

Book Reviews

M I FINLEY (ed), *Studies in Roman Property by the Cambridge University Seminar in Ancient History*. CUP, 1976. 211 pp.

Cambridge University Press are to be felicitated for having decided to publish this work (and others) in multilite. Let us hope that their example finds imitators.

The essays here reproduced are the work of a seminar of advanced students, of a competent order. Professor Finley, explaining the aims of the exercise, frames the questions that invite answers in the field selected. He emphasizes the paucity of the literary evidence, the shortcomings of conclusions often based on highly random references, the absence of figures and the impact of state action on private investment in land.

R P Duncan-Jones opens with a study of configurations of landholding in the Roman Empire. Having listed the categories of land-proprietorship, he proceeds to discuss the private estates, pointing out that such estates tended to become fragmented owing to inheritance; hence any known unit might have been part of an estate elsewhere. He then examines six areas for which estate registers exist; his method is statistical, his information variously derived from tax assessments, recorded acreages, income, and water-entitlement. But he asks: do differentiations arise from a variation of environments, is the raw material too selective, ignoring the small-holder, and are the largest landlords under-represented? He concludes that comparisons are possible only within the same sector of wealth, but also that the records point unequivocally to a heavy aggregation of property in the hands of the rich. One feels that these studies could be much more realistic were it only possible to identify and study the areas on the ground.

Dorothy Crawford tackles the problems of the imperial estates, interesting herself in definition, movement in and out of imperial control, management both internally and in relation to the whole imperial economy, and the personal involvement of the emperors. Her list of known certain imperial estates is extremely cautious, and could certainly be expanded. She doubts, for instance, if the Combe Down inscription refers to an estate, but has overlooked that more than one procurator is here alluded to, so that several imperial projects may be meant. The *centurio regionarius* recorded at Bath restoring a shrine *insolentia dirutum* surely indicates a *regio*, ie the subdivision of an imperial estate, in the vicinity. The extent of imperial estates in Judaea was certainly larger than this study would imply, and a good deal of additional information is now available there. Crawford dwells on the policy of the emperors to absorb the management of the *ager publicus* into that of their own estates. Important is the

mention that the system of procurators, conductors and coloni recorded in the African inscriptions was not necessarily repeated in other provinces. Apart from Asia Minor, it certainly existed in the Lydda district of Judaea, where the *aris*, the precise Hebrew equivalent of *mishotes* is mentioned in the Talmud. Tiberius, Nero and Severus acquired much landed property by confiscation, so that the imperial domain became a major factor in the Empire's economy, thus withdrawing markets from the private sector. Various forms of lease and management are here detailed, but Crawford does not discuss the fact that some imperial estates (eg in Noricum) appear to have imposed customs at their borders. The emperors were of course interested in the revenue that their domains yielded, and Hadrian encouraged his coloni to cultivate marginal lands on favourable terms. John Crook deals with classical Roman law and the sale of property. As a mere layman I have only one comment here. A constitution of Gordian deals with forced sales at low prices, and Talmudic rulings appear to be very interested in this subject in Judaea in the same century — a striking example of the impact of common conditions on two very different systems of law.

Elizabeth Rawson on the Ciceronian aristocracy and its properties is more relevant to social than to economic problems, if they can be distinguished. She notes that there is little sentimental attachment to individual estates, and landed property did not contribute to political power; the absence of primogeniture and entail resulted in much breaking up of estates by gift and bequest. Few owners, apparently, were genuinely interested in agriculture itself, yet on the business side many large villas supplied luxury foods to the city of Rome, and while aristocrats seem to have been keen buyers and sellers of land, knowledge of professional property — dealers and developers is restricted — one was Orata, who may have invented the shower bath.

Professor Finley now takes a hand in private farm tenancy in Italy. The sources are meagre; fixed money rents, share cropping and permanent payment in kind were all current. The situation appears to have been that good tenants were hard to find, and landlords were prepared to retain their lessees despite arrears and insolvency, and to deal leniently with them for that reason. Why not? Pliny netted 400,000 sesterces per annum from his tenants at Tifernum Tiberinum. Indeed, the offence of forcible retention of tenants is referred to more than once in the imperial edicts.

P Garnsey examines urban property investments; Atticus and Cicero, and certainly others, owned income-bringing shops and blocks of houses in town (Cicero received 80,000 sesterces per year from his).

Many well-to-do city-houses at Volubilis (Africa) in the third century A.D. were centres of oil-production; at Timgad one of the most luxurious dwellings possessed shops communicating with its interior. In Noricum Alföldi noted the link between the wealthy city bourgeoisie and various crafts. This subject deserves study in view of the various statements of scholars concerning the non-productive character of classical cities, and of the concentration of trade and industry in the hands of non-citizens, a doctrine propounded by Professor Finley himself in his book, *The Ancient Economy*.

C R Whittaker winds up with the theme of *agri deserti*. His is an exercise in which he criticizes damagingly almost every testimony usually cited to prove the spread of uncultivated tracts and the general decline of agriculture of the Empire from the third century onwards. He rightly admits that this sort of evidence cannot be quantified.

Whittaker, it seems to me, omits to weigh attentively the fact of the growth of tied tenancy (the colonate) which went *pari passu* with the flight of cultivators from the land. The coercion involved may well have seriously depressed production, just as the enforced collectivization in the USSR has driven down production on all except the small plots that the peasantry are permitted to cultivate for themselves. Also, discharged veterans were generally mediocre farmers, and if Augustus ceased land-grants, the Byzantine emperors introduced a 60-acre grant, complete with seed and plough team, to released servicemen. We must also recall that barbarian irruptions did mean the killing of farmers and peasants, the disruption of roads, markets and irrigation systems. The problem should also be examined whether the third-century plagues were due to a lowered physical resistance following undernourishment among cultivators, and how far climatic change affected agriculture adversely. Recent data show that precipitation was dropping slowly but consistently throughout the imperial age in the Middle East — the prosperity of north-western Syria and the elaboration of runoff farming in the Israel Negev notwithstanding. In Britain, 'classical' agriculture broke down owing to the collapse of organization and the barbarian advent. Both these phenomena preceded in various provinces the final disappearance of Roman power in the west, and restoration was carried out with increasing difficulty. Whittaker's essay, cogent as it is, proves that the problem can only be solved by continued investigation in each province.

SHIMON APPLEBAUM

ZVI RAZI, *Life, Marriage & Death in a Medieval Parish: Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen 1270-1400*. Past and Present Publications: CUP, 1980. xiv + 162 pp. £12.

The growing number of people who have worked through a series of court rolls of any size will appreciate at once the prodigious efforts of Dr Razi. Here he presents us with the fruits of his labours on what must be one of the longest and fullest runs of manorial records. And a pretty solid harvest it is too. The reader needs a head for figures; to skip them means skipping the book. Presumably editorial considerations denied Dr Razi the luxury of a conclusion. The book is rather spoilt without one. We are not given the opportunity at the end to draw breath, stand back, and review the path threaded through the statistics. Neither are we given the chance to adjust our sight from the limited world of Halesowen to the larger world around. What was going on elsewhere?

