

Book Reviews

N D G JAMES. *A History of English Forestry*. Basil Blackwell, 1981. xii + 339 pp. 24 illustrations. £19.50.

This book is primarily about the development of forestry in England since the Norman conquest. The author hopes that it will be useful as a guide to earlier times, and as a record of the expansion of modern forestry. It was written to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland by one of the society's past presidents.

The thirteen chapters fall into three groups. Chapters 1-5 deal with the medieval forests, their laws, administration and beasts. The majority of the pages, however, are devoted to a descriptive inventory of 129 forests, giving for each their boundary and a few historical records and anecdotes. The sources used are entirely secondary, for example, gleanings from the Victoria County History and well known books by J Manwood, J G Turner and J C Cox. Chapters 6-8 cover the early development of 'modern' forestry, i.e. plantation forestry. There is much about the seventeenth-century timber supply and what should be done about it; ship building and the supply of timber for 'wooden walls'; early forms of plantation forestry; and the introduction of tree species from abroad. Chapters 9-13 cover forestry over the last century, dealing in particular with the origins of modern forestry around the turn of the century, the formation of the Forestry Commission, the drive for large-scale afforestation, and the formative experiences of two world wars. Appendices include a comprehensive list of statutes relating to forests and forestry 1184-1971; a select bibliography; and a list of relevant Government reports 1787-1957.

Two general criticisms seem in order. The first is more a warning: this is not a history of English woodlands. Until recent times most woods were treated as coppice, yet the system is scarcely mentioned. One of Oliver Rackham's books is listed, but as a work containing substantial parts devoted to matters other than forestry. Wood pasture, the other traditional system, is mentioned in the earlier chapters, but we get little idea of how the pasture woods were managed. Secondly, I would dispute the implication that there is any significant connection between the medieval forests and modern plantation forestry. Admittedly, some medieval forests remained in state

hands long enough to become part of the modern Forestry Commission estate, and in the New and Dean Forests forestry today is influenced by the remains of the medieval system, but that is about the end of it. The practices and philosophy of modern forestry are quite different and indeed a new element in the scene. If this book had not perpetuated the spurious connection with medieval forests, thereby leaving space to dwell more on modern forestry, it would have been a great deal more valuable.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to dismiss the book. It is a clear summary of received wisdom amongst foresters. The section on modern forestry is valuable. Many will find the appendices useful as a source of reference. With its clear type, varied illustrations and the colour reproduction of Gainsborough's Cornard Wood on the cover, the book is most attractive.

G F PETERKEN

M L RYDER, *Sheep and Man*. Duckworth, 1983. 846 pp. Illustrated. £55.

This monumental work contains 846 pages, weighs over 4 lb, and costs £55. It embodies the vast knowledge accumulated by Dr Ryder during a lifetime devoted to the study of all aspects of sheep. It discusses in Part I the unrecorded domestication of various species of sheep by man and continues through the prehistoric period of skeletal remains. Part II collects together records of the middle ages when sheep and wool dominated the English economy and also discusses the evolution of sheep in other regions of the world. Part III describes the modern breeds and their place in the various systems of contemporary agriculture, ranging from arid deserts through the temperate zones to the mountain regions, where transhumance is still practised. Throughout, Dr Ryder has produced a variety of illustrations culled from ancient drawings and sculptures as well as from modern sources to illustrate changes in the evolution of sheep and of the tools associated with their husbandry; archaeologists and anthropologists will find much to interest them in Part I. The appendix (pp 785-801) contains a list of the locations of such material, and the references (pp 802-829) contain more than eighty referring to Dr Ryder's own publications.

The index is inadequate in relation to the size of the book, because it repeatedly gives a string of

undifferentiated page numbers after an entry — 94 after 'shearing', 54 under 'cheese', 51 under 'weaving', when half a dozen should be the maximum entries under one heading. And Dr Ryder's erudition does not include the titles of the English aristocracy. Lord Leicester of Holkham we know, or Thomas Coke of Norfolk, if preferred; but please *not* 'Lord Coke of Norfolk' (p 492)!

The price of this book will restrict its use to the readers in agricultural and archaeological libraries for whom it will be an essential reference work on the history, breeding, and husbandry of sheep from the prehistoric times to the present day. Dr Ryder must be congratulated on the publication of this authoritative volume on his chosen topic.

EDITH H WHETHAM

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England*. George Philip, 1983. 254 pp. Illus. £10.95.

One problem with any subject which is making rapid progress is that research findings often remain relatively inaccessible in journals. Settlement history has suffered from this, but in his book Christopher Taylor has drawn together many strands of recent scholarship to provide a valuable summary of current developments which helpfully distinguishes between new and defunct ideas. Tracing changes since prehistoric times he adopts an approach which goes beyond a narrow concern with locational or spatial aspects of settlement to consider it in the context of society and economy as a whole. *Village and Farmstead* is also a noteworthy addition to the new *genre*: scholarly texts enlivened with copious illustrations. The subject matter is eminently suitable since crop marks, landscape features and village layouts are often difficult to describe but come vividly alive in aerial photographs or diagrammatic form. The successful juxtaposition of text and illustration is a major strength, as is the book's straightforward and readable style.

Prehistory has undergone perhaps the most revolutionary thinking during the past decade due to the work of palaeoecologists, palaeobotanists, geographers, archaeologists and historians, a revolution fully reflected in this work. For example, findings are suggesting a very much smaller role for environmental determinism than once thought. Thus the belief that mesolithic and neolithic sites were confined to the light upland soils is no longer tenable. It is now recognized that the abundance of evidence reflected a smaller subsequent disturbance of these marginal areas by man, compared with lowland sites. Nor were early societies spread thinly upon the landscape. Instead Taylor portrays a dense and highly mobile territorially-based settlement pattern, which left few

areas untouched and wrought spectacular changes on the environment including deforestation, regeneration, soil erosion and blanket peat formation. The Bronze Age, from around 1500 BC, emerges as a period of particularly notable change. It witnessed a radical and massive alteration to landscape patterns with the replacement of haphazard settlements and small fields by a planned countryside of large field systems flanked by long territorial boundaries which ignored topographical features. Reasons for this change are inevitably conjectural but we are offered tantalizing glimpses of continuity with later time periods. For example, in certain areas there is evidence to suggest that these territorial boundaries formed the original estate or parish boundaries of Roman and later periods. And there are further indicators that these early farmers practised seasonal grazing on certain detached portions of territories similar to the transhumance of more recent times.

The belief that once documentary evidence becomes available we can begin to date the origin of villages as we know them with certainty is another myth firmly rejected by Taylor, who has found that place-name evidence and the evidence of Domesday Book for example can seriously mislead. A much more reliable approach has been the combination of assiduous field walking, aerial photography, excavation and a more critical use of literary evidence, which in recent years has led to some radical re-interpretations. These contradict the traditional notion of cataclysmic change often associated with the influx of new peoples, and provide instead support for the author's own view of continuity and gradual adaptation. Thus the neat nuclear village thought to be the typical settlement form created by the early Anglo-Saxons is shown not only to have appeared relatively late in the eleventh century, but to have made small progress over large areas of the countryside. Much more typical was the small hamlet or isolated farmstead usual in prehistoric and Roman times. The popular opinion that massive desertion of sites occurred with the Black Death is also shown to be a fallacious one. Where abandonment did occur, resettlement was often rapid and generally the crisis only further weakened settlements which were already vulnerable. The reality, argues the author, was a constantly changing pattern of settlement right through from prehistoric to modern times. Within the territorial-estate or parish boundaries sites shifted, expanded, contracted, were abandoned, resettled and shifted again while undergoing endless changes of form and structure. Against this backdrop certain developments came into prominence at different periods. The seventeenth century saw an upsurge in the removal of entire villages or part of them for the creation of formal gardens around country seats; forest clearance and fenland drainage were followed by a rash of isolated farmsteads; and squatters built cottages

along the edges of heaths as population grew. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enclosure preceded the building of more farmsteads on former strip fields or common wasteland; industrial villages sprouted around mines or quarries; hamlets were created along canals and towns grew in response to the arrival of railways. In the present century the pace of change quickened with further shifting, creation, expansion, shrinkage or wholesale abandonment of sites.

In his discussion of the causes of shifts in the settlement pattern Taylor is wary of national explanations. So often villages or hamlets witnessed changes in total contrast to that of close neighbours. Although demographic swings had a role and geographical factors were sometimes relevant, it is the human element to which responsibility for change is mostly ascribed. Purely local decisions by landowners, industrialists, local authorities or poor migrants have created new settlements or condemned old ones, irrespective of national trends. The result of course is that underlying causes often remain unknown. We lack explanations for the abandonment of sites as recent as the past century: Luddington in Northamptonshire finally disappeared in the 1950s though it is not known why it happened. Painstaking local research of the kind Taylor has himself undertaken is vital for throwing further light on the problem: Snap in Wiltshire was deserted in 1914 and local tradition blamed failure of the water supply whereas closer investigation revealed that purchase of land by a family of butchers was the true cause.

Village and Farmstead is a handsome book, and very moderately priced considering the lavish illustrations and quality of content. Both interested laymen and students of settlement history will find it invaluable for obtaining an overall view of the complex changes that have occurred in the past. And the useful bibliography of over 200 references will point them to more detailed reading if they so wish.

RAINE MORGAN

T H ASTON, P R COSS, C DYER and J THIRSK (eds.), *Social Relations and Ideas: essays in honour of R H Hilton*. CUP, 1983. xiii + 337 pp. £25.

Few persons have affected medieval historiography in recent years more profoundly than Rodney Hilton. His warm approach to economic and social concerns, reaching profoundly into the political arenas (less so into the administrative concerns of some modern historians); his sensitivity to all sorts of evidence, medieval literature as well as court rolls, landscapes and maps as well as private household records; his deep concern for rigorous scholarship and yet his willingness to plunge, sometimes uninvited, into areas of conflict and debate (few will forget his timely

intervention in *Past and Present* in the Robin Hood controversy) — all these have left a mark, not only on his many research students, some of whom are now colleagues, but on other medieval scholars further afield. Once viewed with suspicion, his judgments are increasingly welcomed and valued.

This tribute volume richly deserves a welcome. Only in one respect is it unworthy of him who sought the widest audiences for his views — its unreasonable price. The range of subjects covered both reflects Hilton's wide-ranging interests and at the same time precludes detailed review. After an introduction by Edward Miller, Aston's essay on the origins of the manor in England, first published in 1958 and reprinted here with a postscript, has a peculiarly dated and even irrelevant feel about it; he seems to be arguing about a subject and along lines which no longer interest contemporary historians. It may be salutary, nevertheless, to be reminded of these earlier debates to which Hilton himself contributed and on which he was nurtured (as the bibliography shows, by 1958 Hilton had at least two major books and seventeen articles, most of them dealing with matters of social rather than legal-administrative matters).

