

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

DAVID COX, *The Church and Vale of Evesham 700–1215: Lordship, landscape and prayer* (Boydell Press, 2015). 228pp., 14 illus. £60

Established around 701, the early minster located on a promontory in the lower Avon valley would develop by the time of the Norman Conquest into a regionally, if not nationally, important Benedictine abbey. David Cox charts the history of this transformation in the fortunes of Evesham Abbey in the context of its relationships with first regional, then national, Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings; other ecclesiastical authorities, most particularly successive bishops of Worcester; members of the regional nobility; and the people who lived and worked in the Vale, including the growing numbers who settled in the burgeoning town beyond the abbey's precinct wall. Drawing on a wealth of published editions and commentaries on a broad range of primary sources, Cox seeks to set this religious community in its valley landscape through an exploration of landholding over time and its impact on the spiritual life of those inside, and, to a lesser extent those outside, the cloister.

The book is divided into three sections, the first offering a chronological narrative from the foundation of the earliest church by Bishop Ecgbine with King Æthelred's support to the abbacy of Æthelwig. Within this, the introductory chapters provide some valuable details concerning the regional kingdoms and how the early secular division of the area was mirrored in the ecclesiastical make-up of the Vale and adjacent territories. Æthelwig's abbacy straddled the Conquest and the abbot is shown to have worked hard, and sometimes aggressively, to maintain and even enhance his abbey's estates. The differing characteristics of the various abbots form the skeletal framework of much of the first and second sections, the latter devoted exclusively to Walter's (1078–1104) abbacy and including amongst other matters, the abbey as the controlling power in the spiritual lives of the inhabitants of the Vale.

Because this is a history of an important Benedictine house, it is not surprising that developments within

the precinct boundary – such as the growth of book production in the scriptorium, the creation of several shrines for the abbey's increasing relic collection by abbots Ælfweard and Manni, and the enlarging of the church under Abbot Manni – form the core of Cox's study. In addition, there is some consideration of the abbey as landholder and landlord including its relations with the peasantry, but more on these aspects of the abbey in the landscape would have been welcome. However, this may not have been possible due to a lack of suitable sources for the institution's Anglo-Saxon and Norman history, and to a degree this is remedied in the third and final thematic section which covers the long twelfth century.

For this later period, Cox charts the activities of particular abbots – most notably Abbot Norreis – who were in dispute with those within their own community as well as with outsiders, especially the bishop of Worcester, that at times involved matters of lordship, both ecclesiastical and secular. As he highlights, at Evesham, as elsewhere, this led to and was the product of a marked expansion in the use of written evidence: charters, cartularies and estate surveys. His assessment of the various seals is interesting in terms of how visual symbols of saints might be employed to enhance the abbey's credibility, and these ideas are similarly explored with respect to the abbey's saints and its abbots through pilgrim tokens and written sources including the revised *vita* of St Ecgbine, a compilation of miracles of the Virgin and the *Gesta abbatum*.

Although in this third section the chapter on 'Investment' briefly mentions the countryside, much of the chapter is on the town at the abbey's gate. This focus on the urban landscape is not surprising because of its proximity to the monastery and the close relationship between the two communities either side of the precinct hedge, and then wall. Being particularly interested in urban development this caught my attention, although Cox's end date of 1215 meant that matters such as any move towards the seeking of civic autonomy by the townspeople was beyond the scope of his study.

Overall, this is a well-structured and clearly written account of the leading personnel at Evesham's religious

community over 500 years as they mostly sought to enhance their house's wealth and prestige, and to defend it from threats from outside and less frequently from within. By supplying this study on Evesham, Cox has provided another piece in the national jigsaw and a valuable addition to the histories of Benedictine communities in Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest England. Consequently, this book will be of interest to those researching both early monastic and diocesan development and the regional history of the West Midlands.

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MICHAEL HICKS, *English inland trade, 1430–1540: Southampton and its region* (Oxbow, 2015). xvi + 184 pp., 154 diagrams/graphs, 41 maps, £45 (hardback), £22.50 (e-book).

This volume serves as a technical introduction to the rich potential of the brokage books, which contain enormous detail relating to the goods transported overland out of Southampton between 1430 and 1540. The brokage books are famous without necessarily being well-known, a contradiction that arises from their possible uses and the problems presented in interpreting their contents. Many of these problems would be greatly reduced if all the extant books had been transcribed so that we could know if the 27 years which are available are also typical. Sadly, despite the best efforts of those involved in working on the brokage books, it has so far proved impossible to get the necessary funding, though it might be assumed that amongst the aims behind this publication is another attempt to get that funding.

The bulk of the 17 chapters are the work of Michael Hicks and Winifred Harwood closely followed by John Hare, with Helen Bradley and Tom Beaumont James each contributing one paper. Between them, the five authors shed light on the riches offered with discussions of the brokage system, Southampton's foreign trade, the books' economic context, the trading calendar and the freight transport of Southampton. The chapters that follow contain detailed descriptions of Southampton's trading partners starting with Salisbury, London and Winchester, which each get a chapter. The small towns of Hampshire and Wiltshire are taken together and are followed by a discussion of the more distant locations. Chapter 11 discusses the brokage books as sources for local and family history – the books are, after all, lists of people and places as well as goods. Chapters 12 to 15 cover specific commodities: wine, luxury goods (spices and wax), fish and cloth. Chapter 16 considers a wide range of goods: grain, hops, wool, hides, salt,

tin, lead, coal, iron, building materials and finishing with bowstaves.

At the end of the volume are a number of intriguing distribution maps. For instance, Map 18 shows the distribution of materials for the cloth industry for all years. On the facing page are nine small maps showing the same data broken down into pairs of years: 1439–40, 1447–48, 1461–62, 1462–63, 1477–78, 1491–92, 1492–93, 1527–28 and 1539–40. Even in those two cases where the maps represent successive pairs of years, the destinations are noticeably different. Where there are wider time gaps, the differences can be very marked and extremely thought-provoking.

The project's website, www.overlandtrade.org, gives a brief introduction (which pre-dates the publication of this book) together with some fairly simple notes. However, it is well worth exploring the interactive map option, which allows you to search by commodity as well as the carter, recipient and destination of the goods. Selecting one or more of these options brings up an appropriate section of the map and allows you to refine your search. Even far-distant Manchester, for instance, is known to have received both wine (via four carts) and oil (via three carts). Further exploration of the options leads to the creation of a .csv file which can be downloaded via Excel, although note that by no means all the transcribed data is accessible via this search function.

This reviewer has attempted to give a flavour of the volume and the potential of the resources it describes knowing she must fail – you will have to read the book and explore the website yourself.

JENNIFER HOLT
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A. T. BROWN, *Rural society and economic change in County Durham: Recession and recovery, c.1400–1640* (The Boydell Press, 2015). xv + 288pp., 19 figures, 32 tables, 4 maps. £60.

Focusing on the development of agrarian capitalism in county Durham between the turn of the fifteenth century and the eve of the Civil War, this book provides a detailed view of the fortunes of three groups of landowners: the bishops of Durham; Durham Cathedral Priory (later the Dean and Chapter); and lay landowners, both large and small. The existence of relevant material – including a range of Inquisitions Post Mortem, accounts, wills and probate inventories – in both cathedral and university library archives in the city has greatly assisted the analysis presented. In his introduction, Brown notes that economic change in the region was not the result of a single factor but rather the combined effect of three factors:

increased commercialization; demographic changes; and changing relationships within the class structure. Brown also stresses the importance of analysis which straddles the late medieval/early modern divide, arguing that the 240-year period in question is best seen not as a 'transitional era' but as a long agrarian cycle during which changes occurred which were important to the development of agrarian capitalism. The book examines the effects on landed society of low prices, low rents and high wages during the recessionary fifteenth century, before progressing to consider how landowners' responses to these issues affected the ability of their successors to deal with the high levels of inflation experienced in the sixteenth century.

As one would expect for Durham, there is a seam of coal running through the book. Whilst the bishops exploited the mines economically, albeit through lease income, thereby avoiding the costs of actually winning the coal, the Priory kept their mines in hand so as to meet the demands of household consumption. As for its farms, the Priory weathered the recession by firm management of arrears, improved rent collection, reorganization of farms and a move to leasehold arrangements. In contrast, the diversification of income sources by the bishops in the fifteenth century also extended to forests and parks, as well as mines, with little change in the agricultural estate, leading to the survival of copyhold tenure. Thus, in the following century, those copyhold farms had rents that were difficult to increase, resulting in nominal payments during inflationary times.

Having concentrated on the effects of these economic circumstances on the two major estates of the bishops and of the Priory in the first two chapters, the book moves on to consider lay landowners: whilst they were able to build up their estates during the fifteenth century, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries resulted in the fragmentation of many of these estates. The fortunes of the gentry are considered in Chapter 4 where the problems facing the aristocracy are shown to have been to the benefit of the lesser gentry. Chapter 5 considers the wealth brought to the rural economy by merchants. Brown suggests that not all merchants were looking to become landed gentlemen, but rather they bought land because of the coal and other minerals beneath it, which in turn had the potential to enhance their merchant status. The book then examines the emergence of the church leaseholder – that is, those tenants who were leasing land from the Dean and Chapter – while the final chapter explores the situation for the yeomen and smallholders on the estate of the bishops of Durham who were able to buy and farm their

own land. By retaining 'yeoman values', as opposed to those of gentlemen, they were able to raise considerable profits, which funded further purchases of land thereby amassing reasonable fortunes by their deaths.

