

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN, *Tradition and transformation in Anglo-Saxon England. Archaeology, common rights and landscape* (Debates in Archaeology, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). xii + 251 pp., 12 figs. £55.

This book joins a series of recent studies that have sought to explore the origins of landscapes characterized by open fields, and in particular asked why they became the dominant form of land management in England's 'central province' but not elsewhere. In the past, archaeologists and historians have tried to explain this in terms of a variety of factors, such as population density, the nature of lordship, the natural environment, and the character of landscape and society in the early medieval period (just before the villages and open fields were created).

Oosthuizen's study is a development of the latter approach, setting out to explore the possibility that there was long-term continuity from prehistory through to the early medieval period in the collective structures of managing grazing in what she refers to as a 'common pool resource'. The book begins cautiously. Having made the simple observation that there are similarities in the physical characteristics of areas of permanent pasture in the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods and areas that in the later medieval period are known to have been commons, Oosthuizen correctly notes that '[t]his is a long way ... from establishing the proposition that prehistoric and Romano-British cultivators utilised and managed their grazing lands in the same ways as their medieval successors' (p. 29).

Unfortunately it is not long before this caution is abandoned and it is suggested that 'the collective management of pastoral landscapes under common rights may represent a continuous tradition from prehistoric into early medieval England and after' (p. 42) and that 'it follows, then, that if at least some prehistoric and Roman arable was laid out in open fields subdivided between a number of cultivators, then they were probably managed within a CPR [common property regime, i.e. a collective institution

that governed common pasture and open fields]' (p. 78). These are bold claims, that both pasture and arable were managed collectively in the late prehistoric and Roman periods, and that the collective arrangements in the medieval period show continuity from the late prehistoric and Roman periods. A closer inspection of the evidence presented does not convince this reviewer.

It certainly was true that there were extensive areas of permanent pasture during the late prehistoric and Roman periods – this is well known – but that these pastures were grazed communally in a continuous tradition from the prehistoric through to the medieval period is to my mind unproven. There is simply no evidence that the complex customary arrangements documented in the medieval period existed in these undocumented prehistoric times, and the potentially important alternative of hefting – that does not even appear in the index – is considered in just a single line (p. 34). Then on p. 77 we are told that there is evidence for Roman strip fields, but without sufficient critical assessment of the primary data for what is only a small number of sites. Indeed, a closer examination of detailed published reports reveals that what are indeed long, narrow Romano-British fields cannot have been open fields with the regulated common grazing that was so characteristic of the Midland system (at Royston Grange, for example, the fields are defined by substantial walls, and on the Gwent Levels by wide and deep water-filled ditches). There are other cases where details are simply incorrect, and the referencing wrong. In Figure 4, for example, we are told that a sub-circular open field at South Brent in Somerset is documented in a late seventh-century charter but this is simply not true: the estate is indeed documented at that date, but not the open field (to compound this error, the reference given in the caption is incorrect, and is for an interim note on excavations at a totally different place in Somerset that makes no reference to South Brent). On p. 76 we are told that there were 'sizeable curvilinear Roman fields on the Gwent Levels ... subdivided by narrow ditches into long narrow strips': the reference ('Rippon 1996'), however, does not appear

in the bibliography, but this reviewer can be confident in saying that curvilinear fields on the Gwent Levels (a reclaimed coastal marshland) are in fact medieval and are separated from the Romano-British landscape below by a thick layer of sterile alluvium (as is clearly explained in my *Gwent Levels* [1996]).

In summary, the idea that there were extensive permanent pastures in Roman Britain is well known. How these pastures were managed is, however, impossible to say without documentary records but communal regulation is one possibility. That there was a 'continuous tradition' from the prehistoric through to the medieval period is, in the mind of this reviewer, unproven (and unprovable), and the idea that there were open arable fields in Roman Britain is simply not supported by the extensive published evidence, which instead suggests that fields in this period were small enclosures defined by banks, walls and ditches. Overall, this book presents a novel hypothesis, but has not marshalled sufficient convincing evidence.

STEPHEN RIPPON
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JAMES DAVIS, *Medieval market morality. Life, law and ethics in the English marketplace, 1200–1500* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). 514 pp., 29 figs., 17 tabs. £65.

In recent years, there has been a sad tendency, chiefly among cliometricians, to approach various topics in economic history through the prism of anachronistic econometric models. Such an approach means a painful sacrifice of the historical context, which, in many cases, is dismissed altogether. The current book is an important reminder that complex themes in economic history cannot be fully appreciated unless broader historical and philosophical contexts are considered. James Davis's *Medieval market mortality* is a first-rate study of a highly important, yet somewhat understudied topic. Broadly speaking, this book looks at the impact of various medieval concepts and commandments, as shaped by theological writings, on market regulation and activities in late medieval England.

The book comprises four (very) long, yet straightforward, chapters. Chapter 1 deals with contemporary perceptions of and attitudes towards retail traders. The generic coverage of sources is truly impressive: they range from literary texts, through theological writings and sermons, to works of visual art. Davis finds that petty traders were regarded as greedy and somewhat sinful elements within the society, who tended to profit from their trade by abusing and deceiving their clients. Such behaviour was most damaging to the common good of the community and stood in

a sharp contradiction to social and religious morals of those days. The cunning and deceitful nature of traders, sometimes bordering on the deadly sin of avarice, prompted the community and the authorities to treat them with suspicion, which is reflected in the writings of late medieval philosophers and theologians. Just as for other sinners, the only way to salvation for greedy traders was repentance (achieved through restitution of gained goods and generous donations to the Church).

Chapter 2 looks at a set of laws and regulations enacted to restrain and control traders. Such legislation was passed on both the macro-level (royal statutes) and the micro-level (borough ordinances, guild regulations), and included a series of mechanisms to ensure relatively fair trade. These included regulations of public market-places, trade on Sunday, public order and sanitation, weights and measures, coinage, bargaining, credit, prices, usury and, naturally, the ubiquitous Assize of Bread and Ale. The discussion of the latter occupies 15 pages (pp. 233–48) and it provides a most authoritative treatment of the subject. Instead of focusing on the contents of the original Assize, Davis discusses its changing character across space and time. In all cases, trading legislation is to be understood not only in broader socio-political and economic perspective, but also in the context of religious and moral norms and views of those days.

Chapter 3 studies the behaviour of market traders within a local context of Suffolk (one of the most commercialized and 'market-ized' counties in England), focusing on three market loci: the small market towns of Newmarket and Clare and the borough market of Ipswich. Particular attention is given to the implementation of the Assize of Bread and Ale and other regulations on trading transgressors. As Davis shows, in many cases local authorities were caught in the dichotomy between the duty to penalize blatant transgressors and the practical need to let the perpetrators of minor frauds off without penalties. It should be borne in mind that urban markets were controlled and regulated by the town elites, consisting, *inter alia*, of merchants and producers. This, in turn, may explain their lenience towards petty transgressors, to ensure that business went on as usual. This fact reflects the gap between the theological, moralist and legal basis of market morality and its actual implementation.

A much shorter and less detailed Chapter 4 considers the continuity of market morality into the early modern period. Here, Davis draws upon the works of Keith Wrightson and E. P. Thompson, stressing the renewed and elevated concerns about trade, greed and market

morality in the Tudor and early Stuart eras. Following Thompson, Davis places the criticism towards market traders in socio-economic reality of the early modern period, marked not only by social mobility and stratification, population growth, and the rise of consumerism, but also by impoverishment and outbreaks of famine. These changes brought about a harsh response from some Anglican preachers and moral philosophers, who stressed the immoral side of market activities. Chapter 4 is followed by a short conclusion, nicely wrapping up the main points of the book.

