

from dense scrub or high up in trees. Nor was it easy to avoid incidentally recording other species singing in the background, a problem given Koch's educative aims. Nevertheless, the recordings were popular, and, Guida suggests, they contributed to the popularization of birdwatching after the war. Koch's enthusiasm for his adopted country was reflected in his conviction that English birds sing better. Whatever his listeners made of this, there was undoubtedly a resonance between his birdsong recordings and perceived markers of Englishness such as quietness, domesticity, and moderation.

There is a limit to what anyone can do in 150 pages, and I am sure Guida would be the first to acknowledge that *Listening to British Nature* is not a comprehensive study. There is much more on the wars than on the period between, much more on military than civilian listening during World War I, and the converse during World War II, and much more on birdsong than the other sounds of nature (including the many other noises birds make). Indeed, the book reads rather as a collection of sparkling essays than a closely rehearsed argument—the chapter on rambling sticks out in this respect. The question of how nature is and was understood and defined warrants much fuller discussion, as does the relationship between listening to nature and experiencing it through other senses. It is surprising that there is so little engagement with the work of David Matless and others on sonic geographies, especially in the section on playing the radio outdoors (chapter 3). More fundamentally, although the quotations and examples that underpin the book are well chosen and plausibly construed, a short, wide-ranging study of this kind cannot take the reader very far into the listening experience of the individuals concerned. *Listening to British Nature* is nevertheless a valuable addition to the literature—an informative, thought-provoking, and indeed in many respects pioneering study that is likely to stimulate much further research on rural and natural soundscapes in and beyond twentieth-century Britain.

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JANE HAMLETT and JULIE-MARIE STRANGE. *Pet Revolution: Animals and the Making of Modern British Life*. London: Reaktion, 2023. Pp. 288. £20.00 (cloth).  
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With *Pet Revolution: Animals and the Making of Modern British Life*, Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange make an important contribution to both the history of animals and the history of modern Britain. As they describe the emergence of a British culture of petkeeping, they draw on a wide literature, but they also chart some new directions. They are keen throughout to bring the story of companion animals up to date. An excellent read, *Pet Revolution* is entertaining and often very moving.

The significant contributions Hamlett and Strange provide are several. Notably, they trace changes and continuities in petkeeping over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other scholars have looked at the earlier period, but they are often interested exclusively in pet dogs or the wide range of relationships with animals in modern Britain. Some offer comparisons with the present day but lack the continuous perspective. Others are preoccupied with specialist histories, such as the rise of animal welfare. I do not know of a directly comparable book, although there are many sociological and theoretical studies of pets and companion animals inevitably of relevance. Hamlett and Strange come at this topic as historians, however, rather than from the perspective of animal studies, and their overall account is steadfastly empirical, as the preference for the ordinary word *pet* indicates. So, too, does

their reliance on Keith Thomas's *Man and the Natural World. Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (1983), a time-honored explication of a pet as an animal kept in the home, named, and not raised to be eaten, a definition that Hamlett and Strange expand upon but do not want to challenge.

In their substantive chapters, Hamlett and Strange provide some distinctly new emphases. While chapters 3, 4, and 6, on the pet and the home, the pet's role in family life, and on the grief of losing a pet, are more familiar, chapters 1, 2, and 5 break new ground, at least for me. In chapter 1, they look at the increasing separation of the domestic pet from the wild animal, starting with the nineteenth-century fascination with capturing and taming wild animals, which Hamlett and Strange persuasively link to the trade in exotic animals and to the imperial adventure theme of children's literature, even if the pets were field birds "rescued" from the hedgerows or "bred-tame" budgerigars (31, 40). As Hamlett and Strange argue, compassion for animals in the wild redefined the boundaries of pet keeping. They suggest that the waning of faith in the imperial mission has a counterpart in the developing criticism of trapping and caging wild animals, resulting in a firmer sense of what the wild is and thus what counts as a pet: "Between the early nineteenth and the end of the twentieth century the boundaries between pets and wildlife were radically redrawn" (19).

In chapter 2 Hamlett and Strange look at the business of buying pets, taking in the impressive development of the animal trade, domestic and international, and the many dodges practiced on the innocent and ignorant consumer. As Hamlett and Strange put it, buying a pet was "an activity fraught with potential fraud, deception, and animal cruelty" (78). They underscore the awkward paradoxes of pets being at the same time creatures and commodities, consumer goods, and emotional subjects.

