

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

EDWARD IMPEY with DANIEL MILES and RICHARD LEA, *The Great Barn of 1425–27 at Harmondsworth, Middlesex* (Historic England, 2017). vi + 89 pp., 31 illus. £20.

Harmondsworth is among the country's great medieval barns – what hacks call the cathedrals of the countryside. At twelve bays and 192 feet in length, it is here reckoned the thirteenth largest British barn for which there is evidence, although many of those which trump it are long-since demolished. Built in 1425–27 by Winchester College to service a newly purchased manor, it remained in agricultural use until the 1980s. Disuse led to disrepair, and finally a rescue purchase by English Heritage for £20,000, followed by £573,000 for repairs, completed late in 2014. A secure long-term future remains some way away, however, threatened as the barn is by Heathrow's third runway. Look out for this one in the years to come.

It is suggested by the authors that the construction of great barns may have followed the return to demesne farming in the twelfth century, after which grain tithes were received as unprocessed sheaves rather than as grain. Such barns have a rich literature – Walter Horn and Ernest Born are scholars' names that immediately spring to mind – but all too often the focus has been almost exclusively on structure, with context and function secondary considerations, if treated at all. Not so here, and that is what makes this such an exemplary study. Two things facilitated it: the opening up of the building and the recording and structural analysis which informed repairs, and the survival of a rich series of medieval accounts.

The manor of Harmondsworth was bought by William of Wykeham in 1391 as an endowment for New College, Oxford. As on other endowment properties, heavy investment in its buildings followed: church, prior's house and then the barn. That barn supplemented, or more probably replaced, two earlier barns, one being used in the 1390s for mixed crops, the other for hay. Accounts show that the barn or barns had to store cereals and pulses from around 240 acres, and

there is an interesting discussion of the volume of crops barns could accommodate (dependent on how high into the roof the stacks rose) and the correlation between storage volume and the crops' acreage. There is, however, wide variation in the outcomes of the calculations according to the sources used, and the underlying assumptions on which the modern estimates are based: some estimates suggest Harmondsworth had considerable excess capacity, but this is far from certain. Also uncertain is the final cost of the new barn, although there is an informed consideration of what is known, and comparators.

As revealed by the accounts, the main crop grown here in the early fifteenth century was wheat (the smaller and broken grains, *curallum*, separated by sieving, being used as animal feed), followed by barley, oats, pulses and a mixed fodder crop of oats and legumes called *harascum*. The use of the barns – and barns in general – for storing and processing crops, which at Harmondsworth were also ricked, is considered in some detail, as are the ultimate uses to which the processed crops were put, alongside accounting procedures and the responsibilities of the college and manorial officials. This is a particularly rich and nuanced chapter, and would serve as a very useful primer for students. From Harmondsworth itself there is nothing particularly out of the ordinary, although labour services were still important as late as 1450. Their continued imposition in the early fifteenth century did not go unchallenged, and it is noted that by then, Harmondsworth had a long history of disastrous labour relations. Formal commutation came in 1461. However, by the fifteenth century the harvest workers did at least enjoy a much ampler and richer diet than in earlier days: in 1433–34 the harvest climaxed with a feast or 'reapgoose' for the twelve *famuli*, and presumably others, for which three geese were accounted, probably served on a table furnished with a cloth and candles.

At some stage before 1540 demesne farming ceased and the entire manor and rectory was leased as a single property, passing in 1543 to the Crown by exchange and thence in 1547 into lay hands. By the seventeenth century, if not earlier, groups of bays in the barn were

let with separate nearby properties: two bays with Court Lodge in 1687. There is, however, no evidence of partitions having been inserted in the barn, although these are known elsewhere. Later, probably in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, a series of multifoils or 'daisywheels' were inscribed by compass on several of the stylobates: the contention that these were apotropaic, to ward off witches, bad luck or fire, has recently gained credibility through the work of Timothy Easton.

The book is well produced and attractive, with high-quality colour illustrations. My only disappointment is that Historic England has chosen a slightly modest format, a softback the same size as this journal. A building this magisterial really deserved more generous bookmaking. But this is just a small cavil. It is very good study.

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JON STOBART, *Sugar and spice. Grocers and groceries in provincial England, 1650–1830* (Oxford University Press, paperback ed., 2016). 320 pp., 8 illus. £29.99.

Sugar and spice is a wide-reaching and thorough examination of the grocery trade in the long eighteenth century that analyses the processes of selling and purchasing groceries from merchant to retailer to consumer. By placing groceries in the historical context of the 'consumer revolution' and global empire, Stobart links the national and transnational to the everyday, ephemeral goods that have often been overlooked in favour of durable objects. He also considers how the familiar terms 'luxury', 'novelty' and 'pleasure' as explanatory concepts of eighteenth-century consumerism often disguise the continuities within grocery retail. Over the course of the book, Stobart demonstrates that these could be relatively fluid categories, and that 'novelties' were often incorporated within existing retail processes and structures.

In his first chapter, Stobart studies the grocery trade's pre-modern roots, arguing that the trade existed as a specialist branch of retailing well before the eighteenth century and that 'change as much as continuity marked the eighteenth-century grocery trade' (p. 40). Chapter two examines colonial goods that grew in popularity over the eighteenth century: sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate and tobacco. Through an examination of inventories and grocers' stock, Stobart strengthens his argument that these new goods, rather than stimulating a big growth in grocery retailing (as has been previously argued), were incorporated into existing lines of stock. The third chapter turns towards grocers and their 'networks of supply', which developed

over a period when imported goods were becoming increasingly popular. Stobart argues that the existing supply networks were 'dynamic and responsive' (p. 88) and that shopkeepers held established personal relationships with the suppliers through whom they purchased their stock and new goods.