There is no doubt that this book has many merits. First, it is impressively interdisciplinary in its nature, incorporating a wide array of sources and perspectives, literary, statistical, legal and visual alike. Second, despite its potential to have been restricted to the narrow realm of numbers and figures, the monograph is imbued with human and cultural dimensions: thus, we are not only told how many ameracements and ale-regrating offences were committed at Newmarket in the early fourteenth century, but we are also told how the same transgressions were perceived, theologically and legally. This connection between purely economic and cultural factors, studied so well by Davis, will undoubtedly set new scholarly standards. Third, the monograph is based not only on a solid bibliography of secondary works, but also on a fair number of unpublished archival sources, deriving from 15 different repositories (14 in England and the Huntingdon Library in San Marino, California).

Any shortcomings are minor and they in no way detract from the excellent quality of the book. For instance, Avner Greif is curiously misspelled throughout the book as 'Avner Grief'; chapter 2 focuses primarily on the urban environment, and one wonders what the situation was on rural manorial markets; in chapter 3, one might wish to see a geographic comparison with other regions in England (it is unfortunate that the local case studies were restricted to Suffolk). All the same, this is an unquestionably first-rate contribution to scholarship and, as such, the author is to be lauded on his achievement.

PHILIP SLAVIN
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TOM WILLIAMSON, ROBERT LIDDIARD and TRACEY PARTIDA (eds), *Champion. The making and unmaking of the English Midland village* (Liverpool University Press, 2013). xii + 250 pp., 11 figs, 68 illus. £70.

Academic ideas come in and out of fashion, and this important study by Williamson, Liddiard and Partida represents a major challenge to orthodox thinking with

regard to the origins of villages and open fields. In particular it makes the case for a return to environmentally deterministic explanations for past human behaviour. This book is one of a pair resulting from a major AHRC-funded project, which have mapped the landscape of Northamptonshire in remarkable detail in c.1300 and c.1770. The other book – Tracey Partida, David Hall, and Glenn Foard, *An Atlas of Northamptonshire: the medieval and early-modern landscape* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2013) – contains detailed maps that reconstruct the open fields and other land uses at these two dates, and a discussion that broadly adheres to the now established view of how this landscape evolved. Williamson *et al.*'s *Champion. The making and unmaking of the English Midland village*, in contrast, presents a radically different hypothesis.

Northamptonshire was chosen due to its excellent source material – archaeological, cartographic, and documentary – but in particular because of the remarkably detailed and extensive research by David Hall, who had reconstructed the layout of the county's open fields on a series of Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 maps. In the AHRC project those sheets, along with a variety of other source material, were digitized in GIS and this allowed the series of illustrations in these two volumes to be prepared. These landscape reconstructions are a truly outstanding piece of scholarship. The introduction to *Champion* includes an extremely useful historiography and description of the project's methodology. In Chapter 2 'Structures of Landscape' one gets a flavour of the underlying philosophy of this book with great emphasis placed upon geology, soils, climate, and topography and the rejection of 'vague "social" explanations for regional variations in settlement and field systems' (p. 44). This approach of challenging orthodoxy continues when considering the evidence for landscape character before the creation of open fields. The traditional 'Northamptonshire model' is that several scattered farmsteads and hamlets associated with Early to Middle Saxon pottery were replaced around the eighth to tenth centuries by a single nucleated village (i.e. a process of nucleation). Williamson *et al.* present a series of statistics to challenge this (p. 57), suggesting that in 51 per cent of parishes there are no known sites associated with Early to Middle Saxon pottery, and in 28 per cent of parishes there is just one. This data would indeed appear to suggest that the widely accepted 'Northamptonshire model' for settlement nucleation only appears to work in the remaining c.20 per cent of parishes, although to make this case additional information is required, most notably the

percentage of each parish that has actually been field-walked, and the technique of field-walking that was used (which varies from grid-walking, which should have detected every site, through to widely spaced line-walking, which is bound to have missed some sites). If, for example, only 25 per cent of the parish was walked in a systematic way, and just one site associated with Early to Middle Saxon pottery was found (the remaining areas being pasture, woodland, and under modern settlement, or only walked in an unsystematic way), then statistically there are probably four sites associated with Early to Middle Saxon pottery in each parish. The Williamson *et al.* hypothesis, that there was no process of settlement nucleation is, therefore, unproven, considering the data presented and the way it is used.

In addition to rejecting nucleation as the process behind village origins, Williamson *et al.* also set out to shatter various other long-held views about champion landscapes. They argue that in Northamptonshire most open fields only attained their maximum extent and regular form in the post-Conquest period. They reject the idea that large numbers of villages were created through conscious planning, arguing instead that most were created through gradual growth from relatively small Saxon cores, that areas with a regular layout result from the spreading of villages across the strips of earlier open fields, and that elsewhere village plans were shaped by the underlying geology. The assertion that 'physical geography was thus the principal determinant of settlement form' will certainly raise eyebrows, but the evidence here is well presented and well argued. Another distinctive contribution of this book is in mapping the likely extent of all the major land use types (arable, permanent pasture, meadow, woodland, and heath) across the whole of Northamptonshire (Plate 38), although to understand the key conclusion – the extent and significance of non-arable land use even in this, one of the most 'champion' landscapes in England – one should look through the more detailed maps in the *Atlas of Northamptonshire: the medieval and early-modern landscape*.

Overall, this is a book that stimulates a huge range of emotions: surprise (as many traditional ideas are challenged), contemplation (as the implications of Williamson *et al.*'s hypotheses are profound), but also some frustration (as, in places, the evidence base and use of statistics should have been stronger). *Champion* has to be read alongside the *Atlas*, but together they form an important and thought-provoking piece of scholarship.

STEPHEN RIPPON
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RICHARD BRITNELL, CLAIRE ETTY and ANDY KING (eds), *The Black Book of Hexham. A northern monastic estate in 1379 with additional documents, ca. 1113–1536* (Hexham Local History Society, 2011). x + 299 pp. £18 p/b available from the Treasurer, Dotland Farm Cottage, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 2JY.

The Black Book of Hexham is a rental of the lands belonging to Hexham Priory, dating from 1379. However, it contains more detailed information than one would expect from a simple rental, and consequently the editors rightly decided that the manuscript could be likened much more to an estate survey, providing extensive details about properties, estate assets and individual holdings. As such it offers a detailed and fascinating snapshot into an ecclesiastical estate of the late fourteenth century.

The whereabouts of the original manuscript are currently not known, and the editors worked instead with an edited version, which represented a mere transcript of the original, in abbreviated Latin, which was published in 1864–5. In addition, some extracts from the Black Book prepared around 1841 were deposited in the Northumberland Record Office. The editors of the current volume, commissioned by the Local History Society of Hexham, had the unenviable task of reconciling the invariable discrepancies between the surviving transcriptions. Considering these challenges, a thoughtful and careful edition of the Black Book of Hexham, now fully translated, has been crafted.

Useful maps illustrate the locations of the far-flung properties of the Abbey, which together made up what was called Hexhamshire, an estate encompassing properties across a number of Northern counties, including Northumberland and Yorkshire. The book contains a very helpful glossary of English words. There is also a detailed list of properties acquired by Hexham, as well as a gazetteer listing properties mentioned with National Grid references. The introduction is clearly structured, with subheadings describing in detail the estates of the Augustinian Abbey and the editorial process.

The Black Book itself is a treasure trove of evidence for a whole variety of matters pertaining to the daily running of an estate as well as the individual manors. The documents provide fascinating insights into the economy of the estates of Hexham and their social structures. It contains information about tenurial structures and lord-tenant relationships. It shows for example that even at this late stage, when other lords were starting to abandon their attempts to enforce suit at mill, Hexham's lord still noted that tenants owed suit of the lord's water mill at Hexham, or they had to face a

penalty of the forfeiture of 'a horse with a saddle', no less, 'to the lord' (p. 35). The documents also contain details of acreages held, rent and service obligations. There is information about a myriad agricultural activities and by-industries such as brewing. Very close and detailed information about the location of tenements and fields, with many identified by fieldnames, will also be of interest to landscape historians. The Black Book also describes rights of common, and provides details of the demesne lands.

