

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN, *Landscapes decoded. The origins and development of Cambridgeshire's medieval fields* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006). xiv + 176 pp., 5 tables, 51 figs. £14.99.

Susan Oosthuizen's book is of importance way beyond its local study area – the Bourn Valley of Cambridgeshire – for it offers an interesting and detailed case study for a period that is still imperfectly understood. Although much of this material is already available as journal articles it is here brought together and discussed within this wider setting. Current opinions on the origin and development of field systems are presented and attempts are made to set changes within a chronological time frame.

Oosthuizen recognizes a series of landscape features and examines how parts of older systems may have been fossilized within later arrangements. A regular system of land division involving roughly parallel long boundaries, parts surviving as route ways, can be identified in the Bourn valley, similar to those which formed part of the prehistoric co-axial systems that have been identified elsewhere. Oosthuizen dismisses these as resulting from transhumance and the presence of linear drove ways for moving stock because the distances involved are too short, seeing them rather as the result of 'the relatively equitable apportionment of the environmental resources ... between family groups' (p. 88). This may remain open to question, for the main reason behind the movement of stock was to remove the animals away from crops during the growing season, and the distance covered was immaterial (often only a relatively short distance over a few hundred feet in later historical times in west Wales). More innovative is the recognition of a 'proto-common field' laid out across several contiguous parish areas, it is argued, between 700 and 870 – before estate fragmentation – also giving rise to a series of narrow linear commons (or were these ways?) running across the four parishes involved. This seems to indicate that the system was laid out at a time when these parishes were part of a single estate. Although early settlement evidence is not readily available in this area, the theory

appears to echo other recent suggestions of settlement nucleation in parts of the East Midlands taking place within composite estates before estate fragmentation (something it is, however, particularly difficult to date in areas devoid of charter evidence). The 'classic' common fields confined within each parish area in the Bourn Valley appear to have represented an extension of the arable between the tenth and twelfth centuries. These are interesting theories that demand further studies in other regions, especially as most of this analysis is based upon the technique of topographic or retrogressive map analysis, a technique that can be as dangerous as it is useful.

The emphasis here seems to be upon deliberate planning as the motive behind the apparent regularities observed in the landscape rather than functional factors of land use, such as the need for access ways both across and along the valley for the farming communities who lived and worked the land. Some other suggestions may be open to question and may not be as straightforward as assumed: the nature of Roman field systems, for instance (p. 4); the ability to elucidate methods of woodland management in early medieval England from place-names alone (p. 35); the identification of areas subject to woodland regeneration in the post-Roman period (p. 6): these are taken as fact when they are all open to interpretation and require much more critical analysis than is suggested here. However, in all fairness, there are more critical discussions of more directly relevant matters such as the use of the heavy plough. The development of individual settlement nuclei is also well covered with some detailed examples. By 1300 a pattern of big, nucleated villages, still keeping their offals (former common pastures) and greens under communal control, had appeared.

This is essential reading for all those working in the early medieval or medieval periods; it is original and thought-provoking and, provided one maintains a critical eye, provides an excellent spur to much needed studies elsewhere and to further deliberately structured field analysis and archaeological investigation.

DELLA HOOKE
University of Birmingham

JOE and CAROLINE HILLABY, *Leominster minster, priory and borough, c.660–1539* (The Friends of Leominster Priory & Loaston Press, 2006). xii + 292 pp., 146 figs, 20 illus., 15 tables. £10.00.

This lavish production owes much to the injection of Local Heritage Initiative funding. It provides an extensive analysis of the development of Leominster from the foundation of its Saxon minster c. 660 until the Dissolution in 1539 of the successor priory established by Henry I (not Henry II as the back cover proclaims) as a dependency of Reading Abbey. There is a list of abbreviations along with a single set of notes, undivided by chapter, running to 24 pages in double column and, even more frustrating, a single index of persons, places and subjects; a proper bibliography and footnotes would greatly have facilitated the volume's scholarly use. The volume is copiously illustrated.

Much is made of the seventh-century minster of Sts Edfrith, Hæmma and Æthelmod, its precinct built on an island site and the huge 12-mile wide dependent *parochia*. Its parallels as a site of historical significance with Glastonbury are explored. But apart from the *Secgan*, most of this is extrapolation to fit in with Leland's stories; in reality we know so little of these early institutions as is shown by the dearth of historical data for Brixworth, Clapham's 'most imposing architectural memorial of the seventh century surviving north of the Alps.'

Leominster seems to have become a double house, perhaps a daughter of the nunnery of Shaftesbury, by the early eleventh century: Wulfgeat of Donnington's will and John of Worcester's *obit* for Earl Leofric of Mercia (cited p. 269, n. 111) both use the word *cænobium* of Leominster, rather than *monasterium*. It is assumed that the minster priests became prebendaries serving both the nuns and the *parochia*: in fact what evidence there is for this phenomenon comes primarily from the royal nunneries of Wessex.

There are interesting, and attractively illustrated, chapters discussing the fabric of the Romanesque priory church, the parochial nave and their decoration. Others examine Leominster's library and relic collections. Those cataloguing the priory's influence on the location, development and shape of the borough are somehow less convincing.

M. J. FRANKLIN
Hughes Hall, Cambridge

MARK BAILEY, *Medieval Suffolk. An economic and social history, 1200–1500* (Boydell Press, 2007). xiii + 328 pp., 6 tables, 16 plates, 18 maps. £25.

Mark Bailey's authoritative study of the economic and social history of medieval Suffolk is the first volume to appear in a multi-volume history of Suffolk. With the publication of Bailey's volume the series is off to more than a solid start. Bailey is well known as a historian of medieval Suffolk and has published extensively on the county's economy in the middle ages; he brings his earlier research and a strong foundation in the primary material for the county to bear on this study. His work is broadly chronological and divides between the high and late middle ages, the first chapters dealing with his main themes before the mid-fourteenth century; in the final chapters Bailey examines the key events in the county from the period of the Black Death and their social and economic consequences. There is no absolute replication of chapters across both periods; instead, Bailey's chosen emphases shift, sometimes only by small degrees, often to reflect changes in the county's economy and social organization, the available material and the historiographical trends.

His aim, as he makes clear, is to illustrate the variety within the county and its subtleties, which challenge any simple models of longer-term economic change. This last point he explores in a conclusion to the volume in which he, developing at the empirical level ideas already discussed by Bailey and John Hatcher in an earlier publication (*Modelling the Middle Ages* (OUP, 2001)), rejects a notion of historical prime movers in favour of the accumulation of individual pieces of the historical jigsaw. As such, the volume is also a paean for local historians and for local history, a recognition that the local study is vital to the historian whose interests reside in the investigation of broader economic and social trends.

There is certainly a great deal of benefit in this volume for both the general and 'specialist' reader. One of its clear strengths is that, allied to clear and compelling prose, Bailey is careful to locate his discussion within the more general secondary literature. Although, of course, the focus and the emphasis of the discussion is wholly directed at the condition of medieval Suffolk, this volume will appeal to those keen for an introduction to the economic and social history of medieval England. That said, readers of the volume eager to discover the particularities of medieval Suffolk will not be disappointed. Throughout, Bailey is determined to stress the discrete features of the county's economy and in this respect draws attention, on more than one occasion, to the high incidence of personal and tenurial freedom, the density of population, and the considerable volume of

commercial activity. He contrasts those characteristics with other, almost paradoxical features of the economy, including well-established lordships, most obviously the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, with traditional expectations of their local economy.

The experience of high and late medieval Suffolk provides Bailey with the opportunity to engage with a number of ongoing historical debates, not the least of which concerns the significance of lordship and serfdom as determinative factors in the development of the medieval economy. In his discussion, and quite appropriately, Bailey's own interests are strongly evident, though they certainly cannot be said to dominate. Thus, for instance, there is a good deal of close information on agrarian production and demesne management, as well as careful dissection of the range of produce across the county and change over time in relation to the same. There is relatively less on aspects of the more overtly social and institutional frameworks, though the volume contains, for example, considered discussions of the land market and of the nature of villeinage within the county. In terms of the latter, and operating from his perspective on Suffolk, Bailey questions the overall significance of serfdom for that county, though accepting a local significance.

In his concluding discussion Bailey also offers some useful comparison with recent work on neighbouring counties, and especially on Norfolk, for which a great deal of research on its economy and society has been undertaken in the last quarter century. The subtle regional and sub-regional distinctions, which help to explain, though not fully, the difference experiences of the two counties and areas within them, are grist to Bailey's mill, as his final discussion of the textile industry in the region illustrates. The lack of consistency in its history, he points out, defies simple explanatory models.

Bailey recognizes that an economic and social history defined by county risks imposing too rigid an administrative boundary on historical developments not so easily confined. Compared, though, to the large number of estate and manorial studies, as well as research on individual towns, there are, notwithstanding a long- and well-established commitment to county histories *per se*, relatively few histories of the medieval economy and society conceived at the level of the county. The focus upon the county is useful here as it opens up, as it did in Larry Poos' study of later medieval Essex and Jane Whittle's work on Norfolk, avenues for investigation which would not always coincide in studies with a different focus. Thus, we see the exercise of lordship beyond the great estates, for instance, and we look both at rural and urban economic activity. In this respect, as in others mentioned above, the volume is a welcome and

valuable addition to the study of the medieval English economy and society. The volume is well supported by a full bibliography and an effective index, as well as intelligently employed figures, maps and plates.

PHILLIP R. SCHOFIELD
Aberystwyth University

ADRIAN R. BELL, CHRIS BROOKS and PAUL R. DRYBERGH, *The English wool market, c.1230–1327* (CUP, 2007). viii + 205 pp. £50.

As the authors outline in their introduction ('The Context'), the wool trade of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, with its abundant source material in the form of customs accounts and contracts for the purchase of wool, has already attracted much attention from historians. However, they contend that the full potential of the documentation has yet to be realized as a source for financial dealings and trading networks on a local and national stage. This book is not a history of the English wool trade – indeed, the authors explicitly reject such a claim. Rather, at the heart of the book is the study of advance contracts for the sale of wool, drawn up between English wool producers and largely foreign merchants. The authors show that these survive in greater numbers than had previously been thought and the contracts are here examined exhaustively for the light they shed on the buyers and sellers, advance payments, the reasons for advance contracts and problems associated with them, as well as the stages of the preparation and delivery of the wool. Both lay and monastic producers were involved in the process but it will come as no surprise to read that the latter were dominant, accounting for 84 per cent of surviving advance sales.

The authors move from the general (chapter two) to the particular, with a detailed look at the evidence from one Cistercian abbey, Pipewell in Northamptonshire (chapter three). The monks of Pipewell entered into contracts, negotiated and renegotiated, with merchants from Cahors. This is case study of great interest and highlights the centrality of these contracts to monastic finance and credit; indeed the earliest surviving indenture for an advance sale of wool comes from Pipewell (1242). Pipewell itself is revealed as 'belonging to a group of specialist smaller-scale producers who marketed an "intrinsically better product" than their competitors' (p. 77). This chapter reveals a community moving from using the cash raised from advance sales for building activities and paying taxes to using it to service unpaid loans. Four instances of sheep disease in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries threatened to undermine the whole basis of the abbey's trading and credit operation and brought it to near disaster. At the

outset of the book the authors state that their approach is to combine 'empirical historical and modern financial research methods'. The final chapter therefore looks at the structure of forward agreements for sale, calculating interest rates and assessing the efficiency of the wool market. The conclusions are that the market economy was a dynamic one, and those operating in it were capable of financial sophistication.

JANET BURTON
University of Wales, Lampeter

BRIAN BARKER, *Law and disorder in the Medieval North-East: the Claxtons and the Barony of Dilston in Northumberland, 1373–1441* (Papers in North Eastern History, 16, North-East England History Institute, 2007). 42 pp. £5.95.

Studies of disputes among the late medieval gentry have long assumed major historiographical importance. The eruption of violent disagreements concerning property were once thought to reflect the decay of the feudal system until detailed prosopographical studies revealed a complex society made up of many-layered networks and allegiances. In recent years, historians have come to look beyond the fragmentation of regional and local society to emphasize the vertical ties between gentry, nobility and crown. The north-east of England has, to some extent, been left out of this scholarly tradition, characterized as a border region different from the rest of the kingdom. Barker's detailed analysis of one particular dispute between Durham and Northumberland families is therefore to be welcomed.

The story told in this paper is a gripping tale of marital strife and decades of legal wrangling which took place in the shadow of the great northern magnate families of Neville and Percy. Before his death in 1378, doubtful of his wife's fidelity and therefore the legitimacy of her children, Walter Tyndale alienated his inheritance to the Claxtons. The inheritance included lands in Northumberland and, given the links between the Claxtons and the Nevilles, threatened Percy territorial interests. Barker develops the narrative by alternating his focus between the gentry dispute and the magnate interests at stake. Following a settlement in 1398–9, the dispute was renewed in the 1420s after the death of the Claxtons' political patron Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland. With obvious Percy backing, a self-proclaimed Tyndale heir emerged and seized Dilston by force. Matters were not resolved until the 1440s when, with the Neville family bitterly divided, Robert Claxton became a Percy retainer and secured the Tyndale inheritance.

Barker uses this case study to demonstrate the links between the gentry in north-east England, the great magnate families and, by extension, the kingdom at

large. The dispute was carried out in a way similar to other such disputes elsewhere in the kingdom, undermining notions of the distinctiveness of the region. Likewise, competing Neville influence in Durham, expressed through the Claxtons, and Percy influence in Northumberland, exercised through the Tyndales, suggest the North-East should not always be regarded a homogenous region. Barker's conclusions raise interesting questions concerning the representativeness of this particular dispute, especially in the light of recent work by Liddy on the distinctiveness of gentry society in the Bishopric of Durham. Barker's study is clearly written and he has provided a useful glossary, family trees, a map and the transcription and translation of a key document.

BEN DODDS
Durham University

MARGARET YATES, *Town and countryside in western Berkshire, c.1327–c.1600: social and economic change* (Boydell Press, 2007). xii + 338 pp., 10 figs, 24 tables, 3 maps. £55.

Yates' study of western Berkshire in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the transition from the medieval to the early modern periods on a regional level. The region chosen by Yates for her study consists of the distinct sub-regional geographies of the Vale of the White Horse, the Berkshire Downs and the valley of the River Kennet. The region also contains the cloth town of Newbury and Yates is much concerned to describe and analyse the relationship between town and country.

A number of descriptive and causal frameworks have been applied by historians to the transition between the medieval and the early modern periods. After describing these frameworks in her introduction, Yates takes them apart and tests them against her evidence. For example, she points to the prominence given to 'early incidences of capitalistic production' in discussions of the emergence of capitalism (p. 81). Newbury could be regarded as one such example. Yates examines the centralized cloth production which developed in the town and was described in a late sixteenth-century poem:

Within one roome being large and long,
There stood two hundred Loomes full strong:
Two hundred men the truth is so,
Wrought in these Loomes all in a row. (p. 91)

However, manufacturers such as the Winchcombes, on whom the poem is based, were unusual. This form of centralized cloth production was transitory in Newbury and arose in large part as a result of 'individual entrepreneurial activities' (p. 98). Throughout

the book, Yates always seeks to examine problems from multiple perspectives and, although she acknowledges the predominance of cloth in the economy of Newbury, she also discusses other economic activities including the trades in fish, raisins and pottery.

Interesting though the discussion of western Berkshire is, Yates goes further than the study of one particular region: she explores the factors which defined a region and the sub-regions within it. In her chapter on 'Landscapes, population and wealth' she shows that one small region actually contained significantly different sub-regions. She uses records of taxation to demonstrate that, although in the fourteenth century the distribution of population and wealth remained fairly uniform at a sub-regional level, by the sixteenth century there had been significant changes, particularly in the distribution of wealthy rural inhabitants and wage labourers. Wider economic changes had varying effects on the vale, downland and wood-pasture areas and the prosperity of Newbury itself was significant. Yates is also sensitive to the unpredictable impact of exogenous changes such as the dissolution of the monasteries. Prior to the dissolution, the abbeys of Abingdon, Reading and Beaulieu were major landholders in the region. Despite stability in the patterns of landholding from the fourteenth into the sixteenth centuries, the dissolution represented an exogenous shock after which there appears to have been much more change in the landholding class. Another important aspect of Yates' conceptualization of region and sub-region is the relationship between town and countryside. She uses investment and debt as indicators of relationships between different areas and finds the explanatory models of urban hierarchies inadequate. The case of Newbury is of particular interest because debts do not seem to have been contracted between townspeople and those in the immediate hinterland of the town but rather within the town itself and outside the region altogether.

One of the most troubling aspects of the fifteenth-century economy in particular is the question of the chronology of change. Historians have identified the existence of distinct sub-periods, which is confirmed by Yates. She is also able to establish the importance of regional and sub-regional differences in patterns of development. Newbury enjoyed relative economic buoyancy in the fifteenth century and a period of prosperity following the mid-century recession, a factor which had some impact on the surrounding area. The picture in the north of the region is different. The town of Wantage did not enjoy similar economic buoyancy, depriving the area of the benefits of nearby urban prosperity. As always, though, Yates is aware of the complexity of the impact of various factors on

different groups in society. For example, she observes the prevalence of smallholdings and poorer tax payers in the Kennet region but points out the availability of different sources of income in the area, including employment in the finishing of cloth, which encouraged immigration and ensured the viability of the local economy.

Yates' approach is driven by her questions rather than by the survival of particular collections of documents. This means she has to fill gaps in the available evidence from western Berkshire as best she can, drawing on a very wide range of sources including many different types of administrative documents, literature, and archaeology. Her technical expertise is shared with readers in four appendices containing substantial quantities of data and detailed discussions of the methodological issues arising. Those undertaking research projects on the economic and social history of the late medieval and early modern periods will find this discussion useful.

It is tempting for historians to remain in the comfort of their own periods, a tendency often reinforced by the arbitrary divisions of university curricula. Yates has courageously attempted to transcend these divisions and finds it is not possible to identify one 'specific moment that constitutes a break with the past and the end of the middle ages'. Instead, she finds many of the processes of change underway in the fourteenth century and then a 'discontinuous process which continues to this day' (p. 23). Nor can the process of change easily be attributed to any particular causal factor or group in society. Rather the impact of lords as well as that of 'enterprising individuals' must be set in the context of urban-rural relations, physical geography, unexpected exogenous factors and so on. In this book, Yates has not only given us a detailed picture of continuity and change in one region but has demonstrated the complexity of the chronology of change and its causation.

BEN DODDS
Durham University

ROBERT LIDDIARD (ed.), *The medieval park. New perspectives* (Windgather Press, 2007). xiv + 207 pp., 69 figs. £25.

How the history of parks has changed. Now, as this attractively produced and illustrated volume of essays shows, historians discuss the sociology and cultural context of park-making (Milesen), parks as spaces where cloistered ladies could indulge in sporting activities while shielded from prying eyes (Sykes) and parks as part of planned landscapes (Richardson). Anyone who ever found parks boring should think again. This collection is intended to demonstrate the new diversity of approaches to the subject, and it admirably succeeds in its aim.

The essays are all of high quality, and generally clearly

written. The first five chapters are rather grandly described as examining some 'conceptual issues concerning the place of parkland'. Stephen Miles on shows just how varied were the precise circumstances and motives of those who established parks, refining the notion of parks as status symbols and setting the subject firmly in a context of gentry formation and status display. Amanda Richardson's fascinating chapter examines the way certain parks were integrated into the landscapes surrounding royal residences. Naomi Sykes shows how fruitful the zooarchaeological approach can be; bone assemblages, this reviewer was delighted to find, suggest that the best venison joints went to the lord's residence, the less good to those lower down the social scale. Pluskowski argues for an environmental archaeology of parks, emphasising changing medieval conceptions of them, and usefully locating them between forests on the one hand and gardens on the other, and in a broader context of aristocratic hunting culture. Ian Rotheram, writing on the historical ecology of parks, follows them through to the twentieth century and discusses the challenge of conserving this heritage.

These introductory chapters are followed by a series of case histories (Stephen Moorhouse, on Yorkshire, Anne Rowe on Hertfordshire, Rosemary Hoppit on Suffolk and Angus Winchester on Cumbria) that bring us firmly back to earth. Every one of these is useful and together they provide a remarkable illustration of how different approaches applied at the level of a county can illumine aspects of park histories. They bring out the wide range of purposes and uses to which parks were put in different places, periods and circumstances. 'No two parks are the same', observes Moorhouse, with justice. They might mostly contain deer, but they were rarely simply 'deer parks'. Some were stock farms or studs; many (perhaps most) were exploited for their grazing and timber; others contained quarries, fishponds or rabbit warrens, and a host of lesser resources were also drawn on, such as nut trees. Rotheram talks of the 'working medieval park', Hoppit of 'working resource-units'. And just as parks might change in size and shape over time, so might their primary purposes. Yet Moorhouse himself and his fellow contributors are alert to general features too. The extent to which the gentry created parks may vary from one county (or region) to another (Rowe finds many in Hertfordshire; they seem to be fewer elsewhere), but their parks are generally smaller than those of their social superiors. The siting and distribution of parks relates to territorial organisation, lordship and tenure as much as to the distribution of woodland or topography. They may often have been a response to erosion of woodland.

A recurring theme in these essays is the extent to

which parks were integrated into a planned landscape based on the seigneurial residence – designed as settings, perhaps even with the visual pleasure they might provide in mind. Amanda Richardson's examination of royal parks is immensely stimulating. Those puzzling 'little' ('inner' or 'home') parks fit well into such a perspective. But she herself is aware that the general applicability of these ideas remains to be tested; in any case she is writing about exceptionally large royal parks and her focus is largely on what she calls the 'great age of the medieval park', the fourteenth century. Parks were often close to or adjoined the residence but many were well away, on the edges of manors or parishes, partly because that was the only possible place for them at the time of their creation. In fact the circumstances and manner of their creation are largely absent from these stories, as is the relationship of parks to the rest of the manorial economy. Clearly this, too, varied, but the subject needs to be explored. There are occasional references to ridge and furrow in parks or running beneath park enclosures. What had happened here? There is, I think, one reference to what is rather euphemistically called 'settlement disruption' (Pluskowski), another to the dispossession of tenants, but in the sixteenth century. The point is several times made that it can be difficult if not impossible to pin down the date of a park's creation (licenses to impark are shown not always to be reliable) and the need to consider the attitudes of the local population is sporadically noted, but such subjects are never really tackled. The park at Cockermouth (Winchester) was a 'valuable tract of woodland and pasture for the local community', yes, but the local community had to pay to use it. So this is very much parks from the park-owners' point of view. But it is a collection that should send us all back to our sources, which is high praise indeed.

JEAN BIRRELL

University of Birmingham

ANDY WOOD, *The 1549 rebellions and the making of early modern England* (CUP, 2007), xix + 291 pp. £55.

The rebellions of 1549 are in sore need of a new study, so the appearance of this book is a cause for celebration. It is not a straightforward narrative of the revolts, however, and its structure will confuse some readers. Chapters one and four deal most directly with the rebellions of 1549. Chapter one sets the scene, examining the political and religious situation in the run up to 1549 before undertaking a whistle-stop tour of the rebellions themselves. There is little new here, but Wood writes an engaging narrative. A more detailed analysis of the events and actions of 1549 is provided in chapter four, which, although titled 'Rebel political language', could

just as happily be called 'Rebel politics'. Chapter four concentrates heavily on Kett's rebellion and dissects the actions, demands and the social make-up of the 'commotioners'. This is Wood at his strongest: full of perceptive insights into what happened and why. Two further chapters are concerned with events after the revolt. Chapter two looks at the four years after 1549, examining the disorder and suppression which followed the rebellions, and linking the popular politics of 1549 with the commons' role installing Mary as queen in 1553. This is interesting, and it is a pity the chapter is so short. Chapter six considers the afterlife of Kett's Rebellion: how its history was constructed through the narratives of Neville and Sotherton, right up to the present day. Placing this chapter last has a certain logic, and makes a fitting ending to the book, but it means that detailed consideration of the historiography of Kett's Rebellion is disconnected from the rather uncritical account provided in chapter one.

The book's main fault is its uneven coverage. While events in Norfolk receive a reasonably full treatment, those interested in the equally large and bitter Western Rebellion of 1549 will be disappointed. Other than short sections in chapters one and two, and a smattering of references elsewhere, it gets little consideration and no new research. The same can be said of the disturbances elsewhere in England. In addition, the book has a curious emphasis on events *after* the revolts rather than before. Wood considers immediate political and religious context of the revolts, and makes a strong case for the benefits of breaking down the barriers between social and political history via the study of popular politics. However, at the same time he is setting up new barriers, disconnecting social history from the economy. Little consideration is given to the economic grievances voiced in 1549 and their origins. Enclosure receives no sustained treatment. Wood's detailed analysis of class relations floats free from any roots in actual economic circumstances. Instead the book contains two further chapters which are largely superfluous to the history of 1549. Chapter three begins with an examination of the difficulties of recovering 'rebel speech', what Robert Kett actually said during the rebellion and in his confession, before continuing with a discussion of the role of speech in popular politics and resistance. This long exposition boils down to the uncontroversial statement that speech can be considered a form of action in early modern England. In a book on rebellion it might have been apt to give more consideration of obverse relationship: how, in the absence of detailed verbal statements of the rebels' intentions, actions can be seen as a form of language. Rebellion is the point where speech turns into action, and a more detailed analysis of rebel actions

would have fitted well here. Chapter five looks at the 'decline of insurrection'. 1549 was England's last great popular uprising, and it is uncontroversial to explain this in terms of the widening social and economic gulf in village society between wealthy tenants and the labouring poor in the late sixteenth century. Wood, however, wants to argue something rather different. For him the government deliberately extended the village elite's inclusion in officeholding and local politics to widen the social gulf. The village elite's increased hostility to their poorer neighbours provides evidence that this tactic was successful in undermining the roots of future rebellion. What is at fault here is the chronology: Wood wants to place these changes after 1549. But the emergence of the village elite, their role in office holding, and the criminalization of the poor, have origins which can be traced back to the Statute of Labourers in 1349–51, if not before, and are well documented in the late medieval studies of McIntosh and Dyer, which Wood does not consider. Instead he has mistaken a discontinuity in the historiography, the tranche of early modern studies which have a start date of 1550 or 1560, for a real discontinuity in sixteenth-century England. Despite these criticisms, at its best, this book has a great deal to offer the historian of popular rebellion. In places it is sophisticated and perceptive, even inspirational in its approach. But it is a patchy book, and will leave readers who hankered after a new history of 1549 dissatisfied.

