

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

TOM WILLIAMSON, *The origins of Hertfordshire* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010). xi + 271 pp., 66 figs. £16.99.

Tom Williamson's impressive update of his original book of this title (Manchester University Press, 2000) is a real pleasure to read. The text is lively, stimulating and authoritative, and evidence and arguments are clearly explained. This paperback volume is also a pleasure to look at: the text is printed more clearly than in the original publication, and the 21 new photographs are not only better-reproduced but distributed appropriately throughout the book, rather than bundled in the middle pages.

The book's central theme is the development of territorial organisation in Hertfordshire between 400 and 1000 AD. The original seven-chapter structure has been retained. The wider geographic and chronological context provided in the first two and last two chapters has been edited and updated, but the three central chapters – which focus on the evolution of early Anglo-Saxon folk-groups into middle Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the development of early medieval extensive estates, and the pre-Conquest origins of medieval settlement and landscape exploitation – have been extensively rewritten and include much new material.

This new look at Hertfordshire stimulates and contributes to any number of research questions, which themselves illustrate how far landscape history has matured in the decade since the book was first published. Just three are explored below to give a brief flavour of the delights to be found by readers of this stimulating trove of evidence, ideas and debates.

Williamson's central premise lies in his adoption of Everitt's model of contrasting *pays* of river and wold as the basis for the emergence of political groupings (Alan Everitt, *Continuity and colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlement*, 1986). He explains the origins of territorial division in Hertfordshire in terms of control by individual groups over discrete zones defined by river catchments – each area encompassing a range

of reliefs and soil types, and thereby providing access to the widest possible range of arable and non-arable resources. This model does not, however, take account of the proposition – based on early medieval sources – that Anglo-Saxon political and cultural identity was based on rights over land, rather than territorial definition. Perhaps, it suggests, early Anglo-Saxon clans or folk-groups identified themselves in terms of rights they shared to specific pastures and woodland rather than in terms of defined physical boundaries. How might this play out in Hertfordshire, one wonders?

A second premise of the book is that differences in settlement pattern and agricultural exploitation between more densely settled, 'primary' zones of arable and meadow in river valleys and less densely settled, 'secondary' zones of pasture and woodland on less fertile upland wolds can be explained in terms of population growth over time. That is, early peoples preferred to settle in valleys and subsequently gradually colonised the uplands in response to land hunger forced by demographic growth. There are two difficulties with this assumption. From at least the middle Iron Age there is evidence for settlement across all landscape types, which makes it harder to argue that there was much extensive unclaimed land available for settlement in southern England in any period thereafter. The persistence of rights of communal access to pasture, recognised by prehistorians in monuments such as causewayed camps and stock enclosures, and by historians in Anglo-Saxon laws and charters, demonstrates that such 'secondary' areas were in fact highly regarded. How might the evidence from Hertfordshire play out if it is instead explained in terms of shifting relationships between equally ancient dominant and subordinate settlements?

Such issues bring us up against a third premise. Upland zones, especially along watersheds, are regarded as 'marginal' both because of their distance from the arable 'core' and their location near the territorial periphery. The location on pasture of important prehistoric monuments focused on communal events like feasting, and of large numbers of barrow burials designed to be visible from a distance, may mean that

such areas were not 'marginal' at all, but were central to the identities and practices of the groups that created and used them. Exploration of the distinction between what is 'distant' and what is 'the edge' might enable contrasts between river and wold (and 'core' and 'marginal') to be understood in other terms: for example, by seasonal activity which left a different archaeological imprint – like the young men and women of early medieval Ireland who took cattle 'booleying' on the uplands each spring, or pastoralism as localised agricultural specialisation in a relatively integrated regional economy, or specialised renders required by an elite. The evidence from Hertfordshire contributes to this debate.

That this book on Hertfordshire generates such questions demonstrates the central relevance of regional studies to the discipline as a whole. The reader who picks up this excellent book will find much more besides: discussions of the possibility of cultural continuity from Iron Age *oppidum* to Roman *vicus* to Anglo-Saxon *caput*, the survival of prehistoric land divisions into the modern period, the fossilisation in territorial and diocesan boundaries of shifts in the balance of power between the emerging Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and so on. This is Williamson at his best and the book deserves to become a classic, standing on academic and lay bookshelves alongside Finberg, Hoskins, Beresford, and Taylor.

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RICHARD BRITNELL, *Markets, trade and economic development in England and Europe, 1050–1550* (Ashgate Variorum, 2009). xviii + 330 pp. £85.00.

This very welcome book contains a stimulating collection of 21 articles by Richard Britnell, all previously been published in a variety of edited volumes and journals between 1968 and 2001. In addition the volume contains a short, previously unpublished paper entitled 'Urban economic regulation and economic morality in medieval England'.

The articles presented in this volume combine in an attempt to move away from the rather dichotomised interpretations of economic and social development in later medieval England of primarily Malthusian and Marxist perspectives. Instead the essays support Britnell's view of a commercialising society. It is argued that this long-term development of commercialisation, in this collection from c.1050 until 1550, is expressed in trade, the growth of markets and other commercial institutions as well as their various social consequences. Britnell argues that taken together these can be seen to have 'contributed directly to the institutional structure of the modern world' (p. xi).

In reflecting these concerns, the essays in this volume examine various aspects of commercialisation. They therefore explore towns, markets, long and short distance trade, aspects of the regulation of trading activities alongside questions of consumption, demand and estate management. As such the collection offers a satisfying mix of detailed studies, like for example 'The making of Witham', 'The Pastons and their Norfolk' or 'Forstall, forestalling and the Statute of Forestallers' on the one hand, and papers taking a more sweeping and long-term view, like the excellent 'Commercialisation and economic development in England, 1000–1300', or the thought-provoking 'Commerce and capitalism in late medieval England: problems of description and theory' on the other.

It is particularly nice to have the two essays comparing towns and the economies of England and northern Italy in the fourteenth century together in this volume. 'England and northern Italy in the early fourteenth century: the economic contrasts' offers a wide-ranging and insightful comparison between various aspects of the two economies, rightly taking agricultural as well as other local peculiarities into consideration in seeking to explain differing levels of enterprise, long-distance trade and banking. 'The towns of England and northern Italy in the early fourteenth century', highlights not only some of the problems arising from comparative work, but also how fruitful such an analysis can be in sketching out the key differences and similarities, and the effect such differences had upon the wider economy.

Such collections of essays are always useful and welcome as rooting through volumes of journals for individual articles can be avoided, and this makes them very helpful for undergraduate teaching.

Two criticisms are to be made of this book. The first is the pronounced concentration on England in the articles. Although the volume's title promises a European perspective, most of the papers in this volume concern primarily English markets, towns and trade. One, 'Local trade, remote trade: institutions, information and market integration, 1050–1330' does take a wider European perspective, and, as mentioned, two compare English and Italian economies and towns.

The second criticism is entirely editorial. The layout of the Variorum Collected Studies series by Ashgate, can be trying and at times distracting, which is unfortunate for a book which is priced at £85. The published papers are not given a continuous pagination and instead articles are numbered by Roman numerals with original page numbers left intact. In addition font and text layout are not harmonised throughout

the volume, and the font of some individual articles, like the 'Burghal characteristics of market towns in medieval England' are so small, that this reviewer found them difficult to read.

These criticisms however, do not distract from the importance of the essays presented in this stimulating volume.

MIRIAM MÜLLER
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P. D. A. HARVEY, *Manors and maps in rural England, from the tenth century to the seventeenth* (Ashgate Variorum, 2010). x + 340 pp., £75.

The Variorum Collected Studies series exists to publish in a single volume the leading articles and essays of an individual scholar. Those articles are not produced in a fresh format with new, and continuous, pagination: the originals are simply scanned to a high standard and thus reproduced exactly as they first appeared on first publication. If the scholar has contributed influentially to the development of the discipline, then it is a boon to have much of their best work collected in a single place. In a career spanning fifty years, P. D. A. Harvey has been very influential in shaping our understanding of the rural history of medieval England.

There are 18 articles in this volume, arranged in chronological order of their subject matter. The addition of a detailed index adds considerably to the usefulness of the volume. The chronological range of Harvey's interests is unusually wide, and he is equally at home discussing tenth-century harvest workers as he is looking at seventeenth-century estate maps. The subject matter is also eclectic, ranging from landscape history to mainstream economic history.

Harvey's monographs – most notably those relating to the Oxfordshire manor of Cuxham, the format and uses of manorial records, and the history of maps – are deeply rooted in the primary source material. This interest and expertise in documents is strongly represented in the volume, where he explores the strengths and weaknesses of an extraordinary range of sources: manorial accounts, agricultural treatises, two estate surveys (the remarkable *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa*, and the Bolden Book), the Pipe Rolls, maps and personal seals. His analysis of the potential of medieval and early modern local records for reconstructing the English landscape, published in *Landscape History* in 2004, contains some salutary warnings about their shortcomings, and ought to be compulsory reading for anyone embarking upon research in the subject.

Harvey's discussions of the primary sources are characterized by his keen intelligence, thoughtfulness,

meticulousness and common sense. His willingness to dwell upon uncertainties, and to articulate areas of ignorance, rather than breezing past them, enhances the reader's confidence in his judgements. This even-handedness, together with a deep knowledge and understanding of the source material, elevates many of his publications to the status of works of reference.

Yet Harvey is more than just an excellent technician, as his major contributions to aspects of the economic history of medieval England reveal. His ground breaking articles on the English inflation of c.1180 to 1220, and its impact upon the management of seigniorial estates, are still highly influential 40 years after their publication, and raise challenging (and as yet unanswered) questions about the nature of the late twelfth-century economy. His three essays on the peasant land market are indispensable to anyone wishing to study this important but demanding subject. The development of an exceptionally active and localised market in small pieces of land during the thirteenth century, and the transformation after c.1350 of villein tenures into different types of copyholds and leaseholds, carried significant implications for the subsequent development of agrarian capitalism in England. Harvey sketches the broad outlines of these developments in a clear and authoritative manner, and, in his final contribution to the subject (published in 1996), he also offered a future research agenda which advocates advancing along a broad front: an interlinking of estate management, patterns of inheritance, tenurial obligations, and family structure and prosperity. These three essays exemplify the best attributes of Harvey's career and works, and of the historian's craft: technical excellence combined with the ability to handle complex issues and ideas.

