

Book Reviews

S LIMBREY and J G EVANS (eds), *The effect of man on the landscape: the lowland zone*. Coun Brit Arch. Research Report No 21, 1978. 153 pp. Illus. maps. £10.

This volume contains the papers given at a conference organized by the Scientific Research Committee of the Council for British Archaeology on the effect of man on the landscape in the lowland zone of the British Isles. The twenty papers cover a wide range of topics, including the effect of plants and animals before man came on the scene, and so are difficult to review in the usual way.

The first paper by P J Fowler discusses the propositions of Sir Cyril Fox put forward in *The Personality of Britain* (1932) in the light of the current thoughts on cultural history and land use. The next paper is a discussion by J A Catt on the contribution of loess to soils in lowland Britain, and this is followed by a consideration of changes in the quality and distribution of soils by Susan Limbrey. Prof F W Shotton then demonstrates the archaeological inferences that can be made from a study of alluvium, taking as an example the lower Severn-Avon valleys.

Insect evidence for the effect of man on the landscape is summarized by P J Osborne from remains going back 6000 years. A wider range of biological remains is used by M A Robinson to compare the effects of man on the environment of the Upper Thames Valley during the Iron Age and Roman periods, grassland being predominant in both periods. Dr P C Buckland shows that the generally accepted hypothesis that grain production can be correlated directly with population numbers is unsound because it takes no account of loss due to insect attack during storage.

There then follows an account by Caroline Grigson of the larger ungulates that were present in Britain between the end of the last glaciation and the arrival of the first farmers, in which she points out at the start that the division into highland and lowland zones has little relevance. New data on the vegetational history of East Anglia using pollen analysis are presented by R E Sims, with particular emphasis on forest clearance. J G Evans, C French and D Leighton use land snail analysis in the tufa deposits of two late-glacial and post-glacial sites to study habitat change, and its relation to occupation by human groups.

A detailed discussion of Mesolithic settlement sites in the Weald and elsewhere presented by R M Jacobi shows that their density is greater than hitherto supposed, although they tend to be concentrated in certain geological conditions. The site density, together with pollen analysis, allows an estimate of population to be made. J M Coles, in describing man and landscape in the Somerset Levels, shows how the unique character of this isolated area of peat has enabled the interaction

between changing environmental conditions and human adaptation to be followed over several millennia. In a second paper on the area F A Hibbert deals with the vegetational history.

Colonization and land use in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age are discussed by R Bradley, who contends that the settlement process of the Early Bronze Age owed part of their distinctive character to the economic changes that had begun in the preceding period. Sian Rees then considers the evidence for the tools, particularly the ard, available for cultivation in prehistoric Britain, and H C Bowen discusses 'Celtic' fields and 'ranch' boundaries, showing that the latter are better described by the non-specific term 'linear ditches'.

The evidence from place-names in Berkshire for the effect of man on the landscape is detailed by Margaret Gelling, who distinguishes between habitative and topographical place-names, pointing out that the latter are likely to be more informative. C C Taylor then shows that the location and form of villages frequently changed during Saxon, medieval and later times, and the volume ends with a paper by Willy Groenman-van Waateringe on the impact of Neolithic man on the landscape of the Netherlands.

The volume is well illustrated with maps and line diagrams, with some photographs, and there is a good index for a symposium of this type. One personal disappointment is the lack of special treatment for sheep, which have certainly been most important in moulding our landscape. Perhaps they await study by the modern methods used throughout these very illuminating papers.

M L RYDER

ROBERT NEWCOMB, *Planning the Past*. Dawson, Folkestone. 1979. 255 pp. Illus. £8.

Robert Newcomb's book has come at a time of renewed interest in the past in many countries. 'The visible past,' observes the author, 'is all about us, but we must learn to appreciate it as our heritage and as a recreational resource.' Before this, however, we need to complete an inventory of historic (including of course all prehistoric) features. With this, Newcomb argues, existing museums can take on new roles, and be supplemented with new recreational approaches to history. Further, if we comprehensively record the past in countryside and town, we can better decide what features have to be sacrificed to essential change and which should remain to comprise a fuller and more economic use of the past.

Interestingly, the author is North American: his experience in Britain and Denmark, besides the United

States, allows him to compare the attitudes to the past found in these three countries. In Britain we have long been preoccupied with the conservation of nature and historic buildings. But neither of these can properly be separated from the immensely interesting, man-moulded landscapes of which they form part. British and Continental countrysides abound in features that often have triple value as relics of human occupation and management, as habitats for wildlife, and as collections of species. The real value of such humanized landscapes (as Newcomb points out in examples like Bodmin Moor) lies in the fascinating insights which they give us into the ways in which past communities related to one another and to their surroundings. Indeed, the large number of settlement sites, routeways, and cultivation areas now identified in Britain has required a major rethinking of past population sizes and distributions, and of the technical capabilities of our prehistoric and Roman and Saxon forebears.