JANE WHITTLE
University of Exeter

H. R. FRENCH and R. W. HOYLE, *The character of English rural society. Earls Colne, 1550–1750* (Manchester UP, 2007). xxv + 309 pp., 30 tables, 3 illus. £60.

Earls Colne is a place well known to many historians of early modern rural society in the English-speaking world and beyond. It owes its fame to its seventeenth-century clergyman and diarist Ralph Josselin. It was Josselin's voluminous diary that first attracted the attention of the historical anthropologist Alan Macfarlane and which subsequently made Earls Colne the object of Macfarlane's pioneering but ultimately unrealized (and unrealizable?) attempt at a totalizing historical reconstruction. French and Hoyle take advantage of the online resources this created to revisit a fundamental question in the history of English rural society – the disappearance of the English peasant and agricultural transformation.

A helpful introductory chapter, which deserves to be widely read, revisits the debate over the early development of agrarian capitalism in England triggered by the thesis advanced by the American historian Robert Brenner in the 1970s. What came to be known subsequently as

the Brenner debate saw Brenner criticize explanations grounded in commercialization and demographic pressure and argue for the centrality of class relationships and the erosion of peasant property rights. Writing at much the same time, but largely ignoring the issue of landlordism and drawing directly on his researches in Earls Colne, Alan Macfarlane offered a very different reading of agrarian change which sought to undercut the debate over the transition from feudalism to capitalism by challenging both thesis and chronology, arguing for a more ego-centred and commercially-oriented English 'peasantry' from at least the middle ages. French and Hoyle skilfully summarize and critique this debate in the light of more recent research and make this the focus of the often very detailed chapters that follow.

The book moves from general debate to a consideration of Earls Colne's particular characteristics. The authors are careful to acknowledge the potential problems of a single parish study, emphasizing Earls Colne's particular character. Anciently enclosed, located in an area of wood pasture and practising a mixed agriculture, the village had a more diversified occupational structure that reflected in part its involvement in the north Essex cloth industry and, importantly, the urban influences of Colchester and even London. This was a complex, commercialized, and mobile society.

At the core of the book is a detailed analysis of changes in the pattern of landholding and the respective roles of landlordism, inheritance and land market. With two manors, half the land was held in demesne, but with much of this leased out and, with freehold accounting for only some six per cent, copyhold was the dominant form of tenure. In line with the experience of much of eastern England, after the climacteric of the 1549 rebellions and an arrested seigneurial reaction, the favourable terms enjoyed by copyholders by inheritance in East Anglia were consolidated in Earls Colne. Fines to the lord increased over the longer term by perhaps as much as thirty-fold, but represented only about a fifth of manorial income. At various points, the resident lords of the manor, the Harlakendens, sought to assert manorial rights. This gave rise to disputes between them and the previous owners, the earls of Oxford, and with various tenants. In analysing these, the book offers valuable evidence of the existence of faction and feud at even this local level. But the relative unimportance of income from copyhold as against demesne leasehold helped to explain why the manorial courts slowly declined.

Painstaking computer-generated reconstruction of the myriad land transactions recorded in the manorial courts allows the authors to map the pattern of landholding and land transactions over the period of study. The picture that emerges is highly complex. This was a fundamentally

bifurcated market in which volatility, until perhaps the later period, was the norm, with a pattern of land retention for a little under half of the acreage over fifty-year cycles while, by contrast, many holdings were held for surprisingly short periods. While, over the longer run, there was some consolidation into larger holdings, the average holding size remained small, with many holdings often very small at less than one acre. Much copyhold land was held as an investment. Inheritance remained the largest factor in land acquisition, with many of those inheriting land, including the Harlakendens, ex-stewards to the earls of Oxford, being otherwise not very active in the further acquisition of land. Significantly, those acquiring land through purchase usually exhibited more activity subsequently. While there was a gradual tendency towards consolidation of larger holdings with the emergence of a few parish gentry and a significant presence of the middling sort, two factors worked against this. In practice, a pattern of partible inheritance saw accumulated holdings subject to the demands of younger heirs, while the disappearance of families into urban society saw plenty of very small holdings sub-let. Indeed, with minimal freehold, most of the demesne leased, and just under forty per cent of copyhold land sub-tenanted, the owner-occupier was an exception in Earls Colne. As an analysis of the pattern of office-holding suggests, it was acreage, not ownership, that mattered most.

Earls Colne does not England make. Nevertheless, the detailed work that Macfarlane's original research project made possible means that it is unlikely that we will ever be able to better the insights into the land market that French and Hoyle's study offers. Their work suggests that early market involvement, for smaller landholders with secure 'peasant' property rights and larger landholders alike, made the whole sector necessarily sensitive to the incentives offered by secular shifts in the price of grain. But, given the detail of the analysis offered, there is much more for the reader of the book to discover, not least a shadowy historical community study revealing something of the strengths and limitations of Earls Colne, given the absence of key records, had Macfarlane attempted a 'total history' there.

JOHN WALTER
University of Essex

PETER EDWARDS, *Horse and man in early modern England* (Hambledon Continuum, 2007). xii + 340 pp., 10 illus. £35.

Alongside Dorian Gerhold, Peter Edwards is the foremost historian of the horse and the horse-drawn world of early modern Britain. Indeed, taken together, Gerhold's *Carriages and Coachmasters* and the present

volume provide as good a 'general view' as we are likely to get in the absence of detailed local studies. Prof. Edwards' book, drawing on an impressive range of sources (including, *mirabile dictu*, material from Wales) serves up a massively detailed account of the horse in all its manifestations; as a status symbol and object of conspicuous consumption, as a tool of war, as a labourer yoked to coach and plough and as a central player in a variety of sports.

The major strength of the book lies in the discussion of the issue of demand for horses of differing shapes and sizes as the economy expanded after the mid-sixteenth century. Before 1500 the profile of both saddle and draught horses in Britain was strictly limited, but with the development of regional specialization in agriculture, the opening of mines and quarries and the expansion of internal trade by road and water, bigger and better horses were required. As time went by, indigenous stock (or, at least, some of it) was improved by judicious crossing with Oriental and northern European animals, so that the great fairs of the east Midlands and elsewhere thronged with horses of every size and description. To these fairs flocked the carriers, traders and packmen, where they jostled with farmers seeking horses for the plough or gentlemen in pursuit of well-matched beasts to haul their newly-purchased coaches. Since everyone of any substance rode a horse, either their own mount or a hireling, the horse fair was of almost universal interest.

A gentleman attending the fair might be looking for mounts of decent stamp to meet his obligations under the various pieces of militia legislation (and I should add, incidentally, that Edwards is especially strong on the whole subject of the cavalry in early modern warfare). Alternatively he might be seeking a decent ambling hack for hawking, a speedy hunter which might occasionally be raced in a gruelling long-distance 'match', or even a candidate suited to the riding school. But, in any event, the matter of status and style was never far from his mind, because a gentleman could not fittingly be seen on any old horse. It was all very well for a farmer or a lawyer to go about his business on a nondescript mare, but the cut of a gentleman's horse was a symbol of his power and authority; it had, perforce, to be an animal of distinction in the same way as his carriage horses had to be matched for colour and size and trained to move with studied dignity. And it was useless spending good money on the sort of horse capable of cutting a dash if you were unable to ride him properly; hence the development of 'High School' riding. A man well-versed in the classics, mathematics, music and poetry was still only half a gentleman if his dancing and swordsmanship were below par and his

riding not of the highest order. The *manege* took riding beyond a mere leisure pursuit and made it central to a gentleman's education. The polite fiction was maintained that training in the *manege* helped prepare a man for war. And polite fiction it remained; how, after all, could the balletic movements developed in the *manege* have any relationship to mounted swordplay or the taxing business of re-loading a pistol at the trot? At the end of the day, *manege* training did little more than offer a man just one other means of showing off!

Hunting was another matter altogether. While Edwards remains equivocal, I would suggest that riding to hounds, which demanded extremely skilled horsemanship, was as good a way as any of fittening horses and men. Anyone who has hunted knows that the sport requires strong nerves and considerable bravery, reminding one of Mr Jorrocks' observation that hunting was the image of war with none of the guilt and twenty-five per cent of the danger. Besides, hunting controlled vermin, encouraged horse-breeding and the horse trade and, on another level, emphasized man's governance over creation.

Edwards makes extensive use of contemporary accounts, estate records and the toll books of fairs. In so doing he rightly warns us that these sorts of documents only give a partial view of the attitudes and behaviour of people towards their animals. He seeks to argue that the instruction manuals and literary sources suggest that people's behaviour towards horses became more humane and training methods less brutal later in the early modern period. Perhaps, but what of the approach of those unable to read these sources? I would guess that across all levels of society the brutality of behaviour meted out to a horse was in inverse proportion to its willingness to cooperate. I have known horses whose extraordinary stupidity and obtuseness would have driven the mildest and most humane of trainers to reach for the whip, chain and curb, and I suspect that things were much the same four centuries ago. Whatever the case, horses were over-ridden, over-driven and generally over-worked as a result either of ignorance or of economic pressures. Meanwhile the unfortunate animals were bled, purged and drenched with alarming abandon in what were often hopeless attempts to heal injury or cure disease. Of course, some customary poultices worked, but most veterinary procedures were utterly ineffective, while contagious diseases remained largely untreatable beyond keeping infected animals in isolation. Anyone with an interest in animal welfare who takes the trouble to read a pre-twentieth century veterinary text will offer up a silent prayer of thanks for some of the more recent developments in veterinary science. At the same time they will deprecate the posturings of the organicist zealots who would deny animals the benefits of science

and, like a friend of mine, eschew proper treatment in favour of worming their horses with a clove of garlic when the tide is in ebb. Well, really!

Although Prof. Edwards has given us an important, well-researched and highly-authoritative book, it is not without its flaws. The syntax is occasionally garbled to the point of incomprehension. One is sometimes left quite breathless, as in the case of 'Accordingly, the initial covering should normally take place in the third year, though gentlemen might wait a further twelve months'. Thoughtful proof-reading would have helped elsewhere. Meaningless remarks like 'horses' dietary requirements were high', the totally unfounded observation that Berber horses from North Africa had acquired Spanish blood in prehistoric times and references to 'equine (as opposed to "equestrian") pursuits' could have been clarified with a little care. So too would have been the claim that 'Innogen' was a character from *Cymbeline*, that the Suffolk Punch was a recognized breed in the sixteenth century, that horses were sold for 'pistols' rather than 'pistoletos', or that 'Lorimers' engage in making mountings for bridles. And when, pray, will writers on the history of horses honour the Thoroughbred, a recognized breed, with the dignity of a capital 'T'? Finally, while I reckon to know a little about horses, I fear a fog descends when I read of 'a riffey horse' or the 'pocky fashions'.

But these are whingeing criticisms of a major achievement which should be essential reading for historians of the horse and for those with a more general interest in the early modern period.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth University

DAVE POSTLES, *The North through its names. A phenomenology of medieval and early modern England* (Oxbow Books, 2007). xii + 244 pp., 21 tables, 47 maps. £35.00.

With this volume, the eighth in the series that began in 1973, the English Surnames Survey, funded by the Marc Fitch Fund and housed in what is now the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, comes to an end. Previous volumes in the series have been county surveys; this one is devoted to the use of onomastic evidence in tackling the elusive concept of the North as a separate region. It is based on an impressive range of printed sources – lay subsidies, poll taxes, manor court rolls, cartularies, etc. – from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with some evidence from the twelfth century and more from parish registers in the early modern period. A series of maps shows the geographical distributions of various names to demonstrate their northern provenance or their confinement to local societies within the wider North

(but it is not always clear whether blank counties signify the lack of examples or the absence of evidence).

Dr Postles is not concerned with those numerous northern names that are derived from farms, hamlets and villages, including such splendid examples as Ackroyd, Entwistle, Ramsbottom and Sowerbutts, for such names were obviously formed locally. It should be noted, however, that in the North they account for about 50 per cent of surnames. His concern is with other categories of bynames and hereditary surnames at the period of their formation. His scholarly work adds a great deal to our understanding of these processes. But how far do they help in defining a distinctive northern region?

He begins, with suitable caution, by considering whether names such as North (or Norris), South, East and West relate to migrants. The answer to his question can be provided by much later evidence, that of the 1881 census returns, which have been shown to point to the 'homes of family names' in much earlier times. At that time, the 9,929 Norths were living mainly in the North (with 2,095 in the West Riding) and in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire. The 12,865 people named Norris were also found predominantly in the North (with 2,245 in Lancashire). Those named South lived mainly in the South, and (if we exclude London) the highest number of those named East were living in Lincolnshire, with very few in western England. Only the widespread name West does not conform to this pattern. It is clear that such names mostly referred to people who were living not far north, south, east or west of a locality, just as place-names such as Norton, Sutton, Aston and Weston were coined in a local context.

Dr Postles acknowledges that the naming patterns which he observes are not confined to the North, though they are far more evident there. The problem, of course, is where is the southern boundary of the northern region? The distributions on his maps often extend down to Lincolnshire and Leicestershire and occasionally into Norfolk. He concludes his discussion of occupational names, for example, by referring to 'the spilling out of the North into lower reaches', but notes that their density 'was more intense in the northernmost reaches, so that they can be construed as characterizing the North if not exclusively northern'. He also recognizes the importance of *pays* or 'country' within the northern region. Indeed, he is rightly concerned to emphasize this point in each of his discussions of particular forms of name. But when we look at the map on p. 95, which shows that in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries elliptical topographical bynames such as Northiby were largely confined to north Lincolnshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire,

with some spillage into the North Riding, we wonder how this can be reconciled with the notion of a northern region beyond the Humber and the Mersey.

In a book that is packed with detailed evidence it is, of course, only to be expected that some interpretations might be questioned. Thus, in an interesting discussion of occupational bynames, it might be noted that Badger is not especially northern, as it has a strong presence in the West Midlands, and that Collier is widespread nationally, as it was more commonly applied to a charcoal burner than to a coal miner. It is also interesting to note that Neathird, which features so strongly in Leicestershire on his map based on the poll tax returns of 1377–81, should be included in his examples of the instability of bynames, for it does not survive as a surname.

The strength of this book is in the thorough assembling of evidence for many different types of byname. Although it is already well known that some forms, such as names ending in -son or -man or occupational names such as Walker, Lister or Thacker, are predominantly northern, Dr Postles has provided firm evidence placed in a wider context. He is particularly informative on the formation of bynames from surviving pre-Conquest personal names, pet forms of names that are often concealed by Latin forms in taxation records but are revealed in manor court rolls, 'inventive and sometimes salacious forms of nicknames', and a distinctive topographical vocabulary that includes Scandinavian terms such *bek*, *kar*, *lund*, and *scale*, etc. Throughout, he is concerned with the various bynames that were acquired by peasant farmers, many of which (at least in Yorkshire) developed into hereditary surnames during the first half of the fourteenth century. His book is therefore of interest to medieval agrarian historians and not just to specialists in the field of onomastics.

DAVID HEY
University of Sheffield

JOHN GURNEY, *Brave community. The Digger movement in the English revolution* (Manchester University Press, 2007). xiii + 236 pp. £55.

This book has four principal aims: to explore the local background to the Digger movement; to study the Digger movement as a whole, providing a corrective to the normal fixation on Gerrard Winstanley; to offer a reassessment of Winstanley's background, connections and ideas; and to assess the very different reactions the Diggers provoked in Walton and Cobham. Supported by evidence drawn from extensive archival research, Gurney's study demonstrates how stimulating and valuable local history can be. While not devoid of weaknesses, the book is sure to become a key reference point for all future studies of the Diggers.

One of the key questions running throughout the book is 'who exactly were the Diggers?' Here, Gurney suggests that they were a disparate group with similarly disparate motivations. Among their ranks one finds local bricklayers, blacksmiths, maltsters, drapers, shoemakers and glaziers as well as radical sectaries drawn from further afield. The level of detail provided by Gurney makes for fascinating reading, and what we have in this book is the most comprehensive profile of Digger membership to date. I did find it slightly odd, however, that Gurney chose to give unexpected prominence to one particular Digger, John Coulter.

Coulter is introduced to us in the book's Preface, and what we learn of him there serves as a narrative frame for the study as a whole. Coulter was both a Digger stalwart – present from beginning to end – and a local yeoman farmer who had inherited a thirty-acre estate, a major player in manorial affairs and a respected member of the 'middling sorts'. What is slightly odd about this is that Coulter later turns out to be an anomaly, the only Digger ever to have played a prominent role in local affairs, and, indeed, his status and position appear to have been overplayed somewhat in the Preface. The other local Diggers were parish residents lacking the security of tenure and united by their marginal, vulnerable and economically precarious position on the fringes of society. The emphasis throughout the book – and Gurney's choice to foreground Coulter is illustrative of this – is placed on the Diggers as a movement of the respectable 'middling sorts'. The evidence cited, however, seems more consistent with a position never explicitly advanced, namely, that the Diggers were a movement of the poor and the poorer elements of the 'middling sorts'.

Gurney is at his best in situating the Diggers within their local context. In addition to discussions of familiar themes such as the spread of religious radicalism and the costs of free quarter, there are excellent sections dealing with rural popular protest in Surrey during the 1640s and the history of bitter landlord-tenant conflicts in Cobham. The latter partly explains why the Diggers encountered less local opposition once they relocated from St. George's Hill in Walton to Little Heath, Cobham. Given popular hostility toward landowners in Cobham, people were reluctant to engage in a campaign against the Diggers orchestrated by a manorial lord, John Platt, whose aim was to protect his own interests. Whereas opposition in Walton had come from the poor and 'middling sorts' as well as the agents of kingly power, it seems that in Cobham Platt had to rely on hiring men from outside the parish to do the dirty work of destroying crops and houses.

There was a more basic reason why the Diggers were

better received in Cobham than in Walton. As Gurney argues throughout the book, many of the Diggers were residents of Cobham, linked to non-Diggers by complex kinship and neighbourhood ties. The different reactions the Diggers provoked is thus explained by the simple fact that in Walton they were outsiders, while in Cobham they were locals. As ever, though, Gurney enlivens even the most prosaic of arguments with plentiful concrete detail. One is thus presented with two Walton neighbours, Henry Bickerstaffe and William Starr, the former a Digger, the latter one of their leading persecutors. While Starr was motivated primarily by the perceived threat the Diggers posed to his own claim to the commons, Gurney suggests that personal score-settling may also have played a part, because Starr sought revenge for a violent and public humiliation that his own father had suffered at the hands of Bickerstaffe. It is this level of tangible human detail that makes Gurney's study both original and engaging.

Although Gurney seeks to shift the focus away from Winstanley as an individual and on to the Diggers as a movement, he does offer an analysis of Winstanley's ideas. There is much of value here. The final chapter, for example, contains an interesting discussion of Winstanley's strategic reassessments, i.e., the subtle changes in emphasis and argument used to legitimate and secure support for the Diggers. Nonetheless, the treatment of Winstanley's ideas is the least original aspect of the book. Gurney follows many others in suggesting that religion and politics were fused in Winstanley's thought, that he propounded a powerful practical Christianity, and that his ideas were influenced by, but went beyond, those of contemporary social reformers. Of course, Gurney's primary concern is not the political thought of Gerrard Winstanley. In keeping with the book as a whole, Gurney's contribution to the study of Winstanley lies in the results of his archival research.

Following the invaluable work of James Alsop, it is now widely accepted that Winstanley was neither one of the labouring poor nor a member of the pseudo-gentry, but that he came instead from an artisanal family of modest means. Although Gurney is quick to point out that conclusive evidence is in short supply, his own research recasts Winstanley as the member of 'an influential community of interest encompassing major gentry families, politicians, mercantile leaders and prominent religious figures' (p. 66). This is sure to provoke debate and reaction. It is also one of the reasons, among many, why the book is destined to become a key text in Digger studies.

DARREN WEBB
University of Sheffield

J. FINCH and K. GILES (eds) *Estate Landscapes. Design, improvement and power in the post-medieval landscape* (Boydell Press 2007). ix + 234 pp., 67 figs. £50.

This book, the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology's fourth monograph, consists of papers given at the Society's Estate Landscapes Conference in April 2003 and includes work undertaken both in the British Isles and the New World. The aim of the conference, as summarized by the editors in the preface, was to 'explore the increasing interest amongst archaeologists in the study of post-medieval landscapes in general' and the form of the 'estate landscape in particular' (p. vii). Tom Williamson's inspiring introduction whets our appetite for what we believe will surely follow. The great estates are a post-medieval phenomenon worthy of study by post-medieval archaeologists who are academically equipped to look at them in ways not previously tackled. Although new, many estate landscapes incorporated something from the past; they reflect new attitudes to property and aesthetics as well as often contradictory political, ideological, and economic motivations. 'All papers demonstrate how understanding the landscape demands that researchers break through their own conceptual boundaries and address issues raised in agriculture, economics, literature, philosophy and politics' (p. ix). This is great stuff, but do the papers live up to these high expectations?

Much that follows testifies to the fact that what makes a good conference presentation does not easily transfer itself to the printed page. Quite appropriately most of the papers aim to show the value of an archaeological rather than landscape-historical approach to the various features which surround the great house. This is particularly clear in Charles Orser's contribution from Tanzyfort House in County Sligo. Here, meticulous excavation and recording of the building remains shows how an older 'vernacular' house was partially rebuilt to form dog kennels. While it would obviously have been easier to build from scratch, an older structure was retained to enforce the idea of stability and continuity within a later landscape. Detailed archaeological investigation is thus interpreted in the light of the known social aspirations of the time. Similarly work on the pottery kiln at Dunster is given a truly archaeological perspective by David Dawson and Oliver Kent. Although much of the paper reads like an excavation report, including cross-sections of pottery sherds, the placing of the kiln within the context of landscape design is fascinating. The kiln was located, not for the convenience of importing raw materials and exporting the product, but so that it could be seen from the castle, thus incorporating an 'industrial' element into the otherwise rural scene and so emphasizing

the modernity of the owner. Classical archaeologists have always understood the importance of memorials to an understanding of society and collective memory and so Harold Mytum's paper on monuments in estate landscapes is significant. Although small elements in the landscape, their symbolism is obvious. Amongst other things, they represent the continuity of land ownership, evoke memories and encourage the ethic of loyalty. All these attributes are present in his chosen areas of study at Castle Howard and Sledmere. Sir Mark Sykes' famous memorial to the Wolds Wagoners, who were raised by Sir Mark to provide transport in a war zone during the First World War, is particularly important in linking the Sykes family with the community. So far so good; the interpretations of the archaeologist have been informed by issues from literature, philosophy and politics.

Other papers are more influenced by the approach of the landscape historian. Jonathan Finch reminds us that even in the most fashionable of landscapes – that at Castle Howard – earlier features, such as ancient woodland and medieval fish ponds, survive, while Paul Everson elegantly shows how many seventeenth-century gardens, particularly 'fishing gardens' when laid out by puritan gentry, were created as an aid to contemplation. Robert Silvester and Judith Alfrey describe the development and consolidation of a Welsh estate, paying particular attention to the importance of the mainly nineteenth-century built environment from the black and white traditional-style cottages and artisan's dwellings to the smallholdings through to the gentrified farms. They point out the significance of these different types of buildings to any understanding of how the social system operated. Sam Turner describes in general terms the development of the field systems of the South-West and links this rather loosely to estate landscapes. Although enclosure was generally early, there was some reorganization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly on the larger, 'barton' farms of the gentry. Here 'the reorganizing of their estates into more regular enclosures could have been a way of expressing their rights of ownership; power to alter and improve their lands might have emphasized their growing status' (p. 65).

A final section widens the subject to include colonial landscapes, often, as in the example from south-west Ireland described by Colin Breen, created not by the traditional landowning elite relying on agriculture and rents for their income, but by an entrepreneurial mercantile group. While they may have justified their actions by harping back to a classical model of colonization, dispossessing the local Gaelic-Irish and destroying their language and traditions, their motives were mainly financial. This critical shift from the practices of the past had a huge landscape impact. Unlike at Tanzyfort, there

was no attempt to emphasize continuity and stability by retaining past elements in the landscape. Leech and Hicks develop this theme of the 'archaeology of capitalism' further in their papers on Nevis, St Kitts and the Leeward Isles. Links between landscapes of colonization in the West Indies, often master-minded by the owners and designers of the great British landed estates, are stressed by Dan Hicks, who concludes

When we consider the financial connections between the West Indian planters and British estate holders in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ... the observation that the working out of ideas of improvement in the landscapes of the Caribbean might have had a central role in influencing the ideas of improvement in Britain is still more compelling' (p. 222).

While, as Barbara Heath explains, Jefferson consciously modelled his rural retreat on classical and English models, perhaps we should also be looking for a colonial influence on English estates.

Thus, while many of these papers contain intriguing and thought-provoking material, their concentration on detail in their own chosen fields means they often read like research reports and so do not in fact 'break through the conceptual boundaries' that Williamson describes.

All the papers are let down by the standard of the illustrations. Too many of the maps are fuzzy and the photographs dark. We expect better of a book priced at £50.

SUSANNA WADE-MARTINS
University of East Anglia

ADRIAN RANDALL, *Riotous assemblies. Popular protest in Hanoverian England* (OUP, 2006). xii + 354 pp. £65.

This volume comprises a very wide and detailed survey, based on an impressive range of primary sources, and also utilizes the very numerous secondary works on the topic. It has already proved very popular with my undergraduates, though at this price one hopes a paperback version will soon follow.

Randall begins with an incisive analysis of power and authority as bolstered by the 1715 Riot Act passed shortly before the aborted Jacobite rebellion in Scotland. It remained on the statute book until 1919. Under its provisions 'felonious violence' could be met with what he dubs 'summary judicial slaughter' following the magistrates' rendition of a proclamation enjoining a dispersal of assemblies within an hour. The main agency of riot control was the regular army, though its officers showed little enthusiasm for bloody confrontations, not least because *in extremis* the ranks might turn on their

commanders. But, as Randall observes, magistrates rarely resorted immediately to the dispersal order, whether or not troops were available, but most commonly at least attempted to negotiate solutions, which regularly included the investigation of popular grievances as well as dispersal. In this scenario there was often a theatrical element.