MARK BAILEY
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RICHARD GODDARD, JOHN LANGDON and MIRIAM MÜLLER (eds), *Survival and discord. Essays in honour of Christopher Dyer* (Brepols, 2010). 306 pp., 1 fig., 7 tabs., 1 map. €70.

Christopher Dyer is one of the outstanding scholars of our generation of medieval social and economic historians, a prolific and wide-ranging author, and past President of the BAHS. This collection of essays has been brought together to honour him on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday. As the editors acknowledge in their introduction, it is very difficult to do justice to the breadth and depth of Dyer's considerable research interests and influences. To overcome the problem they have devised two rather artificial motifs of 'survival' and 'discord' to group this disparate collection of essays by past students, colleagues and friends.

One of Dyer's great strengths has been his ability to integrate and harness archaeological and archival research in the pursuit of a plethora of topics encompassing standards of living, economic exchange and numismatics. The single archaeological contribution by Astill reflects another of Dyer's interests; in this instance, rural settlement and the interaction with towns and the economy. In his wide-ranging survey Astill argues against unilineal or incremental development and gives importance to regional differences. Astill provides a long chronological perspective within which he places greater emphasis on the eighth and twelfth centuries as periods of profound change.

Local and regional themes are maintained in the section on survival, which also includes a posthumous essay by Fox on lords' exploitation of 'waste', demonstrating the depth of his understanding of the intricacies of the Devon countryside. Britnell provides a re-assessment of Postan's interpretation of the fifteenth-century economy; whilst Goddard focuses on the mid-century recession and the availability of credit in towns, although data from the decades of the slump are missing from his tables. Swanson focuses on the local economy of Derbyshire and argues for the important contribution of income derived from spiritualities. Langdon's essay provides novel insights into the far-from-static picture of wage labour and uncovers the dynamics of family groups, women and working partnerships from royal building accounts.

Essays by Masschaele and Schofield straddle the two sections and are concerned with developments in the law. Masschaele takes Dyer's research on the interaction between town and countryside as his starting point for an exploration of itinerant royal courts and their impact on the places and people where they were held. Schofield returns to his legal roots in a study of trespass litigation within the jurisdiction of the manor court and argues for the impact of some degree of peasant agency on developments in the law in the local court.

The second half of the book is more closely allied to Dyer's earlier interests in conflict and the range of essays is correspondingly broad, ranging from individual communities to comparisons across Europe. Birrell's essay is a superb example of how a meticulous and nuanced study of one record, in this instance a rental of 1341 for Alrewas, when combined with the author's command of historical and local contexts, can tease out its significance and inform on a wide range of topics including lord-tenant relations, dues and services, peasant attitudes to the written word and peasant recourse to the law, all subjects that Dyer has addressed. Dyer's work has not been limited to England and the contribution by van Bavel on the revolts in

the Low Countries expands our understanding of the contrasting contexts in which urban and rural revolts occurred in that region. The unusual nature of the English revolts is a theme explored polemically by Cohn who argues that English commoners were less self-confident than their continental counterparts. Laughton adds an urban dimension by examining the management of discord in fifteenth-century Chester.

Other local studies in this section include Briggs's evaluation of the effectiveness of the demesne farming system before and after the Black Death in eastern England, through a case study of Great Eversden. A closely studied communal lease of Great Horwood is employed by Tompkins to address issues of individualism and collectivism. Diet is a topic that Dyer has done so much to elucidate, and Müller's rather eclectic collection of sources for studying food as a point of conflict is a gesture towards this important area of his research.

The final section of the book, the bibliography of Dyer's writings 1968–2009, further attests to the scope of his interests, and 'The Story So Far ...' leaves us in happy anticipation of what is still to come.

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CHRISTOPHER W. BROOKS, *Law, politics and society in early modern England* (Cambridge UP, 2008). xii + 456 pp. £65.

Chris Brooks's book is one to read slowly and savour over a long period. His mission is to explain the role that the law played in early modern society. This brief allows him to look not only at issues of politics and administration, but also the legal writing and education and, a question which interests him greatly, how far legal principles were understood within early modern society. He also writes about how people used the law and how far legal institutions impinged on their lives.

The book effectively falls into two parts. In the first, Brooks adopts a chronological approach which builds to the denouement of 1641 – in which many of the legal disputes of the previous half century, and in particular the innovations of the previous 15 years – were conclusively resolved by statute. Brooks's success is in showing that there is, in a legal sense, a high road to the civil war. In 1640–1 we can see the Elizabethan legal mind reasserting itself and seizing the opportunity given it by the Scots to resolve some issues once and for all. In the course of this he gives us a fuller exposition of the 'common-law mind' than we have had before, drawing a great deal of his material from what might be called 'grey literature': readings at the Inns of Court, assize

sermons and charges at the assizes and quarter sessions – to give us a much clearer sense of what legal ideas circulated and where. From all of this, it becomes clear that there was never a single legal mind, but persisting questions about a variety of issues, including the power of the crown. Brooks is good on the debates around monarchical power, and he confirms the existence of a ‘republican’ streak in Elizabethan legal and political thought or, as he puts it, a ‘mixed monarchical interpretation of the English constitution’ (p. 81). Sir Edward Coke, in particular, comes across as a man after his time, fighting a rearguard action against Thomas Lord Ellesmere and others whose view of the prerogative James I found more congenial. Brooks also shows how some of Ellesmere’s clients held pretty absolutist ideas. This leads to the thought that in the law, as in religion, the late 1580s and the 1590s were as formative a decade as the late 1540s had been for the Elizabethan generation. Where the Elizabethans saw 1549 and recoiled from inflaming the commons, some of the generation who lived through the Presbyterian campaigns and the furore provoked by Martin Marprelate spent the remainder of their lives suspecting popularity and detecting incipient democracy in all quarters. (Lord Chancellor Ellesmere suspected Coke of popularist tendencies, and he was almost certainly right.)

The second half of the book changes tack. It focuses on a variety of areas in which the law can be seen in operation. Several of these are required reading for early modern rural historians including the helpful discussions of copyhold, employment and family law, debt and credit, and the legal dynamics of local communities. There is some extraordinary material on the scale of imprisonment for debt before the civil war (of which I hope someone will give us a fuller exposition): each reader will find their own cherry. I differ from Brooks on some points here, perhaps approaching these issues from another perspective. I think he fails to appreciate (following the work that Henry French and I did on Earl’s Colne) just how far there is a rejection by ordinary people of the seigneurial claims implicit in the exercise of the manorial court. Moreover, John Broad has shown how some lords might be reluctant to convene courts given that they represented a potential source of opposition (and were certainly the locus of custom) to their estate policies. Conversely one would like to know more about the larger ‘world view’ of those lords who continued to try and make their courts work right through to 1640. The accounts of judicial attitudes to corporation are helpful, but incorporation, I am relieved to say, barely features, which leaves me space to offer my views on this elsewhere. Occasionally the text wanders, and I

thought that Brooks’s discussion of the ‘problem of the over-mighty’ rather lost its way and did not offer the firm conclusion that an undergraduate reader might hope for.

There were also a couple of areas I felt Brooks downplayed if only by omission. One is Star Chamber, about which there are some very interesting comments concerning its role as a check on public officials in the seventeenth century, but there is perhaps less on its place as the vehicle through which administrative policy could be enforced. Of course, we need a good modern account of Star Chamber. The other is arbitration, an area of great interest to historians perhaps thirty years ago, but not one which raises any legal principles, and which warrants only three page references in the index. Yet arbitration is pretty ubiquitous in early modern society and deserves its place in any account of how the law was used. Arbiters are often lawyers. Much litigation ended in with an extra-curial settlement and it is possible to see much of the work of Chancery as being arbitration.

I am a little sceptical too when Brooks says that ‘it is very difficult to find any evidence at any point during this period of a distinctively “folk justice” that existed outside one kind of local jurisdiction or another’ (p. 424). Difficult, but not impossible, and I think that there are hints from 1549 of alternative systems of justice, both in the sense of short-lived tribunals, but also in the justice administered by the earl of Arundel, both perhaps offering a different balance of equity in which greater weight was given to the needs of the small man, the manorial tenant, and less to the manorial lord. Something of this sort can also be seen in the petitions of 1549 and Norfolk petition of 1553, and the same ideas underpin much equitable litigation in which custom is made to support claims of a distinctively peasant equity. The comments of Archbishop Richard Bancroft in 1609, quoted on p. 117, are very interesting here, suggesting as they do that jury trials at the common law were easier for the gentry to manipulate in their favour so that the poor were disadvantaged in enclosure disputes. A forthcoming paper of mine on the protracted disputes in *Taverner v. Cromwell* from north Norfolk in the third quarter of the sixteenth century shows all too plainly how both parties believed that a jury of yeomen would find differently to a jury of gentry on the same facts. Now this may not amount to ‘folk justice’, but I think we should keep open the possibility that there were voices within the countryside that regarded the common law as the (manorial) lord’s law.

Law, politics and society is underpinned by an enormous range of reading, not only from the printed

materials, but also a mass of unpublished literature from both sides of the Atlantic. One of the key sources that Brooks draws on are the charges given at assizes and quarter sessions by judges or magistrates and he shows compellingly how these articulate not only current preoccupations but also the essentials of the law and legal thinking. Brooks is interested in how far legal understanding permeated English society. I would say a long way. Recall, for instance, the doubts expressed when the levying of the Forced Loan was announced in 1626: the legal principles at stake were widely recognised and understood. Now we have this book, we can appreciate that charges were a form of legal as well as political education. The sources he does not consider are the printed sermons contained in the Book of Homilies, some of which might usefully be seen as contributing to a popular legal consciousness.