The next chapter analyses the geographical location of grocery shops in provincial towns and cities. Stobart argues that the physical location of grocers, amongst traditional 'genteel' traders, shows that they were 'firmly tied into polite lifestyles' (p. 111). Through a study of geographical markers such as trade cards and newspaper advertisements, an interesting argument is made that consumers created mental maps which positioned grocers' shops within other polite and genteel retailers, reinforcing their respectable position. Chapter five goes into the space of the shop itself, and looks at how groceries were displayed. Stobart provides evidence that grocers displayed their products in a way that suggested order, efficiency and professionalism, as well as adapting promotional techniques to suit their expanding range of goods. In chapter six, Stobart moves on to the process of buying and selling. Again, he demonstrates that selling groceries is as much about continuity with the seventeenth century as it was about change. Grocers were still expected to offer credit to respectable customers, and customers expected personal recommendations and guarantees from their grocers.

The next two chapters turn to advertising, focusing in particular upon newspapers and trade cards, and the audiences for these advertisements. Stobart argues that these two mediums offered different aspects of goods to the consumer: trade cards contained rich imagery and symbolism of empire and the exotic, whilst newspapers focused more on the commercial aspects of price, quality and availability. Consumers would receive both messages from these forms of advertisements, demonstrating that 'new' goods such as tea could be both exotic and mundane simultaneously. Stobart also examines the different shopping practices of consumers. Households developed their own routines in grocery buying, and developed skills at interpreting the commercial information available to them, whether through advertisements, reputation, or word of mouth, customers made their choices based on price and quality.

In chapter nine, Stobart delves into the life of groceries once they left the shop, leaving the space of the retailer and entering the home of the consumer. Stobart studies recipe books in order to explore the 'novelty' and 'luxury' of these 'new' imported goods. He argues that 'food and eating held different meanings

for different groups who were motivated by different concerns' (p. 238). The elites, for example, used food and groceries to delineate their social status and financial position, whereas the middling sorts used new groceries to denote their polite sociability and prudent respectability. The final chapter examines the material culture which surrounded these new groceries, using inventories to reveal that new 'consumption bundles' such as hot drinks paraphernalia, were collected gradually and situated amongst existing goods, rather than replacing older practices.

Throughout this book Stobart presents a detailed analysis of the life of groceries, from the time they reached Britain's shores to their consumption. Through this wide-reaching examination, he puts forward a persuasive argument that the growing demand for imported groceries in the eighteenth century was incorporated successfully into existing retail structures. A recurring theme is one of continuity *and* change (one might say, development) where existing sourcing, retailing, advertising, purchasing, and consumption processes were adapted and expanded to include these new goods. Colonial groceries could at the same time be seen as luxurious and everyday; novel and existing, nuancing these conceptual categories. As a whole, *Sugar and Spice* expands and furthers our knowledge of the consumer history, not least by insisting that goods should be understood through their 'lifespan' – from merchant, to retailer, and on to consumer.

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KATE FELUŚ, *The secret life of a Georgian garden* (I. B. Tauris, 2016). xiii + 258 pp., 71 figs. £16.89.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that one should never judge a book by its cover. Yet the charming exterior of *The secret life of a Georgian garden* should stop any bookshop browser in their path, tempting them to pick up and thumb through its contents. Upon doing so, the curious shopper will be rewarded with a book which is both insightful and entertaining, a history of the pleasure grounds of the Georgian elite. Rather than following a strictly chronological narrative, Feluś' work is arranged into sections covering morning, afternoon, evening and night-time, thus giving the reader a view of a 'day in the life' of the Georgian garden. In doing so, Feluś connects the garden – so often discussed primarily as an agreeable but somewhat unimportant hobby or afterthought – with the everyday experiences of the era's wealthy men and women.

The book will be enjoyed by both academics and interested amateurs alike. On the one hand, Feluś presents a history of the changing faces of pioneering

landscapers (with a particular focus on Lancelot 'Capability' Brown), which provide the contextual and evolving background to the fairly consistent uses made of the garden itself. Yet, on the other hand, the book branches out, with references to scenes from Jane Austen novels providing a pleasant levity to the volume as a whole. All this is aided by Feluś' opulent and witty use of language where, for instance, an inheriting landowner is 'the archetypal new broom, [who] started sweeping away the most out-of-date features of his uncle's garden' (p. 59).

Feluś' book also benefits from the many visual images. First, there are the numerous pictures, both monochrome and colour, which add richness to the descriptions of the scenery. There are many which stand out, though a particular favourite has to be the two-page colour spread depicting the fireworks at Whitehall in 1749 (figure 64). In addition to the pictures are the earthy descriptions Feluś supplies, which transport the reader to the Georgian garden itself. Though, once there, they may be surprised by what they see. From portraits of a young George III stealing glances at the Lady Sarah Lennox making hay, to spectacles of boisterous lads engaging in mock naval battles on otherwise peaceful lakes, Feluś never fails to entertain.

An element of cheeky playfulness in people's use of their gardens also becomes apparent. Feluś describes one incident that involved the sacking of a hermit, hired to live within the grounds for seven years, yet found partaking of refreshments in a local tavern. Feluś shares this playfulness when she postulates on the possibility that naked bathers – their modesty protected by shrubbery and slopes – might watch with amusement as fully clothed people passed by completely unaware.

