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Fabian Hiscock, *Passing Through: the Grand Junction Canal in West Hertfordshire, 1791–1841* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2019). 256pp. ISBN 978-1-912260-15-7. £16.99 (p/b).

This concise but well-argued book examines the economic and social impact of the Grand Junction Canal on west Hertfordshire during the period of the Industrial Revolution. It provides a valuable case study of the role transport infrastructure played in the economic development of England's regions. This is particularly so as Hiscock gives us a 'negative' result.

The study's chronological and spatial boundaries are the first 50 years of the canal's operations and the ten historic parishes in west Hertfordshire that the canal passed through (these are Tring, Aldbury, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley, Abbots Langley, Watford and Rickmansworth). The end date of 1841 is justified partly for intellectual reasons: to remove the effects of the London and Birmingham Railway (completed in 1838) from the study, and partly for evidential reasons: 1841 allows Hiscock to use the tithe maps prepared between 1838 and 1844 to look at land ownership and usage. The year 1841 also provides the first census to detail occupations of the population. In addition to these sources, the book also uses trade directories, parish records, and the archives of both the Grand Junction Canal Company and a turnpike trust.

Hiscock finds that the economic impact of the canal in Hertfordshire was modest. Only one significant industrial development—the expansion of the paper makers Dickinson in Watford—can be linked to the arrival of the canal. Pre-existing silk and paper mills elsewhere on the route did not greatly expand or change their operations, and neither did breweries. The typical market town trades of tailors, blacksmiths, carpenters, and so on, did not find many new markets because of the canal. Farmers did not make great use of the canal either. The difficulty of getting bulky materials to the wharfs from across the county meant that it was easier to use the pre-existing road network. The wharfs along the canal did create new jobs, but they were mainly to the benefit of towns along the route, adding new activities to the existing transport and distribution functions of market towns. The purely rural parishes saw very little change. Overall, the economy and society of Hertfordshire remained overwhelmingly rural. It was similar in structure to, and with the problems (such as low wages) as, other Southern counties. For much of

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agriculture and small-town industry, the existing road network, well connected as it was to London, worked well.

As has been found in studies of the railways, the building of the canal did not create a boom in local employment. Both the specialist engineering and surveying work and the construction labour came from outside the county. The impact on agricultural employment and wages in the county was modest. A negative effect of the canal was on the pre-existing infrastructure and transport networks. The wider water network was one area that saw some degree of conflict and problems. There were several disputes over water rights during the planning and building: the Grand Junction Canal Company had to buy out several mills to acquire their rights. Field drainage and water levels in the region were disrupted by the canal. This is a topic that has been studied for East Anglia, but this book shows how it could be important elsewhere in England. The nearest turnpike road—Sparrows Herne—lost revenue for 50 years from the Grand Union's opening. However, most of the canal's freight traffic was new rather than diverting trade from the turnpike, suggesting another local dynamic at work.

There are several appendices that historians working on Hertfordshire, or canals, in the future may find useful. These consist of: the economic and social characteristics of west Hertfordshire towns based on trade directories; Hertfordshire boat owners and operators drawn from the registers of the Grand Junction Canal Company; a list of canal related property (including owners, occupiers and usage) from tithe maps; and a financial model of a turnpike based on the accounts of the Sparrows Herne turnpike.

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E. Lord and N.R. Amor (eds) *Shaping the Past: Theme, Time and Place in Local History, Essays in Honour of David Dymond* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2020). xviii + 215pp. ISBN978-1-912260-23-2. £18.99 (p/b).

Curated as a festschrift to David Dymond, this collection of 16 essays written by his friends, colleagues and students pays tribute to his extensive work in the field of local history. Dymond taught the subject primarily at Cambridge for over 50 years, often in adult education classes but also in academia. He has also written several books on the 'doing' of local history for those who could not afford to attend a course. While his teaching credentials are extensive, he is also a researcher. His extensive time in the archives has allowed him to produce geographically and chronologically diverse works of history; and, in the process, he has developed his own distinctive approach to the field of local history. The subtitle to the book refers

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to one of these, the importance of defining the theme, time and place in any local history study (p. xvii).