Newcomb's book falls into three parts. The first considers 'current planned uses of the past as well as techniques and programmes for expanding historic preservation and making it more useful'. Part 2, in fuller detail, 'surveys rural and urban, industrial and political impacts' on the terrain of the three countries studied, citing a number of important historic landscapes as case studies. Part 3 examines methods of landscape evaluation. The author offers a good review of the existing literature — with extensive chapter bibliographies — and much useful material on making historic landscape inventories. The book considers urban and industrial, as well as rural, landscapes. For each, and drawing especially on his Danish experience, Newcomb stresses the need to find 'recycled' uses of the visible past which meet future requirements, whilst maintaining visual variety and continuity with that past. For this, systematic inventories of artefacts are a basic first step. In view of these aims, the sites and monuments records, for example, now being developed in many English counties are a good start, but they will often need a great deal of enhancement for future planning.

Chapter 3, 'The Inventory and Resource Assessment', makes good reading: it includes the first of a number of very useful tables of artefacts of different ages and origins which comprise 'items of visible history' of Denmark, Britain and the author's home state of California. Newcomb observes that full surveys of artefacts as a basic input to planning are very labour-intensive and time-consuming. However, he nowhere discusses in detail the scope for using a handful of professionals, with some temporarily hired graduates and many more volunteers (trained, eg in winter evening classes), for survey work — as is already being done with remarkable success in several English counties. The cuts in public spending, the expected growth of

'spare time', and the urgent need for survey and conservation through the threat of continuing rapid land use change all indicate new opportunities for the competent, dedicated, and personable volunteer. Moreover, Newcomb's publication format has probably precluded a fuller discussion on such important issues as a consensus on recording procedures (including, perhaps, a survey notation) ideally needed for meaningful data comparison between regions and districts in any search for rational conservation priorities on representative landscapes.

In Chapter 4 the author discusses the effectiveness of conservation legislation in Britain, Denmark and California. In both Britain and Denmark management agreements may be made with farmers by the government covering a limited number of scheduled artefacts on their lands; in practice, however, the compensation offered is quite unrealistic in these years of inflation, and many farmers resent state interference. From this it is clear that if classic landscapes, like that (detailed later by Newcomb) at Wormleighton in Warwickshire, are to be retained, then some better *modus vivendi* will have to be worked out between government, academics, farmers, and the general public. Here the Danish Nature Park idea (noted carefully by the author) — incorporating integral elements of cultural history as well as ecology in landscape survey and management — offers considerable potential. It seems we may yet have much to learn from adapting this, and North American experience. But, as Newcomb observes, we need to know a lot more about visitor impact on historic sites and landscapes, and, indeed, about what motivates the general public to visit historic (including prehistoric) sites at all.

Two commendable features of Chapter 6, 'Landscape History Relics in the Rural Scene', are the diagram included on p 121 'the rural landscape in its historical dimension', and the table between pp 124 and 125 listing illustrations of preferred study topics in rural landscape history in Britain, Denmark and the USA. Here it is a great pity that the author's North American perspective is largely limited to California, and that space (and perhaps limited study opportunities) prevent fuller comparative discussion of work in France, and especially the Netherlands and West Germany. However, speaking generally, Newcomb notes that 'the challenge is to retain the essential elements and overtones of history while at the same time agriculture is modernised for the benefit of rural producers and urban consumers.' But (Chapter 9) 'it is not easy to monumentalise the fields and hedgerows of an entire nation, nor to construct living museums which adequately tell the story . . . '.

In Chapter 10 the author concludes that in 'planning the past to serve the present and the future . . . [we need] . . . to make certain that sufficient historical material, along with its supporting artefact scenery, is

present so that recreation has the potential to become a learning experience as well as being a diversionary one . . .'. But this will require 'a greater public awareness and appreciation for visible history as well as a dedication to its continuing preservation'. One aspect not covered fully by the author is that we are often (with nothing yet like a full record of the visible past) making presumptuous judgements in present-day planning schemes as to what future generations will consider was worth recording and conserving. There seems no real answer to this much begged question, but what we can do as a legacy to our successors is to conserve — or at least survey — as much as we can, guided by the best of our own lights. Despite obvious limitations, Newcomb's book deserves to be widely read and well heeded. The text reads well, despite occasional lapses into American style. The case studies stress the value of comparing the approaches to landscape survey and conservation found in countries with different settlement histories. It is only a pity that the economies of format have not allowed fuller discussion and illustration of some of the examples used.