There is little in this book that warrants criticism, and any that exist stem largely from a wish that certain topics had been explored in greater detail. For instance, the tone of Feluś' work is pleasant and almost always joyful – except for the description of the untimely death of an up-and-coming composer – and suggests an idyllic life. Yet, the book might have benefited from giving more attention to the trials of running a Georgian garden. There are a few tantalizing references to the difficulties experienced by those who worked at the gardens, such as when servants had to struggle on their hands and knees against strong winds, but this felt like an all too brief glance behind the curtain of the garden facade. Further, the cost of maintaining the gardens and providing lavish entertainment is not mentioned, and the reasons why people went to such lengths is only fleetingly discussed. The focus on the positives also tends to mean that the gardens

are explored in mostly pleasant weather, and so the interaction between a garden and its many users in more inclement conditions, and as the seasons changed, is rarely revealed.

Perhaps leaving the reader wanting more is a sign of a successful book. It is certainly likely to encourage readers to dig through the extensive bibliography to find out where they could learn more. Nevertheless, Feluś provides a unique insight in to the way the garden both fuelled and facilitated life in this period, and highlights its importance to society. Feluś has shown how the role of the garden reached beyond the boundary walls, to influence people in their everyday lives, from the clothes they wore when exploring the grounds, to the food they ate (including reference to a three-foot-long venison pie), and to the fascinating way in which activities at night were planned around the timings of the full moon. The garden, we learn, interconnected many aspects of people's everyday lives. In doing this, Feluś has shown that there was so much more to the Georgian garden than we might have expected, and that by rooting through these pages, we may learn to appreciate gardens all the more.

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HANNAH BARKER, *Family and business during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2017). 288 pp., 28 illus. £60.

In *Family and business during the Industrial Revolution*, Hannah Barker sets out to offer a fresh interpretation of family business history by challenging current perceptions of family, gender, work and power relationships in a period widely regarded as heralding significant economic and social change. By using the term 'Industrial Revolution' in her title, Barker immediately stakes her claim in a much broader historiography and demands that the reader considers the family business in the context of those 'spectacular but isolated successes of small numbers of giant industrialists and financial elites' described by Maxine Berg (p. 4). This is undoubtedly an ambitious undertaking, even though the evidence originates from a relatively small geographical area, namely Manchester and Liverpool.

In the Introduction, Barker argues that business owners viewed themselves as a 'diverse, yet distinct, social group' (pp. 9–10) and this idea of self-identification is a theme that is referred to throughout the following chapters. The importance of family to the majority of businesses cannot be underestimated, and although Barker herself has contributed to an important literature that demonstrated women's place in the business world, this analysis moves the debate

along to examine men, women and families; an avenue that will prove much more fruitful in uncovering the broader picture.

Family and business is split into six chapters. Chapter one, 'Wealth Holding and Investment' (co-authored with Mina Ishizu), uses 124 Manchester wills and 130 Liverpool wills to examine the preoccupation of small business owners with wealth generation. The diversity of these investments suggests that they could be both a 'belt and braces' form of security against the pitfalls of trade, as well as a 'get rich quick' scheme, and the pitfalls of the latter are colourfully described through the cautionary tale of Liverpool biscuit baker John Coleman. Examination of the probate process leads Barker to question the degree to which a testator's last wishes were actually carried out and what the implications of this might be for the second generation of business owners.

The examination of probate records is further developed in chapter two, 'Family and Inheritance', which looks more closely at the motivations and practicalities of will writing. Barker argues that 'will making was primarily driven by a desire to control one's property' (p. 48), and this desire for posthumous control is a factor that appears to underlie the majority of the probate process. The case studies of John Woodward, Thomas Kent and James Blomiley each demonstrate the way that the probate process could be used by people to attempt to control not just their family's economic future (although she also presents plenty of evidence of this) but also the future personal relationships of family members and beneficiaries. Historians of women's history and the legal practicalities of estate distribution will be particularly interested in the section on women's inheritances (pp. 63–76).

In chapter three, 'Family and Business', Barker uses court records to try and differentiate the myriad of motivations and relationships that combined to create 'family strategy'. She acknowledges that court records show fissures rather than cooperation, but they also show how these conflicts were resolved. Barker's careful description of the court records also reveals the multiple levels of trust that existed between family members, supporting her argument that family should be considered a complicated and fluid organization rather than a single economic unit. The hostility of court battles is set aside in chapter four, 'Cooperation, Duty, and Love', and the focus turns to the ways that families worked together to create economic and social stability in a time of tumultuous change. Sections on parents and children, husbands and wives, and other family members allow Barker to remind the reader that the men and women in these pages experienced the

deep and powerful emotional connections of family life: something that can easily be overlooked.

Chapter five, 'Home, Business, and Household' (co-authored with Jane Hamlett), and chapter six, 'Family and Household', use inventories and diaries to firstly reconstruct the physical space in which small businesses operated and secondly, examine how people used this space. Analysis of the layout of business and living premises is particularly interesting, not least because it refutes the arguments that the Industrial Revolution was the time of the separation of work and home. Barker contends that public and private spaces, those of work and home, were fluid and reflected the relationships that they housed. The case of George Haywood, an employee who found life very uncomfortable because of the cheek-by-jowl existence that many of the tradespeople and their employees experienced meant the 'metropolitan customs' (p. 193) of separate rooms for different purposes were of little relevance or interest to the business owners of north-west England.

Family and business is an extremely focused work which makes excellent use of case studies to reveal the dynamics of family life and relationships within the context of small business ownership. There are some aspects that are perhaps not explored to their full potential, particularly the role that religion played in shaping communities, but this is a minor quibble given the way that Barker has successfully integrated the history of family enterprise into the wider economic, social and cultural history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England. Moreover, *Family and Business* demonstrates the continuities that underlined business life in the epicentre of momentous economic change.