Nevertheless the English especially, though not exclusively, were particularly prone to protest over a multitude of matters, some of them relatively minor, including the relocation of a central village pump to an awkward peripheral spot. However, historians of popular protest are virtually unanimous that the most common issue was high food prices in the Georgian era, notably in the second half of the eighteenth century, when demographic growth increasingly pressed on the capacity of the British agrarian sector to keep abreast of demand, particularly after substandard cereal harvest yields became recurrent features. Grain imports in wartime proved difficult, especially during the war against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, when the situation was further aggravated by *consecutive* harvest failures of 1794 and 1795, 1799 and 1800, and finally 1810 and 1811. 'In any other country', opined the President of the Board of Trade on conditions in 1800, they 'would be called a famine'. Nevertheless, improved communications over the eighteenth century, facilitated the development of a national cereal market, notably in the mid-century creation of London's Mark Lane exchange, where merchants, factors and millers dealt in grains based on samples exhibited. This move away from customary pitching markets was also reflected in dealings between farmers, corn-factors and millers, increasingly negotiated in the privacy of 'market rooms' in substantial inns, which came to replace the traditional public forum. Price speculation was also facilitated through the official *London Gazette's* weekly listings of provincial cereal prices, originally designed for the price-mechanism governing the import and export stipulations under the Corn Laws, which Randall overlooks.

Unsurprisingly, his perception of disturbances over food issues is strongly coloured by E. P. Thompson's famous study, of 1971 vintage, identifying the 'moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', buttressed by the essay 'The moral economy reviewed' in his *Customs in Common* (1991). Randall defends Thompson's analysis, but challenges his argument that during the wartime famines the customary 'equilibrium between paternalist [local] authority and the crowd ... was undermined ... [by] acute anti-Jacobinism of the gentry [and] by the triumph of the new ideology of political economy'. Ironically, Randall shows that the first and especially the second famines produced a fundamental

division between the government committed to orchestrating the rigorous suppression of food riots, and the senior judiciary led by Lord Chief Justice Kenyon who ruled that, under common law, traditional marketing offences remained illegal. Moreover, Pitt's early 1801 resignation, usually attributed to George III's resistance to full Catholic emancipation under the 1800 Act of Union, was dictated more by the fact that the current famine necessitated peace at any cost, which under Pitt was out of the question. Only one of Pitt's cabinet survived, the experienced and forceful home secretary, the Duke of Portland, responsible for the state's so-called 'terror' in the later 1790s, including the rigorous suppression of food riots; he was not replaced until the famine terminated in mid-1801. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that populist moral-economic perceptions survived amongst all ranks, including those comprising the critical agency, the unpaid magistracy, despite Portland's very public denunciations of some justices.

Another major component of Randall's study focuses on industrial protests, both before and during the principal Luddite explosion in 1811–3. Luddite antecedents were addressed in his earlier incisive and influential study *Before the Luddites* (1991). Here the focus is on the breakdown of Tudor legislation banning designated mechanical innovations, and technically still enforceable. This provoked affected workers to combine – not necessarily on a permanent basis – to demand protection through prosecutions of offenders, appeals to parliament, and militant physical intervention against new machinery. There seems to be little doubt that politicians were particularly concerned that recurrent violent industrial riots might trigger wider metropolitan protests, a possibility which manifested itself later with the Gordon riots, even if parliamentarians were far less concerned about provincial mobilizations. Randall addresses various militant protests from the early eighteenth century, before focusing on the fierce and prolonged riots in West Country woollens at the turn of the century, which spawned the Brief Institution, basically a trade union which also embraced their West Riding counterparts. Under its auspices, grievances were taken to Westminster, with select committees in the Commons interrogating witnesses in 1803 and again in 1806. The unionists advocated the enforcement of the ancient statutes, while substantial employers insisted on repeal. If these are rightly interpreted as 'ideological confrontations', the report of the 1806 committee, which recommended the repeal of no less than 76 'redundant' statutes, enabled uncontrolled industrial capitalism, and comprised the state's much trumpeted solution, but it was not to pass uncontested.

Randall's coverage of the three well-known Luddite

districts, hosiery in the East Midlands, the gig-mills of the West Riding woollens, and power-loom in Lancashire and Cheshire is penetrating, despite further recent studies. Quite rightly, he dismisses Thomis' 'compartmentalist' thesis, which asserted that Yorkshire croppers' violence reflected their non-unionization. Randall also accurately perceives that northern Luddism was more complex than its Midland counterpart, and much more violent, including resort to arms and arson attacks that targeted both domestic and business premises. This northern militancy was also intermixed with food rioting accompanying the third wartime famine, and conjoined with insurrectionary plots. In its two principal theatres, Northern Luddism was ultimately crushed by the army, tantamount to embryonic civil war in some witnesses' estimation, and followed by mass hangings of activists convicted in Yorkshire. Evidence relating to Midland Luddites' politics is thin. However, it is worth adding that the City of Nottingham was a major centre of popular radicalism in the 1790s and beyond, and the only known location for a political meeting of over fifty people authorized by two justices under the Seditious Meetings Act. This reviewer considers that the 1810–13 crises requires an *holistic* study, with coverage on a scale equal to the study of its two wartime precedents, a suggestion I suspect Randall would support. That should include government policy and intervention, and embrace Luddism in Cumberland and Westmorland, which await their historian.

It must also be acknowledged that Randall's book embraces many other categories of popular protest, including entire chapters relating to the politically-motivated, among them those associated with Wilkes and Gordon, and another on popular protest in the English countryside. The latter includes anti-Turnpike riots, reflecting what Randall rightly dubs the 'privatization' of previously publicly-owned roads, anti-Militia protests, notably by peasant and other small farmers opposed to the lottery-like enforced recruitment of their sons, who were vital sources of free labour. However, there is nothing *systemic* on opposition to enclosure, possibly reflecting the continued influence of Neeson's fine monograph. There is more thorough consideration of the admittedly smallish mobilizations complaining about decisions and policies adopted by poor-law administrations in both urban and countryside parishes. Above all, Randall's study emphasizes the remarkable capacity of the English propensity to mobilize – peacefully or violently or with a mixture of both – on a huge range of issues adversely affecting working-class people especially, but never exclusively.

ROGER WELLS
Canterbury Christ Church University

DAVID OLDROYD, *Estates, enterprise and investment at the dawn of the industrial revolution. Estate management and accounting in the north-east of England, c.1700–80* (Ashgate, 2007). x + 234 pp., 3 illus, 55 tables, 2 maps. £55.

Oldroyd offers a fascinating insight into the accounting and management practices of three estates in the north-east of England. The estates, owned by the Bowes, Cotesworth and Ridley families, all had a significant involvement in mining and the coal trade. They were large, complex businesses and the periodic absences of their owners and the broad geographical spread of their interests meant that it was necessary to adopt organizational structures that delegated responsibility to stewards. Oldroyd examines the performance of these structures in four key areas: contractual arrangements, investment planning and returns, the management of labour and the behaviour of managers. He finds that the systematic keeping of accounts functioned to support and protect property rights and enforce contractual obligations. It allowed owners, stewards and viewers (professional mining engineers or managers) to assess productivity, regulate costs, manage risk and engage in forward planning. Accounting also played a vital role in the oversight and management of stewards and viewers, although not in the management of the general labour force in the mines. Here, accounting was used to ensure that workers were properly paid, but did not function as a means of establishing disciplinary control. Oldroyd's explanation for this apparent anomaly is that, since pay and conditions were relatively good, industrial disputes rare, and there was a shared understanding about what constituted acceptable levels of work, the mines were productive and profits derived from the miners' endeavours remained high. Thus, there was little incentive to rock the boat by introducing closer oversight or attempting to change working practices.

In spite of the limited impact of accounting on the behaviour of the general workforce, one of the most interesting aspects of Oldroyd's work is his analysis of how accounting practices functioned to shape the mind set and actions of the stewards and viewers managing the estates. Indeed, accounting could become a powerful tool in aligning the behaviour of the managers with the expectations of the owners. Notably, the requirement to keep records acted as a form of surveillance and particularly served to restrict managers' ability to defraud their employer. This was especially important to William Cotesworth who, coming from a lowly background and having previously exploited his own employers, harboured a mistrust of his employees. Oldroyd also provides us with the occasional insight into the consequences of the failure to manage this

aspect of business properly. William Thompson of the South Shields salt-pans, for example, found a lack of the proper receipts meant that payment for services rendered was not forthcoming. Accounts allowed the judgement not just of honesty and competence but also enabled performance to be monitored. This worked against the mine manager Nathan Horne, who found himself accused of inefficiency and mismanagement as a result of the failure of the mine under his control to turn a profit. But in other circumstances the meticulous construction of accounts protected stewards and, in some cases, enabled them to prove their value and, in consequence, advance their interests.

Oldroyd's general conclusions run contrary to those of Sidney Pollard in his influential *Genesis of modern management*. Pollard argued that because of inexact costings, confusion between capital and profits and inability to recognize capital as the central motivating force behind entrepreneurship, accounting was of limited use to those making business decisions. Oldroyd's view is that accounting was actually an essential and adaptable tool in the management of the estates in question and that it did function as a means of maximising profits. Consequently, *Estates, enterprise and investment* provides a valuable contribution to the debate about the progress of capitalism during the eighteenth century.

ANNE L. MURPHY
University of Exeter

CHERYL SCHONHARDT-BAILEY, *From the Corn Laws to Free Trade. Interests, ideas and institutions in historical perspective* (The MIT Press, 2006). xiii + 426 pp., 32 figs, 30 tables, 3 maps. £30.95.

The protection of agriculture is an enduring concern in every modern state, no matter how devoted it may be to the freeing of international trade. The repeal in 1846 of Britain's Corn Laws by a parliament dominated by landowners has therefore never ceased to fascinate economists, political scientists and historians alike. The author of this study is a political scientist. She is keenly interested in the theoretical implications of her study for political explanation; and toward this end, she deploys a range of methodologies which are daunting to the layman. She succeeds nevertheless in bringing out some points of enduring importance to anyone, whether layman or scholar, who is interested in crucial turning-points in agricultural trade policy.

This study focuses much of its attention on those Conservatives in the House of Commons who ultimately voted alongside Sir Robert Peel to repeal the tariff on cereals, pre-eminently wheat, which they had been elected to uphold. Free-trading ideas, as the author documents, had remarkably little to do with their decision. The

economic interests of most of these Conservative MPs were still predominantly agricultural and pointed in the opposite direction, though free-trading interests were gaining ground in their constituencies. So what persuaded this Conservative minority in the Commons, subsequently known as Peelites, to vote for repeal? Only four of them had voted on the free-trading side on this issue in the House of Commons over the previous four years.

Using computer-assisted content analysis, the author finds her answer in the debate in the Commons. This methodology enables her to identify the need felt by Conservatives, particularly those representing constituencies with substantial interests in the freedom of commerce, to find a Conservative rationale for their change of mind. Sir Robert Peel suggested one such possibility in his opening statement to the House of Commons, but without laying much emphasis upon it. He argued vaguely for repeal as a good way to preserve the landed basis of parliament. Would-be Peelites embraced this notion with such enthusiasm that it crystallized and bulked large when Peel drew the prolonged debate to its eventual close. They welcomed the conception of repeal as the best way to preserve the 'territorial constitution' of King, Lords and Commons dear to all Conservatives. Peel was in effect proposing an economic concession by the landed classes to preserve or at least to prolong their political primacy. The House of Lords, where landed interests were still stronger than in the Commons, found Peel's suggestion equally persuasive, and accepted the economic concession required of them in order to ward away the democratic reforms which would destroy their political base.

In the event Peel was proven triumphantly right, though his political opponents drove him from office the moment that he secured repeal. The Anti-Corn Law League, which had mounted a massive, radicalizing agitation throughout the country, was disbanded, and the fervour it had generated died. Two years later, the intransigence of the July monarchy in France precipitated a wave of revolutions across continental Europe, thus apparently validating the line of thought and action that Peel and the Peelites had embraced in Britain. Doubts about the wisdom of the Peelites were nevertheless raised on both flanks of the Continent: in Britain by Disraeli and protectionist Conservatives in the name of party loyalty and honouring commitments to constituents; by the generation in the wilderness to which the Peelites consigned the Conservative party by going their own way; and by Russia which managed to avoid revolution for the rest of the century through relentless repression.

PETER T. MARSH
University of Birmingham

H. KRISTENSEN (ed.), *The diaries of William Brewis of Mitford, 1833–1850* (Wagtail Press, 2007). 116 pp., 21 illus. £9.99.

Farmers' diaries take a variety of forms. At their simplest they are kept intermittently and consist of short notes about family, weather and prices, with an occasional aside about local events of more than usual importance. More elaborate journals are written up regularly, often with an entry for each day which may sometimes occupy several pages of manuscript. Published editions of farm diaries usually begin with an introduction containing substantial information about the diaries and their author, the area in which the diarist was farming and something about the historical significance of the diary. *The farming journal of Randall Burroughs (1794–99)* edited by Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson and published by the Norfolk Records Society provides an excellent example.

The publication of Brewis' diary follows none of the conventions. The book under review consists of extracts from fifteen diaries kept by William Brewis, a tenant farmer at Mitford in Northumberland, between 1833 and 1850 (the volumes for 1835 and 1836 appear not to have survived). An illustration of two pages of the diary, included in the book, demonstrates that the diary was written in copies of the annually issued *Newcastle memorandum book and register of the northern counties*, a local almanac and diary. The diaries are now in the Special Collections section of the Robinson Library at Newcastle University. Extracts had previously been separately transcribed by two scholars, Joan Foster and Dr Michael Smith, who drew the current editor's attention to the diary. It is their extracts which, as she explains in the introduction, she has edited for publication. One consequence of this, as the illustrations show, is that the stated editorial convention of retaining original spelling and grammar has not been followed. A second is that no effort seems to have been made to provide any of the usual information about the diarist or his farming background. The short paragraph about him in the introduction is culled from the extracts and is only supplemented by the inclusion of a family tree and an epitaph given at the end of the book.

Much that might be useful to many historians has been lost by this process. Brewis was a tenant of the Mitford family whose estate covered several thousand acres in the neighbourhood of Morpeth, one of the two most important towns in Northumberland at that time and the location of an important livestock market. The farms that he tenanted were situated at Throphill on the north bank of the river Wansbeck approximately three miles west of Morpeth. Although the book contains illustrations of maps made of both farms in 1839 for

the estate, no information about them is taken from the accompanying schedule of the acreage, rent or cropping systems. Similarly, no use has been made of other estate papers or of Tithe Commutation files. During the period covered by the diaries, two important articles on agriculture in Northumberland appeared in *The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*. John Gray of Dilston's was published in 1840 and William Colbeck's in 1847. Both were noted authorities on farming in the county and provide important contextual information which apparently escaped the attention of the editor.

The publisher states that the 'diaries give the reader a fascinating insight into farming, markets and fairs, weather, crops and livestock, sport, horses and hounds etc', while what is really presented are randomly selected vignettes for the entertainment of a general reader. The thorough analysis of the work of one local farmer that would have been of considerable use to local and agricultural historians remains a desideratum.

IAN D. ROBERTS
University of Durham

GEOFFREY TUDOR, compiled by HELEN HILLIARD,
Brunel's Hidden Kingdom. The full story of the estate he created and his planned house at Watcombe, Torquay (Creative Media Publishing, 2007). 160 pp. £23.50.

This is the story of Watcombe house and estate, lovingly researched over twenty years by local resident and former Sandhurst and Dartmouth lecturer, Geoff Tudor, and brought to publication in commemoration of the bicentenary of Brunel's birth by the wife of the general manager of what is now Brunel Manor, a Christian Holiday and Conference Centre.

It was characteristic of Isambard Kingdom Brunel that when he looked for a country seat at the height of his career in the 1840s, he disdained to buy any existing estate but was determined to create one for himself out of a bare, arid and exposed hillside above Torquay – a site he had discovered while engineering the building of the South Devon Railway. It provided enough problems for him to solve to satisfy his need for a challenge, and this book tells how he engineered his park and laid the foundations for his house before his financial losses over the calamitous construction of the SS *Great Eastern* forced him to initiate steps for its sale just before his untimely death in 1859, at the age of 53.

The account is largely formed around two documents – the Watcombe Estate map of 1859 in the Devon Record Office, and Brunel's garden memorandum book in the Bristol University Library Brunel archive – and it is a useful case study of how a new park and garden was created in the Victorian period: the creation of a surrounding shelter belt of trees; the establishment

of walks and carriage drives to encompass the best viewpoints both within and over the surrounding countryside; the engineering of a water supply from seven linked wells and raised nearly 300 ft by a gas-powered pump to two reservoirs 800 yards away at the top of the estate to feed a fountain and provide water in periods of draught for his plants; the purchase of thousands of trees and shrubs including all the latest specimens brought back from Asia and the Americas by the Victorian plant hunters, and the preparation of the soil for them, including use of the very latest fertilizer, 'a plentiful supply of vegetable mould, wood ash and bone, with just a little Guano and soda and burnt clay'. Brunel intended his gardening to be as advanced as his engineering! His calculations for how many cubic feet of water were required to play his fountain for 12 hours a day, and his annual measurement of the growth of his plantings between 1853 and 1858 show how he threw himself as energetically into this project as all his others.

The book is profusely illustrated in colour, including plans for the never-built French Renaissance chateau-type house he had the country house architect William Burn design for him. Amongst the mine of information, this reviewer was amused to discover that Brunel, who had driven his railways through so many peoples' back yards was a 'nimby' himself when faced with a proposal to build a cement works on the beach below his estate! The major regret to be expressed is the lack of referencing within the text, which abounds in interesting but annoyingly un-attributed quotations from his letters.

MICHAEL DUFFY
University of Exeter

EDWARD BUJAK, *England's Rural Realms. Landholding and the agricultural revolution* (Tauris Academic Studies, 2007). ix + 270 pp., 10 tables, 3 maps. £65.

By the 1830s one-third of all English grain came from just six eastern counties: Cambridgeshire, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. It was here that the new fodder crops made their greatest contribution to agricultural productivity, by allowing farmers to reduce the area under permanent or temporary grass while maintaining livestock numbers without loss of manure. Suffolk won the admiration of James Caird for its mixed farming on heavy land, its pipe and tile drainage, and its commitment to artificial fertilizers. All was so well and good through the years of high farming that no one really spotted the change – when it came. Landowners were so convinced that they had invested wisely that when grain prices started to fall they unwisely buried their proverbial heads in the local clay, convinced that the higher yields they were

achieving must eventually bear financial fruit. In the end they compromised and what emerged was what Edward Bujak calls 'a bastardized version of mixed arable and livestock farming', which enabled farmers to continue to fatten livestock and also to keep some arable land in tillage – at a significantly reduced rent (pp. 59–60).

Much of this story is perhaps predictable, particularly in the light of Tom Williamson's recent work on East Anglia, but Bujak looks beyond the bare agricultural facts to ask interesting questions about the rural social structure. Suffolk was a county of large estates, but why was it possible for these estates to survive the tempestuous times of the agricultural depression, as well as the legal changes brought about by the Settled Land legislation, more or less intact? Why did tenant farmers remain loyal through these years, to their landlord and to his political preferences? Why did land reform make so little progress in the county? Why did labourers continue to doff their caps when they might have been expected to be in dispute with their employers through agricultural trade unions, or simply take to the road to London in the search for fortune, if not fame? The answer to these questions, Bujak suggests, is that there was a kind of elaborate conspiracy in which landlords refused to betray their tenants, keeping them on through thick and thin because letting a farm during the agricultural depression was not something to be contemplated lightly. Tenants in turn respected their landlord's position by continuing to vote Conservative (and thus also took little notice of either the Liberal party or its flirtation with land reform). Any potential disrespect from labourers was nipped in the bud, with new cottages, gardens and allotments, often made available in protective closed villages. Everyone gained: landlords retained their estates and their political influence (transferring it by the 1880s adroitly from national to local politics), tenants renegotiated their leases when conditions were bad, and labourers lived in relatively good circumstances – although Bujak has little to say on wages. Of course, some of this rosy glow could not survive the agricultural downturn of the 1880s and beyond. Some landowners were forced to sell, although usually only their detached estates. Some labourers were locked out in a trade dispute in 1874, but were admitted back into their old jobs and cottages soon enough afterwards. Deference was challenged, but not defeated.

Bujak argues a good case, bringing together economic history, political history, and rural social history, to show how the different strands interacted through the years of plenty and the years of dearth. His discussion of the impact of the land reform movement in its Suffolk context is particularly illuminating, and he contributes to a number of mini-debates as he goes, such as the role of

local landowners in the implementation of the New Poor Law, and in the reforms of local government from 1888. But at the end of the book I was left with a slight tinge of concern. I have no doubt that Suffolk landowners built cottages, laid out allotments and closed villages, but they come over as a smug lot, anticipating the needs of farmers and labourers, and digging deep into their pockets to fund them. Yet Rider Haggard, writing of Suffolk in 1902, found that 'the owners of land who have no other source of income are practically ruined'. Had they spun him a yarn, or was he painting a deliberately provocative picture of the late Victorian countryside? This book suggests the latter, and in doing so it raises some interesting questions for future research.

J. V. BECKETT
University of Nottingham

GARY MOSES, *Rural moral reform in nineteenth-century England. The crusade against adolescent farm servants and hiring fairs* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007). vii + 247 pp., 2 tables, 3 maps. £69.95.

Gary Moses has been building up to this work for over a decade, so much so that those cognizant with his publications will already be familiar with the contents of this book. For those readers who are perhaps not fully conversant with Dr Moses' work, the book is not quite as broad-ranging as the title suggests, but is an analysis of the evangelical campaign against hiring fairs in the East Riding of Yorkshire, 1850–80. Due to the research output of both Steve Caunce and Gary Moses, the farm servants of the East Riding are undoubtedly one of the most closely studied groups of English farm workers, and this synthesis of the existing scholarship forms a very useful addition to the available literature. However, this book is not well presented by the publisher, nor is it priced at an accessible level, and the familiarity of its contents will not aid its success.

The importance of hiring fairs is not as widely recognized as it could be, and there is a tendency to see them, like farm service itself, as a northern anachronism. In this respect it is only right that this book should indeed be seen as a contribution to our understanding not only of moral reform, but of the social, economic and cultural landscape of rural England in this period. Although much work remains to be done on hiring fairs and on farm service in general, it has been successfully argued that neither are incompatible with highly productive and progressive, commercial agrarian regimes. So if this book assists in the ongoing process of the intellectual acceptance of northern agrarian systems as being integrated within a national whole rather than being dismissed as being peripheral, anachronistic or simply different, then it will serve an invaluable purpose.

Despite the essential contribution made by hiring fairs to agricultural success in much of the North, it was argued by some contemporaries that they were outmoded and uncouth, incompatible with respectability and economically unnecessary. Although there is no paradox whatsoever between capitalist farming and the public hiring of servants, hiring fairs themselves were an arena that offended some contemporary perceptions of modernity, the collision of capitalism and respectability, between popular culture and moral reform. Hiring fairs were, quite literally, a labour market, but they were also mass recreational assemblies that were feared due to their corrupt and corrupting influence.

Chapter one introduces the book by reviewing literature on approaches to popular culture, as well as discussion of the importance of farm service in northern English agriculture. Chapter two is based substantially on the article that appeared in the *Review* in 1999, and discusses the relationship between farm service and the changing economic landscape in the East Riding c.1840–80. Chapter three discusses hiring fairs as labour markets, arguing that they adapted and expanded in response to market conditions. Chapter four investigates hiring fairs as arenas of popular recreation in the recreational cycle of activities, demonstrating how they provided the carnivalesque atmosphere within which servants expressed their independence. It was because of this temporary cessation of normality, when servants were masterless, that they became a perceived threat. Their exuberance in leisure coupled with their bargaining power helped fuel antagonism towards both hiring fairs and servants.

Chapter five, 'The church critique of hiring fairs and farm service', is partially reprinted from an article that first appeared in *Rural History* in 1996 and demonstrates that the church objected to the 'moral danger' posed by hiring fairs. This was coupled with wider national concerns about the loss of status for the established church. The campaign against hiring fairs is discussed further in chapter six, which discusses proposals emanating from the Church for the reform of hiring fairs. The most successful of these was the promotion of separate indoor hirings for female servants; campaigns to undermine farm service as a system, or as a labour contract, were very largely unsuccessful. Despite the clamour generated by the Church of England against the perceived immorality of hiring fairs, the campaign against farm service achieved very little. This is undoubtedly a product of the extent to which servants were integral to the intensification of capitalist production and the 'reshaping of farm service into a proletarian institution' (p. 212).

ANDREW J. GRITT
University of Central Lancashire

JOYCE BURNETTE, *Gender, work and wages in industrial revolution Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). xii + 377 pp., 24 figs., 58 tables. £55.

There is abundant evidence from different continents and across the centuries to suggest that historically women have earned less than men. In Britain during the classic period of the Industrial Revolution (c.1750–1850), women usually earned somewhere between a third and two-thirds of the male wage. Moreover, occupational sorting had resulted in men and women performing different jobs, with women workers being found in a fairly limited range of occupations. Whilst the existence of job segregation and the wage gap is well-known and not disputed, there is less agreement amongst historians as to the cause of this gender division of work and wages. The primary aim of Joyce Burnette's book is to tackle this contentious question head-on and produce a nuanced debate about gender discrimination in the workforce. She sets out her reasoning carefully and clearly in the introduction: economic motivation was the driving force behind gender differences in work and wages. This explanation is at variance with those historians who give preference to gender ideology. Whilst not dismissing the importance of ideology, Burnette argues that economic actuality drove ideology, not that other way round.

