

this will want to discover more of Loane and the many subtleties apparent in her writing, and the same can be said for many excerpts in the set. Finally, Anna Martin, a settlement worker, considers (1913) the problem of wives who do not get sufficient maintenance from husbands who earn a decent wage but withhold too much for their own needs and pleasures, their women finding inadequate succour from the poor law guardians. Although there is some superficial overlap between the excerpts here, each one offers something special and distinctive. That is a general feature of Andrew August's selections across these four volumes. And so is the geographical spread firmly in place from vol. I, and the variety of voice that begins to emerge strongly from vol. II.

So what, in sum, does this selection offer us that searching the rich variety of internet databases does not? It opens out, I think, a gateway and a guide. The several Introductions here prepare the ground for a greater understanding of the subject matter than would otherwise be available when tackling the sources direct and unannounced, as it were. It is helpful to have Professor August's overview of the shifting patterns of fashion that have lionized and then unduly denigrated social history in the historiography: his whole project is, to a certain extent, an exercise in rehabilitation, and as a social and urban historian myself I wish all power to his elbow. The Introductions to the four volumes then provide numerous pointers on how to read the material in front of us, often against the grain of the writers' stated intentions, sometimes exploring the new fields of interest within 'the social' that have emerged from feminist critiques and the cultural turn. All this is of value to the student. And so, to both student and scholar alike, is the revelatory selection that Andrew August gives us, suggesting innumerable fruitful avenues for further investigation among largely forgotten writers and dusty publications. It will need to be on the shelves of every history department library in Britain and beyond.

Jerry White

Birkbeck, University of London

Louise Miskell, *Meeting Places: Scientific Congresses and Urban Identity in Victorian Britain*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 204pp. 14 b&w illustrations. £60.00.
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Between 1831 and 1884, the annual meetings of various national scientific organizations were held in 62 urban centres around Britain and Ireland. These week-long meetings away from London became an important part of the Victorian urban cultural calendar and provide a useful and fascinating indicator that towns had attained a high level of social and cultural significance. They often attracted a lot of attention and drew large audiences. The first of these associations to be founded and the most eminent was the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) established in 1831. The other three organizations that Louise Miskell examines are the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS), the Royal Archaeological Institute (RAI) and the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE). After considering how and why the pattern of these meetings changed, the book looks at how and why different towns competed to hold meetings, comparing the behaviour of the four organizations. It then considers the process of running these events, the kind of speakers and audiences that they attracted and the wider impact and legacy of these 'parliaments of

science' upon urban life in the locality. It concludes that these events were as important as royal visits and major civic ceremonies in providing towns with an opportunity to promote their own status and identity. The main argument of the book is that local urban centres were able to use the weekly congresses to boost local civic pride and to assert their status and reputation against competition from rival towns. Miskell contends that the holding of these 'great annual knowledge festivals' conferred important 'cultural capital' upon the towns involved which supplemented and complemented that gained through the provision of other institutions perhaps more associated with Victorian social urban improvement such as libraries, museums and galleries.

The strength of competition between towns for the learned congresses underscores how importantly they were regarded and how significant inter-urban rivalry was as a driver of Victorian urban culture. We learn how towns competed and campaigned to hold the meetings and how the organizations themselves selected the places for their occurrence. The impact of the growth of major industrial and manufacturing centres and the relative decline of many county towns and ecclesiastical centres is evident and the choice of towns for all four association meetings shows a broad shift from capitals, regional centres and historic country towns towards growing manufacturing and industrial centres, although many of the former continued to hold their own throughout the period. The impact of inter-urban rivalry at the regional level is also evident in the choice of location, where there was no obvious national or regional centre. In Wales, for instance, it is striking that the earliest meeting was at Swansea rather than Cardiff which had not yet emerged as national capital, whilst in the English East Midlands, meetings took place at Leicester, Nottingham and Derby as there was no obvious regional capital.