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ANGUS J. L. WINCHESTER, *Dry stone walls: history and heritage* (Amberley Press, 2016). 96 pp., 180 illus. £16.99.

As someone living on a hill farm in the North Pennines, who has a keen interest in its landscape and traditions, and also being an amateur dry stone waller, I have long desired a book like this. Angus Winchester was already familiar from *The harvest of the hills. Rural life in northern England and the Scottish Borders, 1400–1700* (2000), his ground-breaking study of pastoral farming that combined assiduous documentary research with expert field surveys and amply showed his personal affection for, as well as his informed understanding of, this region. *Dry stone walls* demonstrates the same methodology and attitude.

As the author declares in his Introduction, this book's

focus 'is unashamedly on northern England, which possesses some of the highest concentrations of dry stone walls' in the country (p. 8). His cases of particular walls are nearly all from Cumbria, Derbyshire and the Yorkshire Dales. Readers based elsewhere, especially in Wales, might thus be disappointed. Moreover, he is concerned almost exclusively with walls as field enclosures and property boundaries. Sheepfolds (pp. 73–7) and bields (pp. 77–9) are discussed, but not houses, farm outbuildings, churches, fortifications, mine workings, rabbit warrens, monuments, curricks or follies, even though any of these features – depending on their age and location – might potentially provide informative examples of the dry stone waller's craft. Such structures await serious study in this context.

The strict parameters of Winchester's survey enable him to conduct a systematic and fairly thorough appraisal of dry stone walls as primarily barriers to the movement of animals, by far their most common function. These walls must together stretch for thousands of miles through the northern and western regions of the British countryside. It is most important for the observer to understand that 'the modern landscape of dry stone walls does not date from a single period but is a composite production, reflecting a range of historical processes from the medieval period to the nineteenth century' (p. 92). In the first section of this book, Winchester presents a convincing account of how these processes occurred and their characteristic signs in the routes, materials and construction of walls. The clear and edifying photographs are commendable. Winchester admits 'that few attempts to identify distinctive features of medieval walls are wholly convincing' (p. 20); but the presence of orthostats and boulders strongly suggest antiquity, while an H-profile more specifically evinces a medieval or early modern date. The main problem when trying to date walls from their morphology is that they will have been periodically repaired and very possibly entirely rebuilt during their past. However, because wallers are reluctant to undertake any unnecessary labour, the course of a wall, any firm foundations that are in place, most of the other building material already there, and probably the existing height and profile of a wall are all likely to be retained unless there has been a compelling reason to change any of them.

By far the greatest mileage of dry stone walling, instantly recognisable by its straight lines, originates from the era of parliamentary enclosure. The form and building technique of walls also became fairly standardized and the occupation of professional waller began then, when there were many more wallers than there are today. One of Winchester's intriguing details is that, in the late eighteenth century, a 'waller

might expect to be paid around 2 shillings per rood of 7 yards (6.4 metres) – roughly a day's work' (p. 43). Rough indeed! This is considerably beyond what a modern waller, working to a decent standard, would comfortably undertake. Maybe there is an invisible second waller (paid part of that 2 shillings) and a boy (the son of either of these, possibly paid nothing, whose job was mainly to gather or create heartings) invisible in that record; otherwise it really was grim up north.

The second section of the book is a field guide to the features to be seen in dry stone walls. The different kinds of local stone, along with aesthetics and pride in good workmanship, have determined regional walling styles. The normal components of a wall, such as throughs, copestones (known variously as cams, capstones, capes or combers, depending on location), sheep creeps (or unkeys) and smouts, the necessary gates and stiles to allow human movement, an interesting range of gateposts and stoops (as well as harr-hanging to avoid installing either), and more specialized features such as bee boles, rabbit smouts and initialled stones (these denoted either land ownership or responsibility for maintaining a stretch of wall) are each clearly described and explained. Curiously, hares' leaps, distinct from rabbit smouts by being positioned about halfway up the wall instead of at ground level, are not mentioned. It is unfortunate that the author has included, as an alternative for 'sheep creep', the term 'cripple hole', when that name has been quietly relinquished by wallers in recent years. Winchester's stated dimensions of traditional skeps (p. 73) are questionable in that any examples of the smallest – as little as 25 cm in diameter and 18 cm high – are almost certainly supers, for vertically extending the capacity of a bee hive. The photographs in this section include some examples of walls built of challenging material, showing not only the necessity of using whatever stone was close to hand but also the ingenuity and skill of particular wallers. Winchester includes the reuse of building materials (including stones from Hadrian's Wall and other Roman edifices) and odd items (such as fragments of hand querns and clay pipes) sometimes found inside walls, which might help to date them (pp. 83–5).

Deeply informed by the author's expert knowledge of northern England's landscape history as well as fully conversant with the techniques and terminology of dry stone walling, this book will be useful to agricultural historians. Lucidly written, methodically arranged, well illustrated and full of intriguing examples, it will also be accessible and engaging for the general reader. And most particularly, all dry stone wallers will enjoy and benefit from reading it.

MARTIN HAGGERTY

CAROL BEARDMORE, STEVEN KING and GEOFF MONKS (eds), *The land agent in Britain. Past, present, future* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 210 pp., 7 illus. £52.99.

