

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

DELLA HOOKE, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England. Literature, lore and landscape* (Boydell Press, 2010).
x + 310 pp., 21 figs., 6 illus., 3 tabs. £50.

Both author and publisher should be congratulated on the appearance of this handsome book. Solid and beautifully printed, and illustrated with clear and relevant figures, it is a pleasure to handle. Straightforward in style, encyclopaedic and authoritative in content, consistent in quality, and shot through with a vivid aesthetic appreciation of trees, it is a pleasure to read.

The book is divided into three sections. The first takes as its focus the symbolism of trees in pre-Christian and Christian contexts, in Anglo-Saxon and other contemporary literature, and finally as an element in national consciousness. The second section locates trees and woodland in the Anglo-Saxon landscape, discussing the nature and distribution of Anglo-Saxon woodland, the evidence for woodland management in early charters, and the use of individual trees or groups of trees in boundaries, assembly places and significant locations. The last section deals with trees across three ecological settings, wood–pasture and ‘ancient’ countryside, damp places, and open or planned landscapes. There is a critical evaluation of early medieval sources, an extensive bibliography and a sound index.

The volume is valuable in a number of ways. It is a compendium of primary material drawn from an impressive range of sources: place-names and Anglo-Saxon charters, early medieval literature, archaeological and landscape evidence, and documentary sources. There is, for instance, a discussion of the distribution of the Celtic place-name *nemet*, which (as is well known) indicates trees or woodland with sacred attributes (pp. 46–8). What is new (to this reviewer, at least) is the evidence for the size of some of these groves, and their setting in even larger areas of open grazing. For example, there are 13 place- and river-names derived from *nemet* on the northern reaches of Dartmoor within an area just 20 km by 40 km, itself located in much wider wood–pasture. Yet we know almost

nothing about how such landscapes worked in practice. Local communities clearly managed and exploited these large areas of grazing for their flocks and herds, and some areas were enclosed for coppicing and the growing of standards. What is completely unknown is whether the sacred areas were under a different management regime, whether they were continuously or only seasonally important, how their boundaries were marked, or how they were accessed and by whom. Underpinning such questions are, of course, wider issues of social and economic organization.

The book is also valuable in including evaluations and interpretations of primary material in the wider context of an up-to-date historiography. To take just one of innumerable examples: *lēah* is one of the most commonly known place-name elements associated with woodland landscapes. Yet despite its ubiquity, it can be difficult to interpret accurately, being found across Britain in regions of extensive woodland as well as in areas of more open wood–pasture. Hooke is nonetheless sure-footed in finding her way through a range of interpretations that combine charter material (which is difficult to interpret) with regional geographies and the preferences of individual scholars, to conclude that it was most probably used to indicate open grazing, interspersed with stands of wood, even in places like *Andredesleag*, the Sussex and Kentish Weald (pp. 125–6).

And finally, there is much here to stimulate new research. Some will be based on the unavoidable flaws that specialists in one discipline and another will find in this book. That surely is one of the roles of publication, and is in itself a cause for congratulation provided that (as is the case here) the material being criticized is of fundamentally high quality. Yet others will seek to drill down into the inevitable generalities that must accompany such a wide-ranging view. The figures showing national distributions of many individual species (hampered, of course, by the unequal distribution of early charters across the English counties) could offer a springboard for new research on the regional character of early medieval ecology and land use, especially when integrated with archaeological, palynological, environmental, documentary and

architectural sources. The wider context of generalizations of ash and oak found in so many early records, and yet (apparently) so rarely found in place-names or assembly places, fruit trees in river valleys, especially those with a long history of cultivation, and the thorns that enclosed early arable, offer exciting possibilities for research focused on particular regional landscapes. The cumulative longer-term results of such work might throw some light on the origins and development of English regional landscapes.

Trees in Anglo-Saxon England will be an essential reference work, and one of the few to be read for both interest and to support other research, moving seamlessly between bedside table and library shelf of interested layman and committed scholar.

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN
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PAUL CULLEN, RICHARD JONES and DAVID PARSONS, *Thorps in a changing landscape* (Explorations in Local and Regional History, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). xviii + 224 pp., 47 figs, 9 tabs. £14.99.

Since the pioneering work of Margaret Gelling, the study of place-names has taken account of local landscapes and economies in the interpretation of linguistic evidence. Here, two place-name experts and a landscape archaeologist join forces to cast new light on the subset of names containing the Old Norse element *thorp*. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Kenneth Cameron, using East Midland examples, argued that such names were applied to small, dependent settlements that were founded late in the Anglo-Scandinavian era or in the two centuries after the Norman Conquest on poorer soils near the edges of manors and parishes. This hypothesis was reinforced by the detailed work of Gillian Fellows Jensen on all the counties of the Danelaw and it has been generally accepted.

The authors have gathered a corpus of 896 place-names in *thorp*. The heartland of the name lies north and east of the line of Watling Street, now the A5, within the territories of the former Five Boroughs of the Danelaw. *Thorps* are plentiful too in Yorkshire and Norfolk and they are scattered elsewhere in the northernmost counties of England. South of Watling Street, a smaller number of *thorps* are derived from an Old English word with the same meaning. The authors settle an old debate by concluding that they are contemporary with the Danish *thorps*. Great numbers of names in *-torp* are found in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and other parts of northern Europe, where studies have shown that they tend to be small, often dependent, low-status, outlying places.

In contrast with other habitative generics, such as *tun*, *ham* or *by*, *thorps* hardly ever grew into towns. Many of them disappeared in later centuries. No *thorp* has been systematically excavated, but a considerable number have revealed evidence from small-scale digs. The pottery that has been found nearly always dates from after 900, in line with the Cameron hypothesis. Intriguingly, a small number of settlement plans suggest that in their earliest phases *thorps* were arranged in regular, linear and compact plots of near-equal size, along a single village street, in contrast to the more complex layout of earlier Danish settlements known as *bys*. This settlement form hints at some special purpose.

In chapter 6, on 'Thorps in the Landscape', the authors demolish Cameron's claim that *thorps* and *thorpes* were sited on poor soils by plotting the distribution of these names against MAFF soil grades. Their maps show that these settlements were mostly found on grade 3 agricultural soils that are considered to be good to moderate in quality. Arable soils were strongly favoured independently of their drainage properties and they tended to be superior to those of the earlier *bys*. The authors conclude that *bys* and *thorpes* may have performed separate economic functions within the early medieval countryside: *thorps* housed small communities that were involved with arable cultivation while the primary function of *bys* was livestock farming. Moreover, *thorps* were placed 'in the very areas and at the very time that we understand the landscape to have been undergoing fundamental change. The primary factor was a cereal revolution'. Were they founded perhaps for workers in the distant open fields, for ploughmen or even perhaps slaves tied to the demesne? Some names imply groups of youths or workers. Others belonged to royal estates. Were *thorps* the equivalent of berewicks and bartons elsewhere?

The authors are at pains to point out that other factors influenced the creation and development of these new settlements. The use of Scandinavian personal names as prefixes suggests a high incidence of private, individual tenure or ownership. The development of *thorps* coincides with the growth of urban markets and the demand for grain. And perhaps the name lost its association with arable farming over a long period of time?

These are stimulating ideas. The arguments are set out with admirable clarity. Readers will want to see which of them apply to their own particular areas of interest. In the case of the present reviewer this is Derbyshire and South Yorkshire. Derbyshire has far fewer Scandinavian place-names than the other East Midlands counties, and none of the 17 *thorps* recorded

there before 1300 are found on the carboniferous limestone plateau, now known as the White Peak, even though the villages there had open fields; and only three are located in the Trent Valley, where Midland-type open fields were plentiful. The remaining 14 *thorps* are all situated within the north-eastern wapentake of Scarsdale. Only two of these were sited on the best cereal-growing lands on the magnesian limestone belt, where farming was organized on an open-field system; the other 12 were on the coal-measure sandstones, where closes associated with hamlets and scattered farmsteads were more characteristic than villages surrounded by small open fields. Nevertheless, the wapentake supported 54 corn mills in 1652, so cereals were clearly once as important as livestock.

The chronology of the South Yorkshire *thorps* fits that described by the authors, though, as they note, many more names appeared in the West Riding well after 1500, when the original meaning may no longer have applied. We might add that a complicating factor in the history of these secondary settlements is that some of the so-called 'lost' *thorp* names were simply renamed: Renathorpe is now Hatfield House, Canonthorpe is Falconer House, and Streetthorpe is Edenthorpe.