ROGER MILLMAN

FRANÇOIS SIGAUT, *Les Reserves des Grains à long terme. Techniques de Conservation et Fonctions Sociales dans l'Histoire*. Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Publications de l'Université de Lille. 1978. 203 pp. Illus, maps, diagrams. No price stated.

The reasons for the change from food gathering to a more or less settled living place and concentration on agriculture, the working of the soil, the planting of seeds, the protection of the growing crop from animal and vegetable predators, and finally the harvest and storage of the product, have not yet been satisfactorily adumbrated. It has not been more than hinted at in M Sigaut's book, which I am sure he would be the first to acknowledge.

May I repeat for sufficient emphasis: the progression from food gatherer, the collection of wild herbs and fruit, and honey, to a settled way of life only became possible to man when he learned how to grow crops, possibly by accident! And he must have known how to preserve some stores to maintain him until the next harvest. No doubt his activities were a combined operation, partly growing, partly gathering, and partly flesh hunting. The preservation and comparatively long-term use of stored products was the beginning of man's journey towards megalopolis. At first it was no more than a meagre provision which it was hoped would last until the next harvest.

So little is definitely known, and so much must be learned, that one must welcome Sigaut's work with a measure of acclaim. He has made an important addition to knowledge, although he modestly admits that there is much more to be learned. The first part of the book

describes the involved technicalities of storing grain in silos, the methods employed in different ages and places, and the theories advanced by the literary advocates of such procedures. Theories are substantiated by an imposing set of documents derived from the contemporary literature of many nations and places.

We do not know why some societies developed agriculture. Indeed, as knowledge increases so conclusions become less definite. But we do know that it happened, and not only in one place. Theories multiply but uncertainty lingers. M Sigaut has written a scholarly thesis, and has collected a bibliography and illustrations which support his admittedly tentative conclusions. There is a great want of first-hand studies, exact and complete, of peasant methods of grain storage, and this is one step in the right direction.

G E FUSSELL

HERMAN VAN DE WEE and EDDY VAN CAUWENBERGHE (eds), *Productivity of Land and agricultural innovation in the Low Countries (1250–1800)*. Leuven UP. 1978. 187 pp. Tables, graphs and map. No price stated.

Conscientious researchers are always ready to seek new sources of information. Today tithe records have become important to the historian, that is to say more important than the less recondite sources used in the past, but it does seem to me that agricultural historical research is today less directed towards the actual practice of farming than to the financial and economic circumstances in which the work was done. This is not, of course, to say that the farmers' crop yields, their price, and his reward, out of which he must pay his rent, and reluctantly his tithes, were not of the most exacting importance to him.

The various papers presented here are very concerned with the incidence of tithe (and possibly rent) as an indication of the processes of farming pursued by the farmers who paid these charges; but various questions present themselves, and are not to be very easily answered. Perhaps this is the aim of this series of very careful studies.

One could possibly ask: what is productivity? is it output in volume; output in monetary value; output as soil conservation? a scale or scales? Probably in the end it may be the measure which determines the buying price of the land or the amount a farmer can secure upon a mortgage.

It has become an accepted canon (to which I have heartily subscribed) that the farming of the Low Countries has been an example to all of Europe, not excluding Great Britain. Here some doubt is presented about this, but possibly only figuratively! Belgium and Holland certainly lived a disturbed life with all the many wars that were experienced. It emerges quite clearly from these papers that Weston's approach to the farming of Brabant and Flanders must be looked at

more closely, perhaps modified by the war damage (which was rather continuous, or at least sporadic), and the consequent fluctuations in production possibly by area as well as yield.

In conclusion, I would venture to say that these essays seem to be about the profits to be secured by farmers, and not about the methods they employed to cultivate crops and breed livestock; but they are no doubt of value to the economic historian. I can say no less and no more, but must postulate the question which modern studies enquire into: how does one find out how the farmers worked in the past?

G E FUSSELL

CHRISTOPHER CLAY, *Public Finance and Private Wealth: The Career of Sir Stephen Fox, 1627-1716*. Clarendon Press: OUP. 1978. xvi + 362 pp. £12.50.

Born in the village of Farley near Salisbury in 1627, of parents who occupied 'the lowest fringe of that blurred borderline between gentleman and peasant', Stephen Fox left school at thirteen to become a page-boy in the Court at Richmond. He remained in the royal service for most of the next sixty-three years, one of his last duties being to lead Queen Anne down from the throne after her coronation. In the course of this long career Fox became a leading expert in government finance and served almost continuously and with great assiduity as one of the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury between 1679 and 1702. Moreover, long before this, by using various official positions as a basis for independent financial operations, he amassed a huge fortune which he subsequently invested in a mixed portfolio which included land as well as almost every other type of investment then available, except for the securities of the joint stock trading companies. In the mid-1680s a nephew justifiably described him as 'the richest commoner in three kingdoms'.