Burnette is therefore interested in 'what work women did, rather than how people thought or spoke about this work' (p. 3). Chapter 1 attempts to provide an overview of women's work. It begins by measuring the incidence of occupational sorting by extracting statistics from a range of sources including the census, parliamentary reports, and commercial directories, before moving on to a qualitative description of the main female occupations (textiles, cottage industry, agriculture and domestic service) from anecdotal sources. Chapter 2 then establishes the size of the wage gap across occupations, carefully differentiating between time-rate wages (by the day or week) and piece-rate earnings (by output). The results concur with those of other historians and confirm that the wage ratio between women and men usually ranged between one-third and two-thirds (even after correcting for variables such as the different hours worked by men and women, and non-cash benefits). The rest of this chapter and the next get to the real gist of the book, seeking explanations for the wage-gap and occupational sorting by gender. Were they determined by custom or by market forces? Burnette concludes that in the competitive portions of the labour market women's lower wages were the result of their labour productivity and were set by the market rather than custom. In piece-rate work, differences in earnings were due to differences in productivity and time worked, not to men and women being paid different rates. In time-rate work, differences

in strength and training were the key determinants in divergent productivity rates. Biological factors also explain occupational sorting, especially strength. Except laundry work, workers in strength-intensive industries tended to be men, and workers in industries requiring less strength were primarily women. Childbearing and rearing also led women to be concentrated in certain industries, with high childcare costs encouraging women to work in the home-based industries. Occupational sorting could therefore be beneficial to women: it guided them to occupations where strength was not important and minimized the wage gap by allowing them to earn higher wages than they would have had in an economy without it. Burnette also argues that women's wages were market-led and could and did respond to supply and demand conditions. Evidence presented in chapter 3 shows that women's wages did rise when demand for their labour was high (for instance in the lace and straw-plait industries during the Napoleonic Wars) and, in chapter 5, evidence for substitutability being present in agriculture is offered, with farmers willing to hire more women if men's wages increased too much and began to squeeze their profits. In contrast chapters 5 and 6 turn to industries where occupational barriers did exist, in the less competitive skilled labour market (where unions benefited from exclusionary tactics) and in self-employment, such as the professions and retailing, where capital requirements, educational handicaps and gender barriers all limited female opportunities. Gender ideology therefore had a more pervasive influence in these non-competitive areas of the economy. Finally, chapter 7 analyses women's labour force participation, arguing in the first half of the nineteenth century this was caused by declining demand, whereas after 1851, mounting occupational barriers, rising household incomes and new attitudes and information about health all contributed.

Burnette argues that contemporaries did not necessarily understand economic models and therefore often turned to the language of custom to explain the gender division of work and wages. Historians should not construe these statements as a description of reality. But will her methodology and conclusions convince? Many will pick up this book already familiar with the line of argument as published in a series of high-profile articles over the last few years and will need no persuading. Some will be more sceptical. I found many of the arguments relating to the existence of market forces in chapters 2 and 3 persuasive. However, much of the evidence comes from the agricultural sector. Whilst obviously not wanting to question the significance of the industry that has formed the focus of my own academic research, can this be taken as typical of work and wages

during the industrial revolution in Britain as a whole? Others will find the econometric approach forbidding, if not completely off-putting, and the result may be a more pronounced schism between historians of women's work based on methodological approach. There is no doubt that the author has a confident and sophisticated handling of the data. At other points though the author appears to be rather out of her comfort zone and I found sections on the exclusionary tactics of trade unions or explanations for declining female labour force participation for example, rather less convincing.

This book is relevant to everyone with an interest in women's work in Britain in the post-1750 period and deserves a wide audience. Even those with an aversion to economic modelling need to give it a go. The nuanced debate that Burnette calls for in the introduction should then be guaranteed.

NICOLA VERDON
University of Sussex

ELIZABETH T. HURREN, *Protesting about pauperism. Poverty, politics and poor relief in late Victorian England, 1870–1900* (Royal Historical Society/Boydell, 2007). 12 tables; 1 illus; 9 figs; 2 maps. £50.

This excellent study of the administration and politics of the English poor law, in a comparatively neglected phase of its history, contributes greatly to our understanding of the 'poverty, politics and poor relief' of the title. Hurren sets out to examine the origins and, especially, the impact of the '*crusade* against outdoor relief' (for reasons that are not made explicitly clear, Hurren italicizes *crusade* and words derived from it), which has been examined by Karel Williams, Mary MacKinnon and others. From the late 1860s to the mid-1890s, poor law unions were encouraged by the central government, particularly after the establishment of the Local Government Board in 1871, to cut back on the payment of outdoor relief, adopting various harsh and controversial strategies to retrench on poor law expenditure. Hurren's book focuses on a single rural poor law union, the notorious Brixworth Union in Northamptonshire, where the crusade against outdoor relief was embarked upon with greater enthusiasm and success than in most other unions. The Brixworth crusade was led by an imposing trio: the fifth Earl Spencer, who was the largest landowner in the union, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Gladstone's first two governments; Albert Pell, the Conservative MP for south Leicestershire, a spokesman for the Charity Organisation Society and a leading figure in national poor law debates; and the Rev. William Bury, rector of Haselbech and chairman of the board of guardians in Brixworth for much of Hurren's period. Brixworth was not a typical poor law union; it was

one of the Local Government Board's 'model' unions, and was often discussed in official investigations, the Board's annual reports, Charity Organisation Society publications and in the leading periodicals of the day. It was an important theatre of political conflict between 'crusaders' on the board of guardians on the one side, and more liberal guardians and representatives of the labouring poor on the other.

The introduction and part one of the book convincingly locate Hurren's study within the large historiography of the English poor law; she sets out to establish the importance of the late nineteenth century in the history of the poor law, and of social policy more generally. In parts two and three Hurren takes her readers on a compelling 'poor law journey' (p. 217), which follows the 'political journey' (pp. 160, 251, 253) taken by the 'working people' of Brixworth, as they responded to the crusaders' attacks on the poor law benefits to which they had customarily been entitled. We read of the origins of the crusade at the level of central government – the 'Goschen Minute' and 'Longley Strategy' are familiar to students of the poor law – but Hurren also points to the local factors behind the Brixworth 'crusade', which can be seen as a 'pre-emptive strike' (p. 112) against incipient agricultural trade unionism in the district. She shows that the labouring poor in the Brixworth union fought back in a variety of ways against the 'crusading' majority on the board of guardians, arguing that previous historians have understated the extent of resistance to this phase of poor law administration. A central place in Hurren's analysis is given to the 'coming of democracy' (pp. 155, 244): the spread of the poor law franchise and the abolition of plural voting in the early to mid-1890s allowed the anti-crusaders in the Brixworth District Outdoor Relief Association to obtain a majority on the board of guardians by 1896, and to reverse the crusading strategy. Some of these anti-crusaders had served their political apprenticeship in the National Agricultural Labourers' Union some two decades earlier. In the intervening period, the labouring poor and their supporters were often able to voice opposition to stringent poor law administration in parish vestries, the significance of which has often been overlooked by historians of the later nineteenth century.

In common with many social historians, Hurren is eager to emphasize the agency and political participation of the 'working people' of Brixworth, although it is notable that, before the franchise reforms of the 1890s, their victories over the crusaders were often won with, and perhaps only because of, the prominent support of other members of local elites, such as the dowager Viscountess Milton (pp. 161–2). Nevertheless, it is clear that the working-class population had a detailed knowledge of the rules and workings of the

poor law, as other historians have also suggested. This was not surprising, as the crusading policies of the guardians were posted on church doors within the union (p. 119; this is a feature of the poor law that Keith Snell has recently emphasized). Hurren's study illustrates the profound physical and psychological impact of these policies on the poor – often through detailed accounts of individual cases, ably reconstructed from a range of sources – and details the complex strategies to which they resorted in response to them. There are some useful insights from contemporary sociology and anthropology, although perhaps these could have been developed further. There are also some minor presentational infelicities: for example, the use of the same quotation from Sidney Ward, a local anti-crusader, twice (pp. 104–5, 262–3), a reference to Joseph (rather than Seebohm) Rowntree as the author of *Poverty: a study of town life* (p. 72) and a number of typographical errors.

The local focus of Hurren's study does not prevent it from making a significant contribution to the historiography of the later nineteenth century. She successfully challenges the 'misconception that studying the minutiae of pauperism records means losing the bigger poor law picture' (p. 250). *Protesting about pauperism* is an impressive account of the importance of local politics in the development of social policy in the period, and contains several useful suggestions for further research. It is a significant contribution to the historiography, not only of the poor law, but also of English local politics and rural life in the later nineteenth century.

MARK FREEMAN
University of Glasgow

ALAN CROSSLEY, TOM HASSALL and PETER SALWAY (eds), *William Morris's Kelmscott. Landscape and history* (Windgather Press, 2007). xiii + 210 pp., 113 illus. £25.

Certain towns and villages are known to people outside their regions mainly for having been the homes of great writers or artists; and so deeply informed have been our perceptions of some broad landscapes – most notably Wordsworth's Lake District and Hardy's Wessex – by their imaginative representation that, when we visit them, many of our own impressions are essentially predetermined. Furthermore, the artistic or literary associations of a place might be seen to have influenced local demography, planning decisions, priorities in conservation, and the development of tourism, as well as the more recent interpretations of the environment and its human inhabitants. The publication of a book entitled *William Morris's Kelmscott. Landscape and history* clearly demonstrates that a famous inhabitant can affect both

the character and identity of a place more than a century after their departure.

The thirteen chapters collected here originated as papers delivered at a conference, *News from somewhere: William Morris and the Kelmscott landscape*, organized by the Society of Antiquaries and held at Kelmscott Manor in 2003. The contributors are archaeologists, historians and architects of various kinds, possessing expertise in their fields, one trusts, yet, with the exception of Linda Parry (a past President of the William Morris Society), no obvious affinity with Morris nor special facility for analysing his work. This is strange, in a situation where Morris is one of the most studied Victorians, with a twice-yearly scholarly journal and a quarterly newsletter devoted to him, besides a steady stream of academic and popular books examining various aspects of his life and work. There is a guaranteed market for a book on Morris's Kelmscott; but will its purchasers' expectations be satisfied by its actual contents?

Addressing the Ancoats Brotherhood in 1894, Morris declared that 'through forty years of my life I have diligently and affectionately *noticed* the countryside in its smallest detail'. There are many passages in his writings which support this claim. Indeed, Morris's modern biographer Fiona MacCarthy has remarked on 'the mixture of succinctness and deep feeling that made him so exceptional a writer about landscape'. Therefore it is remarkable that in *William Morris's Kelmscott* very little of Morris's poetry or his prose romances are considered, and his lectures, essays and journalism are virtually ignored. As a writer, he is treated principally as the author of *News from Nowhere*, and even with this novel the contributors' engagement is superficial and often careless.

There are times when the contributors seem unable to distinguish between Morris's depiction of the countryside as, in *News from Nowhere*, he fantasised how it could be in a utopian future and how it actually was in Victorian England, so that his appreciation of the contemporary rural situation, his knowledge of local landscape history, and even his reliability as an observer, are all called into question. For example, Robert Parkinson remarks: 'Ironically, Morris idealized country life at a period of dramatic decline in agriculture' (p. 174). Similarly, Mark Robinson argues: 'This idyllic countryside of William Morris's time was almost entirely artificial, the creation of millennia of human activity' (p. 30). It was not idyllic and Morris did not represent it thus. He was well aware of the human activities which had shaped the countryside (this is acknowledged by Tom Hassall, pp. 5–6) and, unusually at that time, appreciated the roles of people in all social classes, in a wide variety of occupations, working upon and from the land. He also

delighted to observe the trees, flowers and birds around him; and almost always, when these are mentioned in his writings, it is by their particular species. Thus it was for Morris a *living* landscape in several respects, which is profoundly different from regarding it as 'almost entirely artificial', a surprising – nay, alarming – assertion from a palaeo-botanist who has in his previous sentence mentioned the fritillary and ox-eye daisy.

Within the confines of a review, it is impossible to present a comprehensive rebuttal of the assessment of Morris given in this book. Let it suffice to point towards his journalism and lectures, in which he repeatedly describes the hardship of agricultural workers and the mismanagement of farmland. For example, Morris rails against the situation in which, whilst politicians feast in London, out in the countryside there are field-labourers 'Rubbing through life toward the workhouse and the grave on ten shillings a-week' (*Commonweal*, 16 June 1888), 'their slavery to the farmers being so direct that it presses on them every day' (*Commonweal*, 10 December 1887). He yearns for the time when they might 'no longer fear starvation as a penalty for not working more than enough' ('The Aims of Art', 1886 lecture), and advocates 'the ennobling of daily and common work, which will one day put hope and pleasure in the place of fear and pain, as the forces which move men to labour and keep the world a-going' ('The Beauty of Life', 1880 lecture).

In *News from Nowhere*, the idyllic rural scenes, set in a utopian future England, are explicitly contrasted with the nineteenth-century reality, yet Morris's graphic descriptions and scathing criticisms of his contemporary countryside have received scant attention in *William Morris's Kelmscott*.

There is a wealth of published scholarship concerned with the various aspects of Morris's life and work, yet not much of it has been incorporated into this volume. Notable omissions from the chapter notes and bibliography include E. P. Thompson's intellectual biography, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, and Peter Faulkner's insightful studies of the poetry and fiction. Nicholas Salmon, a brilliant scholar who specialized in Morris's political ideas and activities, and who edited his contributions to *Justice* and *Commonweal* for publication in book form in 1994 and '96, is cited only as a co-author of *The William Morris Chronology*. Jan Marsh's biographies have been used, but not *Back to the Land*, her study of radical agrarianism from 1880 to 1914, which identifies Morris – with John Ruskin – as one of the two leading prophets and original inspirations for this movement. Most glaringly of all, John Payne's eclectic and thought-provoking book, *Journey up the Thames: William Morris and Modern England*, has been omitted, even though its topic and method could hardly

be more pertinent to the present study. Payne's invisibility has a sinister aspect, for – unmentioned anywhere in this volume – he delivered a lecture on 'Kelmscott and Englishness: a sideways look at the English Countryside' at the 2003 conference from which *William Morris's Kelmscott* is derived. Payne tells me that he wrote up and submitted his lecture to form a chapter in this book, but it was rejected for being too polemical and not properly historical in its method and focus.

This brings me to the heart of my discomfort with *William Morris's Kelmscott*. Morris's intense engagement with politics, as a leading revolutionary communist, during the very period that he was co-tenant of Kelmscott Manor, is barely admitted, let alone discussed by any of the contributors. Instead, Morris is presented as a would-be country gentleman who enjoyed fishing, visiting old churches and designing wallpaper. By, in effect, denying Morris's passion for social justice, underplaying his commitment to conservation (hedges and public footpaths as much as historic architecture), and not recognizing his blunt contempt for the privileges conventionally demanded by social class and monetary wealth, this great man is grossly misrepresented. The book is blatantly revisionistic.

Moreover, its tone is often identifiably that of the establishment, conservative and occasionally reactionary. To say, as does Hassall, that the earth 'had been shaped for millennia by Man' (p. 5) is surely nowadays unacceptable in its use of this gendered and capitalized form. John Cherry tells us that a display, arranged by the Oxfordshire War Agricultural Committee in 1916, of women agricultural workers in the district 'was attended by *important people* such as Sir Sydney Olivier, Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, Lord Jersey, Sir John Dashwood and others' (p. 171; my italics); and referring to the same event, Mary Hodges says that 'The great and the good attended' it (p. 80). It seems we are being instructed to be deferential towards our superiors. Ironically, Hodges's chapter is entitled 'Kelmscott: The people in their place'.

The value of this book consists mainly in the chapters which concentrate on aspects of local history and heritage, where Morris features only incidentally. Of these, Simon Townley on 'Medieval and modern settlement at Kelmscott' and Julian Munby on 'Vernacular architecture in Kelmscott' are the most commendable. 'The Morris family and Kelmscott', by Linda Parry, is reliable and appreciative, though it attempts little more than a biographical narrative. Her account is ably complemented by Nicholas Cooper on 'Kelmscott Manor' itself, and Cherry's chapter on 'Kelmscott depicted' contains interesting information about the artists who worked there in Morris's time and

subsequently. In the final chapter, on 'Kelmescott and conservation policy', Parkinson's observations upon the current situation are banal and his vision for the future is lamentably restrained, in both respects rather less inspiring than what might have been provided by Ken Worpole or Colin Ward (both of whom are Morrisians) or – I hardly need add – John Payne.

Lavishly illustrated, including many fascinating photographs and reproductions of some little-known artworks, *William Morris's Kelmescott* is an attractively produced volume, in this respect worthy of the subject. Its textual content offers quite a lot for the residents of Kelmescott and its surrounding area, and possibly also for some visitors to Kelmescott Manor; but unfortunately Morris – as a writer, thinker, campaigner and credible countryman – is very poorly served, as are his scholars and his many admirers who will be disappointed by this book.

MARTIN HAGGERTY
Scarborough, North Yorkshire

K. REDMORE (ed.), *Ploughs, chaff cutters and steam engines. Lincolnshire's agricultural implement makers* (Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2007). 156 pp., 191 figs. £17.50.

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, which has a distinguished record of publication, has an active interest in industrial history, hosting its own Industrial Archaeology Team. The Society has now brought together members of this team and others, who collectively have achieved a major contribution to industrial and business history within the confines of this deceptively brief book.

In the nineteenth century, Lincolnshire (especially Lincoln itself) became the centre of the British agricultural engineering industry, a position which it held until the late twentieth century. While there are recent histories of some of the larger firms (notably by Michael Lane), this book concentrates on the second-order firms, mostly of middling size. There are 13 chapters here, each devoted to a different firm. The only one whose name might be recognizable to a wider audience is Blackstone of Stamford, which achieved an international reputation for its mowing and haymaking machines before 1900, later moving heavily into oil engine building. Taken over by Listers in 1936, and subject to a series of post-war takeovers, Blackstone's Stamford works finally closed in 2002.

The other firms examined here had a diverse history. They range from the small firm of William Howden of Boston, who made the first 'portable' (i.e., moveable with horses) steam engine in the county (in 1841), but produced only a further 11, because he didn't wish to

flood the market (!), to Blackstones and The Malleable of North Hykeham, which began with castings for agriculture, before moving into castings for the motor trade, finishing with about 2,000 employees in 2000. There are also chapters on William Cooke (peak employment about 100), which became the largest plough maker in Lincoln until its demise in the 1920s; on James Hart of Brigg, who never recovered from the technical failure of his steam engine at the 1854 Royal Show, and two of the surviving firms, J. and B. Edlington (Gainsborough) and T. and J. Fletcher (Winterton), which were larger in the past, but have adapted deftly to the twenty-first century. They also include a notable and still surviving dealer in farm machinery, Peacock and Binnington (Brigg).

Most of these firms had (or have) a long history. How far does this book illuminate the factors making for industrial success or failure? Only two may be said to have failed – Cooke and Hart. Cooke was a case of product inertia, continuing most of its pre-1914 lines until the 1930s, without much serious attempt to adapt their implements for use with tractors, and remaining craft-based until going into receivership in 1938. Apart from his disaster at the Royal Show, Hart, along with other small steam engine producers, was at a disadvantage as the nineteenth century wore on and competition from other Lincolnshire giants like Ruston, Hornsby, and Clayton and Shuttleworth proved irresistible. Whether Duckering failed or merely closed is a moot point. In the late nineteenth century the firm concentrated heavily on cast-iron kitchen ranges, for which presumably there was little chance of repeat orders once they were installed in the burgeoning Victorian terraces of Lincoln, and their sheer weight must have confined sales to the locality. The firm closed in 1926, although the foundry survived until 1957.

These failures apart, there were six firms which just closed, either due to the late twentieth-century corporate reorganizations (Blackstone, Malleable), or just dribbled to a halt – Coultas (1955), Hett (founder retired, 1895), Howden (founder left firm in 1859, though the works continued under a successor until 1876), and Tuxford (closed in 1880s; left no business records, but seems to have been more interested in innovation than profitability). These latter may be classed as the not unusual terminations of firms which begin well and enjoy a period of prosperity before either having their energies diverted into unprofitable lines or losing their entrepreneurial 'animal spirits' as Keynes described them.

Perhaps the most useful examples are to be drawn from the remainder of this list, who survive to this day – Edlington, Fletcher, Peacock and Binnington, and Rundle. The three manufacturers all achieved a good

reputation for their products in the nineteenth century, and showed nimble footwork in thinking up new lines in the difficult times of the inter-war period. Continued product innovation and niche marketing seem to be the key to their survival. The non-manufacturer, Peacock and Binnington, has from the start taken as its motto 'Service before Sales', so that customers would stick to the firm in the future, and has prospered accordingly.

Each case is different, but overall the book is a testimony to the continuing importance of the ever-alert entrepreneurial spirit. Cooke might have survived with more of this at its disposal; Duckering and its successors definitely lacked it; the surviving firms certainly have it. Mere technical expertise is clearly not enough, as the histories of Hart, Howden and Tuxford demonstrate.

The variety of industrial and business experience highlighted in these pages is the more convincing because the authors possess a variety of backgrounds and experience. Some have personal knowledge of the firms concerned, and can thus flesh out the available documentary material. Others have come to the project through the SLHA and its industrial archaeology team, or have a strong interest in industrial and business history. They all manage to pack a large amount of information and thoughtful appraisal into a small compass and the result is an indispensable addition to the literature on the history of the British agricultural engineering industry.

The agricultural engineering industry was (and is) a protean one, ranging from the blacksmith to the multinational giant. It is difficult to trace all the individuals, partnerships and firms who have claimed to be agricultural engineers in the last two centuries. It is therefore particularly welcome that the editor has compiled a selected list of Lincolnshire implement makers (pp. 144–49), comprising a total of 142 names and firms. This is the first time this has been done for any English county; it is to be hoped that other county historical societies may follow suit.

A final word on the quality of the book production; overall it is very high indeed, and the numerous and well-chosen illustrations are both useful and a delight to the eye.

PETER DEWEY
Oxford

BROMYARD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, *A pocketful of hops* (New edition, 2007). x + 190 pp. Illus. £14.95 incl. p. and p. from Peter Mesdag, 29 West Hill, Bromyard, HR7 4EU.

This is the second edition of a book, first published in 1988, that has found a wide popular readership. The major change is new material that brings the historical narrative up to date (2007). Other changes

include the addition of new photographs, maps and other illustrations and some stylistic revision of the original text. All of these changes help to make the book more readable and generally attractive, whilst, as the introduction notes, leaving intact the broad format and flavour of the original.

A pocketful of hops remains a solid and accessible social and economic history of hop-growing in Bromyard, Herefordshire – once one of the main hop-growing areas in England – from the turn of the twentieth century to the present day. A key focus, as befits a book produced by a local history society, is on the significance of hops for not only farmers but also the wider community around which the industry revolves.

After an introductory chapter tracing the evolution of hop-growing in Bromyard from the middle of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, the book falls into two parts. First it examines the social dimensions of hop-picking; five chapters cover the perspectives of growers, local pickers and seasonal migrant labour and the various local authorities and voluntary organizations that took responsibility for their welfare and organization. The second half of the book examines the changing fortunes of the industry itself, with six chapters covering technical developments in hop-growing, the servicing of the hop industry, quantitative trends in hop production, the impact of the dwarf hop, and the influence of changes in marketing, drinking tastes and government regulation over the course of the twentieth century.

The book has two major strengths: a wealth of factual detail on the technical aspects of hop growing; and a strong sense of hop-picking as experienced by the hop-pickers. The latter is imparted by the inclusion of lengthy reminiscences from interviews and letters and a wide range of high-quality monochrome photographs. As with most books of this type, however, the portrayal of social life is open to the charge of being overly rose-tinted; there is little indication of the hardships suffered by such workers, nor of the tensions and conflicts that often arose between growers and pickers.

Unsurprisingly, given its amateur status and local remit, the book does not seek to locate hop-growers and pickers in the context of a wider historical division of labour. Nor is there any serious attempt to place Bromyard hop-growing in wider geographical context; this is very much a descriptive, idiographic study. The absence of any attempt to assess the significance of hop-growing to the local economy of Bromyard beyond some disjointed references to the wages of hop pickers in the nineteenth century means that the book would be of limited interest to economic historians.

These caveats aside, and bearing in mind the paucity

of historical studies in this area, *A pocketful of hops* provides a valuable, if narrow, insight into the history of hop-growing in England and its significance for rural society.

GRAHAM GARDNER
Aberystwyth University

PETER DEWEY, *'Iron Harvests of the Fields': the making of farm machinery in Britain since 1800* (Carnegie Publishing Ltd., 2008). xvi + 352 pp., 89 illus, 48 tables. £18.99.

When this book arrived on my desk my musician son looked rather sniffily at it and then expressed some pity that I had perforce to read such dreary stuff. Perhaps he had a point, I thought; after all, a number of authors addressing the subject of the history of farm machinery have managed to produce tomes of unutterable tedium and of little academic, to say nothing of literary, value. But, as I began to read, it became clear with every page that Peter Dewey had risen far above the slender achievements of that unhappy pantheon. His is the work of the mature historian, combining economic and business insight with a deep understanding of the practical aspects of the agricultural machinery industry and its role in the success of British farming over the past two centuries. It is a work of considerable scholarship tempered with agreeable lucidity.

Based substantially on archive material from repositories the length and breadth of Britain, *Iron Harvests* leads us chronologically from the efforts of the wheelwright and carpenter of the late eighteenth century through to the creators of the behemoths stalking the fields of modern-day Britain. As he describes each generation of new machinery, with specific examples being covered in some detail, Dewey is careful to set developments alongside the national and international economic background and changes in the fortunes of the home-based agricultural economy. Indeed, one of the book's great strengths is its success in explaining the sometimes subtle relationships between technological change, social conditions and the relative success or failure of the many agricultural engineering firms whose beginnings lay in the industrial foment of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Driven by the spirit of innovation and inventiveness, firms like Ransomes of Ipswich, Bamfords of Uttoxeter and Blackstones of Stamford marched triumphantly through the cutthroat world of Victorian capitalism, maintaining their competitive edge by constant and undivided attention to business, enterprise and entrepreneurship. Dewey writes elegantly on the structure and function of these businesses, of their successes and failures and of the personality clashes between the often larger-than-life characters running

them. The relationship between the great machinery dynasties, their workers, the government and the farmers themselves are also carefully considered.