South Yorkshire had 30 *thorps* recorded before 1300, of which twelve were named in Domesday Book. All were sited in the central part, well away from the Pennines in the west and the lowlands of Hatfield Chase in the east. Of the seven on the magnesian limestone and the four immediately to the east, only four were recorded in 1086. The majority of *thorps* were again in the mixed farming district of the coal-measure sandstones, which was characterized more by wood-pastures than by open fields (though each village and hamlet had its small 'townfields'). However, support for the idea that *thorps* were associated with arable farming comes from the distribution of another Old Norse place-name element. South Yorkshire has twelve *thveits*, the -thwaites that were clearings, meadows or paddocks associated with pastoral farming. They too are found only on the coal-measure sandstones and on or just off the magnesian limestone belt near Doncaster. *Thorp* and *thveit* appear to be describing two different types of outlying farming communities.

This book is a fine piece of collaborative research that suggests new ways of looking at the transformation of medieval agrarian economies and the creation of settlement patterns that still characterize much of the present landscape. It will be warmly welcomed by readers of this *Review*.

DAVID HEY
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MARK NETZLOFF, *John Norden's The Surveyor's Dialogue (1618): A critical edition* (Ashgate, 2010). xlii + 223 pp., 10 figs. £55.

John Norden's *Surveyor's Dialogue*, published in 1607, 1610 and 1618, is widely recognized as one of the most articulate reflections on agrarian practices and changes in early seventeenth-century England. Surveyors, who were increasingly employed to review manorial records, advise on estate management and improvement, and in some cases to map estates, assumed a role at the centre of debates about agrarian structures and values. Norden's volume, in this context, was one of many surveying manuals to be published, but arguably the most influential of all. Its author was also one of the most prominent surveyors and cartographers of his generation, working extensively on state projects, such as the Jacobean surveys of forests, as well as surveys of private estates. Moreover, as this timely modern edition demonstrates, *The Surveyor's Dialogue* has since assumed a kind of canonical status, and has been quoted widely in a range of recent work, across disciplines ranging from economic history to Renaissance literary studies. And yet, as Mark Netzloff quite rightly argues in his introduction, it has too rarely had the sort of attention, as a full and coherent work, that it deserves.

Netzloff is determined to correct this situation. He looks carefully, for instance, at parts of the book concerned with agricultural improvement and the sale of land, as well as some of the better-known discussions of the role of the surveyor and the social structure of the estate. He is astute on the peripatetic expertise of the surveyor, seeking at once to encode common standards across the country and to spread innovation from one region to another. As Netzloff writes, from this position the surveyor 'begins to refer to the customs of his "country" as customs – as local, subjective, and open to reform and improvement' (p. xxxii). Yet this remains a studied, measured argument for reform, and Netzloff reflects thoughtfully on this. In particular, he argues that Norden wrote the book at the same time as the Midlands Revolt, and indeed 'deliberately sets his dialogues at exactly the same time' as the uprising, on an estate that remains 'undisturbed by the most tumultuous events in agrarian England during the Jacobean period' (p. xxxv). It is not easy to base much of an argument on the lack of reference to an event, and Netzloff himself is not entirely clear what to make of this, but he is surely right to note the text's commitment to an ideal of economic reform without social destabilization. Others at this time were developing radical arguments in favour of enclosure; Norden notably skirts around this most controversial of rural issues.

For all its strengths, however, the introduction is disappointingly short, at thirty pages, and in some respects somewhat sketchy. On textual matters, in particular, it is a little weak. There are a couple of interesting observations about changes to the text between the 1607 and 1618 editions, including Norden's recognition of deforestation, an issue that had absorbed much of his time in the employment of the state, but no substantial analysis of the text's development. Moreover, apart from a passing reference to editions of the book in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is no discussion of readership and influence. More might also have been said about the author himself, and his relationship with the book's powerful dedicatee, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.

Given the availability of Early English Books Online, the value of a new edition of an early modern text must always be an open question. This volume, though, justifies the effort. The decision to modernize spelling will not please all readers, but makes sense for a publication of this kind. The annotations are helpful, Norden's many marginal notes are preserved as footnotes, and text added for the 1618 edition is indicated in square brackets, or recorded in textual notes, to allow readers to analyse aspects of the book's development that may interest them. The index is slight, especially on the text itself as opposed to the introduction, but may be sufficient for navigation. While some researchers may continue to use the original versions, there is much here to make the text more accessible, and some genuine reasons to cause those familiar with it to look at it afresh.

ANDREW MCRAE
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MARY SIRAUT (ed.), *A history of the county of Somerset, X, Castle Cary and the Brue-Cary watershed* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010). xix + 236 pp., 74 illus., 17 maps. £95.

This volume in the VCH's Somerset series covers ten ancient parishes, including the town of Castle Cary, lying between the rivers Brue and Cary in the south-east of the county, in Catsash hundred. The area has a typical Somerset landscape of rolling green fields, streams, and hedgerows, but its homogeneity is misleading as it conceals much variety in landholding and agriculture, and some significant industry.

The town of Castle Cary, lying at the north-eastern edge of its parish, was a centre for secular and ecclesiastical administration in the Middle Ages, and had a weekly market, but for most of its history was modest in size. Though it had an earlier clothing trade, its growth came from the horsehair factories and linen

mills started up in the early nineteenth century using local water power. At its peak the horsehair industry had three major factories, of which one still remained in 2000, producing high-quality webbing and other products.

For seven of the parishes little or no source material exists regarding medieval agriculture, and overall there are few manorial records, or large runs of estate material, except for Kingweston, mainly because most manorial lords were absentees and most parishes had fragmented ownership by the eighteenth century. In about half the parishes the manorial lands were sold off or the manor was divided, and only two parishes had resident landowners with substantial lands. Kingweston was the only parish where all the freehold was owned by one landlord, the Dickinson family, who from the 1740s bought the manor and all the remaining freeholds except the glebe, remaining there until the 1920s. In Alford the manor belonged to the Thring family for a hundred years from 1807 and, though they did not own all the land, as resident landowners they were influential in the parish and its main employer.

Elsewhere landholding was very diverse, allowing the creation of many small freehold estates and owner-occupied farms, and the fragmented landholding may be reflected in the constant division, amalgamation, and reorganization of farms' lands: farm sizes generally increased during the nineteenth century, but many large farms were reduced in size by the early twentieth, and in any one parish some farms were reduced, others increased, and new farms were created. In the twentieth century many farmsteads were built on new sites, often to replace those in the villages, which were then converted into dwellings or holiday accommodation.

Though grass predominated by the early nineteenth century, all parishes still had some arable, and many were typified as dairy and corn. However, a wide variety of crops, including potatoes and teasels, were grown, attributed to the existence of the many small freehold farms, since large landlords tended to discourage variety. By the end of the twentieth century dairying remained important, but more diversification had appeared, with a range of crops, fruit, and products such as alpaca and ice cream, while mixed enterprises involved tourism and leisure activities. Farming remained strong in some parishes, such as Babcary, with about ten working farms in 2000, but in West Lydford no working farmsteads remained in the village, and its pasture was used by farmers from outside. One non-agricultural crop of significance came from Keinton Mandeville, where by the late eighteenth century large areas of the open-field arable were quarried for the slabs of Lias Keinton stone,

which was lying near the surface and was used for buildings and fences in nearby villages and pavements throughout southern England.

The earliest land-use information is generally from tithe apportionments, which have been used here to produce more informative parish maps, showing the areas of the arable, grass, and orchards, and are greatly to be welcomed, since they also give a sense of how medieval fields have may been organized. The social history section allows the inclusion of interesting details such as the travelling drapers from Scotland who founded prosperous businesses in Cary, or the marble mason's wife in Keinton with five children, who gave her occupation in 1861 as 'slave to the rest of her family'. Regrettably, the copy-editing has become a bit slack, with a few misspellings, most noticeably on the hundred map. This may be a result of staff shortages, and it is sad to have to add that the last member of the Somerset VCH staff has been made redundant and, though work is continuing on a voluntary basis, this is no more than a short-term respite. Despite the energetic efforts of supporters in the local authorities and elsewhere, the end of work on the Somerset series, as for some other counties, is not far off unless a substantial source of funding is found.

PATRICIA CROOT

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DAVID S. JOHNSON, *Liming and agriculture in the central Pennines. The use of lime in land improvement from the late thirteenth century to c.1900* (BAR, British Series 525, 2010). ix + 147 pp., 30 figs, 31 tabs. £40.

This is an excellent book on a subject of considerable interest to all agrarian historians. The book's focus is on the historic use of lime as a soil additive and it sets liming in the context of land improvement. To this end it provides us with a case study and extensive examples that others can use for comparison in their own research areas. The research aims extend beyond establishing the time frame for liming as a soil improver to include its use in areas without a limestone geology and those which were not subject to parliamentary enclosure. Further, close attention is paid to the question of who initiated the use of lime and how its use proceeded over time.

