

Reviews and Recommendations

A selection of extracts from reviews and recommendations for the University of Chester Press publications (most recent first).

[**Bloomsbury, Belsen, Oxford: Janet Vaughan - Medical Pioneer**](#) (by Sheena Evans), by Dr Pat Thane, Visiting Professor, Birkbeck College London

“Sheena Evans’s thoroughly researched, accessibly written biography reveals one of the most impressive women in twentieth-century Britain. But she is largely forgotten. Janet Vaughan made pioneering, profoundly significant, contributions to medical research and health: discovering the causes of anaemia, the effects of malnutrition, inventing the blood transfusion service in World War 2, revealing the dire effects of plutonium following atomic events. At a time when there were few women in medicine, even fewer mothers like Vaughan, and they suffered extreme discrimination. She actively and effectively promoted women’s rights in medicine and more widely for equal pay, maternity rights and opportunities, including as Principal of an Oxford women’s college for 22 years. While in public roles she improved medical and other services in Britain and elsewhere, becoming internationally famous and respected. Men who achieve far less become public heroes.”

Dr Pat Thane, Visiting Professor, Birkbeck College London

[**Bloomsbury, Belsen, Oxford: Janet Vaughan - Medical Pioneer**](#) (by Sheena Evans), by Dr Pat Starkey, Honorary Research Fellow, University of Liverpool

“This is an engaging and illuminating account of Janet Vaughan’s life. The science is made accessible and is so well described that this becomes not just an insightful biography but an account of the amazing rapidity with which knowledge has advanced.”

[**George Cuitt \(1779-1854\) - ‘England’s Piranesi’: His Life and Work and a Catalogue Raisonné of His Etchings**](#) (by Peter Boughton and Ian Dunn), by William D Shannon, *The Local Historian*, May 2024, 52(2), pp. 182-3

“All in all, this is a truly remarkable book, of interest to art historians obviously, but also to anyone with an interest in ‘the picturesque’ and ‘the Romantic’, in the technical processes of etching and printing, in antiquarianism, and in architectural history, with particular regard to Cheshire, North Wales and Yorkshire.”

[**George Cuitt \(1779-1854\) - ‘England’s Piranesi’: His Life and Work and a Catalogue Raisonné of His Etchings**](#) (by Peter Boughton and Ian Dunn), Extract from of a book review in Volume 172 (2023) of [*Archaeologia Cambrensis*](#) by Thomas Lloyd (Cwrt Henri):

"First and foremost, in these days of straightened finances, one must salute this massive, handsome and comprehensive work of scholarship, published by the University of Chester Press and happily for us in Wales, beautifully printed and stoutly bound by Gomer Press, Llandysul. This is indeed a doorstep volume on finest A4 size paper, which gives an artist who will be but little known to many, a stunning uplift to his posthumous reputation; and one which in the opinion of the present reviewer is entirely well deserved."

[**George Cuitt \(1779-1854\) - ‘England’s Piranesi’: His Life and Work and a Catalogue Raisonné of His Etchings**](#) (by Peter Boughton and Ian Dunn), by Professor Graeme White (Emeritus Professor of Local History, University of Chester): *Cheshire History*, Volume 63:

"This magisterial work is the culmination of a long-term labour of love on which Peter Boughton of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, was engaged until his death at the age of 59

in 2019. It has been completed by Ian Dunn, former County Archivist for Cheshire, and is fittingly dedicated to the memory of Peter Boughton, aptly described as 'curator, teacher and communicator, champion of artists and the fine arts in Cheshire and beyond'. ... Although Peter Boughton did not live to see his book published, he has left us a wonderful legacy. Ian Dunn's work in seeing the book to completion has also been of the highest order. This is that rarest of books, one which will still carry authority a century from now. It is the product of thorough, intelligent and painstaking work, scholarly yet readable, beautifully illustrated and a great credit to all who have been involved in its production."

[Looking at the Landscape: Glimpses into the History of Cheshire and Beyond](#) (edited by Graeme J. White and Sharon M. Varey), by Professor Angus Winchester, *The Local Historian*, 2023, 53(3):

"This wide-ranging collection of essays is full of interest and contains some welcome fresh approaches to the study of local history. Published to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Chester Society for Landscape History, the volume contains seven essays by members of the society, exploring aspects of both rural and urban landscapes, mostly in western Cheshire. They range in date from the early medieval period to the late-twentieth century. As the title and the editors' introduction make clear, the focus is on the visual, on what can be gleaned by looking at tangible features in the landscape and interpreting them in relation to historical processes and contexts."

