development of mechanised picking, the tractor, a greater emphasis on disease control and the development of disease-resistant and dwarf varieties. The huge post war research contribution of Wye agricultural college is also properly emphasised.

For readers wishing to explore more fully the intricacies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century hop cultivation in the Kentish Weald (there is only a passing reference to other regions such as the west Midlands) this is an excellent text, with a full bibliography. There might have been more illustrative material: perhaps a diagram to explain the planting schemas, or even some of the many available photographs of the people involved, such as the pickers, farmers and middlemen. At times the text is long on description but short on analysis: precisely why, for example, could American and German hops outbid those from the United Kingdom in the home market? And what is it that makes an East Kent 'Golding' a superior hop to a Wealden 'Fuggle'? Finally, the greater deployment of primary sources such as the census enumerators' schedules, the 1910 valuation survey books and maps, and the National Farm Survey of 1941–43, would have added greatly to our understanding of those case study farms chosen, and also the middlemen in the Borough. Nevertheless, those sources which were used were revealing, and well handled. As an insight into an iconic rural landscape, this is an excellent guide.

Brian Short
University of Sussex

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Paul Cullen, Richard Jones and David N. Parsons, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape*, Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011. 224 pp. £14.99 pb. 9781902806822.

This book is a very readable study of a place name type that describes a habitation of some kind, whether hillfort or hamlet. This kind of name is difficult to study as often there is nothing to see on the ground that would indicate size, function or appearance. It is easier to recover the meanings of Old English topographical elements because these features survive to be explored, unless they have been overwhelmed by modern townscapes. Thus there are studies of individual topographical elements, and there is Gelling and Cole's book on *The Landscape of Place-Names*, written by a linguist and a geographer, but until recently there has been little exploration of the habitative elements. *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* is a welcome pioneering study of one such term and, as in *The Landscape of Place-Names*, the authors have pooled their knowledge. There are chapters describing the corpus of names with both English and Danish variants, the archaeology of thorp sites and of their distribution, especially in respect of soils and hence farming possibilities. Approaching the question 'what is a thorp?' from different angles, and finding ideas converging, has allowed the authors to suggest an answer: that a thorp is a relatively late place name element whose use extended into post Conquest times; it was closely connected with arable farming, and arose in the period when there were great changes in the farming landscape as the open field system took hold.

This series, 'Explorations in Local and Regional History', aims to publish work of mid length and, with 160 pages of text plus appendices, 'Thorps' fulfils that requirement. The series aims to cover novel themes and fresh subjects and this is the first book to deal with habitative place names in such detail, at least in recent decades. The third aim is that it should be accessible to a wide readership avoiding 'technical language and jargon', and this book is easy reading. The numerous brief recapitulations of earlier points are most helpful to anyone trying to assimilate unfamiliar material.

Informative maps, diagrams and photographs enliven the text. Fortunately the errors in maps 6.9 and 6.10 were discovered in time to provide replacements. Producing clear maps using only black and white is not easy and it is particularly difficult to distinguish between the two or three grades of soil shown by shading on maps 6.7 and 6.8 when looked at in detail, although the overall impression is adequate. The large size of the dots on maps 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10 make it difficult to see what the underlying soil type is, and the close clusters give the impression that there is nothing but thorps locally. The smaller dots on maps 6.4 and 6.5 give a more realistic and easy to interpret picture. Another error noticed is on p. 9: there is a statement that *ōra* means 'bank, shelf', whereas a more careful reading of Gelling and Cole makes it clear that an *ōra* is the same shape as an *ofer*, namely a flat-topped ridge with a rounded shoulder.

Chapter six comments on the suitability of land for dairying, seemingly meaning the raising of milch cows, but as sheep were widely used for producing milk and cheese some comment on sheep rearing and the part they played in fertilising arable land would have been welcome. The growing understanding of the precise meaning of topographical elements is enabling us to visualise the physical landscape of England through its place names. The publication of this book is an important step in enabling us to see how the place names describing human activities help to complete our overall picture of the medieval English landscape. The sombre, though entertaining, cover photo hides an exciting new approach to place name study in this book.

Ann Cole
Lincoln

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Paul A Elliot, Charles Watkins and Stephen Daniels, *The British Arboretum: Trees, Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, London, Pickering and Chatto, 2011. 320 pp. £60. 9781848930971.

Of my friends who grew up in Derby, there was not one who visited its arboretum as a child. By the 1970s it had acquired a rather unsavoury reputation, fitting neatly with the perception of public parks which had been circulating since the late Victorian period, as run down, contested spaces, full of dangers and antisocial behaviour, with trees ravaged by pollution and ill use. This comprehensive, readable and interesting study of arboreta in the nineteenth century seeks to recover these spaces as microcosms of the enlightenment