

Book Reviews

Great Britain and Ireland

M. AUDOUY and A. CHAPMAN (eds), *Raunds: the origin and growth of a Midland village AD 450–1500: excavations in North Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1977–87* (Oxbow Books, 2008). xvii + 148 pp., 161 illus., 50 tabs. £28.

Raunds, a small town located a little to the east of the Nene Valley in north-east Northamptonshire, has been one of the iconic sites for rural settlement and landscape studies for more than thirty years. Ten years of excavation in the north of the present village started in 1976 in response to threatened development, and gradually expanded to cover thousands of square metres on three main sites on both sides of the valley. Here were uncovered not only the remains of scores of buildings ranging from large halls to minor ancillary structures spanning more than a millennium from AD 450 onwards, but also an otherwise entirely unknown church and associated graveyard of late Anglo-Saxon origin and numerous ditches. In 1985 the investigation expanded to include the surrounding historic landscape, ultimately encompassing forty square kilometres, which included excavation at four major sites in addition to those within Raunds itself, and extensive fieldwalking which allowed the evolution of the surrounding pattern of settlement over thousands of years to be reconstructed. The results of many of these investigations have already been published (A. Boddington, *Raunds Furnells, the Anglo-Saxon church and churchyard, Raunds Area Project* (English Heritage Arch. Rep. 7, 1996); S. Parry, *Raunds Area Survey: An archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire 1985–94* (Oxbow books, 2006)). Others, including the excavations at nearby West Cotton, are still awaited. The volume under review here is the first full publication of the excavations within Raunds itself.

The volume is published in two formats, with chapters 1–5 presented in traditional hardback form and chapters 6–9 on CD. Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the history of excavation in the settlement and to its topographical, geological and historical context. This

is followed by a summary of the historical background including descents of the two discrete manorial sites, Furnells and Burystead, which were identified during excavation, and a third unexcavated manor, Gages, which lay nearby. An ecclesiastical history identifies Raunds as a possible minster site and outlines the history of the surviving parish church: there is no historical evidence at all for the second church, which is known solely from excavation. Chapter 3, engagingly titled ‘A panorama of settlement development’, provides a broad chronological overview of the development of settlement, synthesizing evidence from the three main sites excavated within Raunds (Furnells, Langham Road and Burystead) and smaller areas to the north and south. These thirty pages represent the distilled essence of current understanding, and are very effectively illustrated with plans at various scales, which allow the reader to appreciate both the detail of features in the individual sites and the overall arrangement of structures and boundaries across the three sites. This is followed by a much shorter (six-page) chapter titled ‘Archaeology and history’ which focuses on specific historical issues for which the authors consider the evidence from Raunds to be particularly pertinent, namely, the impact of the Danish settlement and the subsequent ‘reconquest’ and the origins of ‘metricated’ settlement planning. The remaining 80 pages of the hardback publication (chapter 5) are devoted to presenting detailed evidence of the excavated features, while the CD includes the final four chapters comprising specialist reports (‘Saxon and medieval pottery’, ‘Saxon and medieval finds’, ‘Animal bone’, ‘Plant and invertebrate remains’).

The format may seem a little unconventional, and will no doubt, as the editors suggest, incur disapproval from some for ‘relegating’ specialist reports to CD (although it is clear that this had to be done for reasons of cost, and the volume is indeed very affordable as a result), while chapter 4 sits uncomfortably with the others and should really have been included within chapter 3. It is a pity that the CD simply includes a PDF file containing the rest of the volume, with no use made of the potential of such a medium for including more primary data.

The long time lag between completion of fieldwork and formal publication has meant that while much of the evidence has become familiar from interim reports, original interpretations have been extensively revisited and revised. These are not always incorporated effectively in this volume: it is particularly frustrating to discover that the fundamentally important structure-by-structure reappraisals of the ceramic dating (p. 170) are included separately on CD rather than being incorporated into the text of chapter 5 where the ceramic evidence from the same structures is discussed.

The importance of this publication lies not just in the presentation of evidence from a major excavation but in its interpretation in chapters 3 and 4, notably in the way this seeks to link the archaeological evidence to historical events. In summary, the reader discovers that, at Raunds, dispersed 'untidy' areas of settlement of early Anglo-Saxon date on both sides of the stream were variously reorganized or abandoned in the middle Saxon period before being re-planned over a very short period of time in the early tenth century as a nucleated settlement with regularly laid-out blocks of rectangular plots defined by linear boundary ditches. It is implied by the editors that this re-planning occurred as a consequence of the 'reconquest' of the region by the kingdom of Wessex, when 'the basis of the late Saxon reorganization was the establishment of a coordinated and consistent land allocation to all members of society' (p. 52). They go on to aver that the physical reorganization of the settlements which this required took place 'as a sudden and dramatic event', carried out as a rapid, staged process of laying out successive blocks of several plots at a time. In a short section considering the impact of this for the origins of the open-field system (which will, no doubt, be of particular interest for readers of the *Review*), they say that it is 'likely that the two processes of settlement and field system reorganization may well have been introduced as a single package' (p. 53), although this theory is not examined in detail. If, on looking at the evidence for regularly laid out plots on the published plans, the reader considers this interpretation to appear somewhat open to question, they may not be surprised to discover that it was only made after excavations at nearby West Cotton revealed similar, better-defined features there which were then identified during re-examination of the Raunds evidence.

Overall, the publication provides a very accessible, well-illustrated account for anyone wanting to get a good understanding of firstly, how these important sites related to each other and changed over time and secondly, how the editors have interpreted the evidence, aspects of which are considered controversial by some. Readers of the *Review* will be particularly interested

in the ideas about the origins of the open-field system as part of a planned nucleated landscape in this area. This has, of course, been the subject of much debate, still ongoing, to which this volume makes a stimulating contribution.

CARENZA LEWIS
University of Cambridge

MARGARET E. BRISTON and TIMOTHY M. HALLIDAY (eds), *The Pilgate manor of the Sacrist of Peterborough Abbey, Part B of the Register of George Fraunceys, Sacrist, c.1404* (Dean and Chapter of Peterborough, Anthony Mellows Memorial Trust vol. IV; Northamptonshire Record Soc. 43, 2009). liv + 538 pp., 3 figs., 2 maps. £20.

This is a lavish production, hardbound in the traditional Northamptonshire Record Society green case with gold lettering on the spine along with a glossy dust jacket complete (curiously) with two copies of an exquisite colour photograph of the present Pilgate House. Unfortunately your reviewer's reaction on opening the volume was coloured by annoyance at the number of sub-editorial errors which 'spoiled the ship'. Some of these could perhaps be described as matters of taste, rather than complaints of substance. Using '[46]' as a noun and the subject of a sentence is an unusual solution to the age-old editorial problem of how to refer to a particular document in an un-indexed cartulary, but it would have been helpful to have had this made clear initially, rather than some 30 pages into the introduction. Others are more serious: inconsistency in dating style ('20.08.1361' on p. xxvi, '20 October, 1357' on the following page); contradictory handling of a range of manuscript folios ('fos 148-156' on p. xxxii, (correct if an en-rule were used, rather than a hyphen), but 'Folio 8 to Folio 156 inclusive' instead of 'fos 8-156' ('inclusive' is superfluous), to say nothing of incorrect elision ('1330-1', using an en-rule is correct for a period of time beyond the second decade of a century, not '1330-31', using a hyphen (p. xxvi)). Failure to use 'smart' quotes (e. g. on p. xlix) is a further example of inattention to detail. Appropriate cross-referencing to standard reference works is customary in such volumes precisely because it makes them easier for scholars to use: for example, it would be helpful to know that [74], a charter of King Stephen, is in fact printed as *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* III no. 659, where further texts are noted and different dating inferences made (cf. also p. xix); this portion of the Register itself, BL, Ms Cotton Faustina B, iii fos 1-157, is customarily cited as Davis no. 765. Much is made of the changed dedication of the parish church in Barnack (at p. xxv, discussing [189]), suggesting that the modern ascription to St John the Baptist is not medieval. While recent literature on

medieval rural church dedication practice in general remains limited, in the case of Barnack, most unusually, it happens that there is explicit documentary corroboration from within a quarter of a century of the document copied into Fraunceys register that the dedication of the *parochialis ecclesia* in Barnack was indeed to the Baptist. On 4 September 1311 Bishop John Dalderby issued an indulgence in favour of St John's which was recorded in his memoranda register (Lincolnshire Archives Centre, REG/3, fo. 229v). The reference in Fraunceys is probably to some chapel within the parish.

That said, this edition of part of one of the Peterborough sacrist's cartularies is a welcome addition to the Mellows memorial volumes. An elaborate codicological description is provided, which is much more extensive than that in Janet Martin's 1978 volume, no. 37 in the series. The text divides naturally into two parts: charters and other documents relating to tenurial change in the sacrist's manor of Pilgate from the late twelfth to the mid-fourteenth centuries and a collection of associated rentals and surveys from 1403 and earlier. An interesting excursus details a tithe dispute between the abbot of Peterborough and the rector of Barnack in the 1370s, including *acta* of Bishop John Buckingham which are said not to be recorded in the Lincoln registers ([199]n (p. 219)). No original material survives with which to compare the transcription. The material from the first part is printed *in extenso* in the original Latin (along with two texts in Norman French), along with an English translation which 'attempts to preserve some of the idiosyncratic features of the Latin charters'. A bibliography is provided, along with indices of personal and institutional names, place names and subjects.

M. J. FRANKLIN

Hughes Hall, Cambridge

GUY BERESFORD, *Caldecote: the development and desertion of a Hertfordshire village* (Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 28, 2009). xi + 267 pp., 154 figs. £38.

This impressive monograph describes the results of one of the largest-scale excavations to have taken place within an English medieval village. Today, the settlement at Caldecote comprises just a manor house and six labourers' cottages next to the medieval church, though this was once the site of a small village that in the fourteenth century had fourteen households. In total 6.5 acres (2.63 ha) were excavated including a series of peasant crofts, the rectory, and a large part of the moated manorial enclosure that was laid across a series of other former peasant tenements in the thirteenth century. The excavations were carried out between 1973 and 1977, but a lack of funding at the time meant delays in the post-

excavation analysis of the finds, and the preparation of a report for publication. Both the author and the Society for Medieval Archaeology's monograph editor Christopher Gerrard are therefore to be congratulated on bringing into print this important piece of work.

The volume begins with an excellent introduction (by Christopher Gerrard) that sets this excavation in its wider context of the history of research into deserted medieval villages and current debates such as the development of peasant houses and the origins of village-based settlement (as opposed to the more dispersed settlement patterns that preceded them). The site was excavated because it was threatened by ploughing, and the discussion of the destructive impact that the Common Agricultural Policy had on both archaeological sites and the wider landscape will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. The rest of the volume follows the traditional structure of an excavation report with chapters on the documentary evidence (including the text of a survey of 1321), the methods of excavation and recording, a description of the archaeological evidence period by period, and then specialist reports on the various finds (such as the pottery, household utensils or tools) and environmental material (plant and animal remains). The final chapter provides both an excellent synthesis of the evidence, and a discussion of their significance.

There is much in this report for anyone interested in rural history including the animal bone assemblage (which shows a decline in cattle, and an increase in pigs and sheep over the course of the medieval period) and charred cereal assemblages (dominated by bread/club wheat, but with some barley, and a very small amount of rye). The sequence of peasant houses shows that relatively simple structures with roofs supported by earth-fast posts and cob walls, which may have housed both humans and animals, were replaced in the late medieval period by more substantial timber-framed houses with separate barns for the livestock. As well as this below-ground archaeology, the report also embraces a study of the standing buildings, with both the church and manor house containing medieval fabric. The artefactual evidence suggests that the village of Caldecote was created in the tenth century although several strands of evidence – including its 'cot' place-name and the way that the peasant crofts appear to have been laid out over the strips of an existing open field – suggest that this was a secondary phase of village creation in the region. In the later medieval period blocks of three crofts were each replaced by six more substantial farmsteads that probably represent the amalgamation of tenements that is well documented across fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England.