Overall the book is generally well produced with the exception of a few typographical errors: 'amble' rather than 'ample' being one instance. What lets the book down, however, is the application and quality of its maps. For those unfamiliar with the geography of the area, a good clear map with key locations marked thereon would be a great improvement to that presented on page 23. The maps of townships on pages 211 and 219 lack both clarity and any form of key. Given that they are from the late eighteenth century and do not relate to any of the tabulated records of tenants presented in that chapter, their relevance is also questionable. Another concern is the repetition of key points: for example, we are told about the differing responses to economic circumstances and their subsequent effects at least twice before page 26 – and twice again on that page. It would also have been helpful to understand how much coal there was in a chaldron and how much lead in a fother.

Notwithstanding this, Brown's is a valuable book from an early-career historian. In his conclusion, he notes that neither national nor regional generalizations apply to the area under consideration. Therefore, the focus on this one county for a specific time period enables an in-depth understanding of the effects that the development of the coal industry had on both the economy and society. Overall, then, this book provides inspiration to undertake similar focused studies at a local level, both for different areas and for different periods.

ALAN WADSWORTH
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RONAN O'DONNELL, *Assembling enclosure: Transformations in the rural landscape of post-medieval north-east England* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2015). 164 pp., 32 illus. £14.99.

Enclosure, as readers of the *Review* will appreciate, took various forms and occurred in several phases. This book, an addition to the University of Hertfordshire Press's *Explorations in Local and Regional History* series, arises from the author's doctoral research at Durham University, which explored the post-medieval enclosure process in the north east of England. It offers a valuable regional perspective focusing on five case study townships namely Learmouth, Milfield, Howick, Longhorsley and Elsdon and drawing on the estate collections of the Greys of Howick and Howards of Naworth. Close attention is given to local

detail revealing how events that are seen as part or related to enclosure – for example, farm consolidation – were more complex than often assumed, taking place before and after enclosure rather than simply being the outcome.

The introduction provides a summary of enclosure historiography and crucially emphasizes the need for small-scale studies to counteract the large-scale national studies of enclosure. It points out that enclosure processes ‘were performed by individual people who lived and worked at the level of villages, townships and farms, not that of nations, continents and worlds’ (p. 2). This argument supports the numerous county and local studies of enclosure, particularly of the parliamentary period. There follows a synopsis of the regional context and the reasons behind the selection of the case studies. This structure is applied consistently throughout the chapters, aiding comparison. In the last sub-section of the chapter the author outlines the different types of enclosure, how it changed over time in different regional settings – for example, the midlands and Cumbria – and the different forms and chronologies of improvement that have been linked to the agricultural revolution debate. Agricultural and rural historians rarely engage with social theory, which is often more readily employed by landscape archaeologists and cultural geographers. Approaching the much-studied subject of enclosure from the standpoint of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), O'Donnell explores the role of numerous local ‘actors’ including landowners, tenants and even the landscape in shaping the enclosure process in Northumberland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Thematic chapters consider specific aspects of the enclosure process, for example, the abolition of common rights, consolidation and ring-fencing of farms, rearrangement of land-use patterns, dispersal of settlement and the adoption of new technology and methods, all familiar to agrarian historians. Chapter 2 outlines each township's enclosure history with formal and informal or piecemeal enclosure being identified. For example, at Longhorsley and Milfield there was enclosure by agreement in 1664 and 1789, at Howick and Learmouth by unity of possession in 1635 and 1799, whilst Elsdon was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1731. Emphasis is placed on individual or group decision-making and the significant influence of human agency in the enclosure process. As O'Donnell argues, ‘the context of each particular enclosure event, the number of landowners, their wealth and status, their knowledge of enclosure, the type of land to be enclosed and the details of its tenure are all highly significant to the way in which the process actually played out’ (p. 32). Chapter 3 examines the creation of ring-fenced farms

in the post-medieval landscape through engrossment and land consolidation associated with late seventeenth and eighteenth-century estate management. Discussion is not centred solely on enclosure but rather related factors such as the role of tenants and the pattern of boundaries. This leads onto a consideration of the conversion of land between arable and pasture. As shown, the land-use pattern changed in the post-medieval period as the extent of arable and pasture varied regionally between lowland and upland areas. Similarly commons were intermittently cultivated and arable converted into grass. Although it is recognized that these changes were often not permanent and the processes complex, enclosure is cited as an influential factor in speeding up this transition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Settlement dispersal, which is usually viewed as a consequence of enclosure, is addressed in Chapter 5, the case studies underlining the importance of local conditions. Settlement patterns resulted from different circumstances with enclosure, engrossment and the creation of ring-fenced farms all being causes for dispersal, which occurred alongside increases in farm size, consolidation and land-use change.

In Chapter 6 the local uptake of agricultural improvement is examined showing how the economic motives of improvement reflected a wider national movement. The case studies exhibit the typical features of improved estate landscapes including the building of cottages and model farmsteads, the establishment of plantations, drainage improvements, the reorganization of field boundaries and the adoption of improved husbandry practices. Changes in labour organization and leasing arrangements during the nineteenth century are also outlined. It is suggested these are indicative of the contemporary awareness of improvement through published material and the desire of landlords and tenants to benefit from greater profit and status. The penultimate chapter proposes a new approach to enclosure emphasizing the proactivity not only of gentleman farmers but also those of humbler social standing, notably, small tenant farmers. Other aspects discussed include the availability of capital and the role of landlords, tenants and land agents in pursuing policies of estate improvement. It is rightly emphasized that factors such as family relationships, marriage and inheritance were significant in leading to the creation and division of estates.

The concluding chapter summarizes findings, reaffirming the value of ANT for history and archaeology. It identifies further questions as to how enclosure can be interpreted at different levels, whether locally, regionally, nationally or globally, demonstrating

local history's relevance in testing larger-scale models or hypothesis. Although concerned with only five townships, the book is a useful addition to the long-established historiography, having the potential to be extended geographically, and is innovative in its theoretical underpinning. Does this approach constitute a new theoretical history of enclosure? And if it does, to what extent will the current generation of historians engage with this viewpoint and what insights, not hitherto revealed by the traditional historiography, will it shed light on? It certainly does adopt an interesting theoretical perspective, which will enhance the current enclosure debate. The book is illustrated with farm and township plans and photographs and has a bibliography and index. It will be relevant to landscape archaeologists, historical geographers and economic and social historians studying enclosure, and local historians interested in the rural landscape of the north east of England.

JAMES P. BOWEN
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ANDREW MACNAIR, ANNE ROWE and TOM WILLIAMSON, *Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire: Society and landscape in the eighteenth century* (Windgather Press, 2015). 240pp., 84 illus. £35.

Why would anyone who doesn't live in that county want to read a whole book about a county map? The answer is that the authors of this book have provided a template for all future studies of maps as documents, rather than just as 'pretty pictures'. Maps can be, and have been, looked at as works of art, as moments in cartographic history, or as sources for landscape history. This book starts by looking at the Hertfordshire map *qua* map and in its context – but then goes on to show how, by digitization and geo-rectification, it can become a fundamental source for understanding the settlement, agricultural and social history of this county. Beautifully produced and extensively illustrated, the book also includes a DVD with a larger-than-life scan of the map broken into 36 separate images, plus the digitally redrawn map, with accompanying maps of the underlying relief, geology and soils of the county, and separate maps showing the wastes, woodlands, arable, pasture, churches, roads, mills and other features.

The authors are under no illusions about the quality of this map. Made by two London-based cartographers of Huguenot extraction, and influenced by the work of Dury's father-in-law, the prolific map publisher Jean Rocque, also a Huguenot, in many ways the map harks back rather than looks forward to the new age of map-making. It was published in 1766, as the first

epoch of county map-making based upon regurgitating the works of Christopher Saxton and his contemporaries was giving way to the new era of Society of Arts influenced, large-scale, mathematically accurate, functional maps. In 1759 the Society had issued an advertisement offering cash prizes for county maps at the one-inch scale or better, based upon trigonometrical surveys, using theodolite and perambulator; and in 1765 had awarded its first such prize for Donn's map of Devon. Dury and Andrews never applied for a prize, and probably would not have been awarded one had they done so. Although published at a scale of 1 mile to 1.95 inches, their map tells us nothing about where the map-makers laid out their baseline, nor where their stations were located, which perhaps gives rise to some suspicion as to their methods. Unusually, too, Dury and Andrews appear to have taken Hertford Castle as their prime meridian, rather than St Paul's, London, or even Greenwich Observatory, which was becoming the norm at this date. Moreover, they appear in many cases to have filled in the topographical details by eye, or even by imagination, with the field boundaries in particular showing little relationship to reality. On the other hand, they took great care with their cartouche, wherein their 'target market' of a gentleman, standing with his gun dog before a classical country house, is illustrated in a rococo style influenced by Rocque. By this date, this was beginning to look a bit old-hat, although it no doubt still appealed to the 169 noblemen and gentry whose names appear upon the map alongside their residences.

Nevertheless, as the authors move from a discussion of the map itself to the next stage of digitizing and geo-referencing in order to make it available for the analyses to come, the usefulness of the map for today's historian become clear, for all its shortcomings. Using Adobe Photoshop for the digitization, each feature – boundaries, roads, windmills, parks and the like – was drawn in by hand as a separate layer in Photoshop. The map was then 'warped' to fit some 113 control points taken from the British National Grid, using mapping software ArcGIS, after which new layers were added from modern maps showing the underlying relief, geology and soils.

The final section of the book then uses this geo-rectified map to discuss the detailed landscape, settlement, social, agricultural and industrial character of the county in the eighteenth century, and from that point goes back in time to consider developing patterns. As just one example, the authors look at the 44 places named on the map as containing the place-name element 'bury', showing how these places emerged in the mid-late Saxon period on the light,

free-draining soils of the county, many of them going on to give their name to their parishes.