The book's primary focus upon the urban dimension of the weekly parliaments rather than their scientific or intellectual content pays real dividends. The richly documented and meticulous case-studies illuminate the impact of the congresses upon the towns involved, the personalities most associated with these and astutely balance wealth of detail with generalizations. There is also useful attention to the impact of the scientific parliaments upon broader urban culture and improvement. By deploying a wealth of primary source materials, most of which have not been exploited by urban historians in this kind of way before, including local and national newspaper accounts, this book offers a new and genuinely Britain-wide perspective on a period when comparison and competition between neighbouring places was a constant preoccupation of urban elites. We learn what kind of events took place at the meetings and how these were capitalized upon by the interweaving of civic municipal events into the scientific congresses. Corporations and other local government bodies, for instance, were usually much in evidence, with councillors and civic dignitaries attending and often unveiling celebratory statues or plaques, events which were usually documented in the newspapers. Descriptions and illustrations of meetings and associated events reached national and international audiences through publications such as the *Illustrated London News*. The book sheds much light upon Victorian scientific and intellectual cultures more generally including the major expansion in the audiences for science that was taking place between the 1830s and 1880s. Academics, scientific luminaries and elite figures visited provincial towns and cities, mixing with local scientific/intellectual, clerical, medical or civic figures causing a stir. Scientific debates and discussions on evolution and other topics appeared in local newspapers and the audiences for these meetings therefore went well beyond those who actually attended events. We

learn where events took place in theatres, libraries, museums and galleries. There is also attention to the involvement of women and other participants including children and the working classes. Miskell demonstrates that the attendance and behaviour of women and the working classes was often keenly commented on. At Aberdeen in 1859, for instance, she notes that ladies at the BAAS would 'find the evening meetings and conversaciones congenial' and in turn 'impart grace and attraction to them' (p. 120); on the other hand, their supposed lack of knowledge was frequently commented upon.

The book illustrates very clearly how important science was in Victorian urban culture and helps to bridge an important gap in scholarship between the literary and philosophical culture of the Georgian and Regency periods and the provincial associations, museums and universities of Victorian science. It also underscores the importance of the interface between national science and scientific associations, the crystallization of scientific disciplines and the practice of science at a local, urban and regional level. For example, we see the extent to which local scientists and geological and natural historical studies informed the content and character of events, helped to bolster local civic pride, how meetings sometimes stimulated the formation of local societies and how this dimension helped to expand the audience for science as well as bolster local civic pride and enhance the culture and status of the town. At Manchester in 1842, for instance, the achievements of John Dalton were celebrated whilst the work of local chemist James Joule and engineer William Fairbairn was also featured (p. 133).

This superb, richly documented and illuminating study can be very highly recommended to academics and students of urban history, the history of science, Victorian studies and other related fields.

Paul Elliott

University of Derby

Moritz Föllmer, *Individuality and Modernity in Berlin: Self and Society from Weimar to the Wall*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. ix + 312pp. 10 plates. Bibliography. £65.00.
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Moritz Föllmer, who in the past decade has written a number of excellent essays on suicide, the apartment and popular novels in Weimar Germany, expands his focus in this new monograph to the notoriously nebulous concepts of individuality and modernity, as found in Berlin between c. 1930 and 1961. A book-length study has allowed Föllmer to flesh out his thesis that, contrary to much of the existing literature, individuality was present, albeit in a multitude of guises, in Berlin from the late Weimar period onward. This runs counter to the position of Ulrich Herbert and others that residents of (West) Germany only began to shake off collectivist mentalities and accept modernity around 1960. Föllmer deliberately draws his study to a close at this juncture to underscore his revisionist stance.

Föllmer does not argue that a single form of individuality developed across these three decades and the four regimes they encompassed. Crucial to the persuasiveness of his argument is the concept of 'multiple individualities' (p. 3). In short, the forms of individuality found in Weimar, Nazi, East and West Berlin varied considerably, even within each regime. Residents of Weimar Berlin experienced 'existential uncertainty', which Föllmer describes as a 'key dimension of individuality in modern times' (p. 46), and witnessed the competing claims of