Overall, this is an important report that provides an

excellent introduction to the study of deserted medieval settlements, and presents the results of a particularly large-scale excavation. The report is extremely well structured and presented with a wide range of illustrations to aid the reader and is a significant contribution to our understanding of the origins and development of the medieval village.

STEPHEN RIPPON
University of Exeter

BRUCE M. S. CAMPBELL, *Field systems and farming systems in late medieval England* (Ashgate Variorum Collected Studies series, 2008). xiv + 316 pp. £70 (£63 online).

This is one of three collections of previously published essays by the leading medieval economic historian Bruce Campbell to be issued recently by Ashgate, the others being *The medieval antecedents of English agricultural progress* (2007) and *Land and people in late medieval England* (2009). The volume under review comprises 13 pieces which originally appeared between 1980 and 1997. The common concerns of the various chapters are outlined in a useful new seven-page introduction. There is also a very useful index. Although the chapters were written at different times for different purposes, together they form a remarkably coherent book which consistently addresses a set of connected problems. Reading the volume right through offers an interesting opportunity to observe the evolution over a couple of decades of one scholar's efforts (with the aid, in several cases, of co-authors) to delineate medieval England's agricultural geography between about 1250 and 1450.

An important theme of this book is that the farming systems practised by medieval landlords were diverse, but subject to clear spatial patterns. Furthermore, the essays maintain that these patterns must be explained not simply in terms of environmental factors, but also in relation to the influence of commercial opportunity and levels of economic rent. The impact of market demand reached its fullest expression in eastern England, and especially Norfolk, the site of a highly productive 'intensive mixed farming' regime that prioritized high value grain crops, horses rather than oxen as working animals, fodder cropping, and dairying. Yet institutional factors could also influence preferences for particular types and combinations of crops and livestock. The clearest link between the 'field systems' and 'farming systems' elements of this book lies in the fact that the common-field arrangements in which agriculture was conducted represented such an important institutional force. Most notably, Campbell describes the origins and character of the flexible, relatively unregulated common-field system of eastern England, which allowed

cultivators (including landlords) substantial freedom to innovate.

A particularly notable achievement of the research represented here lies in its approach to medieval sources, and the methods used to analyze them. This volume reveals Campbell as a pioneer in using large bodies of data which relate to broad geographical areas. Some of the earliest essays by date of original publication are essentially micro-studies, but in later chapters the focus is increasingly on sources which offer a national picture. The book is largely based on databases of manorial accounts, and of *inquisitiones post mortem* extents. The overarching theme of the analysis carried out on these sources is that of classification. Using the statistical technique of cluster analysis, demesne farms are grouped together on the basis of their shared characteristics to provide classifications of farming systems and land use types. The spatial incidence of the different types is then mapped. The fact that classification is also a focus of the essays on field systems (especially in chapter IV, 'Commonfield origins – the regional dimension') lends further thematic coherence to the volume. The overall result of these attempts at classification, as Campbell's introduction observes, is to help provide 'a systematic spatial framework within which future research into and discussion of the late medieval agrarian economy can be conducted' (p. xiii).

As this volume and his other two Variorum volumes demonstrate, Campbell was responsible for a very substantial body of work in article and chapter form even before the appearance of his monumental volumes *English seigniorial agriculture 1250–1350* (2000) and *England on the eve of the Black Death. An atlas of lay lordship, land and wealth, 1300–49* (2006, with Ken Bartley). It is welcome that these important essays, including those in the volume under review, have now been made more conveniently available in reprint form.

At the same time, it is worth noting that several (though far from all) of the topics discussed in *Field systems* are also among those covered in the two later volumes just mentioned. Arguably, the value of reprinting the earlier essays would be less obvious if their content was largely superseded by that in the later books. This turns out to be a relatively insignificant concern, however. It is true that the classifications of husbandry and cropping types contained in *English seigniorial agriculture* are often based on fuller data than their equivalents in the reprinted essays, and that the later book sometimes adopts a modified system of organizing this data. However, the 2000 and 2006 volumes omit a full explanation of the techniques that underlie the classifications made. For this, and for a host of insights

on advances in medieval agriculture, the reader must turn to the essays reprinted in *Field systems*.

CHRIS BRIGGS
University of Southampton

CLAIRE NOBLE (ed.), *Calendar of inquisitions post-mortem, XXV, 16 to 20 Henry VI (1437–1442)* (The Boydell Press & National Archives, 2009). liv + 802 pp. £175.

M. L. HOLFORD (ed.), *Calendar of inquisitions post-mortem, XXVI, 21 to 25 Henry VI (1442–1447)* (The Boydell Press & National Archives, 2009). lvii + 614 pp. £175.

These two volumes are the latest in the renewed series of calendars which was begun several years ago under the direction of Professor Christine Carpenter of the University of Cambridge with funding from the AHRC. Having spent several years using the original calendars as part of a project which collected data from the IPMs and then continued to use the original series frequently for research, it has been very interesting to explore these newer calendars which cover the period some one hundred years later than my usual area of study.

The editors of these volumes have delivered greatly improved levels of detail and information – far better than the old series. All of the additional material is of the type which will be of great help to scholars and to local historians alike. As well as the improved level of detail from the documents themselves, the excellent introductions will help anyone unfamiliar with the source to find their way around its intricacies and eccentricities. The clearly delineated rules for using the calendars are extremely helpful and eliminate the guesswork which was sometimes involved in using the older versions. The tables of references are also set out in a clear and helpful way and the addition of notes as part of these tables is very welcome. The inclusion of footnotes for certain marginalia is also very useful as are the notes about the translation of certain words within the marginalia itself. The tables of escheators too are helpful for those people interested in the administrative structure that lies behind this source.

The additional material provided in the new series of calendars will be of great use to a wide range of readers. The inclusion of jurors' names is particularly important. This provides easier access for scholars to analyse this greatly under-studied group; they will no doubt also be welcomed by local and regional historians. The jurors' index which includes the county in which the name occurs is particularly helpful. Indeed the division of the indices into jury names, personal names, and place-names is an excellent tool.

Within the entries themselves the inclusion of the extents in the new series of calendars is very welcome. While it is a commonplace to say that the valuations in the later IPMs are poor reflections of reality, it is nevertheless important to have these extents in the printed volume so that the maximum use can be made of the information that they contain. The greatly increased amount of detail from the inquisitions that these calendars contain is their most impressive and important feature; for while the introduction warns that these calendars are not 'an edition' of the source they do (again in the words of the introduction) 'present in as concise a manner as possible the information provided'. This richness of this material is evident on every page. Small estates such as those of Robert Warner are described; his Surrey manor of Poyle, which included only 26 acres of land but two watermills and two fulling mills, is in contrast to his other manor of Hampton Poyles in Oxfordshire, with its 400 acres of arable land and 20 acres of meadow. Great estates such as that of Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick are also included, although the type of information is rather different with a great deal of space being devoted to the disputed inheritance of parts of the estate. The personal situation of the deceased often leaps off the pages of the calendar; William Haroudon, 'gravely troubled by his illness' was driven to enfeof his lands to members of the local clergy in order 'to expel the king and other lords by collusion from the wardship of the premises' during the minority of his heir.

These volumes are a welcome addition to the new series of calendars and a considerable improvement on the old. They are a pleasure to use. One further improvement would make the new volumes and the old calendars of even greater use to historians (especially those who live some distance from a good library). If it were possible to make the indices to the series machine-readable and searchable, then many hours of searching through the numerous volumes could be saved. Not within the scope of the current project, but perhaps something for the future?

MARILYN LIVINGSTONE
Northlew, Devon

CHRISTOPHER DYER (ed.), *The self-contained village? The social history of rural communities, 1250–1900* (University of Hertfordshire Press, Explorations in Local and Regional History 2, 2007). xii + 148 pp., 21 tabs, 19 figs. £14.99.

The declared premise of this book – the 'question' of the self-contained village – is a non-issue. Historians of rural England do not believe in village self-containment. Indeed such is the orthodoxy of population mobility, land turnover, and economic and cultural interaction,

the reader might even anticipate a counter argument, a revisionist claim for population continuity, economic self-sufficiency, and cultural isolationism. But this is not the theme of a collection that, in its conclusion, reasserts the non-existence of the self-contained village: 'The self-contained village probably never existed', writes its editor on the last page of the book, 'and was certainly not in continuous decline between 1250 and 1900' (p. 141). It would therefore be tempting to treat the 'question' as a mere device to impose coherence on a diverse collection. Yet this would be a superficial reading of some sophisticated essays that, whatever the jacket blurb, explore mobility, social interaction, and notions of community and belonging in a range of English communities. The most interesting among them actually explore how this myth of the self-contained village had more relevance to some sections of society than others. Stability and authority were ideologically linked.

So they are a valuable group of essays, covering the period from 1250 to 1900 in essays dealing with the late medieval (Chris Dyer and Jane Whittle), the early modern (Steve Hindle and Henry French), and the modern (Ian Whyte and David Brown). The geographical range is relatively wide, though it is limited to England. Most counties are mentioned and the North is not invisible: indeed, there is a chapter (Whyte's) on Cumbria.

One of the book's values is that it demonstrates the range of source material available to explore the dynamics of village life, the historical variability of documentary evidence, and the consequent differing questions asked by historians of their respective periods. Land transfers, court rolls, and tax records dominate medieval work on the English village, as demonstrated in Dyer's chapter. Manorial documents are one of the primary sources in Whittle's exploration of population mobility in rural Norfolk during the late medieval and (early) early modern periods, but she is also able to use church court depositions to good effect, working them against the records of the landholding families to show social differentiation at work: the landholders were less mobile than those captured in the archives of the more socially inclusive church courts. The sophistication of Hindle's chapter is not merely a result of his skills of reconstruction and analysis (though he is one of Britain's most talented early modern historians) but a reflection of the superiority of early modern sources over the medieval. He is able to move beyond the mere mechanics of mobility to explore actual concepts of 'belonging' in rural communities. His cultural work on the early modern period complements Keith Snell's work on the parish and local attachment in rural England from the mid-eighteenth century, though Snell is a notable absence from this collection. Hence also French's ability

to rethink Richard Gough's *History of Myddle* (1700), reconciling its 'village in the mind', which, with its privileging of 'residence and familial longevity' (p. 82), really did come close to the mythology of the self-contained village, with the mobility that surrounded the Goughs of rural England. The answer lies with social variation.

While the book's recurring themes – regional variation, temporal flux, social differentiation, the early role of the market, the dynamic role of the industrial revolution – are familiar to historians of rural communities, I can think of no other volume that demonstrates them with such historical and geographic range, and which, at its best, takes the historiography to a new level.

BARRY REAY
University of Auckland

ANDREW MCRAE, *Literature and domestic travel in early modern England* (Cambridge UP, 2009). xi + 247 pp., 9 illus. £50.

This book offers the inviting prospect of an exploration of the ways in which travel featured in the works of literature penned by authors in the early modern period. Through an assured analysis of a large selection of texts, chosen because they engage substantially with issues of sixteenth and seventeenth-century personal mobility, Andrew McRae examines how contemporaries understood mobility and made sense of the increasing geographical connectedness of England. He opens proceedings, somewhat conventionally, with the itineraries of John Leland and perhaps slightly overstates notions of the 'parochial xenophobia' and 'intense localism' that gripped England in the early Tudor era (p. 8). However, in taking Leland and Defoe as the 'bookends' of his study, McRae neatly locates his survey in a time when both the volume and the acceptability of domestic travel within England undoubtedly increased. He also reveals changes in the way in which mobility was reflected in English literature.