After the Introduction, the book is split into four chronologically-arranged parts. The book is chronologically and geographically unbalanced: most of the chapters (13 out of 16) focus on Eastern England, which is where Dymond's own work has been concentrated and 8 chapters are devoted to the medieval period, being split between medieval religion and medieval trade and industry. Topics explored in medieval religion include clergy-lay disputes in an Augustinian Priory in Barnwell, Cambridgeshire, an examination of the donors of glass windows in the medieval churches of York, hermits from Norwich, an exploration of medieval religion through the cult of Henry VI, and an analysis of the will of a particularly well-armed cleric from fifteenth-century Suffolk. The trade and industry section examines smaller late medieval Norfolk fairs, a comparison of the woollen and worsted industries across two centuries, and the domestic building industry in Stamford.

The first two chapters from the early modern section examine hierarchy and politics, the first being a seventeenth-century study of the politics of the town corporation in Thetford, Norfolk, and the second examining three centuries' worth of parochial office holding in families in Long Melford, Suffolk. The last chapter in this section explores how cheese connects Lowestoft, Suffolk and Anstruther in Fife. Part IV, covering the modern era, begins with an exploration of internal workhouse disorder in Suffolk, the most pauperised county in England at the time of the New Poor Law. The next two chapters both explore changes in settlement and population. The first features suburbanisation in Sutton, Surrey, and the second population decline in Godmanchester in Huntingdonshire. The actions of a courageous canon from Brightlingsea in Essex and his relationship with his oyster-catching laity forms the penultimate chapter. The last chapter explores Dymond's idea of place in local history, and how concepts of a particular place can be constructed in regional fiction.

As a festschrift, each essay can be expected to reference or relate to part of Dymond's work, and this the book does. Some connect to specific articles or books by him, such as the chapter on office holding in Long Melford in Suffolk or the seventeenth-century feuding within Thetford Corporation. However, a large part of the book's strength lies in the fact that each of the topically very distinctive and different essays almost serve as case studies for local history, as well as reflecting the breadth of Dymond's own research interests. A good range of local history methods and techniques are usefully illustrated across the essays. In addition, each chapter also includes some reflection on how Dymond approached his study of the subject. In some cases this is almost unwritten, and one must read between the lines to understand Dymond's influence upon the writer. In others, Dymond's impact is more upfront, such as his recommendations on how to choose a subject for

research (p. 141), or ‘his use of geographical concepts, space and relationships in landscape studies’ (p. 99).

At the same time, the book also suffers in two particular ways. While the focus on eastern England is understandable given that Dymond’s own work in local history was centred on this region, as a work of local history it would be stronger if the essays in it were more regionally balanced. As it is, just 18 per cent of the book features areas outside of this region. While the small print on the reverse details that it has a ‘particular focus on Eastern England’, the title does not reflect this and this could disappoint a reader who was hoping for a geographically broad perspective. In addition, the book should certainly feature more maps—it has just six maps in four chapters and for a historian who valued the engagement of local history with other disciplines such as geography this is rather a glaring omission. Chapters 14 and 15 in particular would be improved with the inclusion of maps reflecting the changes of population and locations of specific areas.

Despite this, the book has a great deal to offer, particularly for those interested in medieval eastern England. Even for those who are not especially interested in either, there is much to discover here on the ‘doings’ of local history, and there is a feeling that in this respect, David Dymond would greatly approve of the essays offered up in honour of his work.

Liz Van Wessem

Lionel Munby, updated by Heather Falvey, *Hertfordshire Population Statistics 1563-1801* (Hertfordshire Record Society, 2019). 38pp. ISBN: 978-0-9501741-1-2. £5 (p/b).

