

Book Reviews

A W R WHITTLE, *Neolithic Europe: A Survey*, CUP, 1985.
xiv + 363 pp. £27.50 (hardcover); £9.95 (paperback).

This book fills a very substantial gap on the shelf. It is the first detailed survey of Neolithic Europe in English for many years; Whittle has obviously made great efforts to give uniform coverage to all parts of Europe. This makes a valuable contrast to most European archaeology books written in Britain, which tend to give undue bias towards Britain and the nearer parts of Europe; and we must be grateful to Whittle for the obviously very extensive reading in a large variety of languages, including various Eastern European ones, that he must have undertaken in order to write it. As a work of synthesis of vast quantities of material previously not easily accessible the book must be seen as a success.

The book begins with a brief introduction discussing the different and changing approaches to the way archaeological evidence is interpreted; Whittle takes a fairly traditional view of the limits of archaeological inference, and throughout the book points out, but is mainly rather hesitant in accepting, the more theoretical arguments which are increasingly becoming important in our interpretation of the past.

The second chapter sets the scene of pre-agricultural Europe, discussing both the natural environment and the archaeology of Mesolithic Europe. Chapters Three and Four deal with the period 6000–4000 bc, considering first the evidence of material culture, settlements and economy of the earliest farmers in south-east Europe at this period, and then deals with the same topics for the expansion of farming into central and western Europe from 4600–4000 bc, especially as evidenced by the Linear Pottery Culture, and thirdly looks at the earliest phases of agriculture in the Mediterranean area. Chapter Four considers the evidence for the same period in areas of Europe where farming was not a full part of the economy. Moving on to the period 4000–2000 bc, we return to south-east Europe in Chapter Five to consider further developments in settlement patterns and artefacts including the earliest use of copper. Chapter Six deals with the same period in central and western Europe, sub-divided into periods 4000–3400 bc, 3400–2600 bc, and 2600–2000 bc. Within each period material culture, settlement and subsistence, and ritual and exchange are discussed, and within each of these sections each part of central and western Europe is covered. References to any one area are therefore well-dispersed throughout the chapter! In Chapter Seven we return to the

Mediterranean region, now in the period 4000–2000 bc. The rigid structure of these chapters inevitably works better for some areas than others; certainly in the period 6000–4000, the contrast between the Mediterranean and south-east Europe on the one hand, and north-west Europe on the other clearly emerges. However, to follow the development of any one particular topic, such as megalithic tombs, would be difficult, and threads of uniformity, and the significance of minor regional differences lost. This is further aggravated by the small number of headings for the sub-divisions which would have made finding such information much easier.

The final chapter very briefly summarizes the main trends in developments and change in the history of the Neolithic in contrasting areas, and in Europe as a whole.

It would be difficult to recommend this book to the agricultural historian intent upon discovering what light recent archaeological studies have shed upon the earliest origins of agriculture in Neolithic Europe. For a period in which most prehistorians would agree that one of, if not the, major development was in the domestication of plants and animals, disappointingly little of the book is devoted to detailed discussion of the evidence and theories relating to agriculture. Lists of crops and animals are buried amongst even more extensive lists of sites and descriptions of pottery, all of which would give the unsuspecting reader the impression that the only changes in archaeology in the last three decades have been in the number of sites known, a few radio-carbon dates, and a handful of words such as 'prestige', 'elite' and 'social' used as mainly unexplained jargon. In his introduction Whittle suggests that he will concentrate on social issues, at the forefront of current archaeological thinking. In practice, this seems to mean that he uses a few terms very frequently, without differentiation of the context. For example, every rare artefact found in a grave is thought to be a 'prestige-good', and 'symbolic of high-status and elite groups', although on each occasion *caveats* are included. It seems that Whittle lacks confidence in the application of theory to his period, but at the same time feels compelled to attempt to use it.

The very comprehensiveness of the book causes problems. Of necessity the amount of space devoted to some of the more interesting and better researched aspects, such as, for example, the Swiss Lake Dwellings is proportionately small. This is particularly frustrating when important social and economic

arguments are skimmed over, and not properly explained, especially where Whittle mentions, without real explanation, another author's theory (the identity of whom is rarely made explicit except as a numbered reference) and then in one or two sentences dismisses it. As an example we may take Andrew Sherratt's theory of a Secondary Products Revolution. The theory is mentioned, but not clearly explained; if Whittle has grounds for criticizing it, it requires more thorough treatment than he is able to give in less than half a page.

The index is not very comprehensive, and in the text several terms are used without being explained, while other phenomena are described without being named (for example, causewayed enclosures (p 219), though subsequently (p 261) they are named without reference back to the earlier description). Although this book is difficult to read from cover to cover, it will nevertheless provide a useful reference book to the latest evidence from Neolithic Europe.

MARGARET R EHRENBERG

G BARKER, *Prehistoric Farming in Europe*, CUP, 1985. xviii + 327 pp. 100 figs, 19 tables. £27.50 (hardcover); £9.95 (paperback).

Mr Barker will doubtless now share the recent experience of this reviewer, also the author of a book on prehistoric farming: to receive critiques from some agrarian historians who doubt the validity of his work because it is not based on documentary evidence. This will not be one such review, for archaeological evidence can be used to witness farming irrespective of the written word, but it is worth pondering in the light of this major piece of scholarship whether indeed the study of past material culture can or does produce agrarian history.

To be fair to the author, he makes no claim to write history. 'My concern in this book has been to attempt to describe and analyse (if only partially to explain) the development of European farming from its origins until the close of the prehistoric era.' The subject is extensive in space and time; description and analysis are executed thoroughly and with insight and both pursue a moving target, the *development* of a defined human activity. Though the organization of the material is basically geographical, within each area the treatment is chronological and the areas themselves generally march from south-east to north-west, the core of the book therefore developing a narrative momentum through time. Furthermore, the whole is top and tailed in a manner appropriate to histories. That Mr Barker has given us a signal work in agrarian history cannot seriously be doubted; but of course such a judgement assumes the evidential validity of his particular sources, by definition pre-documentary.

What are they? Pp 11-27 specify them, distinguishing six categories: '(1) agricultural tools; (2) settlement

archaeology (occupation sites, constructional features within them, and off-site remains such as field systems); (3) pictorial evidence, in particular the "rock art" of Scandinavia and the alpine region; (4) environmental archaeology — studies of data primarily recording ancient ecologies but sometimes also reflecting ancient land use (pollen, molluscs, microfauna, sediments); (5) food refuse, the primary data for diet — particularly fragments of animal bone and collections of seeds and other botanical residues, but also . . . coprolites and fecal remains; and (6) site location studies'. This is a neat categorization, unexceptional to the prehistorian who could then explain the exploitation of such sources by references to methods such as micro-wear studies, crop-mark digitization, flotation, and catchment analysis. As Barker remarks (p 26) with regard to the last, 'Examples of such work make a fundamental contribution to this book.' The quotation could be extended to embrace other techniques too, for the ingenuity of students of the prehistoric past seems to be boundless. Is it just because the absence of documentary evidence presents not only such an obstacle but also such an intellectual challenge to a breed motivated by an excess of 'curiositie'? In part, probably 'yes', but of course the fact is that many an agrarian study, both local and based in our own documented era, could benefit from such methods; for another of the uncomfortable facts for the purist documentarian is that material and allied non-verbal evidence opens up aspects of farming which were never recorded in writing even on the best-ordered estates. Mr Barker's book is throughout a testimony to this truism almost because he is forced to look and gather, like his prehistoric foragers, where and what he can.