Once the broad context has been established, a beguiling and fascinating first chapter discusses literature devoted to England's rivers. Citing 'river poems', such as William Vallah's *A tale of two swannes*, McRae shows how ideas about connection, representation and national identity were evoked. It is a compelling thesis, enriched by references to John Leland's *Cygnea Cantio*, which describes another swan on a journey from Abingdon to Oxford; and to William Camden's *De Connubio Tamae*, which traces the Isis, the Tame and the Thames. The better-known works of Spenser and Drayton are similarly deconstructed. A petition presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1585 in the form of a poem by the Thames watermen, John Byshop, offers a glimpse of new thinking about the

need to divest rivers of obstacles and other impediments to travel. Byshop's sentiments found an echo half a century later in the extraordinary pamphlets of another Thames waterman, John Taylor. Attention then turns to the evocations of place, mobility and contested uses in the 'prospect poems' of Ben Jonson, Thomas Carew and Andrew Marvell. The latter's *Upon Appleton House*, for example, refers uneasily to itinerant mowers arriving to harvest meadow grass for hay. Sir John Denham's *Cooper's Hill* offers reflections on the Thames as a floating highway for the movement of agricultural products and general merchandise.

Unlike rivers, roads were apparently 'not considered poetic' (p. 69). Of all the early modern poets, only Michael Drayton in *Poly-Olbion* gives them any considered attention. The author therefore turns to written itineraries, road maps, and pamphlets of directions for peddlers and chapmen. These sources are, of course, all very well known. However, McRae's analysis of the so-called 'rogue pamphlets' is especially valuable. Thus, Thomas Harman's 1566 *Caveat for common cursitors vulgarly called vagabonds* shows how fears about the supposed risks of road travel were being stoked up. Suspicions and misgivings crystallized into legislation, such as the 1598 vagrancy statute, which sought to restrict mobility that was considered morally dangerous and socially subversive. Paradoxically, however, the expansion of commerce positively encouraged travel and publications designed to make journeys easier, such as pocket itineraries and distance tables, poured forth. Ogilby's road maps may thus be seen less as something entirely new, and more as just a culmination of responses made to growing demand. At the same time, Chamberlayne, Procter, Mace, and Defoe offered practical suggestions about how England's highways might be improved and better managed.

Works such as Laurence Clarkson's *The lost sheep found*, intertwine the realities of quotidian travel on England's ways and highways with allegorical journeys through life. This leitmotif, of course, found its fullest and best-known expression in Bunyan's *The pilgrim's progress*. The genre presents roads as spaces of mobility and as complex networks offering many choices, but the correct path leads to spiritual understanding and reward. A powerful image of how travel was conceptualized and imagined is thus provided.

A chapter on inns, alehouses and taverns shows how early modern literature captures their 'edgy social dynamics' (p. 129). As points of temporary stasis in the ever-shifting geography of mobility, where the local and the alien fleetingly mingled, these establishments were presented as places of hospitality and repose; and as spaces of degeneracy and criminality: unpaid bills, horse

theft, robbery, and nefarious business transactions. As expected, Mistress Quickly's London tavern, featured in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, is shown as a place of material threats and social challenges, as well as human warmth and conviviality. A fascinating deconstruction is provided of the little-known Ben Jonson play, *The New Inn*, which emphasizes the transience that such establishments inevitably embodied, and their potential for causing discomfort and disorder.

Contemporary poetry and prose richly captures royal progresses: from the 'highly theatricalized performance of authority' (p. 146) perfected by Elizabeth I, to the ignominious flight in disguise of Charles I from Oxford in 1646. Royal 'progress roads' are evoked as spaces of political connectivity and for the demonstration of dynastic legitimacy. Authors who chronicle the collapse of royal power in the Civil War envision journeys and highways as metaphors for instability and uncertainty.

Travel writing as a genre is traced from John Leland to Celia Fiennes, by whose time the 'recreational journey' was unremarkable. A cameo appearance is made by Thomas Coryat, whose 1611 account of his low-budget foreign travels prefigured the era of the Grand Tour. Consideration is given to the so-called 'journey poems' which originated in 1583 with Richard Eede's *Iter Boreale*, and flowered fully in the post-Restoration era. When accounts of their peregrinations were written by Evelyn and Pepys, the observations resulting from the tourist's gaze were commonplace. From them and others we learn of growth in the volumes and varieties of traffic using England's ways: a burgeoning internal trade that offered the most visible expression of the country's 'changing pattern of domestic mobility' (p. 210).

The 14 pamphlets published between the 1610s and the 1640s by the Thames waterman, John Taylor (the self-styled 'water poet') are dissected and perhaps best encapsulate the central message about the transformation in mobility and domestic travel in England which McRae's book presents. Thus, 'Taylor perceives all places, both within England and beyond, as potentially connectable with all other places' (p. 231). And when Defoe produced his *Tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain* in the 1720s, he presented an image of nationhood based on geography, realized in a complex web of trade networks; it stood as an emblem of 'wider patterns of mobility, commodities and information' (p. 237). That such a perception would by then have been widely shared, in a manner that it would not have been in the days of John Leland, is a central argument in this most erudite and scholarly volume.

MARK BRAYSHAY
University of Plymouth

ELIZABETH GRIFFITHS and MARK OVERTON, *Farming to halves. The hidden history of sharefarming in England from medieval to modern times* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). ix + 263 pp., 24 tabs. £52.

Before the rise of owner-occupation in the twentieth century, the traditional system of English land tenure involved landowners, who provided the fixed capital (the land and buildings) and tenants or farmers who provided the working capital (the stock and implements), paid a fixed rent, and kept any remaining profit from the farming operations that they organized and managed. There has been a recent move for some landowners to operate sharefarming contracts in which they provide not only fixed capital but also working capital such as dairy cows in return for a share of the profits, a system apparently imported from New Zealand. But until about the beginning of the First World War most English farmland was rented from a landlord by a tenant. Sharefarming – or sharecropping as it was called in the southern USA – or its continental European versions, *métayage* in France and *mezzadria* in Italy, had no place in England. It halved any incentive to improve, and thus Arthur Young explained the success of English farming and the comparative failure and poverty of continental European farming. Or so we thought.

Elizabeth Griffiths and Mark Overton, with the assistance of Michael Winter in a final chapter on the current situation, suggest that ‘farming to halves’, or sharefarming, was much more common in England than we have hitherto realized. In fact, they argue, sharefarming has existed in England from the medieval period onwards, but informally, as a matter of custom, deliberately uncoded, and consequently difficult to see in the manorial records or landed estate leases and rentals with which rural historians generally work. Sharefarming was especially associated with periods of low prices such as the seventeenth, late nineteenth or late twentieth centuries. It was used by landlords when tenants were hard to find, or short of capital, or needed to be established on reclaimed land, and among the peasantry, as the authors are happy to call them, to ease the flow of capital, expand businesses, and provide for old age. In very recent times it has been encouraged by tax laws, and is now being defined and categorized. The traditional English landlord-and-tenant system is thus revealed by Griffiths and Overton as an exceptional phase, lasting from the early eighteenth to the later nineteenth century, and emerging from the increased political power of the landed elite from the end of the seventeenth century. This reduced the risks of landowner-ship so that landlords ‘effectively subsidised tenants’ (p. 198) until the imposition of death duties in the early twentieth century reduced the attractions of landown-

ership and precipitated the rise of owner-occupation in the twentieth century.

For this argument to be accepted we need examples of sharefarming from several centuries and many parts of England. From a close reading of the secondary literature on medieval land tenure Griffiths and Overton find examples of manorial tenants subletting for a share of the crop in the Midlands and East Anglia. In the early modern period there were examples from Cornwall to Cannock Chase and Yorkshire to the Wessex water meadows. Evidence from the four Norfolk estates of Raynham, Felbrigg, Blickling and Hunstanton in the seventeenth century provides considerable evidence for the various ways in which the system worked. In the eighteenth century, however, reduced risks and the emergence of a group of substantial tenants brought fixed-rent tenancies into the pre-eminent position which lasted until the late nineteenth century, although, they argue, sharefarming continued to exist among small tenants, and in the twentieth century increased considerably, so that by 2007 contract farming, partnership farming, and sharefarming together involved 2.3 per cent of all holdings, covering 6.6 per cent of the agricultural land in England and Wales.

There is clearly a substantial body of evidence to indicate that sharefarming of various types existed, and continues to exist, in many, if not most, parts of England for much of the last millennium. The question that remains, however, is the extent to which it existed. In parts of France and Italy it was clearly a significant, if not the dominant, form of tenure. Can the same be said of England? The nature of the evidence makes the judgement difficult, for surviving tenancy agreements will not reveal short-term sub-lettings or verbal agreements. There can be little doubt that what we think of as ‘normal’ fixed-rent tenancies were common from the sixteenth century onwards, so we are left with the question of which was the more common and this is not one that Griffiths and Overton attempt to resolve. But their work means that future historians of estate management will be unlikely to take rental evidence at face value. It also puts recent changes in the pattern of land tenure into historical context, and requires us to think again about the differences between England and continental Europe.

PAUL BRASSLEY
University of Exeter

GERRY BARNES and TOM WILLIAMSON, *Hedgerow history, ecology, history and character* (Windgather Press, 2008). viii + 152 pp., 69 figs. £19.

The ‘Hooper method’ of hedge-dating, by which an estimate of the age of a hedge is based on the number

of species it contains, has become a popular axiom of landscape studies. Through systematic fieldwork and analysis, Barnes and Williamson set out to test the validity of Hooper's hypothesis, promising a deeper understanding of the origins and development of hedgerows over time. Contrary to the broad geographical scope suggested by the frontispiece photograph of Herefordshire, the work outlined here consists chiefly of the results of an extensive survey of hedgerows in Norfolk. The authors draw upon an impressive dataset based upon the assessment of some 2,800 hedges collated from 120 parishes in the county.

The volume begins with an introduction to the methodology of hedge dating, focusing upon the pioneering, albeit fundamentally flawed, work of Hooper and his colleagues in the 1960s and '70s. Subsequent chapters re-evaluate Hooper's hypothesis by considering in detail the environmental and human factors which have led to the rich diversity of hedges in the Norfolk landscape. Sections on agricultural change and enclosure, regional variation and soil type, will be familiar to readers of Williamson's earlier work. In this volume, the overriding argument, that soil type plays a significant role in determining not just the number of different species within a hedge but also the species count, is well made. Differences in hedgerow morphology are the consequence of a vast number of variables including multi-species planting, local seed supply, soil fertility, and moisture content, affecting in particular the rate at which new plant species colonize, and methods of management. Thus hedges growing in close proximity often reveal a remarkably different species content. Dismissing Hooper's hypothesis as a grave over-simplification the authors surmise that 'there is no way of simply "reading" the age, or origins, of a particular hedge from its present composition' (p. 132). The penultimate chapter considers the regional context of hedges, emphasizing the significant role soils played in giving rise to distinctive regional ecologies. The discussion inevitably moves away from the somewhat dense analysis of hedgerow composition of preceding chapters, to consider regional variations in farming economies and agrarian practices, patterns of enclosure and landholding patterns, all of which influenced the origins and functions of hedges. The authors conclude by calling for greater consideration of hedges in 'Historic landscape characterization' projects, a pertinent reminder that it is hedges rather than merely fields that contribute to the physical identity of a region.

