

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

NICHOLAS J. HIGHAM and MARTIN J. RYAN (eds), *Landscape archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (The Boydell Press, 2010). xii + 231 pp., 29 figs., 14 illus., 4 tabs., £60.

Nicholas Higham's introduction offers not only an excellent indication of the book's contents but also summarizes the many changes that have occurred over recent decades in the interpretation of settlement development, field systems and woodland cover in early medieval England. Such changes may now be better understood because of recent progress in the techniques available to landscape archaeologists, but, as this book reveals, much as yet remains unclear. It is the companion volume to another which concentrates upon the evidence that may be derived from place-names and documents.

The papers themselves illustrate the use of developing archaeological techniques. These include experimental archaeology (in the use of timber); spatial modelling and mapping (multiple estate formation in Kent); test-pitting within present-day settlements to indicate chronological changes in settlement location; the use of illustrations showing farm implements and activities; archaeobotany and the use of climatic records; pottery collection through field walking; the use of pollen and other palaeoecological data; topographic analysis; and cemetery evidence.

The greatest interest, however, may arise from the fact that all these sources point towards the less well understood mid-Anglo-Saxon period (generally seen as c.650–c.850 AD) as a time of significant change. Breaking away from the 'Midland-centric' tradition of landscape research, Stephen Rippon argues that landscape transformation began rather earlier than has sometimes been assumed, in 'the long eighth century'. Within a framework of greater territorial stability, village nucleation began to take place and agriculture began to intensify, involving the introduction of new crops and ploughing techniques as well as land use change. Much of the evidence for this has been derived from pottery collected by field walking, but

in south-west England, where pottery evidence is limited, it is palaeoenvironmental data that has to be examined. Carenza Lewis shows how the collection (or non-collection) of pottery by test-pitting in East Anglia, marked by an absence of early or middle Anglo-Saxon pottery in many present-day settlements, seems to indicate a break in continuity and related settlement shift in the middle Anglo-Saxon period. New sites, ranging from village clusters to dispersed farms, most apparently dependent upon agriculture, can be detected in the late Anglo-Saxon period (c.850 until the Norman Conquest) after a period of apparent abandonment and shift. Susan Oosthuizen, in a chapter sadly depleted of much-needed plans, also argues for a process of settlement nucleation beginning in the middle Anglo-Saxon period (as Anthony Brown and Glenn Foard have long argued), again drawing attention to the 'long' eighth century. Debby Banham's chapter discusses how far agricultural change was due to a shift to wheat as a staple of the Anglo-Saxon diet sometime after 700, also envisaging this as related, through the provision of better drainage, to the use of ridge and furrow ploughing and greater use of the mould-board plough. In East Anglia, the location of Christian cemeteries in close association with settlement sites, examined by Richard Hoggett, seems to have emerged rather earlier than was once thought, perhaps as early as the seventh century, coinciding with a restructuring of the landscape during the Middle Saxon period. With the extension of both settlement and agriculture at this time, Peter Murphy discusses the evidence for settlements and associated farming on the highest, but still risky, locations of the Fenland coastlands, such as on the roddons, from the seventh to ninth centuries. He also dates fish traps recorded in the estuaries of East Anglia, both sources of evidence suggesting the more intensive use of coastal resources at this time, the same period of agricultural intensification argued for elsewhere in this volume.

Several authors attempt to relate their findings to a wide contextual frame. It remains unclear how far development of the open fields was related to settlement nucleation; changes were a recurrent possibility as

fashion and techniques changed, with ample scope for the remodelling of settlement patterns in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Neither were 'open' fields necessarily the same as 'common' fields. Tom Williamson reminds readers of the importance of environmental factors, suggesting that social practice could not act within an environmental vacuum. He argues that choices are likely to have been affected by soils and, to a lesser extent, climate. However, he also launches new ideas: that the same factors that facilitated cereal production and reliable harvests in eastern England also led to a freer peasantry not as inclined, through necessity, to put itself under lordly control. Furthermore he points to the influence of river valley systems and watersheds on the flow of peoples and ideas.

Although this volume is not the only one covering these themes, and many of the ideas presented here will be found scattered across the published literature, it is especially valuable that so many views are brought together here so that they can be contemplated and cross-referenced.

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MARK GARDINER and CHRISTOPHER WHITTICK (eds), *Accounts of the manor of Mote in Iden, 1442–1551, 1673* (Sussex Record Society, 92, 2008). lxxxv + 314 pp., 11 illus. £20.

The Sussex Record Society has a long and distinguished history of producing scholarly, meticulous and above all useful editions of primary sources. This volume fits very well into that tradition.

Mark Gardiner and Christopher Whittick's edition of the accounts and records of Mote manor in Sussex provides both a meticulous transcription and translation of the documents themselves and an extensive and highly informative introduction. The addition of the appendices and a glossary make this an exemplary volume of its type and one that will be used by local historians, students and academics alike.

The records comprise accounts, court rolls, a rental and a survey and cover over 200 years of the manor's history. One outstanding feature of the accounts is that the management of manor was taken back into the lord's hands in 1471. This makes these accounts particularly valuable since direct management was rare at this time and surviving accounts are often very sketchy indeed. The accounts presented in this volume therefore have an importance quite apart from their information about the individual manor. Their value is heightened by the fact they survive for a period of large-scale building on the manor.

The introduction is excellent and surely covers all the necessary elements of the documents. The expected diplomatic of the various documents is there but this introduction contains much more. It also outlines the history of the manor and its owners, and then discusses in detail the contents of the documents themselves. It focuses on the household and the building elements of the accounts, but also looks more briefly at the agrarian economy of the estate.

The section concerning the agrarian economy puts the activity on the manor of Mote in its historical context and offers such things as calculations of the yield and seeding rates of different crops. The importance of wood sales to Calais is highlighted; Sir John Scott made the most of his knowledge of the Calais market to expand this trade using wood from his own and others' estates. The accounts paint a lively picture of the Scott household in the 1460s, '70s and early '80s, using evidence in the accounts to look briefly at purchasing patterns of the household and the local processing of foodstuffs. The building accounts too are fascinating for the snapshot that they provide of the building/refurbishment of a private house in the fifteenth century. References in the accounts to 'the lady's paper' and 'the accountant's paper' and 'books of particulars' are a tantalising reminder of the lost layers of medieval administrative documents.

The editors have also provided considerable information about the history (up to the present day) of the archive of which these documents are part, and include a list of stewards of the estate from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Their detailed discussion of the diplomatic of all the different record types includes an analysis of the paper of the account rolls. The individual administration of the different bailiffs is also outlined and their characters brought to life; Thomas Russell's notes, which form part of the 1673 survey documents, display the impatience and frustration of someone trying to make maps from a combination of direct survey and written descriptions.

The appendices are also very welcome. The stock-deeds, which encompass records from 1280 to 1645, demonstrate, as the editors point out, the changes in terms over time, which reflect the changing nature of feudal relationships. The detailed prosopography highlights the breadth of the medieval 'career'. The concordance will be of great use to those using the records themselves and a glossary is always handy.

The indices in this volume are especially detailed and a highly valuable accompaniment to the texts. The carefully compiled index of persons and places is to be expected from such a volume, but the index of subjects will also be welcomed by a wide range of scholars.

There is however one area where the editors' care is somewhat lacking. The maps are a good addition but their usefulness is undermined by a lack of detail. Illustration 3 is discussed in the text with regard to Walland Marsh and Ewhurst, but these are not marked on the map. Again in a discussion about Map 4, Walland Marsh is mentioned, but not marked on the map. A key on these maps would make clear the import of the shaded areas. More generally, the maps which comprise illustrations 8, 9 and 10 might have been more convenient had they appeared close to the rental to which, one assumes, the numbers on them refer.

These are small quibbles. This volume makes a highly valuable source accessible. It will be of great use to a wide range of historical enquirers and will be mined for evidence across a wide range of subjects.

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TONY STEPHENS, *Landscapes and townscapes of North Craven: insights from the archives* (Long Preston Heritage Group, 2011). 153 pp., 126 figs. 23 tabs. £9. Available from sales@longpreston.info.