Aston's paper is the earliest in period; it is also the only one reprinted. The rest have presumably been prepared specially for this volume and reflect Hilton's wide-ranging interests. Domesne agriculture in the late eleventh century (Sally Harvey) reviews over a wide area the structures of demesnes and their profitability and suggests that demesne farms were less desirable in this early period than they have often been thought to be. A welcome posthumous essay by Postan on the decline of feudalism as seen by 'historians of antiquarian bent' and 'historians operating systems, whether Marxist or not' posits the view that since feudalism means many things to many people, the phrase 'the decline of feudalism' is meaningless. Essays on the imposition of a Church-dogmatic concept of marriage on an older order and morality as seen in twelfth-century France (Georges Duby), on the different views of the *vavasour* in France ('a holder of a sub-fief') and England ('a man of modest fortune', although it changed over time) by P R Coss, and on earlier conflicts between lords and tenants on the ecclesiastical estates of Halesowen (Razi, an essay which needs a map) reflect the wide interests of Hilton in social constructs, literature and language, and social protests as well as his geographical range from Europe to west midlands local history. Poverty is dealt with in two other essays — as reflected in *Piers Plowman* (Geoffrey Shepherd) and in a study of diet, using a wide range of documentary and some archaeological evidence (Dyer). Two important review articles follow — a survey (Astill) of what evidence archaeology has thrown on the late medieval economy (concentrating, justifiably, on pottery, village and

urban settlements, coins and bones and opening up a range of new questions; it is regrettable that industry is not included, for the evidence marshalled is now extensive), and an analysis of recent work on late medieval peasant freedom and unfreedom (hereditary serfdom) in SW Germany, Bavaria and E Germany (Wunder). An essay on attitudes to time, space and modes of control (Smith) in Russia up to the seventeenth century is matched by Joan Thirsk's paper on English books of husbandry in which she shows that most of the authors were themselves practical gentlemen farmers concerned to share their views with 'humbler men'.

The book is handsomely produced and, as is so necessary in such a wide-ranging collection, well indexed. The British Library copy will be in great demand for many years to come; get in your inter-loan request now.

ALAN ROGERS

F M L THOMPSON (ed), *Horses in European Economic History: a Preliminary Canter*. British Agricultural History Society. 1983. 206 pp. £6.50.

With major works already devoted to the vine, the potato, and, more recently, the sheep, it is very surprising that more attention has not been devoted to the history of the horse. As Prof. Thompson's introduction to these essays indicates, this volume is no more than a preliminary run through aspects of what are defined as 'some of the different approaches to the study of the historical role of horses in the economy and society, rather than a fully integrated history'. Viewed in the light of this modest ambition, the volume is a considerable success.

Inevitably, a series of papers presented to the Eighth International Economic History Congress at Budapest in 1982 will be patchy in its coverage, both chronologically and geographically. The wide-ranging survey of the great horse in medieval times, R H C Davis's 'The Medieval Warhorse', is sadly isolated in both senses. This chapter raises sufficient questions about the origins, breeding, and possible late medieval decline of the warhorse to demand substantial further research. In England in particular, the years after 1360 saw the decline of the royal studs, and perhaps of controlled breeding in general, and the growing importance of artillery in English military tactics completed the decline of the English great horse.

Three studies examine the complexities of horse power and its gradual replacement by water and steam and later by the internal combustion engine. Jennifer Tann's 'Horse Power' packs a great deal into a brief and elegant survey of the potential of the horse as a source of industrial motive power, c 1780, and points to the very low marginal cost of horse-powered additions to plant as the secret of their long enduring attraction.

Even to the middle years of the nineteenth century this relative cheapness remained attractive, except in industries such as iron, where unit demands for power found the horse totally wanting. The two other studies discuss the twentieth-century displacement of the horse from transport and from draught on the farm. T C Barker's 'The Delayed Decline of the Horse in the Twentieth Century' employed standard sources to point out the slowness of the process, and its international contrasts, in which Germany, perhaps surprisingly, remained predominantly horse-powered on the farm until the Second World War. E J T Collins's 'The Farm Horse Economy of England and Wales in the Early Tractor Age', with its analytical appendix by David Hallam, penetrates more deeply into the problem, making significant alterations to previous statistics of the decline and in consequence laying greater stress on exogenous demands for horses and the retreat of the plough as its causes. The study is important in its own right, and as a foretaste of Hallam's fuller study, which will no doubt extend to other important variables, such as the price and availability of labour on the farm.

The other studies of Part I, F M L Thompson's 'Horses and Hay in Britain, 1830-1918' and Keith Chivers's 'The Supply of Horses in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century' are both concerned with the supply side of the horse economy. The former extended his previous estimates of horse populations to quantify demands for fodder, and to analyse the consequent extension of the radius of supply. By the 1890s, the mechanical baling press had opened yet another domestic market to competition from abroad. Commercial structures responded to the challenge, and domestic supplies only failed to cope when challenged by the half million extra animals on the Western Front in 1918. Chivers presents a clear and concise analysis of the breeding and rearing of draught horses, of the economics of stallion ownership and of the trade in general, and of the determinants and sources of imports.

The 'Case Studies' of Part II are generally of lesser interest, although based on deeper research. P R Edwards's 'The Horse Trade in Tudor and Stuart England' presents an early statement of his important and novel analysis of the toll books of English horse fairs, in defining the geography and nature of the trade, and stressing the complexity of the commercial structure, in which middlemen predominated. Herman Diederiks used the Napoleonic surveys of 1807 to assess ownership in 'Horses in the Netherlands at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century'; and Olga Crisp's 'Horses and Management of a Large Agricultural Estate in Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century' presented a Russian perspective on the issue of the horse *versus* the ox in a general study of the Meyendorf estate in Kursk province. Most

interesting and demanding of these European case studies was A Gomez Mendoza's 'The Role of Horses in Transport in a Backward Economy: Spain in the Nineteenth Century', which presented detailed estimates of motive power for a country in which the mule and the donkey reigned supreme. Cheap carrying services were supplied by the peasants to break down Spain's autoconsumption, but the author does not quite explain how the country coped with a huge horse population and its demand for fodder under conditions of strict protection for the cereal farmer.

This is a cheaply but nicely produced volume which has done sufficient in its ten varied essays to indicate that the economic and social history of the horse can be a rich and varied subject. Naturally, vast questions remain unanswered: although horse meat is mentioned on a number of occasions in these essays, none explains why so much of Europe, the Belgians excepted, was so profligate with so large a potential store of protein. Horse history in its evolution is thus at an early but interesting stage: while a valuable preliminary, this is more a rising trot than a canter.

J A CHARTRES

G WHITTINGTON and I D WHITE (eds), *An Historical Geography of Scotland*. Academic Press, 1983. xiii + 282 pp. 28 figures, 14 tables. £22.50 (hardback), £9.80 (paperback)

At the start of 1980 the growing community of historical geographers working in Scotland had no substantial collaborative works to their credit, a sorry situation in comparison to the steady productivity of historians and economic historians. With the publication of *An Historical Geography of Scotland*, however, we now have two major works on Scotland within four years making special use of the historical geographer's particular concern with spatial patterns and processes.

The earlier work, *The Making of the Scottish Landscape*, edited by M L Parry and T Slater, was correctly identified by its editors as the first collection of essays on rural Scotland. As such it was quite consciously a summary of progress in research, with contributions by specialists covering their own fields and a recognition of the lacunae without any attempt to fill them.

The new *Historical Geography* is rather more ambitious. It attempts, refreshingly, to cover a much broader canvas; the editors recognize the importance of moving on from the rural and parochial to examine a much wider range of patterns, not merely focussing on Scotland *simpliciter* but putting the country in its wider British and European context, and trying to bring Scottish historical geography up to date methodologically. All this is attempted in such a way, at least as

far as the publisher's description is concerned, that it should interest and inform the student and the general reader. How well does it succeed?

The reviewer is left with the feeling that it does succeed, at least to the extent that it is a useful addition to a scanty literature, but that it by no means satisfies the need for a clear modern appraisal of Scotland's geographical past.

It has to be said first that the student or general reader will not find this book to be a well-rounded reference work. Like Parry and Slater before them, the editors in their preface are ready to consign to oblivion topics like transport history which possess no specialist. Other topics vanish down the cracks between the chapters; this fate befalls the Romans, whose misfortune it was to be neither prehistoric (Chapter I) nor of the Dark Ages (Chapter II). Indeed, one wonders whether the editors had a very clear view of their readership. The style and presentation of individual chapters varies greatly. Dodgshon's stimulating Chapter III, for example, is a research summary supporting its arguments about pre-eighteenth-century rural developments with copious references, including specific documents in the Scottish Record Office. Gordon's chapter on industry, in contrast, has a broad-brush approach uncluttered by any except occasional secondary references. Both approaches are legitimate, but the offspring are uneasy bedfellows.

The editors' task can certainly not have been easy, considering the task of devising a coherent structure that would adequately take into account the chronology of events, the range of topics, and some striking regional variations, but the book does not present a very satisfactory solution to the problem. The progression is untidy and unclear, and some contributions are not well matched to their titles; even the most hardened Scottophobe might accept that the designation 'medieval' is inappropriate in the title of a chapter (Chapter III) terminating in 1700.

The greatest difficulty is with the later chapters, which tread the uneasy line between history and current affairs. David Turnock's contribution on the Highlands copes well with the situation, but in other cases the balance is not well-maintained. George Gordon's industrial survey, for example, is hardly a contribution to historical geography; it is indicative of its emphasis that his three maps (at a rate of one per ten pages this book is poorly provided with maps and diagrams) all relate to the last fifteen years.

It would be unfair to ignore the real strengths of this volume. The early chapters by Ian Morrison and Robert Dodgshon in particular succeed in meeting the standards set both by editors and publishers, and there is much of interest too in the late chapters by Gordon Clark (rural land use after 1870) and J Doherty (urbanization after 1750). Most contributions are quite adequate in themselves, although Whittington's

eccentric chapter on the agricultural Lowlands, however justified in its attack on previous approaches, seems unfairly selective in singling out one particular culprit.

