

Book Reviews

SIÂN E REES, *Agricultural Implements in Prehistoric and Roman Britain*. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 69 (I-II), Oxford, 1979. 772 pp. £17.50 (available post-free from BAR, 122 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7BP).

This book comprises three chapters: (1) The ard and the plough, including shares of stone and bone, wooden parts found in bogs, shares and coulter of iron and two models of ards of bronze from Roman times as well as a survey of the literary evidence written by classical Roman authors; in addition there is a survey of traction equipment and ploughing techniques; (2) manual cultivating tools, divided into hoes and mattocks, spades, and shovels, weeding-spuds and turf-cutters; (3) harvesting tools comprising sickles, hooks and scythes, mowers' anvils, forks and rakes. After each chapter follows a complete catalogue of all relevant specimens kept in collections in England, Wales and Scotland with references to provenance, museum- or site-number, main measurements, site and date, and a brief description as well as references to previous treatments in literature.

Dr Rees is not the first scholar to publish evidence on British agricultural implements from prehistoric and Roman times. Amongst her predecessors are such authorities as E C Curwen, C Fox, W H Manning, F G Payne, and K D White. But her summaries of viewpoints and discussions is valuable because of her judicious conclusions. Dr Rees has presented an almost exhaustive and up-to-date survey of the whole material with nineteen maps of distribution of types. She has drawn about 250 items to scale together with sections of their blades, shafts, sockets, etc. In the reviewer's opinion this is a great achievement. This book will be indispensable for experts in other countries as well as in Britain. Furthermore, she has studied and indicated, where possible, marks of wear which can often tell the way the tool was used. This is rare in previous studies of agricultural implements.

Of course she is aware of deficiencies which she would have liked to avoid if time and means had been available. Especially she mentions the lack of experiments carried out with replicas of the tools in question. Certainly the study has been open to much speculation without the advantage of practical experience. Even experiments may be inadequate to solve the problem of use because the experimenter often lacks knowledge himself about practices still carried on in other parts of the world. Ethno-Archaeology is a rather new concept in the English-speaking world, though ethnographic knowledge should be indispensable for every scholar who wishes to arrange imitative experiments.

Dr Rees refers to experiments with ard-ploughing carried out some years ago in the Historical and Archaeological Experiment Centre at Lejre, Denmark. These experiments provided us with important knowledge in other respects, but the researchers failed to imitate ploughing with an ard tilted to one side, though this is a normal practice in countries where farmers are still cultivating with an ard. And evidently the British ploughmen of antiquity used the same method, as can be seen from Dr Rees' diagrams in Fig 75. The conductor of an ard-plough will always walk on the ploughed furrows tilting his implement against himself, while an inexperienced amateur is inclined to walk behind with the ard in front of him. Consequently his control of the movements of the implement becomes ineffective. It requires long training to exercise full control of both the ard and its team.

If Dr Rees had been aware of Samuel Avitzur's excellent book on *The Native Ard of Eretz-Israel* (Tel-Aviv, 1965) she would have learned what is the decisive difference between what he calls the 'Sword-Ard' (Glob's Bow Ard, or what the reviewer would prefer to call the 'Stilt-Head Ard') and the 'Sole Ard' (Glob's Crook Ard). The first type — well known from the Danish Døstrup find — is capable of tilling the field down to 28 cm depth if filled with a brace-rider which stabilizes the junction between the stilt and the beam. But even without such a device the Stilt-Head Ard is the strongest construction of the two types; it can penetrate the soil to a considerable depth and consequently produces the marks in the sub-soil which have been detected and described in many countries during the last twenty-five years. In contradistinction to this, the Sole Ard produces shallower and wider furrows fitted to receive the seed. Avitzur illustrates the type furnished with a seed-funnel, and it is evidently this type which is depicted in the famous rock-carving from Litsleby, Sweden, showing a ploughman carrying a bag from which apparently he puts the seed into an open furrow.

Some ard-marks running parallel in one direction could possibly be traces of the Sole Ard? They are normally separated from each other with spaces of between 25 and 30 cm, and this could be explained by the practice of people walking between the rows to weed the seed. Dr Rees is puzzled by the random distribution of stone clearance cairns in Shetland and Orkney. But if she had known Gudmund Hatt's work on Danish prehistoric fields (*Oldtidsagre*, with an English summary, Copenhagen, 1949) she would have seen that this was a common practice. People would try to get rid of stones in the easiest possible way, and they often gathered them round a heavy stone; the ard could

easily avoid such impediments as cairns and big stones. But in Lem heath in West Jutland I observed that the cairns sometime had become oval in plan, the long axis parallel to the long side of the field, seemingly because the field had been ploughed only in one direction.

What I once said about the two mould strokers and the supporting cross-bar on the Stilt-head Ard need not be repeated here. It can be read in *Folk and Farm. Essays in Honour of A. T. Lucas* (Dublin, 1976) which is not in Dr Rees' bibliography. Her treatment of the Scottish stone shares needs no comments: the reviewer agrees that the problem of hafting should be solved by experimentation.

However, Dr Rees' treatment of the so-called 'Shoe-Last Axes' (stone shares) of the continent requires comment. It is not evident how the polish of wear observable on these tools could be produced on both the nose and the lower face of them. An ard has to be tipped in order to penetrate the soil, consequently the nose of its share will be worn and some of its upper face; but how could the lower face of its share happen to be worn in its sheltered position? It has never been demonstrated in properly arranged and controlled experiments, and a simple drawing on paper is not convincing.

The reviewer admits to have misinterpreted the Hunsbury spade-fashioned tools of iron as shares (Fig 26); Dr Rees is obviously right in her statement that they are something else — probably a tool for digging or weeding? In a review in *Tools and Tillage*, III, 4, 1969, Alexander Fenton of Edinburgh has shown that her wooden spade p 321, Fig 106, is a type of shovel, the sharp edge of which fits the cutting of matted grass sods. This shovel can produce very thin turfs, excellent for the building of escarpments on fortifications as well as for thatching. Archaeologists often find traces of such turfs when they cut profiles, and these could possibly be mistaken for plough-furrows.

Because the chapter on harvesting implements is principally based on formal instead of functional criteria, it has produced some confusion arising from earlier sophisticated classifications of development. Primarily the items should have been arranged because of the shape of their cutting edges, secondarily by mass and weight, and thirdly by the main shape of the tools. Even today different shapes of sickles can be used for the same purpose (see L Takács; *Itásgazdálkodásunk Emlékei*. English summary: *Relics of Hungarian Shifting Agriculture, Cleared Land and Method of Clearing*. Budapest, 1980). Some of the Hungarian tools are similar to Sian Rees' iron hooks and bill hooks, but others are bent backwards, ie balanced tools, like her iron bills and sickles. Consequently, it seems to be a little sophisticated to discriminate between reaping hooks and sickles. But Dr Rees is probably right in claiming the long Roman scythes to be used for hay-making rather than for the cutting of

corn; because of their abruptly curved neck they would be too weak for harvesting. It is also tempting, in accordance with her, to assume that the procedure of threshing was performed by oxen's or horses' feet on a circular threshing floor. May be also the *tribulum* with its flint teeth was used in Britain? If so an analysis of pieces of flint for wear marks should be initiated. The threshing flail is at least a later invention.

It will appear from what has been said that Dr Rees' work is a milestone in the study of the history of agriculture. It is so rich in information that it cannot receive full justice in a short review.

AXEL STEENBERG

NIGEL HARVEY, *The Industrial Archaeology of Farming in England and Wales*. Batsford, 1980. 232 pp. Illus. £15.