Dr Razi has provided a wealth of information for the attention of the 'Cambridge School' and its ilk; but what of the non-specialist? This book stands in a series designed, we are told, as much for him as the specialist. Unfortunately, he is shown scant consideration. This is a shame. Here is a book about a particular local community. On the surface, we can imagine many in and around Halesowen interested in the history of their town and interested in buying a book of this title. Yet we can also imagine how few would look beyond the table of contents and the list of tables. Surely Dr Razi's editorial board could have encouraged him to write a book which would have had far greater appeal and still retained its academic integrity? This does not necessarily entail omitting material but re-ordering it (many of the tables could have been grouped at the end; that alone would have made for easier reading). Indeed, there are several points at which we might justifiably ask Dr Razi to expand his story. What, for example, was the impact of the abbot or his representatives upon the manor? To what extent can the men and women of Halesowen be pursued into the surrounding countryside; do we possess records of surrounding manors? It would be interesting to have Dr Razi's comments upon the printed edition of his records. Court rolls have so much of interest in them; it is a sad thing to see them reduced quite so comprehensively to the table and the figure.

ANDREW JONES

D O PAM, *The Hungry Years: the struggle for survival in Edmonton and Enfield before 1400*. Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, Occasional Paper, new series no 42, 1980. 31 pp. 95p.

A local history society depends for much of its success upon an enterprising and enthusiastic membership and an abundant supply of sources, whether documents or stonework. The Edmonton Hundred Historical Society is blessed with such a marriage. Its list of publications show that the marriage has been fruitful; indeed, we can expect further happy events. This is tremendously welcome. A combination of local appeal, scholarship

and readability not only ensures a healthy local society but also provides monographs which attract interest and respect across the country and beyond. The combination, however, is hard to achieve. While Mr Pam has laboured diligently, the result is not entirely successful. It seems so unfair to take local societies to task for failing to achieve the standards of a university department. But here is a study which lays claim to high scholarly credibility. Within 23 pages of text we have over 300 footnotes, by far the greater part referring to unpublished manuscripts. Much time and energy has been spent in quarrying in those tricky strata, charters and records of royal courts. Here is a local study which we can expect to make an important contribution to a wider historical understanding. Yet we are disappointed. What Mr Pam gives us is, I am afraid, a collection of facts. This gives his study of Enfield and Edmonton an antiquarian flavour which it does not deserve. But a mass of ill-digested material (eg p 25) provides us with no coherent theme. No rounded picture emerges; no significant conclusions are reached (the conclusion — p 28 — is little more than a repetition of information already provided).

Ostensibly, Mr Pam's objective is to provide a study of Enfield and Edmonton which justifies his title. Was the fourteenth century a time of impoverishment for the peasantry; was there a battle for survival, particularly in the first three decades of the century? Mr Pam adduces evidence of families falling on hard times as they fell into the financial clutches of London merchants. But families have always risen to prominence in one generation to fade in the next. What Mr Pam fails to do, right at the start of his study, is to discuss his sources. This is no mere quibble. His work is so dependent upon his sources that his readers deserve some attempt to evaluate them. We are given little or no information about legal processes in the royal courts — information which, again, the reader requires and which could have been culled from the publications of the *Selden Society* and condensed into a paragraph or two. If we had a grasp on the sources, we would then be in a better position to interpret the mass of facts. Mr Pam has had access to such marvellous sources. To introduce them to us would only serve as a compliment.

A number of minor quibbles — but their effect is cumulative and they underline the remarks already made. We do not get off to a good start. The first sentence (p 5) is redundant; it bears no relationship to what follows. An explanation of the dating (p 6) would not come amiss. Is 4 March 1338 in 1337/38 or 1338/39? We need to know a lot more about individuals. Adam Fraunceys (p 7) is a good example. Mr Pam ignores the useful biographical account provided by Miss Thrupp. The charter (p 16) could have been transcribed for us. The section on peasant strips (p 17) is not really worth having. The description of the

manors could be considerably 'tightened up' and then placed at the beginning. Too much detail is dispersed casually over too many pages. The Domesday section (pp 12–14) is far too long, and too 'exact'. Finally, while the word *demesne* (p 17) is explained, too many technical terms slip by without comment — 'benefit of clergy', 'eyre', 'patent', even 'hundred'.

With a little trouble Mr Pam's work on Enfield and Edmonton could be reworked into a substantial contribution to our knowledge of suburban London in the Middle Ages. He promises us a continuation of the story to the end of the sixteenth century. The trouble will be worth taking.

ANDREW JONES

M W GREENSLADE and D A JOHNSON (eds), *Victoria History of the County of Stafford, Volume VI*. OUP for University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1979. xix + 294 pp. Illus, maps, plans. £48.

Volume VI of the Staffordshire VCH will be of particular interest to readers of the *Review* since rather over half of its pages are taken up by four valuable essays on the agricultural history of the county. Jean R Birrell writes on medieval agriculture, and Ann J Kettle takes the story on up to 1793. The two subsequent periods, from 1793 to 1875 and 1875 to 1975 are written by C R J Currie. The remainder of the volume deals with the county's schools and the University of Keele, and with Stafford, the county town. The whole is produced to the VCH's usual high standards.

A poor, backward and thinly-settled district in 1086, especially in Cannock Forest, the county shared in the rise of population and expansion of cultivation which characterized the period between Domesday and the early fourteenth century. Assarting in the forests still left the county well wooded, and at this early time cattle and sheep already played major roles in the economy. Field systems were often irregular and complex; oats were of particular importance among arable crops, and some large acreages were given over to peas. Famine struck Staffordshire in 1315–17, as it did elsewhere, and by the 1320s some land had been abandoned. The Black Death appeared in 1349, with a second serious outbreak in 1361, leaving more land out of cultivation or leased as pasture, and numbers of ruinous farmsteads. The decline was, however, perhaps more marked in the populous manors of the south and centre of the county. Direct cultivation of demesnes declined, wage rates rose and many customary payments could not be collected, although some peasants profited from the conditions to accumulate large holdings. The tale was not entirely one of stagnation: there was much peasant activity and pasture farming flourished.

Enclosure was the dominant feature of the early modern period in Staffordshire. Permanent conversion

of arable to pasture caused relatively little unrest, and indeed was sometimes initiated by the farmers. Parliamentary enclosure in the eighteenth century was largely concerned with the remaining commons and wastes. Farming moved towards three main kinds of specialization: stock-rearing and dairying in the Moorlands, corn and dairying on the heavy lands of the county's centre, and sheep and corn on the light soils of southern districts. Changes in landownership, influenced by redistribution of monastic lands, led to more efficient estate management, and ultimately to higher rents as leases were converted to rack rents in the eighteenth century. Farms were tending to grow in size, and by this time there was increasing interest in improvement, stimulated by the expansion of nearby markets in the Potteries and Black Country. The hoeing of turnips began about 1770, and soon after some farmers were beginning to drill their seeds; heavy use was made of marl and lime as soil dressings. Oats were still important, especially in the Moorlands, and peas were regularly grown for fodder, but Staffordshire was predominantly a county of stock husbandry. Clovers and rye grass were increasingly used in the eighteenth century to improve the pastures, and efforts were made to improve both the sheep and the Staffordshire longhorn by crossing with other breeds. Horses, pigs and poultry were important supplementary livestock.