The real problem is one of integration; the book suffers from a failure to mould contributions into a form compatible with a clear editorial policy. That expertise exists in some quantity is evident from the editors' ability to draw on a group of authors almost entirely different from the earlier rural book. However, it is inevitable that this book should be compared with the *Historical Geography of England and Wales* of 1978, and in view of the lack of cohesiveness the comparison cannot be very favourable. With a clearer overview, Whittington and Whyte could have raised the status of this book from 'useful' to 'very good indeed'; in the meantime Scotland's historical geography still awaits its first comprehensive analysis.

J M LINDSAY

A R BRIDBURY, *Medieval English Clothmaking: an economic survey*. Heinemann Educational Books; Pasold Research Fund, 1982. xiii + 125 pp. £9.50.

Dr Bridbury's mode of argument is by now well known, but on this occasion it is compounded by a particular lack of facts with which to support his thesis. This short book, then, is not likely to leave the mark on our growing understanding of medieval English clothmaking which Dr Bridbury himself agrees is greatly needed.

His general thesis is simple. At all stages during the Middle Ages, at least from the mid-twelfth century into the fifteenth century (the period covered by this book, although most of it is concerned with the mid-thirteenth to the late fourteenth centuries), clothmaking was very important in England; we cannot say much about it because 'the ordinary activities of ordinary people are, for the most part, irretrievable'. Having absolved himself from the need to search the documents and to assess the growing archaeological material relating to medieval clothmaking, Dr Bridbury argues that the alleged supremacy of wool-exports during the period between the 1270s and the 1370s is the result of historians concentrating exclusively on taxation records (his own appendices, nevertheless, deal almost exclusively with these same tax records; the figures given on pp. 116-122 are not Bridbury's but those of Carus-Wilson and Coleman, and those on pp. 114-115 come from H L Gray and are known to be unreliable). Instead of concentrating on wool *versus* cloth exports, he argues, we should instead concentrate on how the indigenous clothmaking industry first faced and eventually overcame a threat to the home market from

foreign imports of cloth and then recovered the lost ground by exporting more and more cloth throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The argument is buttressed not by facts but by rhetoric; the book abounds in 'probably', 'possibly', 'presumably', 'perhaps', etc, much of it verbose escapism from the necessity of a rigorous search for evidence: when discussing the 'success' of Edward I's customs of 1275 as contrasted with the 'failure' of those of 1196-1203, we are met with the following remarkable passage:

'What does this extraordinary contrast between Edward's response to the fiscal potentialities of foreign trade and John's indicate? Can we really believe that it merely reflected the differences between John's character and stature as king and Edward's? Can we believe that John, who resorted to such ignominious shifts in order to raise money, would not have revived his taxation of foreign trade if foreign trade had been worth the trouble of doing so? May we not with justification see a change over the years, not so much in personality as in circumstances? And may we not conclude that the change in circumstances was brought about by a prodigious but unrecorded increase in the volume of wool being shipped abroad between the beginning and the middle of the thirteenth century?'

When to this is added more than a dash of moralizing, the concoction becomes unpalatable. Without the facts to support the thesis, this small book represents a regrettable waste of money on the part of the Pasold Research Fund, whose contributions to the history of textiles have in the past been of much more significance than this ill-researched offering.

ALAN ROGERS

M C COLEMAN, *Downham-in-the-Isle: A Study of an Ecclesiastical Manor in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. Boydell, 1984. x + 166 pp. 3 maps; 6 plates. £15.

The monograph which deals in depth with a single manor or village has long held an important and respected place in the literature on medieval agrarian history. Indeed, such a scale of analysis is frequently imposed by the essentially local nature of so much of the available evidence. Yet, as the best of these studies — P D A Harvey's now classic account of Cuxham or Z Razi's recent court-roll based investigation of Halesowen — amply demonstrate, the end result need not be parochial: with their sharp if perforce narrow focus they afford insights into agrarian life which are often denied to students of later periods. Alas, the same cannot be said of the work currently under review.

Miss Coleman's chosen subject possesses considerable intrinsic interest. Downham-in-the-Isle was part of the estate of the Bishops of Ely, about whose administration and financial organization E Miller has already written at length, but about whose agricultural activities etc much remains to be known. Downham is one of the best documented of the Ely manors, with two thirteenth-century extents, two sequences of fourteenth-century court rolls, and some good fourteenth-century account rolls. Although subject to a locally all-powerful and old-established ecclesiastical authority, with all that that implies, Downham lay in the heart of one of the most idiosyncratic and dynamic regions of medieval England. Other parts of the Fenland and their immediate environs have already attracted a great deal of attention; so any study of the Fenland's largest island — the Isle of Ely — is of potential interest for comparative purposes. Ecologically, Downham, like all Fenland settlements, was richly endowed: it enjoyed naturally fertile soils, virtually unlimited pastoral resources, and easy riverine access to the great trading entrepot of Kings Lynn. There is therefore much of general relevance that a study of Downham's fourteenth-century court rolls and accounts might have revealed.

Unfortunately, Miss Coleman's monograph fails to do justice to these sources and to recent advances in their methods of analysis. The subjects covered include holdings and tenure, bylaws and local administration, the operation of the manor court, inheritance and dower, and arable and pastoral husbandry, whilst a third of the ninety-six page text (there are an additional sixty pages of tables) is given over to the reconstructed biographies of villagers. The treatment of husbandry practices is particularly disappointing. The existence of a three-field system is implied but never explicitly demonstrated, nor is it made clear how such a rotational scheme was reconciled with a pattern of demesne cropping which devoted 43 per cent of the sown area to winter corn, 38 per cent to spring corn, and 19 per cent to legumes. More seriously, there is no attempt to explain why on apparently fertile soils which could command an annual rental in the early fourteenth century as high as 30d an acre, mean yields both per seed and per acre should, with the exception of barley, have been so low (with ratios for the ten or so harvests which are recorded of 2.0 for rye, 2.3 for oats, 2.4 for wheat, and 4.1 for barley). The proverbial livestock deficiency of medieval England can hardly in this case provide the reason; for, as Miss Coleman quite rightly stresses, pastoralism was a mainstay of the local economy. In this context it can only be regretted that the author provides no systematic data on demesne livestock to set beside the much fuller statistics which she gives of arable production. The absence of full information on the size and composition of the demesne labour force is

likewise unfortunate. There is, of course, much in this book which it is useful to have in print; but at a price of £15 its cost is out of all proportion to the modest aims and achievements of its author.

BRUCE M S CAMPBELL

W G V BALCHIN, *The Cornish Landscape*. Hodder and

Stoughton, 1983. 234 pp. 19 maps, 63 plates. £7.95. Since man modifies his environment, Professor Balchin, a historical geographer, has, for a second time but far more extensively, described the making of the Cornish landscape during a period extending over four thousand years. Over even longer eons geological changes and climatic vagaries have affected the profile of the land and its ecological surface. So a recent land utilization survey has classified nearly seven-tenths of the area of Cornwall as 'farmscape', less than a twentieth 'wildscape', more than a fifth 'marginal fringe' between these two categories and a bare 0.5 per cent as true 'townscape', leaving the small remainder as rural-urban — 'rurban' — fringe, a somewhat suspicious classification. This distribution, of course, results from many generations of human occupation and suggests a predominantly agricultural region, but with the two fringes accounting for a full quarter of the total area of the county the landscape, or rather landscapes, of the peninsula might merit a designation of hybrids; furthermore, in that lies their interest and appeal.

There are two aspects of man's relationship with nature of which the historical geographer is conscious — co-operation or adaptation towards and exploitation. The former is essential to continued agricultural success. The latter, however, has provided some of the more eye-catching features of the west country landscape — the 'Cornish Alps', waste from china clay in the St Austell area, and the derelict ruins of mine surface workings scattered throughout the county from St Just in Penwith right up to the Tamar and beyond. Yet as the years pass even these scenes are changed from stark dereliction through weathering and the slow but sure establishment of organic vegetative life which eventually may support some type of farming activity.

Its geological structure and climate have meant that throughout the ages of human occupation Cornwall has been marginal or 'fringe' agricultural land. Adaptation to these natural conditions has enabled men to utilize this land, a long story which Professor Balchin has traced from the tiny prehistoric fields found in parts of West Penwith with their massive hedges, built partly to give shelter from Atlantic gales, partly to dispose of rock to get a few plots of cultivable soil, right down to present-day experiments to establish vegetation on china clay spoil tips. Most progress has been made since fairly large-scale mining

began towards the end of the seventeenth century accompanied by a rapid growth of population, the reversal of which during the period 1861–1911 also modified the farmscape. The same period saw the still continuing transportation revolution, both in land and sea travel; two successive highmarks of this have been the construction, a century apart, of the rail and road bridges over the Tamar at Saltash, furthering the development of the tourist industry which has been responsible for so much 'rurban' fringe development to accommodate holidaymakers and those of them who decide to retire to Cornwall.

This second, much expanded version of Professor Balchin's original 'essay' on Cornwall in 'The Making of the English Landscape' series, suggests comparisons with its predecessor. It has a much handier and attractive format; although much of the original text is incorporated it is brought up to date while most of the illustrations are new and far more clearly reproduced. The up-dating of the study since 1954 is vividly instanced by the earlier version including pictures of both the exterior and interior of Morwenstow church and the present containing an illustration of the satellite tracking station in that parish. Let it not, however, from this be too hastily concluded that times and human preoccupations and proclivities have changed, for in the mid nineteenth century Morwenstow's famous parson, Hawker, was vastly concerned in attempting to reduce or alleviate perils of shipwreck on the perilous coast of his parish. The index includes national grid reference to practically every place mentioned in the text, ensuring that this work has consummate qualities as a tourist guide besides its scholarly qualities as a work of county historical geography.

JOHN ROWE

BARRY COWARD, *The Stanleys, Lords Stanley and Earls of Derby, 1385–1672. The Origins, Wealth and Power of a Landowning Family*. Manchester UP, Chetham Society. Third series, XXX, 1983. xvi + 252 pp. £21.

By and large the dust has long since settled on the controversies over the rise of the gentry and the crisis of the aristocracy. Historians these days devote more attention to peasants than to peers. But systematic studies of the vicissitudes of landowning families are still needed and the Stanleys — one of the major influences in the North of England — have long required the treatment which Dr Coward has now provided. Writing after the initial disagreements over landed society have subsided has enabled him to identify and profit from the mistakes of his predecessors, to recognize the need for extreme care in the handling of sources and the wisdom of avoiding easy generalizations and neat but misleading formulae. For these reasons he joins earlier critics in questioning

the validity of Lawrence Stone's 'crisis of the aristocracy' and refutes the notion that aristocracy and gentry were distinct, competing groups. He is also critical of more recent attempts by Dr Blackwood (in *The Lancashire Gentry and the Great Rebellion 1640–1660*, 1978) to reduce the subject to statistical tables. The evidence, he rightly says, is too incomplete and ambiguous to support this kind of treatment. Even the historian of the Stanleys — the leading family in Lancashire — has to cope with a corpus of records which is patchy in the extreme. Their rule in the Isle of Man is the best documented. Elsewhere their activities are often shadowy. Such are the shortcomings of the evidence that it is impossible to be precise about the family's wealth even at particular moments in time.