There are detailed endnotes to each chapter and an extensive bibliography which perhaps not surprisingly lists some fourteen references by J. B. (Brian) Harley, the doyen of cartographic historians and perhaps the first to study the corpus of eighteenth-century county maps. Unfortunately, his untimely death in 1991 only just post-dated the launch of the first edition of Adobe Photoshop (1988), so he never got to digitize or geo-reference his maps. However, he would have loved this book, which can be commended to anyone who wants to know how to use old maps to their fullest extent as key – albeit often overlooked – historical documents.

BILL SHANNON
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ERIC JONES (introduction), *The farmer's world: Richard Jefferies' agricultural journalism in the late 1870s* (The Richard Jefferies Society, 2016). xxvi + 260 pp.

Richard Jefferies is best known for his prolific work about natural history, rural life and agriculture. His lyrical style was informed by his experiences on the land and the close affinity he developed with the rural communities he lived and worked in earned him an outstanding reputation. He also demonstrated expertise in journalism, contributing to some of the leading newspapers and journals of the late nineteenth century. Born in north Wiltshire on 6 November 1848, his formative years were shaped by his rural encounters, whether with people and places or flora and fauna. Moreover, generations of his family had been farmers whose livelihoods revolved around the land. This undoubtedly influenced his writing. *The gamekeeper at home* was inspired by his memories and encounters with a local gamekeeper he had befriended, and was based on 24 articles originally published for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. *Hodge and his masters* – again collected from articles – depicts a rapidly changing rural world and combines his affection for traditional practices and customs with an acknowledgement that the new could in fact often harmoniously coexist with the old.

Having begun his journalism career at the age of 18, Jefferies' work gained prominence in the 1870s after three of his long letters on the condition of the Wiltshire labourer were published in *The Times*. This book focuses on Jefferies' later contributions to agricultural journalism – the articles he wrote for *The Live Stock Journal* and *Fancier's Gazette* in the late 1870s. This publication was established in 1874 and reflected the increasing importance of livestock in

English farming in the 1870s. It was at the forefront of an agricultural press that was now catering for specific sectors of farming and explicitly targeted breeders and stockowners. Jefferies' articles were about the agricultural economy and farming – chiefly livestock – and were a synthesis of both his observations and experiences and his knowledge and expertise in the field.

Published by the Richard Jefferies Society, this new book is valuable in bringing to the fore some of Jefferies' lesser-known writings. Its existence is all the more impressive when its origins are considered. Samuel J. Looker, undertaking research on Jefferies in the 1940s, found reference to the *Live Stock Journal* in his field notes and sought out the collection in the British Library. Numerous articles bore the style of Jefferies but none were signed. Eventually receipts came to light that substantiated that these articles were indeed the work of Jefferies. Whilst Looker republished some of these articles, this book brings together all the articles from the *Live Stock Journal* identified to be the work of Jefferies and combines them with new introductory material from economic historian Eric Jones.

The edition begins with a biographical note about Jefferies that charts his career. The foreword then explains the role of Looker and the Society in identifying and publishing these letters. An excellent introductory essay by Jones expands upon the biographical information to provide the context to understanding the significance of the excerpts from the *Live Stock Journal*. Jones's commentary is critical, examining and questioning the approach taken by Jefferies in order that the reader not only fully recognizes the importance of the works reprinted here but also the influences behind their existence. Jones encourages the reader to view the articles both as descriptions of agriculture on the cusp of change and as providing an insight into agricultural thought of the time. As Jones concludes, 'The book's insights into a genuinely crucial turning-point in rural affairs, presented in Jefferies' inimitable style, make it a significant source for agricultural historians' (p. xxiv).

This contribution to the study of rural and agricultural history is evident in the articles themselves that follow Jones's introduction and are reproduced in chronological order. They appear almost as they would have in the *Live Stock Journal*, although it is noted that obvious typographical errors have been corrected and some punctuation added. Each entry notes bibliographical data along with information about how it became assigned to Jefferies. Collectively they offer a window onto a short but crucial period in English agriculture between 1877 and 1878, a period when the agricultural sector was on the tipping point between a

golden age and a great depression. Recurring themes addressed imports and competition from abroad, especially American meat; employment issues; the distance between centres of supply and consumption; livestock breeds and the use of shorthorns on arable land; pasture and stock; milk and dairy; the weather; hunting and game; and trespassing. Jefferies' journalistic style was direct and challenged his readers to question their own practices and to innovate.

This book thus provides important insights into aspects of the 'farmer's world' and the agricultural journalism of Richard Jefferies. It is a significant reference text that allows the reader to consult the work of Jefferies on a number of notable topics as well as consider the contribution of agricultural journalism in a changing world where farmers faced new challenges. As such the book should appeal to students, researchers and academics along with those with a general interest in farming in the second half of the nineteenth century.

SARAH HOLLAND
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JON STOBART and ANDREW HANN (eds), *The country house: Material culture and consumption* (Oxbow, 2015). 256 pp., 100 illus. £70.

The country house is an excellent collection of essays, which grew out of a 2012 conference held at the University of Northampton and co-organized with English Heritage. Each of the chapters has something original to contribute to recent discussions about material culture and consumption in the period since 1700. In particular, several essays take novel approaches to illuminate the transnational movement of goods and intellectual and aesthetic ideas, and trace the national and local networks of consumption in which the country house was involved.

The international approach taken by several of the contributors offers useful comparisons as to the motivations for building country houses in different European contexts. Yme Kuiper and Johanna Ilmakunnas look at country house building in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and eighteenth-century Sweden respectively, and show that the motivations behind building country houses were varied and complex. Along with Shelley Garland's essay on Earl de Grey's choice of a French style of architecture at Wrest Park, and Victor Hugo López Borges's chapter exploring the Anglo-Irish influences on the building of the Palacio de Castrelos in Spain, these essays demonstrate the transnational movement of design and intellectual ideas which influenced architecture and design across Europe.

Another group of essays study the proliferation and popularity of exotic goods in the eighteenth century. Kate Smith explores the complex meanings attached to global and imperial objects. Smith argues that these were not just objects of high fashion but were valued for the sentimental and personal memories attached to them through gift giving and dynastic inheritance. Helen Clifford looks at where different imperial objects were placed within the houses of Sir Lawrence Dundas, an eighteenth-century businessman who invested heavily in the East India Company. Clifford argues that there were a myriad of meanings attached to different properties held in one family, meanings that are revealed through the moving and placing of items in certain properties. Through this study of objects and place, Clifford supports the overarching argument of this collection that a country house needs to be understood in the context of its wider geographical, social and economic networks.

Another strength of this collection is furnished by the essays that look beyond the walls of the house to the wider estate and country. Jane Whittle's superb chapter on the consumption habits of the Le Stranges of Hunstanton in the seventeenth century is an excellent example of the fruitfulness of looking beyond inventories in order to study the processes of consumption in a country house. By using household accounts, Whittle traces the supply of mundane and ephemeral items that do not appear in inventories. In doing so she finds that the seventeenth-century country house had strong economic links with both local rural society and large urban areas. Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery's essay on the geographies of supplying Stoneleigh Abbey and Arbury Hall in the eighteenth century supports this understanding of the country house as part of a wider economic and social network. By tracing the suppliers of these neighbouring estates, Stobart and Rothery argue that personal preferences and family loyalties were often the deciding factor in the consumption habits of the elite. In considering the life cycles and seasonal mobility of aristocratic families, they argue that the 'local' was a 'fluid concept' to eighteenth-century families. This conclusion is supported by the contribution of Annie Gray in an essay on the supplying of food to the Victorian country house. Gray considers the entire process of food consumption from acquisition to preparation to disposal, bringing together the house and its surrounding estate. The journey of foodstuffs demonstrates that country houses were linked to other properties in the family network and that 'local' was a variable concept. A section on interpretation and representation poses challenging questions about the future and memory of the country

house. Karen Fielder's wonderful essay on the lost house of Coleshill challenges the concept of treating the country house as separate from the wider estate, arguing that the landscape of the Coleshill estate can only be understood through an awareness of the house that once stood there.

As a whole, the contributors draw a coherent and persuasive argument that we cannot understand the complex and shifting meanings and uses of a country house without considering the wider geographical, economic and social contexts in which they are situated. By focusing upon consumption and the country house, this collection shows that it is possible to re-place the country house within transnational, national, local and personal networks and see it as a 'fluid' rather than a fixed and isolated entity. This thought-provoking collection of essays is therefore essential reading for historians, archaeologists, geographers and others concerned with the development of the country house and its contribution to rural and urban economies, as well as for all those interested in wider histories of consumption across the last three centuries.

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CHARLES WATKINS, *Trees, woods and forests: A social and cultural history* (Reaktion, 2014). 312 pp., 112 illus. £27.

While trees have always captured the popular imagination, the same has not always been true of the attention of British historians and historical geographers. If trees played an important part in foundational works of landscape history by such scholars as H. C. Darby and W. G. Hoskins, the spur to take trees seriously as objects of historical study came not from not from history but ecology and environmental change. In particular, the early work of the late Oliver Rackham proved pivotal, his *Trees and woodland in the British landscape* (1976), *Ancient woodland. Its history, vegetation and uses in England* (1980), and *The history of the countryside* (1986) all now recognized as pioneering, classic works. In turn, historians and historical geographers were inspired to turn to trees, to head to the woods and forests, both as objects and spaces of interest in their own right but also a way of thinking through wider questions in social and cultural history. Today, such studies are many, the foci and approaches diverse, but – until now – there has not been a study that has brought together these interdisciplinary advances. Charles Watkins's excellent *Trees, woods and forests* is the study this recent blossoming of research deserves and the field of woodland and forest

research needed, and Watkins the scholar uniquely qualified to deliver.