Brooks has a good eye for a telling anecdote from the law reports, the lectures given at the inns of courts and the charges. Sometimes he précisés at length, but all too often one is left wanting to reach for the manuscript to read the text for oneself. Hence, to give an example from late in the book, one would like to know more of Francis Ashley's readings on Chapter 29 of Magna Carta given in 1616. It is a matter of Utopian regret that there is no companion volume giving some of the unknown but key texts which remain in manuscript (and law French too): such a volume would be both enlightening and also useful for teaching.

Readers should not allow themselves to be put off by the title. History students tend to run away from the law – the idea that society has abstract principles underpinning it does not appeal to those who read politics in terms of private advantage. In fact they will greatly profit from the book's clear exposition of some of the legal flashpoints of the period – the ex-officio oath, the disputes over the relation of common law to equity and ship money. The book takes its considerable learning lightly and reads supremely well. I suspect – indeed I hope – that in five years it will be seen as a deeply influential work.

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JOSÉ BOSWORTH, PAT HUDSON, MAUREEN JOHNSON and DENISE SHILITOE (eds), *The Middleton Papers. The financial problems of a Yorkshire recusant family in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Yorkshire Archaeological Record Series, 161, 2009). (The Boydell Press, 2010). xxv + 194 pp., 3 figs. £50.

The Middletons were a middle-rank Yorkshire gentry family resident at Stokeld near Spofforth, much of

whose estates were around Middleton, near Ilkley. A substantial accumulation of their archives remains in the possession of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds and, from this, the Society has now printed a selection of papers outlining the financial problems of the family in the later sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century. The first section consists of papers relating to the absence of William Middleton (1551–1614) whilst abroad in 1578–82 (he left his wife in Yorkshire to go first to London and then to travel in Europe, going as far as Naples). In the second are printed accounts for 1653–55, after a later William Middleton had bought the estates back from the Commissioners for the Sale of Delinquents' Estates through intermediaries.

The volume is not a success, and so it is important to explain why. In part the editors hit the nail on the head in their own preface: 'Both [sets of documents] followed a time of national upheaval and personal misfortune and hence are not characteristic of the family's fortunes in less troubled time'. So why are extraordinary documents privileged with publication, but not those reflecting the running of the estates in less disturbed conditions? First we have a volume of accounts kept by one Thomas Robinson, who ran the estates in Middleton's absence, under the supervision of four commissioners acting as a debt trust, together with a few ancillary documents. These include the text of Middleton's English passport and the novelty of a licence to travel around Naples at night, which is illustrated but not transcribed. The account is just an unadorned transcript filling 39 pages without any attempt to tabulate the data, or establish whether the attempt to build capital on the demesne at Stokeld (Middleton's justification for leaving Yorkshire) was successful. It will provide useful material for an undergraduate or even MA student to cut their teeth on.

Second, the main document for the later period is a day book of expenditure, 1653–55. We do not seem to be told whose account this, but it appears to be that of a household steward and contains a mixture of expenditure for agricultural costs, household consumption and the personal costs of family members. This fills 32 pages. It is supported by some correspondence and deeds outlining the family's reacquisition of the estate and the heavy levels of debt they carried over the 1650s and 1660s. The latter material is useful enough, but really ought form the basis of an article in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* or *Northern History*: it is hard to see what might be the justification for its publication in full.

There is then a quite extraordinarily weak introduction by the editors, which never discusses any

of the questions one might like to have answered about this material. There is no attempt to calculate the income of the family at any time and, whilst the title of the volume refers to the family's recusancy, the costs of recusancy to them, as opposed to their civil war royalism, are never explained. (In fact it would seem hard to attribute William Middleton's problems in the 1570s to his Catholicism: the financial penalties on Catholics only really kick in in the 1580s.) The truth is that the introduction does not really exploit the documents, nor set them in a context of the family's fortunes. A rental of 1578 is dismissed as an underestimate of income when compared to earlier and later ones (p. 55), but this is never explored or the comments justified. The later life of William Middleton, and his troubles as a recusant, is left undescribed (although the comments on him in J. T. Cliffe's *Yorkshire gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War* (1969) suggest a much more interesting and historically rewarding figure than the editors acknowledge). Virtually nothing is said about the generation between William Middleton and his grandson who had to buy back his family's estates. The latter William Middleton borrowed to recover his estates from Sir John Lowther of Lowther amongst others, but no use has been made of the Lowther archive at Carlisle, or the accounts that Colin Phillips published as long ago as 1979. It turns out too that the circumstances of the first William Middleton's continental tour have been explored by the same authors in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 72 (2000), which has to be preferred to the summary account in the introduction of this volume.

In sum, this is far less than the book's title promises. The editorial quartet explains that they started this project as part of a WEA Palaeography class. Their transcription doubtless brought them a great deal of pleasure, but whether they have been well advised to press on with publication has to be doubted.

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JANE WALKER (ed.), *Datchworth Tithe Accounts, 1711–1747* (Hertfordshire Record Publications, 25, 2009). lvii + 129 pp., 7 illus., 2 maps. £22 & £3.50 p&p. (available from Mrs. Gwynneth Grimwood, Honorary Treasurer HRS, 50 Sollershott Hall, Sollershott East, Letchworth, Herts., SG6 3PW).

Tithe accounts have long been recognised as important documents for agrarian historians because they can provide information on prices and farming practices for small and medium-sized estates, rather than the institutional accounts and large estate records that tend to dominate our view of the subject. However,

it might be worth adding a rubric applicable to most other primary sources, that they are only valuable when properly understood. As Jane Walker's very detailed introduction to this set of eighteenth-century Hertfordshire accounts makes plain, the complexity of tithing arrangements makes this necessity particularly pressing. The great tithes on all products of the soil might be collected in kind, compounded for wholly or in part in cash, or (until 1549) fall upon the labours of people, in the output of a mill or a fishery. In addition, particularly after the Dissolution, the great tithes might be owned or farmed by a layman, but much 'privatised' monastic land remained exempt from tithes. Not only this, but tithing customs varied from parish to parish, and had to accommodate new crops, such as turnips or potatoes, and others that were difficult to levy in kind, such as milk.

The Datchworth accounts were maintained by Rev. William Hawtayne (1680–1747), chaplain to the Earl of Essex, by whom he was presented to the living in 1709. Hawtayne moved in court circles, and became chaplain to Caroline of Ansbach, Princess of Wales after 1714. In the first few years of his incumbency Hawtayne also kept accounts of his direct farming activities on the 20–24 acres of glebe lands in Datchworth (approximately half of it composed of strips in the village's remaining open fields). Although Hawtayne's income shifted over time largely to (more convenient) composition payments, the accounts reveal that between 1711 and 1717 his total income from Datchworth amounted to between £120 and £140 per annum. Thereafter, wheat prices declined, and it appears that some of the village's farmers were either in some financial difficulties, or less willing to compound in cash, possibly because age was causing them to wind down their farming operations. Either way, Hawtayne rarely managed to extract more than £100 from Datchworth thereafter. Only accounts for 1726 and 1739 are not recorded.

As is often the case with an account book kept by one person over a long period, the Datchworth Accounts are actually something of a miscellany. They include details of composition agreements with a few tenants, various partial surveys of the parish, a tantalisingly brief description of the pattern of farming and the rotation on John Whitfield's farm in 1715, and even the values of grain sold in Northumberland and Cumberland in the winter of 1739, reported by 'Mr Cook a very serious elderly man and at that time a serjeant in Major Farrer's Troop in Earl Cadogans Regiment of Dragoons Quarterd in my parish of Leighton Bossard ... in the year 1741'. Very helpfully, the editor has also included a range of other sources in this volume, including the 1607 Glebe Terrier, 1721 Land Tax returns and poor

relief payments, and some biographical information on some of the tithe payers.

This information adds up to a very useful volume for agrarian historians interested in prices, fluctuations and farming practices in lowland England in this period. The editor's introduction is very thoroughly researched, providing a very detailed background discussion to the law and history of tithes in England, and a very effective analysis of prices and income from the Datchworth tithes. This meticulous introduction, and the transcription and preparation of the accounts themselves, displays the editor's considerable expertise. As ever, agrarian historians should remain profoundly grateful to the continuing efforts of county record societies to organise, sponsor and produce valuable editions of this kind; upon their continuing efforts so much else depends.

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RUTH FACER, *Mary Bacon's World. A farmer's wife in eighteenth-century Hampshire* (Threshold Press Ltd., 2010). xvii + 204 pp., 11 figs., 12 illus. £15.

The economic, social and cultural world of the farmer's wife is largely a mystery to the historian. In contrast to day labourers and servants on the farm, whose work has been effectively reconstructed in recent years through the careful analysis of estate and farm account books, documentary sources detailing the daily routines of the farmer's wife remain extremely scarce. Gordon Mingay's comment, made in the early 1960s, that 'farmers' wives and daughters do not emerge very clearly from the contemporary records' is still pertinent (*English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1963, p. 246). Although an attempt was made a few years ago by this reviewer to recover the contribution made by the farmer's wife using practical farming manuals, encyclopaedias and dictionaries (Verdon, *Agricultural History Review*, 51, 1, 2003), their place in the farming world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still remains obscure. Ruth Facer's book is therefore an extremely welcome and valuable volume.

It traces the practical, religious and literary life of Mary Bacon, a farmer's wife from Hampshire. She came from a strong agricultural and religious background and, from her marriage to William Bacon in 1765, farmed successfully for the rest of the century, first in the village of Cliddesden and then at Aylesfield farm, north of Alton. Although representative of the farmer's wife of the 'middling sort', what is unusual about Mary is that she kept a detailed ledger that has survived and is now housed in the Hampshire Record Office. The ledger, first used as a farm account book by her yeoman

farmer uncle Augustin Kinchin, was taken over by Mary in 1789 and she continued to write in it until 1807, by which time she was a widow. Facer is right to argue that the document gives 'a remarkable insight into the work and mind of a farmer's wife', providing a 'very valuable contribution to the limited knowledge we have of this group of women' (p. 6).