Industrial archaeology has been marketed widely by publishers over the last decade and on some occasions has been used to embrace subjects that could only with much imagination be incorporated within an acceptable definition of the term. The placing of, for example, hedges or livestock breeds within the scope of industrial archaeology would perhaps lead some to conclude that this process is continuing. But that would not be fair criticism of the attempt by Nigel Harvey in this new work to project agriculture across its broadest possible spectrum as an industrial activity of long standing, with remains and survivals from the past worthy of study literally in the field.

A synthesis of this nature has been badly needed for some years in the world of industrial archaeology. Apart from well-known farm installations, usually concerned with motive power, and processing operations such as milling, industrial archaeologists generally have allowed agriculture as a producing industry to slip through their fingers. Romantic conceptions of an uncomplicated and unchanging countryside take a long time dying and account for only passing references to farming in most textbooks on industrial archaeology. But the explosion of public interest during the 1970s in obsolete farm machinery and the farming systems they served has progressively been breaking down these barriers. At last the remains of the country's most widespread industry are slowly being subjected to the investigative techniques devised primarily for manufacturing and heavy industry.

In Mr Harvey's terms the farm is the location for an industry where organic substances to be consumed or used by man are produced. And he goes on to describe how the landscape, the raw materials, plant and machinery have been manipulated by agriculturists over the centuries to enable this activity to be carried out as efficiently as the period allowed. It is made clear at the

beginning that this is only an introduction, and it is difficult to see how this could not be so when the Middle Ages to almost the present day is spanned in well under 200 pages of text.

The chapter on Tools, Implements and Machines seems particularly to suffer from the blurring effects of generalization. While the landmark inventions and individuals are mentioned, little is made of the engineering enterprise of many firms, large and small, that combined to give agriculture its nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrial face. So many aspects are contained in the following section on farm buildings that it is often little more than a series of sub-headings. But buildings are a subject that Mr Harvey has surveyed most fully elsewhere, and this book stands on its comprehensive approach rather than depth of analysis.

The text is nevertheless detailed in its compactness and very valuably indicates locations of surviving sites of interest. Perhaps the most useful element of the book, however, is the reference section, extending over forty pages and detailing chapter by chapter the sources that the author has used in compiling the text. This agreeably illustrated book has much appeal for the interested general reader and will prove an excellent resource for anyone intending to study the archaeology of agriculture and the countryside. Mr Harvey's lead will surely be followed up by others in the future.

ROY BRIGDEN

JUNE A SHEPPARD, *The Origins and Evolution of Field and Settlement Patterns in the Herefordshire Manor of Marden*, Department of Geography, Queen Mary College, University of London, Occasional Papers No 15, 1979. 44 pp. Illus. £1.50.

This is an attempt to reconstruct the landscape development of the large manor of Marden, situated on the banks of the river Lugg north of Hereford. The starting point is a large-scale, detailed estate map of c1720, and using this source, together with the evidence of the existing landscape and of a few readily-available documentary sources, Dr Sheppard has been able to suggest the main stages through which the common fields, meadows, enclosures, and settlements have developed since the Iron Age. The study provides further useful evidence of continuity in landscape use and development to add to the growing number of similar studies from other parts of the country. Perhaps the most interesting of several points to emerge from this account is the suggestion that, as has been demonstrated in other parts of the country, the large Iron Age hill-fort of Sutton Walls within Marden manor was the centre of a chieftaincy controlling the surrounding area, and that the Sutton Walls site was

the precursor of a royal multiple estate which subsequently became the hundred of Thornlaw. There is certainly an impressive correlation between the hypothetical bounds suggested for the Sutton Walls chieftaincy, using modern archaeological and geographical techniques of spatial analysis, and the actual boundary of the eleventh-century Thornlaw as reconstructed from the Domesday Survey. Dr Sheppard is also able to show with the aid of an informative series of maps the changes which have occurred in the landscape and settlements, the extension of the common fields, variations in farm sizes and the evolution of the modern pattern of land use.

As an exercise in landscape reconstruction this is excellent, but as the author herself acknowledges, it is too brief to answer all the questions it raises. Marden is rich in documentary material, and Dr Sheppard refers to several sources which she has not as yet analysed in detail, such as manorial surveys of 1608 and 1649 and an Enclosure Act as early as 1606, as well as several medieval sources. These would no doubt provide useful evidence concerning her hypotheses and about field systems, land-use and tenurial and other relationships within the manor. The evidence of aerial photography and of systematic fieldwork would also add another dimension to the study. It is to be hoped that Dr Sheppard's stimulating work and suggestions will be followed by yet more detailed work on what is clearly a promising area for the investigation of field systems, settlement patterns and the evolution of the landscape since the Iron Age.

J H BETTEY

E E RICH and C H WILSON, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Volume V, The Economic Organization of Early Modern Europe*. CUP, 1977. x + 749 pp. £18.50.

This volume of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* concentrates on the organization of agricultural and industrial production, of commerce and of financial exchange, filling in gaps in the economic history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which were left after the appearance of Volume IV in 1967. Most of its chapters are written by scholars of long experience and wide knowledge, and hence it distils much cumulative wisdom. This is particularly true of Charles Wilson's first chapter, which has a very broad perspective, and sometimes casts brilliant shafts of light on shifts of fortune between similar industries and similar trades in different countries of Europe. And yet those brief, clear glimpses of one or two branches of economic activity are heavily biased towards Holland, England and Italy, and only serve to highlight the depths of our ignorance on other countries and innumerable other topics. We

should know far more about the economies of Spain and Portugal, far more about the international organization of horticulture and the horse trade, far more about fuel supplies and sales, and the innovations for economizing in its use. But for the fact that A R Michell incorporates his own original research on fisheries to provide a stimulating account of the European scene, the subject would hardly have featured in this volume; from the shortness of his bibliography, one sees only too clearly how little work has preceded his. Professor Kellenbenz, in his chapter on industrial production, is better served by other scholars who have studied the major textile, metal, and mining industries, but his short reference to the luxury, versus the mass, market in consumer goods broaches a subject, embracing innumerable smaller industries, that badly needs more attention.

Nevertheless, across broad tracks of ignorance some well charted features are effectively portrayed. Kristoff Glamann summarizes the main items in domestic industrial consumption and the trading channels along which they were distributed. Barry Supple writes elegantly and comprehensively on the nature of enterprise, though he omits agricultural entrepreneurs, and his narrative is so refined and distilled that not a single identifiable human being of flesh and blood crosses his pages. Herman van der Wee writes on the functioning of monetary systems, banking and credit, and Betty Behrens on the autocratic governments of France, Prussia and the Hapsburg dominions, and the contribution which their policies made to economic development.

Of most interest to readers of this *Review* is the chapter on 'Agriculture in the Vital Revolution' by B H Slicher van Bath. His task was plainly difficult because he had already covered much of the ground in his *Agrarian History of Western Europe*, and, presumably, did not wish to repeat himself. So he chooses in this volume to start by enunciating some basic facts about agriculture as a business enterprise, supplementing this with some average figures of early modern crop yields, livestock weights, and volumes of cereal consumption, together with a list of alternative tillage systems. He then proceeds to discuss the different weather conditions required for different crops, and tabulates some typical conjunctures of agricultural events, those occurring in periods of economic prosperity on the one hand, and economic depression on the other. This use of some twenty pages out of a total chapter of ninety pages is somewhat eccentric, though such information will be of great value to teachers of agricultural history who wish to build up a sound foundation of basic knowledge in their pupils. They will find here a reliable index of yield ratios, a table showing the progress of fen drainage in the Netherlands decade by decade, and precise examples of the rates of application of manure.