The quantum increases in agricultural prosperity in the third quarter of the nineteenth century stimulated demand for field, barn and dairy equipment of every description. Once the government prohibition on the export of farm machinery had been lifted in 1849, the growth of companies was underpinned by an expanding export market. In effect, British agricultural machinery dominated the world market in the years before the Great War. Subsequent to 1914–18, when war work had been a priority (with Foster's of Lincoln alone producing no less than 2,909 tanks between 1915 and the Armistice), the fortunes of the industry were linked closely to the booms and slumps of the period, the state of European trade and the degree of harmony in the home labour market. While there were significant technical developments, the overall environment was one of loss of exports and a degree of restructuring leading to a slimmer industry whose output by the mid-thirties was a mere two-thirds that of 1914.

The substantial profits accruing to the industry during the Great War were mirrored in World War II as outputs of farm machinery grew dramatically to satisfy the needs of the 'Plough-Up' campaign and munitions, armaments and aircraft parts flowed from agricultural engineering factories to meet the insatiable demand of the war machine. But a cloud lay just visible on the horizon. Fordsons, David Browns, Marshalls and other home-built machines were no longer the sole mechanical power units in Britain's fields, and by the end of the war they could be seen working alongside the Allis-Chalmers and Minneapolis-Moline tractors which had arrived via 'lease-lend' from across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, if the USA had become the world's largest manufacturer of tractors, Britain still lay in second place immediately after the war. Meanwhile as technical developments led to significant increases in tractor efficacy and efficiency, British companies like Bamford, Dowdeswell, Palmiter, Tasker, Simplex, Alfa-Laval and Gascoigne were at the forefront of innovation in field, barn and dairy machinery by the mid-1970s.

During the next thirty years these and many other firms came face-to-face with the inexorable tide of foreign competition, to the extent that Britain's tractor industry, in terms of relative size, stands today where it did in the early twentieth century. India is presently the world's largest producer of tractors. Yet, in today's environment of computer technology and satellite navigation, there still remain a large number of British farm machinery makers serving regional, national and international markets. Many of these are relatively small

family-run businesses which continue in the tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship characteristic of the early days of the industry. Their survival and ready preparedness to embrace new ideas should remind us (despite the irresponsible nostrums of the organicist elite) that if Britain and the rest of the world are to survive the crisis of food security that looms ahead, every available technology will need to be exploited to the limit.

It is, of course, easy to quibble with some of Dewey's observations. I doubt, for example, whether Neolithic men in their right minds ever *totally* abandoned hunting and gathering in favour of settled agriculture, and I am not altogether convinced that the failure of the machinery industry to attract graduates in the 1980s had any material effect on its progress! Marginally more seriously, I am suspicious of his definition of 'a Quarter' as 28 lbs (see p. 3). If this was the case, as opposed to the Quarter of 8 bushels of approximately 56 lbs per bushel, then with wheat at more than 126 shillings per quarter in 1812, little wonder that bread riots were commonplace!

But these are trivial whinges. Dr. Dewey has produced a *tour de force* which is unlikely to be bettered in the near future. His beautifully illustrated and scholarly book is a major achievement. Whether they sip it like a good wine and savour it in small amounts, or swallow it whole like a Galway oyster, a generation of agricultural, economic, business and urban historians will benefit from Dewey's efforts.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth University

M. MASHEDER, *Carrier's Cart to Oxford. Growing up in the 1920s in the Oxfordshire village of Elsfield* (The Wychwood Press, 2007). 140 pp., 40 illus. £10.

This is a book about a world which has all but disappeared. A former teacher and academic, Mrs Masheder is now in her eighties and here presents us with an account of her childhood in rural Oxfordshire. Elegantly and persuasively written, the book reveals a memory as clear as the morning dew. Men and animals long dead, kindly and eccentric vicars, tramps slumbering in haystacks, gaily-coloured gypsy caravans, and a world dominated by order and regularity and the endless cycle of the seasons; all are recalled with astonishing clarity.

What Elsfield lacked in physical sophistication (dark, dank, if picturesque, houses, no electricity, stand-pipes and long-drop privies) was amply compensated by the vibrancy of the community and the sense of belonging and communal harmony which prevailed. There may have been few alternatives to farm labour or domestic servitude for the sons and daughters of poorer families, but this situation was generally accepted until the

1930s when economic opportunities broadened and the deference born of dependence began to evaporate. Before this, though, parish church and village school propagated the idea of a rigid social hierarchy which tended to be paralleled in the alarming pecking order of the school playground. If many children from labouring families were educated in the village school rather against their will, they would have taken some solace from the knowledge that, however poor they might be, they were eminently superior to those lesser breeds in the Empire who daily counted their blessings as subjects of that most benevolent of Emperors, our dear King George V. The celebration of Empire Day was always great fun for young people, as were the village outings, fairs and fetes, and the shenanigans associated with seasonal festivals. To the unfortunate child growing up in today's febrile emotional climate and subject to the unwholesome dictates of political correctness and risk averse 'healthunsafety' fascism, life in 1920s Elsfield would seem paradisaical. There was tea to be taken in hay and harvest field, trees to be climbed and ponds and streams to be fished, birds' nests to be sought, rabbits to be snared, gardens and allotments to be played in and kisses to be stolen in wood and meadow. And there were darker things to be learned. Closeness to animals may have engendered a respect for certain values, yet when kittens were drowned and pigs slaughtered, a child soon awoke to the nature of mortality and the transience of earthly things. The same child would learn something of the hypocrisy of a society which so passionately and cruelly condemned illegitimacy and even something of the nature of sexual deviancy through unwonted contact with the occasional expositors and molesters who lurked in all communities.

One of the great virtues of this book is its freedom from nostalgia. If, like me, the author deprecates the inevitable abandonment of the English village by its indigenes and the almost total severance of the village's link with the surrounding farm land, she does not make a big issue of it. The old, stable, well-ordered community has gone, and whatever the efforts of some *advenae* to revive seasonal festivals, it will never return. After all, Maypole dancing, like Morris dancing, is a wholly ludicrous activity when disconnected from the realities of the agricultural and vegetational year.

Mrs Masheder's book is a valuable contribution to the growing volume of published recollections of the earlier inter-war period. I am sure I will not be alone among her readers of a certain age in noting that much of what she describes in the 1920s would have been readily recognizable to a child of the 1950s. The old village was a long time a-dying.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth University

LADY EVE BALFOUR, *The living soil* (Soil Association, 2006). xlv + 246 pp. £8.95; SIR ALBERT HOWARD, *Farming and gardening for health or disease* (Soil Association, 2006). xxiv + 282 pp. £8.95; LIONEL PICTON, *Thoughts on feeding* (Soil Association, 2006). xxiii + 265 pp. £8.95.

Growing acceptance of organic foods has been one of the most significant developments in the British retail food sector over the past ten to fifteen years. However, this organic boom has affected British farmers considerably less than it has consumers; despite spiralling organic food sales, less than five per cent of British agricultural land is under organic production. The organic revolution, viewed from the perspective of British farmers, has largely been about food imports and conversion to organic production by some livestock or mixed farms in the west; very little of Britain's organic acreage lies in the arable areas of the east of England.

Nevertheless, public embrace of organic food raises questions for agricultural historians, not least 'where did the organic food movement come from?' and 'what are its fundamental principles?' Three books, originally published in the 1940s, and recently brought back into print by the Soil Association (SA) offer some answers.

Philip Conford was the driving force behind the Soil Association's decision to reprint these 'organic classics' and he acted as series editor. The original idea was to develop a longer series: however, these three are unlikely to be joined by other titles, despite the existence of several books from the same period that might warrant reprinting. The chosen three are: Lady Eve Balfour's bestseller, *The living soil* (first published in 1943), Sir Albert Howard's tract on compost, *Farming and gardening for health or disease* (1945), and the Cheshire GP Lionel Picton's presentation of organic concepts and their relevance to nutrition, *Thoughts on feeding* (1946).

Those familiar with Conford's work, particularly his *Origins of the organic movement*, will have no difficulty understanding his reasons for wanting to see these books come back into print. For the SA perhaps they serve to emphasize that it is not a new, inexperienced organisation. Despite the organic movement's recent successes, it remains vulnerable to accusations that it is little more than the product of woolly ideas dating back to the 1960s and '70s about working with, rather than against, Mother Nature. These books are a reminder that the SA has a longer history and a more developed intellectual foundation than many might suspect.

Of the three authors whose 'organic classics' have been revived, Sir Albert Howard tends to be remembered by people who have taken the time to investigate composting techniques and their history. An agricultural scientist who spent most of his career working at research

stations in colonial India, Howard has long been viewed as one of the most acceptable (i.e. scientific) faces of the organic movement. Howard developed the 'Indore' composting technique during the 1920s, after observing and modifying methods used by Indian peasant farmers to protect and enhance soil fertility. During the 1930s and 1940s, Howard promoted Indore composting as the key to sound agriculture. He was scathing about inorganic fertilizers and the new chemical-based crop protection products. Indeed, Howard's response to any approach to agricultural science other than his own was negative. As this book makes clear, he liked to be in charge and was not a team player.

Farming and gardening for health or disease is, Conford explains, Howard's 'most panoramic and inclusive' book. Howard places composting within the context of his personal understanding of agricultural history (he begins with primitive agriculture, takes in farming in classical Greece and Rome, considers medieval farming traditions, and ends with the Second World War). This is also a profoundly ecological book; ensuring that agriculture does not threaten ecological functioning is Howard's overriding concern. Howard refers frequently to 'Mother Earth' and expresses an almost spiritual belief in the power of (feminine) nature. Agricultural problems and diseases affecting a range of crops – from tea to potatoes – are discussed, with Howard arguing in each case that only composting has the power to restore and maintain the health of soil, crops and livestock. It has been argued that Howard was the most significant figure of the British organic movement of the 1930s and 1940s. *Farming and gardening* offers insights into his thinking and, in so doing, provides clues about how many early organic supporters viewed agriculture and wished to see it develop.

Lady Eve Balfour's *The living soil* is known more widely than Howard's work, primarily thanks to the Soil Association's tendency to refer to Balfour as its founder. However, it is unlikely that many people have read *The living soil* and those who have probably read the 1975 version, which was radically different from the original 1943 edition. Conford has wisely chosen the first edition for reprinting. An introduction by Lawrence Woodward, of Elm Farm Research Centre, offers useful biographical and agricultural context.

The living soil was the organic movement's biggest publishing success, and was reprinted many times during the late 1940s and 1950s. It is easy to see why. In it, Balfour brings together organic concepts and arguments, presenting them in a direct and enthusiastic writing style. Discussion about what was then new scientific research is presented in an accessible, almost suspenseful style. *The Living Soil* was as close to a page-turner as

the early organic movement ever came. It was also published at the right moment, when people in Britain and its colonies were being urged to grow as much food as possible and were thus receptive to information and debate about agriculture and horticulture in a way they had not been before the war.

Another appeal of *The living soil* is its wide ranging nature and optimism. Balfour discusses everything from soil erosion to the future of Britain's housing policy, encouraging her war-time readers to dream of a better world in which healthy people eat highly-nutritious food, live in airy homes, and contribute passionately to the rebuilding of Britain and its empire. Essentially, this was a call to arms and remains so in spite of passages that have inevitably dated. Re-reading *The living soil*, it is easy to see why Lady Eve Balfour became a leading figure in the post-war organic movement.

The third 'organic classic', *Thoughts on feeding*, is the least well-known and, until now, the most difficult to secure from second-hand book dealers. Lionel Picton's book is part memoir, part personal statement on nutrition, part organic tract. A GP in Cheshire during the first decades of the twentieth century, Picton was convinced that poor diet was the culprit behind most disease and that food grown organically was more nutritious. He and a group of his fellow Cheshire doctors published a 'testament' to this effect in 1939, which included the following statement: 'We feel that the fact should be faced. Our daily work brings us repeatedly to the same point: "This illness results from a lifetime of wrong nutrition." *Thoughts on Feeding* is much more uneven in tone and pace than Howard's or Balfour's works, and some of the scientific explanations are rather convoluted. Other passages are simply odd, sometimes delightfully so. Picton has much to say on flatulence, bowel movements, and why (human) mothers should institute breastfeeding schedules identical to those of cows. Given Picton's strong opinions and his discussion of specific medical cases, *Thoughts on Feeding* may be of interest to historians of medicine as much as to agricultural and rural historians.

Together, these three 'organic classics' do not tell the whole story of the early organic movement. Several other long-out-of-print works come to mind, including Maye E. Bruce's two books on composting and Friend Sykes' *Humus and the Farmer*. By reprinting three, Conford and the Soil Association have made it a great deal easier for historians to understand the ideas of the early organic movement and the arguments its leaders presented as part of their (unsuccessful) effort to resist the rise of industrial agriculture.

ERIN GILL
Aberystwyth University

MARK HAMILTON LYTLE, *The gentle subversive. Rachel Carson, Silent Spring and the rise of the environmental movement* (New York: OUP, 2007). x + 277 pp. £13.99.

Does the world need another biography of Rachel Carson? As Mark Hamilton Lytle notes in the Afterword to *The gentle subversive*, prominent biographies of Carson already exist, most notably Linda Lear's definitive work *Rachel Carson: witness for nature* (1997). Lytle's intention is not so much to fill in gaps left by such accounts, for he believes few if any, exist. Rather, his aims are roughly threefold: to render an abbreviated and more narrowly focused account of her life and legacy (Lear's book is nearly 500 pages); to provide an update of Carson's legacy in light of current controversies surrounding *Silent Spring* and DDT; and to tell Carson's story in 'narrative' form – that is, to tell it from Carson's point of view as much as possible. A narrative approach seems appropriate for a biography of Carson, Lytle suggests, given that her writing often sought to tell a story from the perspective of non-human life-forms, so as to minimize human biases. But such an approach also requires that the writer – in this case, Lytle – must struggle to 'stay out of the story' (p. 253). Presumably, Lytle's fidelity to the narrative form explains why the bulk of his original and insightful commentary on Carson's life and legacy is relegated to the book's Epilogue and Afterword.

This is not to say that Lytle offers nothing of interest for readers already familiar with Carson's life and work. Even while he struggles to stay out of the story, Lytle gives welcome attention to Carson's religious background and sensibilities, noting that her work echoes 'the jeremiads of her Presbyterian forebears' (p. 62). He also draws parallels between Carson's understanding of ecology and that of the 'Ecology Group' of philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, which flourished during the 1930s and 1940s. Like those thinkers, Carson tended to reject reductionism in favour of an organicism aimed at restoring 'moral values to the scientific enterprise' (p. 89). Unlike them, Carson cared little for deriving political implications from ecology. Reforming society in the light of ecological principles such as cooperation was not her goal; protecting nature from humans was. (p. 90). Yet Carson's harshest critics were quick to draw such connections, even suggesting that communist sympathies motivated her arguments in *Silent Spring*. Lytle's genealogy of Carson's ecological ideals is interesting and it covers some ground not covered by Lear (Whiteheadian ecology makes no appearance there; Donald Worster briefly comments on Carson's Whiteheadian ideals in *Nature's economy*). But it may be a stretch to link Carson's interpretation of ecology

so closely with a 'cooperative ideal' evident, according to Lytle, in *'The sea around us* and books that followed' (p. 90). Nature's interdependence and the 'web of life' were indeed prominent themes in Carson's writing. But interdependence frequently takes on Darwinian overtones of fierce competition and harsh struggle, particularly in *Silent Spring*, where Carson draws on Darwinian principles to illustrate the folly of targeting insects with chemicals. She advocates using nature's own 'weapons' against it (what she terms 'biological controls') as the more effective option. Hers was no arcadian vision.

Lytle resumes an analysis of Carson's brand of ecology in his Epilogue, situating her within the environmentalism of Pinchot and Muir (she had affinities with the latter's rejection of anthropocentrism), and the ecological models of Elton and Tansley (she embraced the former's community concept). But this discussion never picks up the earlier thread regarding the Ecology Group's influence on Carson, leaving readers to guess about the precise connection. The constraints of the narrative approach make some of the biographer's observations appear almost as *non sequiturs*.

In the Epilogue and Afterword, Lytle reveals his rationale for the book's title. Carson may have appeared thoroughly conventional, even quaintly old-fashioned in dress and demeanour, but a subversive fire burned below the surface. Carson challenged authority – scientific and governmental – and encouraged citizens to do the same. Though her life was extinguished by cancer within two years of the publication of *Silent Spring*, that fire would spread to a 'community of dissenters,' a counterculture seeking an ecologically responsible life (pp. 205–06). The Epilogue sketches the history of the ecology movement from these subversive roots to the rise of environmental legislation, the first Earth Day, and the 1972 ban on DDT in the United States. Lytle concludes with a detailed discussion of current controversies surrounding DDT, mosquito-borne malaria, and Carson's work. Internet blogs (and respected sources such as the *New York Times*) have laid the blame for the deaths of 'third-world' children from malaria directly at Carson's door. Latter-day critics depict Carson (as they did 45 years ago) as the very symbol of an environmental movement concerned more with birds and bugs than with human babies. Yet, as Lytle notes, Carson never called for a complete ban on DDT, but only for more moderate and responsible use. Moreover, the DDT ban in the United States did nothing to prevent other countries from using it, nor did it preclude the use of DDT in public health emergencies. In fact, the reasons for phasing out DDT in malaria-stricken regions have relatively little to do with Carson's crusade and much

to do with patent law, the global economy, and the proliferation of newer, and more profitable, chemical pesticides. Lytle's tempered analysis of this nettlesome issue is one of the book's most valuable contributions.

Carson's subversiveness was equally matched by a gentleness that was not wholly a media stereotype. In labelling Carson 'gentle,' Lytle notes that she was morally outraged at cruelty to animals, for example; she loved birds and wildlife, detested hunting, and she formed close bonds with women and appealed strongly to women through her writing. Themes of home and domesticity 'were central to Carson's descriptions of the interdependence of living things' (p. 242). With such references to her gentleness, Lytle implies that Carson exuded, or retained, a certain femininity or womanliness, a nurturing quality. But precisely what Lytle intends by juxtaposing these two dimensions of Carson's character remains somewhat elusive. (Does he believe that her subversiveness and gentleness were at odds, something paradoxical? Did Carson's gentleness make her an unlikely subversive? Or, on the contrary, did it make her an effective subversive? Was Carson more or less 'gentle' than other women of her generation?) At times, Lytle seems to hint at a certain proto-feminism (or eco-feminism) discernible in Carson's work and in reactions to it from female readers and colleagues. This is a theme worth pursuing and one wishes Lytle would stay in the story a little longer. In the absence of a sharper analysis of these features of Carson's character and their relationship to one another, Lytle's portrait might be read as condescending. Lytle intends no disrespect; his admiration for Carson is clear, even when his observations about her are not. Carson might respond to Lytle much as she did to readers (especially men, she noted) who were shocked to discover that not only could a woman write about the subjects Carson tackled, but also that this particular author was not a masculine or 'oversize, Amazon-type female.' 'I can offer no defense,' Carson replied with customary equanimity, 'for not being what people expect.'

LISA H. SIDERIS
Bloomington, Indiana

ARTHUR STANIFORTH, *Straw and Straw Craftsmen*
(Shire Publications, 2008). 32 pp., 3 figs, 43 illus.
£4.99.

This reprint of Staniforth's 1981 classic, with its detailed and finely-illustrated descriptions of the traditional straw-using trades, comes as a welcome reminder of the value of this versatile natural product at a time when the cost of fossil fuels and products associated with them is spiralling almost beyond control. While horse collar making is now of little contemporary relevance,

thatching is every bit as important as it was twenty-five years ago and the onwards expansion of the heritage building industry continues to stimulate demand for cob walls and traditionally-made basket ware. Paula Sunshine's 2006 Shire volume on wattle and daub emphasized the environmentally advantageous benefits of straw in the building industry and Staniforth's work further underlines her comments. At present the vast majority of straw produced in this country is employed either as livestock bedding or as a source of domestic or agricultural heating, despite the wide scope of alternative uses. As demand for traditional hand-crafted products increases in line with advancing prosperity, there is good reason to predict a bright future for the 900 thatchers, 120 basket makers and the various other straw workers scattered around Britain in the early years of the twenty-first century.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth University

ERIC WOOD, *The south-west Peak. A landscape history* (Landmark Publishing, 2007). 191 pp., illus. £19.99.

In this book 'south-west Peak' is defined as the area bounded by lines joining Macclesfield, Whaley Bridge, Buxton and Leek, thus encompassing Macclesfield Forest, part of the High Peak and part of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The wisdom of not considering a wider area, including the country east of Leek town and even all the western margin of the Carboniferous limestone outcrop may be questioned, but however defined, the south-west Peak most certainly comprises an interesting tract of hard country straddling the boundary of the national park. In his exploration of the history of its landscape, Eric Wood has set out to 'appeal to the general reader and those with an interest in local history' using a 'broad-brush' treatment. The book is arranged in twenty-one chapters which, in turn, are broken down into short sections with notably bold headings, thus giving a guide or gazetteer-like feel. A wide, but by no means comprehensive, range of published sources has been consulted and the ground has also been walked, evidently with some enthusiasm. However there are a number of aspects of the book which limit the success of Wood's endeavours, most particularly an imbalance of content and the manner of its presentation.

The photographs on the front cover and the fly-leaf set the tone for the volume. A good two-thirds of the content is given over to the development of communications and the exploitation of natural resources. Clearly the author's interests lie with relict features in the landscape, notably trackways, roads, quarries, coal mines and water power sites. Someone seeking a guide to such aspects will find much of interest. The reader's understanding would have

been enhanced by more systematic discussion of the associated physical environment and also by a greater use of distribution maps so that specific sites could be seen in their wider context. Some subsections are generalized in content and could apply to England as a whole, such as those about highwaymen and coaching services, and add little to an appreciation of the south-west Peak landscape.

The agrarian scene is dealt with less confidently. The difficulties occasioned by the extensive wet moorlands extending to over 500m, dissected by deeply cut valleys deserve greater elaboration. The south-west Peak has long been marginal country with a scarcity of evidence of coherent settlement until medieval times. For example, there is but scant reference to the area in the Domesday Survey. The reader is offered some detail on surviving Anglo-Saxon crosses, again emphasizing Wood's concern with extant landscape features. This too would have benefited from basic distributional mapping. There is proper recognition of the extent to which the area came to be dominated by the Macclesfield, Peak and Malbac Forests, and likewise the importance of monastic grange communities. The farming scene after the Dissolution and during and after seventeenth-century disafforestation, is but briefly summarized.

Landmark Press produces books to a high standard but a number of presentational aspects merit comment. The maps are not drawn in a consistent style and a few appear as hand-drawn working sketches. Some are appropriately located with grid references and sources but others are not. Similarly the sources of photographs are not acknowledged and one suspects that many originate with the author. Tighter editing would have helped to ensure that the title as given on the front cover matched that on the title page and to correct such statements as 'Macclesfield Forest is bounded by Peak Forest' to the west rather than the east and that the coal seams occur in the Namurian. Some do but others lie in Westphalian or Coal Measures basins. The bibliography contains duplication and regrettably there is no listing of other sources consulted, thus preventing the reader from exploring further.

The south-west Peak would have benefited from a longer period of gestation. It is particularly unfortunate that the book ends abruptly, with no attempt to draw the various themes of agrarian development, industry and communications together. The wholeness embodied in the concept of landscape is thus passed by along with the opportunity to identify what makes the south-west Peak a distinctive tract of country worthy of consideration separate from the rest of the Peak District.

ROGER DALTON
University of Derby

GARY J. WEST, *An historical ethnography of rural Perthshire, 1750–1950. Farm, family and neighbourhood* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2007). ix + 311 pp., 4 figs, 17 tables. £74.95.

This book is an ethnological study of belonging or identity between 1750 and 1950, in Perthshire, a county that has received little research by rural and agricultural researchers. The study stems from the author's own interest in his family roots, especially on his father's side of the family, 'most of whom continued to live and work on farms in and around Perthshire until recent retiral' (p. 1). The author brings together a wide range of evidence including oral testimony from his own semi-structured interviews of his relatives, archival recordings, documentary evidence and estate records, to examine the themes of the agricultural transformation of Perthshire (improvement and post-improvement); family labour (especially women and children) and its importance to the post-improvement agricultural communities and the experience of farming life; and the 'temporary family' of the farm bothy (examined through the development of that system of housing and an account of bothy life). This is followed by a detailed analysis of communal labour and neighbour-based reciprocity and charity (exchange labour and charity labour) in the second half of the book.

For each theme, the author provides closely argued and reflective theoretical, historical and cultural frameworks, bringing together and considering the wider debate of a number of scholars. That analysis provides a helpful framework for his work on Perthshire. The author adopts and uses a number of well established methodological approaches to examine a range of themes: for example, he uses those developed by Åke Campbell and Bjarne Stoklund (1976) to provide a cultural ecology model of Perthshire (pp. 76–81), and Ian Levitt and T. C. Smout's (1979) methodological approach to the examination of the Poor Law Enquiry of 1843 to assess the employment of children in agriculture (p. 87). He also develops further some of the existing methodological approaches. In particular, his development of a working model of communal labour systems is particularly useful.

The strongest, and also the most interesting, part of the book examines communal labour systems; the author has already separately published this work in a number of articles. This is an aspect of rural life that has received very little attention in Scotland but has received some interest in other countries, such as Ireland. Indeed, he acknowledges Anne O'Dowd's *Meitheal: A study of co-operative labour in rural Ireland* (1981), as an important stimulus for his work and draws extensively on her theoretical framework. The author explains that these systems were a 'phenomenon [that] has been widespread

throughout Perthshire during the past two centuries, and its various manifestations have contributed to local society at a number of levels' (p. 284). It was also a feature that 'was by no means unique' to this county. (p. 284). This is an area of study that deserves further attention.

As a county study, the absence of a map which details the various localities and districts mentioned is frustrating. This is particularly so for understanding the distribution of evidence on child employment (pp. 87–8), the geographical location of the agricultural improvement case studies (pp. 42–56, 67–61, 61–74), as well as the distribution of the bothy system in 1867 (p. 133), and the preference for married or unmarried servants (pp. 138–40).