[Looking at the Landscape: Glimpses into the History of Cheshire and Beyond](#) (edited by Graeme J. White and Sharon M. Varey), by Bob Burgess, *Cheshire History*, Volume 63, 2023:

"The cover illustration of this compilation volume features a keyhole with treasures of the landscape on view beyond. This is most appropriate. The compiled seven papers span a period from the tenth to the twenty-first centuries, so have the widest appeal. These papers, thoroughly researched, reflect the expertise and focus of the Chester Society for Landscape History. A worthy 35th anniversary publication and very readable. ... I would also add, enjoyable."

[Becoming Urban Cyclists: From Socialization to Skills](#) (edited by Matthieu Adam and Nathalie Ortar), by Mohammad Nazapoor, [Urban Cycling Institute](#), 30 November 2022:

"The book will appeal to anyone seeking to understand the process of becoming a cyclist in different socio-spatial contexts and learn from the variety of mixed methods research looking at urban cycling. It is a great opportunity for readers to get familiar with cycling culture in different cities and countries. All we need to promote urban cycling is make sure that we are moving in the right direction; this book is an excellent resource to help us do so."

[The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), by R. Paul Evans, *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society*, Vol. 4, 2022

"This volume provides a valuable addition to the research on the industrial development of the Wirral peninsula and in doing so also chronicles the close links that existed between the Neston and Flintshire collieries. It is a scholarly work of reference, deserving to sit on the shelves of all local historians. Credit should also be given to the University of Chester press for investing in the publication of such specialist parochial studies."

[The Widening Circle of Us: A Theological Memoir](#) (by Peter Francis), by John Saxbee, [The Church Times](#), 28 January 2022:

“This is a book for those who have wrestled with their faith and vocation in the light of John Robinson’s *Honest to God*; those who are relatively untouched by late-20th-century liberalism, but are prepared to give it a fair hearing; and, by no means least, those who simply enjoy a well-written memoir that is both personally engaging and theologically challenging.”

[**The Widening Circle of Us: A Theological Memoir**](#) (by Peter Francis), by Linda Woodhead MBE, F D Maurice Professor, King’s College London:

“Eminently readable – I know it is a cliché, but I really couldn’t put it down. The subtitle ‘theological memoir’ perfectly describes the genre that Peter Francis has made his own. I wish there were more books like this.”

[**The Widening Circle of Us: A Theological Memoir**](#) (by Peter Francis), by Sarah Perry, internationally bestselling author of *The Essex Serpent* and *Melmoth*:

“This memoir is a pleasure, a challenge, very moving, admirably frank and it is often funny in parts too.”

[**Becoming Urban Cyclists: From Socialization to Skills**](#) (edited by Matthieu Adam and Nathalie Ortar), by Alexandre Rigal, [*Anthropocene*](#), 3 October 2022:
[Full text in French](#)

[**Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews**](#) (by James D. Holt), by Lat Blaylock, *British Journal of Religious Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1942688>

“This book provides a useful guide and a well-formed argument for inclusive religious education which attends to religious groups on the margins of the RE curriculum in British schools. James D Holt is Associate Professor of Religious Education at the University of Chester, and his long-term research interest in ‘minority religious communities’ ... makes him both an ideal guide to the field and a persuasive arguer of the case for increased nuance, coverage and alertness to such communities and to the internal diversities of ‘major world religions’.... By attending to the borders between religions and the marginal status of some large groups of believers in our society, Professor Holt has laid down a fresh and sharp challenge to all those who care about what pupils might learn about in RE.”

[**From the Welsh Border and Beyond: Travels in Minority Languages**](#) (by Simon Gwyn Roberts), by Nia Moseley-Roberts, [*The Welsh Agenda*](#), Spring/Summer 2021, Issue 66:

“*Travels in Minority Languages* is in many ways the perfect bedside book. Its nine chapters, covering locations from Sri Lanka to Senegal, provide a great diversity of absorbing reading material; lovers of Eastern Europe will be pleased to hear that studies of ex-soviet states – the current focus of Roberts’ professional research and from the contents of this book, an old favourite haunt of his – occupy a third of the volume. Roberts is by no means a shy traveller, often making a point of his desire to visit places off the beaten track and immerse himself in local customs. The fascinating information he subsequently presents is viewed through Welsh-tinted glasses, unfamiliar material framed by a more familiar viewpoint, making this an easy book for those familiar with Welsh culture to slip in and out of.”