Fox's great opportunity came soon after the Restoration when, as a reward for his efficient service as *maitre d'hôtel* to the exiled Court in the 1650s, he was appointed to the Board of the Green Cloth, and in 1661 to the post of Paymaster of the Guards. In this latter capacity, whose responsibilities grew with additions to the Guards, its extension to garrison troops, and wartime expansion of the army, he was immediately confronted by the long-standing problems associated with the Crown's inability to pay its forces regularly and promptly. Fox's response was to use his own credit with London bankers to borrow the money required for payments, and then to re-lend it to the Crown, a system which proved so successful that it was quickly formalized and later extended to include the Royal Household and various other spending departments. By ploughing back into the scheme most of what he made from it, Fox reduced his dependence on borrowed

money and increased the rate at which he grew wealthy. He also began to act as something of a banker himself, accepting loans from some private individuals, and lending to others. Together with the Crown's need for his services, Fox's special position as creditor and departmental treasurer enabled him to survive the 'Stop of the Exchequer'; indeed, because thereafter the flow of government money increased, he was able greatly to expand his activities in the private sector. Though ousted from the Paymastership by Danby in 1676, he regained the post briefly before resigning to become a Lord Commissioner in 1679. Subsequently he remained extremely influential and successful, both as a government adviser and administrator and as one of the wealthiest moneyed men of his day. His investments included an extensive estate in London and the West Country, fee farm rents, offices, pensions, and annuities; he lent hugely to several important public figures; bailed out three well-married offspring from the consequences of their or their partners' extravagance; helped numerous other relatives to make their way in the world; and was a major benefactor first to Chelsea hospital and later to his birthplace, Farley.

Although almost any book on Fox would be of interest, it is difficult to do justice to the scope and excellence of this one. It is cleverly structured: by combining a chronological and a thematic approach Dr Clay deftly steers the reader through the complex public activities of Fox's early and middle career to the more private concerns of his later years. Moreover, by regularly quantifying and tabulating the extent and composition of Fox's wealth, he lays the basis for an astute analysis of the significance of Fox's role in the history of English government finance. He establishes beyond reasonable doubt that Fox was a man of great probity; than in regard to the Paymastership he acted as a risk-taking financier and not as a profiteer; and that his success greatly eased the problems of a series of hardpressed administrations. While the major development of credit techniques came only after 1689, Fox's operations were the 'ultimate stage' in the previous evolution of expedients. In addition Dr Clay charts the major influences, familial and financial, on Fox's investment behaviour. His early interest in accumulating real estate faltered in the late 1670s and never recovered, primarily because of heavy mortality among his children and his sole male heir's failure to produce a child. To someone who never aspired to be a landowner as such, a further argument against land purchase was the low return it offered (5 or 6 per cent gross and significantly less net) compared with investment in private lending and fee farm rents (around 6 per cent), lending to the government on tallies (7 or 8 per cent), or annuities (usually well over 10 per cent). Indeed, in a valuable illustration of the regional impact of the agricultural depression of the late seventeenth century, Dr Clay shows how difficult it was for Fox

merely to run his estate on a care and maintenance basis. He closed the home farm at Redlynch; made substantial loans to tenants, and withstood heavy rent arrears; and finally, faced with a drop to only 2½ per cent in the return on his original investment, sold some land and attempted to cut costs elsewhere by increasing the number of life-tenancies on his property. He later acquired more land in part repayment of some of his huge loans to debt-ridden aristocracy and gentry; and he spent considerable sums on land in repairing the fortunes of his surviving offspring; but only latterly, after a second marriage at the age of seventy-six had produced four children including a son, did he regain interest in his estate.

In measuring the progress of this remarkable man Dr Clay has rescued him from the obscurity which so often envelops those whose activities were primarily administrative rather than political, and whose recompense was private wealth rather than public acclaim. His painstaking research, penetrating analysis, and considerable literary powers (all exercised on a broad canvas) have also combined to produce a work which all those interested in this period will find deeply rewarding.

PETER ROEBUCK

H S A FOX and R A BUTLIN (eds), *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England, 1500–1900*. Institute of British Geographers. 1979. 187 pp. Maps and figs. £8.50.

This collection of essays sponsored by the Historical Geography Research Group of the IBG is intended not as a stocktaking or complete interpretation of rural change but rather as a sample of the present research being carried out by historical geographers. It is also, in fact, excellent value for the agricultural historian, who will find much here to interest him.