With the fall in grain prices from near the end of the Napoleonic Wars there was a tendency for landowners to encourage farmers to further shift from arable to grass. After 1793 there was a greater interest in agricultural improvement, and landlords established model farms and supported agricultural societies. Professional land agents, such as James Loch, advocated drainage and modernization of farm buildings. Four-course rotations were enforced in some leases, and roots and leys were commonly introduced where conditions favoured them, while the growth of the industrial towns encouraged market gardening and more intensive corn cropping. By the 1820s drilling and the associated horse-hoeing were common, and threshing machines were coming in. Grassland management involved the use of manures like guano and town manure, and water meadows, some long established, were widely used. On light soils the Cannock Heath sheep became dominant, though Southdowns and other breeds were kept, while Leicesters emerged as the main breed in the Moorlands. The chief development in cattle farming was the spread of dairying, for liquid milk near urban centres, and cheese, the Cheshire and Derbyshire varieties, elsewhere. The local longhorn now gave way to the Shorthorn, and for beef Herefords came into vogue. Farms continued to grow in size, and indeed James Loch, in particular, was criticized for his 'great rage for uniting farms and turning adrift honest farmers'. But there remained, nevertheless, many small

cultivators, both in dairying areas and on the claylands.

In the hundred years after 1875 Staffordshire was somewhat insulated from the full effects of foreign competition by an already high proportion of pasture land. More of the remaining arable went down to grass and farmers relied increasingly on cattle, especially on sales of liquid milk, feeding their stock on imported foodstuffs. Industrial expansion provided larger urban markets but also created problems — land was lost to towns and roads, farms were split up, crops damaged by smoke, and labour drawn away from farming. The shrinking number of arable holdings concentrated on producing fodder for fattening stores, while market gardening expanded near the towns. By 1939 permanent grass occupied 78 per cent of total crop and grass lands. While sheep numbers tended to fall, cattle numbers rose, to outstrip sheep by two to one in 1971–73. Sales of liquid milk displaced cheese in dairying areas as railways provided speedy channels to London, Birmingham, Burton, and other large markets. Eventually, in consequence, the supremacy of the Dairy Shorthorn was threatened, and by 1965 the high-yielding Friesian was predominant. Herefords were still by the late 1930s the chief breed of store cattle. In the declining flocks Shropshires gradually gave way to a variety of breeds, though by 1960 the main ones were Cluns and Kerries. As elsewhere, estate lands came on to the market and owner-occupation increased; farms continued to grow in size. The average farm (including smallholdings of more than 1 acre) rose from about 42 acres in 1875 to 60 acres in 1960, though such figures disguise the wide variations in size to be found in different farming districts. In the early years of this century rents, at between 25s and 33s per acre, were lower than a hundred years before. By 1973, with a shrunken total acreage and much mechanization, farming employed only 12,131 people and was but a minor activity in the county.

It is impossible to mention all the aspects of Staffordshire farming discussed in this volume. The choice of items referred to here must reflect to some extent the reviewer's interests and sense of the significant. There is a great deal of primary material which cannot even be hinted at in a review, and which might send not a few scholars scurrying to Staffordshire sources. If there is to be criticism, then perhaps it could be wished that the discussions were related more to broader regional or national trends, and that so much richness on what was the county's main livelihood might have been permitted to fill the whole, rather than only a half, of one not very thick volume.

G E MINGAY

M L PARRY and T R SLATER (eds), *The Making of the Scottish Countryside*, Croom Helm, 1980. 327 pp. 13 tables, 41 figures, 23 plates. £22.50.

This volume is a collection of essays by twelve scholars which attempts to trace the evolution of the rural landscape in Scotland from prehistoric times to the mid-nineteenth century. The study has more cohesion than other works of this kind because of the clear chronological framework, the recurrence of the major themes of continuity, change and regional variation throughout and also because the essays are cast in a broadly uniform format, each author indicating the state of current scholarship in his field and ending with a conclusion pointing to areas requiring further research.

The collection is divided into three main sections: 'the Early Countryside', from prehistoric times to the seventeenth century; 'Accelerated Change', from the later seventeenth to the early nineteenth century; 'the Reshaped Countryside', which deals with the classic period of the 'Agricultural Revolution' between 1790 and 1850. Part 1 consists of four surveys of the published literature by G Whittington, R A Dodgshon and A Fenton. These writers show how the countryside was in a condition of slow but constant adaptation due to climatic and demographic influences before 1600 and demonstrate the imprudence of facile generalizations in the light of profound local variation and scanty knowledge. In Part 2 I Whyte summarizes his published views on the organizational changes in Scottish rural society in the seventeenth century. This essay stands rather uneasily beside one by I H Adams which is more inclined to stress the drama of late eighteenth-century revolution ignoring the increasing volume of evidence (much of it in this book) that the 'old' society before 1750 was far from static. More impressive contributions in this section come from L Timperley, who meticulously reconstructs the pattern of land-ownership in eighteenth-century Scotland, and M L Parry who has effectively employed aerial photography techniques to measure the movement in the size of cultivated acreage in south-east Scotland between 1750 and 1850.

Part 3 is perhaps the least satisfactory in the book. The standard of scholarship does not decline markedly but there is less novelty and so less impact. J B Caird surveys the literature on agrarian change but his conclusion amounts to a re-affirmation of the old textbook orthodoxy that the major influences were the late eighteenth-century 'improving landlords'. Some of the studies cited in his footnotes are inconsistent with this view, and the implicit tension between his verdict and the arguments advanced by Whyte, Dodgshon and Parry (especially on p 193 of the latter's contribution) are not recognized. The articles by D G Lockhart and J P Shaw on the Planned Villages and the New Rural Industries respectively are very competent pieces of scholarship which contain few surprises. J M Lindsay on Commercial Use of Woodland examines a little-known aspect of agrarian change but given the localized emphasis of his investigations his conclusions

must remain tentative. Finally, T R Slater provides a preliminary outline of the development of gardens and ornamental parks around the houses of the Scottish landed class from the later seventeenth century.