We all tend to like books full of high-quality photographs, maps, images of old portraits and other fascinating material, and this is such a book. There can be no doubt that Tony Stephens knows his area and shares this knowledge enthusiastically with us. Craven was the name of a British kingdom. Its modern geography is usually taken to refer to the area of the Yorkshire Dales that runs south from Wharfedale to the Lancashire boundary, west to meet Cumbria and east to the watershed between Wharfedale and Niddendale. From this substantial area Stephens has selected five towns (Burton in Lonsdale, Long Preston, Giggleswick, Settle and Rathmell) and two dales (Langstrothdale and Littondale). This is perhaps where the problems start, for – although we are provided with some truly splendid detailed maps – there is no map of the whole area to help those less familiar with this part of the north of England to put the discussions into context and understand how his subject areas relate to each other. A considerable proportion of the introductory chapter is devoted to explaining the documentary resources, which are generally illustrated with first-class images of the originals alongside a transcript; similar illustrations appear in later chapters. The five townships are each allocated a chapter, with chapter seven (which is longer than the others) devoted to both dales. There follows a remarkably brief conclusion given the complexity of what goes before. The volume ends with a relevant glossary, a list of abbreviations, the footnotes to the text and a bibliography. There is no index, which seems

a significant weakness in a book dealing with complex and geographically widespread material. Each chapter moves between topics and seems to be driven by the documentary resources, which are often of great value. The Long Preston chapter for instance, mentions *The Framing Boke* and generated deep envy in this reviewer that such a resource was available to the township's historians. (This remarkable manuscript is thought to date to about 1590 and sets out detailed information as to who was responsible for which roads.) These top-quality resources are used liberally to generate an insight into his areas of interest. Each township is discussed over a lengthy timescale with some very detailed considerations of specific buildings and fields for which we are given maps and photographs of exemplary relevance, quality and labelling. Some of these more concentrated discussions are perhaps shorter than we might like. It is worth noting that there is more space devoted to the inhabitants of some towns than might be anticipated in a work dealing with landscapes.

We are never told why Stephens selected these townships rather than any of the others, which are, on the face of it, equally interesting, and we are left with a sense of an opportunity missed. Craven is a truly beautiful and fascinating place, with a long and rich history, but no narrative emerges from Stephens's book. His resources are excellent but diverse; a more selective use of these, based upon narrower themes and shorter timescales, could have produced a clearer story. The relatively high number of photographs of walls immediately brought to mind Martin Wildgoose's work on Roystone Grange, and this is clearly an aspect of Craven's history worth pursuing. (Wildgoose's work is discussed in R. Hodges, *Roystone Grange: 6000 years of a peakland landscape*, 2006.) The extremely detailed texts, together with the associated maps and photographs, which form an important component of the landscape discussions, generated a similar feeling that these minute descriptions based upon a comprehensive local knowledge could be a major strength. However, after all the caveats, this is a book one would be glad to possess and which is excellent value for its price.

JENNIFER S. HOLT
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MARK MCDERMOTT and SUE BERRY (eds), *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset* (Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011). xix + 417 pp., 30 illus. £45.

Edmund Rack was a founder member and the first secretary of what became the Royal Bath and West of England Society: though he had no practical experience

of farming, he was keen to encourage agricultural improvement. He had been a shopkeeper in Essex until he retired to Bath in 1775 aged 40, where he wrote articles and poetry, as well as having interests in geology and fossil collecting. In the 1780s he collaborated with Rev. John Collinson in producing a history of Somerset. Collinson was mainly responsible for the documentary and historical research, while Rack carried out the field survey of the parishes, travelling around the county from 1781 until his early death in 1787. His health was never very good and the travelling in all weathers probably hastened his end, when some parishes remained unfinished. When the history finally appeared in 1791 under Collinson's name, he used only small parts of Rack's material. For modern historians this is probably the more interesting part of the project, providing an observant and informative contemporary survey of the majority of the parishes of Somerset, arranged by Hundred.

This handsome volume, well designed and thoughtfully produced, makes available most of Rack's survey, arranged by hundred, from his original manuscript now deposited in Bristol Record Office; a small part of his manuscript is in private hands and unavailable. The deposit also includes letters from Rack to Collinson, which the editors have used in the introduction to throw light on the way the history was being prepared and subscribers found. Rack's wide interests are reflected in the range of information he included for many of the parishes, everything from geology to the surnames found on gravestones. For most parishes he noted the current population, with annual numbers of baptisms and burials; the number of dwellings in the main settlement and also in each hamlet, with their size and materials; the interior fittings of the churches; watercourses and the species of fish found; woodland and the species of tree; the roads and their surfaces; local industry and its employees and output; bridges, mills, workhouses, almshouses, charities, public houses, meeting-houses; the dates of fairs and revels. Occasionally he included significant passages of historical information, on manors and estates or church livings and tithes, possibly gathered from local sources.

The agricultural material is fairly brief: he naturally concentrated on what he perceived to be the main production of the parish, and did not give a total picture of agricultural output, though he also included more detail in his accounts of each hundred. He was more interested in arable farming when it was present, and possibly because of his East Anglian background, was fairly critical of farming practices in Somerset: not enough marl, under-drainage, turnips, or hoeing all

round, but he did note good practice as well. Animal husbandry is mentioned less often, usually only when it formed the significant part of the production, such as on the rich coastal pastures of parishes like Huntspill or Burnham, with their many wealthy graziers, or the fine Cheddar cheese made in Weare in the Somerset Levels.

The amount of information varies considerably from place to place, but he frequently gave figures: price of labour, value of meadow, pasture, or farms, value of industrial output. He noted the main products sold at the fairs and weekly markets, and any unusual or outstanding products, and sometimes the actual value of goods traded. Though his home city of Bath received detailed treatment, several major towns, notably Taunton, are not covered: possibly he was going to rely on local contributors, or his death intervened.

The book also includes in a separate pocket a reproduction of Bowen's *Map of Somerset*, first published in 1750, showing the hundreds and parishes and much additional information. Two of the illustrations are by Rack himself, one a rendering of the topography of Dunster, used for the endpapers, and the remainder are appropriate topographical drawings and paintings of the period. Rack's survey gives a valuable snapshot of the county in the later eighteenth century, not only for agricultural change, but also aspects such as population, housing, and religious life. The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society are to be congratulated on making this interesting material more widely available.

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CHRISTOPHER P. RODGERS, ELEANOR A. STRAUGHTON, ANGUS J. L. WINCHESTER and MARGHERITA PIERACCINI, *Contested common land. Environmental governance past and present* (Earthscan, 2011). xii + 227 pp., 17 figs. £60.

The commons have occupied a central place in the lives and minds of past generations, and continue to do so today. As much a cultural and symbolic landscape as it is an economic resource, the history of common land is an amalgam of competing interests and identities that have developed and shifted over time and place. However, if the commons are to be protected and managed for future generations, the mediation of conflicting interests among resource users together with the application of appropriate management schemes is a pressing challenge. *Contested common land* is the outcome of an innovative interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars from the disciplines of history and law. The book reveals the importance and great potential of developing interdisciplinary

research that pays attention to temporal depth and micro-scale analyses in order to inform present policy-making in ways that will have lasting effect. Published at an important time, following the Commons Act of 2006, the work explores ways to secure and strengthen sustainable management systems that will ensure the protection of ecologically sensitive environments while balancing agricultural and recreational interests. Drawing on a rich body of archival material and fieldwork together with contemporary research on modern stakeholders' views and often conflicting agendas, the authors show the value and prudence of unpicking the entangled meanings and relationships between legal and 'idealized' concepts of property and cultural conceptions of common land.