Drawing on a wide range of examples that are especially rich for the Netherlands, Germany and England, Slicher van Bath then makes some judicious and well considered general comments about agricultural development in the early modern period. His most important conclusions are thoroughly well considered, but may not all be fashionable, and so may not all be heeded as they deserve. He argues that some agricultural yields were as high in the fourteenth century as in the nineteenth century; and the only reason why high yields were not universal was that the economic incentives were not sufficient in many regions. The basic elements of the Norfolk system of husbandry, he points out, were already present in Western Europe in the sixteenth century; what was new in the eighteenth century was not the rotation, but the economic circumstances which made this intensive system advantageous on a large scale in more places. Similarly the impressive long-haul cattle trade across Europe was a temporary phenomenon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he argues, surviving only so long as economic circumstances favoured it; the favourable conjuncture depended on population levels, transport systems and the availability of markets. In his discussion of land ownership, he criticizes the biased preference of the historian for owners of land who are always thought to be superior to tenants. In fact, he says, owner-occupiers usually clustered on poorer land, while the better agricultural land was generally in the hands of tenant-farmers.

No one will read this chapter without learning important truths about the constraints and opportunities for change in agriculture at different times. It conveys clearly much information about the complex and diversified specialities of regions. It does not, however, attempt to convey the interdependence of regions, and their changing relationships in this period. It offers a static, rather than a dynamic, picture of regional specialities. It certainly explains the alternative courses of action available to each group of specialist farmers as circumstances changed, but it does not show regions undergoing change, and so setting up repercussions among their neighbours. Such illustrations are clearly not available for some countries. As Charles Wilson makes plain in Chapter I, the evidence is very patchy for Italy, and worse still for Spain. But the study of the Netherlands and of England has reached a much more advanced stage. It is time now to show, if only tentatively, the way in which individual regional economies were at one moment comfortably integrated with others, and then were disturbed by changes in the world around them, and so had to be reorganized. The decline of the long distance cattle trade from Eastern Europe offers one obvious example; when it faded away, what replaced it? The rise of dairying and distilling in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offers others. In how many centres did these activities

flourish, and through what, possibly different, processes of economic and social change had rural communities passed before they settled on these new specialities? And finally what new ties of exchange or dependence did they forge with neighbouring and with distant communities? Questions like these underline the contrast in economic conditions before and after 1500. Medieval agriculture was far less specialized than in the early modern period. After 1500 enhanced specialization runs like a thread through all branches of economic life. It had merits — it certainly raised standards of living in some places and among some classes — but it also exposed men to new hazards. Moreover, the specialized regions depended in important respects and to a greater extent than ever before, on the unspecialized ones. This reminds us that the farming of all the traditional agrarian economies of Europe deserve as much study as the most innovative ones.

JOAN THIRSK

J R LOWERSON (ed), *Southern History II*. Dawson, Folkestone. 1980. 282 pp. Tables, figs. £12.

Despite problems with the publisher the second volume of *Southern History* is a worthy successor to the 1979 publication; and it is to be hoped that the same high standard of production can be maintained in the future, though the inevitable increase in price is itself indicative of the difficulties which journals devoted to serious research face, especially if published in hardback.

As before, the intent is to include essays covering the south of England from Cornwall to Kent and also to embrace, so far as possible, the period from the Conquest to the present day. In two ways this ideal coverage is less well achieved in the present volume for, excluding the final article — a general survey of tertiary education in the region, Devon, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Sussex are the only counties directly involved, and half the book is devoted to the past hundred and fifty years.

Another imbalance of some significance to those engaged in agrarian history is the emphasis on urban affairs. Five of the eight historical articles are devoted to aspects of this subject, though in many ways there is much of wider interest contained in these papers. The study of the origins of the two small towns of Steyning and Bramber probes some of the earliest evidence for market towns and indicates the impact of local politics on the fortunes of the older settlement; while Mr Nash's paper on mortality among Wiltshire lords of the manor between 1242 and 1377 acts as a corrective to the tendency to concentrate on the peasantry in that period. So, too, the long and well researched article by Mr Roberts on alehouse and brewery legislation has a

far wider significance for the study of a basic industry than the concentration on Devon would suggest. This is one of the major contributions to this volume and it is sad that it is not altogether easy to read, possibly because essentially a digest of a longer dissertation, for it is an important statement. The review of parliamentary enclosure in West Sussex is a timely re-assessment of the work of W E Tate, and comparable studies for other counties would be welcome.

The next four articles concern Southsea, Exeter, Lewes, and Southampton and their content has less immediate relation to agrarian affairs, yet in each there is matter of substance and import. The skilful use of rating and renting records in respect of the development of part of a town suggests possible wider applications where similar records survive; the subject of food riots, although primarily relating to urban society, has a far greater connotation; and even the voting patterns in Lewes between 1865 and 1868 are indicative of the close association between town and country during the last century. Perhaps one of the most striking contributions is that by Dr Vinson on poor relief and unemployment in Southampton during the years between the Wars. This is so in part because of the topicality of the subject, partly because of the clear and well thought-out presentation and partly because of the interest revealed in two Boards of Guardians in close proximity to one another, one essentially urban and the other, at heart, rural, but faced with similar problems. Finally there is Mr Lowerson's survey of local history as a study within the region in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of further education. This, of course, is comparable with Nigel Yates's paper on archival resources last year and is once more a most valuable general survey.

Perhaps, however, one is left this year with a wish that research available for publication was more evenly spread over the region; and one feels impelled to express the hope that the rich resources of Kent and Somerset, to say nothing of the other 'missing' counties, may be used to equally good effect for some future volume. The value of the venture is clear and is accepted, it is to be hoped that it will attract scholarship from the entire region and thus provide volumes still more comprehensive in their content.

FELIX HULL

J S MORRILL (compiler), *Seventeenth-Century Britain, 1603-1714* (Critical Bibliographies in Modern History). Dawson, Folkestone. 1980. 189 pp. £11.

Dr Morrill's book is the second in this new series of critical bibliographies and it offers a select list of 885 books and 478 articles, the majority of which have been published since 1960. His book is sectionalized under

eight main headings and within the different sections the listed books, accompanied by pithy editorial descriptions and comments, are sub-divided either chronologically or thematically. There are frequent cross-references and an index of authors and editors.

The select list is aimed at students, teachers and librarians, and will undoubtedly be most useful to those whose chief interests are in seventeenth-century politics and government. The sub-section exclusively concerned with agricultural history, in contrast, is a very brief one, though the student will find other relevant items listed under Social History and Local History. Morrill makes some hard-hitting comments on the present state of economic and social history. Economic historians, we are told, suffer from an 'underlying lack of data which will forever condemn them to an inexactitude unbecoming to their profession'. Social historians of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, 'have squandered what few resources they possess'. Specialists will certainly question these general verdicts, and some of them will no doubt be surprised by Dr Morrill's belief that seventeenth-century roads and the leather industry are two subjects which still await their historians. The balance of editorial matter, too, seems questionable at times. Volume IV of the *Agrarian History of England and Wales* (1967), for example, is awarded only five and a half lines of editorial comment while Philip Styles's quasi-antiquarian *Studies in Seventeenth-Century West Midlands History* (1978) gets twice as much space devoted to it.

Although the general standard of accuracy is quite high, there are a number of irritating errors in the book. The mis-numberings on pp 27 (line 13: 93 for 89), 57 (line 21: 395 for 305) and 151 (line 3: 842 for 843) are probably the result of careless proofreading. Elsewhere, however, book titles (for example, items 549, 717 and 718) and dates of publication (for example, items 21, 305, 522, and Haigh's book referred to on p 126) are given incorrectly. More serious doubts arise about the merits of the actual arrangement of Dr Morrill's selection of entries. Why, for instance, have book titles and articles in separate parts of the book? And why have editorial comments and descriptions of books grouped together in sections rather than placed immediately below the volume to which they relate? Dr Morrill's methods of presentation do not always facilitate the use of what is, after all, designed as a reference work. His book, despite some obvious merits, can only be described as a qualified success. In any case, students, teachers and librarians will need to go on using the standard bibliographies for this period.