The political interest of Dr Coward's subject, in the nature of things, can never be far from the centre of the stage. The part played by the first Earl of Derby in assisting Henry VII in 1485 and the execution of the seventh Earl in 1651 are familiar incidents in national history. For readers of this journal, however, the particular interest of Dr Coward's volume will lie elsewhere. Though the Stanleys rose to power by a mixture of advantageous marriages and royal favour it was as landowners that they sustained that position. The author has interesting things to say about their leasing policies, estate management, and their relations with their tenants. He notes, for instance, the continuance of a conservative combination of long leases and high entry fines until well into the seventeenth century. Rents payable in kind were by no means uncommon even in the 1630s though in the Civil War when redress was at hand tenants complained that they had 'suffered great losses by the earl's means, who hath endeavoured to break their customs and raised their fines for his own advantage'. In the short term, undoubtedly, the English Revolution had disastrous consequences for the Derby family. In the longer term, as Dr Thirsk's seminal research has taught us to expect, the effects were less serious. 'Only those estates which had been "voluntarily" alienated were not restored in 1660, and despite the earl's failure to recover some of them in parliament, he may have been more successful by other means.'

One could quibble about the merits of the arrangement adopted in the book — part chronological, part thematic — which has produced a certain amount of repetition. Conversely, there are times when the treatment remains tantalizingly brief and suggestive. But this is a useful, well-researched and judicious study. One of its chief merits is that though it recognizes the pre-eminence of the Stanleys in Lancashire it places them firmly within the context of the county community of which they formed a part and reveals the limitations as well as the strength of their social and political influence.

R C RICHARDSON

A CHARLESWORTH (ed), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900*. Croom Helm. 1983. 197 pp. 62 maps. £16.95.

This is an oddly difficult book to read, in that it is the product of the editor and sixteen collaborators and covers a very extended period in less than 130 pages of dense prose. In the preface, the editor and principal author commented on the self-doubt he experienced in the production of this book, and it is a work of somewhat questionable utility: not all the maps are meaningful, nor is all the protest discussed rural.

This book — it is not an atlas in the conventional sense — is divided into a general introduction and six subsequent chapters covering 'land protests' 1548-1860, food riots 1585-1847, turnpike disturbances, the Clubmen and militia protests, protest by agricultural labourers 1790-1850, and rural protest from Rebecca to the Highland land wars. Within each chapter or section a general introductory text prefaces sections and maps dealing with shorter periods or specific events. Thus, Chapter 3, 'The Geography of Food Riots 1585-1847', has maps and text covering the periods 1585-1649, 1660-1737, 1740, 1756-7, 1766, 1771-3, 1776-93, 1794-6, 1799-1801, 1810-18, and 1847 before presenting three micro-studies on the North Midlands in August and September 1756, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in 1766, and Devon in 1795 and 1800-1.

From this description of its form, it will be apparent that the book suffers badly from excessive compression. Many of the events, incidents, and movements summarized in the maps and the accompanying text have warranted or been the subject of full monographs, and this atlas simply does not have the space to convey sufficient information to make its text on such subjects meaningful. Thus, the amazing feat of D J V Jones in compressing the Rebecca Riots of 1839-44 into four maps and less than two pages of text is mitigated by the fact that it will be virtually meaningless to all who have not already read Williams's monograph on the subject. D E Williams's doctoral thesis analysing the food protests of 1766 fares a little better, but still leaves the reader seeking the monograph to make the map more meaningful than two pages of explanatory text permit. To point the issue more clearly, this section, founded on excellent detailed research, employs thirteen different symbols on the map and lacks the space to make them fully intelligible; it also squeezes into the map an over-reduced region-by-region time profile of incidents.

This is not to say that the atlas is without value. Some sections present entirely new information and the maps clearly heighten our understanding of the dimensions of protest. Thus Charlesworth's map of the waves of rioting in late 1830 clearly indicates the movement of protest and thus advances our

understanding of its causation; Jeanette Neeson's maps and text add very substantially to knowledge of the opposition to enclosure in a study of Northamptonshire, 1760-1800; and, drawing heavily on the work of Roger Wells, the absent prince from this *Hamlet*, maps 27 and 28 detail the food riots of the years 1794-6 and 1799-1801, and are outstandingly valuable.

In sum, this is a book of considerable value to the specialist possessed of sufficient background knowledge to be able to follow the heavily compressed text and somewhat over-sophisticated maps. It is generally well produced, although some of the maps are too reduced to permit easy reading. Despite some omissions, for the more general reader it represents a sound illustrated and annotated bibliography of work on the subject and a clear signpost to areas requiring further research. It pulls together a very great deal of work on protest, rural or otherwise, maps and comments with mixed results and forms a useful work of reference for the agrarian historian.

J A CHARTRES

ROBIN CLIFTON, *The Last Popular Rebellion, the Western Rising of 1685*. Maurice Temple Smith, 1984. xi + 308 pp. 4 maps. £17.50.

The ill-fated Monmouth rebellion of 1685 was not only the last serious attempt to overthrow the Crown, it was also the most tragic and pathetic incident of west-country history, and the folk memory of the vicious punishment of the rebels and of the terrible retribution of Sedgemoor and the Bloody Assize remains strongly alive in Somerset and west Dorset. There have been many books dealing with the dramatic events of June 1685, and the approaching tercentenary has stimulated a great deal of interest and further detailed research on the rebels and their motives, and on the reasons for Monmouth's remarkable popularity in the region, especially among the small farmers, tradesmen and cloth-workers, 'sober and pious men' who followed the Duke in an excess of religious zeal and concern for their liberties, and above all for the maintenance of the Protestant faith. Dr Clifton's readable account adds little that is new to the oft-told tale of the rebellion itself and its gruesome aftermath, but it does analyse in detail the social and economic background to the rising, and provides a much fuller and often more sympathetic picture of Monmouth himself than has hitherto emerged. This is based on a great deal of research among local and central records and published sources, notably on Somerset probate inventories, although the number which survives is small and the results should accordingly be treated with caution. Dr Clifton carefully analyses the social and economic conditions and the religious and political attitudes in Somerset in the decade before the rebellion, and it is this first section

of his book which will be of most interest to readers of this *Review*. Although it concentrates on Somerset at the expense of west Dorset from where Monmouth also drew so much enthusiastic support, the book makes an interesting contribution to our understanding of why so many apparently level-headed men rushed to join the Duke and stayed with him to the bitter culmination at Sedgemoor. The problem remains of why Monmouth received so much support in west Dorset and Somerset, and yet so few joined him from the similar puritan, cloth-producing, dairy-farming regions of north Dorset, west Wiltshire or the Severn valley. The book has evidently been in preparation for some time, although the Preface is dated 1983, since it ignores some important recent work on the subject, including Peter Earle's account of *Monmouth's Rebels* (1977), and W MacDonald Wigfield's important study *The Monmouth Rebellion* (1980) which provides an admirable summary as well as a painstaking account of the misfortunes of the rebels and of the careers of those who were transported. A bibliography would have been a useful addition to Dr Clifton's book. There are numerous minor errors: many place-names such as Bridgwater, Sherborne, Shepton Mallet, West Monkton, Lansdown and even Westonzoyland are mis-spelt; Dame Alice Lisle is said to have been tried at Dorchester on p.232 and at Winchester on p.233; Ilchester is confused with Ilminster; the geographical spread and influence of the 'Clubmen' movement is over-emphasized. But such quibbles apart, this book provides an interesting picture of the background to the rebellion and of the complex character, motives and conduct of the major participant, as well as a succinct account of the course of the rebellion and of the hideous fate which awaited so many of the rebels.

J H BETTEY

primarily with the great family but with the tenant community, and each holding is examined in turn. Documentary material is backed up by painstaking fieldwork and the parish is placed in the wider context of the agricultural history of the northern Vale of York. A number of old photographs and maps enliven the text.

Scagglethorp is of interest in being a deserted site whose decay was protracted. The open fields were enclosed very early and the habitation sites were dispersed, but the township still supported eight dwellings in the late-seventeenth century; by 1786 these had been reduced to three. In 1619 Moor Monkton had twenty-eight farms or cottages, twenty-six of which shared land in the thirty-six furlongs of the three open fields. By the time of the parliamentary enclosure award of 1786 the open fields accounted for only 22 per cent of the township whereas enclosures covered 33 per cent, though the cultivated area was much the same as before. The 1786 enclosures corresponded roughly to the surviving furlongs and did not lead to any dispersal of farms, only to a decline in their numbers.

Looking at the map that was the prelude to parliamentary enclosure, one is struck by the extraordinary position of All Saints church standing alone in Church Field (one of the three common fields) half a mile south of the village. A church is recorded in 1089 and a great deal of Norman work has survived in the 1879 restoration. One cannot help wondering whether the village was re-planned on a new site early in the middle ages, like so many other Yorkshire villages, possibly including neighbouring Nun Monkton. The parish has not yet yielded up all its secrets, but Dr Newman's thorough and convincing account of the post-1600 period is one that agricultural historians will certainly approve.

DAVID HEY

P R NEWMAN, *Moor Monkton and its People, 1600 to 1916: Aspects of the Social History of a Township in the Ainsty of York*. Moor Monkton Village History Committee, 1982. 140 pp. Illus. No price given.

Moor Monkton lies near the confluence of the Nidd and the Ouse a few miles north-west of York. Dr Newman's detailed and scholarly study is concerned with the civil parish, which covers 2,700 acres of low-lying land comprising the estate village of Moor Monkton, the deserted township of Scagglethorp and the lost manor of Launde. The small freeholders' township of Hessay is excluded on the grounds that it had little economic contact with the rest of the ecclesiastical parish. The study is based on the estate records of the Slingsby family of the Redhouse (originally the 'redehouse'), who acquired Scagglethorp and Launde in 1560 and Moor Monkton in 1598 and held them until 1916. However, it is not concerned

N MCKENDRICK, JOHN BREWER, J H PLUMB, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*. Europa Publications, 1982. viii + 345 pp. £18.50.