Both an act of synthesis and based on considerable new archival material, Watkins' latest book is of great value in drawing much recent work together whilst at the same time suggesting important new directions for research. Indeed, the subtitle *A social and cultural history* does the book few favours, for it is far more than just concerned with the social and cultural, much of the material rooted in economic, environmental and ecological approaches too. It is also important to note that while much of the analysis in *Trees* relates to Great Britain – for instance, Sherwood Forest is the sole focus of chapter six – the book is global in scope, the tenth and final chapter a return to Watkins' long-standing interests in the 'semi-natural' woodlands of Liguria, Italy. Much of the analysis also speaks to the fact that while trees are materially rooted in place, not only are seeds and saplings highly mobile but knowledge pertaining to tree-management practices (and fashions) has a long history of being truly globally networked. Nor is *Trees* a study bound only to one period, for while the analysis of the modern predominates the first substantive chapter considers 'ancient' tree management practices and chapter two the ways in which European forests were created, managed and represented as spaces of spectacle and display in the classical and middle ages.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Watkins's recent excellent biography of Uvedale Price (2012) and (with Paul Elliott and Stephen Daniels) his illuminating study of the science and culture of the arboretum in nineteenth-century Britain (2011), *Trees* is arguably at its very best in making connections between the emergence and diffusion of new ways of thinking and changing practices of planting and managing trees. Thus we learn that celebrated Arts and Crafts designer William Morris advocated allowing pollarded hornbeams in Epping Forest to return 'to nature', something changing middle class sensibilities – informed by 'aesthetic tastes and scientific principles which were national or international rather than local' (p.138) – supported. Similarly, the famed Beech Avenue of Sherwood Forest is shown to have survived two world wars and colliery development due to the persistence of picturesque values, but ultimately fell foul to quasi-commercial replanting, disrepair and storm damage, eventually being felled in the 1970s (pp.160, 169, 171).

If human enrollments of trees in cultural and economic circuits necessarily dominates the analysis, there is also a sense in which the love of trees (arborphilia), something that richly saturates the book, gets us closer to thinking of trees as (after Donna

Haraway) companion species. For instance, Watkins relates that the American actor Kim Novak was so attached to the redwoods in the grove in which Alfred Hitchcock filmed her for his classic *Vertigo* (1958) that the trees became fellow actors (pp. 224–5). Better known was John Ruskin's love, he feeling a 'boundless affection and admiration' for trees, an emotional state that he believed was 'nearly [a] perfect test of our being in the right temper of mind and way of life' (p. 202). If the lone tree or avenue was, as Watkins's analysis shows, so often the subject of a more-than-human love, this is not to say that copses, coppices, coverts, plantations, woods and forests were not also subject to affection. But commercial, military and other political impulses often rode roughshod over picturesque sentiment and arborophilia, while other tree spaces that have become defining features of the landscape were often the result of sporting and recreational imperatives.

Trees establishes – if it were in any doubt – Watkins as the bard of all things bosky. This is a beautifully written book, one that never gets lost in the detail, the narrative skipping along from one place and time to another with grace and ease. It is also richly illustrated, much of the credit for which must go to publishers Reaktion who continue to set the standard for sensibly priced accessible books with high production values. What of niggles? One might argue that orchards and fruit trees do not get the prominence they deserve, though this is perhaps a reflection on the relative paucity of recent academic work on the history of orchards, and to the pride of place given to woods and forests in the book. Similarly, foresters themselves might revel in the details of woodland management related but see little about their forebears who laboured managing woods and forests and otherwise found employ in woodland crafts (for which see Mairi Stewart's *Voices of the forest. A social history of Scottish forestry in the twentieth century* (2016)). This is small beer. *Trees, woods and forests* is a splendid, timely book that will no doubt become a standard work of reference for all interested in the history of that which singularly unites all countries and all times – trees.

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MIRANDA MCCORMICK, *Farming, fighting and family: A memoir of the Second World War* (The History Press, 2015). 256 pp., 33 illus. £14.99
The idea of the Second World War as 'The People's War', in which a united nation was all in it together, civilians as well as military, was questioned by Sonya Rose in *Which people's war?* (2003). She and others have examined questions of community and identity, civilian

morale, the impact of austerity, class, gender, fair shares and equality of sacrifice. Their writing has changed the emphasis from the similarity of experiences to differences. *Nella Last's war* (1981) was not the war of *Mrs Milburn's diaries* (1979). Much depended on individual circumstances, which is perhaps why there continues to be a readership for wartime memoirs. And they continue to appear, as the wartime generation dies out and the post-war generation, on sorting out their papers, realizes that their contents further illustrate the enormous variety of wartime lives. One of the results is Miranda McCormick's book, which weaves together the experiences of a soldier, a farmer, and his daughter, using family letters, memoirs and diaries as well as public archive material.

The soldier was David McCormick, the author's father. He was a member of the family that founded the Chicago-based International Harvester company. His father had moved to England and married the daughter of a Yorkshire landowning family, and David led the life of a young man with a private income before the war. In 1940 he enlisted in the artillery, and was subsequently commissioned and sent to join the Royal Horse Artillery in North Africa in 1941. In December of that year he was captured and so began nearly four years as a prisoner of war, initially in Italy and later in Germany. The story of his life in the army and as a prisoner is told through extensive quotations from a memoir that he wrote after the war, from regimental diaries, and from the letters that he wrote to Pamela Street. She was 18 when the war began, a farmer's daughter living just outside Wilton, to the south of Salisbury Plain, where he was undergoing officer training in the late summer of 1940. They met at a dance in Salisbury, and he was soon a regular visitor to her home. At the time, she was training as a nurse, although she later joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, in which she was eventually commissioned. Her diaries from that time reveal vividly the pressures and difficulties that young women had to deal with. By the time he was captured their letters to each other more or less assumed that they would be married on his return, and that was what happened. After the war, and some time spent in London, he took on a farm a few miles from her old home, helped by his new father-in-law, who was the farmer, writer and broadcaster Arthur (A. G.) Street.

Apart from its intrinsic interest as a good story well told, the book's main claim to be noticed in this *Review* is for the extra light it shines on A. G. Street, one of the more prominent public faces of English farming before, during and after World War II. He was a tenant farmer, with a 300-acre farm on the

Earl of Pembroke's Wilton House estate, which he had farmed since 1917. He survived the difficult farming years of the 1920s and 1930s by transforming a mixed farm into a dairy farm with a milk round, but also by becoming a popular writer. He had a critical and commercial success with *Farmer's glory* in 1932, and by the beginning of the war had published several novels, one of which, *Strawberry roan*, was filmed. He had also written a number of books on farming, and had established himself as a broadcaster and journalist, with a regular column in *Farmer's Weekly*. The account of his wartime experiences presented here shows how important his writing was to the family income, and gives us a more rounded view of the man than his own writing and the biography that Pamela produced after his death. This book is a reminder, if one is needed, that farmers are people too, and that their farming decisions are affected not only by economic and technical factors, but also by personal and family considerations. It is a welcome, well-produced and sensibly priced addition to the histories of wartime agriculture and the war in general.

PAUL BRASSLEY
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OLIVER FINNEGAN and CATHERINE GLOVER (eds), with an introduction by RICHARD W. HOYLE, *British farm surveys 1941 to 1943: The National Farm Survey of England and Wales and the Agricultural Survey in Scotland. Reports and statistical analysis* (List and Index Society, 2014), iv + 236 pp plus CD. £75 (non-members). Special offer price of £45 for members of the BAHS.

The National Farm Survey (NFS) of England and Wales, and its counterpart in Scotland, sought to address the state of farming during the Second World War. Following the formation of 61 County War Agricultural Executive Committees (CWAECs), an initial survey of farming was conducted in 1940. The government then launched, in 1941, the most comprehensive survey of agricultural holdings in British history. The surveys were implemented over the following two years, and would influence both wartime production and post-war planning. They aimed to record data for every farm concerning land-use and farming type, machinery and labour, condition of drainage and buildings, stocking of the farm, and standards of farm management. Such was the level of detail that the farm surveys are now a hugely important source of information for historians.

British Farm Surveys, the 354th volume produced by the List and Index Society, focuses on the summary report of 1946 and county tables of data rather than the individual surveys. The book and accompanying CD

contain an abundance of quantitative and qualitative data relating to farming during the Second World War at both the national and county level. The book begins with an introduction by Richard Hoyle, which provides useful context for understanding the National Farm Survey, including its origins and objectives and an explanation of the intended uses of the survey at the time. Throughout the introduction are reminders of the significance of the data presented in the book and on the CD – most notably that statistical analysis of the NFS at both county and national level has so far attracted little in the way of attention.

Following the introduction by Hoyle, the book is subdivided into three parts. Part 1 is a reproduction of the summary report, which was originally published by HMSO in 1946. The preface states that whilst the survey had served its immediate purpose of increasing production, its significance would lie in post-war planning. The report provides and explains the definitions and classifications used, and notes that the results given in the report 'are based on a random sample drawn from the total of nearly 300,000 records' (p. 29). Data concerning types of holdings and types of farming, size of holding, economic type of occupier, rent, length of occupancy, convenience of layout, condition of farmhouses and farm buildings, management grade, infestation, water supply and electricity are tabulated; whilst the proportion of each county occupied by tenants, rent per acre, length of occupancy per county, number of farm cottages per 100 workers per county, holdings with piped water supply and electricity is mapped. This is accompanied by explanatory text guiding one through the data. The original appendix to the report is also reprinted, including documents concerning the farm survey sampling technique; descriptions of the main types of farming and agricultural regions; statistical tables per county; and a copy of the farm survey itself.