R C RICHARDSON

PETER ROEBUCK, *Yorkshire Baronets 1640-1760: Families, Estates and Fortunes*. OUP for University of Hull. 1980. xvii + 414 pp. £18.50.

Case studies which provide detailed evidence to confirm or modify generalizations about the evolution of landed society have become fairly numerous for the period before 1640, but there are very few available in print relating to the century or so after the Civil War. Indeed, until quite recently almost all those which had been undertaken had remained as unpublished theses. In 1975, however, one of the most frequently cited of these, Parker's study of the Cokes of Norfolk, appeared, little altered, in book form. Dr Roebuck's book also represents the conversion of a doctoral thesis of a number of years' standing into a book, although it is good to be able to report that he has added much new material and has thus been able to set his four family economic histories in a much broader setting than Dr Parker attempted to do.

The families in question are the Hothams of Scarborough and South Dalton, the Beaumonts of Whitley, the Constables of Everingham, and the Brights of Carbrook and Badsworth, and the chapters devoted to them occupy more than half the length of the book. All are interesting, especially because they were families of the second rank whose affairs have in general attracted less historical attention in this period than those of the great territorial magnates. The disadvantage of writing about gentry families rather than great aristocratic ones, however, is that their archives are almost invariably thinner. Thus whilst the author is able to discuss the economic position of his subjects very fully, and to show how and why it altered over time, relatively little emerges about personalities or (save what may be inferred) about the motives which determined personal actions. This is particularly unfortunate since the first lesson to be derived from this book is the importance of the character and behaviour of the individual landowner in shaping the fortunes of his family — often for decades after he himself had been laid to rest. It is, of course, the uniqueness of every family history, and the capacity that each one seems to have to highlight some new facet of the process of economic and social change within landed society, that makes studies such as these of such absorbing interest to anyone (such as the present reviewer) who has undertaken a similar type of research himself. However, the inability of the author, through no fault of his own, to make any of his landowners come alive, and the great (sometimes laborious) length at which their finances are expounded, will make the central portion of the book rather heavy going for the non-specialist.

Most readers will therefore find the first and last chapters more interesting, for here Dr Roebuck combines conclusions drawn from his four detailed studies with data derived from his investigation into all the other landed families of Yorkshire which achieved

the rank of baronet in the period. The result is a useful contribution to the evolving debate on the nature and extent of change in the upper and middle reaches of landed society in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but it is in the nature of the subject matter that his conclusions cannot readily be summarized in a sentence or two. However, he shows very clearly how such factors as the Civil War and its aftermath, agricultural depression, inheritances, and the failure of male heirs, and the continuing high level of activity on the land market, operated in practice — and they do seem to have brought about a persistent tendency for property to become concentrated into fewer hands. His conclusion that, in Yorkshire, landed society in this period was less stable than Habakkuk found to be the case in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, seems to be incontrovertible, and is in accordance with recent findings for several other counties. In much of the country, perhaps most of it, the age of 'massive stability' for the landowning elite did not begin until the middle of the eighteenth century at the earliest.

CHRISTOPHER CLAY

T M DEVINE (ed), *Lairds and Improvement in the Scotland of the Enlightenment*. Proceedings of the Ninth Scottish Historical Conference. 1978. iv + 70 pp. £3.

This volume brings together seven essays which were first delivered as lectures at a conference held in Edinburgh in 1978. As an attack on the theme indicated by the title it has, then, the deficiencies generally present when scholars supposedly in the same field of study are brought together to give the results of their research. Each must follow the lines of his or her interest and knowledge, and it is always probable that the coverage of the field will be partial and random. So it is here; indeed the book turns out to be Hamlet without the prince. Not one of the contributions treats of what, *prima facie*, should be the centre of an exhaustive treatment of the theme, namely the part played by lairds in the great movement of lowland agriculture which took Scotland from a laggard to a foremost position in European agriculture. John di Folco writes in the first essay of the process of change and the part played by the lairds in a group of Fife estates in the seventeenth century. It is a careful study of estate detail, stopping short in 1679, but with some significance for later development in showing in a way that confirms other recent studies that the Scottish agriculture of the seventeenth century was never the static monstrosity that the writers of the later eighteenth century were apt to depict. Tom Devine moves to the other end of the period of change and looks at social feelings among agricultural workers in

the period from 1780 to 1840. It is true that this is focused on a period when change was rapid and deep but, after a short initial survey of the process of change, he is more concerned with the results than with the generation of change. Moreover, it is the relations of agricultural workers with tenant farmers rather than with lairds that mainly concerns him. This is, however, a contribution which takes the broad view yet is solidly based and which is full of novel insights: an important contribution in its own right.

Most of the remaining essays are concerned either with industrial matters or with the peripheral areas of the Highlands and Shetland where agricultural improvement made much less impact. Alastair Durie attacks the intricate problem of the sources of the funds invested in industry and the relative importance of the lairds as contributors within the general frame. The linen industry is investigated to show how the capital streams flow together. He is able to demonstrate with clarity and authority the capital needs of this industry, but the supply side is altogether more elusive and less amenable to quantification. Again the institutions concerned are well described but it proves impossible to determine, except in list form, just how important were the different groups. It is probably fair to say that the role of landlords is played down as compared with more self-made men of the merchant or professional classes. But we do find here names that will crop up again as ardent agricultural improvers in other spheres. And the very display of the intricacy of the problem and the limits of knowledge is an achievement.

Brian Smith grips the reader with a vigorous intervention in a controversy that may be new to many, the role of the different landlord groups who followed each other successively in the control of Shetland life. The Norse lords, the Scottish lairds, the lairds turned traders, the merchants who became landowners — the designation of these groups is by no means novel but the origins of each as it emerges is shown in a new light; we hear too of important dips in prosperity that led to changes of land-ownership. But the essential account of the intervention of lairds and merchants in the fishing trade and of the effect it had on the condition of the people and of agriculture is scarcely novel. The controversy here seems to be largely on whether we care to describe these as destructive or progressive.

There are two contributions on the Highlands and both are based on the masses of documents thrown up by the administration of the annexed estates. Virginia Wills deals with the agricultural, and Annette Smith with the industrial, efforts of the commissioners. Neither makes great claims for advance secured by the earnest administrators but both can argue persuasively a detailed knowledge of the extensive documentation of their field. At least by implication they show the nature of the difficulties hindering improvement, whether

agricultural or industrial, in the Highlands, thus reflecting on the whole later course of development in the Highlands.

An essay much on its own is that by Alan Tait, writing on 'Robert Adam and the Picturesque'. Tait is obviously uneasy in connecting Robert Adam with the land-owning classes and his essay is almost entirely on Adam's artistic attitudes. He does not deal with the way in which this fitted with the perceptions and ambitions of Adam's land-owning clients.

MALCOLM GRAY

HAROLD B CARTER (ed), *The Sheep and Wool Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820*. Library Council of NSW and British Museum (Natural History). 1979. xxx + 641 pp. £35.

This book, which prints for the first time a selection of the sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, was published under the terms of the New South Wales *Sir Joseph Banks Memorial Act*, 1945. The preface by the editor explains that the volume originated with the work that lay behind his book: *His Majesty's Spanish Flock* (1964, reviewed by present reviewer on pp 129-31 of vol XIII, 2, 1965). There are over 1400 letters and documents transcribed by the editor and arranged in chronological order, most of the originals of which are in the Sutro Library, San Francisco. Following the preface there is a nine-page biographical introduction on the place of Banks in British agriculture, and a two-page textual introduction which indicates how the documents came to be in the Sutro Library. The scale of Banks's activities can be judged from the estimated lifetime correspondence of 100,000 letters. Those published here comprise nearly half-a-million words with some 320 correspondents, but only 430 are written by Banks.