The impression left by the collection as a whole is a mixed one. Undoubtedly several of the essays contribute significantly to our understanding of agrarian development in Scotland. Moreover, the standard of scholarship is maintained at a high level throughout. Almost all the articles are based on an examination of relevant manuscript or on a thorough quarrying of reliable secondary sources. The days when Scottish agrarian history could be written mainly from the printed views of the late eighteenth century improvers and the Old Statistical Account are now clearly over. Yet, some of the old habits linger on, especially in the treatment of the period of crucial change in the eighteenth century. The problem of the origins of structural change in this phase, arguably the central issue in Scottish agrarian development before 1850, is not dealt with satisfactorily. Partly this is because only the essays by Adams and Caird examine this key question directly and it is unfortunate that both of these authors are committed to the old simplicities of heroic improvers transforming the Scottish countryside. No one doubts the significance of landlords but they could have done little, whatever their powers in theory, without the evolution of a suitable social, cultural and economic environment in this period. There seems little awareness of the major obstacles to rapid change. Superficial comparison with the failure of agrarian reform in highland society would demonstrate that landlords had not simply to be 'enlightened' in order to successfully promote 'improvement' but also required tenant farmers of financial substance and appropriate values.

This suggests a more profound weakness in the collection. Most of the authors are historical geographers by training and profession. Their approach on the whole is to describe what happened rather than why it happened. In describing the process of change they provide a valuable framework for future work but they have little to say on the main influences which produced the significant alterations. The major forces of urban growth, home and overseas markets and population increase which shaped the development of agrarian capitalism are here scarcely mentioned. Furthermore, while the physical consequences of change are well-documented, the impact on the social structure and social composition of the rural community remains elusive. This is an important but somewhat restricted examination of 'the making of the Scottish countryside'.

T M DEVINE

FRANCES J SHAW, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth*

Century. Edinburgh, John Donald, 1980. ix + 270 pp, 5 maps, 6 tables. £15.

It is not altogether an original idea to compare the Western Isles of Scotland with the Northern Isles in their two subgroups, Shetland and Orkney. Easy generalizations which imply such comparison have, in fact, often been made; the Western Isles were originally Celtic in their social constitution, the Northern were Norse, and many consequential differences are imagined to flow from these historic facts. But it is an entirely original feat to make such a comparison through the great range of basic sources, thoroughly examined, that Frances Shaw uses in this study. So thorough and careful are her methods that it is difficult to see her conclusions being set aside.

The main question is how far the differences of ethnic origin have made for corresponding differences of social structure and economy in the seventeenth century of which she is writing, and how far the differences that can patently be seen were due to variations in physical endowment or geographical position. It may be disappointing to some that no resounding or simple answer can be given; perhaps inevitably both forms of influences are shown to operate. But that is merely to be true to the evidence, much of it in tiny details, that is assembled, and Frances Shaw does show fairly the aspects of social life in which one influence or the other prevailed. There was a clear difference in the terms of proprietorship of land as between the two groups of islands and consequently in the structure of landownership, with a great deal of fragmentation even of individual townships in the Northern Isles. This influence, moreover, ran right down the social scale to affect the standing even of small-holders and tenants. Yet the underlying economy, mainly stemming from the use of land, was basically similar throughout the two groups. Everywhere were to be found townships inhabited by clusters of joint tenants and their dependants. The occupiers depended for their food supply on grain, grown on an area of arable land divided into infield and outfield and generally sectioned to give the tenants some form of individual occupation, but they also had the use of common pastures on which the prevailing pastoral economy critically depended. The balance between arable and pasture might vary of course, but this was a matter of physical endowment. Small groups of craftsmen were also generally to be found, earning a living in much the same way wherever they might be and usually having pieces of land to help out. One peculiarity of the Western Isles, however, was the presence of a few people of special skill and function, such as physicians, chamberlains, musicians, historians, and bards, who were maintained directly by chieftains rather than by rewards from their customers. Considerable differences were to be observed in productive results: the Western Isles was, broadly speaking, an

area of normal self-sufficiency or even surplus of grain, the basic foodstuff, but also depended on an export trade in cattle; Shetland had a big grain deficit and depended on export of fish and processed animal products; Orkney from a relatively broad arable surface was able to sustain a considerable surplus of grain as well as meeting her own food requirements. Clearly it was the natural endowment of land together with geographical position — allowing for example the export of live cattle from the Western Isles — that produced these differences.

There was also, it is argued, a distinctiveness of social feeling that permeated all social relationships. 'Society in the Western Isles was still rooted in the old Celtic kin-based traditions' and mutual obligations and benefits were deeply felt across boundaries of wealth and social position. The Northern Isles, on the other hand, had no such binding obligations between the social classes. Superficially more equalitarian, it was also a more individualistic society, with less common feeling to bridge divisions, and less chance of social action to give the individual protection.

Up to now, our knowledge of the society and economy of the islands in the seventeenth century has been based, except for Orkney, on retrospective generalizations dating often from the end of the eighteenth century. One of the main points of interest in this book, with its intensive use of contemporary sources, must be how far these preconceptions are borne out in a detailed reading of the records of the time. It is something of a surprise to find how true they were to the facts. The peculiar position and functions of the tacksmen of the west are shown much as we have understood them from the later writings. The description of townships as working agricultural entities fits in well enough with eighteenth-century description. The growth of the cattle trade and its importance to the whole economy of the Western Isles is vividly and authoritatively depicted but it is growth into a familiar eighteenth-century form that emerges. None of these, or indeed of any of the many assembled details of economy and social structure, may be surprising but it is none the less important to have the existing notions placed upon the solid ground of scholarship. Scholars of the future will find this an indispensable book for they may begin their work from much firmer footing than previously. And the general reader, if he is not initially repelled by the necessarily complicated description of the land systems, will be carried by the multiplication of subtle details into these societies, distant in time, yet still with echoes and traces in the problems and ways of living today.

MALCOLM GRAY

IAN H ADAMS (ed), *Papers of Peter May, Land Surveyor, 1749-1793*. Edinburgh, Scottish History Society,

1979. xlii + 314 pp. Annual subscription £8 to the Treasurer, Department of Scottish History, University of Glasgow, from whom this and all other back volumes in print may be obtained by subscribers.

The Scottish History Society has, in more than 90 years of its existence, edited a number of useful sources for agrarian history — notably *Cockburn of Ormiston's Letters to his Gardener* and the *Monymusk Papers*, both on eighteenth-century 'improvers', and Robin Adam's more recent two-volume edition of *Sutherland Estate Papers* that sets the scene for the great clearances. This substantial publication usefully continues that tradition, but in a new direction, by illustrating for the first time the career of an important land surveyor in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The surveyors are a subject Dr Adams has made his own, and his introduction clearly sets Peter May's work (mainly in North-East Scotland, the Highlands and in Bute) in its general and particular setting. Both enclosure and the simple redistribution of runrig strips were possible without surveyors, but their expertise so facilitated change that most of the great lairds anxious to push improvement tried to retain one. May was a protégé of the sixth Earl of Findlater, who employed him on his own estate, obtained government business for him from the Annexed Estates Commissioners, and recommended him to his nephew James Grant of Grant and to the family of the Earl of Bute.