Part 2 of the book introduces the county reports, listing the 61 administrative areas for which a county report was produced and noting whether any data is missing for particular counties. The county tables were never published, and an attempt has been made to present them in the form it is assumed they would have taken based on the summary report. A sample county report, Bedford, is printed in the book. This section is accompanied by volume 2 of the book – a digital file on the CD with all the county reports. On loading the CD, the less digitally inclined may at first be daunted by the different files listed but it is worth persevering. There are two PDFs – one provides the reports county by county and the other is in table order, both of which allow you to browse through the tabulated data. The

CSV files, again by county and table, can be imported into spreadsheet or database applications, and have infinite potential in terms of calculations. In fact, it is easy to appreciate the time and effort that has gone into inputting the data and providing an invaluable opportunity for historians to analyse the data in depth.

Part 3 is the final section of the book and deals with the Scottish material. It reproduces the abridged report of the agricultural survey in Scotland, beginning with an introduction that sets out the context for this survey and its aims and objectives. The report includes the questions asked and the instructions given, before providing some analysis of the data. This focuses on the potential of the land, factors impeding maximum production, crops and livestock, and different land type. There are also a series of tables with data for each Agricultural Executive Committee District in Scotland, and accompanying data on the CD.

British Farm Surveys is indeed a valuable source of information for historians, and this volume helps make a wealth of important data much more readily available for historical analysis and research. Despite the scepticism expressed at the time – and noted in the introduction of this volume – about the reliability of the data, the scale and scope of the project was huge and making it accessible to a wider audience is a commendable achievement. The qualitative and quantitative data encourages comparative work within and between counties. Such a volume has the potential to inspire the reader to consider the differences in data and approaches between England and Wales on the one hand and Scotland on the other; the comparative nature of farming in different counties; and to position individual farm returns in the context of the relevant county report. In essence, it paves the way for interesting and engaging historical enquiries, and raises the profile of previously neglected material.

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ANDREW HUMPHRIES, *Hill sheep husbandry in England: Adaptive to change in diverse ecosystems* (Foundation for Common Land, 2015). viii, 78pp., illus. £8 plus £2 p&p UK only.

This in-depth study of hill sheep farming, especially as regards nutrition, is not aimed at the agricultural historian, but nevertheless provides considerable food for thought for anyone interested in the evolution of our northern landscapes. The book is targeted at the non-farming professional concerned with the management of cultural landscapes. In places, it is highly technical, and perhaps is not for the faint-hearted, but it is worth persisting with, not least for

the occasionally stunning and always informative photographs, especially those attributed to Kath Birkinshaw.

Lying behind the work is the big question of the balance between shepherding as a business requiring a financial return, and the hill farmers' role as custodians of the countryside, managing a 'non market public good', namely a landscape which is regarded by visitors as wild and natural, but which the sheep themselves have created over thousands of years. As Humphries makes clear, if grazing ceased, or even if stocking densities were to be significantly reduced, the grassland of the hills would revert to ferns and heather, followed in time by a birch scrub, and eventually a climax woodland vegetation. This question has become more urgent recently with the purchase by the National Trust of Thorneythwaite Farm, Borrowdale, pricing out local farmers, with the intention of reducing sheep numbers and encouraging wood cover as a means of providing natural flood management. It is perhaps a pity that the author nowhere mentions 'rewilding', although its presence is the elephant in the room throughout the book, especially when we recall George Monbiot's description of the Lake District as 'sheep-wrecked', and his referral to the 'white plague' of sheep which, in his opinion, no longer have any place on the fells.

Of particular interest to historians is Humphries' account of the changing structure of the flocks, and the impact this has had upon the demands they place on the vegetation. From Neolithic to Norman times, mixed flocks grazed the fells, producing meat, milk and wool on a subsistence basis. The make-up of the flocks changed with the introduction of commercial wool production by the Cistercians and others, as the flocks came to be dominated by wethers (castrated males), which were clipped for three or four years, then sold on for mutton. This economy lasted effectively until the appearance of the first New Zealand lamb shipments in the 1880s. Tastes changed, and there was no longer a demand for mutton, while later the price of wool collapsed. The hill farmers responded by replacing their wether-dominated flocks with flocks of breeding ewes, and their output changed from wool to lamb. But, whereas the wethers could thrive on the rough grazing of the hills, the nutritional needs of a ewe, especially one carrying twins in late pregnancy, may be three times greater. This has resulted in the growing importance of the 'in-bye' lands for winter fodder – but also requires expensive supplements of cereal-based products, with added protein, minerals and trace elements, especially during the 'hungry gap' from January to April, when pregnant ewes draw heavily on body reserves, as they also do during early lactation.

Yet although supplementary feeds are the hill farmers' greatest variable cost, nevertheless the main source of nutrition for their flocks continues to be the 'natural vegetation', itself a misnomer. While the vegetation may ultimately be determined by the soils, climate and topography, it is modified by management systems such as burning, which encourages a species mix, and gives greater grazing choice, while over-grazing reduces selectivity and encourages the predominance of certain species. Humphries is particularly good on the strengths and weaknesses of the range of species the non-specialist tends to lump together under the generic name, 'grass'. Thus we learn that sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*) is probably the best all-round feedstuff, while *molinia* is highly variable at different seasons, and heather is of low digestibility, limiting milk production and hence lamb growth. Chapter Six, with its detailed descriptions of the commonly grazed plants, and accompanying photos, is of particular interest.

The traditional practice of grazing the sheep on the hills for much of the year, bringing them down to the in-bye in winter, to supplement grazing with hay and browse, has been modified such that the ewes now come down to the in-bye for 'tupping' (mating) in November-December, then return to the fells until April for lambing, returning again to the fells from June to October, apart from a brief return for clipping in July. Although we talk of 'hill farms', the enclosed lowland of the in-bye is in fact crucial to survival and the hills cannot be considered in isolation from them. Historically, up to the twentieth century, the in-bye grew oats and root crops for the livestock, and potatoes for the humans, on a small-scale rotation. Reseeding of grassland was rare and fertilization was by animal dung and urine, with perhaps a little lime. Today, the in-bye is drained, and fertilized with nitrogen, phosphates and potassium, and is sown with grass and clover.

The fell pastures where the flocks spend much of their lives are sometimes common land, and are often in 'heafs' to which the flocks are habituated from one generation to the next. These pastures fall squarely into the EU category of 'Less Favoured Areas', areas with natural handicaps of climate, infertile soils and topography and are only suited to low-intensity systems. The policy aim, both within the EU and within Defra is to balance livestock production in these areas with other 'public goods' - the flora, fauna and 'landscape' - and the improve environmental outcomes whilst increasing food production (Defra 2011). But are these outcomes mutually incompatible? Heather moors, perhaps thought of as the typical landscape of the hills, covers some 466 kHa of England, an area equivalent to twice the size of the Lake District,

spreading from the Borders, through Cumbria and the Pennines, to Derbyshire and reappearing in the south-west (the author is not concerned with Wales or Scotland). That landscape, and the wider surrounding grassy hills, are the creation of sheep husbandry. Sheep today are healthier and more productive than at any time in history, thanks to an understanding of sheep nutrition. But shepherding is a business whose aim is to produce from a fixed amount of land, the maximum number of good-quality lambs each year, at minimum input and allowing for uncontrollable variable such as the weather. That output depends on the health of the ewes, which in turn is dependent upon breed and feed. This book makes a useful contribution in helping the non-specialist to understand a little of the feed variable.

The book contains a useful glossary of hill-farming terms from the different regions. If you ever wondered about the difference between a tup, a wether and a gimmer, or the difference between a hogg and a twinter, you need go no further.

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J. P. BOWEN and A. T. BROWN (eds), *Custom and commercialisation in English rural society: Revisiting Tawney and Postan* (University of Hertfordshire Press, Studies in Regional and Local History, 14, 2016). xvi + 310pp. pb, £18.99

In a real sense this book announces the arrival of a new generation of economic and agricultural historians. The work of a number of younger historians - the two editors, Tom Johnson, Simon Sandall, Alex Sapoznik - is placed alongside that of a couple of older figures marking their mark on the profession in a second career - John Gaisford, Bill Shannon - and some old hands - John Broad, Chris Dyer, David Rollison, Sheila Sweetinburgh and Andy Wood. Bowen and Brown, who coincided as research fellows at the Institute of Historical Research and held a conference there in 2013 out of which this book has evolved, have brought together a team which has produced consistently good work although inevitably some of it wanders from the book's theme.

The two editors begin with an interesting introduction musing on custom and commercialization. It was custom that allowed commercialization to take place, at least in the form that it took in early modern England - itself a suggestion to think through. I would go a little further and suggest that custom is actually about the allocation of profits of agriculture. The form that custom took in the sixteenth century and later ensured that profits remained with the people

who generated them rather than all sliding into the pockets of landowners. In this way custom in England is fundamentally different in its implications to the operation of custom at other times and in other places where its benefits were much less marked. Custom also allowed, as the editors note, tenants to accumulate land. By depriving lords of the ability to manage their land, they could not take advantage of growing demand for land in the sixteenth century to split tenements or build cottages: for this reason any tendency towards the immiseration of the whole population was defeated, and instead society became polarized.