Indeed, within his considerable canvas, the archaeological evidence is by no means evenly spread: 'in some cases, although the rest of the archaeological record left by these societies may be both prolific and spectacular, virtually nothing can be said of the agricultural system beyond the fact that the people grew crops and herded animals' (p xiii). Other authors will have experienced the sinking feeling that goes with that observation. Here the author makes a virtue of necessity by stating positively that he has selected his material for the regional studies of the Mediterranean basin, the Balkans/Ukraine area, the Alpine region, the continental lowlands, Atlantic Europe, Britain/Ireland, and Scandinavia, and indeed has concentrated on those societies 'for whom the archaeological record is adequate for profitable analysis'. Such bias, openly declared, involves no more limitation to an overall view in practice than does the agrarian historian's understandable but often implicit tendency to work on well-documented estates and in areas and periods with good cartography.

Seven chapters (195 pp) embrace the regional

studies; three other chapters provide rather more than a gloss of academic titivation. 'Approaches to pre-historic farming' (chap 1) outlines the development of interest in the subject, a theme inextricably part of the history of ideas about prehistory itself. The simplistic sequence of savage-herdsman-agriculturalist is aptly illustrated by three Figuiers of 1876. Fig. 4 here in particular is a graphic masterpiece of conceptual schizophrenia: it romanticizes Bronze Age gardening in a Classical arcadia jarred only slightly by the gentle effort of the tiller — obviously a country gentleman appropriately dressed for the masque-like occasion — in placing his unspecific mattock upon the smooth bosom of an implicit but manifestly bountiful Ceres. The current debate about the origin and nature of prehistoric farming in the Near East and Europe is then sketched in verbally and also pointed up graphically, this time with a 1973 *Punch* cartoon — one of a number of nice touches of humour throughout the book.

Chapter 2 briefly discusses the resources of and constraints on prehistoric farming in Europe. Cattle, dog, horse, pig, red deer, sheep and goat are first dealt with in terms of some historical evidence, recent experimental work and modern archaeozoological research. Then plants are covered under sub-headings of cereals, legumes, fodder crops, pasture and fallow, and Mediterranean tree crops. A final section, the 'agricultural circle: crops, manure and fodder', draws on statistics from Rothamsted and Woburn as well as from Butser Ancient Farm in discussing such practical matters as crop yields, fallow periodicity and fodder requirements. Despite the reality, at one level, of opportunities for change being very limited in ancient farming, Barker justifiably stresses the fact that 'the history of European farming is one of a succession of major changes in technology, productivity and organization' (p 54). Overall, as he says, at one end of the sequence are 'self-sufficient farmers or farmer/foragers' and at the other, in late prehistory (or proto-historic societies, to use another frame of reference), 'state or quasi-state systems of agricultural organization'. His final chapter 'attempts to assess the relative importance of the various stimuli (technological, social, demographic, ecological) which could have precipitated such a change'.

Chapter 10, 'Prehistoric farming in Europe: its origins and development', is, then, both a logical *finale* to this internationally-significant book and an important essay in its own right. This is how Barker sees it — and how welcome is his own magisterial, interpretive overview of a huge area, a long time scale, a major theme in human history, and a mass of variously-acquired, diverse and often apparently inchoate evidence. Crucial components of his agrarian pan-Europeanism include, for example, acceptance of substantial indigenous mesolithic populations (p 251) and the spread of farming as 'a series of major expansions or explosions followed by substantial

pauses (which) correlate very closely with major climatic changes' (p 253). The author concludes by expressing a belief, shared by this reviewer and doubtless by the many others who will, and certainly ought to, find this book indispensable, that 'the preservation of today's rare breeds (is) the sensible husbandry of precious genetic resources rather than the sentimental protection of the casualties of progress' (p 263). It is a good exit-line, and as 'true', though undocumentable, as the rest of this pioneer history of farming throughout a Europe indisputably existing largely on an agrarian economy before its various parts came to enjoy, at different times, a written past.

P J FOWLER

JOSIAH OBER, *Fortress Attika: Defense of the Athenian Land Frontier 404-322 B.C.*, Mnemosyne supplement 84, Brill, 1985. xii + 243 pp. 8 maps; 8 plates. 76 guilders.

At first sight an unusual work for review in this journal; but this challenging and well-argued thesis deserves recognition for taking full account of the fact that at all times in classical antiquity the majority of the population lived in the countryside. It is only recently that historians and archaeologists have turned their attention from the cities of Italy and Greece to the systematic study of the pattern of land use and settlement in the areas around the major civic centres.

Thucydides claimed that the majority of Athenian citizens lived in the *demes*, villages, of Attika down to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war in 431 BC. In his survey of the economic resources of Attika Ober is right to dismiss the idea that the area did not have the soil or climate to sustain a rich agrarian economy. Its three large plains and many fertile valleys produced oil and wine aplenty and, on Ober's calculations, may have grown the grain to feed well over half of the Athenian population. Ober's discussion is not particularly original; for a thorough study of the rural settlement in Attika we have to wait for the publication of Robin Osborne's work. Attic agriculture, however, was disrupted in the Peloponnesian war by the yearly invasions of the Spartan army and later by the establishment by the Spartans of a permanent base at Dekeleia from which they could ravage the countryside. In the face of this Perikles' strategy was to bring the rural population into Athens, where they could be protected by the walls and supplied from the sea. There was little chance of a successful Spartan siege because much siege-warfare was ineffective at this date; the invention of the torsion catapult was still fifty years off. Sparta's policy of ravaging was the standard way of putting economic and psychological pressure on the enemy. Its effects were vividly described by Thucydides. Following Athens' defeat in 404 BC, as Ober demonstrates so well, a determination soon appeared that never again must Attika suffer as it had

done. As early as 403 BC the orator Lysias stated: 'since we have lost everything else in battle, our homeland is all that is left to us'. In the next century writers repeatedly stressed the importance of the resources of Attika and the need for their protection. Xenophon reflected current discussion when he suggested that the best way to defend the territory of the Athenians was to plant advance units in the hills to guard the approach roads to Attika. The primary evidence for this new defensive mentality may be the numerous remains of forts and defensive walls to found in the hills of NW and NE Attika. These form the subject of the second half of Ober's book. Given the inadequate archaeological investigation of these sites, Ober is over-ambitious in ascribing them all to the Fourth century, and some of them, it has been suggested recently, may not even be Athenian. In any case Ober misses the final irony of the fact that this defensive system did not work. Two land leases of the period, which laid down the terms of sharing the cost of damage done to property ravaged by enemy action, are testimony to the continuing insecurity of the countryside. Even though there was only one raid in the century, on the three occasions when Attika was threatened with serious invasion in 338, 335 and 322 BC, the Athenians hurriedly came to terms with the enemy to avoid damage and disruption to their agriculture. Ober's detailed study of one area is a most useful supplement to V D Hanson's *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece* (1983).

JEREMY J PATERSON

H C M KEELEY (ed), *Environmental Archaeology: a regional review*, Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, Occasional Paper, no. 6, London, 1984. 181 pp. 20 figs, 15 tables, 3 plates. No price stated.

This is not a single unified work on environmental archaeology such as those of John G. Evans (1975, 1978) with its emphasis on mammal, bird and mollusc remains or that of Myra Shackley (1980) with its emphasis on palaeosoils and sediments. Instead it is composed of four unequal sections reporting on the work of the government-sponsored Environmental Units in the service of archaeology at the universities of Bristol, Durham, Norwich and York. The four reports survey research between 1961 and 1981, and identify future problem areas. The common theme is the inadequacy of environmental provision.