One day, during a meeting of the Caius historical society, Messieurs Brewer, McKendrick and Plumb discovered that each was examining the commercialization of English society in the eighteenth century. The result of their discovery is *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, a set of essays effectively and interestingly tied together by a common theme. All three authors agree that the expansion of the eighteenth-century home market was so considerable that it markedly affected the behaviour of Englishmen. So, while other books on the eighteenth-century economy debate the relative importance of home and foreign markets to England's development, this book begins with a statement of the

importance of the home market and proceeds to explore the new culture associated with its growth.

McKendrick's focus is on sales techniques, that is, on those cultural accoutrements which were invented to accelerate the market's growth. Given McKendrick's previous work on Wedgwood, the reader expects that this examination of the rise of the self-service shop, of shop displays, of travelling salesmen, and of newspaper advertising will reveal innovative attempts to appeal to a mass market. What is less expected is McKendrick's evidence that almost all social strata participated in this market. In 'The Commercialization of Fashion', McKendrick uses pictures, new varieties of pedlars, and the rise of the cardboard fashion doll to argue that even the rural poor were customers of the new entrepreneurs.

Brewer's contribution, 'The Commercialization of Politics', constitutes a triptych whose centre panel celebrates the clubs pledged to liberty and John Wilkes. The two flanking panels tie Wilkes and the clubs to the new market. The first depicts tradesmen and artisans banding together in voluntary associations for protection against the vicissitudes of frequent and unpredictable fluctuations in the supply of short-term credit. Brewer argues that these clubs decreased their members' economic and political dependence upon the elite, and that club members resented the government's manipulation of finance: and so to Wilkes. Wilkes, in turn, inspired the final panel — a portrayal of the clubs as customers of brewers, tavern-keepers, potters, and printers, all of whom satisfied the clubs' demands for political emblems. The culture of politics was now tied to the mass market.

As Plumb demonstrates, the new market even and markedly affected leisure and the upbringing of children. That these two articles (one of which was not easily available) are here reprinted alongside McKendrick's and Brewer's reminds the reader that Plumb's topics are central to analysis of eighteenth-century society. The new market for books, theatre, music, race-meetings, holiday resorts, schools, toys, and circuses was the market of the Industrial Revolution and the market which generated demands for parliamentary reform. How eighteenth-century Englishmen enjoyed themselves and raised their children was directly related to England's new economic structures. And, Plumb argues in 'The Acceptance of Modernity', Englishmen's use of leisure and practices of childrearing served to alter habits of thought. Hobbies and family expeditions to enlighten the children accustomed the populace to novelty, stimulated curiosity in the material world, and prepared Englishmen to accept concepts of rational improvement.

As these essays make evident, the new culture associated with the predominance of the home market also accustomed Englishmen to urban living. It is

remarkable how large a proportion of the new pastimes, goods, amusements, and even sales techniques presented here were either urban enjoyments or aimed at an urban populace. Not only were the Wilkite clubs urban, as were the theatres, museums, concert halls, and shops, but even newspaper advertising was directed largely to the urban populace, for a much greater proportion of city dwellers were literate than were rural residents. In presenting a pronounced change in English culture associated with the new mass market, these essays suggest further questions about the structure of that market and the permeation of its culture. Which aspects of the new culture were adopted by which groups? And which aspects were resisted, and why, and with what consequences? How did the appeal to a mass market affect the role and influence of groups who had heretofore acted as cultural mediators, who had communicated news of fashion, taste, education, and behaviour to their neighbours and so been arbiters of culture? In raising the intriguing possibility that the new market made the differences between the culture of the city, the small town, and the countryside more marked and more important than they had been before, these essays should stimulate new approaches to analysis of the relation between town and country, and of the transformation of England from a rural to an urban society.

NORMA LANDAU

D TURNOCK, *The Historical Geography of Scotland since 1707*. CUP, 1983. xi + 352 pp. £25.

David Turnock's new study of Scottish historical geography since 1707 construes the problem in terms of a modernization process. Each stage of modernization is seen as having a different geographical impact. What he regards as the first stage, 1707-1821, saw attempts to spread change as widely as possible, with investment being directed to the highlands and islands as well as the lowlands, and with as much concern being shown for the social as for the economic consequences of change. During the second or take-off stage, 1821-1914, growth became more geographically selective, being concentrated more and more in the central valley whilst the highlands and islands or 'outer regions' were rapidly reduced to the status of a laggard or backward sector. By the twentieth century and third stage of modernization, the arena of growth had narrowed still further to the urban centres of the central valley. This broad geographical treatment of modernization enables Turnock to set both growth and problem areas in a more explicit interpretative context, with accessibility to markets being given particular stress as the key to economic success.

Discussion of each stage is prefaced by a general overview in which Turnock skilfully sketches out the

broader issues before proceeding with a series of in-depth thematic chapters. As one would expect from an author who has contributed so much to our understanding ofcrofting and the highland economy, those chapters dealing with change in the countryside are notably strong. His style here is to combine local case-studies, in which the processes of change are comprehensively explored, with the mapping of regional but inevitably more selective data sets. On the whole, it is a method that works well. There are some fine discussions of change, especially on areas like the Grampians and north-west Argyll. It also enables a wide range of topics to be thoroughly dealt with, from landholding and forestry to industry and transport. There are also some excellent maps. His mapping of references to farming improvement in the Old and New Statistical Accounts is typically resourceful and provides the basis for a valuable discussion on where improvement took place, though the reviewer would have liked more comment on the actual mechanics of change (especially the change which took place in the arable areas of eastern Scotland) so as to balance the largely retrospective view provided by the Accounts.

Although readers of the *Review* will be more interested in Turnock's exploration of rural change, the book balances this with an equally substantive analysis of change in Scotland's urban-industrial economy since 1707. Indeed, the book is structured around a single, conceptual framework that embraces both sectors. The result is a satisfyingly coherent and successful argument. Not least amongst the book's merits is its examination of change down to the present day, enabling the author to display his firm grasp not just of recent historical change, but also of present-day planning problems. Altogether, it represents an important and praiseworthy addition to the literature on Scottish historical geography.

R A DODGSHON

P ROEBUCK (ed), *Macartney of Lisanoure, 1737-1806: Essays in Biography*. Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 1983. 376 pp. 18 maps and illustrations. £16.50.

This is not a book to be judged by its cover (the publishers would be well advised to replace the depressing dust jacket) or by its title. 'Who of where?' will be the first reaction of many people. By itself, Macartney's name will not be unfamiliar to students of eighteenth-century British diplomatic and imperial history, since he was envoy extraordinary to Russia 1764-67, chief secretary of Ireland 1769-72, governor of Grenada 1775-79 and of Madras 1780-86, first ambassador to China 1792-94, unofficial envoy to Louis XVIII of France at Verona 1795-96, and governor of the Cape 1796-98. Scarcely anyone, however, has ever heard of Lisanoure, his estate in the

northern part of County Antrim. The use of his local habitation with his name in the title of this book of essays therefore does not readily identify their subject. Nor does it reflect what most of the book is about, since seven of the ten chapters (237 pages) deal with Macartney's career as diplomat (or Irish secretary). The point is important only because it may put some people off what is really an excellent book, one which — given the extraordinary geographical range of Macartney's diplomatic career — justifies the use of several specialists rather than a single author. The chapters by Michael Roberts on Russia, Thomas Bartlett on Ireland, Edith Johnston on Grenada, T G Fraser on India, J L Cranmer-Byng on China, W R Fryer on Verona and J L McCracken on the Cape expertly unravel Macartney's public career. The volume is held together by good editing and the editor's own judiciously-placed contributions, which deal with Macartney's early, middle and later years and are followed by a short conclusion.

Macartney was descended from a Belfast merchant whose son, Macartney's grandfather, had taken to the law, married well and accumulated sizable (though not very valuable) landed estates in County Antrim which raised him to solid gentry status. Macartney's good fortune began with his being an only son and an only grandson, and hence the inheritor of most of his grandfather's property. This modest patrimony, from which for many years he derived an annual income well short of £1000, was nothing like sufficient to promote his career in public life: it took the patronage, and the money, of Lord Holland and the connections, though little else, acquired by marriage to a daughter of Lord Bute to do that. He apparently did not revisit Lisanoure (his birthplace) until 1770. At that time his 8500 scattered acres in north Antrim had a gross rental of only £694 (an average rent of just over 1s. 7d. an acre); much of the land consisted of bog, rough pasture and mountain; many of the tenancies were held in partnership or in rundale, neither of which was conducive to improvement; and the whole area was remote and economically underdeveloped. In order to enhance his status as a landowner, Macartney sold leasehold property elsewhere and borrowed over £7500 (from his banker Coutts among others) with which to improve the house and demesne at Lisanoure and to augment and consolidate his estate, the acreage of which was nearly doubled. Lady Macartney's first impression of Lisanoure as a 'place without a single tree' was probably no exaggeration, and could have been applied to many another part of the country untouched by the improving hand of a resident landowner, both in the 1770s and later.

From 1786 onward Macartney, at last rendered financially secure by the profits of his Indian appointment, spent long periods at Lisanoure and — this time in an economic climate much more

favourable than that of the early 1770s — continued his policies of improvement more systematically. Some more land was acquired (this time, though, purchases were few and very selective), the demesne was enlarged and the house (never well roofed, and perpetually damp) partly rebuilt, and the village of Dervock was reconstructed and developed as a market town. As old long leases, which had kept the income low and had hindered his plans, fell in, Macartney got rid of middlemen and shortened his leases, in some cases replacing leases by tenancies-at-will, rather earlier than the general trend. In economic terms, the return on money spent cannot have been great. All his life, however, Macartney lived up to his ambitious image of himself, and towards the end was at last able to afford it, while at the same time investing heavily in government securities. By the time he died in 1806, he had effected a considerable transformation in the size, income, organization and development of his estate by the thorough planning and consistent pursuit of rational policies.

Little has appeared in print as yet about the finances and estate management of eighteenth-century Irish landowners, partly because few available collections of papers contain good material for that (still less any earlier) period. The Macartney papers, though by no means complete, are not only better than most for the last quarter of the century but have the additional interest of referring to a gentry estate rather than to one of the leviathans such as Downshire or Abercorn. Peter Roebuck's analysis of the material is characteristically well-organized and thorough, and places Macartney's activities as a landowner firmly in the context of his overall financial history, just as this in turn is placed in the still wider context of his public career. The nabob of north Antrim was by no means a typical Irish landowner, but then one begins to wonder if such a creature ever existed. The Ulster Historical Foundation is to be congratulated on producing another volume of exceptional interest and real historical worth.