In a useful essay Dyer writes about Tawney and Postan, and unpicks their intellectual formation and contribution to economic history. I had never quite appreciated that they were colleagues at LSE and, come to that, both admirers of Eileen Power (whom Postan married). One assumes from what Dyer says that they collaborated in the Economic History Society and on *Economic History Review*, but we never have a piece of correspondence between them cited, nor any comment of what one thought of the other: one is left wondering what survives. He ends with some comments on their service to the profession, with some asides on how the service commitment they exhibited is largely lacking today.

Sapoznik gives a good overview of our state of knowledge of the iron industry in medieval England and the closely related charcoal trade, which acknowledges the importance of archaeology and landscape history in making up for the considerable lacunae in the historical record. Her arguments for the importance of iron in agriculture are well made, and the presence of smiths in most villages can be taken as further proof that villagers needed iron on a regular basis for horseshoes, ploughshares and a range of other tools. (Nails and nail making deserve more attention than they get here.) But, as she shows all too well, the very ubiquity of iron makes it elusive in the historical sources. Perhaps the next place to look is in the records of the debt jurisdictions for people trading in iron and iron goods.

Next comes an ambitious paper by Broad. His initial contention is that visitors to eighteenth-century England, who were so impressed by capitalist agriculture and who took home notions of the tripartite division between landowners, farmers and labourers, misunderstood what they saw. The processes which saw the emergence of capitalist farms were driven by farmers not landlords, and often involved farmers renting land from more than one owner. Enclosure, Broad argues, was not an important factor in the creation of large farms. The essay covers a lot of ground, perhaps too

much, and embedded within it there is a study of the Wiltshire village of Wylie that really needs expounding at greater length. Custom is one of the foundations of the essay: that it was the existence in England of peasant ownership guaranteed by custom that formed the basis of the rise of the farmer. I can accept this so far but have to note that in a large part of England customary forms of ownership did not take root, and it is arguable whether copyhold for lives should really be treated as a form of custom in the sense Broad means. But this is a challenging essay, which continues the tendency of other recent years to give more weight to the farmer and less to the landlord. It deserves careful reading.

The next few essays are empirically rich but perhaps less ambitious than the first three. Sweetinburgh offers a solidly documented essay about the Kentish marshlands in the later middle ages. Bowen ranges widely over commons, cottagers and enclosure in Shropshire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries very much in the terms laid down by Tawney. In an essay which sits a little oddly amongst the others, Johnson looks at the 'economics of shipwreck in late medieval Suffolk', including an account of the capture of porpoises, an exotic commodity never previously mentioned in the *Review*. This was all subject to customary rules though, which justifies its place in the book. Shannon offers an excellent review of the tensions over woodland in Furness (Lancashire) where the Duchy of Lancaster seems to have been hamstrung between its desire to profit from the woodland and its willingness to accept the customary claims of the tenants. There are implications here for the history of tenant right: the tenants come over as well-organized and persuasive, if only through weight of numbers, and able to defeat the managerial aspirations of the Duchy. Many of the same themes are taken up in Sandall's account of the Forest of Dean in the early seventeenth century. Sir John Winter was able to exploit ill-defined customs to secure wood for his iron works; but here the Exchequer was finally able to move against Winter for his destruction of wood. And yet this essay begs more questions than it answers: the reason for the slow speed with which the Exchequer operated, the apparent impotence of the local forest courts and the Exchequer's surveyor to stop (or restrain) Winter, whether Winter ever paid the fines levied on him, even whether he was put out of business.

Brown follows with a dense essay (which repays some perseverance) on the supply of victuals and coal to Durham Cathedral and Durham Priory, the survival of rents paid in food but also the discovery that some rents, apparently paid in money, were actually

supplied in grain and animals. The interest of the essay lies in its discussion of rents paid in provisions. The suggestion that there were coin shortages in this part of the North makes sense, and helps explain fears about coin being drained out of the North by the Dissolution of the Monasteries. I can readily accept Brown's point that payments in grain and other commodities made good sense to both landlords and tenants and their introduction should not be read as being a backward step. This could have been usefully developed. Brown seems unaware that Felicity Heal wrote about Elizabethan bishops maintaining their corn rents (in her *Of prelates and princes*, 1980) and he might usefully have referred to the Corn Rent Act of 1576, which laid down that a proportion of rents on future leases granted by Oxford and Cambridge, Eton and Winchester colleges were to be paid either in kind or in cash at current prices.

By comparison Gaisford offers a crisp essay on a small group of Elizabethan Wiltshire clothiers, delineating the activities and networks of figures who have hitherto been obscure and suggesting that they were every bit as wealthy as their Henrician predecessors. At his death in 1603, Edward Horton had nearly £18,000 out on loan – a fantastic amount. One would have liked a fuller analysis of his money lending: was he still active as a clothier at this time? The overall conclusions – that these clothiers were substantial figures and that the Wiltshire clothing industry remained in good health late in the sixteenth century – seem unarguable. Rollison continues the West County theme with an account of conflicts in Cirencester between the abbey and the townsfolk, and the continuation of the same disputes into the eighteenth century. I was puzzled by a couple of points, notably the question of who owned the manor of Cirencester after the Dissolution and why the townspeople made no attempt to purchase it: perhaps they did. The account Rollison gives is rather inward-looking, but there is a question of how the town related to the county JPs, for whom it was surely a problem to be managed. A comparison with another town with a similar history, Bury St Edmunds, might have been rewarding.

Finally, Wood supplies an 'afterword' which seems to have strayed in from another book. It makes little mention of the essays presented here, and virtually no reference to either Tawney or Postan, commends a number of recent historians of whom he approves and offers a wish list (not always a practical wish list one has to say) of areas where Wood thinks more research is needed. Interesting, but inappropriate here.

So whilst the book's themes get lost at some points, these are individually strong essays, all of which have

something interesting to say. Some of them ought to make a rapid appearance on undergraduate reading lists, and the book is to be recommended to anyone who wants to see for themselves the vitality and range of early modern rural history. One reflection on the book as a whole might well be that Tawney still has the capacity to stimulate, even if only as a jumping-off point, where the intellectual contribution of Postan seems less enduring. I might add that it is an inexpensive book which maintains the established standards of the University of Hertfordshire Press. But am I the only reader to dislike their practice of putting the body text in a sans-serif text (perhaps Arial) and the running heads and footnotes in a serif text (perhaps Times Roman?) Possibly I am old-fashioned to object to the mixing of fonts in this way, but if so, old-fashioned is what I'll have to be.

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Europe and beyond

A. T. BROWN, ANDY BURN and ROB DOHERTY (eds), *Crises in economic and social history: A comparative perspective* (People, markets, goods: Economies and societies in history Vol 6, Boydell Press, 2015). xvii + 401 pp., 23 figs, 18 tabs. £25.

As Gordon Brown discovered in 2008, however much we try to marginalize 'exogenous factors' within our understanding of the economy, they have a habit of coming back to bite us. Given the resultant topicality of concerns about economic crises, this volume of essays provides a welcome reinsertion of the exogenous into historical accounts of economic and social history. The essays range very widely, from environmental crises, to epidemics, to business crises, to industrial problems and decline. Chronologically, they extend from twelfth-century England, early modern Czech lands, nineteenth-century Malta, the late nineteenth-century United States, early twentieth-century Latin America, the so-called 'oil-shock' of the 1970s and the Northern Rock debacle in 2007. This is an interesting mix, and it eschews some of the staples of the econometric literature including Tulip-mania, the South-Sea Bubble, the US stock market crashes of 1873 and 1929. This allows the authors to offer new perspectives and new ways of integrating natural phenomena (the two horsemen of famine and pestilence) into accounts of economic change, and in thinking more systematically about the local consequences of man-made economic problems.

Obviously, any such study has to begin by defining the concept of 'crisis', given that the subsequent

essays apply the term in a number of different ways. The introduction represents something of a missed opportunity in this respect, because it settles for representing all the different ways in which crises might manifest themselves and how they provoke responses. Perhaps it is naive or overly reductive to hope for the formulation of a kind of benchmark, but it would have been very helpful to have a discussion focused on what scale or duration a natural or economic event would need to have in order to stand outside the normal cyclical variations. Such broadly accepted definitions exist in demography to indicate 'crisis mortality'. Would it have been possible, on the basis of the essays represented here, to posit 'natural' crises based on, say, two consecutive years of harvests 50 per cent below the long-term mean; or climatic conditions of two or more years where average seasonal temperatures were 5 or 10 per cent different from the long-term mean; or economic crises that involved two consecutive years in which the money supply contracted, or GDP dropped consistently by more than 1 or 2 per cent?

It would also have been useful if the editors had attempted some kind of conclusion, to draw out common themes. This is particularly pressing, because the essays in this volume point to a *compound* crisis in later medieval England and Europe, in which climatic abnormality allied to human and bovine/ovine epidemics, substantial disruption of credit markets, sustained credit contractions, and extreme cyclical variations in international markets. Rather than the (twentieth-century) examples chosen in Singleton's essay on the possible ways in which a 'disaster cycle' of crisis, response and recovery might aid historical explanation, it would have been intellectually stimulating to see this approach applied to considering the two centuries that were required to overcome the cumulative catastrophes of 1310–50. The reader who seeks such answers may need to find them in Bruce Campbell's newly published magnum opus, *The great transition. Climate, disease and society in the late medieval world* (CUP, 2016).