The collection begins with a discussion by Stuart Macdonald of George Culley, the well-known Northumberland pioneer: Macdonald emphasizes in particular Culley's concern with obtaining and disseminating information about techniques which would pay (as distinct from those which were merely interesting), and how large a role was played by farmers' correspondence in the spread of knowledge. John R Walton's analysis of factors in the adoption by farmers of new machines gives most significance to farm size and the communication of information: landlords and agricultural societies played only a limited role. However, H S A Fox's study of local farmers' associations tends to run counter to this finding. He notes their varied activities to the end of diffusing knowledge, including local shows, discussion meetings, visiting speakers, prize essays, and the maintenance of libraries.

Two of the essays are concerned with the more traditional subject of enclosure. R A Butlin reviews the

various forms taken by enclosure in the less well-studied period 1600–1750, and the extent of the area affected in the various regions of the country. R I Hodgson concentrates on County Durham in 1550–1870, and traces the connection between enclosure and the growth of market-oriented farming, particularly the rise in the demand for grain following the appearance of a large coal-mining population.

John Patten's essay on occupational structures in the East Anglian countryside of 1500–1700 makes use of wills as a primary source, though he is careful to notice the problems of the material. There was, he finds, a substantial increase in artisan-retailers and in people engaged in the distributive trades, and, in general, the growth of a more sophisticated occupational structure. The part played by landowners in the development of coal mining in south-west Lancashire is examined by John Langton. Their role, especially that of the smaller gentry, he finds, diminished after 1670 when the capital requirement and the degree of risk both increased; a larger part was then taken by merchants and other non-landowners.

Two final essays are concerned with horticulture, silviculture and designed landscapes. P J Jarvis relates the introduction of new plants (especially the larch, cedar of Lebanon, walnuts, and hickories) to the vogue for designed landscapes, developments in overseas trade, and the growth of interest in the scientific and visual aspects of the new introductions. P F Brandon is concerned with designed landscapes in the south-east of England, and makes a number of interesting points in connection with the changing attitudes to scenery, the influence of better communications through turnpikes, and the development of *fermes ornées*.

This is altogether a most valuable compendium which is bound to be added to students' reading lists. It is an impressive indication of the range and quality of the work being carried out by historical geographers, and, indeed, one is caused to wonder whether it could be easily matched by the present generation of agricultural historians.

G E MINGAY

HERMANN WELLENREUTHER, *Repräsentation und Groszgrundbesitz in England 1730–1770*. Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart. 1979. 417 pp. Map, bibliography, 35 tables appended. No price stated.

The title of Hermann Wellenreuther's *habilitationsschrift* promised something to agricultural historians that it had no intention of providing. 'Representation in Parliament and Large Ownership in 1730–1770' is certainly about great landowners (the Duke of Bedford and Lord Gower), but it is only marginally about the relationship between them and their farm tenants in so far as they had a vote. It is about fairly successful attempts of noblemen to control votes in Bedford,

Tavistock, and some south-western constituencies in the case of the Duke, and in Newcastle under Lyme and Lichfield in the case of Lord Gower.

Both these great landowners (and Bedford was also a big urban landowner) had political ambitions, requiring adherents in Parliament. Wellenreuther has proved in great detail that whatever the local voting system, there were numerous ways whereby a more or less durable and reliable relationship could be built between voter and nobleman. The nobleman (large landowner) purchased town property, assisted the town when it was in debt, when the poor needed relief, or industry was depressed, made loans to those requiring them, and rewarded adherents by obtaining places for them. The author maintains that during this period, and at least in the cases of these two landowners, the relationship of landowner and voter involved rather more than a flow of resources to the voters, repaid in votes. A contested election was less the rule than the exception. The relationship of nobleman and voter was a customary beneficial mutual interdependence, and not markedly corrupt. While liberal treating of adherents was common at election time, direct pecuniary bribes were not the rule.

Though the constituencies described were small, and certainly involved in rural affairs, they were urban, and it would have been more of interest to the agricultural historian to hear of county elections where farm tenants were influenced by their landlords. The bonds between nobleman and farmer would then, no doubt, be of a different nature.

Wellenreuther's book does, however, use correspondence, accounts, and other estate materials as a source for Parliamentary history. This breaks new ground, as Namier and his followers did not use them. The book is very learned in manner (as a *habilitationschrift* must be), and very fully referenced. Perhaps it proves its case too fully. Indeed it is a little dull. The author has a true sympathy with eighteenth-century England, and, miraculously, makes no errors in referring to titles. He is aware that our nobility have no equivalence with those on the continent. Some of his abbreviations are perhaps not standard. The appendix contains some excellent tables, including some on Bedford's and Gower's incomes. The bibliography is detailed; the index helpful.