[**From the Welsh Border and Beyond: Travels in Minority Languages**](#) (by Simon Gwyn Roberts), by Rita Singer, *Planet: The Welsh Internationalist*, 241, February-May 2021:

“Acknowledging the rich complexity of minoritised language communities in general, this book celebrates an ‘open-minded regionalism’ that ‘cherish[es] their uniqueness whilst remaining open to the world.’ Readers of ‘The Welsh Internationalist’ will find much to stimulate them here.”

[***The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire***](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), by Professor Alan Crosby, *The Local Historian*, vol. 60, Number 1, 2021:

“This remarkable book, the product of lengthy, exceptionally wide-ranging and meticulously detailed research, tells the story of a small and now almost-forgotten coalfield which lies on the shore of the Dee estuary in west Cheshire, some 10 miles north-west of the city of Chester. ... Books are often described as ‘definitive’, but rarely can this term have been more appropriate. It is pretty certain that Anthony Annakin-Smith has found out everything that survives in the written records to do with Neston collieries. Yet the great strength of his work is the underlying vision that the social, human, financial and business aspects of industrial history could be melded with the technical and engineering themes, and the chronological ‘time-line’ of the story, to create a truly comprehensive account. And at £19.99 it is amazingly good value, too.”

[***The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire***](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), by R F Hartley, *Peak District Mines History Society Review*, 2021,

“Something of the thoroughness of this history can be seen immediately by the fact that of its 389 pages, well over 100 are devoted to the endnotes. It is a survey which combines enormous amounts of detail with a remarkably readable text. ... The design and page layout are pleasing and there are numerous maps, plans, drawings and photographs. The book is excellent value at £20 post free from the publishers, University of Chester Press, who are to be complimented on their vision and style.”

[***From the Welsh Border and Beyond: Travels in Minority Languages***](#) (by Simon Gwyn Roberts), by Antony Hoyte-West, *Studia Celtica Posnaniensia*, 5(1), 2020:

“In short, *From the Welsh Border to the World: Travels in Minority Languages* has numerous strengths, including its engaging and accessible style as well as its novel and interesting presentation of the subject matter. It provides a useful panorama of the selected case studies, and the endnotes provide a point of departure for further reading and research on the topics covered. As such, the book is recommended for the generalist reader seeking to familiarise themselves more with minority languages in the global context, as well as for those specialists seeking to gain an alternative perspective on relevant issues. What stands out though, is the work’s comprehensive global reach, which provides a holistic view of the status and use of selected minority languages in today’s world.”

[***The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire***](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), by Professor Graeme J. White, *Cheshire History*, vol. 60, 2020:

“This is a fine book, an example of local history at its best: extensively researched, well-organised, clearly written, attractively presented, beautifully illustrated and informative not only about its hitherto-neglected subject on Wirral’s Dee shoreline but also on how the story fits into a wider social and economic context. The author explains in his preface that he has been pursuing the subject ‘on and off’ in archives across England, Wales and beyond for nearly two decades and he can be proud of the outcome.”

[***The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire***](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), by Dr Peter Carrington, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. 90, 2020:

"The book deals not just with the technical history of the mines but sets them in their commercial and social contexts – where the investment came from, their customers, associated businesses and transport links; the origins of the workforce, their working conditions, housing, marriages, children, education, religion and recreation – and against a range of geographical backgrounds: Wirral, Chester and North Wales, south Lancashire, Ireland and even further afield. Given the amount of detail provided, it will surely rank for many years as the definitive work on its subject, and the breadth of its treatment makes it a model of its kind."

[***Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews***](#) (by James D. Holt), by Dr Geoff Teece, *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 22 March 2020:

"... recent RE reports have directed RE teachers to plan and teach beyond the 'big six' religious traditions. James Holt's book puts me in mind of James Sire's classic *The Universe Next Door* (Sire 2009) which is subtitled 'A Basic Worldview Catalogue'. RE teachers would do well to read Sire's book alongside *Beyond the Big Six* and if they are interested in the academic questions, Jackson's *Religious Education: An interpretive approach* (1997) is a good place to start."