Following an introductory chapter, which introduces key aims and methodologies, the book is divided into three parts, each subdivided into chapters exploring the historical and modern dimensions of common land management. Part one, entitled 'Custom, property rights and sustainable management', is primarily concerned with governance strategies and institutional frameworks within which tensions and conflicts over access and land use rights have been mediated. Chapters two and three deal with customary and local governance strategies in historical context and highlight, in particular, the social and cultural significance of the commons and regulation of rights through principles of good neighbourliness. Chapters three and four shift the emphasis to modern notions of property rights and institutional governance, which is often closely aligned with environmental legislation. In this, the authors offer an assessment of the 2006 Act in view of wider international debates and especially following Elinor Ostrom's work on the governance of common pool resources (CPRs). Part two applies the methodological approaches discussed in preceding chapters to four case studies, from Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Norfolk, and Wales. Each chapter explores the development of common rights since the sixteenth century, and subsequent impact of the Commons Registration Act of 1965. A linking theme to emerge from these micro-studies is that notwithstanding the compulsory registration of common rights, local custom and pragmatism continue to influence farming practices. The concluding part of the book outlines the key themes of common land governance, and discusses the social construction of law and custom, as well as some of the implications the research has for wider debates concerning the institutional governance of CPRs. Some of the technical and legal language is challenging at times and a glossary of terms and acronyms would have provided useful reference for the reader.

Throughout the volume the authors demonstrate the importance of attending to both historical depth and environmental diversity. The authors argue against static, one-dimensional governance systems, as reflected in the 1965 Commons Act, which fail to take into account the particularities of different locales and the long-term impact of human activities and responses to management and change. Of particular interest to this reader is that local customs and traditional farming practices continue into the modern day to contradict and subvert formal legal requirements, as stated in the 1965 Act. Customs are an inherently adaptable and flexible system of local practices developing out of social as well as economic pragmatism, and are typically viewed as being eroded by the legal concepts of private property that have emerged since the sixteenth century. The evidence presented here sheds light on the development and reformation of customary practices beyond the eighteenth century. The authors show how space has been created by the Commons Act of 2006, for the emergence of a more dynamic interplay of property rights allowing for greater flexibility and diversity for the representation of customary practices.

The work is a timely contribution of interest to a wide readership concerned with issues of environmental sustainability, the evolution of institutional governance systems, the history of English and Welsh commons and our historic landscape more generally.

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CHRISTOPHER DYER, ANDREW HOPPER, EVELYN LORD and NIGEL TRINGHAM (eds), *New directions in local history since Hoskins* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). xix + 276 pp., 47 figs, 12 illus., 8 tabs. £16.99.

This volume of essays arises out of the second conference organised at University of Leicester to commemorate the work of W. G. Hoskins. The conference, held in July 2009 in association with the British Association for Local History, was designed (ostensibly) to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Hoskins's influential *Local history in England*. In fact, it was also intended as a showcase for the writing of local history today, much of which takes Hoskins as its inspiration, but a great deal of which has developed in ways that he might not have expected.

These essays are gathered together under several headings: 'The practice of local history'; 'Region, class and ethnic diversity'; 'Making a living in town and country'; 'Religious culture and belief'; and 'Sources, methods and techniques'. As the editors note in their introduction, perhaps the most profound shift in local

history since the late 1950s is its increasing preoccupation with the twentieth century. This is an inevitable development, particularly as the tumultuous events of its first four decades recede from memory, even if it might not have met with the approval of Hoskins (a confirmed anti-modernist).

Nevertheless, the essays in this volume confirm that local history remains the history of the places in which we live. As such, it is not surprising that the essays in this volume have a predominantly urban focus, from Dick's fascinating study of the histories of settler communities in Birmingham, Sweetinburgh's detailed reconstruction of Hythe's medieval butcher-graziers, Howells's equally interesting analysis of working women in nineteenth-century Salisbury, and Royle and Smith's studies of church building, and church politics in the nineteenth-century suburbs. Only Miller's study of the crofter economy of Skye in the eighteenth century is resolutely rural and agrarian in theme. Perhaps this august journal corners the market in all such research, but it would be nice to think that local history can still be agrarian in character.

All the essays in this volume are detailed, scholarly explorations of local or regional themes. Those by Chris Lewis on local history between the wars, and Ruth Paley on the King's Bench (crown side) are the two most likely to be cited repeatedly. Both illustrate local history at its best. Lewis makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the historiography of local history, and emphasizes the role that its 'amateur' practitioners played in the simultaneous evolution of political, economic, agrarian and social history within British universities and colleges in the 1920s and 1930s. As he notes, the efflorescence of professional local history at Leicester after 1945, during which Hoskins produced his best work (and the BAHS was founded), had much deeper roots. Paley's essay demonstrates another profound contribution of local history to wider knowledge. The best local history has always been grounded on a knowledge of sources that comes only by working with them repeatedly, and thinking about their structures and forms. Her essay on the criminal side of the King's Bench opens up a vast array of important and revealing eighteenth-century deposition evidence that offers detailed new insights into the conflicts produced by daily life. However, as she notes, the task of wading through the various index books in order to trace the cases is not for the faint-hearted.

Remembering Hoskins as chronicler of the histories of Exeter, the 'Great Rebuilding', and Tudor inflation and agrarian distress, the essays by Sweetinburgh, Hey and Miller review urban life in late medieval Kent, the houses of Derbyshire lead smelters, and the demographic and

agrarian difficulties of eighteenth-century Skye. They emphasize the benefits of local history in anchoring historical research very firmly to the practicalities and possibilities of place. Similarly, the essays by Cross and Watson on the processes of religious reform in Tudor England show how detailed local insights can reveal the complexities of larger historical processes. Cross demonstrates that it took considerable effort to translate Salisbury's vigorous Henrician religious conservatism into its equally strident late Elizabethan Protestantism. Watson explains the role of the Court of High Commission in challenging the power of lay elites in Elizabethan Yorkshire. Royle's chapter takes up where Pevsner left off, and illustrates the architectural and historical significance of the Gothic revival within Victorian nonconformity (among sects which had previously set their Greco-Roman faces against Anglican architectural filigree). Smith's entertaining chapter illustrates the sub-Trollopian machinations created when various shades of Anglicanism (and snobbery) collided in suburban Oxford around 1900.

Finally, while it difficult to reconcile modern technology with the nostalgia of Hoskins's vision of local history groups dusting off their school exercise books after a summer of tending their potatoes, Ell's chapter on local history and the Web is instructive. Although such essays stand to be outdated with alarming rapidity, his chapter serves as a timely reminder of how much local history is being done on-line. Since its inception, family historians have harnessed the various incarnations of the Internet with enthusiasm. Local historians have followed in their wake rather more slowly, but technologies such as 'crowd sourcing' surely provide a means to join up research, expertise, and effort in a form first envisaged in the 1890s by the *Victoria County History*, but in ways that might now truly be democratic, representative and flexible. While funding has dwindled for resource-enhancement initiatives and ended for 'millennium' local history projects, the technology still advances at a pace to make such open-access research enterprises tantalisingly possible. It would definitely be worth following that particular new direction in local history.

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RICHARD MOORE-COLYER, *Farming in Wales, 1936–2011: 75 years of the Farm Business Survey* (Y Lolfa, Talybont, Ceredigion, 2011). 206 pp., 50 plates. £9.95.

As the subtitle suggests, this book has been written to commemorate the 75th anniversary in Wales of what is now called the Farm Business Survey. A little less

than half of the text is concerned directly with the history of the Survey, while the rest covers the state of Welsh agriculture from the inter-war period to the present day.

Before 1985 the Farm Business Survey was known as the Farm Management Survey. It involves the collection of information on the outputs and inputs, in both physical and financial terms, from a sample of farms spread across England and Wales. Nationally some 2,000 farms have normally been involved, and the results from them have been used by the relevant Ministry (originally Agriculture and Fisheries, now DEFRA) to assess the annual changes in farm incomes across the country as a whole. Given the sensitivity of such detailed financial information, and the consequent likely reluctance of farmers to co-operate with civil servants, the Survey has always been carried out by investigation officers employed by university departments. Only after the data collected for individual farms had been anonymized was it sent to the Ministry. This process began in 1936, and continues to the present day. Chapters four to six trace its history from the viewpoint of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Aberystwyth University.

