

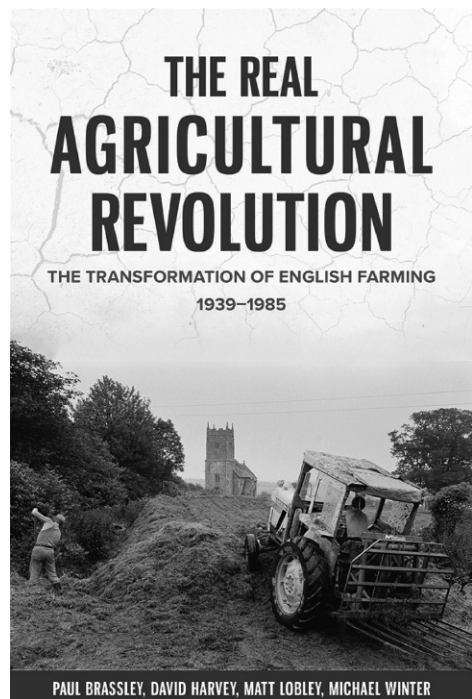
Joan Thirsk Memorial Prize

The Joan Thirsk Memorial Prize was awarded at this year's Spring Conference to Paul Brassley, David Harvey, Matt Lobley, and Michael Winter, for their book, *The real Agricultural Revolution: The transformation of English farming, 1939–1985*, published by The Boydell Press.

On presenting the prize, Professor Clare Griffiths said: 'The Joan Thirsk Memorial Prize is awarded by the Society in memory of Joan Thirsk, who was of course known to many of you personally, and whose work is familiar to and valued by so many more. The Prize is given annually to the author of a book on any aspect of the rural or agrarian history of Britain and Ireland. It has been awarded since 2017, and even in that relatively short time it has generated a very distinguished list of prize winners, about which you can read more on the BAHS website.

'This tradition continues, I'm very happy to say, and this year's judges enjoyed many hours of both enjoyable and instructive reading as we worked our way through the submissions. I was joined in these endeavours by my fellow judges Nicola Verdon and Paul Warde. The standard of the submissions was very high this year, but one book did shine through, and we were unanimous in our decision. This is the first occasion on which the prize has been awarded to a book with more than one author.

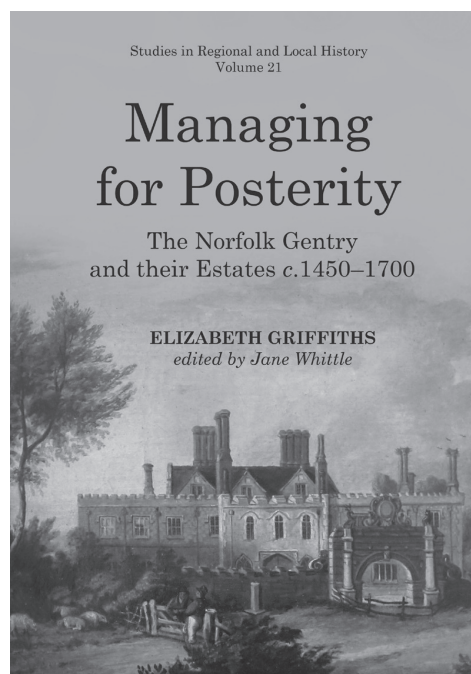
'The real Agricultural Revolution will surely prove to be indispensable reading for anyone studying the history of British agriculture in the twentieth century. It is a book which impressed us with its scholarship, its use of original primary research across a great range of source materials, and the way in which it combines attention to the particular and the regional with an ability to contextualise historical experience and tell a wider and more far-reaching story, a story which it sets out with eloquence and engaging argument. Above all, it succeeds in making a significant contribution to the field, not only in adding to our sum of knowledge, but in providing new insights as to how we may interpret and better understand an important period in the history of British farming, and the complicated processes by which changes in agricultural practice take shape as a consequence of the decisions and actions taken by myriad individuals.'



Managing for Posterity

The Norfolk Gentry and their Estates c.1450–1700

by Elizabeth Griffiths, edited by Jane Whittle



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from the *Agricultural History Review* and edited from two Norfolk Record Society volumes. For anyone interested in early modern rural society and agriculture and the history of Norfolk gentry estates, this volume will be essential reading, offering as it does new perspectives on the history of estate management, notably the role of women, the relationship with local communities and sustainability in agriculture.

Elizabeth Griffiths was an honorary research fellow at University of Exeter and co-author, with Jane Whittle, of *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (OUP, 2012). She passed away in April 2020 while this volume was in preparation. It has been compiled and edited by her friend and research collaborator, **Jane Whittle**, Professor of Economic and Social History at the University of Exeter and Series Editor of *Studies in Regional and Local History*.

Securing the long-term survival and status of the family has always been the principal concern of the English aristocracy and gentry. Central to that ambition has been the successful management of their landed estates, whilst failure in this regard could spell ruination for an entire family. In the sixteenth century, the task became more difficult as price inflation reduced the value of rents; improved management skills were called for. In Norfolk, estates began to change hands rapidly as the unaware or simply incompetent failed to grasp the issues, while the more astute and enterprising landowners capitalised on their neighbours' misfortunes.

When Sir Hamon Le Strange inherited his family's ancient estate at Hunstanton in 1604 it was much depleted and heavily encumbered. The outlook was bleak: such circumstances often led to the disappearance of families as landowners. However, within a generation, he and his remarkable wife Alice had modernised the estate and secured the family's future. After 700 years, the Le Stranges still survive and prosper on their estate at Hunstanton, making them the longest surviving gentry family in Norfolk. The first part of this book presents new research into the secret of their rare success. A key aspect of their strategy was a belief in the power (and economic value) of knowledge: Hamon and Alice wanted to ensure that their improvements would endure for posterity. To this end, they

curated their knowledge through meticulous record-keeping and carefully handed it down to their successors. This behaviour, instilled in the family, not only facilitated on-going reforms, but helped future generations overcome the inevitable reversals and challenges they also faced.

The second part of the book collects together four related papers from Elizabeth Griffiths' research about the Le Stranges, Hobarts and Wyndhams, republished

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