[***The Neston Collieries, 1759-1855: An Industrial Revolution in Rural Cheshire***](#) (by Anthony Annakin-Smith), Dr Michael Nevell, Head of Archaeology, University of Salford

"This is an impressive piece of research, and a significant contribution to the understanding of 18th and early 19th century coal mining in north-east Wales and Cheshire. The combination of documentary and landscape study is exemplary. As such it's an important regional study of coal mining before the large-scale industrialisation of the late 19th century. The work also demonstrates the value of studying smaller-scale coal mining sites from the earlier industrialisation period. Often the survival of both physical remains and documentary material is better for such sites than for the later industrial period. This book deserves to become the standard work for the region on early industrial coal mining for historians and industrial archaeologists interested in this subject."

[***Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews***](#) (by James D. Holt), Julian Stern, Professor of Education and Religion, York St John University

"In this hugely valuable book, James Holt reminds us of the importance of 'beyond' to religious education. The environmental campaigner Julia Butterfly Hill used to say we should not throw things away because there is no place called 'away': we need to understand the places we throw things. In the same challenging way, this book asks what is 'beyond' Christianity and Islam (that might still say it is Christian or Muslim), and what is beyond the six major religions most studied in the UK. Here is a book that not only provides a lively and informative guide to various 'beyonds', it also challenges all of us involved in religious education: there will always be something important and fascinating beyond what we currently know."

[***Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews***](#) (by James D. Holt), Paul Smalley, Senior Lecturer in Religious Education, Edge Hill University

“This book is a valuable addition to the RE teacher’s reference library. It does two things, both of them very well. Firstly it challenges readers to think about the assumed boundaries of religious education, which are frequently part of the RE teacher’s mindset – what does it mean to be a member of a religious group, and who decides the boundaries of the group? The author suggests a way of identifying and navigating these boundaries, particularly in Christianity and Islam, by allowing the child, the believer, to self-identify. Secondly, it provides short, but in-depth introductions to some of the more common religious expressions outside of the big six. These introductions will be particularly useful to a teacher who finds they have a child of that worldview in their class. These introductions will also help teachers who want to move away from simply studying (some or more of) the big six religions, to a more conceptual study of ‘religion’ as it is practised in Britain today. The introductions are well written and accessible, yet full of information. Each section has useful ideas to help a teacher start the planning process. I will be recommending it to both students and serving teachers.”

[***Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews***](#) (by James D. Holt), Professor Denise Cush, Bath Spa University

“A useful resource for RE teachers who wish to include a wider range of religious and non-religious worldviews as recommended by reports such as the Commission on Religious Education’s *A New Vision for Religious Education in Schools*. James Holt selects eight groups, of both ancient and recent origin, the study of which prepares pupils for the diversity they will encounter, expands concepts such as ‘religion’ or ‘worldview’, questions the boundaries of traditions such as Christianity and Islam, and importantly, respects pupils from these backgrounds who will be present in our classrooms.”

[***Acedia and the Transformation of Spiritual Malaise: Essays in Honour of Martin McAlinden***](#) (edited by Wayne Morris), [*The Irish Catholic*](#), 18 July 2019:

“These days many priests, indeed clergy of all kinds, feel they suffer in ways that the clergy never suffered before. Martin McAlinden’s insight, however, was to turn back from his own situation and to try and see it in the light of the early medieval idea of acedia – the “agenbyte of ynwit”, the voice of conscience. He found, human nature being what it is, that the situation he was confronting was not a new one, whatever might be said about modern life, but a part of the human condition. The realisation that others in the past had struggled with and come to terms with their problems through the grace of God, was a study on which he was engaged when he died. This book consists of what he managed to write, with the responses of eight others, with their various insights into both his essay and what they themselves have found. Readers should not be concerned that no final conclusion was reached by the author – all human schemes are incomplete in some way or other, but there is much to be learned from his journey.”

[***Acedia and the Transformation of Spiritual Malaise: Essays in Honour of Martin McAlinden***](#) (edited by Wayne Morris), [*The Expository Times*](#) (131(4), pp. 177-8 review by Anne Tomlinson, Scottish Episcopal Institute, Edinburgh

“this book should be read by all involved in the formation of Christian ministers”

[***Acedia and the Transformation of Spiritual Malaise: Essays in Honour of Martin McAlinden***](#) (edited by Wayne Morris), Most Revd Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry

“It is well over 200 years since William Wordsworth – in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – referred to poetry as ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’. For him, memories of daffodils could ‘flash upon the inner eye, which is the bliss of solitude’. Our current activist culture is inimical

to introspection and that has affected how everyone – including clergy – experiences the world. But when tranquillity, solitude and the inner eye have been relegated to the category of ‘special interests’, it becomes much more difficult ‘with joy to draw waters from the wells of salvation’. (Isaiah 12:3). This series of reflections on acedia is both a welcome tribute to Dr Martin McAlinden and a timely examination of how we can name and tackle the spiritual malaise which so saps the energy of many who began their spiritual journey with great enthusiasm.”