The volume provides a useful addition to the practice of landscape history, and its emphasis on analysis on a local and regional scale, and the central importance of the physical environment, soils and topography,

reminds us that empirical research does not reside in documents alone. However, the analysis is surprisingly devoid of economic factors, the people who made decisions to plant and manage hedges and the tenurial, social and cultural influences that may have shaped their decisions. There has been considerable research to date on the organization and control of local resources, customary practices and rights including common rights of 'estover' and 'hedgebote', and it would be interesting to know how and to what extent local customs and rights shaped hedgerow history. The authors stress the lack of documentary evidence especially for the pre-1700 period. There is just one reference to sources held at The National Archives, which surely underestimates the potential wealth of evidence contained in this and other county record offices. Having been alerted to the potential significance of the humble hedge, future archival studies may bring to light further evidence on the nature of mixed planting regimes, management and the functions of hedgerows as reservoirs of fuel and food, as well as property boundaries. Overall the book is successful in its aim to dispel simplistic methods of hedge-dating and will be of broad interest to researchers interested in historical ecology, conservation, environmental change and regionality.

NICOLA WHYTE
University of Exeter

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS, *Coke of Norfolk 1754–1842: a biography* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2009).

xiii + 218 pp., 1 fig., 25 illus., 1 tab., 4 maps. £50.

Susanna Wade Martins' biography of Sir Thomas Coke does what any good biography should do. It provides a detailed description of his life, his family background, his education and the influences that shaped his politics and his world view. It then locates him within broader local, regional and national contexts, emphasizing both the nuances of Coke's experiences and the wider significance of his behaviour. Coke's life provides a window through which we can observe profound changes in farming and agriculture, rural social relations, landownership, the country house as well as shifts in the fortunes of the Whigs, debates over issues such as the reform of parliament, Catholic emancipation and slavery. Biographies have fallen out of favour with publishers recently and the 'heroes' of the agricultural revolution have dropped beyond the gaze of agricultural historians. A volume on this well-known Whig landowner has been long overdue. That the author has such an in-depth knowledge of Holkham, rural Norfolk and changes in agriculture in this county adds to the seductive potential of the book.

This potential is partly realized through the dual

focus both on Coke's role as an agricultural innovator and his far less understood activities as a Whig Member of Parliament. Wade Martins guides us through his experiences, from his early life before inheriting the Holkham estate, through to his parliamentary career of 50 years as an MP, his input to new techniques of farming, and his hospitality as a country house owner. Never a natural parliamentarian and one who spoke rarely in the Commons, Coke sat on the periphery of many key debates in the politics of this period. The way that Norfolk formed a centre of gravity for his politics is, though, the real power of Wade Martins' insights. His involvement in the Norfolk Petition of 1778 is illuminating, for instance, of local Whig politics. Coke's enduring friendships with Charles Fox and William Windham are particularly noteworthy aspects of the book.

One of the key inputs this book makes is in fleshing out Coke's life beyond the aspects we already know about and describing the links between local elite society and the wealthy and powerful of London. Here we are introduced to a number of original insights to his life and personality, including his artistic and literary circle of friends, which included William Roscoe and Samuel Parr. Thus the complexities of his identity are given full coverage. He is not, we are told, 'to be dismissed as a bucolic and self-opinionated wealthy squire' (p. 163). Particularly strong contributions are made where Wade Martins illustrates the relationship between Coke's Whiggism and other aspects of his life, the way that his politics left an indelible impression on his world view, his social circle and even his contribution to agricultural innovations as a 'gentleman farmer', 'patriot' and landowner. Wade Martins' treatment of life at Holkham, described through the correspondence of visitors, is another fascinating element of the book. Particularly original approaches here include the sociability connected with Coke's famous sheep-shearing events, which both publicized agricultural innovations at Holkham and served as important lubricators of local elite society.

Some concerns, however, are raised by a reading of this book. As Wade Martins points out, Coke left few personal sources in the way of correspondence or other private material. This poses significant challenges for a biographer attempting to provide a close personal analysis, difficulties that this author attempts to overcome but which become particularly acute at certain points. In chapter six, for instance, we are told that Coke had claimed to have supported Catholic emancipation for 25 years before the 1829 legislation (p. 146). However, we cannot know his real thoughts and the exact nature of his position without these types of sources. The book

misses the voice and thoughts of Coke himself: he becomes a muted echo merely reverberating through the testimonies and memories of others. We are left unenlightened as to his private thoughts or the issues that he felt were activating him, along with his everyday experiences of the changing world around him. The bulk of the qualitative analysis focuses on public debates, newspaper reports and the comments of Coke's friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Thus we have a picture of Coke's public image and few clues as to how this image related to his private self. For a man already known to have been an extrovert self-publicist, such perspectives are of limited utility. Overall though, readers of the *Review* will find much of interest in this volume, and a fresh perspective on a range of historical subjects.

MARK ROTHERY
University of Exeter

J. H. ANDREWS, *Maps in those days. Cartographic methods before 1850* (Four Courts Press, 2009). xviii + 549 pp., 250 figs. £50.

Much modern cartographic history has regarded maps as texts, subjecting them to post-modernist criticism aimed at eliciting their underlying assumptions. It is therefore in some ways a relief to find a book which focuses on methodology rather than meaning, construction rather than deconstruction. Andrews sets out to provide a comprehensive technical study of how map-makers went about their work, from earliest times up to around 1850. He describes his book as tertiary literature: but by bringing together just about every secondary source on the subject he fills a major gap. He incorporates well over a thousand end notes, which alone makes it worth buying: though it would have been even handier to have had them all in a bibliography.

One small problem is that only one of those end notes refers to an article in the long-awaited third volume of the monumental David Woodward (ed.), *History of cartography* (Chicago, 2007). This suggests Andrews had largely finished his work before its appearance, which is a shame, as there is much in its 2000-odd pages, particularly papers dealing with technical matters in the Renaissance period that could have added value to Andrews' work. Thus had he read Catherine Delano-Smith's paper there, he might have avoided the indiscriminate use of the two very different words 'sign' and 'symbol', and the propagation of what she calls enduring myths on the subject of 'conventional signs', there being little evidence of the standardization of map signs prior to the nineteenth century.

That said, Andrews writes fluently about everything from theoretical presumptions about the world, through sketch maps, to surveyors' instruments and how they

were used, how surveyors turned their measurements into maps, how problems of depicting height and slope, or deciding on place-names, were dealt with, what was the role of decoration, and how maps were copied and miscopied, edited and compiled. Comprehensive though this is, Andrews also sets an agenda for more research, for example into the difference between theoretical and practical mapmaking, and the difficult question of how 'accurate' maps were in the past. Much has been published on the advancement of tools, techniques and text-books, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: but to what extent did practical field surveyors actually work by the book? They seldom tell us, but most were probably content to use fairly rough-and-ready methods of determining direction and distance, and to fill in the gaps by field sketching. It is only in the nineteenth century, after the state gets fully involved in mapping, that 'unchallengeable precision' (p. 34) becomes the aim. This in turn bears on the question of what Andrews calls 'cartographic merit' (p. 469). Saxton's counties, despite being surveyed at the rate of one every five weeks or so, are perfectly recognisable, with most places more or less where they should be, relative to each other. The same is true, to a slightly lesser extent, of Matthew Paris's map of Britain of c.1250. But how 'accurate' are they, compared with the Ordnance Survey? Andrews, using Tobler's previously little known 'bidimensional regression' method, puts a value of 99.3 per cent on the one and 83 per cent on the other. However, while such figures might measure accuracy in a mathematical sense, they do not seem to measure what ordinary observers mean by that term. Yet if there is a better method, Andrews is not aware of it. Clearly there is scope here for more work.

For the agricultural historian, those parts of the book which touch on estate mapping will be of greatest interest. However, there are some salutary lessons to be learned about the depiction of field boundaries on non-cadastral maps. Students looking at field patterns on military maps like William Roy's famous map of Scotland c.1755 should know that no attempt was made there to reproduce actual field boundaries. All that the cavalryman needed was information on whether or not there were hedges in the district, not what size or shape the fields were. Similarly, the eighteenth-century commercial surveyor was not going to spend a great deal of effort mapping in detail something for customers who might be vaguely interested in knowing that they were travelling through an 'improved' landscape, but whose main concern was getting from A to B.

Overall, there is little doubt that Andrews largely succeeds in answering the question set him by a student many years ago: 'How did they make maps in those

days?' (p. xv). The book is well written and copiously illustrated. Andrews's style is forthright and accessible, and he is not afraid to express an opinion, or to attempt to make understandable such arcane matters as the theory and practice of projections.

W. D. SHANNON
University of Lancaster

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS and TOM WILLIAMSON,
The countryside of East Anglia: changing landscapes, 1870-1950 (Boydell Press, 2008). viii + 252 pp., 41 illus., 6 maps. £25.

For some time now, Boydell & Brewer have been encouragingly supportive of rural and agricultural history. Generously illustrated, beautifully produced and reasonably priced, the book under review here is further evidence of this. *The countryside of East Anglia* provides a comprehensive treatment of the social, cultural and environmental history of that region between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. Laid out in nine thematic chapters, it pays particular attention to change – and continuity – over time, in doing so challenging assumptions about a period often portrayed as a time of ubiquitous rural depression, depopulation and decay. Without denying the severity of the problems faced in the region, Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson make a sustained case for their being exaggerated, both by contemporaries (such as Rider Haggard) and in later commentaries. Large-scale arable farming may have fared badly, as per received wisdom, but the spread of dereliction was uneven, being concentrated on areas of poor soil, pre-eminently the Brecklands of north-west Suffolk and south-west Norfolk. Pasturage and horticulture did better than cereals, and even relatively well in some circumstances. Chapter 3, on alternative agriculture, is especially illuminating in this regard. For all the later nineteenth-century scorn poured on advocates of smallholdings like Jesse Collings ('Jessie' on p. 55 – a rare typographical error), their proposals did not represent any triumph of ideology over practicality. Especially in Norfolk, where county council smallholdings covered nearly 27,500 acres by 1925, small-scale cultivation proved generally successful – even in economic terms (the expanding market for vegetables, fruit, poultry and eggs being the key factor here). Indeed, while smallholdings represented modernity and the future, the traditional economy of great estates and larger arable farms represented the past – a past which was fading as much in East Anglia as elsewhere, as shown in chapter 4.

Modernity, of course, had its disadvantages, especially in ecological and environmental terms, and one of the great strengths of this book is the attention it gives

to the physical re-shaping of the landscape in these years. For example, *pace* Oliver Rackham, hedgerows did not benefit from farmers and landowners lacking the resources to effect their removal during the depression. On the contrary, impoverished squires were likely to fell hedge timber in attempting to raise capital and retain tenants anxious about the revenue-sapping potential of shade cast on crops. Moreover, if depression contributed to the process of prairification, it also contributed to the afforestation of the region, another problematic environmental side-effect of rural modernity. In a 1946 debate on government forest policy, Leah Manning told the House of Commons that 'completely utilitarian' conifers were quite acceptable 'in the soft ground of East Anglia', a point of view from which the Forestry Commission would not have dissented. Indeed, in the inter-war years, and in the face of significant criticism, the Commission planted pines with great enthusiasm, the trees taking well to relatively infertile un- and under-cultivated land (including some common lands). The consequences were significant, doing considerable damage to the wetlands, heathlands, and overall biodiversity of East Anglia. By the time of the Second World War, very little original breck remained in the Brecklands, and many species had simply disappeared, never to return.

Yet if modernity inflicted certain depredations on the landscape, it also saw a rise in appreciation of its scenery and amenity value. Tourists discovered East Anglia in the late nineteenth century, frequenting the Broads, coastal resorts and 'Constable Country' in ever increasing numbers as time wore on. But Wade Martins and Williamson show that the landscape of East Anglia did not fit very easily into the rural-nostalgic 'south country' paradigm of Englishness. This was a less cosy place, a landscape of alterity – but one nevertheless prized for its historical associations, the access it afforded to an older, quondam England. If, as the authors write, '[a] visit to the countryside was supposed to be a trip back in time: the importance of the rural lay largely in its direct connections with the nation's past' (p. 194), the example of East Anglia demonstrates that the (imagined) landscape of this national past took various different forms.