The text itself begins with a forty-page index of the correspondents, and the documents themselves occupy nearly 500 pages. Each document is printed as nearly as possible in the form in which it was written, but whereas those from other people are final versions, the letters of Banks are usually rough drafts, which are therefore revealing. The footnotes have been conveniently placed at the end of the book, where there is also a useful bibliography of works published between 1755 and 1824, described as 'select' yet extending to twenty-five pages. Most of the entries in the index are surnames, but there are many under 'sheep' and 'wool' which enables this volume to be used as an important source of evidence on the period covered.

Also at the end are forty-five pages of appendices and tables, which lack an explanation either here or in the introduction. This means that it is difficult to use them without discovering the letter in which presumably

they are mentioned. Cross-references would have been invaluable here. The eight tables comprise wool fibre diameter measurements which one gleans from the acknowledgements were made from samples of wool found with the documents. It is a pity that there is no discussion of the biological significance of these, nor reference to considerable other measurements that have been published in recent years. On the other hand, if one regards these as raw data like the documents, one must thank Mr Carter for having had the measurements made and for publishing them in this way for use by others — they will certainly be most useful in my work on fleece evolution.

The attention given by Mr Carter to detail, which became tedious in his 1964 volume, must here be commended, and we must be grateful that he has devoted twenty years of his spare time to transcribing and arranging the documents here presented. They provide a unique source of study material from an important period in the history of sheep in Britain and the establishment of the Merino breed in Australia. During the same period Banks was President of the Royal Society, and as friend and adviser of George III it was he who secured for the British Empire an effective breeding nucleus of Spanish Merino sheep.

M L RYDER

JOHN BARRELL, *The dark side of the landscape*. CUP. 1980. 179 pp. 66 illus. £15.

The sub-title rather than the title of John Barrell's book presents a clearer indication of its subject matter: *The rural poor in English painting 1730-1840*. The author considers the manner in which artists painted figures, and the way in which the themes of the pictures are seen today. He argues that in order to comprehend the depictions it is necessary to understand the social position of the poor in society, and that the original ideas behind the themes have become obscured.

Illustrating his ideas through the work of several artists, he makes especial use of the paintings of Thomas Gainsborough, George Morland and John Constable. Of the three studies, that on Morland is the most sympathetic, Barrell putting forward the idea that Morland intended his rustic figures to be seen as discontented and idle, and not the cheerful and industrious figures which his patrons saw. In the section on Constable Barrell looks at the way in which depiction of men working in the fields became more distant with the progress of time. He suggests that Constable wished to indicate the virtues of the rural labourer in contact with the earth at a time when an increasing number of men were working in the crowded conditions of the industrialization which was encroaching into the countryside.

Though Barrell presents a clear understanding of the influence on English art of pastoral literature and European styles of art, he has tended to look at the paintings through the eyes of other art historians rather than at the subjects most obvious in the pictures. For example, he misses an aspect of the quotation from Robert Bloomfield:

But, unassisted through each toilsome day
With smiling brow the Plowman cleaves his way.

Constable used this as a preface to his painting of ploughing, *Dedham Vale*. Barrell takes the quotation as a reference to the loneliness of the ploughman, who is without the assistance of a ploughboy, and contends that the use of the word 'smiling' is ironic. But the reason for using the couplet was that Constable showed a design of plough which required the strength of two, rather than four, horses, the construction of the plough with its single handle enabling the ploughman to control both plough and horses, thus dispensing with the need for a ploughboy.

It is a shame that the obvious agricultural details are not as deeply researched in this book as in Barrell's previous work, *The Idea of the Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840* (CUP, 1972), the appendix of which contains an excellent study of enclosures. However, on the general level close attention has been paid to economic, social and agricultural studies of the period, and the author has used them well to illustrate his argument.

The ideas of the period are explained with clarity, and this is a book which is both enjoyable to read and informative. For a wider understanding of paintings as records of agrarian tasks and related subjects this is a valuable study.

HILARY C WATSON

MICHAEL TURNER, *English Parliamentary Enclosure*. Dawson, Folkestone. 1980. 247 pp. 20 figs, 34 tables; £13.

Dr Michael Turner's work as editor of the late W E Tate's papers provided us two years ago with a great mass of raw data on the enclosure movement in *A Domesday of English Enclosure Acts and Awards*; in this volume he offers his interpretation of this material. Such a general survey was very much needed, for it is some sixty years since the last attempt to portray the movement as a whole, and Dr Turner has brought together the results of the great volume of research undertaken during this period as well as contributing his own thoughts and conclusions. The volume examines both the spatial and temporal distribution of enclosure, discusses in some detail the varying theories put forward to explain these distributions, and offers a summary of work on pre-enclosure changes together

with the author's own Buckinghamshire evidence on the effects of landownership upon enclosure. A substantial portion is concerned with statistical analyses of the Act data, and the results of attempts at correlation with factors such as wheat prices and other price indices. These results provide some interesting evidence on the general relationships of the enclosure movement.

Unfortunately, substantial doubt must be cast on the validity of some of the original statistics, and especially on the use made of them. The division of all enclosures into those containing 'mainly open field arable' and those 'exclusively of common and waste' cannot be justified, for many enclosures contained open field but were nevertheless dominated by common and waste. Worse, in some of the analysis even the qualifying 'mainly' seems to have been overlooked, and the assumption made that this group consists entirely of open field. The result is not only to invalidate some of the detailed conclusions but to leave the whole work heavily biased towards open-field enclosure.

J CHAPMAN

G J LEWIS, *Rural Communities: a Social Geography*. Newton Abbot. David & Charles. 1979. £9.50.

A mutual interest in the making and the changing of rural landscapes has ensured a long and productive dialogue between agricultural historians and historical geographers, from which studies of rural settlements and of field systems have probably been the principal beneficiaries. Through the writings of historical geographers many agricultural historians have been made aware of the diversity of a geographical concern which embraces not only man as an agent of landscape change but also of regional differentiation and of altering patterns and processes in the ecology of man's relationship to his physical environment. But perhaps because few historical geographers have, until recently, manifested an overt interest in another principal geographical concern, the locational analysis of human activity, this branch of geographical enquiry has remained relatively hidden from the view of many agricultural historians. In his survey, therefore, Dr Lewis performs a useful service in synthesizing much of the recently published geographical literature on the locational analysis of the social geography of rural communities.

Although the emphasis of Dr Lewis's book is on the modern transformation of rural communities, it includes both an historical perspective and a review of some analytical concepts and techniques which might be employed to throw light upon earlier agrarian societies. A brief introductory chapter on the urbanization of the countryside is followed by an examination

of theories of community. The author then discusses what he terms 'the main agents of social change' — the migration of people and the diffusion of ideas. A chapter on the morphology of rural settlements appears as a somewhat incongruous interlude before Dr Lewis resumes his review of rural communities as localities and as social ecologies. Drawing substantially, but effectively, upon Margaret Stacey's work, he then offers a synthesis of community life before considering some analytical approaches to it. By way of ending rather than concluding Dr Lewis comments very briefly upon three themes which he suggests merit further consideration: the role of the geographical perspective in rural community study; the changing nature of the countryside; and the question of relevance in academic study.