This short but valuable book provides a comprehensive set of the surviving figures from the six main ecclesiastical surveys for the parishes of Hertfordshire in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It also includes substantial discussions of how the raw figures can be turned into credible parish-level population estimates, and of the other useful information the original returns often contain. The first edition was authored by Lionel Munby and published in 1964, while this new edition has been updated by Heather Falvey. The update has involved adding much more systematic and detailed citations of both archival and secondary material, and a bibliography of more recent work on these sources. Furthermore, Falvey has added extra appendices with some late sixteenth-century figures for one area that was otherwise lacking, and a survey of where to find the fragmented surviving Hearth Tax returns for the county.

The main sets of figures explained and tabulated here are for the ecclesiastical inquiries of 1563 (families), 1603 (communicants), 1676 (communicants and

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dissenters), 1706-1723 (families and dissenters), 1749-1770 (houses and individuals), c. 1790 (families, dissenters and houses), and 1801 (individuals). Almost all parishes are missing figures from one or more of these returns but, taken together, they provide a very full picture of chronological patterns. An example of the returns for a single parish provides a sense of the potential value but also the complexity of these numbers: Aldbury had 33 families in 1563; 180 communicants in 1603; 174 adults in 1676, of whom 8 were dissenters; 55 to c. 60 families in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, of whom 4 or 5 were Presbyterian and 8 were Anabaptist or Quaker; 67 families around 1790, of whom 20 were dissenters; and 457 individuals in 105 families in 1801. None of the figures based on ecclesiastical surveys can be straightforwardly converted into simple population totals, but the authors ably set out the various plausible multipliers that have been used for such conversions, enabling the reader to make his or her own decision about the best method.

Although the authors present these data as ‘raw material’ for others to interpret, there is in fact a fair amount of thoughtful analysis included in the book too. Munby provides a series of population estimates for the county as a whole, compares them to Rickman’s figures drawn from parish registers, and briefly discusses the pattern of change across these centuries. He also summarises the evidence in the surveys of the geographical distribution of religious dissenters, noting for example not only the high concentration of Protestant nonconformists in Hertford but also around Hitchin, Hemel Hempstead, and Berkhamsted. The book includes a set of maps which illustrate the estimates of population and religious dissent, even if they are admittedly less visually pleasing than the versions that could be produced with modern geographical information systems.

This combination of abstracted and tabulated raw figures with thoughtful interpretation and extensive information about how to learn more make this a welcome addition to the growing range of published resources on local populations at this time. Any historian working on Hertfordshire in this period, or any scholar interested in attempting comparative analysis of local populations, will benefit from this new edition.

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Kate Tiller, *English Local History: an Introduction*, (3rd edn, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2020). x + 307pp. ISBN 978-1-78327-524-3. £19.99 (p/b).

English Local History: an Introduction identifies major routes through the varied ‘pathways’ in English local history for those new to the discipline. Kate Tiller’s

work at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education, and her involvement in the establishment of courses at community, undergraduate and postgraduate level, is reflected in an easy, approachable written style that will readily draw the newcomer into the subject.

The book is divided into six chapters. The first, 'Beginning local history', is arguably the most immediately useful to the new local historian. It contains an overview of the range of secondary material that can be found, a sense of the historiography of local history, and introduces related fields such as microhistory. While obvious to an academic or experienced historian, her strong suggestion in this chapter that the new researcher begin with secondary material is arguably one of the most important in the book. The subsequent chapters are arranged chronologically, from early-medieval to modern. Some might criticise this arrangement, arguing that a reverse chronology might be more useful. Tiller pre-empted this criticism in her introduction, pointing out that 'longer-term legacies' will appear during the course of research and rightly argues for the importance of understanding these 'legacies' (p. 3).

The early-medieval chapter explains tools such as place-name studies, and where and how to find relevant primary source documents. The third, medieval, chapter explores local communities within the manor, and the urban landscape. Chapter Four covers the early modern period, focusing on the parish and its growing civil role at this time. Exploration is also undertaken of communities, of the shifting demographic and economic currents of the early modern period. Religion—which was tremendously important to early modern contemporaries—rightly gets its own section too.