[Acedia and the Transformation of Spiritual Malaise: Essays in Honour of Martin McAlinden](#) (edited by Wayne Morris), Helen Warnock, Principal of Belfast Bible College and fellow DProf student with Martin McAlinden

“This book captures well two aspects of theological research: that of presenting thoughtful comment and then the corresponding attentive listening and response. Martin’s work on acedia is indeed a helpful lens through which to consider ministry across Ireland and as the subsequent papers contained in this book illustrate, his work also acts as a stimulating conversation partner, to aid reflection on various contemporary issues. I trust you will be thoughtfully challenged as you read this book, just as I have been by Martin’s presentations, papers, his conversations and indeed his life.”

[Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane: Precarious Positions](#) (by Rebecca Mallett, Cassandra A. Ogden and Jenny Slater) David Jackson-Perry (Queen’s University, Belfast), *Disability & Society*, 2017, 7, 32, 1111–1113

“Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane: Precarious Positions, based on the fourth [Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane International] conference, explores a rich vein, asking ‘what (everyday) encounters with liminality and/or marginalisation reveal about the limits of normalcy’ ... Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane sketches out fragmentary maps of that ground, bringing into relief bridges and points of encounter, but also pitfalls, locations where meetings may be fraught with dissent. The tools of normal are well oiled, colluding efficiently through diagnosis, classification, class averages, bureaucratic process, and other less visible techniques. These chapters argue in turn for collaboration. They call on academics and teachers, disability theories and drug user studies, the transabled, the transgendered, and the dis/abled, all those who fall outside the protective umbrella of ‘normal’, to use these sometimes inconvenient and unsought intersections as gaps through which to insert the less well-honed tools that challenge normalcy. The contradictions and complexities of such a project do not make for a comfortable read. Rather, these postcards from the conference extend an invitation to readers to have their cages well and truly rattled: an invitation I would encourage them to accept.”

[Cycling Cultures](#) (edited by Peter Cox), by Katrine Hartmann-Petersen, *Applied Mobilities*, 1(1), 129-133, 2016.

“It presents what the contributors characterize as a kaleidoscopic view of cycling conversations across national settings and experiences. Cox et al. provide new insights into the understanding of the priorities, perceptions of freedom and interdependences of cycling in everyday life. This book adds to the growing field of cycling literature (i.e. Aldred 2013; Freudendal-Pedersen 2015a; Larsen 2015; Rosen, Cox, and Horton 2007; Spinney 2010) and verifies cycling as an inspiring research field within social sciences.

The key message of book is that cultures of cycling need to be a further object of scientific investigation, because understanding the diversities of cycling makes a better starting point for a region, a city or a nation’s mobility policies. But the book also presents a series of conversations across social and political contexts that bridge between perspectives from

academia, activism and public policy (Cox 2015, 2) ... *Cycling Cultures* shows how a cultural understanding of mobilities is crucial in order to discover interdependencies within urban mobilities in general (Cox 2015, 213)."

[*Cycling Cultures*](#) (edited by Peter Cox), by Jeremy Torr, [*Gaia Discovery*](#), June 2016

"Academic editions are often as exciting as watching paint dry. They come with mountains of references to obscure previous research conducted decades ago, and grip on present-day reality akin to that of Donald Trump's election manifesto. But the *Cycling Cultures* edited collection is a refreshing surprise. It gives insights that surprise, intrigue and inform. ... *Cycling Cultures* offers an in depth look at how, and potentially why, cyclists are so keen to tell everybody that cycling is A Good Thing. But they cast a broad net.

Cycling Cultures edited by Peter Cox is a must read for sociologists, city planners and transportation executives. Across eight learned dispositions on the state of cycling as it relates to modern culture, the book investigates such forgotten corners as the role of the Cargo Bicycle, how Immigrant Women Cyclists learn to ride in Holland, and why some cyclists think it sensible to ride 1600km non-stop in 90 hours in a Randonee. ... If the examples cited of female emancipation and cultural blending through the use of bicycles are anything to go by, the humble bicycle can still bring plenty of new culture to our increasingly crowded yet environmentally aware societies."

[*War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Blitz of 1940*](#) (by Guy Hodgson), by Tom O'Malley, *Media History*, 22(1), 137-139, 2016.