This book is not a complete transcription of the ledger. Rather it rearranges the content into coherently themed chapters (agriculture, religion, the kitchen, medicinal remedies and so on) and sets it within the context of the age using a wide range of other printed material including newspapers, diaries, farming manuals, almanacs and chapbooks. An inventory of goods listed in the ledger reveals that Mary and William were a prosperous couple who took pride in displaying their status through the acquisition of good-quality furniture and furnishing, and who liked to entertain. Where Mary emerges most vividly however is in the section on human and animal ailments, indicating a cost-conscious concern for animal health and status-conscious interest in community welfare; in the section on cookery, where she shows a particular pleasure in cakes and puddings; and in the chapters on her literary and religious interests, which were central to her life. Facer uses this evidence to show that Mary was a woman of fashionable tastes, of rounded but perhaps limited education. Frustratingly there appears to be much less in the ledger on work. There are few clues as to the number of farm workers or domestic servants employed, although Mary had the help of at least two maids, and the income and expenditure of the farm and household are not kept in the ledger. Instead the climate seems to have preoccupied Mary, and her detailed descriptions of the effects of the weather offer interesting insights into what it was like to live through a cold winter in the late eighteenth century.

Ruth Facer immerses herself in the world of her subject and seems to be quite protective of Mary, offering speculations about what she would have thought or done. She hopes that as Mary lay dying 'she was a peace with herself' and found solace in her religious meditations (p. 173). The style and structure make the book accessible for all audiences, and it includes some lovely illustrations. There is no conclusion however, and this could have been a space to contextualize the Bacons in a little more detail. In particular, more on the 'middling sort' and how typical the Bacons were of this group in rural society would have been useful. Davidoff and Hall's pioneering work on the rural communities of East Anglia between 1750 and 1850 (published as part of *Family Fortunes*) would have offered an additional

perspective. That said, this is a fascinating book and certainly succeeds in offering a window into the life of the farmer's wife in the second half of the eighteenth century.

NICOLA VERDON
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JEAN ILA CURRIE, *Three centuries of a Herefordshire village. Putley, 1685 until now (the people, their lives, the farming, the buildings)* (Owlstone Developments Ltd., 2009). x + 256 pp., 80 figs. £18.

While Herefordshire has been served reasonably well by agricultural historians, particularly in relation to cattle breeding and cider production, the wider social and economic history of the county remains under-explored. This volume, which focuses on the history of a small village, six miles from Ledbury, has no pretensions to offer a history of the wider agrarian society of the county. However, it does provide a very interesting illustration of the lives of many of the families who inhabited this community from the eighteenth to the late twentieth century, and seeks to set their experiences in the context of broader developments within the community.

The focus on family lineages, and relations between families and farms, probably derives from the genealogical nature of much of the evidence on which this book is based. As such, it is characteristic of many 'community' histories. It is also reminiscent of the distant ancestor of all such works of parish memory, Richard Gough's *History of Myddle*. This resemblance is compounded here, because in many cases the family histories are linked to surviving memorials in the parish church and churchyard, rather as Gough tied his histories to the holders of pews in Myddle church.

From 1700–1870, Putley was a small, farming, community, of approximately 1,100 acres, 600 within the ancient parish of Putley, and another 500 in the township of Putley and Woolhope. The largest property holders were the Philipps of Putley Court, an early eighteenth-century mansion with 250 acres, and the Gwillims of the Brainge, who owned 350 acres. The remaining lands were distributed among perhaps two dozen yeoman farmers, plus a variety of smallholders. The bulk of this study is concerned to detail the lives of successive generations of these families, and to note family extinctions and changes in ownership.

After 1870, the character of the community was altered by the arrival of John Riley, a Yorkshire textile merchant, who bought Putley Court in 1872 and who changed the mixed arable, pasture and fruit-growing economy of the village by concentrating on commercial

fruit production. This allowed the village to evade the worst of the agricultural depression. From this period, Riley also began buying up neighbouring farms, and turned himself into an autocratic, but relatively benevolent squire, and most of the village into his dependents as tenants or labourers. If this trend was typical of its era, so was its aftermath. In 1925, the Riley estate was sold off and broken up, with the commercial fruit and mixed farms being purchased by owner-operators, who endured the 1930s to benefit from the greater profitability after 1945. The later chapters of the book add to these farming genealogies by harnessing the memories of older village residents to detail life in the community in the mid-twentieth century.

As noted, this a village study, pure and simple. However, the care with which it has been produced, and the efforts taken to trace the histories of individual families and farms, mean that it will be of value not only to those interested in genealogy and local history, but also to provide comparative contextual information for studies of ownership, tenancy and farming practices over the last 300 years.

H. R. FRENCH
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JOHN BOHSTEDT, *The politics of provisions. Food riots, moral economy, and market transition in England, c.1550–1850* (Ashgate, 2010). xi + 321pp., 5 figs, 9 tabs., 5 maps. £65.

John Bohstedt's excellent new book has been some twenty-five years in the making. Like his influential and controversial study of 'community (food) politics' in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England, the *Politics of provisions* also steers a radical course. Taking inspiration from E. P. Thompson's seminal study of the 'moral economy' of the eighteenth-century English market, Bohstedt's study attempts to first contextualise the 'classic' eighteenth-century food riot in terms of earlier antecedents, before taking aim at Thompson's central thesis that food rioters were attacking an 'innovative market economy'. Thompson's rioters were, he argues, operating in a broader historical context of a 'provisions politics' that had started to cohere in the middle of the sixteenth century, a function of the sustained demographic boom and associated economic expansion. Thompson's chronology, so Bohstedt suggests, is therefore wrong. There had been food riots before then, as Buchanan Sharp's studies have shown, but rather post-1550 we see broadly the same social dynamics that underpinned eighteenth-century food riots in place. Indeed, this formative period with its 'maturing market economy' and waves of anti-export riots in 1586, 1597–8, 1614, 1629–31 and 1647–50 was

followed by a discernible downturn in food rioting between c.1650 and 1740.

Why did this 'recession of provisions politics' occur? In an elegant and strikingly original chapter, he suggests post-Civil Wars political shifts and easing population pressures coupled with rising agricultural productivity and market integration allowed England to slip the 'shadow famine' that had plagued the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century. Notwithstanding that the number of market-dependent consumers grew, rising productivity even allowed government to offer bounties to encourage farmers to export. This is not to say that food riots did not occur, but rather that they were far less frequent. Moreover, rather than focusing on 'ports', as riots had done in the earlier period, the focus shifted to newly industrialising communities – Halifax, Rochdale and Sheffield engaged in food rioting for the first time in 1728 – and, especially in the crisis years of the 1690s, the emergent 'bread baskets' of East Anglia and Northamptonshire. Bohstedt also notes a change in the discourses and actions of food rioters in this period, shifting from an earlier focus on 'prodding' governments to support local relief to instead more violent, and direct, attacks on middlemen and merchants. Certain social and occupational groups also became key actors in riots, especially the Cornish tinners and the colliers of Kingswood.

As such, the 'golden age' of food riots that followed in the period between 1740 to the mid-1770s was underpinned in some locales by earlier experiences. However, and this is Bohstedt's key point, many communities were drawn into provision politics for the first time in 1740, not by 'moral offense' but by sheer necessity. The thunder of paternalist moral economy discourses about market villains merely acted to 'lubricate' rioters' actions rather than directly motivating them. So, as the country lunged from one food crisis to another with conditions exacerbated by continued bounty-driven exports, communities responded to a genuine need by targeting those marketers who were perceived to be responsible for shortages and other forms of market manipulation. In particular, bolting mills, the critical cogs in the export trade, were frequent targets. Bolting mills and other such targets were not recent innovations, rather they were symbols of profiteering and often suspected of engaging in adulteration. So, Bohstedt suggests, the 'law of necessity' drove poor consumers to act, and in these emergencies moral bonds and law did not hold. Indeed, to risk execution for rioting was to be seen to be in absolute need. What was novel about the eighteenth century, he suggests, was that further commercialisation created new industrial communities of market-

dependent consumers who were 'ripe for riot'. It was precisely these independent peoples who were to be found leading protests. In market towns that were also parliamentary boroughs, the culture of political bargaining facilitated repeated food riots. For instance in Norwich, Northampton and Nottingham, food riots often assumed remarkably similar forms and utilised the same language as election riots. Such local cultural precedents were, he argues, far more important than paternalist rhetoric, something espoused mainly by country gentlemen and so little exercised in the courts against forestallers and regraters that it 'must have appeared hollow' to poor consumers.

The highpoint of provisions politics came in 1800 when widespread and effectively disciplined food riots won 'rapid relief concessions'. These riots, and to a lesser extent those in 1795, occurred on a national basis, though the organised and industrial communities that had developed traditions of rioting were both first to protest and most successful. Other 'alien tribes', such as navvies and bankers, were also quick to adopt the techniques of long-established community and occupational groups. Responses in 1795 and 1800 were nationally coordinated in relation to the brutal repression of militia-led riots, mirroring the violence of the 1766 Special Commissions, and locally-driven in relation to effecting 'solutions'. Yet it was not this more effective balance between repression and concession achieved in the 1790s and 1800s that sealed the end of the politics of provisions so much as the fact that shops replaced markets as the most important form of provisions retailing. In short, Bohstedt asserts, targets became more diffuse, whilst consumer reliance on credit from shopkeepers meant that riot was no longer possible let alone appropriate. Moreover, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the combination of the formalisation of elite interventions in meeting subsistence needs and, post-1815, declining food prices, meant that the focus of the poor's opprobrium shifted to remuneration and the conditions of their labour.