The papers will demonstrate the range of problems that beset a busy surveyor, though the absence of any reproduction of the plans makes it difficult to understand fully the central function of his work. One feature that does come across is the concern of the surveyor and the landowner to devise a division of farms at once equable and efficient, 'noticing when they are too large and would bear a division or when small to adjoin them with some others so as to make them commodious and afford a comfortable living to the possessors'. This concern extended from cartography to management: in an interesting letter (p 111) May writes to a factor asking what should be done for a tenant about to go bankrupt following a voluntary reallocation of land undertaken not by a surveyor but by birlaymen. (The editor for once falters in describing a birlayman as *presiding* over a birlay court: they were locals who served as jurors, or assessors, of such a court, presided over by a baron baillie who was the laird's nominee.) May also emerges as an improving farmer on his own account, and as a general planner meditating, for instance, on the prospects for the island of Bute: 'your manufacture of herring nets on the one hand, and the cotton manufacture on the other, should keep the young people of the Island in business and consequently make them useful to themselves and to the community — a very different line from which is observable among many of the young ones just now. I

was lately along with the minister of Kingarth visiting the schools. . . '.

The world of the improvers, with their boundless energy, simple optimism and over-estimation of their own ability to bring about benevolent change unaided is well evoked by this volume.

T C SMOUT

WILHELM ABEL, *Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe. From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*. Translated by Olive Ordish, with a foreword and bibliography by Joan Thirsk. Methuen, 1980. 363 pp, 76 figures, 30 tables. £17.50.

In a recent issue, this reviewer drew attention to the outstanding merits of the third German edition of this work, and foreshadowed a translation by Olive Ordish which has rapidly followed. Joan Thirsk, in a brief introduction, draws attention to England as a special case, but suggests the need to observe and learn from the European scene. She has appended an invaluable bibliography on agricultural fluctuations in England. The translator has been remarkably skilful in making the text readable in English. She has slightly reduced loquacious passages and over-learned references, but has greatly smoothed the somewhat crabbed gothic aridity of Abel's style. She has assisted the reader by including abbreviated references within the text, and, unlike Abel, she has printed the whole bibliography at the end. She has, judiciously, somewhat increased the number of paragraphs, and considerably sweetened the reader's task. Footnotes containing non-bibliographical information appear at the back, and the reviewer likes this, particularly because it must have reduced the price. All the valuable graphs and tables in the original are retained, and one welcomes the fine subject index absent in the German edition. The appendix is contracted but in a masterly fashion.

D J DAVIS

WINFRIED SCHULZE, *Bauerlicher Widerstand und feudale Herrschaft in der frühen Neuzeit*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt, Frommann-Holzboog, 1980. 344 pp. (Neuzeit im Aufbau, Bd 6).

Winfried Schulze's explanation of peasant dissatisfaction and resultant action within the Holy Roman Empire from 1525 to the French Revolution is firmly set in the context of central Europe and other contiguous countries. The excellent bibliography illustrates the author's mastery of opinion in the west and in socialist countries on the fashionable topic of conflict. He is not involved in sociological or Marxist jargon. His emphasis is upon resistance to excessive demands by the territorial lord and the development of legal or other subtle attempts to obtain redress. After the revolt of 1525 which obsessed the nobility for more than 250 years, there was every

reason for peasant and noble to seek a traditional or legal solution to their problems. While there were a number of bloody revolts in south Germany and the Hapsburg territories, the focus of most of the trouble, the violence was often ritualistic or theatrical, while complex legal processes were employed. The documents, 41 in number, which occupy exactly half of the volume, are highly stylized and excessively formal. They are all in German, and provide an excellent beginners' course in reading florid documents alien to the English language tradition for their meaning can easily be divined. So stylized and legal are these sources that Schulze considers an important line for future study would be to seek to penetrate the mind of the peasant through folk song, folk lore and other available means. Certainly the documents provide little assistance in this.

The volume, rich in ideas and suggestions, is packed with novel insights. Small territories were a frequent focus of trouble: the small lord was excessively dependent on feudal dues. Like the great prince he was now entering a money economy in the late feudal (that is, the early modern) world, and was forced to make extra demands on the peasants. The small lord could give little back to the peasant. At this time one is apt to think of the Holy Roman Empire as a nullity, but Schulze emphasizes the peasants' effective resort to its highest courts, while equally he could refer his case to the universities for advice, and some bold lawyers engaged in litigation for the peasants. Strife was common where lord and people had religious differences and in areas under military occupation.

Schulze subtly distinguishes grades of resistance, the general reluctance to be violent, and the consciousness of princes that revolt could spread and that precautions must be taken. Clearly, studies in diffusion could be of great interest. He places his emphasis upon peasant resistance in the context of progress towards the modern state. The peasant reacted as the prince built his costly new palace and hired soldiers to fight his wars. It is difficult to imagine this feudal world, such a contrast with contemporary conditions in Great Britain, but it is worth doing in case there are parallels unthought of as yet.

While this is a complex and demanding book, it is jargon-free, and the English reader could find it very rewarding. The author realizes he is a pioneer, and stimulates the reader by kaleidoscopic strands of thought and suggestions for future work.

D J DAVIS

OTTO ULBRICHT, *Englische Landwirtschaft in Kurhannover in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ansätze zu historischer Diffusionsforschung*. Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1980. 407 pp. (Schriften zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialforschung, Band 32.)

Ulbricht's dissertation (Kiel) examines the influence of progressive English agriculture upon Hanover in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He tells of the contention that Hanover, whose Elector was the King of England, was the portal for agricultural innovation. He, therefore, sets out to examine the truth of this, employing methods derived from diffusion studies, in particular the ideas of Rogers and Shoemaker (*Communication of Innovation*, 2nd edn, 1971). While their ideas and models repeatedly appear they do not dominate the book, which, for the most part, is a detailed statement of happenings in Hanover.

This is, in fact, the story of what did not happen. England is pictured as making great progress with enclosures, new intense rotations, introducing red clover and turnips, new ploughs, machine sowing, and horse hoe husbandry. A number of Hanoverians, few knowing English, and few visiting the country, wrote about these innovations, and, as local patriots, tended to reject them as of very little use in Hanover. In many ways they were right for, geographically, many of these innovations could have been of no great value. Ulbricht, for example, pays but little attention to the geographical diversity of Hanover with its great areas of heath, *geest* and marsh. At the end of the century, however, Thae wrote his *Einleitung zur Kenntniz der englischen Landwirthschaft und ihrer neueren und theoretischen Fortschritte in Rücksicht auf Vervollkommnung deutscher Landwirthschaft für denkende Landwirthe und Cameralisten* (3 vols, Hanover, 1798–1804), and this work, backed by much accumulated knowledge, assisted a slow revolution in agriculture during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In telling the story Ulbricht explains conditions in England, emphasizing that the social system, the ownership pattern, and the field systems were much more favourable to change. He tells of the main writers on agriculture: Münchhausen, Beckmann, Bergen, and Thae, and outlines the effects of those visits to England made mainly or incidentally to study agriculture. Finally, he examines each English innovation in turn and records sadly little progress before 1800, but, when he looks elsewhere, he sees a considerable advance in Prussia, the real door for innovation. Even the famous Celle agricultural society missed its opportunities to propagate new ways. Hanover was positively disadvantaged by the fact that its sovereign lived abroad and had no opportunity to hasten change.