In addition to the main survey, the editors have very helpfully included further documents relating to the estate, such as charters and royal commissions. As an interesting point of comparison to the fourteenth-century Black Book, the survey of the Hexham estates conducted at the time of the Dissolution is also provided.

Such editions of primary sources are very welcome as teaching tools for undergraduate or postgraduate students, but also of great interest to the general reader and to researchers. At £18 the paperback also represents excellent value for money. Overall this is one of the best ones I have seen. It is very user-friendly, carefully researched and executed, and contains a fascinating collection of documents.

MIRIAM MÜLLER
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CHRISTOPHER DYER, *A country merchant, 1495–1520. Trading and farming at the end of the middle ages* (Oxford University Press, 2012). xiv + 256 pp., 32 figs., 24 tabs. £65.

Christopher Dyer's latest book is partly biography and partly regional history. It charts the life and fortunes of John Heritage, a prosperous yeoman farmer who became a small-scale wool merchant in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. While rehearsing the key moments in Heritage's life, it also narrates the history of a number of small towns and villages in Gloucestershire and Warwickshire where Heritage lived and traded. The book's primary concern is to establish whether or not Heritage and his contemporaries lived through an era of dramatic change and therefore exemplified the kind of new social and economic order that has often been postulated in the secondary literature.

Dyer's answer to the question is somewhat equivocal. As he notes, it is certainly possible to see in John Heritage some of the transformative forces that have led generations of historians to differentiate the medieval from the early modern world. Heritage was an innovative farmer who embraced enclosure, actively engrossed the holdings of neighbours and fellow villages, farmed on an ambitious scale and rejected traditional methods of open-field agriculture. He sold his familial

holding without apparent compunction, left his native village to start a career in trade, and interacted with a network of entrepreneurs that extended to several counties as well as London. Perhaps most significantly, he kept track of many of his business transactions in a personal account book-cum-notebook, which provides the principal source for a reconstruction of his life. He seems to embody the emergent forces of individualism, capitalism, and social mobility that were transforming the social and economic traditions of previous centuries and ushering in a dynamic new world.

While documenting some of the contours of this new world, Dyer also suggests that the legacy of the past was much more substantial than a straightforward biographical approach might suggest. The world around Heritage was unquestionably changing, but the change was neither particularly fast nor inordinately extensive. The urban and rural communities of the period look very much like their precursors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Likewise, although enclosure and a heightened emphasis on pastoral agriculture can be found in some villages, in many others agrarian practices were still largely based on traditional open-field husbandry. Heritage's suppliers and customers were largely peasant farmers with value systems deeply rooted in traditional forms of piety and communal engagement. Nor had the social tensions of the medieval world faded from the scene. Lordly power still circumscribed many features of peasant life and communities were still dominated by elite groups of local landholders, much as they had been for centuries. Very often, Dyer contends, the change that can be observed in the early sixteenth century was a by-product of the severe depopulation that followed the Black Death, not the result of new mindsets or cultural ruptures that took hold during Heritage's lifetime.

In addition to addressing grand historical narratives of change and continuity, the book also functions effectively in conveying new empirical facts about the early sixteenth century. Particularly valuable material can be found in the description in Chapter 4 of how Heritage ran his wool-trading business. Heritage produced wool on his own lands and had dealings with some members of the gentry, but his main suppliers came from the ranks of the peasantry. Entries relating to purchases and subsequent payments make up the bulk of the account book. Dyer is able to use these entries to recreate a peripatetic country merchant's business techniques in considerable detail, including such matters as how Heritage handled wool of varying quality, how he dealt with liquidity problems caused by the period's shortage of coin, where he found suppliers,

and how he turned an assortment of small acquisitions into the sacks that made their way into international commerce. Historians are not afforded many opportunities to reconstruct rural commerce in such depth and Dyer has made the most of his archival discovery.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Dyer's work has been characterized by clear presentation of arguments and accessible prose, and this book is no exception. The publisher has sought to broaden the book's appeal to a general readership by including a large number of photographs of places discussed in the text and providing other useful ancillary material. Biography and agrarian history have traditionally not been closely associated with each other, but in the right hands their juxtaposition can produce something that is both informative and elegant, as Dyer's book clearly demonstrates.

JAMES MASSCHAELE
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STUART A. RAYMOND, *The wills of our ancestors. A guide for family and local historians* (Pen & Sword Family History, 2012). 199 pp., 32 illus., 1 map. £12.99. This useful volume has been published as part of Pen & Sword's series for researchers in family and community history. The volume combines the history of probate jurisdictions, with a discussion of the various kinds of probate records, and then provides a guide to searching and accessing these materials in the various national, regional and local repositories into which they have been organized.

The study begins with a discussion of the origins of wills, the probate process and a description of the various ecclesiastical probate jurisdictions. The latter can be very complex, and baffling to the newcomer, as are the patterns of usage by testators, so chapter 2 provides a simplified, but very helpful, overview of these. As Raymond notes, any local study is likely to involve the necessity of delving into the minutiae of sub-county ecclesiastical peculiars and other jurisdictions, and testators' propensity not to act in entirely predictable ways! However, this introduction highlights these potential pitfalls.

Raymond then moves on to considering other kinds of probate documents, notably the probate inventory, but also sometimes neglected documents, such as probate administrations, accounts and probate litigation. For many testators, all that survives is the administration bond, recorded in the bishop or archdeacon's probate registers, and, as Margaret Spufford showed more than 20 years ago, to build up a realistic picture of net worth, the probate inventory (the moveable assets transferred to the executors) should really always be read alongside

the probate account (the liabilities on the estate at the time of decease).

The discussion of probate repositories is very helpful, particularly the introduction to the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York, in the National Archives and the Borthwick Institute. These discussions are illustrated with screen-shots of the electronic catalogues for such institutions. While these are very helpful to the newcomer, the danger is that Web sites and electronic catalogues can change with tremendous rapidity, rendering these descriptions obsolete. No doubt, Pen & Sword have factored this into their plans for a series of updated editions!

As noted, these volumes are aimed at new researchers and a non-professional market. For more experienced family and community historians, as well as academics, their strength lies in offering a handy and comprehensive gathering of information, which can be recommended as a guide to the novice. As such, they remain good value and deserve a place on many a shelf.

HENRY FRENCH
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JOHN HARE, JEAN MORRIN and STAN WRIGHT (eds), *The Victoria History of Hampshire: Mapledurwell* (Victoria County History Publications, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2012). 85pp., 28 illus. and maps. £7.

The familiar 'red book' volumes of the *Victoria County History* (VCH) were the product of an ambitious scheme started in 1899 to 'trace the domestic history of the English Counties back to the earliest times' and to include 'all those factors which tell of the progress of England from primitive beginnings to a large and successful empire'. With this rousing aim, Volume I, for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, was the first to be published in 1900. It focused on natural history and pre-Domesday history for the whole county. Four subsequent volumes covered additional general topics and then individual manor and church histories for every parish in the county. The series was completed with an index in 1914. Progress elsewhere was patchy, and only some dozen counties were ever completed. The whole VCH undertaking continued slowly throughout the twentieth century, and since 1933 work has been co-ordinated by the Institute of Historical Research. A grant in 2005 from the Heritage Lottery Fund provided added impetus, and county groups now focus either on researching parishes not previously covered, or – as in Hampshire – rewriting and updating those published a century ago.