Johnson's research area is extensive and extends eastwards from the Lune to beyond Richmond and from Kirkby Stephen southwards, stopping short of Keighley. (His current research is extending this area to include the whole of Westmorland.) The period covered is as far back as he can find evidence, so that the discussion runs from the thirteenth to the twentieth

century. The evidence itself benefits from the author's notable experience as a local archaeologist and the wide range of contacts he has built up over the years. The latter enables him to use the kind of small private archives often unavailable to agrarian historians, who tend to depend upon those of the big estates deposited in county record offices. Of particular value are the diaries and commonplace books which still exist in significant numbers but which do need this kind of personal contact to locate. He is prepared to use all relevant material to support his exploration of the physical landscape, climatic conditions or changes in market demand in pursuit of a wider understanding of his subject, and his detailed discussions contain clear descriptions of both evidence and processes. This blending of examples and discussions from a range of sources and research techniques provides us with the strongest evidence of the antiquity of liming and its widespread application, and shows that the initiative for its use could come from either farmer or landlord. Johnson's discussions and arguments have a robustness and clarity that reflect a lifetime of observing and thinking. Nor should we overlook the frequent, relevant and good-quality diagrams, maps and coloured photographs, which we have come to associate with BAR reports.

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with BAR (British Archaeological Reports) it should be explained that these are (generally) rapid conversions of theses and dissertations into A4, soft-backed publications available on request from www.hadrianbooks.co.uk. The dissemination of recent research requires no justification although the straight publication of academic submissions does not always provide a literary style of English. The concept of 'archaeology' is stretched far beyond the usual framework: whilst BAR 493 is *The maritime and riverine landscape of the west of Roman Britain*, BAR 497 uses probate evidence to examine *The material culture of the tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1545-1642*. This range of content makes them an exciting resource, but BAR reports have two significant drawbacks. The first is the cost: the 2011 publications range in price from £37 to £73. The second is much more serious. Academic texts lose much of their functionality if there is no index, and this reviewer cannot recall a BAR report that has possessed this fundamental item. This absence is unacceptable, and only partially addressed by the very detailed contents pages.

David Johnson's authoritative discussions cover a lot of ground. This includes his pungent criticism of Historic Land Characterisation as 'too one-dimensional, it is desk-based (so arguably ignores landscape) and

does not provide a mechanism for exploring past landscapes', a point of view that this reviewer is very happy to support.

JENNIFER S. HOLT
Rossendale

KAREN J. CULLEN, *Famine in Scotland: the 'ill years' of the 1690s* (Scottish Historical Review Monograph series 16, Edinburgh University Press, 2010). xii + 218 pp., 14 tabs., 14 figs. £55.

The poor harvests of the 1690s or so-called 'ill years' have never attracted the detailed historical analysis accorded to the Highland famine of the 1840s. Yet, as the author of this welcome new study, Karen Cullen, points out, the famine of the 1690s was a national famine as opposed to the regional famine of the 1840s, and the death toll in the 1690s was always seen as higher than that of the 1840s, with as much as 10 per cent of the Scottish population dying from its effects and as much as 20 per cent locally. Cullen's monograph sets out to address this deficiency, providing an informed and insightful analysis of the 'ill years'.

As a text, it comes across as having a number of clear strengths. First, it provides what is easily the most authoritative analysis of exactly what happened in the 1690s, establishing precisely how the 'ill years' unfolded in terms of harvests and food supply. Though sometimes labelled as the 'seven ill years', the crisis was spread over only five years, three of which produced nationally catastrophic harvests (1695, 1696, and 1698), though poorer weather conditions had started to affect harvests in the years immediately before 1695. Second, there is an impressive grasp of context throughout the book. As well as reviewing Scotland's long-term record of poor harvests so as to add weight to the seriousness of what happened in the 1690s, Cullen also explores how what happened in Scotland compared to the subsistence crises happening elsewhere in Europe at this point. Consideration is also given to its economic context, the 'ill years' being only one of four economic crises affecting Scotland in the 1690s. Third, the extended discussion of how weather led to poor harvests and then to famine is not handled in a simple cause-effect way. Cullen holds to the Amartya Sen view that it is not poor harvests alone that matter but access to food or food entitlement. Through this approach, she opens up a much broader debate, one that considers how markets, the Privy Council, kirk sessions and local communities responded to the problems created by scarcity, each responding with different interests or sentiment and effectiveness. Significantly, she concluded that whilst a new poor law act or proclamation was issued every year, it was the kirk sessions that provided most relief.

Fourth, a chapter devoted wholly to the migrational response to the 'ill years' makes it clear just how much social dislocation was generated by their accumulating effects, as thousands went in search of food or tried to slip their accumulating rent arrears, though parishes and burghs became less tolerant of strangers and vagabonds as the crisis progressed. Fifth, although stressed as a national famine, the last such famine in Scotland, Cullen is keen to draw out the marked regional and social differences that underpinned the 'ill years'. That it had its most severe effects in the north and north-east and its least in the eastern Lowlands may not surprise, but its proportionately greater effect on adults rather than children does.

In a book that squeezes the lemon thrice dry in terms of how much it has to say on all aspects of the problem, it might be churlish to complain about what is missing or understated. Yet for all its coverage, more might have been made of the traditional mechanisms by which rural communities in some areas tried to mitigate some of the short-term effects of famine through the use of shell food, herbs, etc. Whilst it is right to emphasize the greater risks associated with spring-sown grains, more might also have been made of the differences between oats and barley, with the latter being sown later and harvested earlier than the former, providing communities in the north and north-west with some buffering against risk. It is for this reason that farmers in Iceland actually retreated out of oats into barley during the most severe phases of the Little Ice Age. Lastly, there are a number of references to marginal land and holdings being abandoned on a large scale in particular areas, like the north-east, but some of the contemporary observations that are used really need to be tested against more explicit data. Yet whatever its omissions, *Famine in Scotland* undoubtedly succeeds in giving an authoritative definition to the 'ill years' and in establishing it as a 'demographic crisis of catastrophic proportions'. It also demonstrates just how much a study of this kind can gain from being wide-ranging and resourceful over the data used.

ROBERT A. DODGSHON
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BOB BUSHAWAY, *By Rite. Custom, ceremony and community in England, 1700-1880* (Breviary Stuff Publications, 2010). 194 pp., 13 illus. £14.

Breviary Stuff Publications was, according to their mission statement, founded to keep significant works of radical history and 'history from below' in print. Bushaway's *By Rite*, first published by Junction Books in 1982, has long since been out of print, with secondhand copies both hard to find and expensive.

That Breviary has made it possible for a new audience to enjoy this important book is to be applauded. That they have managed to do so at such an accessible price and maintained reasonable production values – the curiously wide pages and poorly reproduced images aside – is testament to their desire to make important works accessible to those who cannot afford the high cover prices of, and I quote, ‘certain academic presses, who publish works on working class history with cover prices that most working class people cannot afford’. Besides corrections, the text remains unaltered from the first edition. This is a good thing, for not only was *By Rite* well received on its initial publication but also the text has stood the test of time. This is a beautifully written book. Indeed, notwithstanding the subsequent publication of E. P. Thompson’s *Customs in Common* and the more general writing of custom and customary ceremony into rural history, many of Bushaway’s richly detailed chapters remain at the forefront of our knowledge of the practice of custom in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century countryside.

The book is divided into six substantive chapters preceded by a short analysis of the meanings of custom, the sources for its study, and a brief survey of past attempts to conceptualize custom. This was always the least satisfactory chapter, lacking any wider understanding of alternative – for instance, elite – interpretations of custom or reference to the already vast anthropological literature on customary ceremony. If it was out of the Breviary spirit to substantially rework this chapter, to add a final chapter reflecting on the reception of *By Rite* and the ways in which the field has evolved would at least have been a worthwhile exercise. But this is a minor grumble – and perhaps in part covered by Bushaway’s essay on popular culture in Harry Dickinson’s *Companion to eighteenth-century Britain*. The other chapters need no such *addendum*. Chapter two analyses the customary calendar, focusing in particular upon ways in which church ringers as a clearly defined community group were tied to an essentially secular calendar. The church, as chapter three attests, acted to legitimize the celebration of many secular holidays, partly enforced by law – the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot was marked by a state service in every parish church – and partly by popular assertions that their customs were underwritten by church and state. Nineteenth-century attempts to suppress rambunctious celebrations of 5 November were, so Bushaway relates, often stridently opposed by making this very claim.

Rogationtide perambulations of parish bounds were also occasions to engage in several extra-church customs. Monies were levied, beer demanded, whilst

young boys were often ‘bumped’, stood on their heads, or thrown into clumps of nettles in acts of symbolic machismo by the older men. That perambulations continued long after the church had lost interest in supporting the practice was a testimony to its usefulness in helping resist enclosure through muscular performances of territoriality, in asserting the importance of community, and, critically, in supporting the need to maintain customs that served to legitimize the rights and cultures of the poor. As the analysis in K. D. M. Snell’s splendid *Parish and belonging* attests, knowledge of the physical and political limits of the parish was the wellspring of rural cultural life. In short, the public performance of custom was vital in maintaining social cohesion, not just amongst rural workers but also between the different social classes.