Even so, there are some fascinating, and thought-provoking essays in this collection. Mark and Catherine Casson provide a chronology of crises in late medieval England that will undoubtedly form a foundation on which much future scholarship is constructed, a kind of Phelps-Brown and Hopkins index of cyclical economic stress. This has obvious, but slightly underexploited, connections to Nightingale's chapter on late medieval English credit crises. Philip Slavin's exciting research on the sheep and cattle diseases that accompanied the Great Famine in early fourteenth-century England, emphasizes how terrible life was for the generation

born before the Black Death, and his discussion of recovery strategies links to more general discussions in chapters by John Singleton and Samuel Cohn. The case studies of economic, demographic, financial or industrial crises by Pavla Jirkova (Czech Plague), Josette Duncan (nineteenth-century Malta), Anne Murphy (Bank of England in the 1780s), John Lee (late medieval English cloth trade), Cinzia Lorandini (nineteenth-century Tyrolean silk industry), Peter Bent (1890s US tariff debates), and Alan Knight (Latin American Great Depression), each offer well-worked considerations of the role of exceptional change in provoking responses or initiating decline.

However, the chapter that illustrated the fertility of this attempt to integrate the exogenous shock into existing market-based historical interpretations was John Martin's account of the international crisis of 1972–77. Martin's analysis refutes the explanation of the inflationary spiral of the 1970s as a consequence of the 'oil shock' after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. He embeds these events in two long-term climatic anomalies: a series of abnormally dry summers in the southern hemisphere in 1971 and 1972, followed by ones in the northern hemisphere in 1975 and 1976. The former also produced El Niño effects in 1970–71 reducing the South American anchoveta harvest, and the supply of fish-meal fertilizer. The latter drove the Soviet Union onto world grain markets as a buyer at the moment when the main world market supplier, the US, suffered a significant harvest fall (as it had in 1972). Similar problems were seen in the production of staple crops such as potatoes, sugar beet, and a shortage of livestock fodder after the dry summer of 1976. Rising oil prices and industrial problems in many western countries exacerbated these movements but they did not cause them. 'Exogenous factors' did, and Martin remarks, may well do again, if the predictions of climate scientists about man-made climate change are realized.

Martin's essay illustrates the way that crises can compound each other, and how the abnormal and the 'non-economic' can (and should) be incorporated into historical interpretations. As noted, the essays deserved a slightly stronger interpretative introduction, and (in particular) something by way of synthesis in conclusion. However, this volume is very valuable in puncturing the endogamous supply-and-demand, rational market bubble in which much economic history still resides.

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PETER M. JONES, *Agricultural enlightenment: Knowledge, technology and nature, 1750–1840* (Oxford University Press, 2016). xi + 268 pp., 9 illus. £60

Peter Jones is familiar to many as a historian of rural France, although his most recent book was on the knowledge economy of the West Midlands in the late eighteenth century. Now he has returned to agriculture – but retaining his focus on the production, transmission, use and impact of knowledge – and to France, but also to much of the rest of Europe, between (roughly) 1750 and the 1840s. This takes him into several big questions, from van Zanden's idea of the Little Divergence between the countries around the southern North Sea and the rest of Europe, to the effect of changing markets and institutions, the role of literacy on farm management, and the process by which changing knowledge affects technical adoption decisions; in fact, most of the central concerns of agricultural historians.

He begins by tracing the emergence of new ways of thinking in the second half of the eighteenth century: physiocracy and cameralism, political economy and agronomy, a term which appeared among French writers in the 1760s, and was defined as a theory of agriculture informed by science – especially chemistry – in the 1798 dictionary of the Académie Française. New ideas crossed national boundaries. Duhamel de Monceau's *Traité de la culture des terres*, beginning its publication in 1750, was influenced by Jethro Tull's work of twenty years earlier; Albrecht Daniel Thaer, who established an agricultural school at Möglin outside Berlin in 1806, was inspired by Adam Smith and Arthur Young. He quotes with approval Young's contention that after the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 almost all the European states applied themselves to the study of agriculture, leading to a 'pan-European context of agricultural renewal' (p. 43), with various fiscal and agrarian reforms, cadastral surveys, land clearance and enclosure initiatives in France, the Habsburg Empire, Russia, Prussia and Spain. The wars at the turn of the century may have disrupted knowledge transmission, but they could not prevent it altogether. In 1798 Sir John Sinclair, President of the Board of Agriculture in London, was receiving requests from France for the latest English books on agriculture and rural economy, and in 1809 he made contact with the President of the Agricultural Society of Paris to request samples of spring wheat, which, with the Emperor's approval, were duly sent, along with the President's latest pamphlet on cereal cultivation. Contemporaries remarked on the increasing production of agricultural literature in most European countries and languages in this period. Landowners, farmers, nobility and writers

all travelled to widen their agricultural knowledge, agricultural and economic societies were formed, and parish priests from Spain to Finland were used to both gather and disseminate information.

More than 100 million people were added to the population of Europe between 1750 and 1850, and they were mostly fed by a European farm labour force decreasing as a proportion of the total. Jones devotes three chapters to assessing the extent to which the spread of knowledge was translated into changes in practice, and new practices into increased production; in effect, a wide-ranging survey of European agriculture in this period. Demonstration farms, agricultural shows and societies, enclosure, farmers and labourers who were persuaded or attracted to travel to transfer their skills, improved ploughs, 'numberless new-fangled machines', and new crops: the effect of the agricultural enlightenment, Jones argues, was to ensure that these could be found on farms across Europe. It was a 'highly complex and multi-faceted' process, and these chapters explore both its successes and failures. He also provides an account of developments in agricultural science, and a 26-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

In recent years, thanks to the efforts of international research groups and latterly to the meetings of the European Rural History Organisation, a number of books have been produced in which the experiences of different countries have been explored in separate chapters, often beginning or ending with an attempt to draw some overall conclusions. This book is one of the first to carry the process of integration and comparison to the next level, in which each stage of the argument is related to the experience of several different countries, so that an individual paragraph might mention estates in England and Prussia, landlords in Denmark and France, and farmers in Scotland and Spain. Peter Jones has the linguistic ability to read the necessary literature in several languages, and in the central theme of agricultural enlightenment he has found a focus which brings together most of the questions that concern agricultural historians. The result is an important book, which opened my eyes to comparisons I had never previously considered, and it is to be hoped that the publishers soon produce it in paperback form so that it attracts the wide readership that it deserves.

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JOSEP COLOMÉ, JORDI PLANAS and FRANCESC VALLS-JUNYENT (eds), *Vinyes, vins i cooperativisme vitivinícola a Catalunya* (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2015). 664 pp. €28.

The publication of a book that incorporates the Catalan viticulture memory within the great European history puzzle from the seventeenth century until today is always good news. From different perspectives and throughout the period, we find 15 contributions that help us to understand the agrarian development of Catalonia, the Spanish industrial locomotive. The authors tell us about the chronology of a 'frontier vine-producing expansion' founded on forest and waste-land ploughing, with large investments in labour and capital (new vines), under the *rabassa morta* contract, which guaranteed the farmer 'useful domain' – that is, actual possession and use of the land until the death of the vine and the owner, providing him with rents with little effort in return.

Enric Tello and Marc Badia-Miró begin the first chapter questioning the Hecker-Olin model and the logic of relative prices: the increasing international demand (Smithian effect) and the population density intensified vine planting in two waves (Boserupian effect); the first, more egalitarian, focused on brandy (in the eighteenth century); the second in the nineteenth century was more unequal and focused on low-quality wine, under some specific agrarian, climatic and socio-institutional conditions. Analysing the Francesc Sunyer supply chain, Josep M. Grau Pujol and Francesc Valls-Junyent show the control of the great traders in the brandy market in Tarragona, dominating the entire logistics chain, both in the domestic market and export, leasing manorial and church rights, making unfair loans in exchange for future forced productions. However, as Francisco J. Iglesia Berzosa shows, they failed to extend their business to the rest of Spain. According to Llorenç Ferrer Alòs, the existence of these great traders would explain why the Tarragona areas better resisted the devastating phylloxera plague whereas their absence (and other factors) plunged the Barcelona area (focused as it was on local consumption) into a permanent crisis, very well analysed by Pere Pascual Domènech in his research on the sharp decline of the wine railway traffic and by Ricard García Orallo through his detailed comparative research on the rural loan market in the areas of Alt Empordà (Girona) and Conca de Barberà (Tarragona).

Regarding the areas of Girona and Vallès Occidental, Rosa Congost, Enric Sagner and Pere Roca Fabregat confirm the rise of the vineyards, but also explain how things differed geographically. Girona was less dependent on the vine due to the different uses of the soil, farmers

with a greater bargaining power and the existence of other emphyteutic contracts. In Vallès Occidental a symbiosis between industrial development (Sabadell and Terrassa towns) and wine-growing development occurred and a new group of farmers ploughed new lands. These farmers were the founders of the so-called *pobles de carrer* ('street villages').

This book also shows us how the Spanish liberal state did very little to promote the sector. Josep Colomé Ferrer describes the social fight of the *rabassaires* against a minority of landowners who controlled most of the land. These landowners used the *rabassa morta* contracts to assure themselves new rents and took clear advantage after the phylloxera plague. This fight continued until the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). Whereas the yeomen's collective capital was the driving force of the first agrarian revolution in England between 1650 and 1750, in Catalonia it appeared as a defensive reaction at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this respect, Jordi Planas Montserrat Cucurella, Josep M. Vallès and Raimon Soler Becerro describe the successful and unsuccessful experiences of the new wine cooperatives. Although in some cases they managed to reduce costs and improve the production process they did not have enough resources or government support to improve quality, to bottle, distil and above all, to sell (unlike the French case and despite the Mancomunitat Catalana). All this was achieved from 1942 during Franco's regime (Francisco J. Medina-Albaladejo) and especially since 1980 (Miquel Àngel Bové Sans), a period which saw the third wine-growing wave and a revolution in quality.