As a survey and a synthesis of much of the literature of the 1960s and early 1970s on the social geography of rural communities, this book will be a useful introduction to the topic for those coming to it for the first time — such as undergraduates following courses in rural geography — as well as for those approaching it from a cognate discipline — such as agricultural historians. The explicit concern with the spatial organization of rural communities and localities is both a strength and a weakness, for it allows the author to focus his interest sharply upon locational matters but it also prevents him from considering very seriously the alternative view of space as a dependent variable with understanding the social control of space being more crucial than that of describing the spatial organization of society. While the locational analysts have undoubtedly provided better descriptions of the patterns of rural communities at various scales, Dr Lewis's book confirms the view that they have as yet added much less to our understanding of the networks of flows within and between those communities, whether of people, ideas, goods, or capital. For a book on social geography there is remarkably little discussion of social relations within rural communities. Yet the social conflict within them was and is often a struggle to control space rather than to be subjected to locational constraints as a consequence of the more successful control of space by others. The battle for space within rural communities is but one expression of the class struggle within them. Admirable though Dr Lewis's book is in many ways, its rural communities often appear to lack a vital element: people.

ALAN R H BAKER

R J OLNEY, *Rural Society and County Government in Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire*. History of Lincolnshire Committee for the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Lincoln. 1979. xiv + 202 pp. 14 pp of plates, 7 text figures. £8.50.

In this the tenth volume of the History of Lincolnshire series, R J Olney searches for a sense of county

consciousness in the society and government of nineteenth-century Lincolnshire. Isolated, diverse, lacking good roads and inns, the Lincolnshire of 1800 was only just beginning to achieve cohesion. By 1900, after agricultural depression had replaced the high noon of Victorian prosperity, county feeling had already been 'sapped by the partial industrialisation of Lincolnshire'. Yet in the years of agricultural advance during the second and third quarters of the century the county enjoyed a sense of identity and confidence based largely upon the achievements of its farming community and the classes most closely associated with it. Land agents, attorneys, bankers, manufacturers, merchants, and clergy were interdependent and often inter-related. Sir Charles Anderson thought that agents and attorneys rather than the great landowners ruled the county. Clergy who enjoyed incomes of at least £400 a year were favoured by Lord Brownlow when as Lord-lieutenant he was looking for magistrates. Resident in the villages, accomplished in public business, and politically sound as upholders of authority they, together with the gentry, were natural choices even though this policy kept Lincolnshire short of justices by comparison with Norfolk, Kent, Devon, and Sussex. Lincolnshire's social life is examined in chapters on landed society, the middle class and farm labour and village life, while the growth — sometimes painful — of co-operation over police, county gaols and public service is discussed in chapters on the lieutenancy and magistracy, local authorities and party politics.

In all of these Dr Olney's knowledge of Victorian Lincolnshire and its archives is invaluable. The reader is never submerged in detail and sight is never lost of the quest for a sense of county. Perhaps in describing Lincolnshire's briefly enjoyed cohesion Dr Olney is at his best in identifying the causes of its eventual fragmentation; Methodism, railways, education, the rapid growth of Grimsby, agricultural depression and the shrinking of the gentry and the rural upper middle class. In 1900 most Lincolnshire residents could travel to Lincoln, transact business, and return home the same night, but the railway network which made this possible was linking Lindsey more firmly with Lancashire, the West Riding and the Midlands than with Holland or Kesteven. In county politics national and imperial issues like Ireland and South Africa had a place whereas formerly wool imports, the malt tax and the price of wheat and barley had held the stage.

So much has been written about Victorian self-confidence in urban, industrialized settings that it is refreshing to have this account of it in a rural context with its implications for county government so interestingly explained. This volume is of importance for all students of English rural life and county politics in the nineteenth century as well as for those with a particular interest in Lincolnshire's local history.

T W BEASTALL

IAN CARTER, *Farm Life in Northeast Scotland 1840–1914*. John Donald, Edinburgh. 1979. xiv + 258 pp. £12.50.

Scottish rural history is deficient in regional studies. One is all the more surprised, therefore, to find a study of a major province, the north-east, that not only takes an in-depth look at its rural society during a fairly brief phase of change, or 1840–1914, but does so in a way that is both radical and challenging. Put simply, Ian Carter's text is concerned with the demise of the north-east peasantry over the Victorian period and is framed in explicitly Marxist terms. After being dominated for so long by empirical work, Scottish rural history has a need for interpretative studies and Carter's book certainly falls into this category. However, not all scholars will respond warmly to its blend of 'muckle farmers' and 'twal owsen ploos' on the one hand, and class fractions and relations of production on the other.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first sets out the background to the problem, with a brief discussion of the north-east's physical endowment, its experience of the Improvers' Movement and what Carter terms the 'new social formation' or the social groups created by the Improvers' Movement. It is at this point that he introduces the main *dramatis personae* of his argument, the large, capitalist 'muckle farmers' and the smaller peasant landholder or crofter. These are put forward as class fractions, each with its own material basis of production. Chapter 2 explores how the relationship between the capitalist farmer and the peasant altered between 1840 and 1870. During this period, Carter sees the 'muckle farmers' as becoming more capitalist in their behaviour. Not only were their ranks penetrated by merchant and speculative capital but the rise of the cattle trade from the 1820s onwards gave them a firm and lucrative market role. Peasant farmers, meanwhile, were still able to reproduce themselves as a class. They were able to do so because landowners encouraged the reclamation of waste by the peasantry on favourable terms, a process that spawned extra smallholdings. At the same time, the small farmers were able to discharge the role of stock breeders for the larger capitalist farmers who concentrated on fattening. Reciprocity between the two class fractions was extended further by the peasant family shedding surplus labour and its employment as hired labour by the 'muckle farmers'. Following 1870, these conditions changed. Landowners no longer sought to have extra land colonized, Irish and Canadian stock were increasingly substituted for local leanstock, whilst mechanization led to capital being substituted for labour. By 1914, Carter pronounces the north-east peasantry as dead, as no longer a reproducible class.

Subsequent chapters embroider this basic theme by looking at other aspects. Thus, chapter 4 considers the life and conditions of those who inhabited the bothies, chaumers and cottar-touns, covering everything from

the daily cycle of labour to the inadequate and sometimes scandalous conditions of the bothy. Chapter 5 explores the social conflict between farmers and their hired labour, tensions which naturally varied from the homely family systems of the peasant farm or cottar toun to the stark alienation of the bothy system. A feature of Carter's discussion here is the use made of bothy ballads as a source of contemporary attitudes and feelings. A recurring message throughout the book is that changes between 1840 and 1914 were changes in the relationship between class fractions and reflect the success or failure of such fractions to represent their class interests. Carter maintains that the demise of the north-east peasantry by 1914 occurred because they failed to represent their class interests and that this must be seen as a political problem. He reviews their lack of political consciousness in chapter 6, a chapter in which the peasant's abortive flirtation with the Liberal party and their inability to acquire the substantive legal rights of the crofter are seen as critical. Rather like a bottle of claret that has been poorly decanted and whose last glass is clouded, the last chapter of the book touches the reviewer's palate as slightly tart and of a lesser vintage. It hastily — if effectively — reviews the main theme of the book, chides Edinburgh-based scholars for trying to fit the variety of Scottish rural history into a single mould, and then rounds off the book with a call to his fellow-sociologists to follow his path and look at how the various class fractions in rural society have fared over time and at who exactly owns what. Parts — if only parts — seem more a ferment of questionable asides than considered viewpoint: this is a pity for the book as a whole has much to commend it.

Given the book's Marxist approach, many readers are likely to react unfavourably against what Carter has written. But as he himself implies, and as I would be prepared to accept, the dependence of the Scottish rural historian on large estate paper collections (some of which are still in private hands) has tended, on occasion, to produce much intellectual bowing and doffing of the cap, and there is a place for a more independent, less reverential approach. Besides, his play on social relationships and conflict (as opposed to the purely economic or agrarian dimensions of the problem) is an underworked theme north of the Border. But these more contentious sides of the book apart, readers will still find a great deal of straightforward and well-thought-out agrarian history, a history written with insight and no lack of warmth for the problem. It displays not only sensitivity for the everyday life and struggles of the north-east peasantry but a fine regard for its subtle variations from one locality to another.

