

BOYDELL & BREWER

BOYDELL STUDIES IN RURAL HISTORY

NEW SERIES

Boydell & Brewer is delighted to announce the launch of a new series, *Boydell Studies in Rural History*, under the editorship of Professor Richard Hoyle.

Boydell and Brewer is a leading independent publisher of academic works in History and the Humanities generally which, over the years, has included in its lists key works of British agricultural and rural history. *Boydell Studies in Rural History* builds on that record to offer an outlet for the best new research in agricultural and rural history concentrating on Britain and Ireland, Europe and its colonial empires both during and after colonisation, and North America. The series is open to proposals of both monographs and collections of essays.

IN THIS SERIES we recognise the importance of production. The countryside produced food for its own inhabitants as well as urban society. Over time the draw of industrialised society extended ever further, offering new opportunities to farmers, the possibility of new crops and technologies as well as reshaping agrarian society to meet metropolitan demand. We recognise the importance of power and institutional forms through which power was exercised, whether that of landlords over tenants, farmers over labourers, villages over their poor, the state over the whole agricultural community. And we recognise the importance of perception, of how the countryside, its inhabitants and the activities undertaken there were viewed, how perception served to shape the landscape to meet cultural preferences, and the attraction of the countryside as a locale for sport and recreation.

We see the countryside as never being still for long, but in a constant state of change as the demands of production, the opportunities for the exercise of power and the perception of the ideal landscape shifted.

For us, the countryside is an intensely political and contested space as landowners and governments, farmers and workers tried to use it for their own advantage. Its history is not simply one of property but is equally the story of those who worked there, those who left to avoid unemployment and poverty and those who were drawn to it by the promise of Arcadia and a better quality of life.

Boydell Studies in Rural History therefore has a range from the slave trade to free trade to Fairtrade, from commons to the common market, from hunting to holidays. Its remit includes poor law regimes as much as pigs, poultry and potatoes, sustainability, share-cropping and suburbanisation. It does not privilege any single methodology, but welcomes work informed by economic, social or cultural approaches to the past and recent past. It seeks to offer to the widest audience the best and most wide-ranging research being undertaken, that offers the most compelling account of where we have been and how we have arrived at where we are today.

Suggestions for the series can be discussed informally with the series general editor, Professor Richard Hoyle (r.w.hoyle@reading.ac.uk); developed proposals should be sent (using the Boydell proposal form found online) to Professor Hoyle and to Caroline Palmer at Boydell (cpalmer@boydell.co.uk).

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