However, there are some issues pending. It is difficult to understand where we are without framing the sector in the context of economy as a whole. It lacks an introduction about the evolution of the vine since the Black Death. 'International market integration' is mentioned, but what was the market share? How did the international and domestic prices develop? If demand was a decisive force, the role of the population is not clear enough: was it the cause or the consequence? A Catalan wine-growing area has been left out: El Maresme, where the population had a different history. I also wonder if the theory of the relative prices should be applied to lands that are ill-suited to growing cereals. The cash-crop character of the vine as well as income expectations could be also be considered. Given the high degree of dependence of the farmers, it could be claimed that the expansion of wine production was almost colonial or extractive. Neither the expansion of wine (which cannot be eaten) nor the supposed lack of productivity guaranteed a greater urban demand or a change of the agrarian labour force to other activities so, did

the vine expansion slow down the Catalan industrial development? What do we know about productivity, rents, wages and long-term elasticities? If in two hundred years the yield of the land did not grow, the expansion was simply extensive. If it happened this way, could it not depend on the climatic conditions? Until the nineteenth century, Catalonia suffered a little ice age and the 'Maldá Anomaly' – a significant increase in weather variability (droughts, floods and unusual frosts) and a more humid and unstable environment – factors which could have favoured all kinds of fungal plagues. Finally, brandy and wine are mentioned in the book, but, as Llorenç Ferrer Alòs questions, how were they made? Who made them? How did the market go from brandy to wine given the grape used for the former was of worse quality? Definitely, such questions can only arise in a high-quality book like this, a book that will be essential reading for anyone interested in learning more about the evolution of Mediterranean agriculture.

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DENISE PHILLIPS and SHARON KINGSLAND (eds), *New perspectives on the history of life sciences and agriculture* (Springer International Publishing, 2015). 509 pp., 6 illus. €176.79 (£153).

It is difficult to imagine today's agricultural industry operating without modern varieties of crops and grasses, pesticides or veterinary medicines, all derived directly or indirectly from the results of scientific research. Farmers also use technologies such as global positioning systems (GPS) that were developed for other purposes. Working the other way, statistical techniques now in general use were developed at Rothamsted agricultural research station, and methods of assisted conception in humans originated in the science used in developing artificial insemination, semen storage, and embryo transplants for farm animals. For over 50 years from 1931 the UK's Agricultural Research Council spent millions of pounds on basic and applied agricultural science, and today over a quarter of the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council's budget is devoted to projects relating to agriculture and food security. Since the Royal Agricultural Society of England was founded in 1838 with the motto 'Practice with Science', there is clearly nothing new in this. Yet in the last 30 years this *Review* has published fewer than ten articles directly concerned with the relationship between science and agriculture, and the most recent survey of the subject published in the UK – Blaxter and Robertson's *From dearth to plenty. The modern revolution in food production* –

is now more than 20 years old and was written by scientists and not historians.

How can we account for this? According to Denise Phillips and Sharon Kingsland it is not something confined to the UK. Introducing their book, they point out that science historians, or historians of biology, tend to neglect agriculture to the same degree that agricultural historians ignore science. There are some notable exceptions, although they are often found in history of science departments and publish in science history journals. From their work several common themes have emerged, such as the use of science to promote agricultural growth, and the interactions and relationships between science and government, experts and practitioners, and between science and technology. Agricultural issues have had an impact on the development of the life sciences, especially genetics and ecology, and agriculture provides some interesting case studies of the ways in which ideas and methods travel around the world.

Many of these topics are covered in this book. Roughly half of its 23 chapters are concerned with the twentieth century, with the some of the remainder going back as far as the middle of the eighteenth century. More than half of the authors are working in, or have some connection with, the USA, although several of them write about events in other countries such as Germany, Japan, France or China. Only three of the chapters – Matz on nutrition science in late nineteenth-century Germany, Derry on chicken breeding and Onaga on Japanese silkworm breeding, both in the twentieth century – are specifically concerned with animals. The pre-twentieth-century chapters cover a variety of topics, from the emergence of plant geography in Germany and France, and Napoleon's interest in cotton growing, to the rise of scientific forestry and applied entomology in Russia, the impact of microbiology on the Japanese brewing industry, and the establishment of a botanical garden in Java. This last chapter, together with the following two on the emergence of ecology in the USA, raise some interesting questions about the emergence of scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines and their relationship with agriculture. Otherwise, most of the twentieth-century chapters are concerned with breeding and genetics, and the complexities of the relationships between their practitioners. As Margaret Derry points out, it was the lack of detailed understanding of poultry breeding practices that initially limited the influence of geneticists, who in any case were more interested in general biological problems. What changed, and increased the influence of the scientists, was not the science, but the organization of the poultry industry.

This brief survey of the contents cannot do justice to the variety and richness of the book. I had not thought about the influence of vegetarians, naturopaths, nudists and anti-vaccinationists on the emergence of organic farming in Germany, or the use of whale oil to combat the depredations of the brown planthopper on the Japanese rice crop, before reading this book. I was aware that plant breeders had used X-rays to induce mutations and thus attempt to produce useful variations in commercial crops, but its extent and the excitement it generated in the inter-war period eluded me until I read Helen Anne Curry's fascinating chapter. There is no single unifying theme running through the book, but the editors end their introduction with the hope that this varied collection will stimulate further research. And so it should.

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IAN MILLER, *Water: A global history* (Reaktion Books, Edible series). 141 pp. 48 illustrations. 2015, £10.99.

For those who have not encountered it already, the Edible series consists of small, pocket-sized hardbacks in ochre covers, which deal with 'the rich history of cuisine', not simply from a historical but from a cultural point of view. The idea is clever, the production standards high and the books may be recommended as a sort of *amuse-bouche*. (I imagine that a book on the *amuse-bouche* is forthcoming.) They make good Christmas presents and nicely fill the *longueurs* of Boxing Day morning (if the reader can stand the thought of food, that is).

The series has now reached some 56 volumes covering staples like the potato and rice, meats (beef, lamb, pork – and offal), cantering through styles of cooking (barbecue, hot dog, pizza), fruits (apple, lemon, orange) to drinks (beer, gin, whiskey [sic] and wine). Water sits a little uncomfortably in this company, as it is not, in the way that most of the subjects are, a foodstuff. Instead it is the most basic of staples. As the author says, 'The history of drinking water is one of convincing the public why they should drink water and making it seem interesting' (p. 114). Much of the book is concerned with the adulteration of water, as may be seen at the end when the author provides recipes for a range of flavoured waters. The book ends with an appendix of mineral waters, which, oddly for an academic based in Ireland, omits Ballygowan.

Miller starts by reflecting on the essential need of human society for water and the struggle to provide safe and potable water, but then discusses the reluctance of people to drink water without flavouring. This we

might call the paradox of water: we go to a great deal of trouble to make it pure, then add impurities to it to make it interesting enough to drink. His fourth chapter discusses the preference for water with alcohol in it, which leads into a discussion of temperance and, of all things, the drinking fountain. Miller then turns to the strategies employed to market drinking water and has a chapter on 'Making water interesting' (whether by carbonation or adding ice). He draws to a close with a discussion of how safe water supplies have been made available in developed countries but how great a distance there remains to make them available throughout the world. The focus is on the Global North, but there are nods to the very different conditions of the Global South.

There is much here that is interesting, even amusing. I never knew that there was a Dr Schweppe who founded a mineral water company. Nor did I know the adage that 'in wine there is wisdom, in beer there is strength, in water there is bacteria', here attributed to David Auerbach: but I am glad that I do now. I can sign up to that. It had never occurred to me to spell Evian backwards (all on pp. 74–5). And that is characteristic of the book: a sharp eye for the telling anecdote. The selection is eclectic though. There is no consideration of water as the medium in which food is boiled, or water-based meals like soup. The potato would never have caught on if it could not be boiled. The politics of water are not really covered: the 'theft' of water by urban societies from rural ones, whether the diversion of water from northern to southern California, from the river Jordan to Israel and nearer home from Wales to Liverpool and Birmingham or, of course, Manchester's dependence on the Lake District for its water. Some comments on the ownership of the water utilities would have been welcome. The infrastructure of water is passed over, but coming from a district where reservoirs were two-a-penny, I grew up well aware of the shaping of the landscape to supply the most essential of commodities. The history of the soda stream is covered in a couple of paragraphs, but there is much more to be said about 'pop' especially at a time when there is some public debate (and the promise of government action) about excessively sweetened drinks.

I do not blame Miller for the omissions, confronted as he doubtless was with a tight word length on a subject that perhaps does not quite fit in the series. A book twice the length would, I am sure, have been easier to write. What I do complain about though are the illustrations. The book is brightly and well illustrated, but the illustrations are never mentioned in the text, and, I would imagine, are the work of

an uncredited picture editor tasked with finding illustrations to match a text already in the hand. On p. 65 is a nice picture of the Royal Crescent at Bath: I have no idea why. A discussion of the Goldfields Water Supply System in Australia has a full-page picture (on p. 110) of a pipeline stretching into the distance with the caption 'Goldfields water supply pipeline, western Australia': as nice a picture of a large-diameter pipe as you will ever find, but completely unrewarding for the

reader. The pictures do not add to the text so much as have a life of their own.

This is in large measure an account of the valued-added ways in which water can be presented but which has less to say than it might about the bulk commodity that comes through our taps. There is a bibliography which might easily be twice the length, but, alas, no references, so the text has to be taken on trust.

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