

Personal letters and shorter comments

Professor Roy Porter, Wellcome Institute, London

‘On holiday, in the sun, I read *The Savage Wars of Peace* – and with enormous pleasure. It put me in the picture about so many aspects of Japanese history about which I knew nothing; it made me think comparatively; it focused my attention on things I never think about, from house flies to all the different ways of rendering paper; it informed me about a thousand things, like the antiseptic properties of tea and Japanese adoption customs; it gave me great pleasure, not least because it is so elegantly written; and above all it did what all splendid books should do, it whetted my curiosity. Thank you for sending it to me; it gave great enjoyment.’

Also in *Misuzu*, no.442 (1998) (kindly translated from the Japanese by Osamu Saito) Porter wrote of SWP that is its ‘the most illuminating of the works I have ever read with respect to factors pertaining to both 18th –century England’s development and 19th-century Japan’s’.

Dr. James Laidlaw of King’s College, Cambridge, England

‘I wanted to say how much I enjoyed and admire *The Savage Wars of Peace*, which I read just before Christmas – it was as gripping as a detective story.’

Professor Sir Anthony Wrigley, University of Cambridge

‘I am writing to thank you most warmly for *The Savage Wars of Peace*. I have now read it and have marked a great many passages of which I hope to make use in the future. If it is not yet in the process of being translated into Japanese, I have no doubt that it soon will be so and that its publication there will give rise to just as animated a debate as I am sure will prove to be the case in this country. It strikes me that it will prove valuable not only in relation to the particular set of puzzles which you discuss in the book, but also much more generally in providing a new set of categories of analysing (and perhaps explaining) differences between different demographic regimes and their change over time.’

Dame Anne McLaren, FRS, Wellcome Institute, Cambridge

‘I have just finished reading *The Savage Wars of Peace* – aided by a recent visit to Japan (long plane journeys are almost the only opportunity I get for recreational reading). I found it a treasure trove of stimulating ideas and fascinating facts.’

Professor Sir Keith Thomas, University of Oxford

‘Thank you for *The Savage Wars of Peace* (what a good title!).... It is another *tour de force* on your part and as bold, direct and thought-provoking as ever. It is not on a topic on which I have any great competence, though our three weeks in Japan enabled me to appreciate the force of your argument much more than if I had never been there; and what you say about dirt and cleanliness is certainly right on target. I learned something from every chapter and the nine-link chain in note 379 made me laugh aloud. I shall be fascinated to learn what all the historical demographers make of it. It

certainly gives them a model example of how to write simply, lucidly and agreeably about highly complex topics.'