity of manufacturing and extractive industries in the East Midlands. The second part examines the surviving archaeological evidence for these industries on a regional basis, with a fifth chapter examining the urban evidence. Each section in the second part of the book has an excellent gazetteer of the surviving evidence to allow for further investigation.

The obvious industrial features of Leicestershire are the north-west Leicestershire coalfield and the related mining communities, canals and railways, the Brush engineering works at Loughborough, and the hosiery and the boot and shoe factories in Leicester, Loughborough, Hinckley and the surrounding villages. The authors, however, bring home the variety of industry in Leicestershire. Besides coal-mining, they identify brick-making and lime and roadstone quarrying as important extractive industries in the county. The Swadlincote clay-works producing sanitary ware, the Hathern Station Brick and Terracotta works, the dioritic roadstone quarries at Cliffe Hill and the Groby Granite and Slate Quarries are just a few examples. It is not only the quality of the fieldwork and the comprehensiveness of the gazetteer which is impressive, but also the historical and technical knowledge of the authors, for instance that the Breedon Hill Quarries were worked for dolomitic limestone in a Hoffman-type kiln. Less obvious features of the industrial landscape are the various industries relating to processing agricultural products, for example the brewery and maltings at Sileby, and the many water-powered mills, some of which survived into the twentieth century.

The authors provide good outline accounts of the main industrial developments of the areas they study and utilise the surviving visual evidence provided by the buildings. For example they point to the persistence of the domestic system in both the hosiery and the boot and shoe industries, highlighting particular features such as how the boot and shoe industry took over workshops in south Leicestershire as they were vacated by hosiery firms for the factory. The volume is very well illustrated with nearly 250 plates and diagrams, mainly taken by the authors themselves as part of their fieldwork, though one or two of the illustrations which appear to have been taken from photocopies have not reproduced well. Some of the buildings are clearly in an advanced state of decay, and the recent recession has imperilled others. Already features, such as factory chimneys illustrated in the book have disappeared, but urban scapes because of their size and integrity are even more vulnerable. The book is therefore a record of as well as a guide to industrial buildings and features of Leicestershire and the East Midlands. There is a bibliography of the main works

relevant to the industrial archaeology of the region, though perhaps some reference could have been made to histories of the principal industries. The gazetteer is excellent, with not only clear descriptions and locations, but sketch maps of the proximity of different buildings. For example the gazetteer and map for Shepshed can be used to trace the development of the hosiery industry, from converted seventeenth-century cottages to two-storey purpose-built workshops in gardens and small factories. Shepshed also saw the introduction of boot and shoe manufacture in the 1870s as the hosiery trade moved into the factory leaving available the workshops for the new industry. The only real regret is that the size of the volume makes it too cumbersome to use easily in the field.

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