So, this is a landmark book. Much like Adrian Randall's *Riotous Assemblies* (2006), it represents a high point for the school of protest studies immediately inspired by Thompson's pioneering works. It is written with economy and precision, it wears its many historiographical readings lightly, and makes excellent use – in the latter chapters especially – of a rich archive. The first two substantive chapters are more reliant on secondary material rather than original archival readings, meaning that Bohstedt's analysis necessarily lacks the certainty of the later chapters. Another, minor, consideration is the fact that Bohstedt's riot survey is based on both his archival endeavours and

that of others, leaving the possibility that not all locations have been subjected to the same systematic archival analysis of local sources to which Bohstedt has subjected Devon and Manchester. Readers of this journal might also question the accuracy of Bohstedt's contention – which in itself is a reworking of a claim first made by Roger Wells – that the development of the poor law system with its emphasis upon the surveillance and good character of the poor meant that rural labourers were unlikely to protest. But that these are such slight criticisms merely serves to highlight that Bohstedt's overall achievement is so impressive. This is an important, rigorous, and original book that deserves a wide readership.

CARL J. GRIFFIN
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ANNIE TINDLEY, *The Sutherland Estate, 1850–1920. Aristocratic decline, estate management and land reform* (Scottish Historical Review Monograph, 18) (Edinburgh, 2010). viii + 190 pp. £45.

The Sutherland Estate – one of the largest estates in western Europe during the nineteenth century at over a million acres – became synonymous in radical discourse with oppression and rapacious landlordism as a result of the Clearances of the period 1807–1820. The marriage in 1785 of Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland, with George Leveson-Gower, had permitted agricultural reforms and social engineering to be executed on an unprecedented scale in the most northerly estate on the British mainland. By 1850, the second Duke of Sutherland had been partially successful in recasting the family in a more benevolent, patrician light. Indeed, eleven years after his death, the Irish nationalist *Freeman's Journal* (13 Sept. 1872), wrote that the third Duke showed 'excellent intentions', 'practical philanthropy' and 'paternal energy', praising the money expended on reclamation and resettlement projects. In this enlightened landlordism, believed the *Freeman*, could be found a fine example for Ireland. In her meticulous study, Annie Tindley has produced a work that goes beyond the polarised polemics of earlier works on Sutherland Estate, and presents a model for studies of specific estates. She demonstrates clearly the extent to which apparently 'local' issues in a peripheral area of Britain were intimately connected to much wider British and Imperial economic and social debates.

The Sutherland Estate, 1850–1920 is arranged thematically within a chronological structure, and often focuses on the lives and personalities of the estate managers, explaining how their attitudes illuminated broader political events and social issues. The vast size of the estate ensured that, if the ducal family hoped

to have effective management, it needed to be split into three smaller units: the Tongue, Dunrobin and Scourie managements. These estate managers exerted considerable local power, and Evander MacIver, the factor of Scourie from 1845 until 1895 – whose face stares out from the cover of the book – was the example *par excellence* of a local dictator: trusted by the ruling family and secure in his own belief that he knew what was best for the tenants, yet constantly bewildered by the lack of gratitude shown by those tenants for his and the estate's benevolence.

The book's main narrative commences in 1850, at a time when much of the Highland region was emerging from a destructive famine which was, in a few local cases, as damaging as the simultaneous crisis in Ireland. The west coast of Sutherlandshire was badly affected, and one of the interesting features of the 1850s was the concern of the estate management about 'agitation' – which was a local reaction to hunger but was also treated as a possible local manifestation of European 'socialism' (p. 13). The incredulity of the estate that the crofting population could challenge the landowners' hegemony is a constant theme throughout the period covered. In 1890, for example, Evander MacIver wrote that 'socialism is speeding fast' (p. 94). It is extremely interesting to note that, although contemporaries often highlighted the baneful influence of Ireland on the crofters, John Box, Factor of Tongue, feared in 1889 that some young crofters from Bettyhill – recently returned from seasonal work in America – had imported 'all sorts of democratic, even communistic views' from the USA (p. 102).

Chapter Two deals with the huge drainage and reclamation project undertaken by the third Duke between 1869 and 1893, a scheme which Tindley argues (p. 47) was 'unique in nineteenth-century British agriculture, in terms of the scale of both acreage and expenditure', and is central to the book's thesis, which demands a nuanced and qualified approach to any charges of rapacious landlordism in Sutherland in the nineteenth-century. References to the coal-mining works at Brora (p. 35), which were developed to support the nascent brickworks and lime kilns in the area, are fascinating. Along with the third Duke's role in the development of the Highland Railway, it is clear from Tindley's research that, although the ducal family and their estate management may have harboured hopes of making money from their Highland holdings, and even of 'improving' the lives of their crofting tenants as a result, Sutherlandshire remained a financial black hole for a fortune gained elsewhere.

Overall, the book shows convincingly that the attitudes of the estate management had changed little

from the racially charged 'improvement' mindset of Patrick Sellar and his colleagues. It is possible to identify a thread running through the management of the Sutherland estate, which was informed by paternalism of the clumsiest kind. The book further demonstrates that, far from the smooth-running behemoth of popular discourse, the Sutherland estate was an 'often tortured, overelaborate structure, ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of the period' (p. 173). Dr Tindley is to be congratulated not only for undertaking a mammoth task in assiduously working through these papers, but also presenting the results in such a thorough, well-analysed and readable manner. She has set a high standard for further research on individual estates.

ANDREW G. NEWBY

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EILEEN WALLACE, *Children of the labouring poor. The working lives of children in nineteenth-century Hertfordshire* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010). xv + 168 pp., 35 illus. £14.99

This is a concise and accessible account of the working and living conditions experienced by children of the labouring poor in nineteenth-century Hertfordshire. It is based upon a range of primary sources. Children are defined as those aged 17 years and under. The introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the changing perception of childhood in the nineteenth century, alongside information on the economic and social history of Hertfordshire in general. The main body of the book is then divided into six chapters each focusing on occupations that employed children: agriculture, straw plaiting, silk throwing, paper making, brick making and chimney sweeping. All of these chapters begin with some general background on the origins, history and location of these industries in the county before exploring the types of processes children were employed in, the working conditions that prevailed and how these changed over time. Economic change is shown to have a major (downward) impact on the demand for child labour over the course of the century. State intervention also emerges as a key theme. By the late nineteenth century, hours of work were restricted by law and compulsory elementary education introduced formal learning. The latter created tension between employers, parents and government officials, and the battleground over the traditional straw-plaiting schools, whose focus was on work, and state education in the 1870s is well drawn in chapter 3.

Other less well-known facets of child labour also come to light – the pauper apprentices recruited from London workhouses to work in the Hertfordshire silk mills, the link with Dickens through his account of the

St Albans brickfields in *Bleak House*, and the death of chimney sweep James Dye and the ramifications of that case. The book draws widely on a range of contemporary reports and illustrations. It reproduces interesting extracts from local newspapers, Parliamentary Papers and school log books in an attempt to illuminate the world of work. These are pertinent and well-chosen, although sometimes used rather uncritically. An analysis of how the voices of child workers interviewed by parliamentary commissioners in the 1840s and 1860s were selected and reproduced would have been useful. Use of farm account books might have revealed more detailed information on wage levels in agriculture. The book also draws upon the Hertfordshire census figures to provide an idea of the level of child employment in the different industries, but more could have been made of how reliable (or not) these are, and how they can be used to reveal regional patterns of employment and the familial and household circumstances of child workers. These criticisms are perhaps unfair ones to make of a book that is aimed at a general readership. It is well produced and illustrated and is a good example of local history well done.

NICOLA VERDON

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JEREMY BURCHARDT and JACQUELINE COOPER (eds), *Breaking new ground. Nineteenth-century allotments from local sources* (FACRHS Publication, 2010). ix + 272 pp., 4 figs., 18 illus., 17 tabs., 20 maps. £12 p. & p. From Family and Community Historical Research Society Limited, Fir Trees, 12 Fryer Close, Chesham, Bucks., HP5 1RD.

A study of allotments might appear to be rather a narrow field of research yet this study demonstrates how allotments can be used as a prism through which to explore broad issues in the nineteenth-century countryside. The major interpretative shift of the book is that allotments should be seen as a mainstream part of community life rather than just for the poorest members of the community.

The research project that underpins this book was set up by the Family and Community Historical Research Project (FACHRS) with Jeremy Burchardt as academic advisor. The research project and this book complement Burchardt's research published in *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873*. Volunteer researchers were recruited for 30 of the 39 historic English counties and they provided a mass of quantitative and very interesting qualitative material. This publication is in two parts; a book and a data CD containing the Combined Allotments Database.

The book has a tripartite structure. The first part

is an introduction written by the two editors followed by an overview and summary of the project's findings written by Burchardt. In the introduction the interplay of rural poverty, the New Poor Law and Captain Swing are examined, with Burchardt arguing that it was the persistence of rural unemployment and low wages that was the basis for allotment provision. The following overview and summary chapter contains a wealth of information (drawn from the quantitative and qualitative material amassed by the researchers) and analysis. An examination of allotment holders showed that they were not all held by agricultural labourers but that some craftsmen and tradesmen also rented allotments. Other areas explored are the roles of the provincial press, the clergy and the Labourer's Friend Society in promoting and providing allotments. The second section of the book is a series of six county studies each written by the researchers for that county. The final section of the book contains eight themed chapters. One by Chris Leivers examines the provision of allotments in Derbyshire industrial communities, arguing that the provision of housing (with gardens and allotments) by employers was primarily driven by the need to attract and retain workers. This chapter also examines paternalism, which is a theme that echoes throughout the book.

The Combined Allotment Database includes the data gathered by Burchardt for his study and consists of 3503 records for 2281 unique allotment sites. Various chapters within the book demonstrate how an analysis of the data can be used to enrich local studies of allotments. For example the Allotment Tenants List contains records for 1124 individual allotment holders and it also provides some information on occupation derived from census enumerator's books.