As archaeologists are increasingly made aware of the potential provided by palaeo-ecological evidence, so they continually seek to recover the material and to present it for analysis. However, only 24 specialists funded by the Department of the Environment are available (e.g. 8 on mammal bones, 5 on pollen analysis and palaeo-botany, 3 on insects). At York it is

estimated that there is now a back-log of 50 man-years of work.

The four reports are variable in quality and quantity. Understandably they vary also in the emphasis placed on the contributions of particular environmental disciplines to the past. The report from York discusses urban evidence almost exclusively. It highlights the problems of the vegetation history of York before the Romans arrived, the variations in intensity of Roman occupation both spatially and temporally, the evidence for lower river levels in the Ouse and the virtual absence of evidence for the Anglian period. Climatic change in the post-Roman period with an accompanying change in floral habitats caused by human and animal agency is noted. Only from urban Exeter is there comparable detailed ecological work.

The remaining three reports are predominantly rural and one can only offer a selection of themes for comment. In East Anglia there has been an emphasis on the identification of palaeosoils and in assessing the period of marshland formation. The importance of fen-edge settlements for our understanding of specialized pastoral exploitation is stressed though the Bronze Age evidence is conflicting. In the four northern counties the emphasis has been on obtaining radio-carbon dated pollen diagrams so that the vegetational changes can be plotted both locally and regionally. In south-western England Martin Bell reviews a considerable range and body of work. From the Neolithic period the Somerset Levels have yielded important botanical evidence. From the Bronze Age on Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor the process of land clearance and exploitation can be traced. In coastal Somerset the evidence for Roman colonization of the alluvium has been established while in the Isles of Scilly the marine transgression gathers momentum from the 7th century A.D. onwards to submerge the previously single island.

This review statement serves to show the very detailed work being conducted in four localities and the virtual absence of provision for environmental approaches to man's past in the remainder of England. The whole question of a national policy for the preservation of relict landscapes such as Dartmoor can only be imperfectly argued. Until there is adequate provision for environmental studies in England, vegetational history and the exploitation of animal and plant resources by man will be unevenly understood. This review report has served to identify the gaps in coverage and knowledge. It remains to be seen if any action follows.

LAWRENCE BUTLER

A FENTON, *The Shape of the Past*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1985. viii + 191 pp. £12.

Research and writing within the field of folk life studies can sometimes appear to be so highly specialized in its

concern with, for example, the minutiae of implement design or peasant customs that it may seem to have little relevance to the broader social and economic issues of past cultures. More than with most other branches of historical study the objectives, philosophy and approaches inherent in folk life studies, and the nature of the subject's links with cognate disciplines, are rarely made explicit in general discussions. The reader is usually left to pick up impressions from ideas implicit in detailed papers and monographs. This isolation of work on material culture from other subjects is particularly evident in Britain where teaching, research and writing tends to be the concern of museum specialists rather than of people within institutions of higher education. It is then especially refreshing when someone with the breadth of experience of Sandy Fenton steps back from the detail of his research to provide an overview of a field in which he has made such a notable contribution.

Having said this, the book is neither new nor tailor-made for its purpose. Its chapters have all appeared elsewhere as articles and essays. Most of them were, however, published in European and American folk life periodicals which are not readily available to the British reader. While some of the material may well be familiar to those in the museum world much of it will probably be fresh to historians. Despite their varied origins the eleven chapters have, with some revision, been organized into a framework which is reasonably convincing and coherent.

The book is divided into three sections beginning with a broad perspective and progressively narrowing its focus to specific studies which illustrate the general themes. From the historian's viewpoint the first section is likely to be of greatest interest. In it the author explores some of the links between the study of past material culture and other branches of history, examining approaches within the realms of folk life in the process. His reminder of how modest our progress has been compared with achievements in some other European countries is a salutary one.

The second section takes the theme of 'region, community and home' illustrating the role of folk life research at a middle scale through explorations of the personality of North East Scotland, continuity and change in the crofting townships of Lewis, the long house in Northern Scotland, and the use of animal manure for fuel in north west Europe. The third section consists of two chapters on the sickle, scythe and flail in the more general context of innovation diffusion.

Although the focus of the book is principally on Scotland the author interprets his material by stressing frequent parallels and contrasts with other areas of Europe. The earlier chapters in particular should be of interest beyond their Scottish context in demonstrating something of the variety of approaches within folk life studies. This is one of John Donald's first ventures

into paperback and they have produced an attractive and well-illustrated book. The publishers have a second volume by the same author in preparation.

IAN D WHYTE

S A KNOX, *The Making of the Shetland Landscape*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1985. x + 255 pp. £18.

Despite the physical peripherality of Shetland, its recent history is surprisingly well-documented. Just how well documented is demonstrated by this study of its nineteenth-century landscape by a geographer, Susan Knox. The question of whether the changes conventionally packaged as the Scottish Improving Movement should be seen as long drawn out process or something whose compactness in time made it a more revolutionary process has been much debated of late. Knox takes the latter view, though the time which it took for the pressures of working for change to diffuse northwards made it a nineteenth- rather than eighteenth-century event.

Although it seeks to be broad in scope, the book's approach to landscape change is somewhat skewed. The opening chapters take a prolonged, in-depth view of how skattald — common land — was divided into severalty. These are meaty, well-researched chapters that draw extensively on material which the author has culled from Sheriff Court papers and the Court of Session and which she has conveniently summarized in lengthy appendices to the book. Her discussion ranges over all aspects from the different types of division to a biographical analysis of the land surveyors involved. Having spent six chapters on this theme, the author then steers her text towards the wider problems of farming change, transport improvement and so on. One is given the strong impression that the study originally began as a survey of skattald *per se* and was then broadened through the consequences of skattald division into a wider study. For some, this may seem a crab-like approach to the basic issues of landscape change, especially as her treatment of how change affected runrig or the arable sector of townships is less searching. To be fair, skattald did occupy the major part of Shetland landscape. Furthermore, Knox makes it abundantly clear that a central theme of nineteenth-century farming change was the switch from subsistence to stock farming. This was a complicated switch involving a shift from a domestic system of production in which fishing and farming were combined to a more commercialized economy in which fisherman and farmer, merchant and landowner, were more sharply distinguished and in which livestock production was more important. In these circumstances, the improvement and control of stock permitted by the clarification of property rights in the skattald was clearly crucial. At the same time, the conflict of interest between tenant and landowner which the division of skattald generated, a conflict

which Knox documents with some skill, serves as an introduction for other areas of conflict, such as that resulting from the forcible clearance of townships for sheep.

My overall impression of Knox's book is that its strength lies in the way it handles individual themes rather than in what it says about the broader themes of landscape change. On issues like skattald and the clearance of townships, her text offers significant insights. At the same time, the resourceful way in which she has exploited primary data sets like the Court of Session papers and her willingness to systematize her analysis of individual themes adds to the book's worth. However, her overall argument does have gaps or weaknesses in its coverage. One does not, for instance, find any comment on house types, whilst a theme like the abolition of runrig is dealt with almost *en passant* when compared with the division of skattald. More disappointing is the book's failure to develop a stronger overall thesis of change. The way the text is broken down into very short chapters emphasizes this lack of real synthesis and the author's unwillingness to build her argument upwards.

R A DODGSHON

KEITH A DAVIES, *Landowners in Colonial Peru*, Latin American Monographs, No. 61, University of Texas Press, 1985. x + 237 pp, 2 maps; £22.50.