W A MAGUIRE

JOEL MOKYR, *Why Ireland Starved: a quantitative and analytical history of the Irish Economy, 1800–1850*. Allen and Unwin, 1983. 330 pp. £22.50.

In 1980 Dr Clarkson commented in the *Economic History Review* that Irish Economic History 'looks a trifle old-fashioned with the bewitching voices of the social sciences muted and statistical wizardry missing', and what was then a mountain stream has since become a raging torrent to which this full-length econometric study is the latest contribution. Professor Mokyr seeks his answers by examining a series of hypotheses: these he tests with statistical equations based mainly on variously weighted government statistics, in par-

ticular the 1841 and 1851 Census, the 1836 Poor Law Commission and the 1844 Report of the Devon Commission. In working through these massive reports the author is following in the steps of the late Professor K H Connell and his successors.

It is perhaps unfortunate that he decided not to counterbalance this evidence by looking at some of the large collections of estate papers for specific cases which might illustrate his theories. For instance, p.199, 'the microeconomic effect of landlord absenteeism is more persuasive and more compelling than the macroeconomic effect. The cost of absenteeism to society was not so much that it caused consumption of the wrong goods in the wrong places, but that it led to a monumental case of entrepreneurial failure.' Nevertheless, many of the conclusions which result from his austere clinical method are stimulating and rewarding to the persevering reader. This is a professional book intended for a professional audience: it is not, in the words of its author, 'a general survey of the economic history of Ireland between the Union and the famine. It is not intended as such and should not be read for the purpose of an introduction to the subject . . . My purpose in this work is to answer one question . . . why was Ireland poor?'

The answer to this question is formulated in terms of a series of hypotheses based on factors relating to geography, politics and institutions, social and ethnic considerations, population, capital formation, entrepreneurship, and emigration. The book is carefully planned and divided into ten chapters including an introduction and a conclusion in which he emphasizes that 'Irish poverty was not really one single "event"; rather we are dealing with a series of related but separate phenomena which did not necessarily share the same causal mechanisms.' The individual phenomena are discussed in the intervening chapters and while the emphasis is on quantification Professor Mokyr asks a number of interesting qualitative questions, for example (p.8) he comments that 'Irish consumption patterns differed from those in most other western European countries . . . measures of national income per capita are misleading as indices of welfare. Some items such as leisure and large families, while obviously consumer goods bearing positive prices, are not included.'

In Chapter 2 there is an important discussion of the bimodal nature of the economy, definitions of poverty, questions of diet and the nature of the available evidence. Chapter 3 asks the much discussed question, 'Was Malthus right?' It is followed by a chapter on land tenure and its social and economic implications. The economics of rural conflict and unrest are investigated and the hypothesis advanced (p.144): that 'the background of the difficulties in Ireland was the changes taking place on both the supply and demand side in the market for agricultural

products'. In analysing the core problem of Ireland's limited industrialization Professor Mokyr considers the problem of wealth and limited natural resources together with the availability of capital and entrepreneurship and regards both in the light of the McKinnon syndrome. Ireland's lack of viable mineral resources was probably a more serious element than Mokyr admits. A discussion on entrepreneurship and labour raises a number of important issues, among them questions such as cheap labour and low productivity, the managerial failure of the landlords, the entrepreneurial failure consequent upon absenteeism, and even the question of laziness! Emigration is considered in the light of its contribution to this entrepreneurial failure. Emphasis is given to questions such as did emigration 'cream off' potential entrepreneurial talent from Irish society? Did it remove a potential industrial proletariat? Chapter 9 begins with an *ex cathedra* but questionable statement that: 'the prefamine history of Ireland inevitably will be interpreted in terms of the famine' and goes on to analyse the famine and its consequences, concluding that: 'to summarize, the Irish potato famine of 1846-51 was the last large-scale natural demographic disaster to strike Europe. It provides an opportunity to study in some detail the impact and factors determining the magnitude of the excess mortality such disasters involved.'

This study is primarily based on quantitative evidence and, as with any mathematical formula, if you are convinced of its premises, and any subsequent deduction from them is logically correct, then you are led inexorably to the conclusions which flow from them. Professor Mokyr comments (p. 4) that: 'the idea of content analysis of qualitative information is pursued in several instances because the Irish sources lend themselves well to it': yet on p. 134 he admits that: 'using the Poor Law Commission data to examine what happened to the dispossessed tenants is not less hazardous than using the Devon Commission witnesses. Although the Poor Law witnesses were asked explicitly what had become of the dispossessed tenants, the majority of them ignored that part of the question.' It is in the handling of this flawed evidence that what Dr Liam Kennedy describes as Professor Mokyr's 'statistical wizardry' is most dazzling but it cannot obscure the fact that his raw materials have serious defects for the treatment to which he has subjected them, leaving many of his conclusions probable, possible or doubtful but still not convincingly proven.

Nevertheless, Professor Mokyr's problem with the historical evidence at his disposal is no different from that which confronts any historian — our evidence is always less than we desire. What is disturbing is the clinical impersonality with which he draws his conclusions from an overall view of Ireland placed as a

composite specimen under an adjustable statistical microscope. From time to time he recognizes the difficulty of this problem but it is larger and more fundamental than his model allows. For example, not only did the famine not strike evenly throughout the country but even in normal times there were very real regional variations in social and economic conditions; for instance, Ulster had many distinctive features — a degree of both proto-industrialism and industrialization (rather cursorily dismissed on p. 13) and a diet which relied on oatmeal as well as potatoes. However, what is most surprising and disquieting is the sudden appearance of totally unquantified and unsubstantiated statements like (p. 291), 'the real problem was that Ireland was considered by Britain an alien and even hostile country . . . Most serious of all . . . the British simply abandoned the Irish and let them perish. There is no doubt that Britain could have saved Ireland.' This is debatable. Can it fairly be stated that the reports which supply the statistics for this study indicate an abdication from Ireland's social problems? Even the most cursory reading of the correspondence of Sir Robert Peel and his ministers, along with a consideration of the administrative infrastructure then available to arrange and distribute the necessary relief, might suggest at least a modification of these generalizations.

No country, not even Ireland, is an historical island and all Irish historians must be greatly in Professor Mokyr's debt. In looking at Ireland in a different and wider historical context, and in his extensive application of econometric methods, he has drawn our attention to new hypotheses and emphasized different aspects of an important event not only in the history of Ireland but also in the history of Europe. In doing so he points out both the great value and the substantial limitations of the mass of statistics demanded by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in its well-meaning if unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem of Ireland. Unfortunately, Parliamentary Commissions, particularly with regard to Ireland, have more often provided evidence rather than solutions. Nevertheless, Professor Mokyr has done us all a great service, not least when he reminds us (p. 4) that: 'quantitative and qualitative evidence serve different ends and should be viewed as complements, not substitutes'.

EDITH MARY JOHNSTON

MARTINE SEGALIN, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family. Rural France in the Nineteenth Century*. Basil Blackwell, 1983. ix + 206 pp. 16 illus. £15.

Most historical records have been compiled, and most agricultural histories have been written, by men. Our perceptions of the past have been refracted mainly through masculine lenses. The extent to which such

images might have been distorted is suggested by Martine Segalen's book which both provides a reinterpretation of the relations between husband and wife in rural France during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and offers some specifically — but not stridently — feminist insights into French peasant society.

Arguing that too much uncritical reliance has hitherto been placed upon descriptions of 'savage' rural life by 'civilized' urban travellers and bourgeois folklorists unable to comprehend the social structures which they encountered, Martine Segalen prefers instead to call upon landscape painters like Millet and Courbet as discerning observers of French rural society and more particularly (and more directly) upon its actors whose customs, rituals and proverbs she combines in a way which enables the peasants to speak for themselves even though both as a social group and as individuals they left few written accounts of their *genres de vie*. From a demographic point of view, Martine Segalen contends that the community and the household were more significant than the family and she views sceptically ideas about the emergence of nuclear families in rural France during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, she insists that even within a wider social context relations between husband and wife showed a balanced affection and were not, as some have argued, loveless partnerships as functions of the peasants' algorithm for survival. From an agricultural point of view, Martine Segalen demonstrates that cooperation and complementarity in the sharing of tasks characterized French peasant households and that behind a public male superiority lay a private equality between wife and husband: the systematic division of labour on the farm was reflected in a spatial segregation of activity which to casual observers might suggest a fundamental schism between man and wife but which Martine Segalen interprets as reflecting a logical and harmonious complementarity within the household's organization. Martine Segalen sees this balance being increasingly challenged in rural France today as mechanization and related changes threaten the role and status of women on French farms and as the couple comes to be more characteristic than the household.

This is a provocative book which will provide both excitement and frustration: its general thesis is bold, its detail fascinating, its argument not always convincing, and its style will be unfamiliar to those not acquainted with the elements of French structuralist history. It is an admirable book which offers a novel perspective upon the French peasantry in particular and upon the practice of agricultural history in general. It places people and their relationships at the centre of agricultural history, crops and livestock at the periphery.

ALAN R H BAKER

C J BLISS and N H STERN, *Palanpur: the Economy of an Indian Village*. OUP, 1982. xii + 340 pp. Figures. Tables. £15.

At the Second International Conference of Economic History in 1962 Michael Postan argued that the agrarian experience of early European societies could provide clues with which to approach the problems of Third World societies today. This philosophy, of course, works both ways, and historians of agricultural history have long been accustomed to consulting the work done on modern peasant societies to provide insights with which to consider the agrarian problems of the past. The comparison of societies set in different time spans but sharing cultural and economic similarities is thus well established, and therefore it is not out of place in a journal devoted to the agriculture of the past to consider a work that is firmly set in a modern context. Agricultural historians have a wealth of such materials from which to draw, and indeed many have been discouraged from even sampling the literature by its sheer bulk. A short guide to the best of modern peasant studies, embodying the work of such scholars as Chayanov, Shanin, Thorner, Boserup, and Redfield, would be invaluable in this regard.

Bliss and Stern's work would surely be included in such a guide. Geographically and temporally it is a very restricted study in that it treats with only one village, Palanpur in north central India, and is concerned mainly with data collected during a nine-month period in 1974-5. But the range of subjects dealt with and more particularly their detailed treatment are more than likely to make the work a classic in times to come. It is a highly econometric work, and some of the chapters may thus be inaccessible to many readers (although still of interest to those with a statistical bent, because of the methodology employed). The authors, however, have wisely catered for more general tastes by including a number of extremely useful and readable summary chapters, which could almost stand as a book by themselves.