Although chapter four is entitled 'The origins of the Farm Business Survey', more than half of it is devoted to the development of the department of Agricultural Economics at Aberystwyth and the difficulties it faced because of the agricultural scientists who found it difficult to recognize economics as a serious discipline and the economists who looked down upon those who studied agriculture. The remainder, dealing more specifically with the establishment of the Survey itself, implies that the impetus for it came from the Conference of Provincial Agricultural Economists, the inter-war meeting point of agricultural economists in the various university departments. This may be how the story emerges from the perspective of a single university department, but we are told nothing about the wider intellectual context at the time. The inter-war period was, after all, one in which agricultural economists in other European countries and the United States were expanding data collection and analysis, both nationally and in international organizations such as the International Institute of Agriculture. More specifically, although the book mentions that the funding for the Survey came from the Treasury, it does not explain how the Treasury was persuaded to provide the necessary funding or how the Oxford Agricultural Economics Research Institute was persuaded to abandon its preference for alternative accounting methods.

The first three chapters tell the familiar twentieth-century story of an agriculture pushed about by

external political and economic influences. There were the difficult years between the wars when, apart from the increasing production of milk for the liquid market, and rural electrification, traditional farming technologies were maintained, while the landownership structure underwent dramatic change. The level of owner-occupation in Wales rose from nine per cent in 1909 to 39 per cent in 1936. Nevertheless, a 'mild flavour of decay' began to pervade the Welsh countryside as the traditional economy, society and culture began to 'rot at the centre' (p. 21). The need to maximize wartime food production saw a combination of mechanization and mixed farming begin to reverse this trend. Moore-Colyer's account of this concentrates on the effects of the 'quasi-fascist control' exerted by the County War Agricultural Executive Committees. Dealing with the post-war period he again emphasizes the role of national and, latterly, European policies in determining the fate of a Welsh agriculture that was increasingly dependent upon government funding. The book is rounded off by a fascinating series of individual histories featuring farms that participated in the Survey. Two remain as full-time working farms, some rely on associated activities, such as golf courses or caravan sites, or have become part-time farms or residential holdings, and others have disappeared under housing developments.

In his familiar fluent and vigorous style, Moore-Colyer has produced a book which – despite the odd blemish (the first footnote in chapter one, for example, is inaccurate), and what this reviewer sees as the more serious misinterpretation of its origins – will introduce historians to the research possibilities of the Farm Management Survey, provide a readable introduction to the recent history of Welsh farming, and serve as a fitting memorial for several generations of Aberystwyth agricultural economists.

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STEWART SQUIRES and CATHERINE WILSON
(eds), *Growing better: Lincolnshire and the potato*
(Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology,
2011). 136 pp., 147 figs. £15 & £2 p. & p. from SLHA,
Jews' Court, 2–3 Steep Hill, Lincoln, LN2 1LS.

This informative study provides an almost encyclopaedic review of potato growing in Lincolnshire, a county which historically has been regarded as the premier site for the crop. Following a brief review of the history of the potato and the local dialect, the text explores the changes which have taken place in potato production since the mid-nineteenth century. These include alterations to the cultivation of the land,

to harvesting and storage, as well as the more recent revolutionary changes in the processing and retailing of potatoes in their various forms. The text is complemented by an impressive collection of photographs, diagrams and illustrations.

Stewart Squires and Catherine Wilson, in addition to editing the book, have also contributed either individually or jointly to most of the chapters. Their input is accompanied by contributions from either leading figures in the historical development of this particular region, or acknowledged subject experts in aspects of potato production. I particularly enjoyed Dennis Mills's short account of the 'Great Potato Boom', which resulted from the development of new, improved varieties in the first few years of the twentieth century. Of considerable merit is Peter Dewey's longer, more detailed critique of 'Mechanisation and Lincolnshire manufacturers', which provides a wealth of factual details of the history of mechanization and the importance of Lincolnshire manufacturers. Abigail Hunt's critique of the mobilization of additional sources of labour women, prisoners of war and children as 'unseen labour' in harvesting the crop is particularly impressive in enhancing our understanding of a crucially important activity in the farming calendar. Another interesting chapter is Stewart Squires' account of the role that Lincolnshire played in the popularization of fish and chips. The final chapter contains an impressive collection of recipes compiled by the editors, illustrating various ways of cooking potatoes.

There is a considerable degree of variability between the different chapters not only in terms of their length, but also quality of the analysis. For example, chapter two concentrates on providing a family-history-style review of the leading families involved in the history of potato production in Lincolnshire. There is extensive background information on the role of these pioneers in the region, but the rationale for including these individual families is not completely persuasive. There are a number of dubious points in the text which merit clarification. For example, on page 22 it is suggested that all potato picking was undertaken as piecework, an assertion which is very difficult to substantiate. In a similar way, on page 27, Ralph Godfrey's role in chairing one of the War Agricultural Executive Committees is left rather vague. On page 107, the figures for the average potato acreage in 1950 are incorrect. These relatively minor criticisms do not, however, undermine a text which provides a very useful account and an interesting insight into the historical importance of the crop in Lincolnshire.

In its defence, the book does not set out to conform to traditional academic conventions, where the analysis of

the central theme is supported by an extensive array of endnotes referring to a wide range of sources. Instead, is better to judge it as a coffee-table book, which can be dipped into as light reading. In this respect the book has considerable merits in terms of explaining the different aspects of production, distribution and processing of the potato crop. It will be of interest not only to academics, but also to a general audience interested in the history of Britain's most important source of food, as well as having considerable relevance for individuals focusing on the historical development of Lincolnshire.

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Europe and Elsewhere

MAURICE BICHARD, *Baskets in Europe* (Fyfield Wick Editions, 2008). 272 pp., illus. £20 incl. p.&p.

Available from Fyfield Wick Editions, The Farmhouse, Fyfield Wick, Abingdon, Oxon., OX13 5NB

Maurice Bichard's work has to be one of the most definitive studies on basketry to date. This book will appeal not just to the basket maker but to all basket users, who may look at baskets differently after reading it, and give more respect to the craftspeople who made them.

The book reveals the seemingly countless variety of types of basket and materials used to make them. Most of us have at some time used a shopping basket, hamper or laundry basket, but we might not have been aware of their importance in the not-too-distant past, before plastics were invented. After the invention of string, basketry must have been mankind's first essential craft. Without manipulating fibrous plants to make string they would not have been able to hold together their primitive shelters, catch food with a line or net, or just tie up prey in order to carry it home to their families. The wattle and daub prehistoric houses all over Europe were more or less big baskets and people lived in that type of house for thousands of years, so they must have been functional.

The chapter on materials best exemplifies the years of research that the author has undertaken. Whilst most people know that willow is the prime material used in basket manufacture, some might not be so aware that split oak and marsh grasses were also used for this purpose. Think of a need and someone, somewhere, seems to have made a basket to serve it. The bee baskets in Germany are just one example showing the utilization of thick insulated baskets covered with clay to keep bees nice and warm during the harsh winters in the alpine regions. The basket walls to the carts

highlighted in page 174 look as though they originated among the ancient Hallstatt Celts of the Alpine regions, and it appears that their design was little changed. The description of the straw over-shoes made in Sweden for market traders who had to stand for a long time in freezing conditions was also fascinating. They had a single function, because their susceptibility to wear meant that they were made only for people to stand in and could not be used when walking about. How sensible to devise something to keep one's feet warm while sitting in a cart or standing at a market stall, leaving them to be taken off and changed when one wanted to walk! Today, we expect products to do everything, yet the basket maker in this case made a product for a very specific yet vital role in a cold climate. From fig drying trays to cow muzzles, the variety of baskets this book displays will amaze anyone reading it.

The book begins with a brief history of the origins of basketry and the formation of guilds in various parts of Europe. However, there is a question about how far the in-depth coverage of the political and social history of each region adds to the study of baskets. Others with wider political or economic interests might disagree. The book certainly provides the author with a platform to display his knowledge of basketry very extensively. However, his writing style is somewhat disjointed in places, with some rather long sentences which can cause the reader's attention to wander. Leaving this aside, though, the study is a truly comprehensive record of the development and diversity of basketry in Europe.

Even so, it might have been enhanced by a few drawings to show how some of the more unusual baskets were made, such as the delightful flower-shaped baskets from Sofia on page 228. The photographs and illustrations in the book are, however, truly wonderful and make me want to go out and harvest some material and make some of the more unusual ones myself. History aside, this book is a must-have for anyone who has more than a passing interest in the subject. The book demonstrates wholeheartedly our abilities to manipulate nature and make even seemingly useless material such as wild grass into cherished and useful objects.