In chapter 5, on the sickness and health of pets, they consider the rise of the vet as a respected expert, even a celebrity: "By the mid-twentieth century vets had become a new form of authority, intervening and shaping pet-owner relationships in new ways" (177). Hamlett and Strange also make the point that the "vetted pet" (148) was a very different animal to its predecessors. Pets then and now cost money when they fell ill, and although the better off were willing to pay, even with the creation of the likes of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals in 1917, working people were faced with difficult choices. As Hamlett and Strange emphasize in chapter 6, "Loving pets will always break our hearts" (208).

These are for me the most surprising and informative chapters, but even in the others there are important contributions. The relationship between pets and home life is rightly presented in chapter 3 as "far from straightforward" (80), rather more so than some of us who have looked at the domestication of animals have supposed. Something similar might be said about the observation about pets and family life, in chapter 4: "Pets still shape the relationships we enjoy (or endure) with our human family much as they continue to mediate our family dynamics and personalities" (145). Pets have sometimes become new kinds of family members, as, for instance, they did with the generation of newly independent but single women after the First World War.

Most notably, Hamlett and Strange move away from a focus on the middle and upper classes and draw compellingly on the accounts of ordinary British people. No one who reads this book could doubt their assertion that pets were hugely important to these working people. Attitudes and ideas and forms of expression may have changed, but as Hamlett and Strange write, "The strength and emotional depth of some keepers' commitment to pet animals has remained relatively constant" (14). This is a very defensible point, but it does have the downside of somewhat homogenizing pet culture and planing off some of its sharper edges. In Hamlett and Strange's history, there is change, but the emphasis on people's enduring passion for pets takes away some of the conflicting emotions. There are the ever-present antagonisms of class, but the reader might reasonably cavil at the idea that pets always brought people together. I wanted perhaps a little more on antipathy toward pets and pet owners, or indeed between them. Something of the weirdness of keeping pets is absent. By making petkeeping

so very normal, some of the eccentricities are lost. At a time when petkeeping is criticized by the environmentally conscious, it would be useful to have more reflection on the costs of petkeeping too. These small cavils take little away from this excellent and much-needed account, but they suggest that there is more to be said about the past, present, and future of our relationship with companion animals.

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LARA KRIEDEL. *The Crimean War and Its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 340. \$120.00 (cloth).  
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In *The Crimean War and Its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain*, Lara Kriegel offers a detailed account of the many and varied ways in which the Crimean War has functioned as a “palimpsest for British history” (10). She examines the “afterlife” of the conflict: the ways in which the war “resonates and accumulates in consensual and conflicting ways” across the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries (5). In doing so, she propels this mid-Victorian war to the very center of historical and contemporary questions of belonging in Britain.

Kriegel has organized the book into three parts: “Persistence,” “Avatars,” and “Angels.” In each part she charts its titular theme across two chapters, though throughout the book *persistence* and *avatars* function as bywords for all of the afterlives under discussion and for the groups and individuals who came to embody the war’s symbolism and key national values. In chapter 1, “The Adventurers,” Kriegel explores the meanings attached to the Crimea by successive waves of visitors. During the war, soldiers and tourists drew upon tropes first espoused in Anglophone accounts by early nineteenth-century travelers to bring the Crimea to life for an audience of “armchair warriors” (28), as individuals at war and at home sought to make sense of shifting European geopolitics, martial masculinities, and the justness of the conflict through wartime encounters. In the postwar years, reckoning with the aftermath of the conflict became central to returners’ narratives and persisted well into the twentieth century, as the Crimea was ravaged by two World Wars and played host to the Yalta Conference in 1945. While the proliferation of tourism in the later twentieth century offered Britons the chance to encounter the Crimea anew, the legends of the Crimean War continued to serve as a key lure and a bridge to an imagined past.

In chapter 2, “The Dutiful,” Kriegel turns to the participants of the charge of the Light Brigade. These men were adopted as special heroes among war veterans and were framed as the embodiment of apparently quintessential English values—duty foremost among them. Successive endeavors by individuals, the media, and businesses to connect to the chargers’ legacy have both upheld and caricatured narratives of the chargers’ heroism, from the “bid for belonging in a sanctified national past at a moment of imperial decline” (79) that characterized one 1968 biography of one of the chargers, to the “kitschy bottoms of mass culture” (85) that the charge descended to in the wake of Tony Richardson’s feature film, released in the same year. Nevertheless, the chargers have functioned as persistent, if malleable, repositories of national mythology and symbolism.

In part two, Kriegel explores the “staying power” (90) of the Victoria Cross, tracing its lasting association with the values of duty and heroism, first formulated during the Crimean War. Introduced with an egalitarian ethos, the Victoria Cross nevertheless became a status symbol and denoted belonging to an exclusive fellowship. Its power over the popular