"The subject of the press in Britain during World War II is relatively neglected in historical writing. Much has been written which refers to it, but as yet there is no detailed account of how the national and provincial press and periodical industry functioned during this period of intense political, military, economic and social strain. Guy Hodgson's study contributes to the redressing of that deficiency in an account of the way the Manchester press covered the Blitz in Manchester during December 1940. ... for anyone wishing to think about the complexities of the role of the newspaper press in the UK during the Second World War, this book is essential reading and points to the need for far more work on this important subject."

[*Listening to Less-Heard Voices: Developing Counsellors' Awareness*](#) (edited by Peter Madsen Gubi), by Charlie Jackson in *Therapy Today*, September 2015, p. 42.

"If you are looking for a book on counselling and psychotherapy research written *by* practitioners *for* practitioners, then this is the book for you. Dr Gubi contextualises the rationale behind the publication in the opening sentence: 'Whilst research is designed to inform best practice and increase understanding, there is less in-depth research published about human experiencing that relates to issues that are "on the edge" of the professions of counselling, psychotherapy and psychology, yet which are nevertheless "central" for those people who experience such issues' (p1).

As a predominantly self-confessed (and proud) qualitative researcher, I felt compelled to continue reading. It is so refreshing to discover research 'that comes from a place of passion within the researchers, which is aimed at informing counsellors about aspects of human experiencing that are not written about much (if at all) in the counselling-related literature' (p2)."

[*On Chester On: A History of Chester College and the University of Chester*](#) (written by Graeme J. White) by Rod Hunt MBE (children's author and alumnus of Chester College, now the University of Chester).

“The hallmark of Graeme White's book is its honesty and clarity. His meticulous research of the historical records results in a story both compelling and enticing. Dr White also reads between the lines of his sources, giving us a delicious and fascinating insight into the minds and motives of the key players in the institution's history. Further gems of information are to be mined in the chapter end notes.”

[***On Chester On: A History of Chester College and the University of Chester***](#) (written by Graeme J. White) by Marion McClintock, University of Lancaster, for the [British Association for Local History](#).

“The history of British tertiary and higher education is important and incomplete. Volumes such as *On Chester On* are valuable for all those associated with individual institutions, while contributing through the story of one particular trajectory to a fuller understanding of how and why higher education in the UK has reached its present position and how it might evolve in the future.”

[***On Chester On: A History of Chester College and the University of Chester***](#) (written by Graeme J. White) by Peter Carrington, for the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, new series, 85, 2015, pp. 15-18.

“... we are offered a very detailed and well informed, sympathetic but by no means uncritical work of institutional history. This work can be read from a number of viewpoints - local, national, ecclesiastical, secular, educational, administrative and social - and it deserves to be taken into account by all the appropriate scholars.”

[***War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Blitz of 1940***](#) (by Guy Hodgson), by Alexandre F. Caillot, *H-War, H-Net Reviews*, October, 2015: [full text](#)

“Newspapers provide the historian with a plenteous bounty of information. They offer a window into popular opinion as well as the overarching influence of the media in shaping those views. Despite their value, scholars of the Second World War have traditionally been hesitant to rely on such material, something that Guy Hodgson seeks to address in *War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Blitz of 1940*. Its focus on newspapers allows for a detailed look at the portrayal of a British city exposed to aerial bombardment. A fresh angle on a familiar topic, the author's work illustrates how the costliest war in human history remains a rich area for scholarship. ...

Hodgson's concentrated approach and regional emphasis on Manchester do not hinder the broad relevance of the volume. Its conclusions are pertinent to readers around the world: the importance of factual reporting, the dangers of propaganda justified by military exigencies, and the challenges of discovering the voices of the population. Anyone engaged in the study of history or journalism will find this discussion of great interest. Furthermore, the resulting contribution to the historiography will challenge scholars to carefully evaluate the agendas of their sources.

Over the past several decades, historians have sought to expand the discussion of military history to encompass war *and* society. Guy Hodgson's *War Torn: Manchester, its Newspapers and the Luftwaffe's Blitz of 1940* ably demonstrates the potential for wide-ranging scholarship of considerable appeal to academics and the public alike. To appreciate the transformative effect of conflict on a population, probative research into civilian-military relations can go far towards drawing together what are sometimes (and unfortunately) considered separate topics. This book accomplishes that goal, revealing the vast metaphorical gulf between a people's wartime experience and the stance taken by the government in such a time of crisis.”

