This bibliography of editions complements Ashley Chantler’s cumulative record of critical writing on Cowper since 1980, which is a regular feature of the journal. A list of editions published before 1960 is included in Lodwick Hartley, William Cowper: The Continuing Revaluation: An Essay and a Bibliography of Cowperian Studies from 1895 to 1960 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960). I have given the number of pages in a selection where this provides guidance to its scope and scale.


discreet headnotes, and chronological arrangement enable the reader to build a narrative of Cowper’s inner life, relationships, and activities, while also experiencing his force as a shrewd and committed observer of his times and environment.


Sambrook, James, ed., William Cowper: The Task and Selected Other Poems, Longman Annotated Texts (London: Longman, 1994), 333 pp. A unique addition to the range, printing the whole of The Task and a generous selection of other texts, among them all the important shorter poems, extracts from the ‘Moral Satires’, and (unusually) passages from the translations of Homer. Has an authoritative critical introduction, extensive annotation (conveniently presented as headnotes and footnotes), a chronology, and a bibliographical guide to further reading. Especially suitable for advanced students but rewarding at all levels. Spiller, Brian, ed., Cowper: Poetry and Prose, The Reynard Library (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1968), 1018 pp. Something of a landmark in its time and still valuable. A very substantial selection, with compact introduction and economical, well-judged annotation and other supporting material. Includes a generous choice of shorter poems, all the long poems of 1782, the whole of The Task, some translations, and such pieces as the essay on Cowper’s pet hares, as well as almost 500 pages of letters Professionally edited, expertly presented, attractively produced, an excellent single-volume collection for general use and an all-round view of Cowper.

admired by both Cowper and Byron. The introduction offers thought-provoking perspectives on the ‘Age of Sensibility’ through consideration of the ‘network of coincidences and contradictions’ formed by the work of these three writers. An edition that intervenes unreservedly in the process of critical and literary-historical debate, underlining Cowper’s significance as a poet of both self-conscious reflection and outgoing social concern.