In the twenty-first century there are perhaps questions to be asked of the VCH in general about its

intended audience; the nature of its product; and thus its modern function. Particularly around the Millennium there was a rush of parish histories developed by local communities; some of which are now on Web sites where they can be regularly updated and modified. Such sites can make use of a wider range of visual and audio material and be readily accessible to international users. Inevitably the content and standard of scholarship is variable, but the British Library has since 2004 been selectively archiving those sites which it judges to be representative of British social history and cultural heritage, and which have 'scholarly research value'. It is not clear how this activity might link to the VCH.

Meanwhile, this history of Mapledurwell represents a first publication from the New Victoria History of Hampshire group, which draws upon contributions from both professional historians and local volunteers. Their research is focusing initially upon updating the Basingstoke area, where 1960s overspill expansion produced more change during the previous century than in other areas of the county. As a result, this slim volume represents not so much an 'update' as a completely new parish history. In the original VCH, general topics were covered in county-wide chapters, in which Mapledurwell was given a passing mention for its watercress beds, chalk pits and school. Then, its individual parish entry in Volume IV included only post-Domesday lordship with heraldry; half a page on the church, advowson and tithes; and a few sentences about a charity. In this new book, all aspects of the parish and manorial history are described in chapters covering the history of settlement and population; economic, social, and religious history. There is much scholarly research included, and the work is attractively presented with photographs and map reproductions.

The task of co-ordinating and editing work provided by a wide variety of contributors is notoriously difficult and somewhat thankless. Overlaps, repetition and imbalance of historical detail are bound to occur, and parts of the Mapledurwell volume suffer accordingly. If further parish histories in this series are to follow, they would benefit from a heavier editing hand to reorder some of the content and tighten the narrative. For example, the first chapter on settlement and population embarks upon the history of settlement and buildings before it deals with the inhabitants who created them. When it reaches 'land ownership' it covers only the landlords and one major freeholder, and relegates the copyholders to the later chapter on economic history. The copyholders are needed in the first chapter as they formed the majority in the village from the fourteenth century onwards, and without them the sub-sections

on dwellings, population statistics, and manorial courts are confusing. A similar issue arises in the final chapter about religious life which places the thirteenth-century church at the end, so that it is preceded, rather than followed, by all subsequent religious developments such as the Reformation and the arrival of non-conformity. The reproduction of several of the maps needs revisiting as they are far too small to be read and the list of illustrations at the front would benefit from page numbers. Finally, if it is intended to attract a general audience for the book, then a short glossary would clarify terms such as 'demesne', or 'reversion', and that 'moor' in Hampshire refers to marshy riversides and not to heather-clad hillsides. These issues need to be addressed for future publications in the Hampshire series, but the appearance of this first publication is nevertheless to be applauded.

JULIET GAYTON
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PETER LEACH (ed.), *The account books of Richard Wigglesworth of Conistone and his sons, 1683–1719* (North Yorkshire County Record Office Publications, 2012). 56 pp., 3 figs, £6.00; ELAINE JOYNES, *Parliamentary enclosure in Carlton in Coverdale. Theory, practice and outcomes* (North Yorkshire County Record Office Publications, 2012). 28 pp., 4 figs. £6.00.

In these straitened times few record offices have anything that might be called a publications programme, and yet here are two new publications from Northallerton. My old colleague Peter Leach, fresh from his labours revising Pevsner's Yorkshire West Riding North volume, publishes the late seventeenth-century account books of Richard Wigglesworth of Conistone in upper Wharfedale. The re-emergence of these manuscripts is very welcome. They were briefly discussed by Arthur Raistrick in his *Old Yorkshire Dales* (1967). I tried – and failed – to track them down some years ago. Leach's edition is very welcome as showing exactly what Raistrick saw, and for showing how much more there is in them to be exploited. He provides a full introduction, a detailed tabulation of the contents and a full transcript of what are evidently tatty and not always legible manuscripts. (One would have welcomed a photograph of a single page.)

These are not straightforward accounts. Indeed, to call them accounts perhaps flatters them. There are bits of accounts, memoranda about farming, hirings of servants, building costs and township matters including draft township accounts, together with the ubiquitous recipes for animal medicines and notes of cows bulled. Moreover, the books were used after

Richard Wigglesworth's death in 1703 by his sons for their own memoranda through to about 1719. Leach's elaborate tabulation of the contents of the volume sorts all this out. A helpful introduction outlines the contents and identifies some of the people mentioned. For this writer at least there is an element of closure: a mystery is resolved, and Leach offers a definitive account and transcript of an enigmatic document which I and others can get down and exploit.

Production standards are much higher in Dr Joynes's volume, which has been properly set where Dr Leach's looks as though it has been set from the author's camera-ready copy, with a much-too-small typeface employed for the introduction. Carleton in Coverdale is, in a sense, only just over the hill from Conistone: certainly one may assume a broadly similar economy and society. There is a more direct similarity in that the manorial rights were bought out by the tenants, albeit at very different moments. This is a businesslike volume, which looks at the parliamentary enclosure of the stinted Carleton West Pasture and the higher and unstinted Carlton Moor between 1808 and 1815. There appears to be no body of documentation explaining why then, or even why at all, merely the award of 1815. A few bits of estate correspondence of the Chaytor family are cited, but, when one comes to a promising section entitled 'the advocates of enclosure', we have extracts from the usual advocates, Young, Marshall, Tuke. Hence we have no special insights here except for some throwaway comments that William Chaytor was interested in acquiring high moorland for its value as grouse shooting. The layout of roads, allocation of land and subsequent history of the allotments are all traced. Dr Joynes ends by calling for other 'similar detailed studies of parliamentary enclosure in other Dales townships. It seems to me that the local historian has a valuable service to perform in comparing the broad-brush picture with what actually happened on the ground'. I entirely agree, but historians need better documentation that is on view here to come up with compelling explanations as to why it was thought worth building all those long straight walls, which now stand largely derelict.

R. W. HOYLE
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JON STOBART, *Sugar and spice. Grocers and groceries in provincial England, 1650–1830* (Oxford, 2012). xiii + 303 pp., 48 tabs., 8 figs. £65.

Just over a hundred years ago, *The practical grocer: a manual and guide for the grocer, the provision merchant and allied trades* was published in four volumes. It is interesting to compare the approach of its contributors

with that of Jon Stobart in his *Sugar and spice*. Although the treatment of grocery and grocers in the two works is very different, the groceries themselves have changed surprisingly little; hardly any have disappeared, with only some – not so many as one might think – added. *The practical grocer* includes authoritative articles on a wide range of products that any scholar working on the topic would be unwise to ignore. Like Stobart, it puts tea at the forefront of grocery, followed by other hot drinks and sugar. However, where *The practical grocer* sees these goods as established – and classless – Stobart explores how they morphed from novelty to part of how polite society presented itself. Largely because of a lack of evidence, he is weakest on the uptake of tea among the poor.

Stobart's concentration on such a limited range of groceries is a pity, as it directs too much attention towards new imported goods and away from innovative changes in existing home production. Mustard, for example, was formerly sold mainly as the seed but, after the late 1720s, it was also found in the shops as the refined and more-or-less branded 'Durham mustard'. The home manufacture of soap developed on a quasi-industrial scale so making it available to a broad market, replacing for many the less satisfactory lye. Simultaneously, developments in making candles enabled virtually all to abandon the malodorous rush light.

George Dodd's *Days in the factories* published in 1843, not much more than a decade after the end of Stobart's chosen period, shows how rapidly the industrialization of groceries progressed during the latter part of his period. Dodd included a chapter entitled 'A day in a sugar refinery' and another at a 'Soap and candle manufactory', as well as similar chapters on the large-scale production of tobacco and vinegar. The manufacture and processing of these groceries in what Dodd perceived as quasi-factory conditions must have had considerable effects on how these products were marketed and consumed in the early nineteenth century. None of these innovations are explored.