Ulbricht employs a great weight of evidence to confute Schröder-Lembke's idea that Hanover was the natural route by which innovation entered the country. His volume is informative reading, though of course it bears all the marks of a dissertation — proving the obvious, demonstrating detailed reading, and incorporating the most interesting information in the footnotes. Yet it is not confined to the initiation and spread of change in Hanover, but, glancing elsewhere,

it is an excellent compendium of information about agricultural progress in Germany, 1775–1800.

D J DAVIS

DAVID HEY, *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads: Trade and Communications in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire*. Leicester UP, Leicester, 1980. 279 pp. 32 illustrations, maps and figures. £12.50.

This is a handsomely-produced and important book, being the first intensive local study of early modern road transport. More significantly, Dr Hey's study is the first to integrate a regional assessment of transport development with that of agriculture, rural industry, and domestic trade. Fittingly, in a book dedicated to W G Hoskins, documentary and cartographic evidence is neatly blended with that of the countryside itself: there is the distinctive atmosphere of the southern Pennines and the Peak about this volume.

It is the physical evidence of the countryside which forms its first section. Dr Hey puts substance to contemporary fears about the problems of finding one's way in a desolate landscape both in describing the main transport routes of the area and in his analysis of the chronology of planting signposts and building bridges. While many of the flagstone causeys dated from the sixteenth century and earlier, and many of the great bridges were of medieval origin, there was a marked concentration of the erection of packhorse bridges and the distinctive local 'guide stoops' into the century after 1660. In Derbyshire, a great number of stoops, the waymarkers, was erected in 1709, while being typically more canny with the county purse, the West Riding Justices only succeeded in thus marking the way after 1733. Both processes point very clearly to the significant expansion of road traffic in the region two generations in advance of the turnpike movement.

The same period also saw the expansion of use of wheeled vehicles in the region, under the pressure of demand from its iron, stone and textile industries. Further stimulus to these trades was derived from the navigation of the rivers Idle and Don. While such a hilly region naturally saw an unusually long survival of the packhorse as a means of carriage, by the middle of the eighteenth century carts and waggons were common, even if their use tended still to be concentrated into the summer months. Because of this change, road routes in the region gradually tended to become less direct, being forced by the new traffics to follow gentler courses. Both features are well-documented in European transport history, but make a useful point in being applied clearly to England.

Having thus assessed routes and vehicles, and the patterns of demand placed upon these transport services, Dr Hey concludes by assessing the structure of markets, the retail trade, and traffic in farm produce, demonstrating in the process his considerable expertise

in the use of probate inventories. This analysis makes very clear the extensive role played by the by-employed farmer in all these activities. In this relatively harsh environment the transport industry provided a vital income supplement to the agriculturalist. The personal economy of the carrier in England remains shadowy until the later eighteenth century, from which slightly more revealing records survive, but in this book Dr Hey has succeeded in suggesting some of its substance.

This is in all an excellent local study, and one that entices one to retrace with the author some of these carrier routes. It clearly formed the basis for a very lively local history class at the University of Sheffield, and the author's enthusiasm for his subject is clear both in the text and in his presence in two of the splendid illustrations. However, the certainty of judgement displayed in discussing the history of the region is not matched when connections are made to the wider historical environment. In consequence, the book is at times rather limited in perspective. Perhaps because of this Dr Hey errs on the side of understatement in his conclusions and is not always happy in making links to wider transport history. There are, too, some flaws, as in the comments on the costs of carriage towards the end of the book (p 219). Aiming at posterity, no doubt, there appears on p 235 an incongruous table offering metric equivalents for £ s d. Happily, these are small flaws in an important, well-produced, and nicely-illustrated book of considerable interest to both agrarian and transport historians.

J A CHARTRES

ANDREW CHARLESWORTH, *Social Protest in a Rural Society: the Spatial Diffusion of the Captain Swing Disturbances of 1830–1831*, Historical Geography Research Group, Research Paper Series, 1 (October 1979) and Geo. Abstracts Ltd, Norwich. 78 pp. No price given.

This short monograph represents the application of geography's new clothes to the analysis of the 'Swing' protests of August 1830 to March 1831. By introducing and testing precise spatial variables it corrects and extends the analysis of the earlier generation of studies of rural protest which culminated in the publication of Hobsbawm and Rudé's *Captain Swing* in 1969. In so doing, it takes the opportunity to examine the protests further in the light of the more complex and subtle models suggested by Edward Thompson and Charles Tilly. The net result is a useful if turgid addition to knowledge.

Charlesworth tests three naïve spatial models of the diffusion of the protest derived from Hobsbawm and Rudé: the capillary; the highway; and the market models. None are shown to be satisfactory in statistical terms, and the author was thus led to seek alternatives to naïve concepts of immiseration. Radicalism and its

influence is therefore the explanation offered here, with the main roads from the capital being the routes along which the 'link-men' bearing protest came. Such influences, and those of local social intercourse on the day of rest are here suggested as possible explanations of the relatively high incidence of events on Mondays. Fortunately stopping short of a Taine conspiracy theory, Charlesworth has mined existing data efficiently to point to important features of the protest, and suggested that intensive studies of key communities of revolt, such as Thatcham and Crowmarsh Gifford, may be the most rewarding course for further research. To the historian, then, this geographer has indicated the unsurprising conclusion that simplistic models of the spread of rural protest are unsatisfactory, but presented little new evidence. This is a useful critique of, but no substitute for, *Captain Swing*.

J A CHARTRES

PAMELA HORN, *The Rural World 1780-1850: social change in the English countryside*. Hutchinson, 1980. 331 pp. £5.95 (paperback).

With a productivity worthy of an improving farmer Dr Horn has added another volume to her works on rural society. As was the case with some of her previous books this one is mainly a reliable synthesis rather than innovative in thought or based upon primary research. That is not to say that a wide range of primary authority is not quoted but it tends to be from familiar sources, some indeed made familiar by the author herself in her research articles on Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire. Although the subtitle refers to the 'English' countryside this self-denying ordinance is not always observed; there are some references to Wales and, perhaps more surprisingly, to the Highland clearances.

Dr Horn surveys the rural community at the end of the eighteenth century with an emphasis on regional and local distinctions, the social pre-eminence of the aristocracy and gentry and the state of the roads. These traditional relationships were to be disturbed by the pressures of improvement and war, the wartime strains falling particularly harshly upon the casualties of enclosure. However, those above the bottom layer of rural society enjoyed some prosperity. The collapse of that prosperity is then shown as intensifying the divisions in rural society, epitomized in the savage penalties dealt to rioters of 1830-31, the Tolpuddle case, and the new poor law with its deliberate intent of deterrence by monotony, humiliation and regimentation.