There is at least one major limitation. In their introduction, Bliss and Stern claim that the main purpose in studying Palanpur is to analyse 'rural markets and the behaviour of those involved in them' (p. 1). In fact, the book takes a much more restricted view than this, in that essentially only input markets — the buying of grain for seed, pump sets for irrigation, the hiring of bullocks, and so on — are considered in much detail. Output sales are in the main superficially treated, and only the sale of labour gets extended coverage. One of the questions to which a clearer answer would also have been desirable in Bliss and Stern's study is the degree to which crops in Palanpur are produced for the market as against family consumption.

These criticisms aside, there is much of interest in the book for agricultural historians. There is an extended

analysis of tenancy, which in Palanpur is almost exclusively of a 50-50 sharecropping arrangement, a system which is curiously static in view of the changes that have been occurring in Indian agriculture over the past twenty to thirty years. Bliss and Stern suggest that this is due to a communal desire for uniformity in land and other transactions, a phenomenon that also keeps labour wage rates relatively constant. In short, the attributes of a perfectly competitive market scarcely apply to Palanpur.

Despite the strong element of conservatism in Palanpur's economic dealings, the village has undergone considerable change in recent times. In the twenty years before the main data collection in 1974-5, grain yields had trebled or better. The village population had also increased during this period, but only by about 50 per cent. As a result, the prosperity of some families at least — particularly among the higher castes — seems to have risen markedly, as indicated, for instance, by the increase in the number of consumer durables — bicycles, watches, and the like. Yet the attitude of Palanpur inhabitants to production remains very cautious. Bliss and Stern examine this aspect in a controlled study of wheat production, where the cultivating activities on forty-seven peasant plots in Palanpur were monitored very closely. Perhaps the most surprising thing about this study were the huge variations in production evident among farmers. Attempts to explain these variations by such factors as farm size are in the main inconclusive, and, as much as anything, production seems to depend upon the attitude of the individual farmer himself. Of prime concern to Palanpur men is the question of uncertainty, which often tends to discourage the adoption of certain improvements, especially if they are costly. Extra production, of course, is very desirable, but a miscalculation can spell disaster for the well-being of a peasant and his family. Although still only a theory in medieval and early modern agricultural history, risk aversion seemingly still exerts a very real influence on the economic and agricultural development of this particular Indian village.

JOHN LANGDON

BARRY HARRISON and BARBARA HUTTON, *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland*. John Donald, Edinburgh, 1984. 254 pp. Illus. £25.

This book is a major contribution to the study of vernacular architecture and is likely to become a classic work. Future studies of other regions will need to turn to it as a point of reference, for it is of far more than local importance. The authors and their amateur assistants have spent ten years in surveying 770 buildings throughout the modern counties of North Yorkshire and Cleveland and in examining relevant documents.

Vernacular Architecture has raised its sights from the technicalities of individual buildings to the discussion of broader themes of continuity, diffusion and diversity in the best tradition of Barley and Mercer. And the authors have been well-served by their publisher, for the book is lavishly illustrated with plans, elevations, isometric drawings and photographs.

The opening section uses archaeological and documentary material to discuss origins. The authors have stern words about the early Wharham Percy reports which fostered the widespread belief that medieval vernacular buildings were flimsy, impermanent structures. They suggest instead that in their area seventeenth-century houses may not have been so very different from their medieval predecessors in terms of plans and proportions, though not of building materials. Hardly any houses of a type likely to have been inhabited by even the wealthiest farmers have survived in north Yorkshire from before 1600, and few from the next half-century except in one or two favoured areas. The Great Rebuilding occurred later than in the south or midlands, and plan-types survived longer.

The second part is devoted to the classification of post-medieval farmhouses into groups: the hearth-passage plan, the lobby-entry plan, the end-stack and direct-entry plan, and ultimately the double-pile plans and Georgian farmhouses. Their evolution and their characteristics are explained convincingly and in detail and their distributions are related to farming practices and systems of tenurial structure, where possible. A particularly interesting discussion derives the hearth-passage plan from the medieval longhouse, a type that disappeared rapidly from the area after the mid-seventeenth century. Longhouses are not easy to identify as their byres have been converted into kitchens and service rooms, but the authors are able to show that in north-east Yorkshire and Craven such buildings were in no way inferior in terms of quantity and standard of domestic accommodation to other contemporary houses.

The section on construction deals with building materials (related to the underlying geology), roofs and interior features. In the central Vale of York common rafter roofs were the prevalent type, but elsewhere principal rafter roofs were usual; eighty cruck frames survive, especially on the North York Moors and in the Vale of Pickering, but not apparently in the northern dales where not even a fragment of a cruck blade has been found. Timber-framing ceased during the seventeenth century.

The final part commendably relates building types to farming sub-regions, for wide variations exist in the quality and chronology of accommodation between different areas. Hearth-Tax returns for 1672-3 and all the 375 probate inventories taken in the region in

1709–10 have been analysed, together with longer runs of inventories for particular places. Not only did housing vary from one farming sub-region to another, but in certain areas such as the southern Vale of York its quality changed from one village to the next according to the social-and-economic structure of the locality.

Barry Harrison, Barbara Hutton and the sixty members of their study group have worked on this project for ten years and mean to continue. What remains to be done, other than more recording? In the first place, the people who built and lived in these houses remain elusive. No probate inventory in this study has been related to a surviving building, nor have any identifications been made from the Hearth Tax returns; inventories cannot normally be used in this way in nucleated villages, but can be occasionally in areas of scattered settlement. Secondly, the authors use the term 'vernacular' in a narrow way that excludes the manor houses and halls of the gentry; they confess (p.24) to their 'preference for recording houses of a slightly lower social level'. But if they admit the influence of 'supra-vernacular' houses of an earlier period (and therefore record them in detail), how can they deny the influence of seventeenth-century halls, especially when their owners were the *resident* leaders of local communities? How can such buildings as Kildwick Hall in Craven, Coleby Hall in Wensleydale or Myton Old Hall in the northern Vale of York be regarded as anything other than vernacular in their building materials, plans, elevations and decorative detail? Cannot all domestic buildings in North Yorkshire and Cleveland be regarded as vernacular until Sir John Vanbrugh arrived with his schemes for Castle Howard?

DAVID HEY

ADRIAN BELL, *Silver Ley*. OUP, 1983. 291 pp. £2.95. This is a paperback re-issue of a book first published in 1931. The author, an ex-public schoolboy, was the son of the news editor of *The Observer* when G L Garvin was in charge. He entered his father's firm but after a short spell in journalism he became apprentice for a year to a Suffolk farmer of the old school. He then set up in a thirty-five-acre farm of his own. Towards the end of the 'thirties, about ten years after coming to Suffolk, he wrote a trilogy of novels about his experience. *Corduroy*, the first, was about his initiation into farming. *Silver Ley* describes his first years as a small, gentleman farmer.

He deposited £200 in the local bank – not a negligible sum in the early 'twenties. He hired a man as his helper; bought himself a pair of horses and a heifer that calved as soon as he brought her home from market; and he immersed himself in the life of a working farmer. At week-ends he spent an occasional day visiting his family in London; and he so enthused about his new life

in the country that his parents, and his younger brother and sister, eventually decided they would like to join him on the farm, his father travelling to the country at weekends. They rented a bigger cottage, letting his man, Walter, take over the cottage at the farm, *Silver Ley*. This compromised Bell's plan to farm on his own; but he weathered the period when the family farmed with him, and eventually went back to his original cottage.

Adrian Bell had trained with a substantial yeoman farmer, and inevitably fitted into the social pattern of that class who hunted and rode to the point-to-point event at the end of the hunting season. He took for granted the scene that had not changed appreciably since pre-1914. This book, as do the other two in the trilogy, contains the author's best writing: autobiographical novels which flow along with an easy rhythm that is fresh, lyrical and perceptive. It is a fair picture of the state of farming in the 'twenties, told perforce from the standpoint of the small yeoman farmer who had some money behind him, while hinting at the strain that farming was under after the repeal of the Corn Production Act of 1917 and the abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board.

It is instructive to compare the account in *Silver Ley* with a film of the same period. It was made by the Ministry of Information during the last war and concentrated on the plight of the Suffolk farm worker. He is played by John Slater who later became a television star. The film, called *The Harvest Shall Come* (I believe, still available), reveals the actual stresses farming had been under more starkly than did contemporary writings. It was as though more of the truth was palatable to wartime audiences. It shows that it was a bad period for farmers and an even worse one for farm workers.

GEORGE EWART EVANS

A G STREET, *Farmer's Glory*. OUP, 1983. 292 pp. Illus. £2.95.

Arthur Street (1892–1966) was a South Wiltshire tenant farmer, who began writing on farming topics in 1929, wrote thirty-five books, and became a popular journalist and broadcaster, while remaining a working farmer as well. *Farmer's Glory* was his first book, originally published in 1932. This welcome reissue is accompanied by an affectionate preface by the author's daughter, Pamela Street.

The first part of the book is an account of his boyhood on his father's farm (Ditchampton Farm, near Salisbury). It was a large tenant farm (actually two farms worked as one) of 630 acres, based on a long-established four-course rotation centred on sheep and corn. It was a time that he remembered as spacious and relaxed, for himself and his family. Part of this feeling came from the plenitude of labour; there

were twenty-three employees, including a groom-gardener ('there was always somebody to tell in those days' — p.28). It also came from an elevated social status; the larger tenants, although definitely not 'county', were above almost everybody else in the rural order of society. Two other features of this pre-1914 life stand out; one did not question the customary system of farming, and one paid little attention to questions of comparative costs and revenue. In fact, 'One didn't farm for cash profits, but did one's duty by the land' (p.29).

After leaving school in 1907, Street worked on the family farm for three years. Following a disagreement with his father, he then left, and spent four years working as a farm labourer in Canada. This period forms the second part of the book. Entitled 'A Canadian Interlude', it was for Street rather more than that. For the first time he was earning his living on his own merits, and happy in the knowledge that he was doing so. The Canadian experience also seems to have contributed to two important facets of his character; an ability to work extremely hard, and the mental flexibility which came from seeing a very different farming system at work.