[**Contesting Historical Divides in Francophone Africa**](#) (edited by Claire H. Griffiths), by Tony Chafer (University of Portsmouth) in *Modern & Contemporary France*, Volume 23, Issue 4, October 2015, pp. 538–539.

“This is a very useful introduction to some of the key themes in the study of Francophone Africa. As such, it is well worth adding to student reading lists and will be a valuable addition to the library’s collection.”

[**Contesting Historical Divides in Francophone Africa**](#) (edited by Claire H. Griffiths), by Joanna Warson (University of Portsmouth) in *French Studies*, Volume 68 (3), 1 July 2014, p. 434.

“Overall, this interdisciplinary and multidirectional study fluidly crosses established chronologies and geographical boundaries, moving backward and forward from the precolonial period to the present day, to challenge accepted norms in the study of France’s political, social, and cultural legacies in Africa. In so doing, this book makes an important contribution to our understanding of francophone Africa’s yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”

[**The Prime Minister’s Son. Stephen Gladstone: Rector of Hawarden**](#) (written by Ros Aitken), by Ian Cawood (Newman University) in *Journal of Liberal History*, 80, Autumn 2013, pp. 49-50.

“Ultimately, this is a very well-written and insightful portrait of a minor figure in the orbit of one of the most remarkable men of the Victorian age. Stephen emerges as something of an irritating milequetoast, nagging at his father, yet unable to act independently, and his treatment of his wife Annie reflects poorly on his character, idolising her in his courtship, yet failing to defend her against the monumental busybody that was his mother, Catherine, once they were married. Remarkably, considering the unabated flow of scholarship on the four-time prime minister, Aitken’s biography provides Liberal scholars with a completely original perspective on Gladstone; one which, in this reviewer’s eyes at least, seems substantially to confirm Clement Attlee’s judgement of William Gladstone as a ‘frightful old prig’, but which ameliorates it by revealing that Gladstone had, after all, spent his life in the company of prigs.”

[**The Prime Minister’s Son. Stephen Gladstone: Rector of Hawarden**](#) (written by Ros Aitken), by Paul Ward (University of Huddersfield) in *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 8, 2013, pp. 131-132.

“This is a detailed and well written biography, exploring [Stephen] Gladstone’s long life across the mid and late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century ... It is useful reading both for the view ‘from below’ of William Gladstone but also as an account of anguish in an aristocratic family in the long nineteenth century.”

[**Corporeality: The Body and Society**](#) (edited by Cassandra A. Ogden and Steve Wakeman), by Steven Robertson (Leeds Metropolitan University) in *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 2013, Vol. 35, No. 6, pp. 972-973.

“The stated aim of the editors is to bring together work that helps reassert the centrality of the body in ‘late-modern social thought’ and they certainly make a useful contribution in this regard. The book helps make ‘embodiment’ contemporary, as the majority of the chapters are embedded in recent empirical work or built on discussions of current events. The eclectic nature of the book demonstrates the range of issues that careful attention to embodiment can help elucidate. However, I suspect that few people would find it useful in its entirety – though, for those willing to make the effort, it offers some interesting and possibly

unexpected gems. For sociology academics and students—particularly those who are teaching or studying modules on ‘the sociology of the body’ at undergraduate or postgraduate level—this work will certainly be a useful addition to the bookshelf. For many others, specific sections and chapters relating to particular areas of interest will be worth reading.”

[Shades of Expression: Online Political Journalism in the Post-Colour Revolution Nations](#) (by Simon Gwyn Roberts), in *European Journal of Communication*, 2013, 28:727-728:

“While the role of the evolving media technologies in the events of the Arab Spring has attracted significant attention among media scholars, research on the impact of the media in the Colour Revolutions remains scarce. As Simon Gwyn Roberts rightly points out, this is an unfortunate omission and a manifestation of a rather selective geopolitical focus of media and communications research – but also, we could add, a symptom of the field’s relentless emphasis on the newest technological developments at the expense of longitudinal analysis and informed historical comparisons. Roberts’ book is a welcome corrective to these trends, and shows that many of the trends noted in the Arab Spring – above all the ideal of media freedom, but also the ‘networked’ nature of political protest and its dependence on online media – have clear counterparts in the Colour Revolutions, even though the digital media environment at the time was centred primarily on online news platforms rather than social media such as Facebook or Twitter.”

