is a constantly evolving process and publications derive integrity from their time, place and context.

Gender, religion and local leadership were some of the more significant themes that were overlooked or only partially explored in the earlier analyses, deficiencies that some of the contributors readily acknowledge, and the third segment of the book addresses some of these issues. Heather Laird traces the contribution of the Ladies Land League and argues for the centrality of women generally in the Land War of 1879–82. Anne Kane addresses the role of the Catholic Church but, unfortunately, her jargon-laden approach mars the analysis. Gerard Moran raises the important question of local leadership in agrarian movements and offers as a case study the part played by Matthew Harris in land agitation in Connacht. The final essay is by Tony Varley, whose focus, as in his survey chapter in the book's first section, is the twentieth century, specifically the role of various farmers' parties and the politics of land redistribution.

The contributions to this compound of survey, reflection, new research and indicators to the future vary in quality, accessibility and significance, and, inevitably, there is some replication of themes and ideas. The introduction and the various chapters are properly referenced and, with the exception of those in section two, have select bibliographies appended. Production values are high, reflecting possibly the book's high purchase price, with an attractive, suggestive cover image, Gerard Dillon's *The little green fields*, *c*.1945.

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Homicide in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland. By Richard Mc Mahon. Ppxii, 221. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2013. £70.

In February 1847, at the height of the Great Famine, James Malone was apprehended by the County Meath constabulary for the murder of Patrick Brennan, some thirty-six years previously. The stabbing and murder of Brennan in the village of Mayo in Queen's County (Laois) in 1811 occurred when two factions contested the space on the fair green as a place to sell their wares. The apprehension of Malone, thirty-six years after the crime had been committed, said much about public attitudes to crime and homicide in general in the Ireland of the 1840s. Ireland was not, as has been casually suggested, a lawless society where homicide and crime were ignored, but one which conformed to a strict moral code. Since the mid-1990s the study of the Great Irish Famine has been greatly enhanced by a number of important multidisciplinary works. Richard Mc Mahon's *Homicide in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland* is another in this field. Using a multitude of sources the author carefully reconstructs and examines homicide in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland. This is achieved by adopting a case-study approach principally in four counties – Armagh, Fermanagh, Kilkenny and Queen's County. By doing so he has filled a gap in the historiography of Famine Ireland. This examination of homicide in Ireland is divided into four key areas: personal relations, family, land and finally, sectarianism. All the while the author asks the question: was Ireland a violent society? Indeed, throughout the book Mc Mahon challenges the assumption that Ireland became a much more ordered society after the Famine, arguing that there was continuity in the approach of family and community in controlling social order, which in turn prevented the escalation of violence and homicide. Controlling individual behaviour varied over time and place but it appears that it was effective enough in Famine Ireland. Skilfully, Mc Mahon addresses the variety of causes of homicide, which in this predominantly rural society ranged from

the overconsumption of alcohol to character assassination to adultery. Significantly, the study does not, as the author makes clear in the introduction, include cases of infanticide, which accounted for 44 per cent of all homicides during this period. While recent pioneering studies in this field have undoubtedly provided unique insights, this is an area which needs further exploration given the circumstances which prevailed in Ireland in the late 1840s. Indeed, the author highlights numerous avenues for potential research in this field. Undoubtedly, these further studies in violence and crime, particularly those relating to assault, robbery and rape, will reveal more about society in Ireland in general during this period. A key strength of the book is that the author frequently compares crime rates in 1840s Ireland with those of Ireland and Europe in the twenty-first century, allowing some sense of perspective of how violent a country it was. In addition, chapters examining homicide at family and community level offer new insights into the nature of communal solidarity in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland, something which it appears the Famine eroded, at least temporarily. Likewise, as the author argues, the evidence would suggest that political and religious animosity was not a major factor in homicide rates, contrary to our preconceived ideas of the fractured nature of Irish society. However, the chapter devoted to homicide and land, as the author clarifies, will provoke most debate and perhaps requires further investigation. The author argues that although land-related disputes have received considerable attention within the historiography they were by no means the primary causes of violence. However, homicide was not the only measure of violence in relation to land during the pre-Famine and Famine period. Indeed, if would-be assassins had been more successful the numbers could have been far greater. This was best exemplified in the case of George Garvey, a detested land agent in King's County, who survived as many as seven assassination attempts in the 1840s. When it came to land grievances and issues, disgruntled and affected tenants often aired their grievances in a multitude of ways. In some counties, for example Roscommon, Leitrim, Longford and Mayo, land-related violence manifest itself on an almost daily basis. Access to, and indeed maintaining a grip on land, in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland was something which ultimately fuelled crime and division amongst rural society. One minor quibble is that the book might have been better served if the motives and sources, which appear as an appendix, were included in the introduction. However, this aside, this is an important work in understanding the motives for homicide in mid-nineteenth century Ireland. Mc Mahon's erudite study will certainly spark further research and debate, as historians and others consider how accurate is the claim that Ireland was long 'a quiet country'.

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WILD ARABS AND SAVAGES: A HISTORY OF JUVENILE JUSTICE IN IRELAND. By Paul Sargent. Pp xii, 228. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2014. £65.

In *Wild Arabs and savages: a history of juvenile justice in Ireland*, Paul Sargent provides a sociologically-based study of how the Irish juvenile justice system developed. Covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Sargent's book is a thoughtfully considered interpretation of a deeply controversial topic that delves into a system now associated with prison-like confinement, abuse and childhood vulnerability. *Wild Arabs and savages* is therefore timely and relevant. Sargent commences by providing a somewhat descriptive overview of the structure of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century juvenile justice system. He traces the post-Famine introduction of industrial