A similar pattern of division and distrust permeates the discussion of village institutions. Education and charity could be used as a means of social control, farmers opposed allotments in case labourers became

independent, absentee clerics drew their tithes while in open parishes Methodism prospered. The chapter on crime and punishment is a catalogue of changes in the law. The game laws, from the Black Act of 1722 to the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862, take pride of place. Critics said that the Poaching Prevention Act turned the county police into rate-paid gamekeepers but Dr Horn does not really consider that relationship, nor does she deal with fish and salmon.

By mid-century the roles in rural society — of labourer, farmer and landlord — are pictured by Dr Horn as being more distinct. Rural life was less boisterous, and indeed less cruel in its amusements, as the pressures on the poor towards reliability and sobriety increased. The higher social groups became more private in their amusements. There is a tendency in this book to stress the underlying sources of conflict in rural society. A constant litany properly pervades it, the plight of the agricultural labourer whose conditions, housing and diet were seemingly less well regarded than the farm animals.

J H PORTER

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS, *A Great Estate at Work, the Holkham estate and its inhabitants in the nineteenth century*. Cambridge UP, 1980. xiv + 289 pp. Illus. £24.

This is an extremely interesting and enjoyable book. When I worked at Holkham, the late earl of Leicester, rendered understandably uneasy by my interest in marriage settlements and family wills, caused me to end my researches at the death of Coke of Norfolk, in 1842. I remember a furtive glance at one forbidden document — a list of the investments of the second earl, Coke's heir. Sadly I put it away; Mrs Martins prints it in full. It is of the highest interest. After the South Sea Bubble until 1855, no significant investment was made except in land. Then £11,640 was put into the local railway. In 1870, £10,891 went into shares in the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. Thereafter Indian and Home Rails attracted further large purchases, until in 1886 diversification allowed money to be put into New South Wales $\frac{3}{4}$ per cents. Another stage was reached when 2000 Guinness shares were bought in 1887. In the period 1870-90 no less than £280,000 was put into the stock market, an investment which yielded £11,000 in 1890. The second Earl, therefore, was living well within his means, although income from rents fell in these years by £10,000 a year. Even when a figure for rents of £31,000 was recorded in 1900, compared with the peak figure of about £58,000 in 1877, the second Earl, as Mrs Martins points out, was in no way obliged to modify his way of life. In the nineteenth century, then, agricultural prosperity before 1878 rose sufficiently to enable the Cokes to ride out the disaster that followed.

Otherwise, the evidence used by Mrs Martins for the period after 1842 seems disappointing. 'It is very unfortunate', she writes, 'that so little remains to help us explain the second earl's financial affairs.' Nor has she found it possible to give a very satisfactory account of the second Earl's influence on agricultural developments in Norfolk; the relations of the Earl and his agents with the tenants are elucidated less effectively than one might have hoped. The correspondence recorded in the estate office letter books became less detailed after Blaikie's retirement as agent in 1832. Evidently the advent of Keary in 1851 did not cause the correspondence going in and out of the estate office to become more informative. Perhaps improved transport lessened the need for letter-writing. The result is that Mrs Martins relies on Keary's descriptive survey of 1851 and on another valuable source that she has done well to exploit — the answers submitted by Coke tenants to R N Bacon's questionnaire for his RASE prize essay written at the end of Coke of Norfolk's life (a source which I missed). She offers, therefore, much of interest on agricultural developments on the estate in the 1840s but less thereafter.

The great value of this book, however, is not in its analysis of the conduct of landlords but in its study of the conditions of life of tenants and labourers. Here again, however, evidence on developments in agricultural practice and in farm economics is scanty. Mrs Martins tells us: 'The sources available for studying the activities of the tenants are limited. Very few farm accounts survive and it is difficult to trace descendants of the nineteenth-century farmers.' This disclaimer is only an overture to the most successful and interesting section of this book. The two longest chapters, 'The tenant farmer and his farm' and 'The landlord and the labourer' are dominated by fascinating accounts of farm buildings and of labourers' cottages, accompanied by attractive photographs. Mrs Martins argues convincingly that the quality of farm buildings was an important factor in determining the quality of tenants that an estate could attract. She cites the interesting criticisms made by Coke's agent of the Duke of Norfolk's farm buildings which attracted tenants of a lower calibre than those of Lord Leicester. She suggests that the successes of the Coke estate in the nineteenth century — steady increase in productivity and in rents followed by comparative resilience in depression — were facilitated by a high level of landlord's spending on farm buildings. It reached its height in the period 1850–85; the lateness of the second date implies that farm improvements were sometimes offered as a means of retaining tenants who might otherwise have quit, especially by helping them to adapt to the increased emphasis on livestock. The book shows also that the second Earl took considerable interest in cottages, which were usually let directly by the estate; not much was spent on them in proportion to estate income, but

their standards steadily rose. Mrs Martins has made a significant contribution to knowledge and anyone interested in farming history should study this book with care.

R A C PARKER

MERLIN WATERSON, *The Servants' Hall: a Domestic History of Erddig*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. xxiii + 240 pp. 137 plates. £8.95.

Merlin Waterson's book is both handsome and unusual: handsome in its many fascinating pictures and its quality as an attractive piece of book production; unusual in dealing with three separate but related topics — the history of Erddig, the house, and its owners, the history of the servants who lived and worked there, and the history of a most impressive rescue operation carried out by the National Trust since 1973. The least satisfactory element of a readable text is the history of the estate, for we learn relatively little of the Yorke family who in the eighteenth century came to acquire it, or of the nature of the landed property that supported it, while the financial reasons for the house's fearful decay in the present century hardly appear: the owners' eccentricity would not seem a sufficient explanation by itself. (In the final stages of the long decline to 'the verge of total dereliction' the house itself suffered serious subsidence from the National Coal Board's decision to mine beneath it.)

Many of the splendid photographs show brilliantly the extraordinary transformation that the National Trust has achieved from a state of almost unbelievable dilapidation and neglect. They show also the most unusual feature of the house and the book — the numerous fascinating portraits of the servants who maintained the house and its park in more prosperous times. The Yorkes were truly always eccentric in one respect at least, in commissioning more portraits of their servants than they did of their own family. In addition they wrote reams of verse praising their staff and frequently corresponded with them. Mr Waterson has made excellent use of these unusual sources, as well as the more familiar inventories and accounts that have survived.

This is much more than a picture book of an important house. It throws much light on the people who served it, without whose cheap labour the country-house way of life could not have existed, how they lived, and their relations with their employer. The book fills one, too, with admiration for the work of the National Trust, though it has to be said that an impersonal economic force, the great inflation of land prices of the 1970s, played no small role in the survival of Erddig.

G E MINGAY

JILL FRANKLIN, *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan 1835-1914*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. xvi, 279 pp. 74 illustrations, 70 plans. £15.95.

This beautifully produced and handsomely illustrated volume is concerned with the country houses built from just before Victoria's accession to the Great War. There is perhaps a tendency to discount the Victorian country house in favour of its Georgian or earlier forerunner, and it comes as something of a shock to find on the first page that there were well over a thousand, and perhaps as many as two thousand houses built in the period covered by the book. Only a minority were built by landed gentry of course, for this was the great era of the wealthy industrialist, merchant and banker turned country gentleman. The scale of many of the houses is breathtaking, and although it was possible to build the more modest residences for as little as £10,000-£30,000, the great edifices, especially those built for the established aristocracy, ran to well over £100,000, with the Duke of Westminster's remodelled Eaton Hall topping £600,000.