Despite their pivotal role within rural society, land agents, estate stewards and factors have attracted surprisingly little notice in the historiography of early modern and modern Britain. A handful of books have been written over the past fifty years including David Spring's *The English landed estate in the nineteenth century* (1963), J. R. Wordie's *Estate management in eighteenth-century England* (1982) and David Oldroyd's *Estates, enterprise and investment at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution* (2007), together with articles by T. J. Raybould, Christopher Napier and Sarah Webster. Yet there is no definite history of the English (or British) land agent. As such, this short edited volume of essays is a welcome addition to the limited existing literature.

Drawn from a conference of the same name held at the University of Leicester, the book consists of an introduction and eight chapters. The introduction outlines the duties and responsibilities of land agents, offering a historical overview of the development of the role over the past few centuries and underlining continuities in the experiences of and personal skill set needed by land agents past and present, a theme picked up again by most of the contributors in their individual chapters. Land agency was and is a 'people business' (Hurren, p. 170) and land agents must be 'accomplished diplomat[s]' (King, p. 132) who can negotiate with landowners, tenants, labourers and diverse others alike: agents thus occupied a 'pivotal position within agrarian society' (Beardmore, p. 88). The editors then move on to introduce the individual chapters, although it is perhaps to be regretted that they do not offer a little more by way of a historiographical grounding for the book. They are undoubtedly right to argue that the existing literature is 'relatively threadbare' (p. 12, my emphasis) but a more explicit discussion of how the study of land agents might contribute to existing histories of the countryside and the aristocracy, business history, and the thorny question of agency within landscape change would have been welcome.

Along with the introduction, the early chapters by Jeremy Moody and Geoff Monks effectively set the scene. Moody briefly examines the history and development of land agency over the last thousand years, before focusing much of his chapter on the growing professionalization of agents in the period after c.1800. Monks takes up this theme again in the following chapter, arguing that mechanization and new legislation were both important factors in

the changing remit of the agent in the nineteenth century. The chapters by Carol Beardmore, Steven King and Elizabeth T. Hurren offer detailed case studies of the working lives and relationship of particular nineteenth-century agents and estates, while Caroline Dakers examines agents in fact and fiction, paying particular attention to those agents who appeared in the lives and novels of three female writers (Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot). Both John Martin and Nick Morris offer interesting insights into the tensions inherent in managing heavily diversified estates with multiple stakeholders – Martin discussing game shooting estates and Morris the contemporary situation at Stowe in Buckinghamshire – although in neither case are the chapters centrally focused on the land agents themselves.

Read as a piece, the chapters stress the diversity of agents' responsibilities and roles, offering useful insights into the circulation of ideas and knowledge between agents and the networks in which they situated themselves (perhaps especially in the chapters by Monks and King). They also almost all remind us of the connections between the past, present and future of land agency, although the contributors place varying weight on the issue of continuity *versus* change (read: professionalization). I would perhaps have liked to have heard a little more about how representative the individual case studies were of wider experiences in the countryside, about the relations between landowners and agents (on which the surviving estate archives are surely fertile ground for research) and about the experiences of agents before the turn of the nineteenth century. The history of the *early modern* land agent remains to be written it seems, but this modest addition to the otherwise rather slim historiography on rural land agency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is certainly timely. The combined reference list and detailed index will both be appreciated by readers, although I would also like to have seen a list of contributors.

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TERENCE DOOLEY and CHRISTOPHER RIDGWAY
(eds), *The country house and the Great War. Irish and British experiences* (Four Courts Press, 2016). 208 pp.
£22.95.

This edited volume is a collection of sixteen papers, which tells the stories of country houses and their families between 1914 and 1918. Derived from estate and family papers from across Ireland and Britain, many of the sources are still retained in private family collections rather than local or national record offices

and most are relatively little known. Rather than just presenting a single experience of the war, the book describes a range of differing experiences for the individuals involved, be they men or women, adults or children, living in towns or in the country.

The editors note that the country house community in Ireland made a greater than proportionate contribution to the war effort in comparison with the rest of the population: this initial assessment leaves the door open for further analysis of the sources to understand the subsequent effects on this community and on society in general. The editors are both associated with the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates at Maynooth University, which surely explains the emphasis in the book on examples drawn from Ireland.

The first paper by Fergal Browne looks at the life of Robert Heard, heir to the Pallastown estate. Whilst serving in the war, he was injured on three occasions and recuperated on the estate: during this time, he was involved in agricultural developments, as well as in the local community through agricultural shows and ploughing matches. A further paper by Edward Bujak notes that the skills acquired through fox-hunting were transferrable to flying an aeroplane, which led initially to a 'winged aristocracy': in due course, pilots were recruited from lower social orders, who in turn were accepted by the aristocracy.

Through a large archive of letters between Edward Richards-Orpen and his wife, Philip Bull steps back from the front line of fighting to examine Richards-Orpen's role in the army's Motor Transport School of Instruction. Although serving in France, Richards-Orpen was granted agricultural leave between August 1917 and the following May, during which time he managed the harvesting on the Monksgrange estates in Ireland (which he inherited in 1927), as well as the sowing for the following season. Whilst Richards-Orpen survived the war, Fidelma Byrne examines the loss of family members at the 'big houses' of Ireland. She highlights one case where an estate had to find death duties arising from the loss of three successive owners in an eight-year period: the outcome was that the estate was leased out by the young widow left in charge.

Caroline Carr-Whitworth looks at the effects of the war on the community at Brodsworth Hall in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Noting that 'a large number of the little army of men who find employment on the Brodsworth estate are now serving their king and country' (p. 62), she considers the need for women to take over traditional male roles, as well as the effect on the estate of the ten lives lost. This impact on manpower

is a common theme with Fidelma Byrne noting one estate where thirteen staff had enlisted, leaving the head gardener and a boy to manage the estate.