Arguably, the most important contributions to our understanding of the sociology of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English countryside are made in the first part of chapter four and chapters five and six, studies of the ways in which custom underpinned harvest work, social conflict and popular protest, and crime respectively. If we now know rather more about the importance of custom in the urban and dockside workplace thanks to the work of Adrian Randall, John Rule and Leonard Schwarz, chapter four remains the standard reference on custom in the fields and farmyard. Even Peter King’s excellent studies of gleaning add to rather than supplant Bushaway’s analysis. Chapter five’s exploration of the ways in which the so-called ‘Swing Riots’ of 1830 were culturally underwritten and politically justified by doling and processing customs has served to inspire a recent upsurge in interest in Swing, whilst chapter six has inspired this reviewer’s studies of tree- and wood-bound conflicts.

On its first publication reviewers were in doubt as to whether Bushaway’s study was an important book. If the passage of time – and the publication of subsequent studies – has shown *By Rite* to be a landmark contribution to our understanding of English rural culture, it has in no way dimmed its importance. It remains a compelling analysis of custom and customary ceremony. It is a ‘must read’ for any student of English rural history.

CARL J. GRIFFIN
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ERIC L. JONES, *Locating the Industrial Revolution. Inducement and response* (World Scientific Publishing (UK) Ltd., 2010). 272 pp. £45.

The pen of Eric Jones, over the several decades of his career, has never been less than stimulating. This volume is no exception. He takes an important look

at a currently neglected aspect of the British industrial revolution: its regionally differential impact. Specifically he is concerned to explain the de-industrialization of large swathes of southern England at the very time that the North took off. It has long been recognized that de-industrialization was the obverse of the coin of industrialization and that there were casualties of the regional and sectorial concentration and specialization of industry that was a hallmark of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, as Jones rightly points out, well before the North was growing fast, southern England was shedding its manufacturing industries. 'The south's decline began too early for it to have been the straightforward victim of a superior north' (p. 39). And only in the late stages of industrialization did the use of coal and steam power become decisive locationally. Jones argues that, by asking what caused the de-industrialization of the south, and by considering inter-regional competition, especially in the non-mechanized sectors, the underlying forces in the transition to modern economic growth are more clearly revealed.

Leaning heavily on local and regional industrial histories to illustrate his general arguments with detailed examples, Jones looks carefully at some of the south's industrial regions of the early modern period, taking Kent, Hampshire and Gloucestershire as particular case studies. He emphasizes that relatively new manufacturing as well as old centres were disappearing, 'punctiform' as well as cottage industries: there were chronic disadvantages in the whole area south of the Severn/Wash, and few exceptions to the decline of manufacturing outside London and Portsmouth. As possible explanations Jones dismisses the response to differential factor supplies and relative factor prices as excessively *a priori*. Worker resistance and lack of inventiveness were also unimportant. Conservatism about shifting to lower quality and mass production or to different product mixes, and inadequate supplies of capital are similarly found wanting as explanations. Jones makes a particularly strong argument against the idea that the quality of southern rural labour was inherently poor. Although often the response to decline rather than its initial cause, weaker networks of producers and ancillary traders may have played a part, as may have guilds and trade restrictions, but the Achilles heel of southern industry lay in deficient innovation, the result of a failure to invest in manufacturing.

Blanket genetic or cultural theses such as those (respectively) of Greg Clark and Deirdre McCloskey are examined and found wanting as explanations for this failure to invest and for regionally differentiated growth. In a rather unorthodox chapter Jones brings

evidence from his own family tree to counter Clark's argument as applied to southern England. Yet he has some sympathy for Clark in suggesting that it was not enterprise that was snuffed out in the south but risk taking and entrepreneurship *as applied to manufacturing*. Instead these qualities shifted into farming, agricultural processing, communications and services. The rural south had geological and topographical advantages over the North for arable and other farming. It also had the massive locational advantage of proximity to the London food market. However, the decline of southern industry was a result neither of comparative advantage in farming nor of the success of that sector, which inevitably occurred at the expense of industry. Jones puts major emphasis upon that fact that 'Capital obtained from political favours, court offices, government sinecures, the law and trade entered the southern countryside, as successful men sought to fix their position by buying estates' (p. 149). Fortunes made in public finance, empire and the slave trade sometimes went into urban development but the majority went into southern estates that were generally used unproductively and wastefully, for leisure and blood sports rather than pecuniary gain. Jones does not mince his words in describing the 'laundering of metropolitan money' (p. 159) in the economy of the south. Such 'landed proprietorship created a milieu in which manufactures were disapproved and new industries unwelcome' (p. 161).

There were some southern industries that experienced longer-lived success. Jones puts their eventual demise down to falling transport costs, inter-urban commercial competition and the growing integration of the national market that exposed them first to other southern producers and then to the now more efficient manufacturers of the North. Regional concentration of industrial sectors (cottons largely in Lancashire, wool in Yorkshire, iron in the North East and South Wales, metalwares in South Yorkshire and the Black Country, for example) generated significant economies of agglomeration and the scattered industries of a earlier era could not compete.

Jones offers some interesting critiques and asides about aggregate statistical analysis as a key to causal explanation and he address a wide range of competing literature on Britain's industrial revolution. That some passages have a text-book or survey feel should not detract from the important central argument. Indeed, the accessibility and the range of the volume will make it attractive to students.

PAT HUDSON
Swansea University and
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JOHN and PAMELA MCCANN, *The dovecotes and pigeon lofts of Wiltshire* (Hobnob Press for Wiltshire Buildings Record, 2011). xvi + 235pp., 159 figs., 29 illus. £14. (Available from Wiltshire Buildings Record, The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 3QN).

John McCann is an acknowledged authority on English dovecotes and the Wiltshire Buildings Record is an exemplary body for the work it has done on recording buildings over the last 30 years. As we would expect therefore, this book is a thorough and scholarly investigation of the provision for pigeons within the county. As well as containing detailed descriptions and photographs, sometimes with architectural drawings, of some 60 surviving examples identified in the county, it also lists those that have disappeared, but to which there are documentary references. A further section deals with the much smaller pigeon lofts and nest holes in houses, barns, stables and other buildings.

This book is more than an illustrated gazetteer, although the descriptive list runs to 121 pages; it also discusses the changing importance of pigeon keeping and how it was managed. The main purpose of a dovecote was to house nest boxes in an environment reminiscent of the rock crevices that the pigeons (or domesticated Blue Rock Doves) would inhabit in the wild. In the dovecote the eggs were hatched and the young birds known as squabs would be taken just before they were ready to fledge. Because their flying muscles had never been used, the meat was exceptionally tender and much prized as a delicacy. Dovecotes were therefore prestigious buildings and part of a luxurious lifestyle. The period when the squabs were available was limited from spring through to autumn and so, McCann argues on the basis of household accounts, they did not provide a winter source of meat as has sometimes been claimed.

The design of the dovecote is placed firmly within a functional and historical framework with short chapters explaining the history of pigeon keeping, what dovecotes were and how they were built. It was necessary for the dovecote to provide protection from predators and this would affect their design. Up to the eighteenth century the main dangers came from birds of prey, foxes and members of the cat family. For this reason windows were rare, but instead ventilation was through louvres. The threat changed, however, after about 1720, following the introduction of the brown rat on trading vessels from East Asia. McCann explains that as the brown rat can climb or jump up a smooth vertical surface of hard material more than three feet high, the design had to change. After about 1750 dovecotes were built with raised doorways and nest boxes, deep foundations which could not be

burrowed under and close mortar joints. As the value of grain increased and the amount of bare fallow, on which pigeons could graze, decreased, pigeon keeping declined. It was condemned by agricultural commentators such as Arthur Young, and the heyday of the dovecote was over by the mid-nineteenth century.

Wiltshire is a county particularly rich in dovecotes but this is not simply a picture book of quaint and picturesque buildings, although the illustrations are indeed of a very high standard. Rather their form is discussed as being governed by their function, which, as far as protection from predators was concerned, changed through time. The gazetteer is followed by a section that discusses the great variety of designs of the different elements that made up the dovecote, but concludes that no regional or chronological pattern could be found. Rather it was a question of personal choice.

McCann's style can be rather strident and dismissive of past interpretations. He is at his most dogmatic in his defence of this particular type of building, when he states – whilst briefly discussing residential conversions – ‘There is no justification for destroying any more dovecotes in Wiltshire by converting them to dwellings’ (p.161), a sentiment with which, having read this book, we may well agree.