A chapter entitled 'Traditional into modern: local lives' examines the years between 1750 and 1914. Tremendous changes in society are summarised in this chapter: population fluctuation, rural changes, social structural changes such as the development of classes, the increasing role of government, and religious changes all get a look in. The last chapter brings us up to the modern day, opening with the reflection that this period lies within the realm of lived experience, unlike any other period in the book. Here, muses Tiller, lie the difficulties of managing balance in both perspective and information, since the volume of primary source material in the modern day becomes greater.

The chapters all have commonalities: case studies pepper the book, showing how various methods can be pulled together to explain a particular element of local history. Chapters Three to Six all include some kind of background section and a 'context and themes' section (although the specific themes vary). Chapters Two to Six also include useful sections on 'sources and methods', where the most important sources of the period are discussed in more depth. Included here are tremendously useful checklists of the main sources available during each period, broken down by type—and Chapter Five's checklist has been extensively

annotated, so is even more valuable. Towards the end of the book can be found 'Further reading'. Divided into sections such as local history in general; sources and skills; themes and contexts; relevant journals; and selected local studies, this easily-missed part of the book contains much valuable information. However, omitted from this section is any kind of reference to useful websites. Tiller acknowledges the use of the internet for research and the importance of digital sources and projects elsewhere in the book. However, the introductory paragraph to the 'Further reading' section notes that the text of this book is 'designed to be referred to for some time to come' so Tiller declines to list specific web addresses due to their impermanent nature. While she has a point with regard to the transitory nature of website addresses, there are also long-standing organisations that have had, and will likely continue to have a presence on the internet featuring primary source data for years to come, such as The National Archives or British History Online, and a list of these (by name rather than by address) would be useful to a historian starting with the computer, as so many do. An alternative could be pointing the reader to a source that does keep web references up to date, such as The British Association of Local History's *Internet Sites for Local Historians: a Directory*. It would be good if this could be corrected should Tiller produce a fourth edition.

As it promises, the book is a lively, readable introduction to local history, and in that respect it is highly recommended. It would be a valued book on the shelf of someone new to studying local history as a subject in its own right or to an individual wanting to research his or her local area. It might also be useful to those looking to expand their knowledge of a specific geographical or chronological area. As for the more experienced historian, a good one third of the footnotes refer to texts published since the second edition in 2002 (with the most recent references from 2019) so those without easy access to university libraries may find these useful. Tiller herself refers to this edition as 'much revised', reflecting the substantial changes that have taken place in the field (p. 1).

Local history can be valuable in a number of different ways, as the book reflects, and rightly notes that one of these is the sheer breadth that the local historical perspective can encompass, and how it contributes to wider history. It is also a subject that can be studied by anyone, and frequently is. As Tiller notes, today local history is 'used (or consumed?)' through education, social media, tourism, community and public history projects and private family history research (p. 1). It is this popularity and prevalence, the simple question of asking—why is that?—that make the tools of local history available to everyone, and books like these so important.

Liz Van Wessem

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Andy Wood, *Faith, Hope and Charity: English Neighbourhoods, 1500-1640* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2020). xvi + 291pp. ISBN: 978-1-108886-76-5. £22.99 (p/b).

Local records and contemporary writings are awash with stories of conflict and discord, and of camaraderie and compassion in pre-modern English neighbourhoods. So much so that ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘neighbourliness’ are concepts we encounter time and again in early modern scholarship. We might therefore be forgiven for thinking we already know what it meant to be a neighbour and that a book-length study is not required.

But Andy Wood’s *Faith, Hope and Charity: English Neighbourhoods, 1500-1640* stretches open the intimate, local worlds to which early modern men and women belonged (or in some cases, did not belong). Drawing on a rich constellation of sources including court records, petitions, ballads, advice literature and treatises, Wood seeks to understand the bonds, reciprocities and ideals that held early modern communities together. Over this period, contemporaries were concerned that society had become ‘cold and conflictual’ (p. 3) by increased litigiousness between neighbours, fervent Puritan attacks on community practices like maypole dancing and wassailing, and diminished hospitality and charity by local lords and gentry. Yet ideals of community nonetheless persisted. This is a book based on deep archival research that looks to reconcile—or at least account for—both the hard and soft edges of neighbourhood.