The majority of recent studies of Spanish colonial landed society have dealt with regions which were linked to important colonial or international markets for agricultural surpluses. These studies have focused on the *hacienda*, the large landed estate, which is now seen as the characteristic institution in areas which enjoyed access to markets. In contrast, Davies has chosen for his study the province of Arequipa in the south-western corner of Peru, an area with limited access to extra-local markets, and where consequently the classical *hacienda* did not develop. Arequipa was colonized in the 1540s. In the early years the Spanish economy was based on the ubiquitous *encomienda* system, that is the distribution of groups of Indians to *encomenderos*, grantees who were entitled to draw labour and tribute from their dependants. In the 1560s the *encomendero* class began to develop commercial wine estates in the warm coastal lowlands, where land was made available by the rapid Indian population decline. Viticulture was financed from accumulated *encomienda* tributes, with the major markets being found both locally and in Lima and Potosi. The prosperity of the wine economy was ended by natural disasters in the early seventeenth century, and by the rise of competing production in Peru and Argentina, which forced the Arequipan producers back on local markets. This stagnation of the wine economy diverted Spanish attention to the development of livestock and arable farming in the temperate valleys of

the highlands. Land was at first difficult to acquire, but the situation was gradually eased by the slow decline in the highland Indian population, and by the assistance of the Crown, which promoted the transfer of 'surplus' Indian lands to Spanish purchasers. The main strength of this study lies in the rounded portrait it provides of the Arequipan upper-class and its changing economic and social fortunes over a span of several generations. Despite the vicissitudes of the agricultural economy the major families established in the 1550s survived, and indeed continued to dominate land-ownership until well into the eighteenth century. But while the élite persisted it had to pay a price for the region's economic backwardness, namely a relative decline in its social status. By the mid-seventeenth century the leading families were failing to attract marriage partners from outside the region, and hence had to settle for an increasing degree of political and social isolation. The analysis of Arequipa's economic development *per se* is less successful. The study lacks a concentrated account of Indian population development and of Indian landholding. As regards labour, we learn little about the use of slaves on the coastal wine estates, and are only provided with an outline account of the stages by which Indian labour was absorbed into Spanish enterprises in the highland zone. But whilst the broadness of approach has inevitably led to an uneven coverage, it should be said that this is a fine book, and one that justifies the author's view that more attention needs to be given to those regions which lay outside the mainstream of Spanish colonial development. It will also provide specialists with a number of points of comparison with other Spanish colonial economies. In particular interest will be aroused by Davies's account of the aggressive role played by the Crown in securing land transfers in the mid-seventeenth century, and by his demonstration of the way in which the stability of the local élite was linked not to economic growth but to narrow commercial horizons and economic stagnation.

NORRIS NASH

G C BAUGH (ed), *Victoria History of Shropshire*, Vol XI, Telford. OUP for Institute of Historical Research, 1985, xix + 377 pp. Illus. Maps. £50.

This is the topographical volume of the portion of the county centred on the old market town of Wellington, and covers ten parishes. By the nineteenth century it had been joined by two other urban centres, Oakengates and Dawley. In the 1950s the last of these was developed as an overspill town to accommodate people from Birmingham. Then in 1968 at the decision of the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Anthony Greenwood, all three were subsumed under the new town of Telford, named after Thomas Telford the famous engineer who was also the first county surveyor. Readers who consult the abundant clearly

defined maps (34) and the generous amount of photographic illustrations (57) will realize that here we have agriculture carried out in the industrial context. Indeed, against the backdrop of the Darbys of Coalbrookdale (which, along with Coalport and Ironbridge come under the parish of Madeley), John Wilkinson at Wombbridge (later named Oakengates), and also at Hadley and Horton, and the Leveson Gowers' Lilleshall Company, it is apparent that farming was the minor focus of new economic activity by the middle of the eighteenth century. Industrial development was rapid and by 1840 there were no less than seven mining concerns, fourteen furnaces, five forges and two foundries in the area. However, the early growth of modern industry was followed by decline leaving a landscape ravaged by quarry workings, slag and spoil heaps, and littered with decayed and derelict factories.

But although this is a history of that part of Shropshire renowned for its industry, it is nevertheless possible to follow the interaction of the two economic activities. As early as the fourteenth century the only extensive portion of open-field arable was at Wrockwardine, to the west of Wellington, a parish that was mainly agricultural even in the twentieth century. In the rest of the district there were only small patches of open field mostly surrounded by waste, woodland and park. The period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the destruction of the remaining open fields, a process most noticeable in the seventeenth. Certainly the importance of pastoral farming was an aid to industrial settlement. In Dawley, as the numbers of miners and ironworkers grew, and where there were only three small portions of open field by the early seventeenth century, numerous cottages were built along the roadside and on pieces of waste. At Wrockwardine Wood, from the growth of the mining industry in the seventeenth century to the 1970s, most of the inhabitants worked in the local coal, iron and steel works, though here yeoman colliers and labourers engaged part-time in mixed farming in the early eighteenth century. And at Madeley, a collier who died in 1711, owning no cattle, but £10 worth of butter and cheese, probably traded in dairy products. But the spectacular damage to the agricultural infrastructure was in the nineteenth century when the much larger scale of industrial undertakings destroyed some farms and made serious inroads into others. This was a process most noticeable in the southern part of the area overlaying the coal and iron measures.

In the parishes to the north of Wellington the picture was rather different. Over much of Lilleshall, Preston Upon the Weald Moors, Eyton Upon the Weald Moors, and Wrockwardine, agriculture had a more enduring presence. In addition, by the eighteenth century the Leveson Gowers (later Dukes of Sutherland) were the major proprietors. The appointment of James Loch as their chief agent from 1812 to

1855, was followed by an energetic programme of estate improvements aimed at raising productivity of the holdings, incomes of the tenants, and rent of the landlord. Here we can see some of the features most readily identified with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agriculture. At Eyton Upon the Weald Moors, a pattern of small farms was established by 1659 but in the nineteenth century they were concentrated into large holdings, with most of the inhabitants working in occupations associated with an agricultural community. The pressure towards larger farms was apparent in most parishes, including some of the more industrial ones, and reflected the county wide pattern of large estates.

Although the volume encompasses what is overall a reasonably coherent economic entity, it has to be stressed that the parish by parish format of the topographical volumes does mean that in those which contain important agricultural and industrial activities, like Lilleshall, the reader has to perform some disaggregation. However, this volume certainly provides a wealth of factual information, both for the local historian and also for the general historian searching for material to illustrate a broader canvas. Additionally, all the usual information on social activities, religion, local government, charities, education, place names, etc is included. There is also a general account of the Bradford Hundred, although only its southern parishes are treated in detail here. The high standard of production, the extensive documentation, the very valuable series of maps and well chosen photographs enhance this handsome and substantial reference work.

RICHARD PERREN

LINDSEY CHARLES and LORNA DUFFIN (eds), *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England*, Croom Helm, 1985. 212 pp. £7.95.

This book is the eighth in the Oxford Women's Studies series, and consists of an introduction and five papers about women's paid work from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The subject is important, for women made up a significant, if hidden, proportion of the workforce in urban trades as well as in farming. It also requires considerable subtlety in its treatment, both because the evidence about women is limited and because some of the various conceptual frameworks in which studies of women's work are undertaken are not at all satisfactory.

