Inevitably, Costello’s work across genres is of uneven quality. Even Saunders, Costello’s keenest advocate, can find little positive to say about the novels, describing Gabrielle; or, Pictures of a Reign (1843) as “the weakest of her literary output” (198). Yet at least the novels indicate that Costello knew more history than many who have undertaken the writing of historical romances. Her poems and translations demonstrate that she had excellent skills in versification—a feature barely discussed in this volume—but very often her medieval-style poems are overlong. Although she translated lais of Marie de France, she certainly did not share Marie’s economy of expression, while her “Funeral Boat” is both longer and less enigmatic than Tennyson’s reworking of similar Arthurian material. Saunders’s selections thus provide an important service to readers in reprinting a substantial and accessible sample of the best of Costello’s work, leaving readers to decide which texts merit more study.

Overall, Louisa Stuart Costello: A Nineteenth-Century Writer’s Life wins its case that some at least of Costello’s works deserve to be read. After a century of obscurity, many of Costello’s publications, some of which are extremely difficult to locate in hard copy, are now available in online versions and may find new readers through Saunders’s efforts. For example, The Lay of the Stork, which Saunders characterizes as Costello’s “most polished and cleverly wrought text” (114), is of interest as a poem written in the style of Scott and Byron; and, at the same time, as a veiled commentary on Victorian politics and gender issues, and surely merits more critical attention. This volume also deserves credit for drawing attention to one of Costello’s more remarkable efforts, A Summer amongst the Bocages and the Vines (1840), which provides not only a traveler’s guide to Normandy but also shrewd medievalist observation and an extensive number of folks-tales and traditional ballads reworked into English verse. Louisa Stuart Costello will probably never obtain the canonical status of an author that no 19th century syllabus should be without. Yet if readers are inspired investigate more of her works, or even to reproduce an edited version of one of her more significant writings, this volume will have served a valuable purpose.

Katherine D. Harris, Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual, 1823-1835
(Ohio University Press, 2015) xi + 409 $56
A Review by Kathryn Ledbetter
Texas State University

Forget Me Not is a well-researched, detailed history of British literary annuals during the first ten years of the genre. The time frame marks publication of the first literary annual (The Forget Me Not) in 1823 until the fashion for annuals peaked in 1835. Curiosity about the lavishly bound and illustrated, late-Romantic books of miscellaneous prose, poetry, and short fiction admired as literary fashion for women readers seems unending, as indicated by the many journal articles, dissertations, and book chapters published about various aspects of the genre during the last thirty years. Such scholarly engagement exhumed literary annuals from a previously undervalued status as heavily sentimentalized periodical oddities mocked by characters in Victorian fiction such as George Eliot’s Middlemarch, where Ned Plymdale gushes over a recent volume of the Keepsake. Forget Me Not is the first book-length study that gathers and astutely analyzes existing research, shares new discoveries, and successfully integrates the literary annual within the wider context of 19th century publishing history. The book will serve as a guide to the early history, importance, and influence of literary annuals. Although the author claims that “a definitive and conclusive history of the annuals” is impossible, Forget Me Not establishes a concise and comprehensive history that is long overdue (261).
Chapters Three and Four set up first and second generation groupings of annuals to demonstrate evolutions in size, ornamentation, and themes. The first titles of the 1820s, such as the Forget Me Not, Friendship's Offering, and the Literary Souvenir, were experimental, as publishers tried to anticipate reader demands. The physical aspects of the books gradually evolved from the original pocket size to a larger presentation, and content shifted from almanac-style offerings to poetry and prose, which became the standard fare for literary annuals in succeeding years. "Second Generation" annuals introduced the "cult of beauty" in a highly competitive, rapidly expanding market. The Keepsake, the Comic Annual, and dozens of other titles exhausted sales potential, but many continued with some success until mid-century; the last volume of the Keepsake appeared in 1857. Chapter Five discusses the aesthetic tradition of engravings as art and the importance of engravers to the literary annual fashion. The depth of research in this chapter characterizes the entire book and emphasizes the heavy editorial control of annual editors and the importance of the annual forms. The appendices adapt useful bibliographical information from standard reference sources by Frederick W. Faxon and Andrew Boyle and include a helpful index of annual titles, contributors, editors, and publishers.

Forget Me Not is well illustrated with images of engravings common to literary annuals. The introductory pages list ten helpful tables, including information on retail prices of reading materials 1814-35, publishers' costs, author earnings, 19th century poetry sales, publisher subscription orders for the Literary Souvenir of 1829, and a Table of Contents from the first literary annual in 1823. Sixty-three illustrations are reproduced from annuals such as the Keepsake, Literary Souvenir, the Forget Me Not, and lesser known titles such as Almanach des Muses, Keepsake Français, and Schloss's English Bijou Almanac. Also included are images of title pages, inscription plates, calendar pages, bindings and other assorted visual details. I commend Ohio University Press for its attempt to include a more than usual amount of illustrations in a scholarly book. However, some of the images, such as the 1829 Keepsake Table of Contents in Figure 6.1 and the cover illustration, are too small or too blurry to be effective; the paper and binding of this Forget Me Not are sadly out of context with the beautifully grandiose characteristics of the literary annual productions Harris describes. Still, a degree of grace might be offered to the Press for publishing a valuable contribution to research in literary annuals, and for including a great many images, not one too many.

Stephanie Kuduk Weiner, Clare's Lyric: John Clare and Three Modern Poets
(Oxford Univ. Pr., 2014) xiii + 200 $90.00
A Review by Alan D. Vardy
Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Stephanie Weiner's Clare's Lyric: John Clare and Three Modern Poets contributes to the critical understanding of Clare's poetics that has been an ongoing process since the 1990s. The magisterial Oxford edition made Clare's poems available as never before, and readers and critics set themselves the collective task of developing adequate strategies for understanding a vast and formally various corpus. In 1994, the publication of the collection John Clare in Context (Cambridge, 1994) set the terms for the critical debate. For example, Hugh Haughton's essay "Progress and Rhyme: The Nightingale's Nest and Romantic poetry" offered a complex reading of what is now recognized as a major poem, and positioned that reading against the then current consensus of what constituted "Romantic poetry"—a definitional structure that had trouble making room for Clare. James McKusick posed the most direct challenge to that critical bias with his "Beyond the Visionary Company: John Clare's resistance to Romanticism." That "Romanticism" necessarily entailed visionary inwardness via reflection, aesthetic recuperation or some other version of internalization seemed a given at the time, and Clare studies played a role in the expansion of Romantic poetics into Romanticisms. Clare's emphasis on the aesthetic value of the natural objects he loved provided a foundation for a more nuanced sense of the interplay of representations of the object world and internalization. Clare's poetics remain an ongoing site of critical analysis, with Paul Chirico's Clare and the Imagination of the Reader (Palgrave, 2007) and Mina Gorji's John Clare and the Place of Poetry (Liver-
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