Apart from this relatively minor quibble, Stobart has produced a masterly synthesis of existing research, pursuing such themes as the old against the new in marketing practices, consumers' perceptions of luxury against comfort and convenience, and the importance of polite sociability both in the home and the shop. Whilst former findings were sometimes based on limited evidence, Stobart has backed his conclusions with solid data covering what groceries were in the shops (and both where and when), before passing on to how they were deployed in recipe books and in personalized bills of fare. In the process he has investigated

the production and consumption of a few groceries in early modern England from, as it were, 'the cradle to the grave'. There has been no such work in the literature of retailing and consumption, and it will be valued accordingly.

Having recommended *Sugar and spice* wholeheartedly for what it does cover, I must take issue with aspects of its methodology. Too many of his illustrative examples are taken as given in secondary sources and then not always accurately. For example, Samuel Finney's *History of Wilmslow* is not quoted from the original but from T. S. Ashton's *Economic history* (1955, pp. 214–6), Stobart claims Finney was a cotton dealer (p. 93), which he was not, and implies that Finney's industrial workers were barely distinguishable from workhouse inhabitants, except for being in work, whereas they were much more comfortably circumstanced. The old woman depicted in the 'Cottage Interior' by the genre painter, William Redmore Bigg, was not poor by the standards of the day, having among her possessions a warming-pan and a comfortable chair, with arms. Nor is it clear her loaf was of white bread, though other sources suggest it probably was. Stobart extrapolates too much (p. 273). Incidentally, Stobart neither references the picture nor indexes the painter. There are too many such minor slips, which should perhaps have been picked up by the editor.

Enough of minor criticisms. Accepting that it focuses too narrowly on some types of grocery, *Sugar and spice* fills a gap in the literature. It deserves to be widely read and I am only sorry I did not see a copy before my own text went to the publishers.

NANCY COX
University of Wolverhampton

TIM GATES (ed.), *The Great Trial*. A Swaledale lead mining dispute in the court of Exchequer, 1705–1708, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, CLXII (Boydell Press, 2012). lv + 429 pp., 6 figs. £50. Anyone who has ever wrestled with a set of Exchequer depositions in the National Archives is likely to approach this volume with a healthy degree of respect. Deciphering hundreds of undifferentiated rows of scribal hand, written on now-very-grubby table-cloth-sized sheets of parchment, each seemingly with a mind of its own, is a test for the patience as well as the eyesight. In exploring the records of the dispute over the Swaledale lead mines between Reginald Marriott and Thomas, Lord Wharton, Tim Gates has read, transcribed and edited two complete Exchequer cases between the parties, incorporating a total of 317 depositions by witnesses, involving over 1500 answers to individual questions posed between 1705 and 1707. In addition,

because of his desire to reproduce the full cause papers, Gates has transcribed a further 34 affidavits made on behalf of the parties. This has required the analysis and transcription of 65 different components, beginning with the initial bills of complaint, encompassing the answers, affidavits, orders for a commission to hear the evidence, agreement of the interrogatories, depositions of witnesses, reports and exceptions made by each side to evidence, and the final decrees. These occupy 386 close-printed pages, and must amount to somewhere in the region of 200,000 words.

The case itself was a characteristic Exchequer complaint. Reginald Marriott had been granted a Crown lease of the lead mines of Grinton Whitaside and Harkerside in Swaledale in 1696. In 1705, the Whig grandee, Thomas Lord Wharton organized a ride of the bounds of his claim, to ensure that Marriott did not encroach across the moors between Harkerside and West Grinton, by 'proving' these boundaries before a series of local witnesses. A few days later, Wharton ordered the digging of lead mines on his side of the moors, to prevent Marriott encroaching. As Gates explains, Wharton was motivated to defend his claim because the price of lead had ballooned between 1702 and 1705, making such efforts (and the vast expense of this extensive litigation) worthwhile. However, as the price of lead subsided after 1708, so did Wharton's interest in this case. The case turned on the always slippery issue of manorial boundaries across moorlands, and the status of the lease title granted to Marriott. The nature of the evidence collected about these rights sometimes seems to confirm Mark Twain's definition of a mine as 'a hole in the ground surrounded by liars', but the testimony of many of the miners, and their wives and children illustrates the existence of a more thoroughly proletarian mining community than that described by Andy Wood in the Peak District.

The one unusual feature was that at the end of the equity proceedings in Exchequer, the decree pronounced that the matter should be resolved by a trial at common law, involving a jury of Yorkshire freeholders, rather than a determination by the Exchequer barons. This may have been because such a determination of the case was thought to carry greater local assent than a decision made in Westminster. As Gates shows, this opened up the case to a degree of undue influence, and there is evidence to suggest that Marriott tried to induce at least one of the jurors with an attractive offer of a lead smelting mill in the area. Wharton's side attempted to retaliate by introducing a new bill of exceptions just as the jury were due to deliver their verdict. In the end, the jury decided on

behalf of Marriott and the Crown's lease. Although this was challenged in law and on the ground by Wharton's party, the declining price of lead quickly reduced the value of this prize.

This amounts to a fascinating and extremely well-documented case, although it is by no means exceptional in size or detail within the annals of the Exchequer in the eighteenth century. This study will be of interest to at least three distinct readerships. The first will be those interested in the history of Swaledale, who will find nuggets of information on life, livelihoods and landscape in the area in this period that will not have turned up elsewhere. That said, even the most ardent enthusiast for the history of Yorkshire might struggle to climb to the summit of this mountain of evidence. The second will be researchers and students of economic, social and landscape history, particularly those interested in understanding the shifting allegiances and perspectives within competing communities and their clientage relationships. The voluminous evidence available in this study will allow the subtle intricacies of these connections to be reconstructed by further painstaking research. The third will be those who wish to familiarize themselves with the workings of the Exchequer court, and who will not find a better 'worked example' available in print. Perhaps the only regret is that such a vast body of evidence is not readily accessible (and word-searchable) online.

This point raises one further issue. The publication of such a large and detailed volume is a remarkable testimony to the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's commitment to local records and their history. The publication values, editorial standards, glossaries and footnotes reflect the continual refinement of standards over the century-and-a-half since the foundation of this county history society and its many peers. One wonders what will become of such endeavours in the era of open access, when electronic publication ought to become easier, but when the charges that help fund such activities will disappear. Hopefully, heroic endeavours like this one will continue, done as they are for love of the subject, rather than in the hope of financial reward. As long as they do, we will certainly all become richer as a consequence.

HENRY FRENCH
University of Exeter

ARTHUR MCGREGOR, *Animal encounters. Human and animal interaction in Britain from the Norman Conquest to World War One* (Reaktion Books, 2012). 512 pp., 161 illus. £40.

Arthur McGregor – who describes himself as an archaeologist by training, who worked with animal finds, and

as a boy grew up on a livestock farm – was a senior curator at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. He has expertise in the culture of collecting and experience in working with material culture. All of this experience is brought to bear in what turns out to be a book of considerable scope. It is meant to be a lightweight text aimed at the general reader; he apologizes in the introduction for the lack of footnotes and sets out to simply tell the story of human-animal interaction in Britain from 1066 to 1914–18. However, there is more to the book than this might suggest. This is a very well-researched popular history indeed, as demonstrated by its lengthy bibliography: it is a popular history with complexity and depth.

Recognizing its multidisciplinary, McGregor has set out to write an accessible account that draws on the subject matter, though not the theory, of the emerging field of animal studies. As suggested in its title, *Animal encounters* covers all the possible facets of human-animal interaction, for the period. It tackles the use of animals for sport, food, and power, and its chapters are largely thematic, apart from the first, which is entitled 'The ubiquitous horse'. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach allows McGregor to address topics normally confined to one or another subset of history; for example, with a nod to environmental history he considers the impact of cold winters to be just as significant for animals as their experience of human handling, as well as for humans themselves in the form of famine caused by short growing seasons and wet summers. The very broad sweep of time selected also allows him to see patterns emerging beyond the normal ranges of periodization, so that we see how rabbits, which were once fit for kings, being scarce and husbanded in warrens, eventually, by the nineteenth century, become poor man's meat as their numbers grew.