The research is clearly a personal journey for the author to 'document and understand the way of life of those people from whom I have come ...' (p. 2). On the last page, he indicates that this had a profound impact on him: 'only now do I feel I have the personal and ethnological grounding from which to move on' (p. 288). However, while he accomplished a personal journey in undertaking his research and writing up his findings (the manuscript formed his doctoral thesis, completed in 2000), he ran out of energy before he published his manuscript. The theoretical and cultural frameworks which he used as a context for his work are mostly from studies published between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s – they took me back to the books I was reading as an undergraduate nearly 20 years ago – and take no account of developments thereafter. Indeed, beyond 1995 there are few references: there are six between 1995 and 2000 and seven from 2000 onwards, of which four relate to the author's own work. Some of the debates are out of date and have not been revised to take into account new developments since he started his research around 1990. For example, his account of the nature of the agricultural revolution hinges on the work of C. Beveridge and R. Turnbull, published in 1989, and others who also undertook research at an earlier date. Since that time, the debate has moved significantly forward by studies such as T. M. Devine's *The transformation of the Scottish countryside* (1994). Although Devine's study does not discuss Perthshire, it provides much invaluable evidence that would have informed West's analysis of the improvements at Delvine. West's recordings of his family members were made in 1995–6, and neither the text nor the bibliography reveal whether he undertook further interviews as his research developed. In a number of instances he refers to 'recent research' and 'in recent years', which he specifically denotes as being in the 1980s and 1990s (pp. 9, 10, 14, 31, 40, 84, 143, 173–178,

215, 279) – it should be remembered that his book was published in 2007. As it stands, the book is an out-dated study that regrettably would have had more force if it had been published a decade ago.

HEATHER HOLMES
Livingston

L. KENNEDY and P. M. SOLAR, *Irish Agriculture: A price history from the mid-eighteenth century to the First World War* (The Royal Irish Academy, 2007). 205 pp., 27 figs, 21 illus, 38 tables. €30.

Prices are the lifeblood of economic history. They tell us so much about economic well being, about decision-making and about comparative wealth across time and across space. And these are only a few of the uses and tests to which we put prices. If they are as important as I suggest, then it is necessary to have confidence in the prices that are used, in their origins, their robustness, and their fitness for purpose. Not all economies are involved in all aspects of economic life. Comparative advantage may dictate emphasis on one, or a few, or a range of activities rather than others, and over time comparative advantage adjusts to external competition and circumstance, and to internal growth and development. For Ireland, agriculture was the lifeblood of its economy. The centrality of the 1840s Famine adds more weight to that position. It is not that economic and agricultural historians of Ireland have had want of a good range of prices, but perhaps what has been lacking has been a range of prices in which everyone can be utterly confident. Time will tell whether the data brought together in this important project will serve the next generation of historians, but for the time being it is a massive step forward.

This project has seemingly been rapidly put together in three years. It has a much longer history in the concerns of its two authors who acknowledge everything I have said so far, and more besides, in their opening chapter. In an extended fashion, that chapter sets out the *raison d'être* of the centrality of prices generally and for agricultural prices in Ireland in particular. The authors detail the historiography of price history as pioneered by first Thomas and then Richard Barrington (not familiarly related), of the importance of regional animal, butter, and grain markets, of the government returns as set out in parliamentary papers. This chapter is heavy on admiration for the pioneers, but also critical of their ready adoption of prices without sensitivity to their origins and their meanings. There was a cavalier attitude to the ages of animals, and perhaps by some also to the quality of both animals and grain products, as well as to the regional variations related to those products. There is a tendency to be overcritical perhaps.

After all, by definition, pioneers show us the way and inspire us to improve.

If the historiography is important in declaring an admiration for the pioneers, it is also an inspiration to do better, but chapter two perhaps brings us plummeting back to earth. It is about weights and measures, a problem that all agricultural and regional historians have to confront, whatever the location, whatever the time. The authors illustrate this problem with an account of the regional weights and measures for potatoes and other products. How heavy was a barrel or a bushel? Was it the same in Kilkenny in 1802 as it was in Dublin the previous year? Or the same in Galway in 1824 as it was in Armagh in 1804? If it is a problem for potatoes, one of the least traded products, what about those products that dominated the market place?

In chapter three we have the backbone of the book, the discussion of prices and the way they were reported in newspapers. We have therefore consistent data sources but which are treated regionally: for the south they rely on Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford, but predominantly Cork for the eighteenth and Waterford for the nineteenth centuries; and for the north they are based on Belfast and Londonderry. Unaccountably, and unfortunately, Dublin newspapers did not report prices regularly for certain products before 1810. The authors get their retaliation in first because they recognize the obvious question that splicing series from different places implies a good degree of market integration. That remains an untested assumption, but what is certain is that the comparative analyses in this chapter (and the underlying data in the appendices) will serve important functions in their own right for the inward gaze centred on Ireland, but so also outwardly in comparisons with Europe and further afield.

Chapter four covers similar ground to chapter three but specifically on beef and cattle, embracing Dublin prices as well as other regional sources. In chapter five the authors attempt to bring together the different commodities in the construction of an agricultural price index. The weighting problems involved in such a construction are well known, not only for Ireland but generally, and in this chapter the authors try a number of different schemes based on supposed product shares for a number of different base years. There may be nuances in year-to-year variations, but the long-run picture is more or less identical regardless of the date of the weights chosen, and also regardless of the broad geography of the north relative to the south. There are hints, though, that the devil might be in the detail, and so perhaps others will exploit the new product series in times to come. The scripted part of the book is completed with a short conclusion. It is followed by

three appendixes on sources, and finally the book is rounded off by tables of the raw prices. These tables consume perhaps one-third of the whole book. In summary, then, this is will surely be the standard source for future new work for years to come, and for revisions of old positions on Irish economic development before 1914.

MICHAEL TURNER
University of Hull

CORMAC Ó GRÁDA, RICHARD PAPING and ERIC VANHAUTE (eds), *When the potato failed: causes and effects of the last European subsistence crisis, 1845–1850* (Brepols, 2007) (Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area Series 9). 342 pp., 58 tables, 68 figs. €66.

The changes in consumption patterns resulting from the European expansion after 1500 were perhaps its most durable consequence. Long after the price revolution had been forgotten and after many of the colonies in the New World had shaken off their colonial ties, European consumption habits were still affected by these 'exposure effects'. The most dramatic effect on Europe was brought about by the lowly potato. A recent paper by two economists has estimated that the growth of agricultural productivity in Europe attributable solely to the introduction of the potato from America accounted for 18 per cent of the observed post-1700 increase in population growth and 37 per cent of urbanization (Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, 'Columbus's contribution to world population and urbanization: a natural experiment examining the introduction of potatoes', unpublished working paper, Harvard University, 2008). The potato produced up to three times the calories per acre that cereals did, and on soils that were often not suitable for any other kind of arable farming. As a side bonus (unknown to the people at the time), the potato also contained ascorbic acid and other important trace elements that made those who consumed it healthy. Arthur Young, that inveterate observer of crops and farms, noted in the late 1770s of the Irish that 'when I see their well-formed bodies, their men athletic and their women beautiful, I know not how to believe them subsisting on an unwholesome food'.

Yet the potato carried with it a dreadful risk that was only to be revealed much later. In 1845 a vicious fungus named *Phytophthora infestans* attacked the potato crops in Europe and, for a number of years the harvest was almost completely wiped out. The food scarcity was compounded by an especially poor rye harvest in 1846. The famine could not have come at a worse time. The mid-1840s were already a period of crisis in rural western Europe because, by that time, the competition

of mechanized textile manufacturing had severely cut the income of the workers in cottage industries who subsisted in part on earnings in domestic manufacturing. The crisis would thus have occurred in any event, because home production of cheap textiles was doomed. But those areas where the poor subsisted in part on the collapsing earnings from domestic industry and in part on potatoes were dealt a double whammy in the difficult years from 1845 to 1850. To add injury to injury, many of the regions afflicted by hunger and economic crisis were ravaged by the second cholera outbreak in Europe in 1848–9.

The economic and demographic impact of the potato failure depended on two main determinants: the degree to which diets depended on potatoes and the ability of the economy to come up with substitutes for the potato for the most affected regions at short notice. The failure of cereal crops in Europe did not help, but suffering also depended to a great degree on policy and the approach that governments took to famine relief.

Ireland, in which over three million people depended almost entirely on potatoes for their sustenance, suffered the most, but many other regions in Europe were badly hit. In this collection, a number of scholars from different countries produce comparative essays on the effect of the potato failure on their countries. Ireland, because it was by far the worst-hit nation, has three essays devoted to it, one by co-editor Cormac Ó Gráda, the leading economic historian of Ireland and one of the world's leading experts on famines in general (see his *Famine: a short history*, Princeton University Press, 2009). Irish history was altered forever by the famine. As Ó Gráda points out, most pre-industrial famines led to rapid demographic recovery in the years following the famine. Ireland, by contrast, continued after the dreadful shock of the Great Famine to lose population decade after decade until the twentieth century. Here, three elements came together: a heavy dependence on potatoes, especially in the west and south; low levels of commercialization; and a poor infrastructure. To that, we may add the almost fanatical commitment of the Whig government of John Russell to free markets and its desire to 'reform' Ireland by teaching it to behave more prudently (as a brief essay by Peter Gray explains). The result was a ghastly excess death toll of about 1.1 million people plus at least another 400,000 averted births.

In most of the other areas affected, the demographic effects were noticeable but not nearly as disastrous. In the Scottish highlands, as Tom Devine points out, dependence on potatoes was lower than in Ireland, and the industrialized and richer parts of Scotland were able to absorb the shock. In Flanders, local authorities were more successful in supporting the starving peasants,

although Belgium, too, was fortunate that it had a large modern industrial sector that could mobilize the resources to pay for food imports. In the Netherlands, which had considerable regions heavily dependent on the potato, the effects were palpable, but compared to Ireland they were modest and transitory. In a detailed and well-researched essay, Paping and Tassenaar struggle with a complicated story, in which both rural and urban regions were affected, but the demographic picture is a bit muddled because of outbreaks of malaria and cholera between 1845 and 1850. But here, too, the nation was far less vulnerable than Ireland, because it was considerably wealthier and more commercialized.

Elsewhere in Europe, the potato harvest and the rye harvest failure in 1846 brought a great deal of misery, but not anything that can count as catastrophic. Not everywhere did the potato failure figure prominently in the crisis. Thus, in France, Vivier concludes that the 1846–47 crisis ‘was severe but not exceptional’ and cannot bear the causal responsibility for the overthrow of the July Monarchy. Chevet and Ó Gráda, in an essay significantly entitled ‘Crisis: what crisis?’, fail to see any connection, in France, between production shortfalls and price increases on the one hand and mortality on the other. A fine essay by Hans Bass describes in detail the exact dimensions of the crisis in Prussia, and concludes that distribution was more important than production. Elsewhere in Europe, in Spain and Scandinavia, as essays in the volume explain, the impact of the potato blight was relatively mild.

All in all, this interesting volume illustrates the power of well-done comparative economic history. As in all edited volumes, the contributions are of uneven quality and not always in consensus. The main conclusion is that, as we move away from Ireland, the potato failure declines in its impact. For the historians of Ireland, that conclusion must underline the depth of Irish exceptionalism and the urgent need to explain it better.

JOEL MOKYR

Northwestern University

Europe and Elsewhere:

SAMUEL LETURCQ, *Un village, la terre et les hommes. Toury en Beauce (XII-XVII siècle)* (Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, Paris, 2007). 565 pp., 35 figs, 32 tables. €35.

Many readers of this review will have passed through Toury without realizing it, because the *commune* is traversed by one of the railway lines between Paris and Orléans and by the *route royale* described by Marc Bloch, which is now identified as *route nationale* 20. Samuel Leturcq, lecturer in medieval history at the Université

François Rabelais in Tours, begins his monograph with a methodological introduction that draws the distinction between agrarian structures (landscapes) and farming systems (rotations), summarizes research on open-field and *bocage* by historians, geographers and archaeologists, and recognizes the contrast between deliberately simplified ‘models’ and the messy complexity of the empirical record. Of particular interest is the rejection of the old belief that nucleated settlements in areas of open-field cultivation, such as the Beauce, were necessarily original features. Another hypothesis sees them as the result of spatial reorganization in the past when small settlements disappeared to the benefit of surviving central places. These remarks indicate that Leturcq’s study of a village in the Beauce will provide a much more complex account than the stereotypical image of an arid, tree-less plateau, whose broad horizons are only broken by the church steeples of nucleated villages.

Adopting a ‘retrospective’ approach, the author presents the collective rural structure of Toury between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, making particular use of a detailed terrier and plan that date from 1696 following the transfer of property from the abbey of Saint-Denis to the benefit of the nuns of Saint-Cyr. The pattern of strip fields at Toury was highly fragmented and most property units were extremely small (especially gardens and vineyards), but only seven owners held one-third of the total area. Landowners lived not only in Toury but also in surrounding parishes and in more distant towns, including Blois, Orléans and Paris. Functioning farms were complex assemblages of owner-occupied and rented strips dispersed widely across the parish and beyond. Far from involving three great ‘fields’, or sections of territory, the three-fold rotation operated across three dozen clusters of strips whose geography reflected the existence of four tiny hamlets in the parish in 1696 and hinted at the presence of others that had disappeared in the past. Collective stubble grazing of vast flocks of sheep was practised not just within the parish, or across the territory worked by farms located in Toury, but in a zone that extended as far as the seven villages in adjacent parishes, on average four kilometres away. Here, Leturcq introduces some elementary notions of spatial analysis. Collective obligations were certainly important but so, too, were individual rights in the tiny plots surrounding the village of Toury and its dependant hamlets.

Thanks to the survival of an array of medieval fiscal documents relating to Toury, and to the parish of Rouvray-Saint-Denis further north, it is possible to reconstruct communal agrarian activities in this central part of the Beauce between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Outlying hamlets were more important than

in subsequent times and the results of archaeological field walking give very strong evidence for the location of one of two deserted hamlets. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the settlement pattern of Toury parish was concentrated to a greater degree on the central village. Some useful diagrams relating to regularly repeated distances between settlement clusters suggest how this may have happened. A sideways look at Rouvray-Saint-Denis not only provides complementary information on patterns of strips and crop rotations but also indicates the presence of 'waste' that was being brought into cultivation in the late fifteenth century. This process of *défrichement* emerged emphatically from the record left by *abbé* Suger in the early twelfth century that described properties in the Beauce held by the abbey of Saint-Denis. The final section of the book moves further from archival evidence into the application of ideas and hypotheses derived from other studies of the evolution of rural settlements and agrarian structures. For example, the north-south alignment of the *route royale* appears to have played an important role in structuring the arrangement of cultivated strips. Archaeological evidence dating from Gallo-Roman times suggests the presence of several small settlements, of which one (Toury) came to dominate the local area, whilst others survived as tiny hamlets or isolated farms, and some were abandoned completely.

In addition to this interpretation, Samuel Leturcq provides a thorough discussion of the challenges confronting the researcher. Agrarian and fiscal vocabularies in the past are shown to have been complex and variable across both time and space. Functioning farms did not correspond neatly with property units, with many examples extending into surrounding parishes and a mixture of owned and rented strips being commonplace. Ecclesiastical parishes conformed to administrative entities but some agricultural practices extended across wider territories (in the case of stubble grazing), whilst others operated over smaller areas around the ancient hamlets. This fascinating monograph is enhanced by an array of detailed interpretative maps and is supported by a large bibliography. It reveals a rural world that changed across the centuries, in response to economic trends, modified land ownership, warfare, disease and a host of other factors, and whose landscape expression was transformed by the process of plot consolidation (*remembrement*) completed in 1951. Four decades later, production of wheat and sugar beet across the Beauce was accompanied for several years by the imposition of set-aside that evokes some of the fluctuations in land use recorded in medieval times.

HUGH CLOUT
University College London

N. LOCKLIN, *Women's work and identity in eighteenth-century Brittany* (Ashgate, 2007). viii + 170 pp., 3 tables, 1 map. £55.

Nancy Locklin's detailed and innovative study of the lives of women in Brittany in the eighteenth century will appeal to a range of readers, including those interested in gender history, local and regional history, legal history and French history. It is ambitious and holistic, attempting to provide, as the introduction tells us, a study of women encompassing 'their work, their lives, their rights, their tragedies, and their triumphs' (p. 1). Brittany, distinguished from the rest of France by a number of laws and customs, is chosen because it potentially offers a unique regional case-study. Locklin suggests that such an approach can be used to challenge some of the generalizations and models that have defined the history of women (and particularly women's work) in the last couple of decades.

The book begins with a demographic overview of women in Brittany from childhood to widowhood, utilising as its main source *capitation* tax rolls. The data will be useful for comparative purposes and throws up some interesting and perhaps unexpected insights. Locklin finds, for example, that a relatively high number of married women kept a separate trade, independent from their husbands, and this enabled them to provide considerable support to their family's subsistence. The percentage of households headed by unmarried women was surprisingly higher in small towns and villages than the larger cities, probably because of inheritance of property and tenure rather than economic opportunities, which remained limited in rural areas. The next chapter deals in more detail with the complex question of women's work and identity. It begins with a comprehensive analysis of the position and treatment of women in guilds, and then goes on to look at 'non-guild' urban and rural work. Although there were no exclusively female guilds some, such as the tailors' guild of Quimper, took female members on roughly the same terms as men. In the world of work outside the guilds, the women of Brittany, like most of their European counterparts, were concentrated in a limited number of 'female' trades, notably food, clothing and textiles, cleaning and caring. In rural areas peasant women contributed to the family economy through vital but gender-segregated labour, although Locklin struggles to really shed light on this as such women 'are largely invisible in early modern sources' (p. 71). The strengthening of the sexual division of labour in the textile industry, which dominated much of rural Brittany, is handled in more detail, with an again familiar pattern of female-spinner and male-weaver emerging by the late eighteenth century. Locklin concludes that this position arises as much out of cultural

and social assumptions as from biological or patriarchal explanations.

The third chapter analyses the position of women under Breton law and, although beyond the expertise of this reviewer, I thought that in many ways it provided the most compelling material. Locklin argues that a grasp of the range of legal codes and customs that guided women's lives is necessary to gain a real understanding of their work and identity, and here the focus on Brittany as case-study really reaches fruition. She shows that Breton law gave women certain rights and protection that they simply did not have elsewhere in France, or in other European nations. Partible inheritance was the most important, giving women access to resources on the death of parents. Unmarried women and widows were also allowed to maintain businesses and property, and could make wills or donations that were protected from demands of other heirs or kin. Although Locklin does not deny that patriarchal power was strengthening in the eighteenth century, she shows that Breton women's unique position in regard to law gave them 'greater latitude as they negotiated society and the economy' than women elsewhere were allowed (p. 111). Women were also aware of their rights and responsibilities and were able to defend them through recourse to law where necessary. This is illustrated in the final substantive chapter, where women's social life, friendship networks and codes of honour are explored largely through legal records.

This book is a welcome addition to regional studies of women's work and lives in early modern Europe. Whilst women in eighteenth-century Brittany endured many of the hardships, impediments and suppositions that were familiar to women in other areas of Europe, in some respects they enjoyed favourable rights and resources, which in turn aided their social and economic position. I would have liked more explicit analysis of how the major findings of the study connect with the key concepts in women's history (separate spheres, continuity and change, etc.) in the conclusion, but this is undoubtedly an interesting and valuable exploration of the complexity of women's lives in the past.

NICOLA VERDON
University of Sussex

PHILIPPE MADELINE and JEAN-MARC MORICEAU (eds), *Bâtir dans les campagnes. Les enjeux de la construction de la protohistoire au XXI^e siècle* (Presses universitaires de CAEN-MRSH coedition, 2007). 368 pp., 135 illus, 4 tables, 4 maps. €25.

This collection of twenty-two papers offers a kaleidoscopic view of the main issues which confront those wishing to update or renovate villages, houses or

agricultural buildings. One might have imagined that France's greater area might reduce the number of issues and make the task easier; not so. Some villages and towns need renewal because of population expansion or earlier, unwise planning permissions. To increase in scale, farms need modern buildings and mechanized systems to house larger herds or greater crops. Ancient buildings need sensitive conversion or renewal to allow them to remain in the countryside. Above all, each area's character needs to be considered and conserved.

The authors are drawn from a wide range of academic disciplines. Their papers are grouped under six broad titles: buildings and rural modernization; the historical and archaeological study of buildings; buildings seen from within; aspects of modernization; case studies of agricultural buildings and aspects of landscape representation. Overall, the papers cover ten regions and include both lowland and upland sites. In each group the papers explore different aspects of the same theme, but not necessarily in logical or chronological progression. Mainly stock-keeping and viniculture issues are discussed with little mention of any arising from intensive arable cultivation.

Space is the linking theme. Farmers' need for more modern and usually larger buildings affects, in different ways, the area around them. Farm buildings are still present in many villages and small towns, how are farms to expand here? Solutions which involve moving them into the surrounding area create other problems: how to disperse them, where to put them, whether to create a farming enclave or to scatter the buildings in smaller units. For larger, modern buildings, careful decisions about using modern materials in buildings of traditional shape, and siting them sensitively into the landscape, are necessary. Many villages and small towns now sprawl where originally they were organized round a natural centre. How can those centres be regained while allowing the settlements modern amenities and further expansion? How can empty building space within the sprawl be used? A table of acronyms distinguishes one method of legal approach from another.

Rural buildings, such as the traditional buildings of the Franche-Comté in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, are considered from an historical and archaeological point of view. Important questions concerning the use of archive and material are posed. Can we be sure the documents themselves are reliable – do they describe an original building or one that had already been enlarged or adapted? In villages formerly razed by warfare in earlier centuries had the buildings been rebuilt in their original forms? Careful use of archival, archaeological and architectural information is necessary. When Iron Age buildings in the northern

Alps are considered, the documents are rock engravings, the texts of classical Latin and Greek authors or the ground plans of excavated buildings and the study of palaeo-botanical remains. Whereas Roman villas, their plan forms and the agricultural buildings built alongside them through to Gallo-Roman times, are amply described, the dearth of detailed knowledge about buildings which may have existed in the Early Middle Ages is acknowledged and deplored. Documents start to become available in the twelfth century but many have yet to be discovered and studied for any architectural detail. Do we correctly understand the terminology used? Archaeological excavation could help, but far too little rescue archaeology has been directed towards rural buildings. In the Caen plain developer-archaeology has revealed many thirteenth- to fifteenth-century sites, but most were only partially excavated. Correlation between archives and archaeology then becomes impossible. Furthermore many developer reports have yet to be consulted for their historical information.

Practical considerations include the use of tile or thatch for roofs; how did ventilation and ergonomic layout influence the size and disposition of agricultural buildings and how were these needs translated into different regional styles? Using the Breton farmstead as an example, did the different farming roles played by men and women influence the layout of the farmstead. Also studied is the disposition of farmsteads in Languedoc: grouped or dispersed? In the mountains, however, buildings shelter families, animals and crops. Their farmsteads are isolated by the terrain and their evolution and modern forms are both studied.

As younger generations take over farms, adaptation and reconstruction of the buildings are needed to achieve modernization. They aim to rationalize work to create a more ergonomic system. Where buildings need to be replaced because for years little or nothing had been done to keep them in good repair, the new buildings have to fit into their surroundings. Where old buildings can be retained, additions are made. Then many spread out from the original site, making a large farmstead where harmonization is difficult to achieve. Contrastingly, in the mountains, the traditional form of the chalet has frequently been adopted, adapted to domestic use and overused as a 'traditional local style' whose elements have been incorporated into non-rural buildings such as blocks of flats. Elsewhere its essential elements: use of timber in construction, cladding, roof lines and sense of space have been designed into modern buildings of the area.

Finally, how do farmers themselves see the landscape? The discussion centres on views taken with disposable cameras, views which they considered important for

six reasons: landscapes which belonged, seemed right; where changes were for the better or where they were explicable in terms of progress. They were also asked to consider past and future changes and those which were inevitable in order for farming progress to be made.

Our countries share many of the problems, but our area is less.

GWEN JONES
St Leonards, East Sussex

PIERRE CORNU and JEAN-LUC MAYAUD (eds), *Au nom de la terre. Agrarisme et agrariens en France et en Europe du 19^e siècle à nos jours* (Paris, La Boutique de l'Histoire, 2007). 464 pp. € 27.

Les agrariens français de Méline à Pisani appeared in 1968. In it, Pierre Barral explored French rural society from the agricultural protectionism of the late nineteenth century, through the demographic disaster of World War I and the economic collapse following 1929, to the structural reforms of the early 1960s that sought to modernize family farming by encouraging the elderly to retire, the young to acquire agricultural skills, and farms to be enlarged. Barral discussed these developments in national terms but, in 1969, he edited an issue of *Le Mouvement Social* that examined regional aspects of French agrarian life before 1930. Thirty years later, members of the *Association des ruralistes français* met in Lyons for their 23rd colloquium, which focused on 'Agrariens et agrarismes, hier et aujourd'hui, en France et en Europe'. Thirty-one papers were delivered and twenty five of these are included, in revised form, in the long-delayed volume under review. Editors Cornu and Mayaud begin by explaining how Barral's ideas have been refined by recent research in France and other European countries.

The first cluster of papers examines agrarian life and nation building, with evidence from Germany and Spain being set alongside discussions of rural policies in France. Protracted debates considered whether a single syllabus for primary education was appropriate, or whether French rural children should experience a modified programme incorporating rural skills. Despite suffering more than any other class on the killing fields of World War I, the French peasantry remained the bedrock of the nation during the 1920s, when half the population still lived in the countryside. The second group of papers concentrates on rural development in Britain, Germany and France. Isabel Boussard highlights the activities of successive ministers of agriculture during the Vichy era who strove to keep farmers on the land, return abandoned farms to cultivation, promote plot consolidation, and improve rural housing. A complementary paper by Wolfram Pyta traces German rural

policy during the Nazi period. Rural planners, headed by Konrad Meyer, travelled widely through the German lands to identify farms to be conserved and improved, and others that were too small to be viable and should be merged with adjacent holdings.