In all, then, this is a handsome and useful book that does much to draw out the distinctiveness of East Anglia, while at the same time connecting the region's experience to wider national trends. It is a book that will interest scholars working in a range of disciplines and sub-disciplines, including historical geography, local and regional history, and heritage studies, as well as – more obviously perhaps – social, agricultural and environmental historians.

PAUL READMAN
King's College, London

KENNETH F. KIPLE, *A movable feast. Ten millennia of food globalization* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). xvi + 368 pp. £15.99.

For reasons that are beyond me (though feminist suggestions deserve attention), the classier classes of society do not rank food as really classy. Ask college graduates to name the greatest of our species and they will rattle on for a long time before naming a cook. Our college graduates need two or three days of fasting to complete their educations.

Absent that solution, they should read Kenneth Kiple's new book. Its cover may mislead the prospective reader into thinking it just another cookbook, a collection of recipes, but that is not so; it is a scholarly study of 10,000 years of the gathering, cultivation, breeding, preparation, and consumption of food. It utilizes hundreds of sources, primary and secondary, including cookbooks, yes, but also memoirs of philosophers, graph-laden texts on economics, or articles on malnutrition in medical journals. And (a bonus we can not always count on), it reads well.

The best reference book on the history of food remains *The Cambridge world history of food*, the two-volume tome that Professor Kiple and Kriemhild Conee heaped together in the 1990s, but its 2000 pages of articles, most of them excellent, do not form a cogent whole. Every library should have a copy, but I cannot imagine anyone reading all the way through it. Professor Kiple, fortunately for us, by editing and presiding over its seismic formation, prepared himself to write the cogent book that is the subject of this review.

A movable feast begins with the last hunters and first farmers. Why did they make what remains our species' most radical revolution, the switch to agriculture, which involved the transformation of a small population of healthy hunters and gatherers into dense populations of usually under-fed and poorly-fed peasant subjects of empires we call Roman, Chinese, Aztec, the USA, NATO, and so on? Kiple combines this inquiry with what we know about the origins of our basic crops – notably rice, wheat, and maize – and animals – dogs, cattle, and horses – and how their domestication altered, sometimes positively and often not, whole societies and ecosystems. Our author similarly honours the origins and spread of the substances of our addictions – such as sugar, coffee, tea, or alcohol – too.

Kiple's follows this with a multi-chapter inquiry entitled 'The Columbian Exchange', i.e. the agricultural revolution triggered by the exchange of organisms between the Old and New Worlds starting in 1492. For instance, wheat, a Middle Eastern grass, and horses, a Eurasian animal, became standard organisms on the Great Plains, the Pampa, and the Outback. (I might

mention here that the name, 'the Columbian Exchange', is my invention, the title of a book I wrote a generation ago, and I wish that Professor Kiple and the others that rattle it off so often would acknowledge this).

The last half of *A movable feast*, for me not so interesting as the first half, is devoted to more narrowly modern and often more commercial matters such as the development of regional diets, specifically North American with its Hispanic, Italian and other imported features, and to other globalization trends. Human diets from one side of the world to the other are getting more and more alike. Kiple also considers other modern characteristics – restaurants, supermarkets, frozen foods, fast foods. He also includes a good deal about infections transmitted by food, such as cholera, and diseases of deprivation such as pellagra and that strangest of all our food curses, obesity. He leaves us treading water (or more usually coca cola) in the twenty-first century. Globalization leaves many of our number still poor and starving and others, those of the richer societies, attaining globalization individually.

We are headed for at least a colossal nine to ten billion: feeding ourselves won't be easy. We will have to deal with that problem in an informed and sophisticated fashion. A good first step would be to read Kenneth Kiple's *A movable feast*.

ALFRED W. CROSBY
University of Texas

T. C. SMOUT, *Exploring environmental history: selected essays* (Edinburgh UP, 2009). vii + 248 pp., 13 figs. £60.

Unburdened by the shackles of RAE and REF, many academics choose to continue research and writing after retirement. Few academics, however, possess the necessary enthusiasm and influence to continue while simultaneously shaping and nurturing an entirely new discipline for almost two decades after their retirement. The author of this book firmly falls into the latter category. After his official retirement in 1991 he became the first director of the Institute for Environmental History at the University of St Andrews, before retiring for a second time in 2001. Post-1991 he has either single-authored or edited nine books on various aspects of environmental history.

This latest book, as we have come to expect of Edinburgh University Press, has been produced to a very fine standard with well-reproduced illustrations. The index is useful but it is unfortunate that only a select bibliography was compiled. More importantly perhaps, it is still unclear at the time of writing whether a cheaper paperback version within the price range of students will be printed. This is slightly worrying since the

ever-increasing numbers of students who study environmental history could and should have been targeted by EUP as potential customers.

Exploring environmental history consists of thirteen chapters, all of which have been previously published in some form. Readers need not worry about this. By my count (according to the notes provided by the author) only two of the 13 papers in this book have been republished without alteration. The remainder have all been altered to varying extents, classified as ranging from 'slightly updated' to 'rewritten and much expanded'. The contents of this book have no common geographic theme: at least seven of the articles focus on Scotland, five utilize a British context, and one travels across the North Atlantic to include Iceland. What unites them is an enquiring mind interested in different aspects of environmental history post-1600.

For this reviewer the most powerful piece of writing in this book is the final chapter, 'Environmental consciousness'. It is a rare event for a historian to let passion enter their writing since to do so could potentially alter objectivity. Yet in this chapter the reader, perhaps for the first time, is allowed to observe what truly motivates the author and his affection for nature. This makes the message contained within the final two paragraphs more powerful and it is a chilling and thought-provoking note upon which to end a genuinely interesting article.

In more general terms, one of the most interesting processes in reviewing this book has been to compare the original articles against their descendants and try to map the development of the author's thought processes across time. A good example of this process is the piece entitled, 'The Highlands and the roots of green consciousness, 1750–1990'. The author would probably be the first to admit that the original version of this piece did not give full consideration to some key pieces of evidence and it is to his credit that he has taken constructive criticism on-board to produce a substantial addition to the original that addresses those points. In this respect it is pleasing to see both Gaelic nature poetry and Seton Gordon receive some long overdue credit. However, it is slightly disappointing to note that neither Percy Unna nor his 'Rules', some of which the National Trust for Scotland have often done their level-best to ignore in Glencoe, still do not feature in the author's narrative.

Of the remaining eleven chapters in this book five substantially concentrate on woods and their (ab)use in Scotland through time. One of the themes in these articles is the mythic 'Great Wood of Caledon' and the author, together with Breeze and Tipping (among others), have tried their level best to slay this shibboleth.

Yet, as Smout himself remarks at the end of 'Trees as historic landscapes', 'we are suckers for a good tale' and the continuing impotency of academics to change public opinion about the 'Great Caledonian Forest' is perhaps best highlighted by a current project in Glen Moriston where some are busy trying to create their 'vision of a renewed Caledonian Forest'. What, one might ask, is being lost in our headlong rush to establish green credentials?

This book deserves to become a recommended read for anyone interested in environmental history. Read it and weep for joy that during his eighth decade Professor Smout continues to enthuse upon, research, and write about nature and the environment.

ALASDAIR ROSS
University of Stirling

PHILIP CONFORD (ed.), *The poet of ecology: a selection of writings in memory of Robert Waller* (Norroy Press, 2008). 334 pp, 14 illus. £20.

The impulse behind publication of this memorial volume was not simply to celebrate the life and writings of Robert Waller (1913–2005). There was also, clearly, a fear that without this book Waller's work would soon be entirely forgotten. Many of those who knew Waller felt he should be given a wider – or second – airing, and so the historian of the British organic movement, Philip Conford, has put together a wide-ranging collection of Waller's essays, journalism, fiction and poetry as well as reminiscences offered by friends and family.

The result is eclectic, with some useful nuggets for those interested in how agricultural industrialization was (unsuccessfully) resisted during the second half of the twentieth century as well as in the emergence of a British environmental movement during the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, historians seeking to track the development of the BBC in south-west England may find this volume helpful.

Waller was not from farming stock, growing up in south London and spending his early adulthood attending philosophy lectures, writing poetry that attracted considerable praise, and flirting with the likes of Sonia Brownell (later Sonia Orwell). A move to Bristol in 1949, where his work for the BBC included producing farming programmes, prompted the flowering of Waller's enduring interest in ecology and a belief in the urgent need for humanity to reform its ways in order to life within environmental limits.

During this period Waller met grassland scientist Sir George Stapledon, and was influenced strongly by Stapledon's ideas about 'human ecology'. In 1962, Waller's biography of Stapledon, *Prophet of the New Age*, was published. Amongst Waller's agricultural writings

excerpted in this memorial volume is a 1950 essay written for the anti-communist journal *The Catacomb*, in which Waller argues against over-reliance on food imports, particularly frozen meat from nations as distant as Australia. 'If we wish to increase our meat ration we must improve our marginal lands ... First, what are the marginal lands? It is the land where meat that ought to be eaten unfrozen is not raised' (p. 91).

Later, Waller served as editor of the Soil Association's quarterly journal. This was during the years following publication of Rachel Carson's anti-pesticide tract *Silent Spring*, when for the first time since the Second World War the proponents of industrial agriculture found themselves on the intellectual back foot. As editor Waller widened the scope of the Soil Association's editorial output to include the full range of issues that lay at the heart of a then-emerging environmental movement. In this section of *Poet of Ecology*, Conford includes recollections from individuals involved in the organic and environmental movements, including Michael Allaby and *Ecologist* magazine founder Edward Goldsmith. These recollections offer a wealth of detail about social networks and the intellectual perspective of key environmentalists of the day.

The extracts from Waller's 'green' writing serve as an excellent reminder of the 'radical' nature of the post-war environmental movement. Environmentalists were not merely seeking to tinker at the edges. They were idealists who envisaged profound societal change. Although uniquely his own, Waller's writings are also characteristic of the British environmental movement of the late twentieth century and, as such, offer assistance in delineating the intellectual history of post-war ecological campaigning.

Like many members of the early Soil Association, Waller's interests were not earth-bound; he was also a religious man with an apparently wide-ranging curiosity about religious and spiritual traditions and beliefs. Like many supporters of the organic movement, he was highly critical of scientific materialism. *Poet of ecology* contains much evidence to support the argument that the early organic movement in Britain was home to many with an interest in mysticism and esoteric thought.

Waller's 1982 booklet, *The agricultural balance sheet*, written for the Green Alliance and the Conservation Society, is noteworthy, offering trenchant and still-relevant arguments about the hidden inefficiencies of industrial agriculture. Meanwhile, an article for the *Ecologist* cynically describes the post-war agricultural revolution:

... in the 1950s a doctrine of salvation for agriculture was proclaimed, that 'Farming is a business not a

way of life'. Eager young graduates like missionaries visited farms for the National Agricultural Advisory Service with the new gospel ... Human needs and traditional practices were subordinated to an all-embracing, irrefutable principle known as efficiency ... All cultural values, such as beauty of landscape, humus content of the soil and so on had to take second place ... You could in fact farm too well to be efficient and survive within the prevailing framework of economic efficiency. And economics, being a science, had proven laws which only an irrational person would defy.

As many contributors to this memorial volume note, Robert Waller had few kind words to say about rationalism. This does not mean his writings are not clear and powerful – they are often both – and, while they are original they are also representative of the counter-culture movements of the day, making them historically relevant.

ERIN GILL
Aberystwyth University

RUTH TITTENSOR, *From peat bog to conifer forest. An oral history of Whitelee, its community and landscape* (Packard Publishing Limited, 2009). ix + 237 pp., 8 tabs., 6 maps. £27.50.