One minor complaint is that the definition of an allotment is not given until p.12 and would have benefited from being highlighted earlier in the book. A recent survey by the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners established that the minimum value of fruit and vegetables produced on a 250 square-metre allotment was £1564, which gave a profit of £1362 until labour costs were taken into account, when the net profit would have been just £192. This contemporary survey illustrates the continuing role that allotments play in enabling an allotment holder to improve their living standard through their 'free labour'.

This book, packed with primary research and analysis, will appeal to a wide range of readers. The editors, contributors and researchers are to be congratulated on the quality and depth of their research.

ANNE MEREDITH
Guildford

Elsewhere and General

NADINE VIVIER (ed.), *The state and rural societies. Policy and education in Europe, 1750–2000* (Brepols, 2008). 278 pp., 6 figs., 12 tabs. €63.50.

This book, edited by Nadine Vivier, is the result of work by an international group of historians brought together by the COST network A35 in the working group dedicated to 'State and rural societies'. The aim of the book is to show the evolution and changes of the relations between rural societies and the state in Europe from the second half of the eighteenth century to the twentieth, that is, the historical period in which the effects of the Industrial Revolution progressively modified and reduced the economic and social relevance of the agrarian sector in Europe.

The book includes the introduction and 13 broad surveys and in-depth studies, which discuss a variety of aspects of the rural economy and life in which public authorities intervened during the analyzed centuries. This is not a new subject, but this book is particularly interesting because it concentrates on a number of different areas of Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. This provides an opportunity to observe why and how the European states intervened and changed the rules in some important economic and social matters such as the property rights, the market regulations, the tax system, agrarian contracts, rural credit, demographic policy and rural education. Although many European governments recognised industrial development as a source of rising income, they continued to regard the countryside as the basis of national prosperity. They sought to increase agricultural output in order to guarantee a healthy and increasing population, and this oriented state intervention towards improving productive systems and the standard of living in rural areas. This book explains the reasons for this intervention and how policies of rural development were implemented effectively, and also allows scholars to make some interesting comparisons in the European context.

Each contributor illustrates that the efficiency of state intervention in the agrarian sector and rural life obviously depended on the quality of public policy formation and on the ability of government to enforce the new rules. The chapters chart the implications of the different national approaches, noting, for example, the effects of differing levels of private sector involvement, or the varying amounts of public money invested in agriculture. These observations will allow scholars to think critically about the factors that determined the success or the failure of governmental agricultural

policies. The chapters demonstrate that these factors included the historical timing of government intervention, the levels of resistance to changes within village society, and also the sensitivity of political 'élites' to the social and economic needs of the countryside. Although each national contribution confines itself to some of these aspects within a particular time-frame, the extensive and detailed introduction draws together the conclusions of all the historians involved in this working group and, at the same time, enables a deeper appreciation of the relevance of each article to the overall aims of the volume.

The introduction clearly explains the major concerns of the state in relation to European agriculture. These included efforts to modernise systems of agricultural production, particularly yields, the improvement of rural education, and also in securing electoral support from rural areas for the government. It also illustrates the difficult relations that existed in many countries between the state, landowners and intermediate bodies (such as the agricultural societies, 'comices agricoles', farmers' unions and municipal councils), and the breadth of state intervention in economic and social matters, for example by limiting private property rights in the name of public utility, or through the financing of the development of rural schooling and training.

Other contributions shed more light on particular themes. They illustrate how Physiocracy and Cameralism tried to stimulate agrarian growth in the eighteenth century, and show the different ways in which the French and German authorities gathered agrarian statistics, the fundamental data on which assessments of efficient agrarian policy were based. Chapters also highlight how agricultural policy in Belgium was influenced strongly by the growth of the 'Catholic bloc', between the late nineteenth century and World War I; the formation of agricultural public institutions and the model of state intervention in the Iberian Peninsula; and the evolution of French governmental policy towards the development of rural society, the laws regulating agricultural education, and collective agricultural practices. For the German areas, articles show how agrarian reforms and farm modernisation were financed (as in the case of the Duchy of Brunswick), and also the origin of the Prussian Chambers of Agriculture as institutions representing the needs of farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture as well as helping the development of agrarian sector and the promotion of rural education. Furthermore, other contributors explain the direct intervention of the state or its support to private institutions for the development of rural education in Hungary (through the first College of Farming), Italy (particularly in

the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), and Sweden (where the state had to overcome elite opposition to taxation to fund new rural schools and vocational training in the nineteenth century). Rural education also features in contributions concerning Portugal, Spain and France, as well as in a chapter on agricultural education and training in the United Kingdom between 1850 and 2000. This breadth of analysis will provide scholars with a detailed overview of changes in the economic and social role of the agrarian sector, and the consequence of shifts in the state's agricultural policies.

This book ought to be found in every academic library because it will stimulate scholars to develop new analyses and comparative research into the relation between states and rural societies across Europe. It also provides an opportunity for scholars to enlarge their knowledge of other national historiographies by using the broad and up-to-date bibliographies provided by each contributor's references.

PAOLO TEDESCHI
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JAN BIELEMAN, *Five Centuries of Dutch Farming. A short history of Dutch agriculture, 1500–2000* (Mansholt publication series – volume 8, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2010). 367 pp., 37 figs., 57 illus., 56 tabs., 15 maps. €60.

This book is a concise and abridged English version of Jan Bieleman's important history of Dutch agriculture since 1500, originally published in 1992 and reworked and extended in 2008. With this textbook Bieleman has positioned himself firmly as the most eminent Dutch agro-historian of the last two decades. As in his other publications he firmly attacks traditionally widespread views of an unchanging rural society before the introduction of fertilisers. Next to this, he underlines the enormous variety in agricultural production systems in the relatively small Dutch territory, which must be attributed to the great variety of 'geological landscapes and soil types' (p. 26) combined with a Von-Thünen-like relationship with the distance to the main urban markets.

His approach makes this book a real 'cows and ploughs history' (preface). However, Bieleman states he also wants to deal with agricultural (agrarian) history in a broader sense. That is, 'the history of farming in its economic and social context, where individual farm management has a relationship with markets, price mechanisms, labour costs, tax burden, free holding and tenancy, common farming institutions, cooperatives, farmers' societies and more' (p. 17).

The agricultural history of the Netherlands has an

appeal that extends beyond a Dutch readership. As one of the most urbanized regions in the early modern world, it presents an excellent example of how urbanization and market demand influences agriculture in both the immediate vicinity and over larger distances. Dutch agriculture was also remarkable for its high productivity (per capita and per acre) for over five centuries. As a result, the Netherlands remains one of the world's leading agricultural exporters, despite its limited land area. Bieleman states that the basis of this continuing success was a process of 'intensification' in which 'ever more labour and/or capital was deployed in order to increase production', where capital also includes technology and knowledge.

In the sixteenth century agriculture in the Dutch coastal provinces was indeed heavily influenced by the extensive and increasing urbanisation. Growing market-orientation resulted in specialisation in specific agricultural products (for instance horticulture or madder), in high productivity, and in an increasing number of rural specialists working outside agriculture. Consequently, only a minority of the total coastal population was working in agriculture in the seventeenth century. The Dutch coastal food market and the coastal farmers had both become fully integrated into national and international markets, with, for instance, substantial imports of grain from the Baltic and oxen from Denmark, and large exports of cheese to France. The effects in the peripheral, less urbanized inland provinces were more limited. Nevertheless, inland agriculture also underwent drastic changes due to the rising market opportunities, which were heavily dependent on the local geographical situation.

For the lengthy period of de-urbanisation between 1650 and 1850, Bieleman depicts the many minor changes in agricultural production in coastal and inland regions as a reaction to changing market circumstances. In this respect, he adheres to the 'secular trend', locating these developments within a long-term positive relationship between (agricultural) prices and population growth. Unfortunately, the term 'secular trend' only describes, but does not in any way explain, these long-term developments.

During the period of the Industrial Revolution, the Netherlands lost its position as a 'core economy', though it became an export nation specialising in 'luxury' livestock and horticultural products, directed first to the English market, and then to countries all over the world. Dutch agriculture remained successful in the long run, thanks to rigorous scientific development and mechanisation from 1850 onwards, which Bieleman again illustrates with many examples. Remarkably, technological development went together with rising

inputs of agricultural labour until about 1950. By treating many branches of agriculture (wheat, sugar beet, potato, pigs, poultry and dairy) separately for the second half of the twentieth century, Bieleman shows the emergence of what is often called 'agribusiness' in the Netherlands. Despite employing a diminishing share of the labour force, and being subject to increasing environmental and ecological problems, the high productivity of agriculture remains one of the strengths of the Dutch economy.

It is only possible to give a slight idea of the wealth of information Bieleman provides. However, the enormous amount of detail for different regions does not make this book a particularly easy read. Nevertheless it is, without doubt, an indispensable reference work. For even more data, the Dutch version *Boeren in Nederland, Geschiedenis van de landbouw 1500–2000* (2008), which is almost twice as big, can be consulted.

Bieleman's overview is, nevertheless, unsatisfactory in places. There are few quantitative generalisations for the earlier period in particular. He offers no systematic comparison between regions, and no construction of quantitative indicators for productivity, for the relative importance of the many products over time, for the increase in total labour-input, and for acres cultivated, or wage movements and so on. *Five centuries of farming* provides few ingenious constructions of the development of Dutch agriculture in the past or new methods and theoretical insights. The images presented are mostly directly derived from older literature, and are usually purely illustrative in character. Recent publications, such as Knibbe's provincial study *Lokkich Fryslan* (2006) about the period 1505–1830 and the results of the nineteenth-century Dutch National Accounts Project are not taken into account. In addition, Bieleman hardly presents any international comparisons, because recent non-Dutch literature has not been incorporated. Notwithstanding these weak points, though, this book remains an excellent way to become thoroughly informed about the history of Dutch agriculture.

RICHARD PAPING
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JÁNOS ESTÓK, GYÖRGY FEHÉR, PÉTER GUNST and ZSUZSANNA VARGA, *History of Hungarian agriculture and rural life, 1848–2004* (Argumentum Publishing House and Museum of Hungarian Agriculture, 2004). 294 pp., illus. £28.