Social and political issues figure largely in the third cluster of essays, which explores the specificities of landholding and peasant unions in the Landes and Provence. These French discussions are complemented by papers on the peasants' political party in Poland and on the evolution of rural communism in the USSR and in parts of western Europe. Rural depopulation and representations of rural life form the heart of the fourth section, with essays reviewing how the *exode rural* was debated in the French parliament. In the 1960s, depopulation was viewed as a necessary part of agricultural modernization, but it is now perceived as a social problem at the core of service deprivation that afflicts the poor and elderly in the countryside. The last throes of traditional rural life in France were captured by documentary film-maker Georges Rougnier and by journalists writing for magazines whose focus gradually shifted from the virtues of the family holding to the environmental advantages of organic farming.

The final group of essays highlights aspects of 'productivist' farming, environmental damage, and nature conservation. New agrarian associations, such as the *Confédération Paysanne* and *Coordination Rurale*, have emerged seeking to defend small farmers and their ecologically sensitive brand of food production in the face of mechanized farming on ever-larger units. Intensive application of chemicals and the removal of long-established landscape features in the name of agricultural progress have caused serious ecological damage in many regions. The European Union and other institutions have defined areas for nature conservation and have tried to impose new approaches to resource management. Such policy innovations have been challenged by many farmers who insist that food production remains their prime function, despite their political masters insisting they should re-invent themselves as landscape managers and guardians of nature embracing biodiversity and sustainable development.

The book concludes with Barral's own appraisal of the social and environmental challenges that now face members of the much diminished and increasingly diversified 'farming class'. He insists that productivist farming caused 'a fissure [to develop] in the traditional relationship between farming and nature' (p. 458). Reconciling exploitation with conservation, and recognizing that members of urban society expect more from the countryside than the production of food, are just some of the challenges facing rural Europe in the

twenty-first century. This interesting and long awaited collection of essays has neither tables nor illustrations. Information on the disciplinary background and affiliation of the authors would have been a welcome addition.

HUGH CLOUT
University College London

RENÉ BOURRIGAUD and FRANÇOIS SIGAUT, *Nous Labourons. Actes du colloque technique de travail de la terre, hier et aujourd'hui, ici et là-bas* (Editions du Centre d'histoire du travail, Nantes, 2007). 399 pp., 135 figs, 5 tables, 7 maps. €33.

At a moment when global hunger threatens and policies such as the set-aside of farmland in western Europe are things of the past, this is undoubtedly a very timely book. Its focus is on ploughs and the ploughing of agricultural land especially in north-western France but also in other parts of the country and abroad. Specifically, it presents the proceedings of a colloquium held in 2006 as a continuation of an exhibition on ploughing that had been held at the château of Châteaubriant, to the north-east of Nantes, during 2005 and 2006. This event brought together a sample of the exhibits of ploughs, tractors and other farm implements found in eight local museums in the *département* of the Loire-Atlantique. Demonstrations of traditional ploughing techniques and visits to various agricultural localities complemented the presentation of formal papers at the colloquium. These extramural activities are captured on the CD-Rom that accompanies this volume. Participants included local enthusiasts as well as academics; as the images and affiliations indicate, many were retired.

After five introductory papers that describe the organizing body (the Centre International de Culture Paysanne et Rurale) and reflect on scholarly aspects of the history of ploughing and food production (François Sigaut), the text is arranged in six sections. In the first of these, six contributions trace ploughing activities in ancient Egypt, and in Gallo-Roman and medieval times, and the legacy of ridged fields in Germany. The diversity of ploughing practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries forms the substance of the second section, which includes case studies from Brittany, the Loire-Atlantique, the Lot-et-Garonne, the Haute-Marne and the Brie. Then, three essays widen the gaze to examine raised ploughing ridges in eighteenth-century Ireland, research into ploughs in Slovenia, and the complex vocabulary surrounding agricultural activities in Portugal. Indeed, this point of intricate and variable descriptive terminology permeates the whole volume with a multitude of words being used to characterize similar implements, field working processes

and landscape features. In the fourth section, six papers examine ploughing in parts of 'the South', namely Ethiopia, Tunisia, the Cameroon, Peru and Bolivia, Nicaragua, and east Asia. Next comes a cluster of five historical pieces that trace how ploughs were improved from the latter years of the *ancien régime* to the early twentieth century. Case studies explore attempts to transfer ploughing techniques from the Paris basin to Bas-Poitou, and from England to Switzerland, and trace how Lorraine and Belgium were distinctive centres of innovation. A particularly interesting piece is devoted to the evolution of the Huard company, based at Châteaubriant, between 1863 and 1927 showing how a craft-based enterprise developed into a major industrial organization making ploughs and other forms of agricultural machinery. The two papers in section six discuss the controversial process of applying agricultural chemicals and reducing ploughing to a minimum.

These papers combine academic scholarship with local enthusiasm, some being supported by bibliographic references but others standing alone. An array of maps, diagrams, engravings and photographs provides valuable additional information. The editors use the concluding pages to take stock of what was discussed at the conference and to remind readers that the issue of working the soil, sowing seed and producing food is not just a matter of history but is also an urgent, pressing challenge at the present time and will continue to be so in the years ahead. A single regret must be that no contribution comes from the United Kingdom.

HUGH CLOUT
University College London

ANNIE ANTOINE and DOMINIQUE MARGUERIE (eds), *Bocages et sociétés* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007). 512 pp., 41 figs, 28 tables, 79 maps, 89 illus. € 23.

Along with *défrichement* (wasteland clearance), *bocage* was one of the few French words that H. C. Darby required his novice historical geographers to learn back in the 1960s. But what was *bocage*? Was it woodland or hedgerow? Was it a natural response to a moist oceanic climate or the cumulative response of landowners seeking to define their property or constrain their animals? Were its origins back in the distant past, lost in the mists of time and perhaps associated with the Celts, or were the hedgerows of the *bocage* planted after moorland clearance during periods of population growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Could *bocage* be found in areas of crop cultivation or was it only associated with livestock husbandry? These, and other questions, filled my head when I started research on my first *bocage* territory in the

Pays de Bray where some hedgerows were arranged irregularly but others were geometrical features resulting from heathland reclamation after 1789. In later years, I witnessed the uprooting of hedges in Brittany and the Auvergne, in the company of Pierre Flatrès and André Fel, and conversely saw new hedges being planted near Nantes, with the guidance of Jean Renard. Recently, I have explored how thick *bocage* in Basse-Normandie concealed German ambushes and hindered the advance of the Allies after D-Day.

These questions and experiences were set in context by the three dozen essays, written by 68 authors, that have been brought together by Annie Antoine (Université de Rennes II) and by Dominique Marguerie (also at Rennes) whose expertise spans archaeology and the 'archéosciences' as well as history. Indeed, *Bocages et sociétés* had its origins in a conference with the same title that was held at Rennes in October 2004. In their introduction, the editors explain how studying the rural landscape was once the preserve of geographers who produced regional monographs during the first half of the twentieth century in the tradition established by Paul Vidal de la Blache. However, the arrival of the 'new geography' in the 1960s and 1970s pushed study of the *structure agraire* off the main agenda of academic geography, opening the way for historians, ecologists, landscape archaeologists, and practitioners of new techniques, such as remote sensing, geographical information systems and environmental modelling, to colonize that territory. The 'productivist' thrust of West European farmers, to produce more foodstuffs with greater efficiency, during the 1960s and 1970s has been replaced by 'post-productivist' concerns for managing the whole rural environment in sustainable ways. Thus, hedgerows are now protected rather than being uprooted in the process of field enlargement. *Bocage* landscapes are now viewed as repositories of tradition and authenticity that respect biodiversity rather than as tangible expressions of backward farming. Legislation has been passed to protect enclosed landscapes that figure on international lists of 'fragile environments' and are widely seen as part of national *patrimoine* and regional heritage.

These changes in research practice and in popular perception resonate throughout *Bocages et sociétés*. Initial homage is paid to pioneer geographers, especially André Meynier and Pierre Flatrès, but geographical voices become muted in the greater part of this beautifully illustrated volume. Its spatial context is largely, but not exclusively, north-western France; a few essays refer to other parts of France, to Portugal, Spain and even Quebec. Unfortunately, there are no contributions from, or devoted to, the *bocage* landscapes of Britain, Ireland or

other parts of the Atlantic fringe of Europe. Archaeology and palaeo-ecology figure largely in the first cluster of chapters that report latest research findings, which date the origin of enclosed landscapes in north-west France to the late middle ages. However, *bocage* was still being planted during the nineteenth century, as an intriguing discussion of the experience of agronomist Jules Rieffel on the former heathlands of Grand-Jouan reveals. The structure and evolution of *bocage* environments through time is at the heart of the second group of contributions, which introduce the recent practice of *rebocagement*, as farmers in Brittany plant new hedgerows in conformity with sustainable land-management policies. Echoing the views of archaeologists and ecologists, Annie Antoine declares how in western France

the *bocage* is essentially a 'historic' feature and to search for its origins prior to the last centuries of the middle ages would be in vain. Its history is thus one of implantation and increasing density that runs from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries until the middle of the twentieth century (p. 185).

Les sociétés bocagères are discussed in the third cluster of essays, which contain both historic and contemporary studies. For example, attention is drawn to the legal significance of hedgerows as property boundaries, reviewing evidence from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, and the role of *bocage* environments as sources of firewood is illustrated from the countryside around Rennes in the nineteenth century. Recent enquiries in Brittany reveal a duality of attitudes, with some farmers recognizing the ecological and heritage value of hedgerows but others still favouring 'productivist' messages from the 1960s and 1970s that extolled the supposed virtues of hedgerow removal associated with plot consolidation (*remembrement*). Such contrasting ideas figure prominently in the final group of chapters that include nineteenth-century literary representations of *bocage* country as wild and rustic territory, and further deliberations on hedgerow-reconstitution policy to produce areas of *néobocage*.

This highly informative volume contains an excellent array of photographs and maps, some of which are in full colour. Each chapter has a substantial abstract in English, as well as one in French, thereby making the collection more accessible to an international audience. At only €23 for over 500 pages, the Presses Universitaires de Rennes have produced another publishing miracle. *Bocages et sociétés* is recommended to all with an interest in the evolution of French rural landscapes and in the farmers and landowners who produced, and continue to refashion, them. My one regret is the absence of detailed work on *bocage* country found in the British

Isles, but I have benefited by expanding my vocabulary on landscape features.

HUGH CLOUT
University College London

VICENTE PINILLA NAVARRO (ed.), *Gestión y usos del agua en la cuenca del Ebro en el siglo XX* (Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2008), 759 pp. €40.

The Ebro valley, in north-eastern Spain, constitutes that country's most important river system. Due to its semi-arid climate, the area has a long tradition of irrigation dating back two millennia. During the late-nineteenth century, when rural Spain was ravaged by the ubiquitous Agricultural Depression, caused by the invasion of cheap wheat from the United States and Tsarist Russia, many influential commentators south of the Pyrenees diagnosed irrigation as a panacea for the nation's cereal farmers, whose livelihoods were seriously under threat. The fundamental question was: who should pay? Private individuals, who had so far shown little inclination, or the near-bankrupt state? At the turn of the century, when Spain was humiliated by the loss of Cuba in the Spanish-American War of 1898, regenerationist politicians, foremost among them the Aragonese polymath Joaquín Costa, attempted – with only limited success – to persuade the reluctant political class of the Restoration regime to adopt what he termed an 'hydraulic policy'. Later, when the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera sought to modernize the backward country through the implementation of a comprehensive programme of infrastructural reforms, the regenerationists finally got their way. As Vicente Pinilla recounts in his tidy introduction to this exhaustive treatment of the management and uses of water in the Ebro valley during the twentieth century, by this stage a combination of incipient economic growth and a belated demographic revolution gave rise to a growing demand for water for a variety of purposes. The best-known and most enduring outcome of such pressures was the Hydrographical Confederation of the Ebro (Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro – CHE), founded in 1926 under the direction of the engineer Manuel Lorenzo Pardo. This collective volume, edited by Vicente Pinilla, was almost a decade in the making. The book was originally intended to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the pioneering Ebro Confederation in 2001. In its present form, it accompanies the international exhibition on 'Water and Sustainable Development' taking place in Zaragoza in the summer of 2008.

After a background geographical surveys of the landscape, ecology, climate, vegetation and soils of the Ebro valley, together with its potential for irrigation, by Paloma Ibarra, Fernando Pérez, Isabel Rabanque

and Víctor Rodrigo, the book is divided into five sections of varying length. The first of these sections focuses on the institutions that were responsible for the management of the water, including three essays from Antonio Fanlo, Eloy Fernández Clemente and Ernesto Clar on diverse aspects of the CHE. Secondly there are five wide-ranging contributions, by Joseán Garrigués, Luis Germán, Josep Maria Ramon, Antonio Peiró and Vicente Pinilla, on long-term changes in the water infrastructure along the Ebro, from the mountainous terrain of the Upper Ebro to Catalonia, where the river flows into the Mediterranean. Thirdly, the work contains no less than seven accounts by agricultural historians on the use of irrigation by farmers in Navarre and Álava (Iñaki Iriarte and José Miguel Lana), La Rioja (José Ramón Moreno), Aragon (Alberto Sabio) Lleida and Tarragona (Josep Maria Ramon and Víctor Bretón). Fourthly, there are five studies, by Joseán Garrigués, Luis Germán, Martí Boneta, Juan Manuel Matés and Ernesto Clar, on the non-agricultural uses of water, with a special emphasis on hydro-electricity. The volume concludes with three analyses of the impact of water management and its usage on the environment (Paloma Ibarra, Juan de la Riva, Iñaki Iriarte, Víctor Rodrigo and Isabel Rabanque), demography (Ernesto Clar and Javier Silvestre) and economic development (Alfonso Herranz). In addition, the book boasts an abundance of information in the form of graphs, tables and maps. There is also an extensive bibliography which bears ample tribute to the outstanding contribution of Spain's geographers, agricultural and economic historians to the study of that scarce commodity, water, and its many uses.

All the contributors to this detailed and exhaustive study, without exception, are to be congratulated for the depth of their understanding, encyclopaedic range and original approach to the emerging debate on the role of water in modern times. Their collective study of the Ebro valley should serve as a model for future analyses. Long in gestation, it will surely stand the test of time.

JOSEPH HARRISON
University of Manchester

DAVID CELETTI, *La canapa nella Repubblica veneta. Produzione nazionale e importazioni in età moderna* (Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti). xx + 345 pp. €30.

Hemp, like other products used in shipbuilding, was a strategic resource in the age of sail. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why a state so closely linked to the sea, like the Republic of Venice, should make such an effort to produce it within its boundaries and thus be freed from the need to import the fibre.

David Celetti's book analyses how, by introducing, maintaining and regulating the cultivation and trade of hemp, the Venetian State aimed to provide a supply for its Arsenal, one of the oldest and most important pre-industrial complexes in Europe. The book spans the period from the Battle of Lepanto, in 1571, to 1660, during the latter part of the twenty-three-year war with the Ottoman Empire. During that time, the Arsenal bought more than 7,759 metric tons of hemp and 310 metric tons of tow, most of which was imported from the Bologna area, while the rest came from the Venetian town of Montagnana, near Padua. From 1571 to 1648, three years after the Turkish invasion of Crete, which had led to the war, the Arsenal purchased large stocks of Bolognese hemp from a group of foreign merchants who closely controlled the trade. Celetti demonstrates that the ten most important merchants supplied 76 per cent of the hemp used for the Arsenal. Later, the Republic authorized Arsenal officials to buy at a fixed price a ten per cent quota, afterwards reduced to 7.5 per cent, of all the hemp imported into Venice. In this way, throughout the period of the war with the Turks, shipbuilding in the Venetian State had at its disposal large quantities of hemp.

The second part of the book is devoted to the growing and processing of hemp in Montagnana. In 1455, a commission of three Venetian magistrates appointed to find land suitable for growing hemp on the Venetian mainland discovered in that area the right conditions for the cultivation of the plant: a soil rich in clay and plenty of water. Some months later, the Republic ordered everyone who possessed two oxen to sow two Paduan *campi* (1.88 acres) with hemp. The cultivation of hemp was widespread in early modern Veneto, but the fibre was used mainly for threading cord and for making textiles for domestic use, such as tablecloths and aprons. In order to produce strong, water-resistant ropes, more advanced methods of cultivation were required; in fact an expert from the Bologna area was hired to instruct the peasants from Montagnana and to oversee the whole process of the growing and refining of hemp. It was difficult and heavy work for the peasants, who were required to plough the soil several times and to use a quantity of manure that was far in excess of that produced on their farms. In the countryside around Bologna, landowners put considerable pressure on farmers to hoe the soil instead of ploughing it. After harvesting, the hemp was retted underwater in huge open-air basins built by the rural communities; it was then dried and underwent a series of further operations to free the fibre from the wooden part of the stem.

Hemp growing in Montagnana and in the neighbouring communities was imposed on the

peasants by the state. A complex hierarchy of Venetian officials oversaw the cultivation and the initial stages of fibre production on site, and then organized the transport of the raw material by cart and boat, under armed escort, to the Arsenal in Venice. Here state experts fixed the price paid for Montagnana hemp. It is hardly surprising that the results did not meet the expectations of the government: the hemp cultivated in Montagnana did manage to reduce the amount imported, but the national hemp never reached the quality of that produced in the area of Bologna. State-fixed prices reduced profits and this led peasants and landowners to resorting to every possible subterfuge in an attempt to replace hemp with more profitable crops. This kind of behaviour was more common when the price of wheat rose. Not even the considerable increase in the sums paid by the state for hemp – it rose from 21 ducats for 1,000 pounds in 1577 to 29 ducats at the end of the sixteenth century – managed to stop a decrease in the number of fields sown and the consequent fall in production. Moreover, the meagre profits from growing hemp induced peasants to cut costs and cut down on the numerous ploughings required and the abundant fertilizer required by state-issued regulations. As a result, much of the fibre that reached the Arsenal was not suited for making durable rope. Efforts to enforce quality standards and to curb smuggling met with little success. Only in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did Venice change this policy, allowing a freer fluctuation in prices and freer markets. The result of this policy was that, at the fall of the Republic, hemp growing had spread well beyond the Montagnana district and a steady improvement in the quality had been achieved.

David Celetti's book is remarkable for the wealth of quantitative data collected by the author and presented to the reader, and for the effort to single out the key factors and economic variables that shaped the production system and the dynamics of output, market and consumption, viewing them through the lens of economic analysis. At the same time, it takes into account the many institutional and administrative layers that oriented the actors' choices and set boundaries to their freedom, and it also provides a comprehensive examination of the shortcomings that plagued the enforcement of state policies. For these reasons this book is useful as a case study for a comparative analysis of public intervention in support of naval expansion in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

F. M. VIANELLO
University of Padua

ANDREAS DIX and ERNST LANTHALER (eds), *Grüne Revolutionen. Agrarsysteme und Umwelt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes 2006). €29.90.

This volume (*Green Revolutions. Agrarian systems and environment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*) is collected from a number of papers delivered at a meeting of the *Arbeitskreis Agrargeschichte* (the German equivalent of the BAHS) in 2004. The novelty of the collection is two-fold. Firstly, it follows in the pioneering path of the volume *Agrarmodernisierung und ökologische Folgen* (*Agrarian modernisation and ecological consequences*) that appeared in 2003, in explicitly linking the concerns of agricultural history, which has been primarily focused historically upon productivity, and environmental history. Secondly, it argues implicitly for seeing the major historic transformation in German agriculture as being a product of processes of changing energy regimes, the vastly expanded role of science in agriculture, and governmental interventions that are frequently associated with the green revolution in the developing world, although they were underway at an earlier date in Europe. Chapters cover shifts in the energy regime, developments in insurance, seed production, Spanish forestry (by Gloria Sanz Lafuente), soil science, pesticides and fungicides, government agricultural policy, and environmental protection (by Rita Gudermann). The geographical focus ranges from pre-war Germany and the two post-war Germanies, to Austria and Switzerland.

Fridolin Krausmann draws on his major collaborative study of three villages in Austria to provide a detailed quantitative assessment of energy flows and their influence on agricultural productivity since 1830. Krausmann views the agrarian world through the prism of social ecology, 'society and nature as structurally bound systems', and with a perspective that sees human influences as a 'colonisation' of natural processes. The work of Krausmann and others in the 'Vienna school' is beginning to exercise wider influence in European agrarian history and is well worthy of attention. He provides both a sophisticated model and striking evidence as to how Austrian agriculture shifted from a regime intent on conserving and raising the quantity of biomass to one utterly dependent on inputs of fossil fuels. He finds significant efficiency improvements in the century after 1830 (with a doubling in the ratio of energy outputs to inputs), but that a radical transformation in agricultural practice only occurred after 1950: a transformation that, in energetic terms, has vastly decreased the efficiency of agricultural work. While not the first to provide an ecological model for farming, Krausmann represents a state-of-the-art approach that

could be widely adapted to identify critical shifts in agricultural practice.

Krausmann has next to nothing to say about institutions, but it is these that provide the focus of the other chapters. Frank Oberholzner provides a history of the slow birth of hail insurance in Bavaria over the nineteenth century, where private and statutory bodies had a chequered history until a system managed through the local administration took off in the 1880s. Peter Moser tells a fascinating story of academic and institutional rivalry, and state subsidy and monopoly controls in the development of crop breeding in Switzerland. By the 1930s Swiss seed production and crop varieties were tightly regulated by the national Organisation for Seed Breeding (*Saatzuchtverband*), and a network of regional bodies. Domestically-produced seed varieties were linked with national identity and a conscious drive for self-sufficiency until the model was overturned by forced privatisation following the GATT agreement of 1986.

Moser's analysis of the institutional politics of farming links well with the chapters of Frank Uekötter and Jürgen Büschenfeld on the chemical industry and agriculture, and Arnd Bauerkämper on post-war environmental impacts. The former stresses the essential role of a particular knowledge regime in conditioning agricultural practice, a regime based not only on developments in science but relations of trust built up between experts and producers (and allowing for the rapid marginalization of dissenters). Uekötter sees the 1920s and '30s as key decades in the triumph of the chemical industry in agriculture, resulting in a subsequent rapid loss of knowledge about soil quality. Büschenfeld traces Germany's drive for high productivity, supported by subsidy and massive inputs of chemicals, to a reaction to the extreme shortages of the immediate post-war years, although a move towards self-sufficiency was general in post-war Europe. He notes, though, that the chemical industry's greatest ally in its continuing leading role in agriculture has been the continual adaptability of insects in the face of chemical attack, which continues to keep insecticide producers busy and profitable. Unsurprisingly, Bauerkämper finds that agriculture in the Federal Republic, with the retention of some price pressure from international markets, a more responsive regulatory regime and greater flexibility in farm size and type, proved capable of both greater productivity increases and, in the long-run, more effective environmental protection than the vast centrally-directed farming co-operatives of the east, with the latter's high degree of specialization and poor integration.

As is frequently the case with a conference-based collection of essays, the contributions are rather disparate

in their theme, level of analysis, and evidential detail; many are essentially reports on work the authors have published elsewhere. The volume remains however a useful guide to contemporary developments in germanophone agricultural history of the modern era.

PAUL WARDE

University of East Anglia

CORINNE GAUDIN, *Ruling Peasants. Village and state in late Imperial Russia* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2007). x + 271 pp., 13 tables. £25.95.

'The rural commune presents itself', according to Aleksandr Herzen,

as a social unit, a moral being: the state has never been able to infringe upon it; the commune is the possessor of a taxable entity and is thus responsible for everyone and for each individually, and for this reason it has autonomy in everything concerning its internal affairs.

This view of the Russian rural commune has proved remarkably durable. Since the mid-nineteenth century the commune has been seen as something impenetrable, mysterious, 'differently rational'. This peasant institution is thought to have operated according to its own logic, impervious to outside intervention, including attempts by the state in the early twentieth century to undermine the practice of communal land tenure and land repartition (the periodic redistribution of communal arable among member households).

In this important new book, Corinne Gaudin challenges this traditional conception. Her study makes two major contributions to the history of rural Russia in the post-emancipation period. First, it highlights the importance of institutions for our understanding of the way rural communities functioned. Drawing on archival documents for districts in several provinces of European Russia, Gaudin demonstrates that, contrary to Herzen's assertion, the *mir* was not an island unto itself; it was part of a larger institutional framework. Members of rural communes used local courts, engaged with local (state) officials, and responded to changes in state policy. Evidence from peasant petitions and communal resolutions indicates that peasant behaviour – from the frequency of land repartitions to changes in household size and structure – was often a response to changes in state policy. Gaudin argues convincingly that resistance to land reform in the early twentieth century was not rooted in defence of communal tradition, but in concerns about the laws governing poor relief and taxation, and the absence of a reliable system of property rights enforcement. The peasants in this study, like those studied by Jane Burbank, did not hesitate

to involve courts and local officials in their internal disputes, often employing the official rhetoric of the state in their arguments. Defendants were denounced as *miroedy* and *kulaki* in attempts to discredit them with state officials, while plaintiffs, knowing that officials were charged with upholding 'communal custom', were quick to argue that custom supported their claims. The picture of the commune painted here is not one of an organic 'social unit' or 'moral being', speaking with one voice, but rather one of conflicting interests and internal discord. In this way, Gaudin's study is part of a growing body of revisionist work which emphasizes communal conflict over cohesion.

Second, this study casts much-needed light on the Russian state's failed attempts at rural reform in the period after 1861. Gaudin persuasively argues that major reforms, such as the Land Captain Statute (1889) and the Stolypin Land Reform (1905–17), failed because they were ill-conceived and poorly implemented, *not* because the communal culture of the peasantry was impervious to change. Land captains, for instance, were charged with both integrating peasants into the state legal framework and upholding 'communal custom'. Or, in other words, they were responsible for 'the practical impossibility of simultaneously promoting and preventing change' (p. 32). This task was made even more impossible by the lack of training for the job; most land captains had little or no knowledge of the local institutions they were sent in to uphold, and they received little guidance from the state.

Land reform in the early twentieth century was carried out in a similarly inconsistent way. The reform project encouraged peasants to privatize their communal allotments without creating the institutions necessary to enforce property rights. It encouraged the abandonment of communal land tenure without changing laws that linked communal tenure to taxation and welfare provision. As a result, many peasants were reluctant to seek title, given the lack of enforcement, and many communes were reluctant to grant it, out of fear they might be left with a larger tax burden or, should those granted title choose to sell their land, a larger landless population to support.