JACQUI WOOD
Saveock Water Archaeology

INA ZWEINIGER-BARGIELOWSKA, RACHEL DUFFETT and ALAIN DROUARD (eds), *Food and war in twentieth-century Europe* (Ashgate, 2011). xvii + 276 pp., 7 figs., 9 tabs. £65.

The International Commission for Research into European Food History (ICREFH) holds a symposium every two years in a different European city. In 2009

its members met in Paris to discuss 'Food and War in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', and from that meeting this book has emerged. It has an introduction and conclusion, and seventeen further chapters, which are almost entirely concerned with the First and Second World Wars. The exceptions are Drouard's chapter on horsemeat, which covers the period from 1870 to 1975 when, he argues, horsemeat was at its most popular, and Alicia Guidonet Riera's study of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath. Otherwise, the book is fairly evenly balanced between the two conflicts, with Jonsson and Jonsson's chapter on Iceland covering both, and indeed going back into the nineteenth century to explore what was then the traditional Icelandic diet, a mixture of dried fish, blood puddings, milk, and curds, all generally eaten cold, with few vegetables, cereals or potatoes.

The book is divided into four sections, the first of which is concerned with feeding soldiers. Official ration scales in the British and German armies in both the First and Second World Wars provided for an energy and protein intake that was more than adequate for an active man. However, the troops receiving these nutrients in the form of canned meat and hard biscuit suffered at best from 'menu fatigue' and in many cases from vitamin shortages, tooth problems, and constipation. Lummel's chapter on German Army food in the First World War has an interesting comparison with British Army rations, which had more meat but less of almost everything else, including variety. Nevertheless, as Rachel Duffett points out in her companion chapter on British Army food, they were good enough to attract recruits from the poorer sectors of society, who would eat more, and certainly more meat, than at home. These two chapters, and a third on the problems of providing kosher food for Jewish soldiers in the German Army, provide some fascinating insights into the practical difficulties of providing industrial-scale food supplies for industrial-scale warfare. It is perhaps a pity that there is no comparative study of industrial-scale food supply in the later conflict to see if lessons were learned or mistakes repeated, or to make wider comparisons with French and American army provisioning.

The second and third parts of the book deal with the civilian experience. Shortages of meat, fats, and imported foods, increased use of rabbits, game, and more exotic animals (some Czech writers discussed the advantages of dogs, water rats, squirrels, frogs and turtles), the expanding use of substitutes for butter, cheese, milk, and coffee, and the imposition of food rationing, were all common across most European countries in both wars. What is interesting is how

these common experiences varied between countries, and the effects of the differences. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska concludes that, although British food policy in the Second World War was, on the whole, successful, and meant that the black market was never very significant in the 'people's war', it still 'fell short of the ideal of equality of sacrifice and at times social solidarity was severely strained' (p. 135). In France, however, it was strained to breaking point. Mouré's chapter on the 'cruel realities' of the black market shows how an unsuccessful rationing system could produce desperation and evasion, and Isabelle von Buelzingsloewen highlights the role of food shortages and malnutrition in producing opposition to the Vichy regime. In the Netherlands, den Hartog argues that food supplies were generally sufficient, if dull, until September 1944, but then came the hunger winter, in which some 16,000 people died of starvation and related diseases, and an official brochure was published on how to cook tulip bulbs. Crocus, gladioli and iris bulbs were eaten too, but hyacinths and daffodils were found to be toxic. The effects were not only physical, and Pavel Vasilyev has some intriguing data on the food-derived psychoses that arose during and after the siege of Leningrad, which lasted from September 1941 to January 1944. The final part of the book examines the role of war in producing modernization and innovation in the food industry. To choose only one example, Ulrike Thoms points out that the Second World War saw thousands of food-related patents for new products and methods in Germany, and that military requirements led to some products that are still with us, such as Nestlé's new product, dehydrated coffee, or Nescafé.

This is a rich and varied collection of detailed studies that provides a starting point for any future research on the impact of war on food production and consumption, although it has less to say on the effects of food problems on the outcomes of war.

PAUL BRASSLEY
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Autour du 'Village'. Établissements humains, finages et communautés rurales entre Seine et Rhin (IVe–XIIIe siècles) (Publications De L'Institut D'Études Médiévales, Université Catholique de Louvain). xxi + 543 pp. 41 figs.

In the summer of 2003 René Noël, Professor of Medieval Studies jointly at the Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix (Namur) and the Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve) took retirement after forty years teaching in the Belgian university system. A disciple of Léopold Genicot, who created the centre

for rural history at Louvain, and a colleague of Adriaan Verhulst at the University of Ghent, who founded the Belgian national centre for rural history, Noël defended his doctoral thesis in 1967 on rural settlement in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries across territory between the Semois and Chiens valleys. Located in the far south of Wallonia, this area was not far from his birthplace in the Belgian province of Luxembourg. With Genicot's encouragement, Noël's scope of interest and expertise broadened from the analysis of medieval documents to using field archaeology and fossil pollen records. His publications focused on the transformation of rural Belgium in medieval times but also embraced the rural architecture of Wallonia, the history of Namur, and teaching about the legacy of Charlemagne. The *liber amicorum* under review contains many of the presentations made at an international conference held in his honour at Louvain-la-Neuve in May 2003. Twenty-one essays by colleagues, pupils and friends deal with fundamental aspects of the transformation of rural settlement in Western Europe during the long middle ages.

The volume begins with a masterly, 75-page essay by Noël devoted to differing interpretations of the 'medieval village' proposed by an exceptionally wide range of authors. The traditional model was largely derived from critical evaluations of written material, and envisaged the nucleated village as being anchored in the distant past. However, important archaeological evidence became available during the 1950s and subsequently, with pollen analysis adding to site evidence. Examples of settlement desertion, as well as creation, in medieval times were being found in many areas. Hence, by the 1980s, a second model of the village was being advanced, which saw the nucleated village, with church, cemetery, cultivated fields and surrounding communal territory, replacing earlier, much more fragile and fragmented patterns. Having defined and compared the models, Noël then revisits a vast array of documentation and explores archaeological evidence old and new.

Drawing on findings from many parts of Western Europe, he concludes on page 75 that a kind of village existed in the early middle ages, but lacked the composition and characteristics recognized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It had neither a juridical identity nor communal lands. It was arranged spaciouly, but was less disorganized and fragile than some scholars have supposed. Its inhabitants were not very numerous and shared the sorrows and joys of daily existence, meeting each other outside their dwellings, in the fields and on nearby roads. From the ninth century onwards, they assembled in their parish church

on Sundays and religious festivals. After funerals and memorial services they visited the cemetery, walking across the graves of their ancestors, and evoking their memory. Older members of the group transmitted memories to younger villagers, thereby reinforcing a sense of collective conscience.

The remainder of *Autour du 'Village'* is structured into three unequal parts. The first traces the emergence of 'the village' in medieval scholarship, with four contributors discussing how this concept was handled by anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and classicists. The second section contains eleven essays relating to areas located between the Seine and Rhine valleys, at various times between the fourth and thirteenth centuries. Five contributions explore such themes as grouped settlements, different types and uses of buildings, continuity of routeways, and opportunities – and challenges – posed by palynology for interpreting past landscape features. Six papers then discuss 'structuring elements' of the medieval village: churches, cemeteries, cultivated fields, communal institutions, and castles. The three essays in the final section examine the relationship between villages and their surrounding rural space in Brabant and the lower Sambre valley, and the utility of place names to elucidate changes in medieval settlement in north-eastern France.

This substantial volume casts fresh light on many of the themes that were central to René Noël's own research, and present recent findings for areas that he knew from field experience. Financial and other problems delayed its publication, and some contributors took advantage to update their texts, but *Autour du 'Village'* has been well worth the wait.

HUGH CLOUT
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JANKEN MYRDAL and MATS MORELL (eds), *The agrarian history of Sweden from 4000BC to AD2000* (Nordic Academic Press, 2011). 336 pp., 249Kr.