The outbreak of the First World War brought him back, with the intention of enlisting. He failed the medical examination, and went back to helping his father on the farm, where the old system was just maintaining itself, although handicapped by labour shortage. His Canadian experience was immediately useful, since it gave him ideas on how to save labour (eg the use of double-furrow ploughs, pp.188-9). In 1917 his father died, and Street took over the farm the next year (at a doubled rent, which the estate offered him on a 'take it or leave it' basis). In spite of the higher rent, the next few years were easy ones; product prices went ever higher, and he later wrote that in 1918 he had an income of £2000 (*Wessex Wins*, 1941, p.58). High profits went to many people's heads; the social life interrupted by the war was renewed in a rather frenetic manner, and 'in short', he wrote, 'farmers swanked' (p.206). He admits that he was no exception, giving tennis parties for twenty people, and getting his golf handicap down to eight.

Nemesis struck in 1921, when agricultural prices began to fall steeply (especially corn). Street, in common with other farmers, at first tried to raise his

income by growing even more corn. This made things worse, since he rapidly came up against diminishing physical returns (pp.213-4). As early as 1925, 'ruin gibbered in the background not so very far away' (p.215). An attempt at intensive dairying and sugar beet also failed. By 1927 he knew that he had to find a radical solution or leave farming as a failure. The solution turned out to be the newly-invented Hosier 'bail', a movable milking parlour which allowed cows to be milked (by machine) in the fields in which they grazed. The bail cut milking costs dramatically, and also led to better manuring of the fields, and thus better hay crops. Street went over entirely to the new system, selling all his arable equipment, quitting one of the farms, and completely grassing down the other. Cheap milk production saved him from disaster. He followed up this breathing space by donning the white coat of the milk roundsman (no easy thing for a formerly prosperous farmer) and starting a retail milk business. Thus cushioned, he was able to weather the next depression after 1929 with composure—or so one must presume, since he does not mention that it affected him.

The final chapter consists largely of reflections on the direction in which farming was going at the time of writing (1931), and thoughts on agricultural policy. His general prescription was that others should follow his lead and abandon tillage for grass, a course which he thought justified by climate and consumer demand. He also considered that it was sound from the point of view of national defence, since it increased the fertility of land, and this fertility could be tapped in wartime by switching over to tillage. This view (p.281) is echoed by his daughter (p.2), and is less sound than the rest of the diagnosis; the high cereal yields of both wars owed more to artificial fertilizer than previously stored-up fertility.

Street wrote that the book was an attempt 'to paint a true picture of farming life in southern England during the last twenty-five years' (p.271). Within the limitations of an individual's viewpoint, it succeeds remarkably well. But its popularity owes something also to its protean nature; it can also be read as autobiography, rural nostalgia, a store of good anecdotes, or as a fine example of simple and evocative English prose.

P E DEWEY

Shorter Notices

G AVELLA-WIDHALM, I LUTZ, R MATTEJET, U MATTEJET (eds.), *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Vol. II. Bettlerwesen — Codex von Valencia, München and Zürich, Artemis Verlag, 1982-3. 2210 cols.

The fascicules of this unique lexicon appear in pairs in rapid succession. The whole work will now comprise seven volumes. Since our first review its format has continued as an alternation of longer articles of manageable length on fundamental topics, and many shorter articles, terse and stimulating, with compact bibliographies dating into the eighties. This volume contains about twenty short articles on agricultural history. Irish and Celtic matters seem to attract more attention than the rest of the British Isles. Articles on cities and families are strong points. The history of peoples, places and ideas takes a certain priority over economic history. It is usually unnecessary to await cross-references in later volumes. Each volume consists of ten fascicules, now costing DM39 each, with special subscription terms. This represents extremely good value. The editors have co-ordinated the work of more than eight hundred contributors with great skill, and have kept a just proportion between the length of articles.

D J DAVIS

HERBERT JAMES HEWITT, *The Horse in Medieval England*.

J A Allen, 1983. 87 pp. £10.50.

Herbert James Hewitt is one of the *doyens* of medieval economic and military history, and in this little book he has drawn together much of the information he has collected about horses in the course of his long academic career. The result is an attractive and informative essay for non-specialists. It must be pointed out, however, that the subject matter is both wider and narrower than the title suggests. On the one hand it covers several topics which, though related to horses, are not strictly equestrian: roads, the speed of travel, the transport of heavy goods and the campaigns of Edward I and the Black Prince. On the other hand it is confined almost wholly to the fourteenth century and gives little more than a passing nod to the problem of the horse in agriculture. Being aimed at a popular audience, the book has no footnotes or bibliographies. For these the serious student will have to turn to Mr Hewitt's earlier works, *Medieval Cheshire* (1929), *The Black Prince's expedition of 1355-1357* (1958) and *The Organization of War under Edward III* (1966).

R H C DAVIS

THOMAS TUSSEY, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*.

OUP, 1984. xxi + 344 pp. £3.50.

Good value for money will be found in this edition of Tusser's works, being the definitive one of 1580, as originally republished by the English Dialect Society, with one introduction by Sir Walter Scott and a better, though slightly precious, one by Geoffrey Grigson, and with the notes supplied by Hillman in 1710 and Mavor in 1812. Many readers may find pages and pages of what perhaps is best described as from verse to worse, about such matters as gelding and muck-spreading, apt to become tiresome, unless counteracted by frequent reference to the highly illuminating and mercifully prosaic notes. Sad to say, Tusser rarely waxes poetic, except in his religious verses. His strong point was his acquaintance with husbandry, housewifery and rural economy in eastern England. His verse is a mine of information, or, rather, of ore from which information can usually be extracted, and the spoil thereof contains enigmas enough to taunt the minds of generations to come. No agricultural, horticultural or economic historian can afford to ignore either Tusser or Hillman; no more can the student of English language and literature. For one thing, Tusser lards his verse with old proverbs, sayings and colloquialisms. He was at once deeply religious and truly earthy. He was a man of many and great parts. Who else would compose a piece of verse in which every single word begins with 't'? And who but Tusser can write so sensibly and engagingly about common fields and severalty or so graphically and delightfully about the hay harvest? Every Englishman should read his Tusser.

ERIC KERRIDGE

AVICER WILSON, *Cocklebury. A farming area and its people in the Vale of Wiltshire*. Phillimore, 1983. xx + 119 pp. Illus. £12.

The history of a village is no new thing, as all readers of this *Review* will be well aware. The county antiquarian societies' journals are full of such things, ranging from those printed in the nineteenth century to those peeping out of print at the present day; but it must be emphasized that it was these small, often tiny, villages from which came the Yeomen of England, the people who made the country great; there they lived and died and had their being. This is all the more reason for making a study of a particular place, indeed for

many scholars to make studies of their immediate rural environment and its history. Miss Wilson has done just this and with some taint of scholarship. Cocklebury is indeed an example to later students who are engaged upon the same sort of study in different and varied areas. They might well take example from the industry in seeking sources that Miss Wilson has, in this which may be called an exemplary study.

G E FUSSELL

ALAN EVERITT and MARGERY TRANTER, *English Local History at Leicester, 1948-1978*. Department of English Local History, University of Leicester, 1981. xxxi + 87 pp. £1.85.

Although local history was well established and widely practised before the creation of the Department at Leicester in 1948, and has flourished in many locations since, Leicester has justly achieved pre-eminence in the field. It has become to local history what Cheshire is to cheese. This booklet was compiled to celebrate thirty years of the Department and published as part of the celebration of the Jubilee of the University in 1981. It lists over 1200 items, including book reviews, produced by members, students, and others connected with the Department, and allows the outsider to view the range and quality of its contribution to the broad field of English local history. More than a quarter of the 550 publications have been concerned with agriculture and rural society, and with many entries under the names of Finberg, Hoskins, Thirsk, and Everitt, it is clear that agrarian history has been significantly advanced by the Leicester connection. Professor Everitt's introduction also presents a county-by-county breakdown of the books and articles generated: few readers will be surprised that Devon (22 per cent) and Leicestershire (13 per cent) predominate. As a guide to one very distinctive institutional contribution to the development of modern analytical local history this is very useful and modestly-priced. Many agrarian historians will find in it a valuable addition to the bookshelf.

J A CHARTRES

Cheshire History. Autumn 1983, No.12. Cheshire Community Council Local History Committee, Watergate House, Watergate Street, Chester. Annual subscription £3.50.

The attention of readers is drawn to a deserving biannual publication. This particular number has interesting articles on the court rolls of Macclesfield, enclosures in Frodsham, ridge and furrow, and trailbaston proceedings. It would be easy to decry their authors as mere amateurs, but at least they are historians enough to turn to the original sources.

ERIC KERRIDGE

WALTER MINCHINTON (ed.), *Agricultural Improvement: Medieval and Modern*. Exeter Papers in Economic History, No.14, Exeter, 1981. 137 pp.

This set of useful essays reflects the growing interest in matters of agricultural improvement and technology from the medieval to the modern period and the results thereof. Three of the essays deal specifically with the English south-west and three with the country as a whole. Of the latter three, Roger Wilkes provides a perceptive and stimulating review of the development of drill husbandry, while Nicholas Russell's paper on the improvement of the Longhorn cattle breed offers a much-needed reminder that these improvements were in evidence well before Bakewell's time. John Rule completes the trio of papers covering England as a whole with a handy survey of diet among agricultural labourers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The three regional studies open with John Hare's analysis of Wiltshire agriculture in the later middle ages, where the emphasis is on changing patterns of land distribution and use rather than technical innovation. In a similar vein Robin Stanes deals with landlord-tenant relationships in a study of husbandry covenants in eighteenth-century Devon and argues that here at least covenants played a key role in maintaining high standards of farming. Finally, Derek Jewell shows how the distinctive features of farming in Devon and Cornwall led to and were reinforced by the development of particular types of agricultural equipment. This collection of essays will be of value to anyone seriously or even casually interested in the field of agricultural technology and development.

JOHN LANGDON

P LYTH, *The Southwell Charter of 956 AD: An Exploration of its Boundaries*. Philip Lyth jointly with the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire, 1984. 15 pp. 2 maps, 6 plates.

The Southwell Charter is one of the very few early documents relating to the estates of the See of York which provides any information at all on agricultural development. The grant referred to four townships, roughly coincident with modern civil parishes, which could be seen as centred round the site of a Roman villa. Headlands along parts of the boundary show open fields on the northern limits, while hedged enclosures in woodland areas indicate a certain amount of assarting. Some at least of the woodland was coppiced. Mr Lyth accepts uncritically the validity of hedge dating, but his interpretation of a corrupt Anglo-Saxon text seems reasonable in spite of the liberties that had to be taken to make any sort of topographical sense. His maps are clear and informative, his photographs rather less so. All in all this is a useful addition to the growing number of published boundary perambulations.

H E JEAN LE PATOUREL