This book is a significant one for four reasons. First, it researches the social and ecological history of forestry development in Scotland, subjects that have not received any noteworthy attention in Scottish rural history. As the author notes,

no one has ever asked these people who planted the new forests – who afforested 12 per cent of Scotland in less than a century – how they did it or what they thought about it. Neither have the people who sold or lost their land or their livelihood, been asked what happened to them or how it affected their lives (p. 7)

Second, these questions, as well as other related ones about the transformation of the landscape, are discussed through a case study of the Whitelee Forest, an area of 6,000 hectares of coniferous forest, owned by the Forestry Commission and located on the Whitelee Plateau where Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire meet. This is a geographical area that has received little attention for either rural or forestry research. Third, it provides a case study of aspects of the impact and work of the Forestry Commission, of which there are few studies. Fourth, the book is an oral history, a methodology that is not readily associated with the social and ecological history of forestry development,

though the Welsh Oral History of Forestry Project (Hanes y Goed) has already demonstrated that this is a valuable approach for such research. As Tittensor notes, oral history is an important methodology for 'learning the dynamics of what happened in the past' (p. 8) and for providing fresh perspectives and new information. She suggests that 'the history presented here [in her book] is an "alternative" history, provided by living people who experienced up to 50 years of change for themselves' (p. 9).

The book clearly sets out its methodology for gathering and transcribing the oral and written testimonies. The book 'is written entirely from the orally-derived material ... or from participants' written contributions' gathered for the Whitelee Forest Oral History Project which ran from 2004 to 2007 (p. 9); photographs of many of the informants are included in Appendix 1. Documentary sources play only a minor role. As Tittensor notes: 'documentary sources from the Forestry Commission or elsewhere have not been used to provide information: printed sources have been used sparingly, only where a context is needed' (p. 9). Tittensor has employed one of a number of approaches to the use of oral history. While some researchers may be concerned at this approach, which has nevertheless been widely used, the book shows that it can be used to produce rigorous and accurate research.

The book gives a vivid and detailed account of the transformation – from the early 1960s onwards – of the Whitelee Plateau, from an area of heather and grassy moorland to commercial coniferous forest and, in the 2000s, to an extensive wind-farm. The impetus for that change was the UK Government afforestation programme, which aimed to produce more home-grown timber, reduce rural unemployment and provide incentives to private landowners to invest in trees and timber. The programme led to significant changes to the Scottish landscape over a few decades.

The Plateau presented many challenges to the Forestry Commission: the land is a peat landscape on which it is difficult to drive heavy machinery; it is remote and rises to 376 metres; it is exposed and has a high rainfall. As one informant noted, 'it could be hard, lonely, cold and frightening up on top of the Plateau in winter' (p. 92). Although the ecological factors were difficult, there were others that 'made it the right place for timber production' (p. 87) and for the 'factory farming' of trees over a wide area (p. 88): a landscape that was 'of no great relevance' with very little archaeology; a lack of political constraints; and a willingness of farmers to sell their land.

The transformation brought significant changes to the use and management of the land as well as the

species of flora and fauna that were found. Some changes brought positive benefits, while others were considered to be negative. As Tittensor says:

the species described by local people were important in their lives. It is not surprising that the observed decline of animals such as grouse, blackcock, snow buntings and skylarks, were a source of dissatisfaction. The newly-arriving species like roe deer and siskins, and the increase in raptors do not seem to give equivalent satisfaction. Nor do foxes or grey squirrels! (p. 181).

The testimonies are skilfully transcribed, edited and arranged according to the subjects in the fifteen chapters of the book. The author has expertly woven the transcriptions from the different informants together into a coherent and well-structured narrative. The tables throughout the book helpfully pull together and summarize information gathered in the testimonies and allow the reader to assess the changes that took place on the Plateau. For the reader interested in the natural history of the area, there are lists of flora and fauna, though the list of flowering plants and conifers only records a limited range of species that are generally associated with the habitats found on the Plateau.

The book is lavishly illustrated throughout. Although this wealth of visual material is one of the strengths of the book, it is also its greatest weakness. The illustrations could have been more selectively chosen. Some (such as those showing fencing and damage by wildlife on pp. 93, 94, 95, 136 and 137) are used to illustrate minor points in the text. Their omission would not have detracted from the book. There are also multiple images to illustrate a point where one would have sufficed (such as the three illustrations of wind-blown trees on pp. 141 and 142). The numerous illustrations sometimes distract the reader from the text of the book. Some pages, especially those that have illustrations inserted over part of the two-column text layout, are difficult to read. The book has the appearance of a consultancy report rather than a well-illustrated oral history. A more sympathetic design layout would have benefited the book. It is hoped, though, that it will inspire others to undertake further research into the social and ecological history of forestry, subjects that Tittensor has shown enrich our understanding of the significant changes in the Scottish countryside during the twentieth century.

HEATHER HOLMES
Livingston

MILES GLENDINNING and SUSANNA WADE MARTINS, *Buildings of the land. Scotland's farms, 1750–2000* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2008). xii + 215 pp., 175 illus. £30.

This book is one of the principal outcomes of the Scottish Farm Buildings Survey (SFBS), a ten-year project, initiated in 1993 by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) to sample and record farm buildings in a variety of areas of the country. The initial intention was to publish the results of the survey in a series of regional booklets. Fascicule-style reports on three of the first survey areas, East Central Scotland, Orkney and Sutherland, were published in 1998–9 but this format was subsequently abandoned in favour of one, comprehensive volume.

Inevitably, in a project of this scope and duration, there were changes in personnel during the course of the survey. This has resulted in an account written by Glendinning and Wade Martins with contributions from Peter Caunt of the Scottish Agricultural College and John Shaw of the NMS. Instances of disjuncture between text and illustrations, and repetition of content, can no doubt be attributed to this multiplicity of contributors. However, there is much more to celebrate than complain about in this publication, with the different fields of expertise represented by the team of contributors combining to produce a wide-ranging and informative study. *Buildings of the land* is more than an architectural study. It is an economic and social history of Scottish agriculture which focuses on the practical function of farms within the agricultural systems of its various regions. It is this grounding of the study within a broader agricultural context that extends its interest to a wider readership.

A diversity of agricultural regions is examined, ranging from the drier, arable east to the wetter, pastoral west, extending from the Highlands and Islands to the Lowlands and encompassing crofting and non-crofting areas. The narrative takes as its starting point the early phase of improvement which developed during the second half of the eighteenth century. Funded by rising grain prices, new farmsteads – whose regular, planned layouts placed an emphasis on Enlightenment principles of system and order – were built to serve individually tenanted holdings. These replaced the traditional infield, outfield farming regimes in which the old 'toun' communities engaged. Improvement came to maturity with Victorian high farming in the mid-nineteenth century, fuelled by an information environment of books such as Henry Stephens' *Book of the farm* (1844) and journals, principally that of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. Whilst

retaining an emphasis on systems and order, scientific and technological advances in agriculture gave rise to farmsteads whose layout was dictated by the industrial processes of the regimes which they served rather than aesthetic notions of symmetry. The emphasis on livestock farming in Scotland during the depression years of the late nineteenth century was reflected in the adaptation of farm buildings, whilst mounting legislation and the globalization of agriculture in the twentieth century led to ever-increasing change and loss. The authors are to be commended for continuing their account into the present century, which they identify as a time when a new 'global age of agricultural improvement' is gaining pace. The diversity of regional experience within the over-arching story is clearly acknowledged in the second half of each chapter where the authors depart from the grand narrative to describe local variations in farm buildings and agricultural practice.

Throughout this book we are reminded of the part played by Scotland's tenant farmers in shaping the nation's farm buildings. Whilst in the early period of improvement tenants might provide farm buildings, receiving 'ameliorations' in their rents as recompense, the higher costs of building in the high farming era meant that the landowner was more likely to fund new buildings. However, tenant farmers retained their influence in this matter in so far as landowners, attempting to retain and attract suitable tenants, were responsive to their wishes. This is illustrated by the cycle of farm building improvements every 19–20 years on the Sutherland estate which had 19-year leases. Another familiar theme is the persistence of building in depression. The slow pace of innovation is graphically illustrated in the instance of the keeping of animals on slatted floors: this idea was recommended by a gentleman farmer in the Carse of Gowrie in 1813 but was not generally taken up until the 1950s.

Our appreciation and understanding of the inter-relationship between Scotland's land and its farm buildings is enhanced by the lavish colour photographs in the book. There are also black and white photographs, reproductions of eighteenth and nineteenth century maps and plans, isometric drawings and measured plans. A list of illustrations would have been helpful, as would a glossary of the Scottish terms which might be unfamiliar to the general reader. Otherwise the work is extremely well referenced, clearly indicating the wealth of historic sources which informed the survey. There is also a clear system of coding which allows reference to associated material deposited by the SFBS in the RCAHMS archive and listed in its database, Canmore, on its website (www.rcahms.gov.uk).

SHIRLEY BROOK
Lincoln

PETER HILLIS (ed.), *Journal of my life and everyday doings 1879–81, 1885–92, James Wilson, farmer of Banffshire* (Scottish Hist. Soc., fifth ser., vol. 18, 2008). xii + 431 pp., 4 illus., 1 tab. £25. Available to non-members from Dr Katie Stevenson, The Scottish History Society, School of History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, KY16 9AL.

The diary of James Wilson (1859–1937) is a meticulous and detailed record of rural life through the eyes of a young farmer working on a medium-sized farm, Upper Knowes, in the parish of Deskford, Banffshire, and as a farm manager and griever at Balliemulloch and Georgetown, Aberlour, from 1879 to 1892. It includes acutely observed accounts of the weather (some of the accounts of the poor seasons such as 1879, 1881 and 1888 are extremely valuable), the progress of the crops and animals throughout the seasons, crop yields, prices for agricultural produce and the state of the markets. There are valuable accounts of the activities and roles of a number of rural institutions such as agricultural societies, book clubs, local horticultural shows and mutual improvement societies. It gives an unrivalled account of the spiritual and moral life of an individual and a wider rural community.

This diary is a welcome addition to the small number of farmers' diaries that have been published in Scotland in recent years. It is significant for a number of reasons. It covers a substantial period of time: James Wilson commenced writing in January 1879 at the age of 19 years and continued that activity for thirteen years until January 1892 when he abruptly stopped owing to the pressure of other activities in his life. Much of his diary has survived for this period, though the second volume (the diary extended over four volumes) which covers the period from January to June 1885 is missing. It was written during a period of severe agricultural depression which has received little attention by agricultural and rural historians and for which few accounts of farmers' experiences are available. It is also concerned with Banffshire, a county that has not been well-researched by agricultural and rural historians, though the neighbouring county of Aberdeenshire has received significant attention in recent decades.

Wilson appears to have kept his diary for a number of reasons. He was interested in self-improvement, in improving his education and ensuring his spiritual well-being (he reflects on his attendance at church). In his 'foreword', which he later attached to his diary, his poems and the text of his lectures and essays given to the Deskford and Ballindalloch Mutual Improvement Associations, he notes that:

my personal experience of keeping a Diary has led

me to form a very high opinion of its usefulness. It is not only a practical means of improving one's writing and composition, but it also makes one take more particular note of men and passing events so as to be able to record our impressions of the same (p. 41).

His 'foreword' is also an important document for recording 'some of the more outstanding events that have occurred, during my long and not altogether uneventful life' (p. 29).

The format of Wilson's diary is different to that of many other farmers' diaries. Wilson wrote his entries on a Monday evening and kept a weekly rather than a daily, diary of events and reflections, the usual format for these diaries. His entries, nevertheless, refer to a number of days in the week which are usually described in date order. Wilson's methodology allowed him to reflect on what was important to him during each week: he presents an analysed examination of his life rather than a narration of all the events in it.