The book does not privilege its animal subjects. As noted, it is about the uses to which they have been put by humans and the relationship between humans and animals, rather than the animals in and of themselves. However, within each chapter, a very wide range of animals are represented; apart from horses and rabbits, the list includes pigeons, deer, badgers, cockerels, falcons, mules and donkeys, bees, fish, swans, and farmed animals, as seen in agricultural, pastoral, proto-industrial and urban contexts. Agriculture is treated as significant for its impact on the domesticates discussed – oxen, Longhorns, sheep etc. – but also on wild populations of other animals, such as migrating birds. In the process of capturing such a diverse set of narrative over such a broad sweep of time, we might expect human history to fall by the wayside, but this too is present in the form of drovers, breeders, and park

keepers, not just kings. And, the human, agricultural history is astute and well informed.

Beautifully illustrated, this is a rich text that penetrates its subject with deceptive ease. In it our own story is reflected back to us through the lens of the animals that we have worked with, both kindly and unkindly, since the Norman Conquest. This is a truly mesmerizing account.

KAREN SAYER
Leeds Trinity University

B. J. DAVEY and R. C. WHEELER (eds), *The country justice and the case of the Blackamoor's Head: the practice of law in Lincolnshire, 1787–1838*, Lincoln Record Society, 102 (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2012). 187 pp., 12 illus. £30.

The Lincoln Record Society publishes volumes in which the major part of each book is devoted to an edition of the text of an original document, accompanied by brief introductory notes. This latest is a book in two parts, each illustrating a different aspect of the dispensing of local justice in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Lincolnshire.

The first, edited by Brian Davey, reproduces the justice books of Thomas Dixon (1729–98), which he kept between 1787 and 1798. Dixon was a tenant farmer from Riby near Grimsby, who sat on the magistrates' bench and was the only Lincolnshire JP to leave any record of his justice work done outside the usual sessions. His three notebooks, kept in the Lincolnshire Archives, chronicle those cases on which he sat alone, often in his own house, dispensing summary justice whenever possible. Cases include petty theft, assault and fathering bastard children, with sentences ranging from a public whipping in front of the courthouse to transportation. The introduction explains the legal background to summary justice in the late eighteenth century, with biographical notes on Thomas Dixon and his career as a magistrate. There is a section on the type of offences he heard, including 'master and servant' cases, which he frequently encountered. In addition to the contents of the notebooks, Davey has added relevant extracts from other sources, including the local press, Lindsey Quarter Sessions minutes and accounts of parish officers. The magistracy of Lincolnshire has already been examined in the context of local government in south Lincolnshire (Kesteven) by Joan Thirsk and nineteenth-century Lincolnshire rural society and county government by R. J. Olney. Dixon's notebooks are unique of their type in Lincolnshire and rare in the rest of the country, and, with Davey's contextualization, we have a valuable primary source made more widely accessible.

The same applies to the second part of the volume, edited by Rob Wheeler, which reproduces the text of papers in a case from 1838 of mutual indebtedness between business partners, Benjamin Hart Thorold of Harmston and John Catton from the Lincoln area. One of Thorold's financial schemes to get himself out of debt was to take advantage of the recently passed Beerhouse Act of 1830 to resurrect a former inn on his estate as a beer house called the Blackamoor's Head and to install Catton, a local stonemason, as manager. Catton was, amongst other things, to sell the ale that Thorold tried to brew, but the arrangement ran into difficulties and an absence of accounts between the two parties caused a dispute. Each took the other to court in the Queen's Bench and the papers reproduced here recount the proceedings of an arbitration held locally in Lincolnshire. They include statements by the parties and witnesses, the arbitrator's brief, a summary of the evidence, and various bills and receipts. These are interesting enough in demonstrating the legal processes in such a case, but the incidental detail of their content throws a fascinating light on a number of socio-economic themes. They touch on social relations between the gentry and tradesmen, the establishment of a beer house in the early years after the Beer House Act, improvements to the River Witham as seen through the eyes of the bankers who provided the labour, and the Scotland-to-London cattle-droving trade, which made use of Thorold's premises for overnight accommodation. The introductory paragraphs to both parts of this volume and the texts of the documents provide a fascinating insight into how the law was administered at a relatively informal, local level in a rural county in the early stages of industrialization.

WENDY J. ATKIN
Lincoln

PETER ATKINS (ed.), *Animal cities. Beastly urban histories* (Ashgate, 2012). xiii + 279 pp., 23 figs, 11 tabs., £65.

This edited collection consists of three essays by the editor, in addition to his introduction, with further contributions from Paul Laxton, Sabine Barles, Takashi Ito, Andrea Gaynor and Philip Howell. It focuses on the use of animals – including livestock, fowl, and dogs – and animal histories within modern urban environs, and the conceptualization of animals, animal products and behaviours in the city as, variously, polluting, dangerous, nuisances or valuable commodities. The particular urban contexts in question include Paris, Edinburgh, London, and the Australian suburbs. Highly theorized, the book draws on the most recent debates within animals studies and makes the case

that the city provides just as rich and complex a history of human-animal interaction as the countryside, if a neglected one.

The contributors are drawn from geography, environmental history, history of technology, and as noted in the preface, the emergent 'animal turn' has affected all of these fields along with sociology and anthropology. Atkins himself is very well known for his work on the shifting definitions and battles over the meaning of milk within food history. However, urban history as yet remains perhaps the least touched within the field of history as a whole, and this collection begins as the corrective to that. As Hilda Kean – who is cited in the collection, though along with other authors not indexed – argued in *Animal rights* (1998), functional animals such as cattle were readily visible in towns and cities, not just in the countryside. In the early nineteenth century, chickens, children's author Mrs Lee observed in 1853, were 'such every-day objects, extending even to London cellars, that they are not thought worthy of observation'. Witnessing cruelty to working animals such as horses, Kean has argued, allowed campaigners to argue for reform, and permitted prosecutions to take place within an emerging legislative framework that aimed to prevent such rough treatment. Observation in this respect, of both humans and animals, lead to new practices when it came to the handling of those animals that remained in the cities, which has been seen as part and parcel of the emergence of modernity. There is then a dominant narrative that suggests the animals were summarily removed and the city cleaned up for human consumption. Certainly, local statutes were often put in place in cities like Leeds to do away with pigs. Before this, as A. B. Reach writing for the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849, observed of Leeds:

I have plodded by the half hour through the streets in which the undisturbed mud lay in wreaths from wall to wall; and across open spaces, over-looked by houses all round in which the pigs, wandering from this central oasis, seemed to be roaming through what was only a large sty.

For Reach this was about cholera, but the 'history of the flu', Donna Haraway argues 'is unimaginable without the concept of the co-evolution of humans, pigs, fowls and viruses'.

What is perhaps most striking, however, is that, by the end of the collection, the issues raised and the stories told pool together to make us begin to think about the larger issue of the traffic in animals, people, products and ideas between town and country – even about the micro-organisms that exist in the soil of both spaces – beyond the argument of the continuing

significance of the (non-human) animal in the city itself. Atkins's chapter on the 'charmed circle' of dung makes these continuities particularly clear, and it is worth remembering that human waste also formed part of this flow. All fertilizing substances were caught up in the wider thrust for 'improvement': when writing about the 200 milkmen of Birmingham, the larger of these setting great store in saving the dung from the 1000 head of cattle housed in the town, James Caird expressed great aggravation about the waste of human town sewage under the new sanitary systems emerging at this time. There was considerable traffic between town and country, not just in the fat of the land, but also in urban waste of all descriptions.