The last decades have seen an increasing interest in agrarian history among Swedish scholars. One proof of this was the publishing of the five-volume work *Det svenska jordbrukets historia* between 1998 and 2003. It was a splendid piece of work, in both substance and appearance, written by eight well-known authorities in the field, directed at the general public and academics alike. This book is a condensed version of those five volumes, translated into English for an international audience. The texts are, moreover, updated by research undertaken in the last ten years.

The book has six main chapters, ordered chronologically, from the very oldest archaeological finds of

charred grains and bones of domesticated animals dating from 3900 BC to today, when agriculture is as much about preserving a pastoral landscape and providing 'experiences' as it is about producing food. In addition, there is a short introduction that includes a brief historiographical account of agrarian history in Sweden, a synthesis that puts Swedish agriculture in a wider context, a statistical appendix, and a comprehensive bibliography. Unfortunately, but unavoidably, most of the many beautiful and informative illustrations that made up much of the five-volume work have been omitted in this abridged edition.

The guiding idea is that the Swedish experience is relevant to international research. I share this view, and therefore welcome this book. I believe, however, that more explicit international comparisons would have helped the foreign reader. From the general account it is clear, however, that Sweden's agrarian history belongs to a wider European story. Stig Welinder, whose article covers the first three millennia, points to the fact that the first findings of agricultural activities are associated with finds of Funnel-Beaker pottery. Agriculture seems to have been introduced as part of a wider cultural package, common to a large area around the Baltic and the North Sea. In the subsequent chapter, Ellen Anne Pedersen and Mats Widgren explore at length when and where the different elements of Northern European mixed farming – cattle byres, hay-meadows, permanent fields, and iron implements such as the scythe – turn up in the Swedish setting. In the third chapter, Janken Myrdal tells a story familiar to most British readers, that of medieval growth and decline. Sweden in the high middle ages was characterized by demographic expansion, land clearance, and rising productivity. In the fourteenth century, times were bad, culminating in 1350 with the Black Death. A dramatic drop in population, warfare, and efforts to increase rents – a 'feudal reaction' – followed. However, in the end, peasants' conditions improved. A new era of expansion began.

A main and recurring theme in the book is the view that agricultural development is by-and-large a discontinuous process, characterized by times of rather rapid transformation and times of relative immovability. Carl-Johan Gadd describes a radical transformation in the fourth chapter, 'The agricultural revolution in Sweden 1700–1870'. Here we are told how Sweden changed from being an importer of agricultural produce to an exporter, despite a growth in population from 1.4 million in 1700 to 4.2 million in 1870. A 'technological complex', to use Myrdal's term, consisting of iron ploughs, the use of scythes to harvest grain, new crops and crop rotations, and land reforms (inspired

by English enclosures), made this possible. But Gadd also gives credit to 'underlying socio-economic and institutional changes' that strengthened the position of the peasant-farmer, who is depicted as the chief carrier of change.

In the two last chapters, written by Mats Morell (covering 1870–1945) and Irène A. Flygare and Maths Isacson (1945–2010), we meet a very different agrarian society, now inextricably dependent on, but at the same time at odds with, industrial and urban society. In 1900, half the Swedish population was still employed in agriculture. During the twentieth century this number was in constant decline; in the 1990s it was 4 per cent. In its place, machines driven by electricity and fossil fuels made possible an unprecedented increase in production. We are also told about the political and ideological struggles between agrarian interests and the rest of the Swedish society, within the context of an ever more important market economy and a rising welfare state.

This is an impressive book, spanning a wide range of topics: cultivation techniques, structures of landholding, the gender division of labour, to name but a few. The importance of forestry in Swedish rural society, not the least in the northern area, could have been emphasized more strongly. But the large regional differences that characterize Sweden are still accounted for; even brief, but repeated, references are made to the pastoral economy of the Sami, otherwise sadly neglected by Swedish historians. My guess, and hope, is that this will be an important book of reference for many years to come.

JONAS LINDSTRÖM
Uppsala University

SVERRE BAGGE, MICHAEL H. GELTING and THOMAS LINDKVIST (eds), *Feudalism. New landscapes of debate* (The Medieval Countryside 5, Brepols Publishers, 2011). 232 pp. £80.

This volume consists of eleven essays based on conference papers, with an introduction. The conference, held in 2006, aimed to review early medieval aristocratic society in a comparative light, and in particular to consider the revisionist views of feudalism advanced by Susan Reynolds in a book published twelve years earlier, on which she has contributed a reflective essay. Some of the other essays discuss the institutions and social bonds found in the traditional heartland of feudalism, northern France and the Empire, but seven of them deal with the periphery: Denmark, England, the south of France, Hungary, Norway, Romania and Spain. They range over the centuries between the eighth and the thirteenth, with a tendency to

congregate around the year 1000. Their approaches and conclusions differ, but most of them are in tune with Reynolds's belief that the concepts of fiefs and vassals are not the most useful tools for analysing early medieval society. She was questioning the view of Ganshof that the key relationship among the aristocracy between the Loire and the Rhine was the performance of service in exchange for grants of land. The authors find land leased for cash rather than service, and various types of property which cannot be called tenancies at all. The terms used for conditional grants include the widespread 'benefice', and many local words, such as the Norwegian *veitsla*. Subordinates were described as 'men' or 'faithful men' more often than vassals. There were many forms of association and bonds between people, other than those based on the tenure of land in exchange for service, such as kinship, friendship and clientage. Authors find that the chronology of social development varies across the continent. Sometimes there was a period of 'classical feudalism', in France between 980 and 1060 according to Barthélemy, but it was not a defining or enduring feature of medieval society. Popa-Gorjano ends his contribution on Romania with sentiments that serve as a conclusion for the whole book: 'the term [feudalism] is a hindrance rather than an aid to the historian's work'.

The subject under discussion is potentially relevant to historians of agriculture and the countryside, because lordship over land and the tenure of land lie at the root of the aristocratic world of vassals, clients and faithful men which is the main concern of this book. But almost nothing is said about the means by which the possession of land was used to generate wealth. The existence of the peasantry is sometimes hinted at when an author explains that the Marxist concept of feudalism as a mode of production is not the concern of this book. The contribution on Denmark by Gelting is an honourable exception to the omission of the lower ranks. We do not need to be Marxists to understand that societies functioned as a whole, and the inferior 80 per cent turned land held by whatever tenure, or by none, into a productive asset.

Readers should feel grateful to a publisher prepared to devote resources to a book catering for a minority interest, and to the editors who were ready to give their time to making a collection of essays available. Their work is especially commendable when the essays were prepared for publication in English and French, which are not the native languages of the editors, yet the style of the book is fluent and readable. However, potential readers who are being asked to pay £80 for a relatively slim volume ought to be provided with information

about the contributors, a conclusion, a bibliography and an index (or at least some of these). The introduction consists mainly of a summary of the papers, and should have aimed higher, either by framing the subject more thoroughly in the historiography, or by advancing some alternative to the Ganshof model.

CHRISTOPHER DYER
University of Leicester

ULF JANSSON, LEIF WASTENSON and PÄR ASPENBERG (eds), *National atlas of Sweden. Agriculture and forestry in Sweden since 1900: a cartographic description* (Norstedt, 2011). 232 pp., 225 illus., £25.

HANS ANTONSON and ULF JANSSON (eds), *Agriculture and forestry in Sweden since 1900: geographical and historical studies* (Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, 2011), 542 pp., £13.

The Royal Academy of Forestry and Agriculture in Sweden has arranged the production of two excellent books on twentieth-century history, the first an atlas and the second an anthology of articles. The atlas contains hundreds of wonderfully detailed maps and diagrams with 50 chapters covering subjects such as technology, politics, landscaping and industry. These topics are explored in more detail in the 30 articles that make up the anthology. The project was a follow-up of a similar study conducted a hundred years ago that resulted in the publication of an atlas of Swedish agriculture. The original study was funded entirely by a wealthy donor called Moritz Fraenckel. He also set up a fund to cover the costs of a similar project to be conducted one hundred years later. The fund has remained untouched – until now. The new atlas also forms part of the National Atlas of Sweden (SNA) series published in 24 volumes since the late 1990s.