The cost of the houses owed something to technological innovations: in the supply of pure water, up-to-date forms of sanitation, elaborate bathrooms and lavatories, central heating, and the introduction of gas and electric lighting. More significant, however, was the design and sheer scale of the house, especially as architects provided for the fashionable 'medieval' great hall, with galleries, balconies and hammerbeam roof, and went in for assymetric designs with high, steeply-pitched roofs broken by conical turrets, hipped gables and various wedge shapes to create a fantastic gothic silhouette. Inside the plan of the big house was complicated, catering for a growing taste for privacy and separation of rooms by function, the ladies' section round the morning room and drawing room for instance, placed at a distance from the gentlemen's suite of study, billiard room, gun room, and smoking room. In the more elaborate houses there were separate staircases for the family, the nursery, the bachelors and the servants, as many as six or seven in all; and in the butler's department, for example, there might be rooms set aside solely for brushing, cleaning boots and shoes, knives, and lamps; one house even had a room for the ironing of the newspapers. The servants' quarters had to be extensive to accommodate a staff which normally ran between 15 and 40, and were designed to achieve separation of the sexes and to ensure that the servants had no view of the grounds and were unable to overlook the family. The rigid separation of servants by status and function, and the complete lack of consideration of the saving of labour, made the houses highly dependent on the services of a large body of servants. The heavy use of open fires, for example, required much work in cleaning, laying and replenishing: Bulstrode Park had 44 fires burning on a typical November day. Vast quantities of coal were consumed,

and in some houses iron railways were provided to carry coal from the store into the basement, the one at Osmaston Manor having a length of 'about 300 feet with curves, turntables, etc.'.

There is much more detail to which it is impossible to do justice. Mrs Franklin analyses the owners of 380 of the houses, finding that the proportion built by manufacturers, bankers, professional men, and other newcomers rose from 47 per cent in 1835-54 to as much as 83 per cent in 1895-1914. Among the *parvenus* of 1875-94 were F J Clarke, the originator of Clarke's Blood Mixture, a 'typically Victorian universal panacea', Sir Henry Doulton, the pioneer of glazed sanitary ware, a Courage and a Bass of the brewing families, E J Horniman of tea fame, and Robert Hudson of Hudson's soap. There are also discussions of the choice of site and the difficulties of building, particularly that of keeping control of costs.

The core of the book, however, lies in the examination of the plans of 70 houses, taking up over a hundred pages, revealing just how country-house families passed their days. This is complemented by a valuable catalogue listing for the houses mentioned in the book, the date of building, their owners, and references to primary and secondary sources. And the author does not omit to consider the impact on country houses of changing architectural fashions, new economic conditions and contemporary social developments. For once a dustsheet blurb is amply justified: the author does succeed admirably in bringing to life a lost social world.

G E MINGAY

DENYS THOMPSON (ed), *Change and Tradition in Rural England: An anthology of writings on country life*. CUP, 1980. xi, 291 pp. Illus. £10.50.

Denys Thompson rightly insists at the outset that his book 'is in no way an exercise in nostalgia'. This anthology is not just one more sentimental evocation of 'Merrie England' and 'the good old days', but it does represent a protest against the belief that any sympathetic appraisal of 'the world we have lost' can be dismissed with a slick reference to the 'Merrie England' formula. Moreover, Thompson is equally unimpressed by the corresponding clichés of the progressives, from the 'vast improvements, Ma'am' that so irritated Cobbett to current jargon about land-use efficiency.

He offers here a carefully-balanced selection of writings that describe and analyse pre-industrial rural society and culture. The hardness of the life, its uncertainties and inequities, are neither glossed over nor excused but its rationale and the psychological fulfilment that it could provide are both acknowledged and scrutinized. Its importance lies in its insistence upon significant factors not revealed in scientific statistics or standard historical records. No one reading

this book can ever again talk glibly of the 'unskilled' agricultural labourer of the pre-industrial period, and it pays due tribute to the local knowledge and expertise unrecognized by the administrators of the post-industrial compulsory Education Acts.

George Sturt, author of *Change in the Village* and *The Wheelwright's Shop*, who has been a central figure for Thompson ever since the publication (with F R Leavis) of *Culture and Environment* in 1933, is very much the king-pin here. And legitimately so, since the collection demonstrates that Sturt was not only the most challenging thinker among the rural commentators but also the most accomplished writer of English prose. But he is well supported in this anthology by such expected writers as Cobbett and Jefferies and by more modern authorities including Walter Rose, Thomas Hennell, Flora Thompson, and Adrian Bell. Joseph Arch speaks for himself, and we hear the experience of Joseph Ashby of Tysoe at second-hand through the excellent biographical memoir by his daughter. The extent to which these very different writers agree in their presentation of the old folk-culture is impressive, and Thompson creates a coherent context for their work, the cumulative message of which cannot be ignored. Anyone sceptical

of the very existence of the so-called 'organic community' would do well to read this book.

But, as a meditation upon the quality of life, this is as much a book about the present and future as about the past. Thompson believes that the material collected here represents vital evidence for the current debate about leisure in a technological age. Leisure, he argues, 'has proved a barren gift' because, in Sturt's words, 'unlike the industry of a peasantry, commercial wage-earning cannot satisfy the cravings of a man's soul at the same time that it occupies his body'. The degradation of the assembly line conveyor belt cannot be justified in terms of shorter working hours and subsidized cultural opportunities. The appalling split for most of the population between 'work' and 'play' is itself the curse. So a book that begins with the cottage-culture of two centuries ago ends with the frustrations of our own time. Thompson is by no means advocating a return to old ways — 'we should be able to achieve something very much better than a narrow peasant culture' — but he maintains that a knowledge of the past can (indeed, must) assist us in evolving 'an order in which technology serves human ends'. This is both an admirable and a timely book.

W J KEITH

Books Received

- ANTHONY J BADGER, *Prosperity Road, the New Deal, Tobacco, and North Carolina*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1980. 295 pp. Illus, maps. \$20.
- J V BECKETT, *Local Taxation, National Legislation and the Problems of Enforcement*. Bedford Square Press, 1980. 49 pp. £2.50 (postage 25p).
- B J DAVEY, *Ashwell 1830-1914: The decline of a village community*. Leicester University Press, Occasional Paper, Third Series Number 5. 64 pp. Tables, maps. £3.95.
- T M DEVINE and T C SMOUT (eds), *Scottish Economic & Social History*. University of Glasgow, 1981. 151 pp. Tables, charts. £2.
- ALAN EREIRA, *The People's England*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. 285 pp. Illus, figs. £9.50.
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- Estudis Revista de Historia Moderna* 1978. Universidad de Valencia. 292 pp. Tables, graphs, appendices.