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS
North Elmham, Norfolk

PETER L. WALKER (ed.), *Tithe apportionments of Worcestershire, 1837–1851* (Worcestershire Historical Society, new ser., 23, 2011), £25 incl. p. & p. Available to non-subscribers on CD-ROM only, from Robin Whittaker, 14 Scobell Close, Pershore, Worcs., WR10 1QJ.

Tithe apportionments have long been one of the foundational documents of agrarian history, historical geography, and local and regional history. The parish-by-parish surveys of land ownership, state of cultivation, approximate value and tithe liability are the closest thing we possess in Britain to a European-style cadastral survey. Indeed, as Eric Evans's concise but highly informative historical introduction to this volume makes clear, the tithe commutation process could have provided just such a thing. The plan by the superintendant of surveying, Lieut. Robert Dawson, for a series of detailed parochial maps all drawn on a common scale was vetoed on grounds of cost. The tithe apportionment schedules and their maps (where they survive) provide us with one of the few truly detailed, comprehensive and publicly accessible historical datum points for ownership, tenancy, cultivation and ecclesiastical property. It is particularly welcome, therefore, that the Worcestershire Historical

Society, Worcestershire Historical Environment and Archaeology Service, the National Lottery (Local Heritage Initiative) and local history groups, and the editor, Peter Walker, have combined to produce this extremely useful transcription of the Worcestershire apportionments.

The volume is available in hard copy to members of the WHS, and as a CD-ROM to non-members. The CD-ROM contains an electronic version of the published introductory volume. It begins with an introduction to the editorial practices and some local recording peculiarities within the Worcestershire apportionments. This is followed by a brief overview of the project to transcribe these awards, and then by Eric Evans's guide to the parliamentary history of the tithe commutation process. This is particularly valuable because it explains why the apportionments eventually took the form of parish-by-parish surveys, and commutations of tithes as rent-charge apportionments. It also devotes some time to the subsequent history of the tithe, and the process of tithe redemption (in exchange for government stock) initiated in 1936, and completed in October 1977. The introduction also contains a county map, indicating the location of surviving awards (generally good, but with fewer in the south-east corner of the county), and a hand-list of parishes and awards.

The awards themselves are found on the CD-ROM as Microsoft® Excel spreadsheets. For each surviving parochial apportionment the editor has provided an 'Introduction' (an abstract of the summary at the beginning of each apportionment schedule), and separate Excel 'worksheets' listing the summary of the survey arranged by landowner, the full plot-by-plot survey, and a summary of the apportionment arranged by landowner. The editor notes that he checked the surveys thoroughly, beginning with the arithmetic of the summary and then moving to the full listing, checking tenant-by-tenant. He concludes that most of the rent-charge valuations appear very rounded, and allotted to the entire farm or holding, rather than being apportioned according to the value of individual fields. There was also occasional confusion over ownership, with un-enfranchised copyholders of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester being described as 'owners' in the parishes of Doddenham and Broadwas. The editor also supplies a list of individual recording quirks identified in particular parishes.

This amounts to a fascinating and extremely valuable resource, one that fully repays the time, effort and collective endeavour required to produce it. The searchable spreadsheets will be a very important source for agrarian and local historians, and provide

a new level of detail that should stimulate research into Worcestershire's agrarian history. The volume also conjures the 'pipe-dream of the possibilities that might arise from national transcription of the tithe apportionments'. While that prospect will probably always remain a fantasy, this volume certainly indicates how it should be done.

H. R. FRENCH
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ANDREW JONES, *Victorian North Devon: a social history* (Andrew Jones, 2010). vii + 529 pp. (available from Andrew Jones, The Rectory, Bishops Nympton, South Molton, Devon, EX36 4NY).

Although the author's assertion that this is 'the first scholarly study of Victorian north Devon' can be disputed, he does address a need for more published work concerning Devon's history. It is a great pity therefore that Jones's book is marred by its failure to fulfil expectations that are raised by the title. Jones's meticulous research and exemplary extracts from a myriad primary sources centre on the parish of Rose Ash and its hinterland, in the south-eastern corner of the area that he defines as north Devon. Focusing on this district means that key influences are ignored. Lacking, as it does, an adequate recognition of north Devon's maritime communities, this cannot truly be a social history of north Devon. As a history of the impact of religion on the agricultural communities around South Molton, this book works much better. Jones's central theme of the disparity between the rural poor and their landlords, the clergy in particular, is well handled. If the title had not led readers to expect a wider application, then there would be less to condemn in this book.

Chapters two and three are entitled 'Rural Life' and 'Community Life' respectively, but it is not altogether clear how Jones is distinguishing between the two. 'Rural Life' encompasses customs, beliefs and prejudices and how they shaped and controlled Victorian rural society. It then ranges across sexual mores, public health and migration. 'Community Life' begins with an assessment of the extent of rural unrest in north Devon, then moves on to clubs, societies and parish charities before returning to examine crime. It is a shame that a great deal of interesting material becomes somewhat lost in this lack of structure.

The biographies of five members of the rural elite, with authority in Rose Ash and the surrounding area, rate a chapter of their own. There is an assessment of the influence that these individuals had on the parishes where they held sway. It is unfortunate that these are stand-alone biographies, lacking in contextual

comment on the role the middle classes played in agricultural communities. When Jones moves on to church, chapel and clergy he is at his best and these sections have real merit. Here is the context and insight that is lacking in earlier chapters, providing a valuable account of the impact of the Anglican Church, its fabric, sacraments and clergy, on Victorian rural communities. Although Jones does perhaps underplay the role of the chapel, this is a reflection of the small part of north Devon upon which he is concentrating.

The chapter on schooling has general relevance but Jones's discussion of farming and enclosure returns to the parochial, and is applicable to the area around South Molton rather than the wider region. He finishes with a somewhat incongruous chapter on the village green, which, he acknowledges, is a feature of few Devon villages. The account of the disputes over the ownership of the green at Rose Ash does help to illustrate the control of prominent families in that one village but again there is a need for this to be given broader significance.

When Jones tackles his proposed work on the twentieth century, and I hope he will, he would do better to acknowledge that he is focusing on a smaller area and on themes that are not so broad. That way he will not raise unrealistic expectations in his readers and the book will be recognized as a good example of what it actually is, rather than one that fails to live up to its claims.

JANET FEW
North Devon

REX SLY, *Soil in their souls. A history of Fenland farming* (The History Press 2010). 160 pp., 153 illus. £14.99.

Rex Sly's account is, in essence, a personal account of the transformation of Fenland farming. The narrative is interspersed with cases studies of individual farmers and their families. The idea that the inhabitants had 'soil in their souls' could, however, be defined in a more precise way and the rationale for the individual chapters articulated in a more explicit and persuasive way. There is also lack of clarity in terms of the precise period being covered, and in respect of the magnitude of the changes which have taken place in the different periods. This is apparent in respect of the contextualization, where the review of the key changes merits more precise clarification as they are sometimes based on rather dubious assertions. As such, it does not really cater for an academic audience, given the minimal use of endnotes and the many generalizations and assertions it contains about the historical development of farming.

Its structural weaknesses are also evident in the

rationale for the selection of the chapter titles. It is more or less self-evident why the first five chapters are included, given their common theme of the different social groups living in the Fens. However, it is more difficult to understand how these relate to the last two chapters on 'Crop Spraying' and 'Fenland Cropping'. There is also a very marked variability in the length of the chapters. For example, chapter 2, 'The Ultimate Prize', covers five pages while sixty pages are devoted to the final chapter on 'Fenland Cropping'.

There are a considerable number of instances where the expression could be refined, for example, p. 11, 'ball rolling for the supermarket'. Occasional typographical errors are evident, such as 'wa' for 'war' on p. 27. The text would have benefited from a conclusion; even a tentative one would have been appreciated. In a similar way, a bibliography listing at least some of the key texts consulted would have been useful.

In spite of the book's rather obvious academic weaknesses, it is essential that these do not obscure the text's very positive features. It provides a very useful and informative insight into the way this particular region has been transformed. While the rationale for selecting particular farming families for inclusion is not always as persuasive as it might be, these case studies provide valuable personal accounts of the way that they have coped with recent challenges. The text also contains an impressive collection of photographs and maps, which adds variety and illustrates the transformation of farming in a region that has so far merited scant attention by conventional historians.

JOHN MARTIN
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MATTHEW JEFFERIES and MIKE TYLDESLEY (eds), *Rolf Gardiner: Folk, nature and culture in Interwar Britain* (Ashgate, 2011). xiv + 188pp., 4 figs. £55.

Rolf Gardiner (1902–71) is a figure of interest in various spheres of activity: folk dance, music, forestry, organic farming, conservation, youth movements, Anglo-German relations and 'radical Right' politics. Refused membership of the Home Guard on account of his perceived pro-German sympathies, he was nevertheless accepted by the establishment in later life. He was chairman of the Dorset branch of the CLA, High Sheriff of that county in 1967, and chairman of the European Working Party for Landscape Husbandry. A founder member of the Soil Association, he became an elder statesman of the organic movement.