The books reveal that there is a great deal of continuity in Sweden. Large parts of the plains have been farmed for hundreds of years. Woodland continues to dominate the landscape and in many respects areas north of Scania actually make up the western part of the Taiga eco-region. Forests mature slowly and although futurology is normally risky business, it is quite possible to estimate tree species proportions for the next hundred years. Nevertheless, caution prevails with the estimates given on pages 148–149. Indeed these are subsequently revised on page 167 on the basis of climate scenarios.

Reindeer husbandry is another enduring feature. For the last hundred years there have been around a quarter of a million reindeer in Sweden at any given time. Interestingly the number of predator-gated animals is

approximately 30,000 according to the atlas (p. 189), whilst the anthology estimates this figure to be between 40,000 and 50,000 (p. 462). This indicates that reindeer herding must be assessed in a cultural and political context.

There has also been a great deal of change during the last century. By shifting our perspective to the ‘knees of the curves’ when the pace of change alters drastically (either faster or slower), we can identify at least two major transformations. Firstly, the developments in technology after World War Two had a major effect on farming, particularly with respect to the rapid decline of farm units. The smaller farms were the first to go. They were generally located in the forested areas of Sweden, many of them having been reclaimed during the nineteenth century. The technological transformation meant that farming underwent systemic change, primarily due to the new energy sources and more scientific agricultural techniques being introduced. Key innovations included tractors, milking machines, artificial fertilizers and pesticides, and they all had a major impact on productivity.

A slightly different picture emerges when we look at forestry. There were similar technological advances during the 1950s and 1960s that resulted in the introduction of tractors and chainsaws. Nevertheless, work remained difficult and very manual. There was a second technological leap forward in the 1980s with the arrival of the harvester (a machine used in cut-to-length logging operations) and more efficient planting techniques. Whilst this resulted in increased productivity, it also led to a dramatic decrease in the workforce. Another important consequence was the decline in the number of accidents, which had until then been a big problem in forestry.

The second major transformation had a different content. It came when society at large started placing greater demands on production with respect to the environment. The text and map on page 152 states rather proudly how much dead wood per hectare there is in each forest. This is certainly not something that old-school foresters would have applauded. The use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides has been declining since the 1980s and organic farming has been increasing since the 1990s. Simultaneously there have been efforts to protect nature with a ten-fold expansion of nature reserves.

Other demands concern the use of the countryside as a place for leisure and entertainment. There was a rapid increase in the ownership of summer cottages or ‘second homes’ from the late 1950s, and the trend is still on the up. With a population of nine million, there are now 700,000 second homes in Sweden. Many

of these properties are used by more than one family and in southern Sweden a significant proportion of them are owned by Danes and Germans. Hunting is an important pursuit in Sweden and the annual elk hunt has become almost sacrosanct. Yet it was not until the 1970s that elk hunting became so popular. Since then around 100,000 or 150,000 elks are shot every year. Mass tourism is quite a modern phenomenon and it has a huge impact on the countryside. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of golf courses across the country should not be forgotten, and horses for leisure riding have become a key feature on the landscape.

The books also provide information about food production, gardening and much more. Whilst it could be argued that greater comparisons could have been drawn between Sweden and Europe and the rest of the world, these books should perhaps be regarded as a good basis on which such comparisons can be made.

JANKEN MYRDAL

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

NOELLE PLACK, *Common land, wine and the French Revolution. Rural society and economy in southern France, c.1789–1820* (Ashgate, 2009). 215pp., £65.

The long-term transformation of the common lands of France is a question that has held a central place within French rural history of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period since at least the 1920s. As in Britain, historians (and contemporaries) saw the transformation of the ownership of the commons as a key indicator of agrarian modernization and, as with Britain, the debate over this transformation has also been marked by an ideological dimension. In France, in studies of the revolutionary period in particular, much of the debate has centred around the role of the peasantry in the enclosure and/or regulation of common land and the subsequent effects of that role on the nature of peasant society and class formation in the rural areas. For many years the orthodox view was that of Georges Lefebvre. At the most basic level this was that the peasantry, especially the poor peasants, were opposed to the enclosure and division of the common land since, once the land was lost, they had nothing. Against this, Anatoli Ado and adherents of the *marxisant* views of Soboul following Lenin saw the peasants, especially the middle peasants, as key actors in the creation of agrarian capitalism. To them enclosure and division of the essentially wasted commons was the first key step on the ladder to a viable peasant proprietorship. More recent work, especially that of Nadine Vivier, has shifted the argument, in the first instance at least, away from grand narratives to a much more nuanced and localist interpretation. Vivier

argues that it was not so much the act of enclosure that was important as how the land was to be divided – the *mode de partage*. This in turn depended crucially on regional, economic, social and agrarian variables.

It is within this model that Plack's study is set. Taking Vivier's insistence that the nature of the enclosure and partage of common land can only be understood when studied over a long perspective, it follows one region of southern France through the Revolutionary, Napoleonic and Restoration legislation that fostered the privatization of common land. The region studied is centred on the modern department of the Gard. The Gard, as Plack's study shows, was a region of several agricultural regions, but the dominant landscape form was (and is) that of *garrigues*, a barren landscape of low scrub produced by the long-term burning and grazing of forests. It was in the regions of *garrigues* that most of the common land was concentrated and where the changes in the years from the 1780s to the 1820s had most effect. Outside these regions change was less obvious. For example to the north of the Gard the region of the Cevennes saw little change and the pre-revolutionary pattern of tiny arable holdings and large communal pastures was maintained. Against that, the majority of communes in the south and east of the region saw some changes in the years between the 1780s and the 1820s, and most of these were in areas of *garrigues* or the arid Mediterranean plain.

Plack's study follows this process at two levels, first as represented in the discussions at national level, mainly in Paris and, secondly, in the local response to national and mainly legislative change. In this, the discussion of the revolutionary period takes most time and space with the complex, and often opaque, relationships between the desires of the legislators, local and national, carefully charted. However, for the agricultural historian, there is an often a frustrating lack of precise detail as to how this worked out at the level of the *commune*. Nevertheless the discussion of the regional impact of these reforms does add a further local study of the effects of land reform on land holding and landowning and landownership in this period. Against this there are important caveats. For example, although 42 per cent of *communes* in Plack's study region experienced some privatization of common land. In most of these some communal land was retained well into the nineteenth century and in some communes until the present period. This mix, as Vivier has argued more generally, enabled the *petit producteur* to straddle the world of both the collective and the individual forms of agricultural production, combining the peasant worlds of both Lefebvre and Soboul.

In the final chapter, which looks at the socio-economic impact of the changes in land tenure, Plack looks at the more conventional 'agrarian history' of the region during the period. What we see here is not a 'revolution' in productive techniques, but rather a building on existing methods and structures. To the non-specialist (like this reviewer) the long-term trend in this region would appear to be the expansion of viticulture, and indeed that is certainly reinforced here. Yet the importance of land reform is rather less clear. There had been considerable increase in the amount of land under vines before 1789, but that there was a further increase before 1850 cannot be doubted. What is not always clear from this study is precisely where and how land 'reform' contributed to this. However, it does seem clear that in some communes at least the expansion that lead to the 'golden age' of wine in Languedoc after 1850 was based upon 'new' peasant exploitation of former communal *garrigues*. But, it is equally clear that, for many *petits*, the privatization of communal resources meant simply more expansion on the old system. As Plack says, 'a balanced polyculture still dominated most villages in the Gard during the early nineteenth century and traditional forms of exploitation were carried out on new plots (p. 150)

Like many regional studies, this study makes important points about the agrarian changes wrought during (if not by) the French revolution. While it may lack the grand narratives and great explanations so many British writers have come to expect of French historical writing, its contribution to the complex mosaic of French rural French history is clear. It also presents, almost *en route*, a clear and precise discussion of the debates and methodology around the question of the commons in the revolutionary period and from that discussion raises important points, which are of interest well beyond the wild *garrigues* of the Gard.