The book is divided into four substantial chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on defining neighbourhood by mapping out the landscape of ideals and practices that underpinned being neighbourly. Credit relations, Christian charity and interdependence between households are explored here as bedrocks of neighbourhood. Wood charts a persistent fear of the erosion of neighbourhood and its collective outlook.

The second chapter considers relations and bonds between different sorts of neighbourhood inhabitants. Here the focus is on structures and signifiers of neighbourhood, both physical and conceptual. Paternalism and social hierarchies reinforced cultures of reciprocity, charity and love between richer and poorer neighbours. Wood plots out various expressions of neighbourliness that lodged themselves in early modern mentalities: from pots and pans bearing inscriptions such as ‘Love thy neighbour’ (which feature in Sara Pennell’s work) to alehouses, festivities and games which were all arenas in which neighbourhood was performed, challenged and reinforced.

Chapter 3 considers the spatial and ideological boundaries of neighbourhood. The language of neighbourhood is a useful tool of analysis here; while ‘country’ signified a local area, it spanned a wider geography for early modern gentry, Wood argues, thereby widening obligations for this group of society. For men and women

of more limited means, ‘country’ was part of a lexicon of neighbourhood that gave them a local sense of collectivity and agency. Wood traces these same principles through rural and urban communities, contending that urban inhabitants were not simply placeless and anonymous. They too cultivated and maintained lively parish communities with neighbourly solidarities that existed into the seventeenth century. Inherent in the concept of neighbourliness is its antithesis: *unneighbourliness*. ‘Order and quietness’, Wood asserts, were the two main things that neighbours expected from one another (p. 135). Social disorder—including upended gender norms—threatened the social harmony and peace of neighbourhoods. Misbehaviour was punished by the neighbourhood collective and attempts to reconcile disputes could occur locally.

The final chapter interrogates challenges to neighbourhood such as dearth, disease, witchcraft, and spiritual schisms. These religious, social, economic and political tribulations challenged and tested established ideas of inclusivity. One of the most interesting themes with which the book as a whole engages with is that of choice: faith, hope and charity are, after all, optional. Wood’s assertion that it was the richer and middling sorts who really had *choice* in upholding and perpetuating values and ideals of neighbourhood is perhaps unsurprising but, for me, is rarely explored and unpacked. While the rich had a social duty towards their poorer neighbours, their choices were less constrained than those of the poor, who under enormous pressures and challenges nonetheless tried to hold their communities together.

As with all of Wood’s work, the analysis—particularly of the place of poor folk—is heartfelt, impassioned and at times evocative. The research is painstakingly meticulous and the analysis rich and illuminating. Neighbourhoods were by no means static; and movement, particularly of the migrant poor wandering between settlements in search of work, food and lodging, is given due attention. Newcomers, he says, ‘may well have been welcomed’ so long as they were not perceived as a potential burden on the community (p. 21). But the place of migrant youth—apprentices and servants—in communities that valued long residence is somewhat overlooked. Although Wood asserts that migration was largely local, a significant proportion of men and women travelled further for work. Being outside the five- or six-mile radius of ‘country’, these were new faces in the early modern neighbourhood. How did the principles of inclusion and exclusion operate for these groups? The place of the young is also deserving of more attention.

Nonetheless, *Faith, Hope and Charity* strikes a powerful chord with its reader. It was published in a year when our physical environment shrunk to the local, and neighbours and neighbourhood came to adopt a more central place in the modern world. This, too, was a year in which ideas of exclusion were confronted on an international scale. To suggest continuity between early modern society and our own in how belonging is constructed and understood is perhaps a stretch, but the

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contents of this impassioned, yet measured book nonetheless resonate with some of our own concerns today.

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