In the final chapter the author reminds us that during this period three-quarters of legislation was in the form of Private Bills, showing that the interaction of patron and voter was immediate and real. But the author here gives a more general view of how patrons gained a hold on seats, showing that the merchant and urban magnate were appearing with methods of controlling the electorate peculiar to themselves.

We welcome this detailed and dependable work from a German scholar using English estate documents, hoping that he will continue with this type of work,

endeavouring to answer some more of the hundreds of questions he asks himself about big landowners in the course of the work.

D J DAVIS

ALAN W BLACK, *Organizational Genesis and Development: A Study of Australian Agricultural Colleges*. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia. 1976. xii + 316 pp.

Agricultural colleges today in Australia operate in a difficult and changing environment. Compared to other post-school and higher education institutions, most of them are very small in terms of student enrolments, and located well outside the major centres of population. They are also more costly than most other tertiary institutions to operate in terms of recurrent expenditure. As a result they are often under pressure to diversify and to find new roles. At the same time there is considerable uncertainty about the precise function that agricultural colleges should perform in relation to agriculture and to farming. This, of course, is a reflection of changing patterns in the agriculture scene.

Dr Alan Black and his colleagues at the University of New England (at Armidale, New South Wales) have performed a useful service in helping increase our understanding of the role and dilemmas of agricultural colleges in Australian higher education. The results of their major team project of the early 1970s, which studied four contemporary colleges, were reported in the volume, *Consensus and Conflict in Agricultural College*.

This book is a development from that research and similarly is a comparative study of agricultural colleges. However, its focus is historical rather than contemporary. In brief it is a study of the establishment and early development of the older established Australian agricultural colleges — Roseworthy (established 1885), Dookie (1886), Longerenong (1889), Hawkesbury (1891), Queensland — often called Gatton — (1897), and Muresk (1926). The author attempts to develop answers to five key questions. Why were these colleges established? How were they organized? How did they develop? Who were the men who guided their growth? What problems and obstacles did they have to overcome? He does this very competently, drawing on a wide range of historical sources and sociological literature, and using with ease the skills and insight of both the historian and sociologist (which is by no means a small feat).

Organizational Genesis and Development will appeal to a wide range of readers including students of educational administration, higher education, sociology of organizations, and agricultural history. In short, it is a first-rate original piece of research, well presented and well argued, and making useful contributions to a number of related fields.

GRANT HARMAN

ALAN W BLACK and RUSSELL A CRAIG, *The Agricultural Bureau: a sociological study*. University of New England. Armidale, NSW. 1978. viii + 165 pp.

This brief account of the Australian Agricultural Bureau combines some history with empirical sociology to provide a useful compendium of information about a little known aspect of rural organization. The authors have been modest in their objectives, and the heavy empirical bias limits the significance of the study from both the historical and sociological perspective. The result is that the work will be of interest mainly to those with a special interest in the Bureau.

The Bureau is a self-help organization which exists currently in two Australian states, New South Wales and South Australia. Its purpose is to bring farmers and graziers together in small groups at the local level to discuss such practical matters as the use of machinery, seed selection and marketing methods. In the more active branches meetings are held monthly and are usually based on a lecture, film or demonstration. Meetings supplement the work of the state departments of agriculture, and extension officers find them a useful way of meeting farmers informally and communicating information personally.

Black and Craig's historical section (almost half the book) reveals the weakness of the self-help style of organization compared with the bureaucratically-controlled departments of agriculture and the centralized pressure groups such as the farmers' and graziers' associations. In South Australia the Bureau was the offspring of economic adversity. After years of monocropping on sandy soils, declining yields, and falling prices, the wheat farmers of the colony were driven to accept the proposals of Albert Molineux, an energetic agricultural journalist and publisher who had been influenced by the example of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Bureau, a loose confederation of small clubs (perhaps the country equivalent of the WEA), was established in 1888. Western Australia and Tasmania attempted to follow suit but without success.

New South Wales adopted the system in 1910 as a result of official sponsorship.

Bureau branch numbers and membership in the two states grew rapidly until the 1930s. The first quarter of the century was a period of favourable commodity prices, expansion of the wheat frontier, closer land settlement in association with subdivision of some of the larger grazing properties, and the growth of inland communities. Black and Craig do not explore the role of the Bureau at this time, but it may have played a part in encouraging farm mechanization and more intensive cropping associated with the use of superphosphate. Since World War II, however, the Bureau has been in almost continuous decline because of rural depopulation, the fall in the number of small farmers, the rise of television, and more effective methods of agricultural extension. Only in South Australia does it seem to have much of a future.