ALUN HOWKINS
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GAIL KLIGMAN and KATHERINE VERDERY,
Peasants under siege. The collectivization of Romanian agriculture, 1949–1962 (Princeton U.P., 2011). xxi + 520 pp., 26 figs., 9 tabs. £27.95.

It is difficult to disagree with the verdicts of the eminent scholars that its publishers have recruited to help market this book. It is without doubt an 'important work of scholarship' and 'the most comprehensive ... and penetrating work on the collectivization of agriculture in Romania available in any language'. The result of a multi-disciplinary research project involving 20 scholars using local and national archives

and oral history techniques, the book is divided into three sections. Chapters one to three cover the Soviet blueprint, the Romanian village prior to collectivization and the politics of collectivization, and the creation of cadres to implement it. Chapters four, five and six address the means (from propaganda to brute force) used to persuade peasants to sign up ('pedagogies of power'), and the nature of 'class war'. Chapter seven considers the final achievement of collectivization and factors that contributed to its variable success, while chapter eight addresses its impact on village life, in particular the lack of commitment of peasants to collective farming.

Both authors have worked extensively on Romania for many years, Kligman as a sociologist, Verdery as an anthropologist, and both with an eye to history. As might be expected from these backgrounds, the book is exceptionally strong on the social implications and consequences of collectivization's attempt at total transformation. They remind us, for example, that crucial concerns for peasants were issues like dowries and the organization of marriages under collectivized agriculture, matters that figured nowhere in the Socialist modernizing rationale that underpinned collectivization, let alone the minds of the poorly educated cadres who implemented it. The book is particularly strong on the latter, the extent to which cadres were not in place and had to be trained as the campaigns developed. Equally, it is strong on complexity and variability. The experience of collectivization was not uniform. There was cruelty, violence and brutality, but also scope for concessions and bargains.

Nevertheless, as with all important contributions to scholarship, the nature of that contribution should be delineated. First, the book is not, strictly speaking, agenda-setting in that another book from this research project (Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrinu [eds], *Transforming peasants, property and power. The collectivization of agriculture in Romania, 1949–62* [2009]) came out first. As an edited collection, it lacks the coherence of the earlier volume, but it contains many fascinating papers, including contributions by both Kligman and Verdery. Second, the authors insist on seeing the land reform of the immediate post-war years, together with the introduction of quotas, teleologically as precursors to collectivization. For historians, it is far from clear that collectivization was a Communist goal in 1945, other than a long-term ideal. Its sudden emergence as an agenda item in 1948, in the context of the Stalin-Tito dispute, surprised most of the Eastern European Communist leadership.

The authors also see collectivization as an unchanging process, one that entailed a continuous

'class war' in the countryside. Yet it becomes clear from the text that collectivization policy was not uniform, that in a 'second major wave' (p. 320), from 1957 to 1962, the focus switched to attracting wealthier peasants into co-operatives so as to encourage others to join. There is increasing evidence from across the region that 'class war' in the countryside, which was always in theory against the kulaks and not the peasantry as a whole, was Stalin's peculiar obsession. After his death, and in particular, the debacle of 1956, which had ramifications throughout the region, all Eastern European governments quietly switched their focus away from making war against kulaks. Less centrally, the authors' explanation of the slow pace of collectivization in Romania when compared to the Soviet Union, in terms of the Russian tradition of communal tenure in the *mir*, is presented ambiguously. In places they seem to suggest Russian peasants were less committed to their land, while elsewhere they argue that tenure in the *mir* made it possible to persuade peasants collectively to join, obviating the need to convince them individually. This suggests the central issue was legality rather than tenure; indeed, as the authors stress, the need for a spurious legality for collectivization, for peasants to petition to join farms, was an important feature Romanian 'voluntary' collectivization.

Finally, the book ends in 1962 when total collectivization was achieved, omitting any discussion of how collective farming proceeded after that. Having persuaded peasants to sign up to collective farming, the next challenge was to get them to participate in it. Romania was particularly unsuccessful in this respect; yet collectivized agriculture really did succeed in overcoming rural poverty in countries that abandoned further elements of Stalin's model.

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PETER D. GRIGGS, *Global industry, local innovation: the history of cane sugar production in Australia, 1820–1995* (Peter Lang, 2011). xxxvi + 928 pp., 60 figs., 69 illus., 56 tabs. £72.50.

1,650 grams of paper suggests heavy reading. In over 900 pages, Peter D. Griggs presents the first comprehensive history of Australian cane sugar production. Covering a period from 1788 to 1995, Griggs's impressive study offers a thorough and detailed look into the development of the Australian sugar industry. Expanding from the north-eastern coast into a global business, it was part of a wider trend in commercial sugar production around the globe.

Three sections cover the main epochs in the historical development of the Australian sugar industry. The

years from 1788 to 1863 mark the beginnings of the Australian sugar production. The second period covers the years from the sustained commercial production of raw sugar in 1864 to the outbreak of the First World War. The third period, from 1915 until 1995, saw government regulation of all sectors of the sugar production process changing to a mostly de-regulated environment by the 1980s. Nineteen chapters fill those epochs with life. On the basis of a remarkable number of primary sources and secondary literature, Griggs presents a story of economic success and environmental drama. Even though he claims his book focuses on geographical and environmental questions, he deals with a number of other historical subject areas as well.

In particular, Griggs focuses on social and economic history, when outlining the fundamental differences in Australian cane sugar production compared to that practised by the rest of the world. By the early twentieth century Australian sugar was produced in central milling systems supplied with cane grown on small, family-owned farms, which relied on high-cost European labour. This was a unique feature of the Australian sugar industry. In his seminal work of 1985, *Sweetness and Power*, Sydney Mintz reminded us that elsewhere the origins and structures of cane sugar production were mainly a mixture of colonial 'indigene' production and metropolitan 'white' consumption.

The high wage cost led to a high degree of mechanization. Here, the study is a history of technology that focuses on research and innovation in the refining and milling sectors, cultivation methods, improving the network of drainage, breeding and improving cane varieties, combating diseases, and harvesting and transporting cane.

Governmental measures were also very important in the development of the Australian sugar industry. Here, Griggs's study is a political history. Australia's sugar industry became one of most regulated in the world. Tight government controls over production were installed in the 1920s. Before 1985, numerous regulations governed all aspects of production, from the amount of cane produced on each farm, or the amount produced in each mill, to the final price paid. Government intervention stopped in the 1980s, and today Australian sugar production is no longer protected through a comprehensive set of measures, unlike that of the United States or Brazil for example.

Griggs's work is also a history of entrepreneurship. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company assumes a prominent role in the book. Having been a major driving force in the development of the Australian cane sugar industry, the Company was responsible for about 25 per cent of the Australian raw sugar output after 1920.

It took up a near monopoly over the refining sector between 1850 and 1880 and again between 1900 and 1989 and was important in maintaining the connection between science and agriculture. Therefore, it became a major driver and pioneer in Australian sugar business.

The downside of intensive sugar farming is shown in the environmental history that Griggs traces. Through large-scale deforestation between 1860 and 1915 and water pollution, the sugar industry had a massive effect on the character of the landscape along Australia's north-east coast. Only in the late twentieth century has a new generation of cane growers and millers begun to repair the environmental damage. They have a long way yet to go.

Griggs's book is extensive. Here and there one misses analytical connections to other parts of the world, because sugar was, and is still, a global commodity. Accordingly, policy measures were highly responsive to measures taken elsewhere. Some aspects on transfers could have been elaborated a bit more, especially

when it comes to innovation and science. Was there an international global community of knowledge-based experts, a so-called 'epistemic community' of sugar-cane scientists? Furthermore, the cultural aspect of the family farm in shaping a national economy – and maybe identity – deserved elaboration in a twentieth chapter. By contrast, in Europe the family farm has been considered as the cultural pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy since 1962. Here again, an international link would have been most interesting.

Griggs has written an impressive and highly informative volume. Anyone interested in sugar as a global commodity ought to read the 900 pages. This may be a daunting task, but after you have finished the book, you will have gained a taste for it. The sugar industry provides a perplexing taste of sweetness, but one that has clearly incited Griggs to maximum performance.

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