The collection contains a great deal of interesting and new evidence in the best tradition of recent research in women's history. Three papers deal with women and work in London, Shrewsbury and Salisbury. Kay Lacy shows that various bodies of law imposed legal restraints on women in trades but she also suggests that they may have enjoyed more freedom in practice than they were ascribed in law.

Diana Hutton uses Shrewsbury court records to show that there were clear sexual divisions of labour there and that women were rarely found in the heavier crafts and in the profitable branches of the textile trades; their work was concentrated in retailing, brewing and provisioning. Sue Wright concentrates on Salisbury and argues that women were not as significant in the regulated guild hierarchy (about which there is some evidence) as in the less well documented casual and seasonal employments, including domestic services. She is also able to show that the work that women did was influenced by their stage in the life-cycle, and that the casual, often menial, work done by women was informally organized and thus often hidden from the perception of historians.

The two other contributions approach women's work in a different way, perhaps because they are by men. Chris Middleton presents an overview of the value of women's work from a male-orientated Marxist perspective. He questions assumptions about the nature and value of women's work and the development of capitalism, sometimes more usefully (whether domestic production was really convenient for women) than others (the account of capitalist agriculture). Michael Roberts presents a sophisticated exploration of ideas about the ways that work was seen in early modern England. There was no one image of work but several, with work seen as a vocation, an art, employment, occupation and pastoral escape from care. Roberts, in the most broad ranging contribution to this volume, places women's work, including household tasks, within each of these frameworks by using a wide variety of literary sources.

These, and the introduction, can all be taken as further pieces in a jigsaw puzzle about women's life and labour. These give the impression that there was more continuity in the kinds of work done by women, and the values placed on it, than some writers have suggested. It also left me wondering about the relationships, barely touched on here, between housework and women's roles in the workforce.

LORNA WEATHERILL

K D M SNELL, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900*, CUP, 1985. x + 464 pp, £30.

The position of the labourer in English society has seldom been objectively tested. In the nineteenth century the tendency was to romanticize his position by stressing the concept of lost rights, while recent historical treatment has concentrated largely on real wage data in an urban context. Neither approach is particularly satisfactory, and in this important book K D M Snell has attempted to broaden debate on the quality of life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the rural labourer in what can be termed the southern half of England and Wales. It is the first

part of what is planned as a two volume work, and such is the quality of the book that we can look forward eagerly to its companion volume which will consider northern England. Snell's book comes in a series emanating from the Cambridge Group, and not surprisingly it reflects the Group's interest in using a vast array of sometimes intractable material for an in-depth study of the community. In this case Snell has moved away from the pamphlet literature and the blue books used by early social historians such as Hasbach and the Hammonds, to analyse the rural settlement examinations compiled as a result of the 1662 Settlement Act. Snell's careful use of this much under-rated source enables him to abandon the real wage emphasis of the standard of living debate, with its crude emphasis on wages, food and shelter, in order to look for a more realistic range of priorities. By adding in literary evidence he is also able to test attitudinal changes. Considering the vast array of material he has consulted — the bibliography runs to thirty-six pages and mentions nearly thirty separate repositories — it is hardly surprising that Snell draws some important conclusions about many aspects of his subject.

The central argument of the book is that changes in the countryside during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were almost without exception detrimental to the labour force. As the eastern part of the country increasingly specialized in grain production during the eighteenth century the opportunities for women declined, partly due to the introduction of new technology which hastened the division between the sexes after 1750. Female wages fell as women came to be predominantly concerned with the less significant dairying and calving season, spring weeding and summer haymaking. What had been a family economy down to the mid-eighteenth century in which male and female roles were shared, now became increasingly a male dominated system, but with significant implications for the pattern of seasonal unemployment. Snell finds that the situation was particularly grim in the years 1815-34, and he suggests that nineteenth-century domestic service in the south-east may have represented a disguised form of under-employment. It also produced a division of the female role into economic and domestic functions, which preceded by up to half a century the attitudes towards women which characterized Victorian England.

In support of this hypothesis Snell examines service, the poor law, the effects of enclosure, and the position of apprenticeship. He builds on Ann Kussmaul's pioneer work on farm service in an attempt to present a precise chronology of its decline, and to assess its effect on social relationships. The survival of farm service depended on the ability of individuals to achieve a settlement, but this became increasingly difficult in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Farmers began to hire for short-term periods of less than one year to prevent a servant from obtaining a

settlement. Furthermore, the applicability of the system to the unmarried also began to decline, and by 1820 it had more or less broken down. The result was a decline in yearly hirings, a consequent reduction of settlements, and the growth of closed villages. Since the decline of service was also related to the disappearance of small farms, it was resented because of the way in which unmarried labourers were thrown on to the parish in the winter months when previously they had been kept by their employers. In turn this contributed to the deterioration of social relationships in the countryside. Such changes were likely to have been reflected in the poor rate, and Snell argues that down to 1780 the Old Poor Law was relatively generous, but that thereafter the system was tightened up in line with falling real wages, growing structural unemployment, and changing attitudes to settlement and to female labour. The desire to encourage self-help among the poor, while at the same time maintaining their dependence on society, produced the 1834 New Poor Law. Coming as it did in the midst of these other circumstances it is hardly surprising that the new legislation had severe repercussions for rural poverty and hardship.

These findings suggest that J D Chambers's optimistic view of the impact of enclosure in the countryside needs to be re-examined, and in one of the most impressive chapters of the book Snell attempts to do just this (chapter four). He takes issue with the post-Chambers consensus, and in particular with the castles built on the insubstantial sands of the Land Tax Assessments. Far from finding a fuller and more regular demand for labour in the post-enclosure period, Snell is struck by the more acute distribution of unemployment, which had a particularly severe impact on women. Overall, the rural labour force had a more precarious existence after enclosure than it had enjoyed previously, and much of the reason for this was the loss of rights in the commons — an issue made much of by the Hammonds, and reiterated with force by Snell. Previously these rights enabled labouring men to eke out a living, but their loss at enclosure, coupled with an increase of labour on the market, had a knock-on effect in terms of increasing poor relief. Snell also finds evidence to support NFR Crafts' contention — contrary to Chambers — of limited outmigration after enclosure, and for a link with the Swing riots. The conclusion is that whatever the productivity and efficiency gains, enclosure had a detrimental impact on the lifestyle of the rural labourer. Although Snell may underestimate the problems of generalizing about enclosure, and the limited impact of the Parliamentary movement, he nonetheless turns the comfortable complacency of the post-Chambers era on its head, to argue that the poor had good reason for their fear of enclosure.

Snell also fits into his picture the significance of the decline of apprenticeship. He finds strong evidence for

a decline in the system during the eighteenth century, well before the apprenticeship clauses of the Statute of Artificers were repealed in 1814, a move of particular significance for women. During the eighteenth century many women were bound apprentice, but the relevant point is that they were often bound to trades which were later to become male preserves, and this naturally reinforces Snell's argument regarding the sexual division of labour in nineteenth-century England. The decline in apprenticeships, and the fall away in numbers of women using their trade skills in practice was a discontinuity from the past, and this in turn suggests a change in the notion of the husband as the supporter of his family. Whilst Snell admits that his source material may underplay the female role, he detects an alteration in the role of marriage from an economic partnership towards the purely social alliances of the present day. Not surprisingly this had a considerable impact on the family, and Snell looks briefly at questions such as the idea of the family, the ages at which children left home, the notion of adulthood, and at generational and occupational settlement patterns.