The diary, poems and essays are prefaced with an excellent introductory essay which provides a closely analysed account of the broader social, economic and cultural context for Wilson and his writing. The editor has judiciously edited his writing and has provided a small number of helpful footnotes, where appropriate, to elucidate the text. The index, which largely records the names of places and people, will assist readers interested in local history, though agricultural and rural historians interested in such themes as the growing of particular crops, cattle prices and agricultural tools and techniques will find that it does not help them to gain access to the diary and other writings.

The diary is published in the same format as the Scottish History Society's other publications and is intended as a scholarly publication. But it, and Wilson's other writings, would also appeal to a much broader audience. My father, a retired farmer from Midlothian, enjoyed reading the diary and it provoked him to reminisce about his own experiences in the second half of the twentieth century. Wilson's writings can be read as local history, social history, or church history and it is hoped that the Society will make them all available to the general reader, as they deserve to be widely read.

HEATHER HOLMES
Livingston

Europe and elsewhere

NADINE VIVIER (ed.), *Élites et progrès agricole, XVIe–XXe siècle* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009). 346 pp., 2 illus., 17 tabs., 7 maps. €19.

Many historians, especially in Britain, France and Germany, have extolled the importance of large landowners in using wealth and knowledge to introduce innovations in the countryside, but other scholars, notably in Spain and eastern Europe, have viewed large estates as obstacles to 'agricultural progress'. In recent years, historians at the Université du Maine (Le Mans) have focused attention on the conception and manifestation of progress in the countryside, choosing to place their own experience of western France in a wider perspective by organizing two sessions at international conferences in Amsterdam (2006) and Lisbon (2008). The present volume seeks to provide a nuanced view of large estates by paying less attention to the landowning elite as a class and concentrating more on the aspirations and actions of individuals, sometimes acting in isolation but often as members of agricultural societies. It brings together thirteen essays – overviews and case studies – which cover strikingly different areas and span the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Guiding themes include the composition of the 'farming elite', the methods its members introduced to modify agricultural production, and the impact of these endeavours. Clusters of chapters look at the varied motivations of large landowners from 1500 to the twentieth century, the constitution and activities of improving agricultural societies from 1750 onwards, and the wider diffusion of knowledge among farmers and landowners after 1850.

Richard Hoyle introduces the first cluster with a lengthy review of the role of some members of the landowning elite in transforming aspects of rural England from 1500 to 1750. In similar fashion, Laurent Bourquin argues that not all large landowners in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France were opposed to innovation, despite the largely negative record left by contemporary observers from across the Channel. These overviews are followed by Ursula Schlude's tightly-focused discussion on the work of Electress Anna of Saxony to stimulate agricultural change between 1567 and 1571, and by Jean-Marie Constant's analysis of structural changes in seventeenth-century Beauce, which enabled local farmers to take advantage of rising Parisian demands for cereals in the following century. Four case studies in the central section of the book explore the membership and activities of agricultural societies between 1750 and 1850 in very different parts of the world; New England (Lucien Néraud), Upper and Lower Canada

(Daniel Samson), France (Nadine Vivier), and part of Lower Normandy (Nicolas Rago). This latter discussion of the *Société Royale d'Agriculture d'Alençon* provides a detailed discussion of lofty ambitions and limited achievements, and would be replicated in the experience of other societies elsewhere in France. Despite important modifications following the 1789 Revolution, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the wealthy, landowning elite in France was matched by a new managerial elite whose members possessed the necessary practical knowledge to improve large properties. The volume concludes with five, largely nineteenth-century, case studies; the great estates of the Hungarian Plain (Andras Vári), routine and innovation on large properties near Mexico City (Alejandro Tortolero), modest improvements on some great – but highly fragmented – estates in Spain (Juan Carmona), agricultural penitentiaries and farm schools in France (Ivan Jablonka), and the role of 'social catholicism' in stimulating groups of young French farmers to innovate, especially after 1950 (Brigitte Waché).

This very varied array of information is drawn together in a courageous conclusion by Professor Vivier, who elaborates on the three 'guiding themes' that she identified in the introductory pages. She reiterates how members of the traditional land-owning elite of early modern Europe were complemented by physiocrats and others 'improvers' who founded agricultural societies after 1750, published learned articles and treatises, but had limited impact on changing farming activity. Only after 1850 did innovating theory and improving practices become increasingly widespread in parts of Western Europe and, to a lesser extent, in the other areas studied. Then she draws attention to the gradual diffusion of printed information on improved crop strains, livestock breeds, cultivation techniques and structural modifications. Enclosures in England are contrasted with the long survival of small family farms in France, whose significance was reinforced after 1789. In short, some members of large land-owning elites were innovative from the sixteenth century onwards, but the majority were not – not until very much later, when reconfiguration of market conditions associated with population growth, changing dietary patterns, and the transport revolution of the steam train and the steel-hulled steamship occurred. *Élites et progrès agricole* demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of interweaving material presented at international conferences with more cohesive information presented by members of a home team, in this case based at Le Mans. Breadth is most certainly achieved but at the expense of sharpness of focus. Many readers will appreciate the inclusion of long, English-language summaries of

chapters and also of the very full translations of the editor's introductory remarks and concluding digest. Once again, the Presses Universitaires de Rennes must be congratulated for producing a substantial book at a very reasonable price.

HUGH CLOUT
University College London

BAS J. P. VAN BAVEL and PHILLIPP SCHOFIELD
(eds), *The development of leasehold in north-western Europe, c.1200–1600* (Brepols, 2008). 243 pp, 9 figs, 20 tabs. €62.

This latest book in the CORN series of volumes brings together papers from a range of scholars who have worked on the history of land tenure in north-west Europe. Leaseholding remains one of the least studied forms of tenure, although its prevalence has been a major theme in explanations of agrarian change and development in late medieval and early modern times. This is of course in part explained by the difficulty in identifying leaseholding directly: its rise is generally viewed as concomitant to the decline of customary tenure, and the latter has been easier to trace. Yet leaseholding is not simply what we find when custom disappears: in many places and centuries there was potential for freehold land to be leased, as well as the half-glimpsed world of sub-letting that may have operated across many forms of tenure.

The authors' attempts to grapple explicitly with leaseholding are thus very welcome. The volume encompasses an introduction by the editors, followed by chapters on Flanders, Liège, northern France, two Danish regions – the peninsula and Scania (annexed by Sweden in the seventeenth century) – and two chapters on England, one a general survey and one a case study of west Norfolk. A final chapter on the Low Countries, with a focus on the modern Netherlands, also acts as a summing-up of issues addressed throughout the book. In fact, the period covered by each chapter is highly variable and often stretches far beyond the core late medieval focus of the editors. 'Modern' commercial leaseholding did not for example exist in southern Scandinavia before the late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

Or did it? Very soon we run into one of the reasons why studies of leaseholding are few and the idea itself elusive. There can be many forms of leaseholding, and they can occur between many different actors: leasing of manors by the Crown, leases of individual rights and streams of income, leases between lords and tenants, and sub-letting of all kinds. It is clear that the editors are really interested in quite a specific kind of lease: a more 'modern' kind that involved a clear voluntary contract between landlord and tenant

farmer on identifiably commercial terms (preferably for cash rent) and for a relatively short duration. It is this form of lease which is reckoned, in relatively linear fashion, to have provided the scope for agricultural improvement, commercialization and the emergence of capitalist farming.

Yet given that this kind of lease was rare or non-existent in many regions, or may even have diminished in use over time, the chapters in this book have a rather disjointed feel. They are not all rowing in the same direction, just as the agrarian worlds they studied were not. The chapters on Denmark and Scania suggest that forms of leasehold and freehold tenure were very widespread before pressures from Crown taxation and a feudal reaction spread manorialism in the late medieval period, with leaseholds only re-emerging in the liberal age much later. This story is entirely ignored in the more synthetic chapters that focus on explaining the perhaps more comfortable territory of the Netherlands and south-east England. Similarly, the wide prevalence of leaseholding identified by Whittle in England is dismissed from van Bavel's analysis, because so much land was held by 'beneficial lease' – not the right kind of lease to bring about capitalist advance.

One cannot do justice to all of the divergent and detailed chapters. This reviewer found especially valuable the itemization of possible causes of the spread of commercial leasing provided in the introductory discussion. The suggestion that leasing could work to the advantage of tenants by reducing risk and direct dependence on lords is a useful corrective to the notion that such tenures were always imposed by exploitative landlords seeking rack rents or discipline from a tenantry inclined to custom. Tim Soens and Erik Thoen have produced a thoughtful and nuanced discussion of how local ecological and market conditions generated radically different property relations in adjacent parts of Flanders. Christer Lundh and Matt Olsson's survey of property law and rights from medieval times until the nineteenth century in Scania – a region less familiar to most anglophone historians – is clear and useful, even though little of the discussion pertains to commercial leasing. Jane Whittle provides tentative but judicious moves towards quantification of the distribution of tenures in England, usefully straddling the late medieval and early modern divide. There is, in sum, much of value in this volume although it delivers more than the title promises, in terms of chronological scope, and, at the same time, rather less in terms of coherent collection and analysis than it might have. Rather more stringent copy-editing would also have been welcome.

PAUL WARDE
University of East Anglia

JORDI BOLÒS and ENRIC VICEDO (eds), *Poblament, Territori i Història Rural. VI Congrés Sobre Sistemes Agraris, Organització Social i Poder Local* (Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs, 2009). 759 pp., 157 figs., 45 maps, €20.

This edited volume of essays on population, territory and rural society in Catalonia, Spain and Western Europe, from the early middle ages to the present day, is based on some 30 presentations to a conference held in Alguaire (Lleida) in April 2007, with a number of fine contributions by a distinguished group of agricultural historians, historical geographers and rural archaeologists. Impressively, it constitutes the sixth volume in an ambitious series on 'Agrarian systems, social organization and local power', published by the Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs, which has previously focused on such topics as communal property, peasant solidarity, social control, fairs and markets and living conditions. After an all-too-brief introduction by the editors, Jordi Bolòs and Enric Vicedo, followed by a short introductory survey on the population of Western Europe in the middle ages by Aymat Catafau, the book is divided into two sections: one on fortified farmsteads (*masos*) and population in Catalunya Nova (Tarragona and Lleida) and another entitled 'Population, territory and rural history', which contains ten contributions on the Països Catalans and a further eight on Andalusia, Cantabria, Galicia and the Basque Country.

A number of contributions, such as Llorenç Ferrer's erudite bibliographical essay on the geography of Catalan *masos*, Enric Mendizábal's authoritative account on population and territorial development in the Principality after 1700 and Miguel Hector Fernández Carrión's well-crafted survey on the populations of Spain and Andalusia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, deal with the broader picture. Otherwise, most of the book's contributors provide the reader with more detailed local studies, many of them from hitherto unutilized local archival sources. These include an account of the provision of water to the lead mines of el Molar in the Priorat at the end of the sixteenth century by Albert Martínez, a fascinating study of the colonization of the Ebro delta, in the vicinity of Tortosa, from the early nineteenth century onwards by Emeteri Fabregat and an essay on the archaeology of deserted villages (*despoblados*) in the Basque province of Álava by Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo. The main emphasis of the book is on the medieval period, whilst only half a handful of studies concern themselves with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

My general impression of this fine miscellany is that, in common with its companion volumes, it displays a remarkable labour of love by scholars from a variety of

disciplines – both young and old – who are keen to share with others not only the rich past of the many corners of rural Catalonia but also to put across their findings in the wider context of the most up-to-date investigations and methodologies by leading scholars throughout Spain and across the European continent. As before, the collection is beautifully presented. It boasts an extensive assortment of maps, charts, diagrams and photographs. There are also a number of detailed bibliographies which will be a considerable use to the general reader as well as to avid researchers.