The sociological section illustrates the limitations of research based on a questionnaire and interview schedule dominated by 'objective' and restricted choice-type questions. Black and Craig are able to present a reasonable profile of Bureau members but they are unable to penetrate beneath the surface. Bureau members are older and better educated than the average for the farming community. Membership is seen as a way of increasing instrumental knowledge: demonstration days and lectures on practical farming matters are regarded as the most effective use of time. We are even told in all solemnity that declining branches have the greatest difficulty in attracting suitable leaders. These are lean gleanings from what was, formally, a comprehensive survey. Surprisingly, the historical material is not used to present a view of the changing pattern of rural education, and the possible future of the Bureau. Nor is there an assessment of the Bureau in relation to other sources of information available to farmers. The authors have opted for formality rather than insight, and their approach is only sociological in the restrictive style of positivism.

C B SHEDVIN

Shorter Notices

JOAN THIRSK, *Horses in early modern England: for Service, for Pleasure, for Power*. The Stenton Lecture, 1977; Univ of Reading. 1978. 28 pp. 65p.

In this stimulating lecture Joan Thirsk argues that historians have underestimated the importance of the development of horses, and the trade in horses, as factors in the growth of the English economy between 1500 and 1700. She notes that in 1500 coaches, wagons

and carriages were rare, and only the wealthy and important travelled on horseback. By contrast a French visitor in 1699, Guy Miège, wrote that 'the English nation is the best provided of any for land travel as to horses and coaches. . . . Travelling on horseback is so common a thing in England that the meanest sort of people use it as well as the rest.' In a comparison which is not altogether fanciful, Joan Thirsk compares the

economic effects of the growth and differentiation of the horse trade with that of the motor industry in the twentieth century. Its influence percolated down till no one was left untouched.

She discusses three basic causes for this transformation in the role of horses. They became much more important in military affairs (especially for transporting supplies), and the prodigal wastage of Henry VIII's wars acted as a strong stimulus to increase and improve the supply of English horses. Government policy encouraged the nobility and gentry to keep and breed fine horses. Secondly, fashion was a powerful factor. As the use of coaches and carriages spread, and as the new sport of horse-racing took hold (from about 1585), people vied with one another in the ostentatious display of horses and their livery. Finally, with the great growth of internal trade, the need for horses of all sizes and grades to pull numerous wagons, barges and carts provided perhaps the most deep-seated and profound stimulus of all. All these things encouraged the horse trade, which in its turn reacted on them, and made their continued expansion possible. Once again, Joan Thirsk has drawn our attention to a fruitful new aspect of early modern history, and this pioneering study will no doubt encourage more research on this topic.

MICHAEL HAVINDEN

C T SMITH, *An Historical Geography of Western Europe before 1800*. Revised edn, Longman. 1978. xviii + 622 pp. 90 maps, 42 plates. Paperback £7.95.

This valuable and well-known text, first published in 1967, now appears in a revised edition in paperback. The major change in the revised edition is the inclusion of a postscript which briefly reviews new interpretations of the subject and adds a useful annotated bibliography of recent works. The original text, tracing developments from prehistoric times, and including substantial chapters on rural settlement, agrarian structures and field systems, and agricultural and regional change — all amply illustrated by excellently reproduced maps and photographs — remains largely unchanged.

G E MINGAY

JOHN CHAPMAN, *The Common Lands of Portsea Island*. Portsmouth Papers No 29. Portsmouth City Secretary, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. 1978. 22 pp. Illus. 50p.

This is an excellent case study, well illustrated with maps and photographs. Its particular interest lies in the manner in which the new town of Portsmouth was first inserted into the common field systems of the

island, and then much later brought about their disintegration. Until the eighteenth century the town had an important farming population which had taken land in the common fields around older settlements and added new fields from the waste. The author demonstrates in detail how various parts of the original field organization were abandoned as urban development accelerated, ending finally in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with new streets and buildings directly superimposed on the strips. Portsmouth offers one of the best examples of this process.

J A YELLING

HUGH TORRENS, *The evolution of a family firm: Stothert and Pitt of Bath*. Bath, Stothert & Pitt Ltd. 1978. 86 pp. No price stated.

The origins of Stothert and Pitt date back to 1785 when George Stothert took over an ironmongery business in Bath, followed in 1815 by the establishment of an ironfoundry as a separate undertaking. The foundry appears to have produced the usual range of domestic and industrial castings for a local market, as well as probably a few basic agricultural implements. The firm's interest soon moved into heavy engineering, and by the late nineteenth century it was specializing in steam cranes, pumping machinery, and concrete-making equipment. The history stops in 1902 when the family association with the firm ended.

The principal value of Mr Torrens's book is to technical and business historians. His approach is scholarly, with generous footnotes and a useful index. The lack of surviving primary sources, however, has meant much recourse to secondary material, which at times makes the text a little hard to follow. The work carries a well chosen selection of illustrations.