Jefferies and Tyldesley concentrate on the most controversial period of Gardiner's life, from the 1920s to the 1940s, during which his relationships with German

youth groups, his ambivalent attitude to the Nazi regime and his cultural pessimism about England's future marked him out as what Richard Griffiths, one of the contributors to this book, termed a 'fellow-traveller of the Right'. Gardiner's inter-war activities present a dilemma for the organic movement, since his approach to agriculture played a key role in his resistance to the cultural and political developments of mid-twentieth century England. Robert Waller, biographer of Gardiner's mentor, Sir George Stapledon, once told me that he had admired Gardiner enormously as a forester and environmentalist, but detested his politics and his arrogance. The problem, though, is whether the politics can really be divorced from the environmentalism; and it is compounded by the difficulty of determining exactly where Gardiner stood politically. The editors state that their aim is 'neither to indict nor to exculpate Gardiner, but to situate him historically'.

To illustrate Gardiner's historical context, Jefferies and Tyldesley have drawn together an impressive selection of scholars. Jefferies himself writes on Gardiner's links with the German naturist movement, while Tyldesley has undertaken some fascinating detective work on his friendship with Max Plowman, which sheds light both on Gardiner's attitude to pacifism and on Plowman's attitude to Nazism. David Fowler argues for Gardiner's importance as a pioneer of 'youth culture', a phrase which has a somewhat different meaning today from what Gardiner would have understood by it. Georgina Boyes examines Gardiner's role in the revival of English folk dance, a tradition he incorporated into his farming activities. Richard Griffiths and Dan Stone analyse the complexities of Gardiner's political position, with Stone in particular tracing the connections between politics and organic farming in Gardiner's thought and practice.

Richard Moore-Colyer's essay on 'Rolf Gardiner, farming and the English landscape' is the most directly relevant to agricultural historians, a detailed account of Gardiner's struggles to regenerate substantial areas of Cranborne Chase through afforestation and soil improvement. Moore-Colyer demonstrates that Gardiner was far from being an impractical dreamer; he was a highly disciplined worker who transformed his surrounding landscape for the better and was prepared to experiment with the unfashionable techniques of organic husbandry. Gardiner believed firmly in local initiatives and resisted the abstract uniformity imposed by a centralized State: an attitude that led him into conflict during the War with the Ministry of Supply, over the issue of flax production. As always, Moore-Colyer's style combines scholarship with wit. I especially enjoyed his account of Gardiner's early

morning 'character-building run[s] in the nude across a stretch of Cranborne Chase, no doubt to the alarm of any poachers who happened to be drifting home after their nocturnal forays'.

The editors offer an Epilogue that looks, with tantalizing brevity, at Gardiner's post-war activities and discusses how far his ideas may have influenced a subsequent generation of environmental activists. Even if they did not directly do so, one can still discern various parallels between Gardiner's concerns and those of later environmentalists. It is perhaps significant that E. F. Schumacher formed a friendship with Gardiner from the mid-1960s. Much work on the last two decades of Gardiner's life remains to be undertaken.

As to whether the book avoids either condemning or whitewashing Gardiner, it seems to me that it is indeed very fair-minded: so much so that he perhaps gets off rather lightly. Many of his comments, as quoted in these essays, are rebarbative, and although Richard Griffiths warns against the judgement of 'guilt by association', the fact remains that Gardiner chose to associate with the SS, the SA and some of the most dedicated British sympathizers with Nazism, such as the estate owner Viscount Lymington and the eugenicist Anthony Ludovici.

Jefferies and Tyldesley are to be praised for having brought together such an authoritative range of perspectives. Whatever one's view of Gardiner, he was clearly a remarkable, many-talented man, prescient enough to see the implications of western culture's disregard for the biological realities on which our existence depends, and to emphasize the centrality of agriculture to national life. He is indeed, in the editors' phrase, 'worth more than a footnote in the history of inter-war Britain'.

PHILIP CONFORD
University of Leicester

LIZZIE COLLINGHAM, *The taste of war. World War Two and the battle for food* (Allen Lane, 2011). xv + 634 pp., 15 illus., 4 maps. £30.

Britain's wartime food supply problems, and its response to them, changed the pattern of international trade in agricultural products, and the effects remained after the war. Germany should have found its problems easier to solve. Admittedly it was the second-largest global food importer in 1939, after the UK, despite a long-standing policy of national self-sufficiency, but many of its imports came from continental Europe where they were safe from blockade. And after the spring of 1940 it also acquired supplies from Denmark and the Netherlands, which would previously have gone to Britain. But it had the deserved reputation

of being reluctant to pay for its imports, so its suppliers in south-eastern Europe were increasingly unwilling to provide the bread- and feed-grains that it required. Dutch dairy products historically depended on feedstuffs imported from overseas, which were no longer available. German farmers were short of labour and fertilizers, and so unable to expand production to match demand. German consumers did not actually go short of food until the last year of the war, but those in the occupied territories did because much of the food they would have eaten was being forcibly exported to Germany.

Similar stories of changed priorities can be told about most countries in the Second World War. Japan was also a major food importer before the war, and its consumers suffered accordingly when the ships carrying rice from Korea, Burma, Thailand, and what is now Vietnam, were sunk by American submarines from 1943 onwards. At the beginning of the war Australian producers found that their wheat and apples were no longer required as only higher-value products such as meat and cheese were worth shipping to the UK, and farm workers joined the army and left the land for better-paid industrial jobs. But by the end of the war Australian and New Zealand farmers were working flat out to provide the million or so US service personnel in the Pacific theatre with 95 per cent of their food. It was not only the belligerent countries that were affected. Spain had difficulty both in obtaining imports of wheat and in selling its fruit and vegetables. Argentina maintained its wheat and beef exports, but the demand for its feed grains fell dramatically, to the point where maize and linseed were being burnt for fuel to replace scarce oil imports. War, as the journalist George Steer remarked, was 'the highest form of inefficiency known to man'.

The results could go far beyond the inconveniences experienced in the UK. As Lizzie Collingham reminds us, the nineteen million deaths in battle during the war were at least matched, if not exceeded, by the number of civilian deaths from starvation or malnutrition and its associated diseases. Indeed, 60 per cent of Japanese military deaths were starvation-related rather than the result of direct enemy action. They joined the two or three million Soviet citizens (nobody knows the exact figure) who died of hunger and related diseases, one million of them in Leningrad alone. There were two or three million Chinese deaths in Henan province, three million in the Bengal famine of 1943–44, thousands of prisoners of war in Japanese, German and Soviet camps, and numerous others in the Philippines, Malaya, Greece, the Netherlands, and even, at the end of the war and shortly afterwards, in Germany.

Sobering as these figures are, this book is much more than a simple catalogue of wartime disasters, difficulties, and improvised solutions. The war affected the demand for and supply of food, and brought nutritional scientists and government planners into food debates in unprecedented ways. Equally importantly, in Collingham's view, food issues were central to the outbreak of war, its conduct, and its eventual outcome. Concerns over future food supplies, she suggests, lay behind both the German decision to invade the USSR and the Japanese invasion of China. Once war began, food became a strategic material, as the various submarine campaigns demonstrate, and food shortages contributed to Japanese military failures towards the end of the war, whereas the USSR's food problems did not prevent its victories. She is not alone in making these suggestions, but she pursues them in more detail, on a wider geographical scale, and in my opinion more convincingly than previous writers. In this densely referenced, clearly argued, and wonderfully readable book she takes the familiar wartime food stories of rationing and digging for victory to a completely new level, and reveals the value of examining the various national histories in a global context.

PAUL BRASSLEY
University of Exeter

Europe and Elsewhere

TIMOTHY JENKINS, *The life of property. House, family and inheritance in Béarn, south-west France* (Berghahn Books, 2010). xii + 181 pp. £35.

The author calls this book an 'ethnographically-focused account of the life of property in Béarn' (p. 162). This review can give a glimpse only of the wealth of relations, connections, ideas and overviews presented, that range from local inheritance traditions in Béarn from the Middle Ages onwards, to the origins of the ideas of the famous French sociologist of the family, Frédéric LePlay (1806–82), to the more recent development of theories and concepts of the Béarn-born Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) and finally to national and European Union political debates.