Several papers reflect the effect of World War I on the Anglo-Irish gentry through the stories of individuals: amongst these are Ian d'Alton's discussion of Norman Leslie of Co. Monaghan; Donal Hall's examination of the Bellingham family of Co. Louth; and Colm McQuinn's paper on the Hely-Hutchinson brothers of Co. Dublin. These stories contribute to an underlying theme that those Anglo-Irish families who fought for Britain in the war were seen by nationalists as being on the side of England and therefore not supporters of an independent Ireland.

For Britain, Paul Holden considers the case of the parish of Lanhydrock in Cornwall and the effect of the war on the Agar-Robartes family (who lived at Lanhydrock House) and other families. After the war the parish struggled, not only as a result of the loss of men to the war, but also due to the collapse of both the mining and agricultural industries. Christopher Hunwick relates research undertaken for a war exhibition at Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, which resulted in over 30 names being added to the Roll of Honour, originally prepared in 1924. A paper by Ronan Foley demonstrates how country houses, acting as auxiliary hospitals, provided an extension to the network of war-time care for injured service personnel through a therapeutic landscape, whilst Brett Irwin considers Lady Londonderry's role in setting up the Women's Legion, which influenced the government's approach to organizing female labour later in the war.

This well-produced book of sixteen papers, with very few errors, presents a wide range of viewpoints on the effect of the First World War on the families who lived in the country houses of Ireland and Britain. Whilst some simply extract the information relating to individual war service as contained in the original archive material, others present a detailed and engaging view on the contributions that these families made to the war.

ALAN WADSWORTH
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JAMES RAVEN (ed.), *Lost mansions. Essays on the destruction of the country house* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). 138 pp., 6 figs. £35.99

The country house is an established part of English architecture. This, however, was not always the case. Political, societal and economic changes during the twentieth century placed the country house and the landed order under threat at a time when declining landed authority coincided with the ascendancy of

the state. Within these shifting power relations the key question was what should become of the country house and who should be responsible. Estate owners and architectural historians, confused civil servants and reluctant local authorities, together with amenity organizations and societies – including the National Trust – grappled with a range of important questions. Which houses were of national architectural importance? What were the roles of the various actors? And what were to be considered suitable new uses for these buildings?

This culminated in the landmark *Destruction of the country house* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1974. Curated by architectural historians devoted to country house preservation, it catalogued and lamented loss at a crucial time and in doing so, cemented the country house in the popular consciousness. Such is the legacy of the *Destruction* exhibition that no book on this subject can escape it. Thus the introduction of *Lost mansions* opens by stating that one in six of the great country houses in Britain and Ireland were demolished between 1900 and 2000, destruction which eventually totalled 1900 properties and peaked in the year immediately following the end of the Second World War.

Mournful loss has thus pervaded the popular history of the country house. Yet this interesting volume of six essays helps to refocus the histories of the twentieth-century country house away from loss *per se* and towards new themes including the causes of loss, contemporary representations of loss, and the implications of more recent interest in great estates, the latter principally driven by the popularity of the *Downton Abbey* television series. Importantly, too, the volume broadens the debate to consider examples from England, Scotland and Ireland. It is perhaps apt that the opening image is a photograph of Roseneath Castle mid-explosion: where other books have ended, *Lost mansions* begins.

In the first chapter, Jon Stobart sets about to recover 'lost histories' through the themes of material culture, processes and people. He draws upon fragments of archival evidence including inventories and sales catalogues, theoretical approaches to understanding consumption linked to wealth and status, and little-known histories of female landowners and their impact on country houses in order to successfully 'reinvigorate the country house as a lived space' (p. 40).

Terence Dooley, in considering the Irish country house, identifies how political unrest and demands for land reform had a significant bearing on country house losses. This is charted through Ireland's complex and turbulent nineteenth- and early twentieth-century

agricultural history, which included famine, brief agricultural prosperity during the mid-1800s, global recession from 1877, the establishment of the reforming Land League and subsequent Land War. This instability led to a period of country house retrenchment and the sale of house contents. A long history of ensuing resentment, with land rights at the heart, is viewed as directly culminating in acts of military separatism and agrarian agitation, including the widespread burning of an estimated 300 country houses between 1920 and 1923. Such actions were in part undertaken in the hope that small landholders or the landless could benefit from landowners being ousted. One legacy of this contested history is that the country house became a symbol of British rule in Ireland and, as such, was never regarded as a part of Irish national identity or heritage.

Dooley's overview provides the context for Ian d'Alton's literary perspective on Bowen's Court in County Clare, the former ancestral home to the Anglo-Irish author Elizabeth Bowen. Despite surviving the troubles in the 1920s it was demolished in 1959 following its sale to a local farmer. Through the essay, d'Alton innovatively intertwines Bowen's own history of the house and her critique of gentry life with literary representations to create 'images of lost mansions and their meaning as literary texts' (p. 63).

Barbara Wood's chapter offers a different perspective on loss. Rather than physical loss and destruction, she considers how country houses have lost their purpose and sense of place and the implications of this for their future presentation, especially where familial continuity was lost. She explores this through three examples, including Barrington Court in Somerset, the first country house bequeathed to the National Trust in 1907. Not really knowing what to do with the house, it was let on a 100-year lease to Colonel Arthur Lyle, a gentleman farmer with a passion for architecture. Lyle completely redeveloped and remodelled Barrington, acquired surrounding land and established a successful model farming estate. It is interesting to note here how changing ownership could help breathe new life into estates and drive agricultural innovation. Despite this, and following a several short-term tenancies, the estate was eventually returned to the Trust in 2008. The identity of the house and its estate had been made and remade and, as such, the Trust have found it difficult to identify a coherent narrative to present to the public.