Present-day Hungary, the land east of the Alps, west of the Transylvanian hills, and south of the Carpathian Mountains, is one of the best-endowed agricultural

areas of the European Union. With good land in the Danube valley and the Great Hungarian Plain, only two people to each hectare of cultivated land (Great Britain has nearly ten), and about ten per cent of its working population still involved in agriculture, it is a major producer and exporter of cereals, oilseeds, fruit, wine and livestock products. This book was published by the Museum of Hungarian Agriculture in the year in which Hungary became part of the European Union, and its agriculture subject to the Common Agricultural Policy. It is a survey volume, devoid of any academic apparatus, but as a superbly illustrated account of the main events and trends over the last 150 years or so, it offers an excellent introduction to Hungarian agriculture and rural life.

The three parts into which the book is divided reflect the political changes that have had such an impact on land and farming. János Estók and György Fehér cover the period from the 1848 revolution to the end of the First World War, when over half of the Hungarian national income was still produced by agriculture. They discuss the politics of agriculture – Hungary had a Ministry of Agriculture from 1848 and a national agricultural association from 1849 – and the country's integration into European markets as a food exporter and an agricultural machinery importer. British firms such as Garrett, Hornsby, and Clayton and Shuttlesworth were all selling in the Hungarian market by the 1860s. The phylloxera outbreak occurred a little later in Hungary than elsewhere but was just as devastating. Mechanisation, animal breeding, and the developing food industry meant that the agricultural sector in the late nineteenth century was commercially dynamic, but the imbalance in the estate structure continued. In 1895 only one per cent of holdings were larger than 575 hectares, but these bigger farms or estates covered 48 per cent of the country.

The Treaty of Trianon, negotiated in the aftermath of World War I, resulted in the loss of more than half of pre-war Hungary's land and population, and an even greater proportion of its livestock. A stretch of the north became Slovakia, Transylvania on the eastern side became part of Romania, and some southern districts went to form part of the new country of Yugoslavia. Despite various largely abortive attempts at land reform, Hungary remained a country dominated, in numerical terms, by a poor peasant class, with an inadequate diet and insufficient income, as Péter Gunst argues in his account of the 1919–45 period, to provide enough demand to stimulate industrial production. Wartime food exports to Germany failed to ameliorate the situation, for they were based on a system of forced deliveries, and finally German occupation followed by

Soviet invasion completed the ruination of Hungarian agriculture. By the spring of 1945 the granaries and livestock had been looted, the land lay uncultivated, thousands of men had been taken away as prisoners of war, and starvation loomed. Post-war recovery, complicated by the communist policies of forced collectivization and compulsory deliveries, took a long time, as Zsuzsanna Varga shows in the final part of the book. It was not until the mid-1960s that rural electrification, mechanised farming and other technical changes, and a significant decrease in the farm labour force, began to produce a relatively modern agricultural sector. Then the process of adjusting to a new political system had to begin all over again in the 1990s. It is a pattern of change that is foreign to Western Europe, but repeated right across Eastern Europe, and this volume forms a fascinating case study of the process.

PAUL BRASSLEY
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ROHLAND SCHUKNECHT, *British colonial development policy after the Second World War. The case of Sukumaland, Tanganyika* (LIT Verlag, 2010). 364 pp. €34.90.

In the last two decades, historians, political scientists and economists have paid a great deal of attention to the study of colonial rural development policies during the twentieth century in British and French colonies in Africa and elsewhere. One of their main conclusions was that there was a gradual shift from common notions of 'laissez faire' and indirect rule towards a more interventionist policy of 'colonial development and welfare', especially after World War Two. In these developmentalist initiatives, expert knowledge played a crucial role. Colonial historians and historians of science and technology have long been concerned about how and why authorities tried to stimulate 'modernization' and change in colonial territories. Various scholars stressed that agricultural expertise and science in colonies, far from representing a mere transfer of European scientific knowledge, took shape in the colonial context itself. The multi-layered role that science and expert knowledge played in the colonial enterprise is being exposed via case studies for several countries and colonial regions. Agricultural development policy and the introduction of modern western science aimed at replacing or correcting allegedly inefficient and destructive African ways of farming. In the past, many studies started from the assumptions that modern or western techniques and knowledge replaced or subordinated local habits, local farmers were exploited, and local creativity was suppressed. This evaluation resulted in an unbalanced

picture that sketched African (or other colonized) farmers merely as retarded or as victims, and underestimated their creative potential, social resilience and individual agency. Recently, historians have argued more and more that development and economic growth in (former) colonies not only occurred as a result of colonial development plans, but also independently of them.

Rohland Schuknecht's research accords with these conclusions. This book is the published version of his doctoral thesis, which was submitted at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2008. The author studies British colonial development policy after the Second World War in detail and examines the results of its application. As a case study he takes Sukumaland, a region of about 18,000 square miles and one million inhabitants in north-western Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania). This region was once part of the colony of German East Africa but came under British rule after World War I. This was confirmed by a League of Nations Mandate, later becoming a United Nations Trust Territory (Tanganyika achieved independence in 1961). Sukumaland was one of the tropical areas where Britain unfolded a variety of colonial rural development interventions. Schuknecht describes and analyses this development narrative successfully. Moreover, he does not treat the region as a 'development island', but approaches it as part of the wider imperial and territorial framework of British colonialism. Schuknecht has consulted archives in Tanzania (in the national capital of Dar Es Salaam and in the region of Mwanza) and at the National Archives in Kew.

In his book Schuknecht formulates a number of interesting conclusions. In official reports and debates the British stressed the importance of constitutional development, local government reform, labour market reforms, rural and industrial modernization and the expansion of education and social services. Agricultural policy was based on two major objectives: augmenting production and preserving ecological stability. Colonial experts and scientists attempted to correct inefficient and destructive African ways of land and resource use, and to restrict the movement of people and livestock. They wanted to replace the existing Sukuma practices of agriculture and animal husbandry with a more modern mixed farming, in order to conserve natural resources and to increase productivity at the same time. All this was achieved by compulsion.

In practice, though, British colonial officials and experts were rather unwilling to introduce new measures that could undermine the old systems of peasant agriculture and indirect rule that were well established during the interwar period. It is clear

that colonial agricultural experts wanted to improve and to amend agricultural practices in Sukumaland, rather than to change them radically. Nevertheless the agricultural system was modernised, for example via initiatives towards large-scale mechanisation and cooperative marketing, but mostly these were African enterprises rather than discrete colonial policies. Schuknecht demonstrates convincingly that rural modernisation in Sukumaland often occurred not as a result of development efforts but independently or contrary to them. One example of this is that, while colonial officials still regarded self-sufficiency in food as an integral part of the local peasant agriculture, many Sukuma farmers concentrated increasingly on the cultivation of cotton, as food could be bought easily in markets and in shops because farmers got good prices for their cash crops.

The above-mentioned conclusions demonstrate the limited scope and influence of colonial development plans, especially in the long term. Colonial developers treated Sukumaland as a laboratory for agricultural development; they judged the Sukuma practices of land and resource use as (environmentally) dangerous and backward. They had a blind faith in the worth of western 'scientific' agriculture, but many of these western ideas and concepts often proved to be of limited value. One of the reasons for this failure was the lack of contact between colonial developers and Sukuma farmers. British, or Western scientists in general, regarded themselves as agents of progress, while perceiving local farmers as backward and lazy. Although Sukuma farmers generally did not respond to colonial rural development policies and recommendations of experts in the desired way, these initiatives had a profound impact. They eroded the fragile consensus on which the colonial system was built, for instance by demonstrating that local chiefs were puppets of the colonial system. The new African political and economic elites used this sentiment in the 1950s and 1960s to show that colonial development initiatives were not in the interest of the common people. This prepared the ground for Sukumaland and Tanganyika's final transition to independence.

YVES SEGERS

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KAREN BROWN and DANIEL GILFOYLE (eds), *Healing the herds. Disease, livestock economies, and the globalization of veterinary medicine* (Ohio University Press, 2010). ix + 299 pp., 6 figs, 10 tabs. £22.50.

Compared to other disciplines, historians of medicine have been very slow to move away from exclusively

human-centric approaches to embrace non-humans and ecologies of health. This is despite the fact that human-animal-environment interactions were and are critical to many of their favoured topics, for example, plague and malaria. Because they draw connections with work in geography, social anthropology and other disciplines, Karen Brown and Daniel Gilfoyle's excellent collection of essays on disease and livestock economies is a welcome sign that things are changing in the history of medicine and that the subject is becoming more interdisciplinary. The editors identify four main themes addressed by their contributors: the institutionalisation of veterinary medicine; the global spread of zoonotic diseases; diseases that follow the transfer of livestock to new environments; and colonialism and veterinary medicine. The essays range widely across time and space, from epizootic disease in the Netherlands in the early eighteenth century to the Philippines in the mid-twentieth century. Given the focus on livestock diseases, questions of political economy loom large, for example, in Abigail Woods's account of the attempts in Britain in the 1940s to use veterinary expertise to boost livestock production to meet wartime shortages and post-war economic priorities. John Fisher and Robert Peden demonstrate the uses of specific and locally adapted veterinary practices to address, respectively, the endemic problems of sheep scab in Australia and foot rot in New Zealand. However, it was major epizootics, especially rinderpest (cattle plague), that swept across national boundaries that had the greatest impact upon veterinary institutions. There are essays on the disease in the Netherlands, Germany, the Philippines, and East Africa, all of which show that, while it was a challenge to veterinarians, who mostly relied upon so-called administrative actions, rather than science, its visitations were an opportunity to develop veterinary institutions and acted as a stimulus to research. Interestingly, Daniel Doepper tells how, while the first two rinderpest epizootics in the Philippines were 'like biblical plagues' in their devastation of the livestock economy, a third in wave in the 1910s was managed, if not controlled, by a combination of immunisation and administrative actions.