[Landscape History Discoveries in the North West](#) (edited by Sharon M. Varey and Graeme J. White), by Andy Gritt (University of Central Lancashire) in *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 162, 2013, pp. 247-251:

“This is a thoroughly enjoyable book which caused me to reflect on some of my own research and teaching, being extremely useful to both. It is a fine example of the sources and methods of landscape history with several of the contributors being graduates of Chester’s MA in Landscape History. The work of these former students sits comfortably and naturally alongside those of the more established academic historians and archaeologists in this volume. Indeed, it is a great credit both to the Masters course and the Chester Society for Landscape History that work of this quality is being carried out and that knowledge and skills are so enthusiastically shared.”

[Landscape History Discoveries in the North West](#) (edited by Sharon M. Varey and Graeme J. White), by Gary Duckers in the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, Vol. 83, pp. 5-6:

“Taken as a whole, this attractively presented volume will prove valuable to scholars and students with research interests centred upon the North West and landscape history. The volume not only provides a stimulating insight into the range of investigative techniques that can be employed to understand complex landscapes, but also is an enlightening text emphasising the vital contribution of local societies and organisations to landscape studies.”

[Landscape History Discoveries in the North West](#) (edited by Sharon M. Varey and Graeme J. White), by Polly Bird in *The Local Historian*, Vol.43, 2:

“Anyone wanting to understand the diversity of approaches to landscape history should read this well-produced volume from the Chester Society for Landscape History (CSLH). The papers which form the content of the book were presented at the CSLH’s successful 25th anniversary conference in 2011. An illuminating introduction by Dai Morgan Evans (who co-chaired the conference with Graeme White) is followed by eight papers. A ninth chapter,

'In brief', contains four short contributions based on conference poster presentations. The book is well-illustrated in black and white and 12 colour plates ... As Dai Morgan Evans suggests in his introduction, all the papers demonstrate what he feels encapsulates the CSLH 'knowledge seasoned with enthusiasm'. It is this fascination for the subject matter coupled with disciplined research that shines through and makes this volume so readable. We must hope that the CSLH will publish further volumes."

[**Landscape History Discoveries in the North West**](#) (edited by Sharon M. Varey and Graeme J. White), by William Price in *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, forthcoming.

"The writers have given us much food for thought from their studies of the county to our north (and adjacent parts of North Wales), and the editors are to be congratulated on providing such an attractive volume so speedily after the Conference. *Ad multos annos* to the Chester Society for Landscape History."

[**Politics, Publishing and Personalities: Wrexham Newspapers, 1848-1914**](#) (written by Lisa Peters), by Andrew Hobbs (University of Central Lancashire) in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Volume 45, Number 2, 2012.

"This accessible volume is based on the author's University of Wales, Aberystwyth, PhD dissertation, which comprised a micro-history of newspaper publishing in Wrexham, a small town in northeast Wales, across the border from Chester, where Lisa Peters is a university law librarian. It is the first publication from the revitalised University of Chester Press. All PhD students should be made to condense their dissertations into a similarly readable, well-illustrated seventy-two-page general-interest book ... This is chiefly a local-interest book, but its academic pedigree makes it a useful addition to the long list of single-place and single-title histories of the provincial press from which a national synthesis can eventually be written."

[**The Prime Minister's Son. Stephen Gladstone: Rector of Hawarden**](#) (written by Ros Aitken), by Professor Michael Wheeler (University of Southampton) in the *Church Times*, 21-28 December 2012, p. 51

"The *Prime Minister's Son* is written in an informal style, and tells an engaging story with a special appeal to the hard-pressed parish priest, or long-suffering clergy spouse. More valuable for its biographical insights and discoveries about life in a Victorian parish than for its forays into wider ecclesiastical history, the book is the work of a former teacher whose father attended the training college that is now the University of Chester, in the 1930s. Today, Aitken revels in the glories of Gladstone's Library, and often contributes to the annual seminar known as the Gladstone Umbrella."

[**Biodiversity in the North West: The Slime Moulds of Cheshire**](#) (written by Bruce Ing), by Charles Aron in *Natur Cymru* (Summer 2012)

"As shown by Bruce Ing's wonderfully illustrated article in *Natur Cymru* (No. 41), slime moulds are fascinating and beautiful organisms. Those reading the article will surely have been enthused to go out and search for them and the inclusion of this new book will only enthuse them even more ... This book, which is light enough to take into the field, is a must-have for those studying or embarking on the study of slime moulds in the North Wales area and will also be useful to anyone with an interest in biodiversity."

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