The two final chapters both offer contemporary histories of the country house. Thus Michael Davis explores more recent aesthetic debates regarding the maintenance, use and preservation of ruined Scottish castles. The architectural importance of the Scottish

castle continues to spark debates about conservation, preservation and the appropriateness of restoration techniques. In exploring specific examples, Davis highlights how sympathetic restoration can be a positive and pragmatic alternative to decay and loss. James Raven moves south to reflect on the country houses of Essex, and in particular Marks Hall, exploring the pervasive 'heritage of loss', which, through the *Destruction of the country house* exhibition, enveloped the twentieth-century history of the country house. In looking forward, Raven identifies that, 'we need more grounded interpretive projects as many continue to wallow ... in Waugh-torn landscape where country house history has been high-jacked [sic] for very particular – if insinuated – political and cultural agendas' (p. 123).

In redefining 'loss' as more than simple physical destruction, the contributors to this short volume help us to reimagine British and Irish country houses and their late modern histories. The very readable and nicely produced volume, with helpful abstracts for each of the chapters, is thus a very welcome addition to the field.

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Europe and beyond

JANET M. DAVIS, *The gospel of kindness. Animal welfare and the making of modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2016). ix + 302 pp. £26.49.

Animal advocacy in the twenty-first century has become a 'global economy of kindness', where thousands of organizations compete for public donations to facilitate their version of animal protectionism at home and overseas. The movement itself is fragmented, inconsistent and at times divisive, driven by an unstable mix of altruism, ego, compassion, imperialism, kindness, and greed.

Since the post-World War II 'rights revolution' and the splitting of animal advocacy in the 1960s, animal welfare (the prevention of unnecessary suffering) and animal rights (non-human animal equality through liberation) have been increasingly conflated, a mistake compounded by the popular media who readily sensationalize abolitionist stances to increase readerships. Public challenges to human-animal practices in transnational places are often made with a lack of awareness of the specificities of cultural history and the human lives involved. Detached from its historical roots, the wider animal advocacy movement can learn much-needed lessons from *The gospel of kindness*.

The gospel of kindness expertly traces the social, cultural and political meanings of the American

animal welfare movement from the (American) Civil War to the onset of World War II. The six main chapters focus on implications of the animal welfare movement within the United States in an era of Protestant revivalism and social reform (chapter 1 to 3), and in America's overseas empire after Spanish-American War in 1898 (chapters 4 to 6).

Fez, Morocco (a city with no US embassy in 1929), is the unexpected starting point, where the structural foundation for the book is laid. Here, the American Fondouk animal hospital, the only shelter flying an America flag in a foreign country at this time, is used to pose broader questions about the evolution of the American animal welfare movement in the US and overseas: 'Why were discussions of an American animal hospital in Morocco consistently connected to questions of patriotism, uplift, and American benevolence?' and 'How did an organized movement, which began in cities across the United States, become a vanguard for the nation's aspirations for abroad?' (p. 4).

The first US animal protection organization, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was founded in New York by Henry Bergh in 1866. By 1900 every state had passed animal welfare legislation, largely based on Bergh's New York state laws. Janet Davis explains: 'animal welfare leaders enthusiastically embraced what they called "the gospel of kindness" to build a harmonious union, which could transcend the potentially divisive particularities of culture, religion, race, and class' (p. 4). Informed by the biblical concept of stewardship, animals were placed at the centre of wider projects of social and cultural reform, where 'animal kindness became a barometer of free moral agency and the boundaries of proper, civilized comportment and citizenship' (p. 5).

The gospel of kindness covers new ground on the role of female animal welfare advocates in American identity formation. Where the nineteenth century 'domestic ethic of kindness' (explored by Katherine Grier in *Pets in America*, 2006) saw middle-class women teach children benevolence through pet keeping in the home, the 'gospel of kindness' had wider implications. Davis shows how all-female institutions such as the Women's Pennsylvania SPCA (founded in 1867) and Women's Christian Temperance Union (founded in 1874) 'brought women out of the home and into the classroom, doctor's office, laboratory, church, backwoods logging camp, and state legislature' (p. 83).

Davis also reveals how public interactions with animals were transformed by humane advocates, the media and law enforcers into signs of 'American belonging and exclusion' (p. 85), with racial and class hierarchies being mobilized as pressure points for

cultural assimilation. Examples include: othering the visiting Filipino Bontoc Igorots as dog eaters; the routine prosecution of Italian immigrants for hunting and consuming songbirds; the rejection of Jewish slaughter practices for being 'barbaric'; the portrayal of dog-fighting and rat-baiting crowds as 'beastly' immigrant Irish Catholics; and the restyling of bird hats and docked tails as 'un-American decadence'.

Unlike previous historical work on animal advocacy in America (Susan Jones's *Valuing Animals*, 2002; Bernard Unti's *Protecting all animals*, 2004; Diane Beers's *For the prevention of cruelty*, 2006) and Britain (Moira Ferguson's *Animal advocacy and Englishwomen*, 1998; Hilda Kean's *Animal rights*, 2000), *The gospel of kindness* makes an important contribution to understanding the role of animal advocacy, animal welfare legislation and humane education as tools for empire building in the wider world.