ROBERT A DODGSHON

HOWARD NEWBY, *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England*. Hutchinson. 1979. 302 pp. 6 tables. Cartoons by Thelwell. £8.95.

This is not primarily a work of history — nor would the author wish it to be regarded as such. It is rather a study of rural England as it exists today which uses historical material to show the processes of change. It draws extensively on published sources and particularly on Newby's previous works, *The Deferential Worker* and *Property, Paternalism and Power*.

The central thesis is that the English countryside today is a long way removed from the popular and somewhat idyllic image cherished and, at least part believed in, both by those who live in the towns and those who live in the country. Rural England appears to some to be threatened by urban people and urban pressures; in fact it is also very much threatened by the people who earn their living from it, and who 'by the relentless pursuit of Mammon' through ever more intensive farming methods are placing the environment and landscape in jeopardy.

Newby is at pains to show the reality of the countryside today; what sort of place it is, what sort of people live there, what sort of pressures it is really subjected to and what historical processes have brought it to its present state. In the course of his journey he debunks many popular misconceptions which are avidly perpetuated by contemporary authors. Two examples will suffice. The tied cottage has been described as 'feudal' and as 'legalized serfdom', where, as in fact, 'it is a quite recent development of mid-Victorian agriculture, following on from the decline of farm service and the disappearance of itinerant agricultural gangs' (p 137). A second example is the loss of agricultural land of which some 76,000 acres a year go to non-agricultural uses. In stressing that half of this goes to forestry, he comments that 'it seems less pedantic to insist that forestry is no more than a highly specialised . . . type of agriculture' (p 28). He goes on to stress that the rate of transfer of agricultural land to urban is actually one-third less today than in the 1930s.

There is a discerning analysis of the current state of the English village and of the conflict between the 'traditional' inhabitants and the incomers. Newby finds that it is the incomers who wish to maintain the status quo. They, 'like to see farm workers around the village since this serves as a reminder that they do indeed live in a "truly rural" village as opposed to a kind of rustic suburbia' (p 170). He traces the history of the 'squalor of rural housing' for farm workers since the mid-nineteenth century and the strong feelings which council housing developments — or rather the lack of them — generated in the 'twenties and 'thirties (p 179 et seq). He attributes the lack of public housing in rural areas between the wars to the domination of landlords and farmers on local councils who wanted to keep the rates down. Even since the last war this situation has

continued for, on the eve of local government reorganization in 1974, rural district councils provided only 20 per cent of rural housing stock as against 31 per cent elsewhere so that farm workers were becoming increasingly dependent on tied cottages and other rural workers were faced with a declining pool of privately rented housing (p 185). Conversely, planning controls on rural housing have become — in effect, if not in intent — instruments of social exclusivity. 'For example, the insistence of planning authorities upon the use of certain building materials, the standards of design and external finish and the density of housing development reflect their traditional concern with how a house or a village looks rather than who will actually live in it' (p 187). It might seem that the transfer of power from the Big House to the County Hall and as Newby puts it, 'on, in many cases, to Whitehall' (p 195), has removed control over village affairs even further away from the community but Newby is quick to point out that it would be a fallacy to believe that these changes do not necessarily mean 'that the interests of farmers and landowners are no longer dominant in rural society' (p 196).

If it is easy to sympathize with many of the author's generalizations, it is not always possible to agree with the route by which he reaches them. On p 122 he writes 'it is easy to forget that the majority of those who work in agriculture are neither landowners nor farmers but farmworkers'. Table 5 (p 123) shows the number of regular whole-time workers (excluding family) in 1975 as 144,400. To this one might add 41,400 regular part-time workers, making a total of 185,000. Table 3 (p 79) gives the total number of agricultural holdings (presumably full- and part-time) as 208,600 in 1974, so that it could be argued that there are more full-time and part-time farmers than full- and part-time farm workers. The point at issue is Newby's contention that the farm workers are the least considered section of farming population, with which it is difficult to disagree; but it would hardly be correct to include family workers within that group since they might be presumed to share the benefits of their parents.

Newby gives us a timely reminder of the meaninglessness of continuing an 'urban versus rural' concept of society. 'The mere fact that such a large proportion of the population now works in towns is illustrative of this, but any of the social changes which have affected the everyday life of the countryside cannot easily be fitted into a rural-urban dichotomy. Important developments like the spread of education, the rise of the welfare state, the influence of the mass media and even the increasing rationalization of agriculture itself reflect not so much the influence of urban or rural ways of life, but of the *national* upon the *local* (p 240).

Overall the book provides a penetrating analysis of the state of rural society. Additionally it provides a welcome guide to the jungle of rural legislation

developed in the last fifty years. As a sociologist's view of the development and functioning of the institutions of English rural life it could be read with advantage, by agricultural historians of all periods.

JOHN HIGGS

GRAEME QUICK and WESLEY BUCHELE, *The Grain Harvesters*. American Society of Agricultural Engineers, PO Box 410, St Joseph, Michigan 49085, USA. 1979. 269 pp. Illus. No price stated. A book upon a special subject must not be frowned upon if it is restricted to the choice of its authors. Harvesting and cleaning a crop is but one facet of its production although it is the final result of a season's work, and maybe of a longer period of preparation of the seedbed. Harvesting is always a tricky business and aforesaid occupied several weeks in winning the harvest, and the best part of a winter in threshing and dressing the grain. Verily in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread was a ponderous but irrefragable truism, much as the process has been changed.

Messrs Quick and Buchele have traced the story from the primitive ages, when food was collected one way or another from the wild herbage that surrounded the isolated dwellings of primitive man, to the modern world of machinery. The book is copiously illustrated but unfortunately the pictures are not numbered, although many of them are supplied with comprehensive captions.

It would be rather over-emphatic for me here to go through the ages as these authors, one of them an Australian and the other American, have done, but something must be said about their treatment of the progress of events which have led to the modern mechanized process of harvesting. One thing that mechanization has done is to reduce the process of harvesting from a lengthy duration of some weeks of exacting and exhausting work to a few days' work by two or three men, a combine harvester and a truck or two. To these may perhaps be added a drying plant and the necessary silos for the storage of the grain.

The job was not always so simple, as everyone knows who has taken part in haymaking or grain harvesting. There is an argument amongst the

archaeologists about the countries (or areas) where grain was first cultivated and gathered other than by the collection of wild herbage, but this need not detain us here. The authors deal with the Middle East and Egypt in a rather cursory but quite constructive manner, though their story becomes rather confused with the Roman and Middle Ages; but then the tools used to cut the corn and thresh it were fairly similar throughout the handicraft age; I find the fourteenth-century illustration of the *pik en hak* very instructive: I was not aware that it was so ancient.

Of course the Roman *Vallus* is carefully discussed with all the most recent pronouncements about it, and this part of the story may be regarded as conclusive, whence it jumps to the eighteenth century, not of course without some illustration of the intervening centuries and a chapter on the *Society for the encouragement of Arts, manufactures and commerce* whose influence and premiums did so much to encourage the development of ideas about agricultural technique in the eighteenth century. This chapter discusses the early types of reaper, the inventions of a variety of people, including Bell, whose efforts are rather better known than most of the other aspirants to fame. This is followed by a chapter entitled 'Who invented the reaper?', a controversy by no means new and widely discussed in earlier literature.

After reaping comes threshing, and so the authors revert to primitive times and provide a detailed discussion of the process from the time when the hortative not to muzzle the ox which treads out the corn was good advice. The various apparatus worked manually or by animal power, if only treading, are capably described, but it is of course in the eighteenth century that the foundations of modern technology were laid. Steam power by traction engines urged on the process, and the invention of the petrol-driven tractor much more, but it would be tedious to follow the process in detail here.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries occupy a major part of the book, and there are recondite passages on the gathering of such crops as the soya bean. The bibliography is exhaustive. This is a study thoroughly to be recommended to historians and other interested parties. A very well worthwhile piece of work, but limited to one phase of the farming year, possibly the final and most important one.