Jenkins describes the 'house', encompassing dwelling, property and family, as the most important organizing principle (p. 7) of French Pyrenean societies. One family member of each generation inherits the entire property (land), as well as the authority, reputation and status as the new head of the family. Non-heirs receive only limited compensation or dowries in order to avoid the division of the 'house', the most important aim in this society. In his description of Béarn, LePlay coined the phrase 'stem family' system, in which

three generations lived in one house. Except for the parents and the designated heir and his partner, all other family members in the household remained unmarried. Marriage strategies were a function of the inheritance system. For almost two centuries now, this traditional system has been depicted by authors like LePlay and Bourdieu as being on the eve of extinction or as having vanished some years before, under the perceived threat of outside modernizing incentives, like the legally enforced equal division of inheritances, individualistic 'cosmopolitan' views on family, property and authority, and technological developments in agriculture.

Jenkins stresses the incompatibility of all these different views, and he concludes that the 'house' system of farms remains viable because its flexibility has allowed it to cope with the threats of the last two centuries, at least in the largest 'houses'. Even today, large farmers are still at the centre of local values, and Jenkins describes them very positively as the main agricultural innovators and most successful political leaders, serving as a model for others. In fact, Jenkins distinguishes two organizing concepts in social life: a seemingly archaic one resting on authority within the family and connected to the large farms; and a supposedly modern one with room for individual initiative, that was of most importance for small farmers and villagers, and also to some extent for mothers and younger non-heirs. 'Their co-inherence permits a distinctive, flexible and complex social life' (p. 160), but this combination also triggers the idea that the preferred concept has repeatedly to give way to more 'modern' attitudes. In addition, Jenkins points out the influence of ideas about the family system in Béarn on debates on social reform (civil society) and on sociological and anthropological concepts (symbolic capital, habitus) through LePlay and Bourdieu.

As an economic historian interested in the countryside it proved difficult for me to appreciate the content, methods and arguments in *The life of property*. Take, for example, the lack of empirical evidence about aspects of the functioning of the 'house' system, and its overall aim to transmit the property to a single heir. Bourdieu is criticized for the way he uses statistics, but Jenkins' work also lacks figures. He mentions that he has conducted an in-depth study of 60 farmsteads from 1780 onwards, but fails to present any systematic survey of the results; all we get is a few examples. Jenkins blames Bourdieu for building his analysis on old men as his main informants, yet he devotes a whole chapter to an analysis of a novel about the 'house' of a minor noble/large farming family around 1850, written in 1914, by someone born in 1874 of artisan origins!

Elsewhere, Jenkins describes in detail how another 'house' survived the division of the property forced by the Civil Code, and the 'urban' ambitions of a younger son in 1848. However, he overlooks the fact that the same 'house' was sold in 1870, when the male heir died as a soldier and his sister married and moved away. If the main aim was the continuity of the house, then why did the daughter not succeed, and why did the only son, whose presence was essential on the large castle-farm, put the continuity of the house at risk by entering the army?

Jenkins repeatedly stresses the long-term continuity of the 'house' as the foundation of the local value system in Béarn, without giving any clue about the actual importance of the 'house' system to the different social groups, whether in 1800, 1850, 1900, 1950 or in 2000; figures on the incidence of transfers of 'houses' inside and outside the family are not provided. Regrettably, the thinness of the empirical evidence is not compensated for by an extensive knowledge of the literature in the field of family and rural history. The numerous recent publications of Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga and Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux on the stem-family in the Pyrenean region are not cited (except for one dating from 1984), while references to recent publications on the concept of family strategy are limited.

In conclusion, Jenkins's book could be very attractive for anthropologists and researchers interested in the history of ideas. However, rural historians wanting to get a real grasp of the nature, the working, the motivations and the development of the Pyrenean stem family system would do better to turn to the work of Arrizabalaga and Fauve-Chamoux.

RICHARD PAPING
University of Groningen

TRACY DENNISON, *The institutional framework of Russian serfdom* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
xx + 254 pp., 1 illus., 1 map. £60.

In this excellent book, Tracy Dennison conducts a detailed investigation into Voshchazhnikovo, an estate in Iaroslavl' province, to challenge accepted views of Russian serfdom. She is particularly critical of the continuing acceptance by many historians of elements of what she terms the 'peasant myth'. This myth, she argues, has its root in the visions of nineteenth-century idealists rather than empirical evidence, and believes that peasants allocated land according to household size, redistributed it periodically to reflect changes in households, thereby leading to a weak sense of private property, the absence of land and labour markets, and a collective mentality that minimized risk and provided communal support. In chapters on household

structure and family economy, the rural commune, land, property and labour markets, credit and savings, and consumption, Dennison demolishes this myth with respect to Voshchazhnikovo.

Ultimately, rural society could be more dynamic and 'modern' under serfdom than is usually portrayed. In Voshchazhnikovo, land did not equal wealth; on the contrary, land was tied to dues and the more land a family worked, the more dues they were liable to pay. Land was allocated according to a family's ability to pay and some families did not have land. Land was bought, sold and bequeathed. As the land was relatively poor and greater profits could be made from non-agricultural activities, it made sense for many families to pay others to work their land or to rent it out. Some employed labourers or even owned their own serfs. Only 11 per cent of households made a living solely from agriculture; many males acted as migrant labourers in cities or engaged in estate-based manufacturing enterprises. Serfs took out loans for investments, saved, and lent money to other serfs. There was also an expanding market for clothing, jewellery and materials for house improvements.

Dennison's research, then, reinforces earlier work that stressed the diversity of the serf economy, whilst revealing a range of activities that one would assume could not exist under serfdom. Legally, serfs could not own land or other serfs, and the fact that they did in Voshchazhnikovo was due to the policies of its owners, the Sheremetevs. They allowed serfs to buy and sell property in their name. They protected the rights of owners, settled disputes, and oversaw all important issues concerning serfs' lives, from households and marriage to conscription and trade. In some respects, these practices support the view of serfdom as a repressive and arbitrary system, yet in the hands of owners like the Sheremetevs, who remained impartial and consistent in their policies across generations and estates, these practices formed a reliable framework in which serfs could work, live and pursue individual interests.

The role of the serf owner, therefore, was crucial and the Sheremetevs were not typical. As one of the richest families in Russia, they were able to maintain a central management office in St Petersburg for all their estates, and could afford to draw up and enforce numerous policies. They understood that permitting greater diversity on their estates benefited them financially; serfs, for example, paid for their help in purchasing land and, on becoming wealthier, paid higher dues. Most serf owners were smaller, enacting inconsistent policies as they could not afford to manage a complicated social and economic structure like Voshchazhnikovo.

Equally, the Sheremetevs' policies were only valid on their estates. In the state's eyes, property owned by the Sheremetevs' serfs remained the property of the Sheremetevs. If the Sheremetevs had decided to seize this property, then their serfs could do nothing.

Thus, Dennison rephrases the old question: it is not so much that serfdom was uniformly restrictive across Russia, but more a case that Russia could have been more advanced without it. That said, she raises the interesting point that serfdom's abolition in 1861 actually represented a regression for estates like Voshchazhnikovo. By removing the role of the Sheremetevs without replacing it with full legal rights for peasants, the state made Voshchazhnikovo's peasants worse off in many ways, even if they were now free.

Dennison's book helps historians re-examine Russian serfdom in productive ways. Her evidence is fascinating and often reveals new aspects to serfdom, even if her stress on the impact of serfdom as an institution is not always as innovative as she implies; after all, as her footnotes make clear, in most places she is contributing to existing debates. Nonetheless, Voshchazhnikovo was a different type of estate to those studied by other historians, owned by a different family in a different geographical area, and consequently her findings help construct a more detailed and complex picture of serfdom. Furthermore, Dennison has an impressive grasp of the relevant research on the peasantry of western and central Europe, enabling her to draw wide-ranging comparisons. Russia's experiences come across as a variant of Europe's, rather than completely distinct as is often implied, and this is true of much of Russia's historical development.

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STEPHEN MOSLEY, *The environment in world history* (Routledge, 2010). ix + 123 pp., 10 tabs. £65 (hbk), £18.99 (pbk), £18.99 (eBook).

There are many reasons why agricultural historians would do well to pay attention to the work of environmental historians; the latter have much to say about farming and its impacts. Stephen Mosley's slim volume, *The environment in world history*, is an excellent case in point. Focusing on the most significant factors behind environmental change that have taken place over the past 500 years, Mosley's work is less general and diffuse than many other recently published environmental history primers, which tend to begin with prehistory and end at the present day.

For those seeking a clear description of environmental history itself, Mosley's discussion of its evolution

and approach is extremely helpful. Environmental history's 'primary goal is to reveal how human action and environmental change are intertwined', he writes, adding that the nation state has frequently proven an inadequate framework for research undertaken by environmental historians (pp. 2–3). A key concern of environmental historians has always been understanding and documenting the extent and impacts of land use change, with Mosley reminding his readers that 35–50 per cent of the earth's land surface has now been 'radically transformed by human activity' (p. 6).

The book is built around four chapters, each dedicated to either a source of environmental change or an aspect of the earth's biosphere that has been subject to particularly severe environmental impacts. The chapters focus on hunting, forests, soils, and cities.