This book will undoubtedly cause historians to reconsider their views of the agricultural labourer during the industrialization period. To an extent it restores respect for what seemed to be some of the wilder ideas of the Hammonds and their ilk, at the expense of the revisionism of Chambers. Moreover, Snell's more sombre picture fits with what is known of later nineteenth-century rural poverty. Two questions, however, must be asked about the book. The first concerns its coverage. A glance at the county entries in the index shows the unevenness of Snell's data, with the south-west and the Welsh counties particularly neglected. Not enough is made of the survival of small farms and owner-occupiers in these areas, which were, of course, relatively unaffected by Parliamentary enclosure. The second question concerns the reliability of the settlement data which Snell handles in a highly innovative way. He discusses the material briefly (pp 17–19), and considers the possible discontinuity caused by the change in practice in 1795 whereby only those who became chargeable on the parish were subject to removal, and not — as previously — anyone thought likely to become so. Snell's view is that the change does not affect the quality of his source material, but this reviewer would have liked to have seen a fuller discussion of the issue together with fuller assessment of the likely administrative problems which must have arisen in taking examinations. Without such discussion doubts must remain as to how well the overall argument is supported by the source. These caveats apart, Snell has produced an important work of scholarship which will certainly have a profound and lasting impact on future approaches to the subject.

J V BECKETT

THOMAS C HUBKA, *Big house, little house, back house, barn*, University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA, 1984. 225 pp with 134 figures. £35.

The unusual title of this book, based on a children's rhyme known on both sides of the Atlantic, introduces a thorough study of a farmstead type, well expressed, beautifully illustrated and making a handsome if rather expensive book.

The New England connected barn is an arrangement of farmhouse and farm buildings common in southern Maine and some adjacent states but virtually unknown in the rest of North America. The arrangement starts with a farmhouse set at right angles to the road and continues with minor domestic and agricultural buildings set roughly in line along the depth of the plot to culminate in a combination barn housing crops, animals, and, quite often, their manure. The fact that the buildings may be interconnected, not simply contiguous, has led to the myth that the arrangement was a clever device to help the New England farmer cope with his severe winters. In describing and accounting for the design of the various elements, Thomas Hubka explodes this and other myths but succeeds in making the real story just as romantic as the mythical one.

Farmers in New England found their small farms of stony soil increasingly vulnerable to competition as settlement moved further into the virgin lands of continental North America. Their traditional pattern of mixed farming helped to balance failure in one type of farming with limited success in another. The connected barn was an economical arrangement which minimized building costs and helped minimize labour. It was also a defiant arrangement whereby the architectural decoration appropriate to the farmhouse was extended to the farm buildings. It was an arrangement achieved to some extent through new construction but mainly through moving complete timber-framed buildings with the aid of teams of oxen and on timber skids from one part of the farmstead to another.

The author describes the arrangement with its many minor variations with the aid of extensive fieldwork as well as with evidence from documents and anecdotal evidence from a wide range of sources. To the techniques of the historian, however, he is able to add the techniques of the architect for he adds his own analytical skills to illustrate the buildings and their design with the aid of the bubble diagrams and flow charts of current architectural practice. Furthermore he is able as an architect, rather than a technician, to breathe life and character into his drawings so that they convey not only the facts of the structures they illustrate but also the spirit which transcends those facts. He is also fortunate in that the arrangement of buildings is part of a living culture so that his case

studies have an immediacy rarely available in things historical.

The arrangement of connected farm buildings has its analogies in this country. There are precedents of a sort in the longhouses of the medieval period and the laithe houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Closer analogies may be found in the long ranges of house and buildings to be seen in the Yorkshire Dales and in some other parts of highland England and Wales. Neither the yeoman farms of the south-east of England nor the large commercial farms of the eastern counties present anything like the connected arrangement: farmhouses stand strictly apart from the farm buildings. There may not prove to be any close connection between the arrangements found on both sides of the ocean but one would certainly welcome a study which could build upon that presented here in its completeness, its clarity and its quality of text and illustration.

R W BRUNSKILL

J L VAN ZANDEN, *De economische ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse landbouw in de negentiende eeuw, 1800-1914*, A A G Bijdragen, 25, Wageningen 1985. ix + 466 pp. 130 tables, 5 graphs, 4 maps, 3 appendices. Dfl 50.

This substantial volume readily meets the high standards of critical scholarship which readers of the *A A G Bijdragen* have come to expect, in terms of both the assembly of basic data and historical and theoretical analysis. In fact the book contains two major sections which deal with each of these concerns: the measurement of the development of production, income and labour productivity in Dutch agriculture, and 'analysis and interpretation'.

The underlying theoretical motif of the second main section is a contrast between the phenomenon of so-called 'modern economic growth' initiated by specialization and technical change, associated with Kuznets, and 'traditional economic growth' induced by population growth, associated with Boserup. The author concludes that traditional economic growth occurred up to c1850, which was gradually overtaken by modern economic growth. This is a useful corrective to those without a specialized knowledge of the history of Dutch agriculture who, like this reviewer, may have tended to rely heavily on Jan de Vries' more accessible study of the 'agricultural sector' in an earlier period, the Golden Age, with its emphasis on the modernity of the Republic's agriculture and its relatively autonomous role within the economy as a whole. Dr van Zanden shows that in the Eastern provinces, a peasant economy had persisted until the early nineteenth century, which was gradually transformed into a modern, market-oriented agriculture.

The great value of this work lies in its attempt to relate changes in social and economic structure to productivity changes and the degree of specialization, both of which were highest in the coastal provinces where agricultural development proceeded against the background of a highly commercialized maritime economy and the prevalence of wage labour in both sectors. The relatively unspecialized farming of the Eastern Netherlands gave rise to low productivity, but because of the low cost of living, low wages and incomes still produced a real standard of living which was comparable to that found in the coastal provinces. Although the Eastern provinces witnessed 'spectacular' development between 1800 and 1860, due mainly to intensive growing of fodder crops and expansion of dairy farming, national economic stagnation involving *inter alia* a declining per capita consumption of farm products tended to depress farm incomes elsewhere in the Netherlands. Not until the post-1850 decades did agriculture as a whole benefit from an upsurge of modern economic growth of the kind conceptualized by Kuznets.

DAVID ORMROD

DONALD HARMAN AKENSON, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America*. P D Mcany, Port Credit, Ontario, 1985. x + 243 pp. \$45 (Canadian), £25.

There seems to be no end to Professor Akenson's industry. *Being Had* (1985) builds on insights gained from *The Irish in Ontario* (1984) and *A Protestant in Purgatory*, a biography of Richard Whately, logician and onetime Archbishop of Dublin. The title of this latest, a work of related essays, refers to Whately's laughable experience with the study of head-shapes, or phrenology. For several years the earnest and intellectual divine was completely taken in by a flattering practitioner of this bogus science. For Akenson, the story has a moral. It is a reminder of the gullibility of bright people, especially academics, and the rest of the book is a zesty attack on some of those (mostly Canadian and American) historians who, in Akenson's eyes at least, have been 'had'. The list of culprits is long, since it includes all those who believe, (a) that Irish immigrants to North America were lured by the (often less economically rewarding) cities, and (b) that they were 'unsuccessful'. Those beliefs amount to no more than the founding assumptions of most American-Irish scholarship. Readers of Akenson's *The Irish in Ontario* will have anticipated his reasoning here. There is also some cogent criticism of those who go by traditional estimates of the numbers of Irish in the United States in 1790, and of what Akenson takes to be the hidden 'racism' of the guru of Canadian social historians, H Clare Pentland. If sometimes Akenson seems to get carried away by generalizations based on

an interpretation of the Irish experience in his own small corner of Canada, what he writes is nothing if not entertaining and challenging.