The discussions of livestock diseases and veterinary medicine in colonial settings show the value of interdisciplinary approaches. Martine Barwegen, who also discusses rinderpest, shows the importance of local knowledge and veterinary expertise in Java in the 1870s. She concludes that state control policies probably made the outbreak worse, as the disease was already enzootic, with indigenous farming methods maintaining an ecological balance that prevented the

disease from becoming epizootic. Lotte Hughes uses anthropological methods to construct a narrative of how the Purkho Masai reacted to the impact of colonial rule in Kenya on their livestock husbandry. She suggests that in established grazing areas there was an ecological balance between pathogens, vectors, animals and humans that kept the disease at low levels, and that inevitably such conditions could not be replicated in the reserves they were moved to, ironically to escape East Coast Fever. Saverio Kratli works on the nomadic herders, the WoDaaBe, in the Sahel region of West Africa. He uses actor network theory in his chapter to explore the various colonial knowledges and practices that came together to produce a consensus about what breeds were appropriate for the new colonial environment, which was, of course, a natural-cultural hybrid. The editors make this point more clearly their introduction, observing that in colonial settings, 'the practice of veterinary medicine was as much about reordering indigenous society as it was about controlling disease' (p. 12). Finally in this vein, David Anderson charts the development of the Kenyan cattle trade in the inter-war period and gives us an economic history that takes the 'local' seriously, both in terms of the world views and agency of African pastoralists and the effectiveness of administrative and veterinary rule across the colony and at its borders. The editors close the volume with an agenda for further work on other times, places, animals and diseases, and for studies that are more sensitive to gender and local cultures. Such studies would, of course, be very valuable, but Karen Brown and Dan Gilfoyle have already in this collection addressed many of these issues, I expect this volume will stimulate scholars in many disciplines to explore the history of veterinary medicine and animal diseases.

MICHAEL WORBOYS

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CORMAC Ó GRÁDA, *Famine. A short history* (Princeton UP, 2009). xvi + 327 pp. 36 figs. £13.95.

In this learned and humane book, Cormac Ó Gráda offers a wide-ranging account of famine in human society. The first three chapters review famine and the frequency of famine, describe what actually happens in famines, and explain how famines were prevented and coped with when they occurred. The fourth chapter discusses famine demography (including the shortfall in births). Chapters then follow on 'markets and famine' and 'entitlements' (perhaps the most important in the book). Chapter seven discusses 'private and public action', eight treats 'the violence of government' and famine as a form of war, and chapter nine asks whether we have seen the end of famine.

In a sense, the book falls into three chronological parts. The first reviews famine over a very long period, showing how reactions to food shortages have remained very similar over extended periods of time. Ó Gráda has gathered material from the classical societies of the Mediterranean, pre-colonial India and pre-modern China. Deployed side-by-side with examples drawn from the experience of medieval and early modern Europe and, of course, Ireland in the nineteenth century, Ó Gráda weaves his examples into a scintillating if depressing tapestry. His account of the place of middlemen runs from Cicero to the execution of corn traders in Ethiopia in 1974. The instinct to deny shortage and to turn on the vendors of corn turns out to be a very old one, as is the government instinct to meddle in markets in years of high prices and distress. Most pre-industrial societies seem to have been sufficiently resilient to come through a single year of harvest failure without major mortality: but two successive years crippled them and produced famine deaths in the second year. Incidentally, he dismisses famine as having much of a role as Malthus's preventive check. Second, we have a discussion of twentieth-century famine, showing how famine was so often caused by government and war, and might be a political tool. This is perhaps the real heart of the book. Ó Gráda is particularly interesting on the way in which some modern societies undergoing massive food deprivation managed to sustain elementary rules of cleanliness and sanitation and so avoid the worst of famine-sponsored disease. Third, Ó Gráda asks whether we have entered an age which has seen an 'end to famine'. Food is easier to move, governments and NGOs are now alert to the early warning signs of distress and cheap medical treatments are available, which can sustain the life of the malnourished.

Whilst the book offers a superb overview, the section which will attract most attention is Ó Gráda's re-examination of the Bengal famine of 1943–4. This has a particular place in famine studies as it provides the basis for Sen's entitlement thesis, which placed an emphasis on the failure of markets to deliver foodstuffs equitably in famine conditions. Thus Sen explained the paradox that there could be a famine when there was no shortage of foodstuffs. As I have argued myself, this has become too pervasive an explanation, and it ignores the agricultural roots of famine. Ó Gráda's views will be familiar to readers of his Tawney lecture to the Economic History Society, now printed in the Economic History Review supplement *Feeding the Masses* (2008). He finds that there was an absolute shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal. Persistent attempts by the authorities to find hoarded foodstuffs failed

to discover any. Other supply lines were disrupted by wartime conditions. The Bengal government was delusional about the supplies at its disposal until too late. Entitlements may well explain how food is distributed within a society under stress, but Ó Gráda is in no doubt that at the root of the Bengal Crisis was an episode of Food Availability Decline (FAD).

On one point I find myself stimulated by Ó Gráda into wondering whether he is right. Whilst Ó Gráda finds no evidence of hoarding in Bengal, he also invokes the 'carryover' from year to year a little too much for my taste (see pp. 148–9, 151 and other references). I doubt whether there is such a thing in pre-industrial societies. Holding back foodstuffs until late in the year to maximise profit could always be hazardous. It might well be unpopular, leading to the seizure of stocks by public action or government initiative, but moreover, the expectation of high end-of-year prices might not be realised if either demand collapsed for want of purchasing power (Sen's entitlements) or supplies came in from abroad. As for keeping grain from year to year, do we really know if anyone did this, except of course the few state-sponsored granaries (in Sweden, for example)? It was, after all, a sure way to lose value, the stored grain shrinking in volume as pests ate it: the resulting grain was probably not highly marketable given that in most years it would be sold in the new season to make room for more. In any case, how much would need to be carried forwards as a buffer stock to make much of an impact on the following year's price? If we know relatively little about the agricultural origins of famines, then we also know less than we should about the activities of the middlemen and the international trade in grain.

Having said that, Ó Gráda's book is both learned and humane, it is also elegant in both its writing and production. Occasionally I thought that Ó Gráda was a little laconic – a further sentence of recapitulation to drive home a point would sometimes have been welcome. It is a wise book about an unpalatable subject.

R. W. HOYLE
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GAIL M. HOLLANDER, *Raising cane in the 'Glades. The global sugar trade and the transformation of Florida* (The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

xviii + 348 pp., 6 figs., 25 illus., 5 tabs. £23.50.

Florida's Everglades are known to be both a natural paradise and an ecological tragedy as a swampland dying from thirst. The latter is not caused by recent overexploitation. The Everglades' environmental challenges are the result of a process that goes back

to the nineteenth century in which Florida's sugar industry played a crucial role. Therefore, Florida's sugarcane agro-industry became the centre of the recent political tempest over the Everglades' restoration program. This present-day political struggle sets the stage for Gail M. Hollander's environmental history of *Raising cane in the 'Glades. The global sugar trade and the transformation of Florida*.

In seven chapters, Hollander presents the history of the Everglades as a history of industrialisation and agro-environmental conflicts, chronologically starting with the US acquisition of Florida in 1822 and ending with today's environmental problems. These conflicts occurred, among others, between beet and cane producers, producers and consumers, sugar cane growers and refiners, Cuba and Florida, and producers and environmentalists. By situating these conflicts in their local, national, regional, and international contexts, Hollander's book interestingly brings together a global history of sugar trade in the age of globalisation, an economic and technical history of Florida's sugar industry, a socio-political history of national sugar lobbying, and an environmental history of the Everglades as a region that has to be understood as a part of the political economy of food and agriculture in the United States.

In the late nineteenth century, the draining of the Everglades was inspired by the 'big sugar' producers' anxiety regarding the place of the US sugar economy in the global sugar trade, as well as the question of the US being dependent on sugar imports. 'Big sugar' producers demanded that hundreds of thousands of acres of swampland be drained in order to grow sugar cane. At the same time, and in order to defend America's 'sugar bowl', they lobbied for a national protection policy, especially against their strong Cuban competitors. This was the period in which Florida's sugar producers established the lobbying policy that they would maintain from then onwards. In the early twentieth century, sugar became an indispensable part of the American's basket of goods. Therefore, provision of sugar was a national security concern. This priority

of US policy can be traced throughout the first half of the twentieth century and the Cold War era. During and between the World Wars, cheap foreign sugar, especially from Cuba, had been the major source of supply to the US. The Cuban revolution of 1959 put an end to these imports. In turn, Florida's sugar production grew fivefold. The good days for Florida's sugar industry came to an end in the 1980s and 1990s, when producers had to face public criticism of the environmental damage they caused. Even so, Florida's sugar industry has not lost its importance for the US economy at the end of the twentieth century. In the face of the increasing global oil shortage, sugar has emerged as a promising alternative source of energy. Therefore it seems that the end has not yet come for the environmental story of raising cane in the 'Glades. For these reasons, the political economy of Florida's sugar industry is the skeleton of Hollander's story.

Hollander presents Cuba as the counterpart to Florida's sugar industry. Its sugar production served as a model for Florida, while at the same time it was Florida's strongest competitor. Therefore, a comparative outlook between Florida's and Cuba's environmental challenges would have been an interesting addendum to the book. Furthermore, it would have been worthwhile not only to focus on economic competition in the American market, but also to fathom the competition for quotas in international trade. The twentieth century has been the century of international economic planning. The conflict about global quotas between Florida's and Cuba's industry would have provided an interesting *pars pro toto* for international agreements which, by and large, are analytically under-represented in this book about the global sugar trade.

These are only minor criticisms. *Raising cane in the 'Glades* is an important contribution to the history of globalisation, agriculture, commodities and environment. It shows in a fascinating way the 'glocalisation' effects of global commodity trade and its local environmental implications.

FRITZ GEORG VON GRAEVENITZ
EUI (Florence)