KAREN SAYER
Leeds Trinity University

JONATHAN BELL and MERVYN WATSON, *Rooted in the soil. A history of cottage gardens and allotments in Ireland since 1750* (Four Courts Press, 2012). 224 pp., 43 figs., 19 illus. £22.45.

When I reviewed the previous book by the same authors, which was a more wide-ranging Irish agricultural history (*AgHR* 57 [2009], pp. 147–8), I suggested that they had filled a gap by producing a work about the day-to-day business of farming itself rather than the outcomes of farming, which are often of more interest to agricultural and economic historians. Here, I think they have done it again, but this time in the more rarefied 'do-it-yourself' world of cottage gardens and allotments. This is a slimmer volume, as dictated by the narrower, specialist nature of the subject, but proportionately it is as lavishly illustrated as their previous work. The skills developed by these two retired curators of Ulster Folk and Transport Museum oozes from every page.

For nearly half of the period covered by the book, the subsistence grower in Ireland was a different person to the labourer and others in town and country, who are the subject of the English allotment story. In Ireland he was often more closely associated with the soil for his entire income. It makes the events of the mid-1840s yet more tragic because so often the potato was the main crop being grown. More generally that class of person – known in Ireland as a cottar – rented a cottage and a plot of one or two acres but paid for it at least partly in labour services rather than wholly in monetary rent. They and their families were tied more aggressively to the land both by their work and their need for sustenance. If they grew anything else but potatoes, or raised animals on their plots, it was as often as not to sell on so that they could buy the other necessities of life. The dependence of the Irish cottar on subsistence

cultivation was so much greater than the reliance of the English day labourer on his allotment. The Famine was more or less the final nail in the coffin of this mode of subsistence.

Chapter 1 is devoted to a brief discussion of this cottar system and serves as a reminder that Ireland was different. The remainder of the book becomes a more familiar history of the garden and allotment movement, including a focus on early debates about the efficacy of providing wage labourers with the plots of land, which might – while providing subsistence – divert their attention away from their duties to their masters. But, as in England, there was a tide of opinion from the early nineteenth century in favour of developing allotment gardens or cottage gardens. This is well illustrated in this book with precise references to actual examples of both the debate and the outcome. The rural cottage garden movement developed during the nineteenth century but, with the urban growth of Dublin, Belfast and Cork, the urban allotment movement also developed – especially perhaps from the 1890s – and with it came the development of local produce-growing societies. The outbreak of the First World War accentuated this with government-led leaflets and advice on how best to supplement food sources in times of national shortage. The year 1917 was coined by some as ‘the year of allotments’ (p. 76). Success brings problems, in this case a shortage of land to extend allotments further, and demands for an Allotment Act.

Ireland was in turmoil for much of the next decade but in 1926 legislation was passed allowing local authorities to compulsorily purchase land for subsequent letting on a small scale. Similarly in Northern Ireland an allotment bill proposed putting the regulation of small plots onto a more official basis. It is from the 1930s and this political intervention that the authors are able to give some measurements of change in what has previously has been an enjoyable but largely anecdotal story. The allotment movement took off, accentuated as it was by the pressures of the European war from 1939. Running in parallel with this otherwise chronological story there are chapters on agricultural education at the grass roots and school level, and the role of women and of gardening education in general. Agricultural historians in general will seize upon one or more of the three appendixes to this book, especially the second one, which is more or less a seed catalogue for the 1860s, as provided by Edmondson and Brothers of Dublin. Altogether this is an interesting travelogue through a relatively unknown aspect of Irish agricultural history.

MICHAEL TURNER
University of Hull

Europe and elsewhere

PAUL BRASSLEY, YVES SEGER and LEEN VAN MOLLE (eds), *War, agriculture, and food. Rural Europe from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Routledge, 2012). xviii + 268pp., 21 figs., 13 tabs. £80.

The offspring of conferences held in Lisbon and Louvain, this volume seeks to examine the ways in which the Second World War challenged and changed the nature of post-war European farming and the outlook of its practitioners. In a series of chapters rich in statistical detail, a number of authors consider such issues as capital investment, productivity, mechanization and the development of agricultural institutions in various eastern and western European countries. In most cases the War represented a basic discontinuity, in the sense that normal trading conditions were interrupted while state intervention often precipitated fundamental changes both in production patterns and attitudes towards farming itself. Studies of individual national experiences, including Spain, Hungary, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland, follow in the wake of fine essays by Paul Brassley and John Martin, and Ernst Langthaler, dealing respectively with international trade and the role of state control in Britain, and Nazi-occupied Austria. If the significance of state control in Britain should not be overemphasized, institutional change under National Socialism substantially re-ordered farming in Austria with considerable benefit for post-war development. In Germany herself, a very different rural world obtained. Walther Darre's *Blut und Boden* ideology cherished the notion of a traditional peasantry and, while the German state was able to exploit occupied territories for food, the peasants enjoyed stable prices and guaranteed markets. For them, as Gesine Gerhard observes, the war represented an interlude from the pressures of modernization and mechanization rather than the accelerator of change. Wholesale transformation would be a post-war phenomenon.

State intervention, of course, was a basic leitmotif of farming in many European countries throughout the war and during the early post-war decades. In an essay complementing his previous studies of state intervention and control in Britain, Brian Short considers the various means whereby the County War Agricultural Executive Committees exercised their extensive powers. Like them or loathe them, the farming community had no option but to collaborate with ‘Warag’ plans and instructions for the duration of the war and the following decade. Short shows how the social makeup of ‘Warag’ committees reinforced class solidarity and highlighted carefully orchestrated

social divisions. The appointment of local landowners (or, in the case of Wales, prominent figures in the Nonconformist fold) left little doubt in most people's minds that traditional ('natural'?) leaders remained very much in the driving seat. Whatever evils might befall the land, the rural status quo would remain intact and social change in the countryside would have to await the post-war influx of affluent townfolk.

The war, of course, was a major driver of change, establishing in most countries the idea that government should accept a degree of responsibility for national food supplies and rural policies. The same conflict somewhat modified the overall public perception of farmers as a class. In France, for example, Edouard Lynch notes that the unwillingness of farmers to comply with stringent food directives led to deep distrust of the rural community by the urban working classes. As the black market in food expanded into the post-war years, distrust evolved into hatred as French people perceived the farming world to have profited from the wartime emergency. Many English farmers too were thought to have had a 'good war' in the sense that wartime surpluses were believed to have boosted their standard of living. But, once the dust had settled, the war was over and government propaganda assimilated, the British public came to appreciate the importance of farmers to the war effort on the home front. In her chapter on the image of the farmer, Clare Griffiths highlights the growing credibility of farmers among the urban public, which intensified as the industry became more forward-looking and entrepreneurial in the post-war decades. Farming was now a key element in the economy and, as governments strove to nudge the country towards self-sufficiency in food, the farmer enjoyed growing political influence.

The editors have assembled a distinguished body of contributors who have painted a compelling canvass of a farming world on the cusp of almost unprecedented change. If the volume contains few brave new insights, it offers a valuable overview of the wartime and early post-war agricultural world, along with detailed considerations of the experiences of individual countries, which will be appreciated by students of those economies. Apart from a photo of a self-satisfied and well-dressed English farmer looking ruminatively over a gate, and some poorly reproduced offerings in Carin Martin's chapter on Sweden, the book is innocent of illustrations. Given its alarming price and the richness of wartime photographic archive material one might reasonably have expected a few action pictures to illustrate the well-composed text.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth

PATRIK OLSSON, *Ömse sidor om vägen. Allén och landskapet i Skåne 1700–1900* (The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, 2012). 307 pp., 129 illus. 350 Kr.