Discussing soils, Mosley emphasizes the acceleration in rates of erosion, exhaustion and salinization during the modern period and, most extremely, since the end of the Second World War. The role of Western European colonialism in the damaging of soils in North America and Africa is explored, with European migrants to 'new' lands viewed as "environmental pioneers" encountering soils that were unfamiliar'. In many cases, these soils were less resilient to erosion than typical northern European soils, argues Mosley: 'northern European farming practices had evolved in a temperate climate, typically on undulating terrain with heavy soils that were not so vulnerable to erosion by wind and rain' (pp. 61–2). The mistake that European settlers made was to assume a similar resilience on the part of new, lighter soils they were now farming. Indeed, Mosley describes settlers' approach as often no better than 'soil mining', with consequences that remain serious to this day.

Turning to the period since 1945, Mosley offers a damning overview of the cumulative impacts of industrial agriculture. He highlights the issue of soil compaction in Europe while acknowledging that since the end of the Second World War, approximately 80 per cent of 'all significant soil degradation' has occurred in the developing world (p. 68). Another problem arising from the embrace of industrial agriculture has been the manner in which intensive use of inorganic fertilizers has had the effect of 'masking' deterioration in soil health and functioning. Long-term, irreversible soil depletion is an issue yet to be confronted, argues Mosley, and because soil degradation has usually occurred 'too slowly and too unobtrusively to attract much public attention' there is little awareness that 1.5 billion hectares of cropland have been abandoned over the past four decades (p. 80).

The environment in world history offers a clearly-reasoned overview of major factors in recent environmental change, with a strong focus on soil (mis)management. It is also an excellent introduction to the approach taken by environmental historians.

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MARK B. TAUGER, *Agriculture in world history* (Routledge, 2011). x + 192 pp. £65 (hbk), £18.99 (pbk), £18.99 (eBook).

There is, according to Tauger (pp. 1–2), a complex relationship between farmers and urban civilization, and between farmers and their environment, but in general, he argues, farmers are subordinate in both cases. Therefore the history of agriculture is, from this perspective, an account of the various ways in which farmers escaped from this subordination, only to meet, in recent times, a fresh set of challenges in the form of global warming, peak oil, pollution, debt, and declining farmer numbers (p. 2). Before the nineteenth century, he argues, farmers were self-sufficient, but then, initially in the West, and subsequently elsewhere, 'civilization incorporated the farmers into itself, creating a relationship of interdependence' (p. 181), and this, he suggests, makes both vulnerable to dependence on oil, environmental threats, and socio-economic injustice. The modern world therefore needs to learn from the various ways in which early farmers recycled their waste, adapted to markets and environments, and produced food without requiring large inputs of energy. In short, it needs to respect the dependence of civilization upon agriculture (p. 182).

This book is part of a series on 'Themes in world history', aimed at undergraduate world history survey courses taught especially in the United States, but also elsewhere. In less than 200 pages it therefore has the task of not only outlining the origins and development of agriculture across the world, but also making the story relevant to world history in general, often, presumably, to students who will not become history specialists. It is a formidable challenge. In meeting it, Tauger adopts a conventional structure, dividing world history into seven periods, three before 1500 CE, and four afterwards, although the level of detail increases towards more modern times, and more than half of the book covers the nineteenth and twentieth century in three big chapters. Within each chapter again the arrangement is fairly conventional, with separate sections on Europe, the Americas, China, and south and central Asia.

In a book such as this, which aims to encapsulate the work of an enormous number of archaeologists

and historians, it is tempting to identify the points at which the author is at variance with generally accepted interpretations, or makes simple errors of fact, and most period or subject specialists will no doubt find several in a rapid scan of the book. Is it helpful to apply the term 'debt peonage' to both tenants in ancient Athens (p. 18) and feudal serfs (p. 39)? Whether or not medieval peasant land allotments really are most often called *manse* (p. 38), by the time the term has reached the glossary (p. 184) it has been redefined as 'the large house of the lord'. Devotees of Arthur Young's advocacy of enclosure may be surprised to learn that he has changed his name to Robert, and that 'only Denmark carried out land consolidation and enclosure in the eighteenth century' (p. 83). Four pages later we are told that there was fierce peasant resistance to pre-1700 enclosure in England, and that 'Parliament' imposed enclosure legislation after 1800. A paragraph on the Common Agricultural Policy (p. 142) becomes confused because the effects of its early policies are conflated with its subsequent development, and discussions of eastern European agricultural history often seem to mean only Russia (see p. 68).

Faced with such a range of material to cover, and to be compressed into so short a space, some errors are probably inevitable. The more significant question is whether they undermine the reader's confidence in the book as a whole, and whether they vitiate the author's overall argument. Perhaps what matters more than the detail is whether the overall concept forms a useful framework for world agricultural history. For readers who come new to the subject some framework, or overall issue that persists through the book, is surely better than none if their interest is to be maintained; the question then is whether Tauger's 'subordinate farmer' model is more useful than one which traces the effects of technology transfer, trade, and changes in land ownership and occupancy across space and time, or one which assesses the changing balance of demand and supply for agricultural products and the factors that affected it. Its novelty and debatability may in themselves be a useful device for capturing and keeping the reader's interest. On the other hand, some suggestion that there could be alternative frameworks or models, and where they might be found, might have made the book even more useful as an introduction.

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HANNAH VELTEN, *Milk. A global history* (Reaktion Books, 2010). 160pp., 58 illus. £9.99.

Velten begins her book by looking at human attitudes to the milk of many mammals around the

world over time. She shifts quite rapidly to her main focus: production and consumption of cows' milk in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain and the United States. She organizes her book primarily around shifting views about the value of milk within that period and geographic framework. By the mid-nineteenth century, milk had acquired a bad reputation, as a result of horrific problems arising from the way the commodity was marketed to an ever larger, urban-based population. The author describes city dairies in that period, the way adulterated milk was produced, how disease (most particularly tuberculosis and dysentery) was transferred through milk to people (especially infants), the increased emphasis on cows' milk as a replacement of human milk for babies, and the rise of both condensed and powdered milk.

The author outlines demands for reform and shows how better control over the quality of milk on the market was put in place. She compares regulations enforced by New York State and Britain to improve the purity of milk and its cleanliness, and to ensure the absence of disease-carrying bacteria in it. She discusses the process of pasteurization. Velten also notes efforts at promoting milk. Milk was supplied by the state to schoolchildren in Britain, for example. The advertising of milk, and state support of advertising, played a role in helping the milk cause. These activities made milk a healthier product and also increased public respect for it. By 1950 milk had achieved huge popularity, with a growing body of consumers in both Britain and the United States.

But late in the twentieth century, milk's star began to fall. Milk consumption in the United States and in Britain was in decline by the 1970s (particularly among the young), while consumption of carbonated drinks was on the rise. Drinking milk was simply not cool or hip. Some argued that pasteurization had ruined the natural taste of milk. On top of this situation, significant shifts in attitudes to milk as a food had taken place. Dr Benjamin Spock, for example, after years of advocating milk for children, reversed his view. He encouraged the abandonment of milk drinking. People had become concerned about the welfare of cows supplying the milk, as well as health issues around 'technological' milk (milk from cloned cows for example). In the meantime, consumption of milk has risen considerably in Asia. Velten briefly compares modern Anglo-American trends with those in Asia late in the twentieth century. The author sees this pattern as part of a larger one, which could be described as 'nutritional colonization'. Decline of milk drinking in traditional consuming countries does not mean that milk consumption on a world scale is also declining.

Asian increases in milk drinking led to a rise in global consumption.

The book's focus is milk, not the dairy industry. Generally speaking, Velten downplays dairying in her story. Because historical dairying is very much part of the historical milk story, however, overview observations on how the dairy industry developed would have been useful. Knowing more about the bovine types producing the milk within the period she discusses (as well as dairymen's points of view) would have put the subject of milk into a broader context. Many of the problems of the early fluid milk industry related to contingent changes in the cheese and butter industries. Cattle movement and the role of bovine disease in that movement were also critical factors in historical dairying for milk. A brief look at the rinderpest plague of 1865, and the public's attitudes to London's milk in relation to it, would have placed the uproar over the city dairies in perspective. Milk 'warm

from the cow' was no longer in such high esteem after that time. Understanding the dynamics of the world's dairy cattle population today – their breeding and production – is essential if one wants to appreciate patterns in global consumption. The story of milk is a complicated one with many facets impinging on it. Recognizing that some complexity in the historical milk story arose from historical dairying is important. It is a point that the author might have emphasized more than she did.

This book is admirable in many ways. It is well written and organized. Casual readers will learn a great deal about milk consumption from it. There is no cutting-edge, innovative information in the book, but I believe the author wanted to attract a general educated reading public, not a specialized group of historians.

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