CORMAC Ó GRÁDA

R PRICE, *The Modernization of Rural France: communications networks and agricultural market structures in nineteenth-century France*. Hutchinson, 1983. 503 pp. £27.50.

Although he has produced an interesting and valuable work, it cannot be said that Dr Price has been entirely successful in his aim of analysing the impact of the mid-century transport revolution centred on the railway upon the development of the French rural economy. This is not because he eschews sophisticated theoretical models and 'quantitative' methods, which are arguably inappropriate to a period of transition from a largely subsistence-based to a commercialized agriculture. On the contrary his traditional approach enables him to penetrate much further into the realities — in particular the psychological constraints — of French economic life, which are as likely to be obscured as illuminated by the temptingly copious but notoriously problematic official statistics. Dr Price makes (generally) judicious use of these. But he relies mainly on the significant concrete instance — and rewardingly, given the great reservoir that his extensive research into original sources, both archival and published, has enabled him to accumulate.

The problem is one of balance. Dr Price devotes so much space to setting the scene of the *ancien régime économique* that he is half-way through before he reaches the transport revolution, and three-quarters before he gets to his ostensible subject, its effects upon the agricultural sector. This hardly leaves room for an adequate analysis. The research base becomes more uneven, agriculture itself receiving only superficial treatment. This goes with a certain chronological inconsistency. Dr Price does not seem to be clear about his precise time-span. His main concern is with the three critical decades after 1850. But whereas he traces the development of transport more or less up to 1914, and he examines the effect of falling prices and rising imports upon commercial policy after 1880, his discussion of agriculture virtually breaks off at this point, and he has little to say about how it responded to the Great Depression and the return to protection in the new market environment. The lay-out follows the familiar 'before and after' plan, with matching chapters on communications, market structure and agriculture. Sandwiched in between is a prolonged section on the subsistence crisis of 1846–7, which takes up a quarter of the book. It is this which throws it out of balance.

It is also, together with the preceding discussion of the traditional pattern of markets and marketing, with which it ties in very closely, the most important and

original part of it, the major focus of the author's research. Dr Price shows how the high cost and slowness of road transport on the French land mass created a basically impermeable, compartmentalized market structure, which largely locked agriculture into production for subsistence and local sale. Waterways could exert only a limited liberating influence. The main arteries of longer-distance trade, the river systems of the Rhône-Saône, the Loire and the Seine, with their associated canals, despite considerable investment in the latter during the first half of the century, remained uneven in their efficiency cost and reliability, due to problems of low water and up-stream haulage. As late as the 1840s traffic on the Rhône for example was interrupted for as long as four months a year.

Dr Price's exclusive concern here with trade in cereals, even if they were much the major item, leads him to oversimplify however. He says nothing about the important trade in wool which developed in the departments of the Parisian basin during this period, or the much older but steadily growing tentacular network through which the vast Parisian market was provisioned with meat — whereby for example calves born in upland Auvergne literally worked their way as oxen by slow stages across the plains to the north to be fattened at the age of five or six in the Vendée and Anjou before ending up on Parisian dinner tables. Those agricultural products transported themselves, a method which if not ideal was sufficient to create a widely spread if admittedly mainly shallow commercialization in the traditional agriculture.

Periodic dearths dramatized the deficiencies of the market structure. The pathological symptoms that it displayed under stress during that of 1846–7, the sudden disruption and shifts in normal trade flows, the panic buying, the intimidation of merchants in the market place (particularly 'foreign'), the forcible prevention of grain movements (particularly unaccustomed), the sporadic food riots, reveal much about its mode of operation. In particular they illuminate the popular attitudes that were integral to it, the moral perception of the market in terms of the just price, the priority of local claims, the demonology of the hoarder, which reflected a profound underlying concern about subsistence. Dr Price is at his most interesting in these pages. He shows that the classical principle that 'the difference in price for the same merchandise between two markets cannot exceed transport costs' did not hold under the *ancien régime économique* — even in normal times. Popular psychology was the critical, if not the only, missing variable. The responses that it provoked accentuated the effects of the mis-match between supply and demand, creating disproportionate variations in price between different places, and fluctuations and shortages in the same place.

The crisis of 1846–7 was the last on such a scale. Dr

Price points out that although the disappearance of such crises — the last was in 1867–8 — is a revealing indicator of the modernization of the market attendant upon the transport revolution, it has not been studied by historians. But he does not really fulfil the hopes that he raises here. He fails for example to explain why the dearth of 1853–6, when the price rise was almost as steep and more prolonged, did not cause any comparable hardship in rural communities and among small farmers, and why it did not rub off in the traditional way on manufacturing, particularly textiles. Another such indicator that Dr Price might have made more of is the gradual evening out of the old spatial disparities in the price of cereals. Altogether the chapter on changes in the market structure, although it contains useful material on import penetration, shifts in the pattern of cereal flows, relocation and concentration of markets (and milling) and their gradual replacement by direct purchase, is less satisfactory and more generalized than the earlier analysis. It was a confusing period of continuity and change, made the more so for the reader by the way in which Dr Price oscillates between emphasizing now the one and now the other. An extreme case of this is his statement on one page that 'the zone of provisioning Paris in fruit and vegetables expanded from 50 kms. in 1830 to 250 in 1855', and on another that the Paris *banlieu* largely retained its monopoly 'for some 30 or 40 years after the construction of the first railway networks'.

On the transport revolution itself, the opportunities that it offered to agriculture in terms of cost and speed, and the resultant traffic Dr Price is excellent. His account is very largely based on original sources. He has compiled a series of instructive tables from contemporary published statistics (although usefully incorporating some from recent French studies); and he has filled out the main lines of the picture with a mass of more specific evidence from the archives. The railways of course get pride of place, although Dr Price seems a bit bashful in making the claims for them that he shows they deserve.

To judge from the tables of the carriage of agricultural goods (which however only cover gross tonnage) and from other evidence the response of the merchants involved in the trade to the new form of transport was remarkably quick. The companies were in fact taken by surprise and often fell behind in providing facilities. Already by the early sixties over half the marketed surplus of grain (and flour) appears to have been carried at some point on the railways, while by the second half of the decade the volume of wine and spirits had reached about a third, and of livestock 40 per cent of the 1913 totals, although production at least of the latter had greatly increased. The success of the railways was closely related as Dr Price shows to the concurrent increase in investment in roads, which had already begun in the 1830s and which

if Levy-Leboyer's figures are to be believed amounted during the sixties to 80 per cent of investment in railways (infrastructure and construction). These are some of the more general points to emerge. But there is also much of value on other topics, such as the tariff policies of the companies, government intervention, and transport policy more generally.

The chapters on agriculture are the great disappointment. They seem to be there almost as a matter of form; and admittedly as the sub-title shows it is not Dr Price's main concern. The few pages of the first are so generalized, that the major changes that could and did occur in the pre-railway period are entirely ignored, notably the introduction of artificial meadows on the open-fields of the North associated with the transformation of the sheep flock through crossing out with the Merino — arguably an 'agricultural revolution'. The second, although much longer, is little more than a catalogue of changes in farm size, land use, improvement, equipment etc. (with some dubious maps purporting to show increases in labour productivity). Dr Price makes little attempt to relate these changes to the transport revolution. An obvious tack here is the adaptation of land use to natural potential as farmers were freed from anxiety about subsistence and faced new market opportunities and pressures. But although there are a few paragraphs on the specialization of the Midi in viticulture at the expense of more northerly growers, there is almost nothing on the shift to grass and livestock.