Patrik Olsson opens his study of avenues, or tree-lined roads (in Swedish, *alléer*), in Scania, the most southern part of Sweden, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the remark that an avenue is both culture and nature, an object created by man and a carrier of symbolic meanings, while at the same time being a living organism. This interplay between man and nature is at the heart of both human geography, the field to which Olsson's thesis belongs, and agricultural history. The study touches upon a number of central issues about how to study a landscape, people's perceptions of it, and its development through time.

To understand why people have planted trees in straight lines on both sides of the road, Olsson has looked at maps, mainly, as well as paintings and photographs. Many of them are shown to the reader: the book contains more than 100 illustrations. This is not only a treat for the eyes; it presents the sources, too, and the interplay between text and image is superb. Throughout three empirical chapters – on estate landscape, on landscapes surrounding towns, and on the landscapes of villages – the author guides us from one avenue to the next or, rather, between different systems of avenues. The avenue is used as a tool for understanding the landscape as a whole. At the same time, Olsson emphasizes that an avenue cannot be understood properly without reference to its surroundings. A border between the infields and the outlands of a manor, for example, or the link between a town and a summer farm owned by one of its burghers, explain the starting point of an avenue. This interdependence between part and whole directs the investigation.

Maps are great for studying the history of a landscape, but not without problems. Olsson's survey makes it clear that many maps (and paintings) include projected elements as well as actual ones. They might, therefore, show avenues that were never there. Other maps leave out avenues that existed, because it was not important to register them. Olsson stresses, therefore, the importance of knowing the purpose of a map, but, too often, the purpose is not known. Moreover, while a map shows what was (or was intended to be) done, it does not really say why. In the images studied, Olsson finds more and more of a geometric landscape. Roads and borders were straightened out and trees were planted to mark these lines. To account for this, Olsson links to ideas held in many parts of Europe – and described by earlier research – about

nature, pruned and ordered, as beautiful. Referring to Emily Brady, Olsson describes a dialectical relationship between the practical and aesthetical functions of the avenue. Lopping is the prime example. To cut branches of trees had the double effect of enhancing the beauty of the landscape and providing people with leaves and wood. The latter was important in Scania, where large areas lacked trees.

More of the reasoning behind avenues is found in scientific dissertations, journals and travellers' accounts, which Olsson cites, but could have used to a greater extent. It is also evident in a campaign, launched by an eighteenth-century governor, to make peasants plant trees alongside the roads. Peasants seem to have been reluctant to plant avenues and most of the trees that were planted disappeared shortly thereafter, partly because they were cut down by people who, in a woodless environment, needed wood. Although Olsson initially remarks that different people experience landscape in different ways, this perspective is largely absent from the analysis. The travellers' accounts he cites – as well as maps – express the views of the upper class. In maps from the nineteenth century, Olsson discerns an expansion of avenues around estates, which tells of an expansion of the landlord's domination over the landscape. This is very interesting. But, to the peasant who, in this process, had lost his land, did the lines of trees represent beauty, or oppression? What about encroachments?

The history of a landscape is not only the result of the interplay between human intentions and natural constraints. It is also the result of social conflicts. Adding sources where conflict is more evident – court records, for example – would broaden our understanding of how people have perceived the landscape. There is more to be learnt about avenues. Patrik Olsson has provided us with a good foundation.

JONAS LINDSTRÖM
Uppsala University

DIONICIO NODÍN VALDÉS, *Organized agriculture and the labour movement before the UFW, Puerto Rico, Hawai'i, California* (University of Texas Press, 2011). 328 pp., 4 illus., 1 map. £41.

Dionicio Nodín Valdés has written an important book examining the labour movements that emerged in three different areas colonized by the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth century: Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, and California. He places those movements in the context of the global capitalist economy and US imperial policies and designs. Valdés privileges the economic and military aspects of the US conquest but makes clear that it was facilitated – sometimes

unevenly – by political machinations operating out of Washington, D.C. His focus is on the consequences for agricultural labourers, some of them newly made into labourers by virtue of the economic transformations that followed US dominion. Attentive to racial and ethnic factors that arose as new Anglo-American elites established or, in the case of Hawaii, furthered their economic dominance of their respective areas, Valdés captures the complicated and sometimes contradictory designs of employers and the concerted and sometimes successful efforts of agricultural labourers to represent their own interests. In placing the struggle of labourers in the context of the power their employers were able to muster – economic, military, and political – Valdés has revealed just how remarkable were their successes. By the time the United Farm Workers coalesced in the mid twentieth century, agricultural labourers in California, Hawaii and Puerto Rico had won and lost many battles and came to the UFW with considerable experience.

Similar economic and imperial motivations inspired the incursions into California, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, but the United States confronted different cultures and economies in the three regions. In California, the first to fall to the imperial power of the US, a few Spanish elites operated ranchos and only a small Anglo-American presence existed. Although small landowners enjoyed little presence in California at the time, neither did the labourers there suffer the kind of oppression that would emerge later. In Hawaii, in contrast, Anglo-American sugar planters had not only established a dominant position, they were already well into the process of undermining the authority of the Hawaiian monarchy and the independence of native Hawaii labourers. The importation of Asians provided needed labour but created communities founded on ethnic and racial similarities that would work against domination of the labour force. The Puerto Rican situation differs in two important respects. Anglo-Americans had virtually no presence there until after colonization. A small landowning peasantry existed and enjoyed a certain level of prosperity and independence. The arrival of the Anglo-Americans and the sugar industry would change everything. Regardless of the differences between the three areas, the colonizers, backed by the economic, military, and political authority of the United States, presented a formidable challenge, transforming the agricultural landscape and often repelling concerted efforts of agricultural labourers to assert their interests.

In Puerto Rico, as the sugar economy developed and expanded and the independence of farmers fell in the process, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labour – the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (the Federación) – emerged and by 1918, less than two

decades after conquest, created a democratic workers movement. By the late 1930s, the Federación became too closely connected to employer groups, however, making way for the surprisingly rapid rise of a rival union, the CIO-backed Confederación General de Trabajadores. Valdés suggests that the focus on a certain hero of this new union, Luis Munoz Marin, obscures a 'complex story involving the interaction of political and labour leaders with agricultural workers and their organizations' (p. 61). Affiliation with the United Packinghouse Workers of America both facilitated and compromised their efforts, and factionalism within the Confederation emerged in the context of the modernization of agriculture. One faction embraced the new political/economic order and its leaders enjoyed increased prestige and rewards. Another faction eschewed such cooperation and forcefully represented the interests of agricultural labourers. For their efforts, their leaders faced harassment and imprisonment.

Unionism in Hawaii was much more successful, owing to a combination of complex forces. Although the precipitous decline of the native population necessitated the importation of labourers from elsewhere, particularly Asians, the location of Hawaii made importation a costly enterprise. No significant labour surplus developed there. Companies made some efforts to counter unionism, but were not as hostile as those on the mainland. A crucial factor in the success of union activism was inherent in the plantation paternalism that existed on the island. The creation of small but ethnically and racially cohesive communities

of workers isolated by distance from one another made for the recognition of interests in common and attachment to union activities, particularly with the Longshore Union. Not only did workers there secure meaningful improvements in their standard of living, the Longshore Union was able to influence decisions made during the period of modernization and mechanization that worked to their long term benefit.

Valdés' treatment of California is particularly illuminating. He traces the evolution of the farm labour movement there from its origins in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union to its reformulation in California as the National Farm Labor Union. He examines the failed action against DiGiorgio and the abilities of farm corporations to exploit divisions within the farm labour force. Taking on the arguments made by historians, Valdés challenges the notion that the movement itself was flawed and argues, instead, that the inability of farm workers to succeed there was the result of a failure of democracy. California became the 'Sahara of trade unionism' (p. 230), he argues, because of the collusion between the state and agricultural concerns whose interests they served. His argument is strengthened by the comparative perspective, rendering *Organized agriculture and the labour movement before the UFW* a book that will change the way historians understand the farm labour movement not only in California, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii, but also elsewhere.

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