JOSEPH HARRISON
University of Manchester

C. A. BAYLY, *The C. A. Bayly Omnibus* (Oxford, Delhi, 2009). 1191 pp. £58.

The difficulty with the proposition of compiling an Omnibus to present the lifetime work of an academic is that it risks bringing together ideas coming from different places and at different moments. Rarely can this be truer than for Chris Bayly, a historian whose 35 years of scholarship have ranged through various facets of Indian, global and imperial history. The newly republished *Bayly Omnibus* has a distinctly Indo-centric focus, bringing together three books which focus upon the evolution of Indian society and politics from the late-eighteenth century onwards. The third and most recent of these volumes, *Origins of nationality in South Asia: patriotism and ethical government in the making of modern India* (first published in 1998), is a selection of interrelated essays concerning the cultural backgrounds to Indian politics, emphasizing the determinant nature of indigenous ideas, institutions and multiple patriotisms over later doctrines of Indian nationalism. However, those with interests in the social and agrarian history of north India will inevitably find their attention drawn primarily to the first two volumes.

The first work included here, *The local roots of Indian politics: Allahabad, 1880–1920* (first published 1975), examines the development of early political formations in a major north Indian city, and the backgrounds of those individuals who came to participate in them. The book documents how particular social elites, whether rural landlords, commercial entrepreneurs or urban professionals, became drawn into the machinations of local councils and public associations as a budding political class. By the author's own admission, aspects of the book have dated, in particular the language of interest groups, political control, collaboration and 'radical politics' that characterized its period of writing. This said, as an illustration of the ensnarement of national political brands in local networks of power and patronage, and as a framework for understanding the emergence of

'representative' politics in local arenas, the work has rarely been bettered. It is helpfully re-published along with its companion article, 'Rural conflict and the roots of Indian nationalism: Allahabad district since 1800', which extends the analysis from the city itself to the networks of rural villages, gentry neighbourhoods and commercial townships in the countryside around it. In a valuable retort to the urban focus of many early 'Cambridge school' studies of Indian nationalism, the article demonstrates how modern political configurations and languages, far from being created in cities and then diffused outwards, frequently had distinct rural roots and manifestations which emerged contemporaneously with their urban ones.

Following up on many of these themes, but much more expansively, is the next volume republished here, *Rulers, townsmen and bazaars: north Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770–1870* (1984), an exhaustive and profoundly influential fusion of economic, political and social history set in the market towns and rural outposts of the Gangetic plains. Far from seeing the period in question as one of unmitigated political upheaval, the work's most important legacy has been its depiction of an evolutionary rather than revolutionary transition to British control, with many existing social and political orders being sustained, appropriated or adjusted rather than comprehensively replaced. The work insinuates that the directions and strategies of British expansion were to some extent set by the indigenous forms of social organization and commerce which preceded their arrival. The work has therefore long been of note for its shifting of focus away from the sole agency of the British, towards so-called 'intermediate groups' who are examined with great lucidity, among them the rich cultivators, Hindu mercantile classes and Muslim service gentries who populated these small settlements. Painstakingly recreating their social histories, Bayly describes how these various communities gradually reshaped themselves during this period as the key figures of local government and the mainstay participants in the growth of colonial trade. This constitutes a major revision of the relationship between the colonial state and the societies of India's rural heartland, showing how the latter did not simply fall into the colonial project as passive subjects but proffered the active agency of defining – in large part – the political and economic structures of British control. The book is, moreover, perhaps the best available study of the complex workings of north Indian agrarian society, documenting its interactions with the evolving class formations, commercial networks and public arenas which accompanied the transition to colonial rule, and, as such, the work's importance is hard to overstate.

Each of these major republished volumes has in its own way achieved classic status, and each maintains its own longevity in the respective fields of historical debate which it has itself helped to trigger. The quality and influence of these works will ensure that their republication in this format will be widely welcomed by scholars and students of Indian history and historiography.

JUSTIN JONES
University of Exeter

LYLE DICK, *Farmers 'making good'. The development of the Abernethy district, Saskatchewan, 1880–1920* (second edition, University of Calgary Press, 2008). xxxii + 303 pp., 55 figs. \$34.95.

This title's re-issue, 20 years after its initial publication by Canada's Parks Service, is amply justified. The book's scope goes far beyond its initial purpose to provide the historical setting for the W. R. Motherwell farm as a national historic site. As an in-depth micro-study of early prairie settlement, it gives what few others have. An additional welcome feature of the new edition is an introduction to the most recent historiography which sets the context for this study.

European settlement followed on the displacement of both native and mixed-blood peoples. The former negotiated for reserves of land, although their agricultural activity was subsequently crippled by government regulation. The federal government granted the latter 'scrip' (a right to claim 160 acres), if they received anything. Dick found some evidence of outright fraud by land-company and federal agents, although he perhaps generalizes beyond the available evidence for his area. Lack of any start-up capital may have hampered the chances of most mixed-blood families from joining the move to commercial agriculture more than lack of access to land.

Dick argues persuasively that the decisive factor in a homesteader's success was to arrive early enough to get as much of the best land as possible (up to 540 acres) and to persevere through the hard times. In south-west Saskatchewan that meant filing your claim in the 1880s, and farming through multiple production problems (drought, gophers, grasshoppers) and marketing problems (distant railways, uncertain prices). Another key factor in that perseverance was the homestead's distance from the railway. Cancellations of homestead entries jumped from 50 per cent (6–14 miles) to 75 per cent (22–30 miles). What the debates over initial start up costs show is that they varied greatly. Minimum costs could be very modest before 1900, especially with family and community support as well as low expectations.

Those who arrived in south-west Saskatchewan during the 1890s found that there was not only less low-cost land available, but also less good land. Dick contrasts the Anglo-Ontario settlers of Abernethy with the German settlers in nearby Neudorf. The latter got poorer land and less of it. They had a higher rate of 'proving up' than Abernethy, but a lower rate of long-term permanence. They soon moved on to look for better land.

Those who arrived after 1900 faced rapidly rising land prices, which forced up the level of capital needed to commence. For example, Georgina Binnie-Clark found she had to call repeatedly on her English funds to keep her farm in operation (pp. 89–92). Of course she faced the additional handicap of being female, which made her ineligible for the free homestead grant (unlike the American homestead law). She had to pay \$5,000 for land that would have cost a man \$970 for homestead and pre-emption.

Early arrivals who persevered until 1900 could benefit from high grain prices, better railway connections, and a ready supply of credit due to the rapid rise in the value of their lands. Farm debts arose from purchase of land or farm implements to increase production and initially short-term debt (a couple of months) to cover the prairie farmers' chronic irregular cash flows. These latter could, in effect, become long term, until the later established wheat board and wheat pools gave prairie grain farmers more regular income flows. Those early persevering homesteaders' capital gains usually enabled them to avoid the worst of the debt crises, which fell most heavily on the later arrivals with less land and thus less security.

Dick's theme of an economic divide between wealthy and poorer farmers comes out clearly in his analysis of agrarian protest politics. W. R. Motherwell was a key leader in the first effective prairie farmer protest, on which his later political career – as minister of agriculture for Saskatchewan (1905–17) and then Canada (1921–30) – was built. The Territorial Grain Growers Association that he led proposed modest reforms to grain handling, limited enough to be enacted by the federal government. Whether intended or not, these favoured large-scale farmers like Motherwell, over the poorer homesteader just getting established. As farm leader and cabinet minister, Motherwell opposed government intervention or even farmer cooperatives to store, ship, or market grain.

In an irony he saves for his closing pages, Dick points out that Motherwell farm, now made into a historic site, was far from the typical prairie homestead. Not only was Motherwell one of the early preserving pioneers who received a lot of good land very cheaply, but he

became mainly a brome grass seed grower, rather than the typical wheat farmer.

While the University of Calgary Press is to be commended for the re-issue, the text has not been entirely re-worked: a study more than 30 years old is described as 'recent' (p. 47). There are repeated print errors, at one point rendering the text incomprehensible (p. 218). One hopes for better from university presses.

PETER A. RUSSELL
University of British Columbia

ALAN L. OLMSTEAD and PAUL W. RHODE, *Creating abundance: biological innovation and American agricultural development* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). xii + 467 pp., 59 figs., 8 illus., 46 tabs. £15.99.

When one thinks of authorities on agriculture, one does not normally think of economists. This is particularly true in the contexts of biological innovations and agrarian history. Thus, this book is a most pleasant surprise, and an important contribution to the literature on agricultural development. Indeed, a book on this topic written by someone other than economists would not be as convincing. Development, after all, regardless of how one defines it, is an elaborate variation of change, and the calculus of change is economics.

The premise of this book is as simple as it is brilliant. For nearly 70 years the prevailing thought has been that, until the 1930s, American agricultural development was a function of farmers investing solely in labour-saving mechanical technologies, the so-called induced innovation hypothesis. Now, Olmstead and Rhode demonstrate conclusively that: (a) this notion is economically untenable; and (b) that biological innovations were not only common, but were the principal factor underlying development.

Cyrus McCormick and Eli Whitney are household names thanks to their technological accomplishments. Long overlooked, but deserving equal credit are scores of figures such as Wendelin Grimm and Walter Burling who spent lifetimes developing varieties of alfalfa and cotton respectively. Indeed, the varieties of maize, wheat, cotton, tobacco, and fruits grown in 1900 were markedly different from the varieties cultivated in 1800. Chapters 2, 3, and 7, deal in turn with wheat, maize, and tobacco. Cotton merits three chapters; four covers its becoming 'King'; chapter 5 focuses on its demise due to the boll weevil, and chapter 6 discusses its revival in the twentieth century. California is the topic of chapter 8 which is fascinating in that despite the diversity of that state's crops, similar trends prevail. The role of animals, particularly their link with crops is discussed in chapter 9. Sheep, swine, and beef cattle are dealt with in chapter 10, with dairying being the topic of chapter 11. In sum,

and without belabouring the details, there is something for everyone concerned with a specific crop plant or farm animal in this book. Indeed, more than 300 pages are devoted to empirical evidence that convincingly and overwhelmingly supports this volume's simple and straightforward premise.

While chapters 2 through 11 provide the necessary substance, chapters 1, 12, and 13 are of critical importance as they deal with theory. The first chapter introduces the argument by dispelling the long-subscribed-to myth that during the nineteenth century, rational farmers invested in labour-saving because, due the price of land falling relative to the wage rate, labour was a scarce factor of production. Much like the agricultural economist Ester Boserup, who overturned the ideas of Malthus by recognizing supply as a function of demand, Olmstead and Rhode point out that throughout the nineteenth century 'the price of land relative to wages was rising not falling' (p. 8).

Chapter 12 is a most welcome essay as it deals with draft power. The economics of the shift from oxen to equines, mules and horses, and the tractor as a land-saving innovation are all discussed masterfully. A refreshingly insightful and explicit recognition, and one that is typically overlooked if not ignored outright, is that animals are both biological and technological creatures. Any calculation of their labour- or land-saving attributes, therefore, is flawed if both roles are not factored into the equation. This chapter also points out that farms and farming regions became increasingly specialized (in part because of environmental conditions), and, as they did, they became more and more dependent on others for various inputs.

The concluding chapter illustrates that yet another factor was important in American agricultural history: foreign introductions. Many American crops and their numerous varieties are quite recent arrivals. Finally, the closing note of this book sums up the death of the induced innovation hypothesis. Unlike most scholarly works that offer an alternative perspective on an issue, this book is neither demeaning nor denigrating. On the contrary, it is compassionate and grateful for the many years of intellectual service of the hypothesis. The model this book presents should have an equally long and productive academic life. Indeed, the book's opening section, 'Advanced praise' (p. i), begins with what is essentially the *imprimatur* of Vernon W. Ruttan, one of the long-time and premier advocates of the opposite perspective.

W. E. DOOLITTLE
University of Texas