The only thing missing from this path-breaking study is a more comprehensive discussion of the sources. Gaudin's research is meticulously documented and a detailed bibliography is provided, but given the strikingly revisionist nature of the work, it would have been useful to have a fuller discussion of the sources in the main body of the text. What is the range of information provided in the various reports and court records? What are the advantages of these sources and what are their limitations? How have they been used in the past, if at

all? And are the records better for some provinces than others? Such information would be especially valuable to those who might, as Gaudin suggests, pursue a similar line of inquiry in the context of a local study.

But this does not detract from a major achievement. Gaudin convincingly challenges longstanding orthodoxy with an ambitious and exciting new study, which promises to guide research on rural Russia for many years to come.

T. K. DENNISON

California Institute of Technology

JAMES S. DUNCAN, *In the shadows of the tropics. Climate, race and biopower in nineteenth-century Ceylon* (Ashgate, 2007). xvi + 212 pp., 5 tables, 8 figs, 3 maps. £55.

Beginning in the 1820s, a handful of British would-be planters arrived in Ceylon, with aspirations to establish successful plantations. By the 1830s, it was clear that highland coffee was the most promising crop, and the coffee era was in full bloom by the 1840s. It ended somewhat abruptly in the 1870s, as the spread of a fungus, coffee rust, ruined the coffee plants, and the coffee plantations collapsed.

James Duncan explores the world of the British planters and their relations with the immigrant Tamils who laboured on their plantations, the Sinhalese villagers who lived nearby, and the British colonial government. His title evokes a nineteenth-century trope of light and shadows, in which the self-perceived 'modernity' of the British planters in Ceylon with their 'rational' strategies of plantation management was juxtaposed with their perceptions of the dark and dank highland forests. It is a book about the cultural constructions of Britishness within a largely male plantation elite in the heart of the Asian tropics and the exercise of British plantation power and its limitations.

In the shadows of the tropics is organized in seven chapters, with a brief conclusion. In his introductory chapter, the author explores the European discourse about race in the tropics, and in his second chapter he covers the rise of the plantation economy in the early nineteenth century, synthesizing the literature on the evolution of the coffee sector in Ceylon in the context of the global coffee enterprise. These are very successful, drawing upon diverse literatures about the larger European project of colonization in the tropics.

The third chapter, entitled 'Dark thoughts: reproducing whiteness in the tropics' explores British anxieties about cultural and racial deterioration. His thesis is that the largely male colonists in the highlands of Ceylon developed their understandings of their vulnerability to disease in the idiom of climate and that their vulnerability

to disease prevented them from establishing British domestic values, in good measure because there were few British women who would travel to the tropics and submit to the rude lifestyles of the coffee planters. The result was profound cultural anxiety about maintaining their Britishness, as they found sexual partners among the labouring populations of Tamil migrants and local Sinhalese villagers. The colonists expressed their cultural concerns about degeneration in a discourse about race, and they used their financial power to dominate brutally the Tamil labourers who worked on their plantations.

In the fourth chapter, the 'Quest to discipline estate labour,' Duncan breaks entirely new ground, exploring the authoritarian power relations between the white manager, the 'kangani' or Tamil overseer, and the Tamil labourers. In chapter five, 'The medical gaze and the spaces of biopower,' he explores the British efforts to establish a modest program of public health to protect the Tamil workers who crossed annually by small boat from south India to Ceylon, and then walked for days under duress from the coast into the highlands. Duncan illuminates the tensions between the coffee planters who resisted paying for these public health initiatives, the unwillingness of the colonial government to impose financial obligations on the vitally important coffee sector, and the resistance by the Tamil workers themselves, who were suspicious of European medical practices.

In the sixth chapter, 'Visualizing crime in the coffee districts,' the author explores the tensions between the surrounding Sinhalese villagers and the plantation managers. Villagers 'trespassed' with their cattle onto the plantations. Some villagers stole coffee beans. These frictions continued throughout the coffee era. The British planters were unable to extend the writ of their authority and never successfully addressed these issues. The seventh chapter, 'Landscapes of despair: the last years of coffee,' synthesizes the historical literature on the impacts of coffee rust disease and investigates the social abandonment of the plantations. Here again, the planters were able to fend off the efforts of the colonial government to make them bear some of the costs of displaced workers. In the final years of the coffee enterprise, the plantation workers suffered grievously from short food supplies and negligent care.

Nineteenth-century studies of the plantation sector in Ceylon depend fundamentally upon English language materials that reflect British perspectives. These sources necessarily shape and constrain our historical understanding. The voices of the British plantation managers and government officials are clear; the voices of the Tamil workers are barely audible. The constraints of these historical sources likewise limit our understanding of the indigenous Sinhalese highland

system of 'biopower' that was expressed, in part, in an idiom of 'caste' rather than 'race'. The internal dynamics of Sinhalese communities played a large role in the nineteenth-century transformation of the highlands, far beyond the coffee plantations themselves. An even fuller understanding of 'biopower' and 'governmentality' in nineteenth-century Ceylon will come when scholars develop ways to explore these indigenous dynamics and integrate the two literatures.

Duncan has read the nineteenth-century materials on Ceylon closely and drawn thoughtfully on the broader literatures on race, sexuality, and power in the colonies. His analysis is refreshingly free of jargon and is full of new insights. *In the shadows of the tropics* makes a welcome and highly significant contribution to the historical literature on Ceylon. It deserves a broad readership.

JAMES L. A. WEBB, JR.
Colby College, USA

COLIN GRIER, JANGSUK KIM and JUNZO UCHIYAMA (eds), *Beyond affluent foragers. Rethinking hunter-gather complexity* (Oxbow Books, 2006). viii + 200 pp. £40; MARJAN MASHKOUR (ed.), *Equids in time and space* (Oxbow Books, 2006). viii + 200 pp. £45; DEBORAH RUSCILLO (ed.), *Recent advances in ageing and sexing animal bones* (Oxbow Books, 2006). ix + 240 pp. £65. (Various Proceedings of the 9th ICAZ conference, Durham, 2002.)

Animals are central to our understanding of most archaeological problems in one way or another, including and beyond the development of agriculture itself. All the Big Questions, as the American Lewis Binford once phrased them, involve animals, from the emergence of modern humans, to settling down and the development of social complexity. Even if you prefer a series of smaller questions in more complicated narratives of long-term social change, it is hard to keep animals out of the frame, as prey, resource and capital on the one hand, and as partners, actors in their own right, and conceptual focus on the other. The International Council of Archaeozoology has been going since the 1970s as the principal international forum for the study of animal bones from archaeological sites. Every four years it holds an international conference, whose scope and significance, as these three volumes indicate, is steadily increasing. The three volumes (handsomely published by Oxbow) nicely illustrate two important dimensions of such activity: advances in specialist research, and wide-ranging, critical reflection on long-term change.

The volumes edited by Ruscillo and Mashkour show the way to the first theme. Archaeozoologists do a lot of unsung hard work, but which lies at the heart

of wider archaeological and historical interpretations. Reliable ageing and sexing of animal bones are central to characterizing animal bone assemblages, and beyond them the nature of human activities in given times and places. *Recent advances* offers a close insight into these processes, papers working away at growth rings, dentition, epiphyseal fusion, body size and other issues. *Equids* gives an even more concentrated look at a single species, the contributions ranging from geographical and Pleistocene data to the ongoing debate about the nature and timing of horse domestication. Marsha Levine shows how studies of mitochondrial DNA are adding to the possible picture of restricted times and places for the first domestications (probably somewhere on the Eurasian steppe, and certainly by 2000 BC) by suggesting the continuing incorporation of wild populations into domestic herds. Here are both Grand Narratives (the origin story of first domestication) and smaller and more local histories (the messy business of action at any number of local scales).

That tension, or combination of scales, is also evident in *Beyond affluent foragers*. 'Affluent foragers' is a term with baggage. It echoes the characterization by Sahlins in the 1960s of mobile foragers as the 'original affluent society' because of the ease with which they satisfied their needs and wants. It more strongly reflects the subsequent characterization in the late 1970s by Koyama and Thomas of coastal fisher-hunters in productive environments, with features of rich resources, highly organized social structures and high degrees of sedentism. Both sets of connotations have proved problematic, and perhaps the single most important strand in the last thirty years' research on foragers has been the demonstration of their diversity. 'Complexity' has been a tricky word, and many definitions prove to imprison rather than clarify.

Beyond affluent foragers takes these debates onwards. Eleven papers (with supporting introduction and conclusion) present richly documented studies from Japan, Korea, North and South America, and Australia, combining archaeological and ethnographic research. Diversity is again underlined. From the very wide range of these contributions, we can note the contrast between the eel-fishing Gunditjmarra of temperate south-west Australia (paper by Builth), who were probably sedentary and had hereditary chiefs, and the people of the Lower Paraná wetlands of Argentina (paper by Loponte, Acosta and Musali), who exploited a rich if uneven resource base of fish and vegetables, with coordinated labour and periodic population aggregation, but without significant social hierarchy. Likewise, Uchiyama shows in a study of the prehistoric Japanese Jomon culture that, rather than year-round residence in one place, there was an unstable alternation between what he calls 'clumped' and

'dispersed' systems of residence, perhaps reflecting or responding to local environmental changes; even in the clumped phase, one midden site, Torihama, can be seen (based, as noted above, on careful analysis of animal remains, including dentition) as a residential base in summer and autumn, but as a wild boar hunting camp in winter and spring, when the residential base probably fissioned. As a final example, Grier's study of north-west coast (of America) foragers stresses that affluence is a social construct, a dynamic promoted by social actors and fostering inequality; the economy is a political one, with agendas and interests firmly embedded in households and other key groupings.

The long-term shift from foraging to agriculture is not likely to have been straightforward. Even mobile foragers could have had a complicated network of subsistence practices, patterns of residence and social relations. In some cases, incoming farmers may have replaced and disrupted forager societies, but in others foragers may have been sufficiently robust, or sufficiently similar, to resist either the lure or the compulsion to become agricultural. In yet other settings, there must have been intense interactions and fusions between foragers and farmers. *Beyond affluent foragers* helps to show us how and why.

ALASDAIR WHITTLE
Cardiff University

R. COMPATANGELO-SOUSSIGNAN, J.-R. BERTRAND, J. CHAPMAN and P.-Y. LAFFONT (eds), *Landmarks and socio-economic systems. The construction of pre-industrial landscapes and their perception by contemporary societies. Proceedings of the Le Mans COST Conference (7–9 December 2006)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008). 286 pp., 140 figs., 16 illus. €29.

This volume of conference proceedings is made up of twenty-three essays by forty-two contributors, framed by an introduction and conclusion. Eleven essays are in French, the rest in English. Although there is an understandable bias towards French evidence, there are papers on England and Wales (three), Spain and the Balearics (three), and one paper each on Rome, Morocco, Libya, Pannonia, Ireland, Iceland/Greece, Denmark and the Andes. The volume is divided into three sections: 'symbolic markers', 'structured systems' and 'north-west Europe and the future'. Symbolic markers refer to such things as boundary stones, churches, shrines, tombs or settlements. Structured systems refer to Roman centuriation, terraced fields, road networks, drainage, and irrigation systems. The final section considers how these pre-industrial 'marked' landscapes are still relevant today and deals with cultural heritage issues

in the present and future. The volume is well produced, with numerous illustrations adding a great deal to its usefulness. The chronological range is wide, ranging from two papers which deal with France in Antiquity to several dealing with current policy issues. In a short review it is not possible to deal with all papers equally, so I will highlight those I enjoyed most.

In the first section there are seven papers looking at late Antique land surveying (a thorough review of the evidence); religious sanctuaries in western France in the second century; churches in tenth- and eleventh-century Burgundy (a good survey based on extensive charter evidence, which locates the founding of many churches to the early Carolingian period); a survey of markers in medieval Morocco; a summary of the evidence for markers produced by historic mining in France, especially mining of metals. The remaining two papers deal respectively with pastoralism throughout Spain and olive oil production in Écija (Seville). Esther Pascua Echegaray, who has published widely on the history of medieval Spain, has a particularly interesting essay here on the landmarks left by pastoral activities. She shows how the markers produced by 'town pastoralism' (i.e. that practised close to urban settlements) were different to those produced by transhumant activities. For example, in the former, strong physical boundaries were enforced around village settlements: milestones were erected, which indicated ownership of land and water rights. By contrast, bridges were crucial markers within transhumant systems. She then goes on to explore the historical competition between these two systems and, importantly, how change over time occurred. Pastoralism in Spain as elsewhere was far from static or environmentally determined. The chapter on oil in Écija is also a most interesting study in the place of the mill as the main territorial marker. The paper investigates the expansion of oil production in the eighteenth century and substantial implications for the landscape. The authors point out that the characteristic counterweight towers are now in a state of collapse in the face of more profitable types of agriculture in Andalusia, such as sunflowers and cotton. Their role as landscape markers is rapidly disappearing and the need for their conservation pressing.

In section two the seven papers are as follows: a fascinating study of the 'Via Domitia' in the Narbonnaise over a long time period; a good survey of Roman field boundaries in Western Pannonia (eastern Austria and adjacent parts of Hungary) which points up the heterogeneity of Roman practice in this area; a discussion of the southern Libyan *foggaras* (massive irrigation works contemporary with the Roman empire), in which the author argues convincingly for the social importance of

these features in the perception of the landscape, as well as their technical brilliance; an important discussion of the relationships between castles and roads in Northern Languedoc, which stresses the economic connection at the expense of the strategic; an interesting article which shows how fluid road networks were in Toury (Eure-et-Loir); an impressive survey of terraces in the Andes, which raises many questions about the origins of terracing here and about the sustainability of farming over a long timescale. Felix Retamero's investigation of irrigated agriculture in the medieval Balearic Islands shows how eleventh-century court agronomists were deeply interested in soil types and soil improvement, manuring and watering, to produce a wide range of crops. He develops an interesting argument about the relationship between irrigation and settlement and the nature of Arab and Berber peasant migration. Irrigation caused not only increases in agricultural production but also in the strength of political power.

The nine chapters in the final section are equally diverse. The first paper describes relict field systems in later medieval Ireland (north Roscommon) drawing on a wide range of evidence; there follows a comparative analysis of human adaptation to volcanoes in Iceland and Greece; next is a discussion of field systems in Denmark and cultural heritage issues; similar issues are raised in a paper on the visual impact of enclosure in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and Wales, which is interesting for the number of informal enclosures discussed. The next paper argues that English cities must be understood as landscape and that much can still be learnt about the pre-industrial past from such sites; this is followed by three papers about Normandy, two of which deal with field systems and timber-framed buildings in the light of contemporary farmers' understandings of the historic landscape; the other is about the Regional national park of Normandie-Maine and the ways in which the park is marketed to tourists as a 'natural' site. The final paper argues that sustainable landscapes in Bonsall (Derbyshire, England) can be encouraged by new architectural designs which help to preserve the place as a working landscape rather than one aimed at tourism. As can be seen, these papers are very diverse in time and place, but the excellent introduction and conclusion help to hold the volume together. The editors and contributors have succeeded in their aim to highlight what markers were significant in past landscapes and how and why these are still significant today. There is much in this stimulating collection of interest to historians but much also for policymakers and planners.

ROSS BALZARETTI
University of Nottingham

LINDA KALOF, *Looking at animals in human history* (Reaktion Books, 2007). ix + 222 pp., 64 illus. £25.

Given the recent renewed concern over the use of animals in research, the continued and increasing popularity of domestic pets (especially cats and dogs), and the renaissance of interest in natural history and biodiversity, Linda Kalof's book, *Looking at animals in human history* should find a ready audience. Written in an engaging style with the author's keen attention focused upon her reader, Kalof's monograph provides a rapid and concise overview of the reciprocal relationship between animals and humans from pre-history to the modern times. Of course, such a vast and breathtaking survey may not satisfy those academic historians with their penchant for deep micro-history, but the educated animal lover will find much to enjoy and savour in the book.

Kalof does not offer a new argument or novel thesis. Instead, her book is a breezy secondary review and compilation of the available literature dealing with interactions between animals and their human brethren. She masterfully marshals this material to her task, while also providing the inquiring reader with an extensive and comprehensive bibliography (and reference notes) to pursue specific aspects of the book in more detail. Kalof's historical approach also draws heavily upon both the visual arts and a variety of literary traditions, especially since direct references to the animal-human interactions before the early modern period are quite scanty.

Looking at animals in human history is organized chronologically, beginning with a chapter on 'pre-history', and then progressing through antiquity, the medieval period, the renaissance, and a two-century version (1600–1800) of the enlightenment. As mentioned, for source material in these chapters she depends upon interpretations of art and literature. With the more modern period, however, she examines the transition from understanding animals as mechanized beasts to humanized objects, with the attendant rise of anthropomorphism. In the final chapter, she adds information from the emerging museum tradition, the popularity of zoos and aquaria, and the contemporary mania for natural history exhibitions. All of this material is treated carefully and offered clearly.

Kalof should be commended for producing such an accessible treatment of how humans have interacted with animals over such an extended period of time. The book should find a ready audience among animal lovers, who will find much to enjoy. But it could also be profitably used for courses in the history of science, medicine, and veterinary medicine.

KEITH R. BENSON
University of British Columbia

MARCEL MAZOYER and LAURENCE ROUDART, *A history of world agriculture from the Neolithic age to the current crisis* (Earthscan, 2006). 528 pp., 60 figs. £22.95.

Given the great age and variety of world agricultures, and their continuing evolution and involvement of a large fraction of mankind, the writing of a comprehensive history of agriculture is a daunting venture. Marcel Mazoyer and Laurence Roudart, in this substantial book, with its strongly philosophical approach, make an unusual contribution to this important subject. Their particular concern is for the very large number of impoverished farmers and their families in many developing countries in recent years.

The authors begin with the evolution of agriculture and its 'hominization' and other characteristics not altogether clear to me but leading to a chapter on the 'Neolithic Agricultural Revolution'. This makes only passing mention of V. Gordon Childe (whose name is mis-spelt in the notes) but who proposed both the concept and the term. The agricultural advances made during the Neolithic Revolution probably entailed linguistic and other developments along with them, as Bellwood suggested in 1994. The extension of Neolithic agriculture into many regions of the world, and its further diversification are then considered, with the curious comment (p. 92) that 'the origin of domestic plants and animals has long been part of those mysterious phenomena surpassing human understanding'.

Then come 40 pages on slash-and-burn agriculture in diverse forest environments, which the authors refer to as 'post-forest agrarian systems', going back to the Neolithic epoch but still quite widely practised. Problems with shortening of the reforestation cycle, the reduction of soil fertility, erosion and climate change are considered, among others.

Many aspects of irrigation are then examined in a chapter focussed on 'The evolution of hydraulic agrarian systems in the Nile Valley'. Here again the authors rely heavily on their own observations and first-hand experience to give a comprehensive account of procedures and problems, culminating in the building of the Aswan high dam, the impact of which was then limited by almost a decade of weak floods. Next comes a similarly long and very sparsely referenced chapter on the Inca agrarian system as 'an archetype of mountain system(s)', 'practically destroyed by colonization'. A chapter on agrarian systems based on fallowing and animal-drawn cultivation with the ard in temperate regions, referred to as the 'Agricultural Revolution in Antiquity', follows with digressions into agrarian reform and a very limited and rather unsatisfactory section on crop yields, on which much has been published.

Chapter seven deals with the 'Agricultural Revolution of the Middle Ages in north western Europe', i.e. with agrarian systems in cold temperate regions based on fallowing and animal power, whose evolution and improvement is described.

Agrarian systems without fallowing in the temperate regions, subtitled 'The First Agricultural Revolution of Modern Times', are then covered in chapter eight, as distinct from the preceding Neolithic, Ancient and Medieval revolutions described in earlier chapters. Then come chapters on mechanization and 'the first world crisis of agricultural overproduction' and another on the 'modern revolution' involving 'motorization, mechanization, synthetic fertilizers, seed selection and specialization'.

I have listed these developments and 'revolutions' in the agricultures of the world because, although together these chapters constitute about three-quarters of the book, they are all light on citations, reflecting rather the interpretations and experience of the authors. Much wisdom and history is enshrined here, but also ample scope for debate. The final chapter discusses the origins and expansion of the agrarian crisis in developing countries, focussing particularly on how the lot of the poorest peasants can, indeed must, be improved.

The book ends with a brief but eloquent conclusion from which I quote:

Today's world agricultural and food economy is less disorganized and chaotic than the price jolts, surpluses, shortages, famines and hostile international trade negotiations lead one to believe ... But insofar as agriculture generally forms the blind spot in analyses of the crisis we have tried to share what our personal origins and our professions allow us to understand better – to wit that it is not possible to explain the contemporary world crisis without taking into account the immense and contradictory transformations that drive today's agricultures.

This is a history with a mission and there are many facets which it omits, such as the role that scientific research, both national and international, has played in the recent changes in agriculture. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is barely mentioned, and none of its Centres, not even for their contributions to raising the yields of wheat, rice and many other staple crops. There is no consolidated list of references, but a numbered list of notes allows some citations to be traced, if not very satisfactorily.

I have not read the original French edition of this book but the translation by James Membrez for Earthscan appears to retain the spirit of the original,

although he admits to having modified the text in several places.

L. T. EVANS

*Commonwealth Scientific and
Industrial Research Organization,
Canberra*

J. RADKAU, *Nature and Power. A global history of the environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). xvii + 430 pp. £45.

Although Joachim Radkau's book, now translated into English by Thomas Dunlap, undoubtedly provides students and researchers with a valuable synthesis of the historical literature on global environmental change, it remains in many ways a highly problematic text. The organizing idea throughout is that of sustainability or, perhaps more accurately, how material nature and social and economic power have interacted to create either sustainable or unsustainable societies. In the preface, Radkau is keen to defend the text from the charge of anachronism on this count, arguing (reasonably in my view) that sustainability has long been one of the fundamental problems facing any society. However, if the problem of sustainability gives coherence and legitimacy to Radkau's attempt at a universal history, it is also the most problematic and under-theorized aspect of his text.

The first problem that arises is that the relationship Radkau sets himself to address is not really followed through coherently. At times it is difficult to decipher whether the author intends primarily to present a new interpretation of world history or a clever synthesis of existing literature in environmental history. Ultimately he is more successful at the latter than the former. Although it displays great erudition, the text contains neither sufficient new primary material, nor a sufficiently coherent interrogation of the interaction of power and nature to present any decisively new interpretation. Indeed, the book often reads more like a series of insightful impressions and interpretations, a commentary on environmental historiography, than a traditional monograph. There is nothing particularly wrong with this approach, and there are moments of real enlightenment contained within this text, but there is also no real sense of a definitive argument. Perhaps this characteristic is a result of the author's obvious desire to avoid falling into a 'declinist' narrative of humanity's relationship with nature. Radkau certainly views environmental history as much as a particularist as a universalizing activity concerned with the complexities and indecipherability of ecological change in the past.

However, it is also clear that Radkau does not wish

to abandon the idea of decline completely; indeed, it is ultimately critical to his narrative as demonstrated towards the end of the book in a chapter entitled 'The Failed Americanization of the World'. This really deals with the green revolution of the twentieth century and the break up of traditional farming practices and their replacement with intensive methods. This transformation, we are told, represented a shift in the reproduction of agricultural fertility from a solar to a carboniferous energy regime: a shift from a more or less sustainable mode of agricultural production to an unsustainable one. Yet this kind of observation immediately makes one want to uncover the sources of social and economic power that have so vigorously transformed the world's ecology. On this point Radkau's position seems remarkably uncritical. One obvious candidate for study, capitalism, is barely mentioned (and indeed receives no entry in the index), which is astonishing. The social relations underpinning the production and reproduction of society and nature are not really subject to any kind of sustained analysis, which is unfortunate considering the wealth of well-informed historical materialist analyses that it is now possible to draw upon. Surely some reference to the eco-socialist literature is necessary when addressing this kind of subject, if only as a point of departure. Technological determinations largely take the place of such an analysis, especially in the final stages of the book, but the role of technology in the making of twentieth-century environmental problems is laid in accusatory rather than critical fashion at the door of the United States 'whose expansiveness' we are told 'became a trump card like never before in the age of motorization and mobility'.

The underlying message of this book is that the solutions to our environmental problems (the road, in other words, to sustainability) can be found in a continental European model of social organization, specifically the example of German forestry, in which limits to growth were recognized and ecologies were sustained and reproduced by communities: 'second nature' as sustainable nature. This federalized vision of environmental governance will perhaps be superficially

attractive to those of an anarchistic or communitarian frame of mind. However, the failure to question certain assumptions underlying this conclusion is disturbing. Sustainability is the lingering shadow of this book, but it mostly exists at a subconscious level as an obvious 'good'. It is not brought to the surface, as it should be, to be exposed to critical analysis for the work that it may do in framing and recomposing social relations with the environment, and relations of power amongst human beings. This is a major problem.

One must not be too harsh on *Nature and Power*; it remains a very valuable synthesis of existing material, including much continental European scholarship. The book will certainly provide an essential introductory text for postgraduate students in the field. Its flaws are in some ways indicative of more general problems with environmental history as a field of study. Having identified the environment, or sustainability, or conservation as key themes of research, these concepts are perhaps too often read back into the past without sufficient consideration of their epistemic status. Much of the power of a word is present at the moment of its creation, which is itself a historic event. There is, therefore, a general need for more attention to be paid to the genealogy of such key terms and the power relations embedded in them. Before a concept is turned to historical analysis, it is necessary to understand what it is we are invoking, and what power relations we may be reproducing with its use.

In a globalizing world, any invocation of 'sustainability' is an inherently political intervention. In *Nature and Power* there is an underlying respect for the principles of locality, a suspicion of an Anglo-American economic and social model, and an admiration for a historical continental European model of human-nature relations. However, all this embodies a political vision of the ideal relationship between humanity and the environment. The politics of invoking terms like 'sustainability' or 'environment' in historical study has yet to be subjected to adequate self-reflection by environmental historians.

TIMOTHY COOPER
University of Exeter