Davis traces the introduction of dog management in the Philippines for public health, safety, and colonial order, acknowledging that 'dog eating represented a cultural justification for assimilative empire building, even though actual colonial policy did little to stop it' (p. 126). The challenges of outlawing culturally specific animal practices are demonstrated with the example of cock-fighting in the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico. In the Philippines, the practice became accepted as 'the embodiment of cultural fraternization and exchange among colonizer and colonized' (p. 134). In Cuba, Congress repealed the ban as a sign of cultural and political self-determination, and in Puerto Rico, cockfighting enthusiasts 'simultaneously appealed to ideals of cultural nationalism and citizenship to defend their sport' (p. 139). Ultimately, American policy-makers realised 'that humane education and practical recognition of pluralistic traditions constituted a more effective animal welfare policy than exclusion and criminalization' (p. 150).

Colonial India is an unusual case study in that policy-making and law enforcement was outside of American jurisdiction. However, Davis nicely shows how Indian religious traditions of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and vegetarianism informed American animal protectionism, whilst teasing out the tensions connected to British colonial policy, religion, pluralism, caste, communalism, and nationalism. The difficulties of imposing universalizing rhetoric overseas become quite apparent, and the rise of 'cow nationalism' serves as an important reminder of how animal specific practices can lead to human inequality and dangerous social, cultural and political divisions. This point is reinforced by the example of 'un-American' bullfighting, which was treated as a symbol of Spanish decadence and

decline, and universally banned across the American empire.

The gospel of kindness is a remarkable piece of historical scholarship and an excellent book. The critical historical approach is engaging and global scope impressive. Not only does Davis reveal the significance of animal welfare advocates in shaping ideologies, policies and human-animal identities in modern America, she also uncovers and underlines the historical challenges of transnational animal protection. The book is authoritative and highly relevant to the contemporary world, and should be read by anyone with interests either in histories or animals or in the modern, largely secular, animal advocacy movement.

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CYNTHIA CLAMPITT, *Midwest maize. How corn shaped the U.S. Heartland* (University of Illinois Press, 2015). 304 pp., 19 illus. £82 h/b, £15.99 p/b.

My grandmother, from England, turned up her nose at corn-on-the-cob, which she thought was food only for horses. I regarded this as a curious attitude as our family eagerly anticipated the corn season each year, the 'Taber corn' of Alberta and the 'peaches and cream' of Manitoba. This book helps to explain my grandmother's attitude and it provides fascinating insight into corn history, culture, and economy with a focus on how this crop transformed the Midwest, which is often called the 'Corn Belt'. Confusingly called maize in Britain (where 'corn' refers to cereals such as wheat, barley and oats), corn is today the number one cereal crop worldwide and the major agricultural crop of the United States.

Midwest maize is a lively popular account of the importance of corn. It is a sweeping survey based mainly on secondary sources. Cynthia Clampitt writes that, while many of the topics and issues she covers have been addressed in other books, hers is the first to tie them together. This book belongs in many ways to the recent genre of studies that focus on how products or crops such as cod, salt, coffee and cotton transformed the world. Clampitt argues that corn was an 'empire builder', practically creating the Midwest and making it successful.

A food historian and travel writer, Clampitt covers a remarkable range of topics beginning with the history of maize in Mesoamerica, its first appearance in Europe, the diversity and adaptability of corn, changing technologies in planting, harvesting, processing and preserving, corn as fodder and the rise of stockyards, trains, and cities due to the demands of the corn economy. Clampitt brings to light the multiple uses

of corn, as breakfast cereal, starch, oil, syrup, and as ethanol for gasoline. Careful attention is paid to the material culture of corn history with discussion and photographs of technology now found only in museums such as the hand-cranked corn shellers. There is a chapter on popcorn: Americans consume an astonishing 16 billion quarts or more of popped corn each year. In the chapter, 'Celebrating Corn', Clampitt discusses the many ways humans celebrate this crop and show their gratitude, from the ceremonies of the indigenous people of the Americas to state fairs, and the Corn Palace that has made Mitchell, South Dakota famous. There is a chapter of recipes for preparing, for example, corn oysters, cornbread, and cornmeal pudding. A final chapter examines thorny questions and issues of the present-day including genetic modification, with a focus on how more people of the world can be fed while still retaining ideals of food quality.

While I like the way corn as an indigenous crop is dealt with in several places in the book, I wish there was greater acknowledgement of the work of indigenous women farmers in what became the Midwest. The best book on corn culture, and the most detailed ever published on indigenous agriculture, is *Buffalo Bird Woman's garden* by Hidatsa farmer, Maxi'diwiac, who in 1912 left a meticulous account of corn farming according to ancient methods. The crops of these women farmers were the main economic drivers of their region's economy. They excelled in the art of plant domestication, developing hardy, early maturing varieties of corn that could flourish even in the short growing season of the northern plains, and that could withstand hail and drought as well as early frost. In an approach that is similar to Clampitt's, Maxi'diwiac demonstrates how corn determined where people lived, their architecture, sacred ceremonies, courtship customs, and relations with neighbours. The farming methods and crops that Maxi'diwiac and other Hidatsa, Arikara and Mandan women developed over centuries endure to this day.

A map would have been useful for those not acquainted with the Midwest. It is unfortunate also that there is little venturing north of the 49th parallel. We learn that 'Canada was not initially part of corn's sweeping conquest of the prairies' (p. 13), but in the Red River Settlement of Manitoba in the nineteenth century, corn was a much more successful and reliable crop than wheat. So, there is much to be learned from this book about the profound reach and influence of corn. And I learned that Grandma was not alone, for Europeans still often view corn as animal fodder.

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