DAVID PHILLIPS

DENNIS HARDY, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England*. Longman. 1979. 268 pp. Illus. Paperback £5.95.

Dennis Hardy, Principal Lecturer in Social Science at Middlesex Polytechnic, has produced in this book a useful and balanced survey of the various kinds of 'alternative communities' — planned and experimental settlements — which formed an unusual and little-known feature of the nineteenth-century countryside. He classifies the communities into those marked by utopian socialism (such as the Owen-inspired Harmony Hall), those arising from ideas of agrarian socialism (for example, the Chartist settlements), sectarian communities (such as the New Forest Shakers), and anarchist ones (particularly those derived from the views of Kropotkin and Tolstoy). The book analyses the

philosophies, beliefs and motives which inspired the break from conventional society, and considers the reasons — poor choice of site, lack of funds, failure of leadership, internal dissensions — that caused so many to be shortlived. None of them was sufficiently large or influential as to make an indelible mark on contemporary life. A number of communities are selected by the author for detailed discussion, and his text is made the more vivid by the large number of original illustrations. Some of the settlements tried for agricultural self-sufficiency, and others established commercial smallholdings in the hope of finding outlets in urban markets. It is not the farming, however, but the attempt after attempt to find a new way of life — or return to an old one — which forms the intriguing thread of this volume.

G E MINGAY

MARYANNA S SMITH, *Chronological landmarks in American agriculture*. Agricultural Information Bulletin No 245, US Department of Agriculture, Washington. No date stated (c 1979). 103 pp.

This could be described as a new system of bibliography, possibly not scientific book recording, but a synoptic history in note form supported by the founding literature: a laborious but most informative system. May it be said that the production is more than a systematic notebook. It is that and more, each note supported by the relevant extract from the appropriate authority.

A specimen entry is:

1885. The driving of Texas cattle to railheads in Kansas came to an end. (Robert E. Dykstra. *The Cattle Towns*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, 386 pp. illus., maps, notes, index.)

This is a very commendable work (the time occupied must have been very great), though it is not a connected historical narrative. It is, nevertheless, a substantial contribution to the story of the development of farming processes, crops and livestock, which has taken place in the vast areas of the United States from its first settlement by Europeans to the present day. It will not of course supersede the more orthodox historians, whose works are included in this bibliography, but it is a reference work of the most stimulating character.

G E FUSSELL

J S MOORE (ed), *Avon Local History Handbook*. Phillimore, Chichester. 1979. xi + 188 pp. Paperback £2.50.

This practical *Handbook* for local history research, methodology and sources, compiled by thirteen expert contributors, and published for the Avon Local History Association, is to be commended. Twelve carefully

edited chapters and an appendix (pp 1–101) are followed by a detailed Bibliography on books and articles (pp 102–42) and on primary sources (pp 143–75). The latter provides the addresses and opening hours of libraries, museums and record offices.

Despite its emphasis on the new administrative county of Avon, it deserves a wide readership. It provides a model which other counties or regions could usefully copy. Apart from an up-to-date exploration of the ends and means of local history, eleven themes are explored: the rural and urban landscape; population and the structure of local society; agriculture; trade, transport and communications; industry; housing and the standard of living; local administration and politics; church and chapel; education; leisure and recreation; and public opinion and popular beliefs. The text is admirably indexed, and as a 'stiff paperback' this *Handbook* is moderately priced.

J WHYMAN

DAVID C SMITH, *The First Century: A History of the University of Maine 1865–1965*. Univ of Maine, Orono, Maine. 1979. xv + 295 pp. Illus. \$15.

The University of Maine at Orono had well over 6000 students when it celebrated its centenary in 1965. In 1868, when it first opened its doors, it enrolled a mere four. First-year studies then included algebra, geometry, history, geography, natural philosophy, rhetoric, book-keeping, botany, and horticulture. In addition, the select bands of early students spent time in making bricks and digging drains for the new buildings on the campus. Agriculture and 'practical arts' played a key role from the start. Indeed, much of the university's early support came from those who advocated an emphasis on agricultural studies and research as a means of encouraging much-needed improvement in the state's farming and of checking its outward flow of migrants. It is not surprising, therefore, that the college farm was in operation before the college itself, and that the first farm superintendent was appointed alongside the first academic, the professor of mathematics (and at three-quarters of the latter's salary of \$1200).

Thereafter agricultural research and education continued to loom large in the activities of the campus, and there developed experimental farms and laboratories in which over the years significant advances have been achieved. Apart from this, a large part of the university's history has centred round a constant struggle carried on by a succession of able and devoted presidents to obtain adequate funds from a short-sighted and tight-fisted legislature. Sad to remark that this side of this fascinating and most interestingly illustrated volume has a depressing contemporary ring.

G E MINGAY