G E FUSSELL

Shorter Notices

N J G POUNDS, *An Historical Geography of Europe 1500–1840*. CUP. 1980. xvi, 438 pp. Maps, diagrams. £17.50.

The writer of a text which deals with so big a subject over so long a period faces a major problem of exposition. Professor Pounds' solution is to begin and end with two broad 'horizontal' chapters surveying Europe in the early sixteenth century and on the eve of the industrial revolution respectively; and to have five 'vertical' chapters in between, giving in turn overviews of the development of population, cities, agriculture, manufacturing and mining, and trade. As in his earlier volume dealing with 450 BC to AD 1330, the British Isles and Russia are omitted except for passing references. The result is a book which, as the author remarks, for the most part 'looks remarkably like economic history'. The chapter on agriculture includes statistical material from a wide range of sources, but inevitably most of these are so localized (and possibly untypical) as not to throw much light on the dimensions of general trends. The book is nevertheless a remarkable achievement in assembling and interpreting a very large body of material, and has been written in so lucid and readable a form that it will undoubtedly be for many years a standard text and invaluable work of reference.

G E MINGAY

JOHN LOWERSON, *A Short History of Sussex*. Dawson, Folkestone. 1980. 214 pp. £10.

This is a readable, accurate and comprehensive history of Sussex from the earliest times to the present day, a book that will serve as a useful introduction to the county's history for students at many different levels. The author's own research interests are in the Victorian period, but he has mastered a mass of published material on earlier times and has presented it lucidly and concisely.

The publishers claim that 'John Lowerson has avoided an approach which focuses on buildings and landscapes and has sought to write the more elusive history of the people of the area', but in practice this distinction is hard to maintain. On the first page of chapter one we read that, 'The one uniting feature is the Sussex landscape'; later, new towns and lost villages are mapped, Wealden hammer ponds explained, the 'Great Rebuilding' has a separate section devoted to it, and so on. It would have been better to have recognized that the landscape approach can form an integral part of social history; that being so, the

book would have had a much wider appeal if illustrations had been provided to match the attractive cover.

DAVID HEY

JOHN BURNETT, *A Social History of Housing 1815–1970*. Methuen. 1978. viii + 344 pp. Illus. £5.95 paperback.

This valuable general work on the history of housing gives special emphasis to the factors influencing supply and demand, notably population growth, changes in family size and levels of incomes. The balance of the book is inevitably on the urban side, although two chapters are devoted to rural housing before 1914. However, in the third section of the book, dealing with the period 1918–70, the country housing problem drops out of sight. For the nineteenth century the book provides a useful overview, and brings out well the diversity of cottage homes, their size, construction, defects, and rents, and the problems of generalizing about them. We still need a definitive study of the rural side of housing history.

G E MINGAY

JEAN ROBIN, *Elmdon. Continuity and change in a north-west Essex village 1861–1964*. Cambridge University Press. 1980. xxxiv + 260 pp. Illus. £15.

This book is concerned with the structure of society in a small Essex village and the way that it changed over the course of a century. The size of families, the importance of kinship networks, and the experiences of the various occupational groupings are exhaustively examined. Some of the findings will be familiar to students of rural history — for example, the relatively low geographical mobility of those employed as farm workers in the parish, and the discovery that it was the young people who were most likely to migrate, with girls (entering domestic service) tending to leave at an earlier age than their brothers. Nevertheless, it is valuable to have this development fully documented for one community. The many statistical tables are of particular interest, and there are several useful case studies of long-established families, with the ups and downs in their fortunes carefully recorded. The book will provide a valuable source for both historians and sociologists. However, by its very nature it is unable to set its findings, in any significant fashion, against a broader national or regional background. The account

is also rather flat. One does not get much 'feel' of what life was like for the villagers concerned. Such matters as poor relief (save for a brief mention of Saffron Walden workhouse), medical care, and law and order (including problems of poaching) are neglected.

But Jean Robin's book has many merits and can be recommended confidently to students of nineteenth- and twentieth-century village life. It has a companion volume, *Kinship at the Core*, which considers the nature of community in Elmton from an anthropologist's viewpoint.

PAMELA HORN

JOY PARR, *Labouring Children*. Croom Helm. 1980. 181 pp. Illus, tables. £11.95.

This short book is concerned with the emigration of working-class children to rural Canada during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most came from an urban background and their home environment is examined in some detail, together with the motives and methods of the emigration societies who organized their removal. For the agricultural historian, the book's main interest will lie in the chapters describing the children's life in Canada. The hardships of their situation are emphasized, though the author concludes that as adults they were likely to secure better jobs than they would have done had they remained in Britain.

The survey provides an interesting insight into a little-known aspect of social history. However, students of rural life are likely to find the analysis of the children's experiences on Canadian farmsteads inadequate. In this connection, it would have been valuable to have had more details of the conditions imposed in the apprenticeship indentures, since these seem to have formed a major part of the emigration societies' attempts to protect their young charges from exploitation.

PAMELA HORN

SIR JOSEPH HUTCHINSON AND A C OWERS, *Change and Innovation in Norfolk Farming*. Published for the Norfolk Agricultural Station by Packard Publishers Ltd. 1980. 72 pp. No price stated.

This slim book records the history of the Norfolk Agricultural Station, from its start in the 1880s as a series of experimental plots through its fifty years at Church Farm, Sprowston, to its present position at Manor Farm, Morley, between Wymondham and Attleborough. It was created, and has been sustained, by Norfolk farmers and landowners, though financial help has been obtained from the Development Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture. For thirty-five years from 1924 the Station was directed by Frank Rayns, while Lord Hastings was chairman of the executive committee from 1912 to his death in 1956. These two redoubtable men worked closely with the agricultural scientists at Cambridge, successively Professor T B Wood, Sir John Hammond, Sir Frank Engledow, and Sir Joseph Hutchinson from the School of Agriculture, and with the staffs of the Plant Breeding Institute and the National Institute for Agricultural Botany. But the Station never lost touch with the Norfolk farmers and with the need to demonstrate practices that were not only technically sound but also financially profitable. Rayns at Sprowston pioneered the production of sugar beet in this country, the use of tops and pulp for fodder in place of the traditional turnips, the selection of pure lines of crop seeds, and many other techniques which later became common. He also trained many men who made careers in the National Agricultural Advisory Service; when he retired in 1960, six of the eleven directors of the experimental husbandry farms had been members of his staff. It is useful to have this brief and clear record of the work of some notable men who actively promoted the agricultural revolution of the twentieth century, when science was fully brought into farming practice.

EDITH H WHETHAM

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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THESES IN AGRARIAN HISTORY

Dr Raine Morgan of the Institute of Agricultural History of the University of Reading has prepared a comprehensive bibliography of higher degree theses on British agrarian history, 1876-1978. The bibliography, with introduction, is to be published this spring jointly by the Society and the Institute. Copies are available to members at £2.50, including postage, and can be ordered on the form inserted into this issue of the *Review*. It will also be on general sale, price £3.50 including postage.

THE THREAT TO THE HISTORIC RURAL LANDSCAPE

A day conference on the theme 'The Threat to the Historic Rural Landscape' is to be held on Saturday 21 March 1981, at the Fortress House Lecture Theatre, Savile Row, London W1. Details and booking forms are available from Dr R N Millman, Secretary, Historic Landscapes Steering Group, Department of Geography, Polytechnic of North London, 383 Holloway Road, London N7 ORN.