PATRICK CHORLEY

N J G POUNDS, *An Historical Geography of Europe 1800-1914*, CUP, 1985. xx + 598 pp. £45.

Professor Norman Pounds has been one of the most prolific and consistent historical geographers of his generation. The publication of this hefty volume represents another impressive addition to his output, and completes his ambitious project to construct an historical geography of continental Europe from the earliest times to 1914. The previous two volumes, covering the periods 450 BC to AD 1330 and 1500 to 1800 respectively, already occupy prominent positions on undergraduate reading lists and this new publication is destined to do the same. As with all his writings, the scholarship is unimpeachable, the attention to detail meticulous and the primary and secondary sources consulted quite awesome in their number and variety. There is cited material in at least eight languages, and authors referred to range from Bairoch to Balzac.

In this volume, Pounds consciously eschews his earlier organizing framework of cross-sectional time-slices, and concentrates instead on dynamic processes of change. There are ten chapters, the first of which provides an overview of continental Europe from Waterloo to the First World War and deals with

mainly technical innovations and diffusions, with trade and protection, with the political background and with national economic comparisons. Chapter Two describes the resource base of Europe and is in essence a skilfully disguised introduction to the relevant aspects of the physical geography. The next seven chapters introduce the 'vertical themes' Pounds views as crucial to his task. The first of these is concerned with population and here the more salient factors influencing mortality and fertility are discussed. The treatment of the overall European population increase is rather basic, and the greatest weight is given to migration, which is clearly seen as the most quintessentially geographical demographic element. This section includes an interesting discussion of the Jewish diaspora followed by an excellent comparative analysis of ethnic and linguistic variations in Europe which is one of the strongest pieces in the book. A series of national and regional overviews concludes the chapter.

The next section deals with European urban development and takes us through 'pre-industrial', 'industrial' and 'new' towns. Here the reader is introduced to urban hierarchies and functions, and provided with an impressive range of information on health, housing, transport, food-supply and ethnicity from a wide range of continental towns and cities. It is perhaps disappointing that consideration of theory in this section goes no further than references to old favourites like Christaller and Burgess. The suggestion (p 150) that *Les Misérables* 'can be looked on as a social geography of the poorer quarters of Paris during the July monarchy', left me wondering how Victor Hugo would have reacted to such an interpretation of his text.

Agriculture provides the next theme and once more copious details pour forth on grain supply, on the physical conditions under which agriculture was practised and on the various agricultural systems in existence. This is followed by a chapter devoted to regional examples of these differing agrarian economies, and the reader is taken on a breathless trip from central Poland to Sweden via Mecklenberg, the plains of Lombardy and Flanders, Denmark, central Spain and the Balkans. There then follows a broader description of agricultural regions in France, focusing on the Beauce, Normandy, Limousin and Lower Alsace. In an attempt to convey to the reader what life must have been like in some of these places, Pounds draws heavily on literary evidence, notably Reymont's anti-semitic novel of peasant avarice in Poland, *Chopli*, and Zola's *La Terre*. These sections are the least convincing in the book as the relatively casual and unquestioning use of the novel as an historical source raises some rather intractable methodological questions, which Pounds seems to ignore.

In analogous fashion, the next two chapters are concerned with manufacturing industries in general

and with regional examples of industrialization in particular. The first of these successfully elaborates the origins of the factory system and outlines the various phases of workshop and proto-industry. This is followed by a systematic description of textiles, then iron and steel and finally the coming of the 'second Industrial Revolution', by which Pounds means the chemical, 'metal-using' and consumer-based industries of clothing and footwear. Once again Pounds cannot resist the temptation to make forays into literary criticism, and aspects of Hauptman's *Die Weber* are summarized as if they were the considered conclusions of a learned article on linen-weavers in Saxony rather than elements of a dramatic narrative (p 307). The chapter containing the regional examples of industrial development begins with a worthwhile discussion of the nature of industrial regions, and then concentrates on the coalfield areas between NE France and the Ruhr, before describing, with characteristic thoroughness: Luxembourg, Lorraine and Saar; Saxony and the Ore Mountains; Upper Silesia and Moravia; Lodz; Lyons-St Etienne; Catalonia and finally N Italy. There are passages of considerable power in these sections which demonstrate that good regional geography is capable of considerable insight and cogency. The penultimate chapter relates to transport and trade and is a useful summary of the impact of roads, waterways, railways, and international shipping on the process of economic change in Europe. The book concludes with a rather sketchy picture of the economic geography of Europe on the eve of the Great War, which is made rather more interesting by some excellent dot-distribution maps.

Any historical geography of Europe in the nineteenth century is likely to tell us as much about the foibles and predilections of the author as about the historical reality. This is perhaps as it should be, and as a whole this volume has, despite its intimidating length, a solidity and familiarity which makes the reader feel completely at home even when discussing *chiflik* estates in early nineteenth-century Macedonia. Given the magnitude of the task Pounds has set himself, one cannot fail but be suitably impressed by the outcome. However, one may be forgiven in thinking that the book is, in the end, a straightforward, uncontroversial and rather traditional economic history of nineteenth-century Europe, rendered exceptional by the wealth of detailed information it contains and the excellence of the presentation. Pounds justifies himself at the outset (p xix) by claiming that whilst 'The sources are historical; their presentation [is] geographical'. If by this he means that maps occupy pride of place, then no-one can argue. The book contains a total of 164 illustrations, a sizeable percentage of which are excellent maps, some having great historical significance in their own right. (It is particularly pleasant to see reproductions of Grumprecht's 1856 map of Spanish and Portuguese

towns, Baird Smith's 1855 map of the rivers and canals of Lombardy and Sir Arthur Evans's 1875 drawing of a *zadruga* in Bosnia.) The question remains however, as to whether presentation alone is sufficient warrant to validate the book as an historical geography somehow distinctive from an economic history of the same period and place.

Never one to shirk the issue, Pounds provides the reader with a pithy definition of historical geography on the first page (p xix). It is, he says, 'concerned with the changing spatial pattern of human activity'. Though some may quibble with this, it remains as good a definition of the subject as any. Unfortunately, the implications of this do not square happily with the present volume, for it is clear that Pounds is not concerned with 'human activity' in all its richness, diversity and complexity, but is instead almost exclusively preoccupied with economic conditions. There is of course no reason why Pounds should not place the greatest emphasis on the economic, especially as the impact it had on the regional geography of Europe was so all-pervading. However, a concern with 'human activity' should surely imply that an historical geography of Europe in the nineteenth century must take at least some cognizance of the politics of the period, of national and international ideologies, of tensions between social classes, of changes in popular and elite tastes, values, attitudes and emotions. Not only did such things impact on the regional geography of Europe with a resonance and power that would be difficult to over-emphasize, but they also had their own inherent geographies which need attention. By way of example, whilst it is undeniable that a consideration of industrial economic change on the Ruhr coalfield should occupy a prominent position in any historical geography of Europe, it is equally valid to expect such a project to consider, *inter alia*, the proletarianization of the labour force in the same region, or indeed any of the other social, political and cultural changes which accompanied that particular economic revolution.

The Europe that emerged into the twentieth century was as much a product of these cultural, political and social struggles as it was the result of structural economic changes. At no point does Pounds deal with the former issues head-on. In his general introductory chapter there are sections on imperialism and politics but these are scarcely sufficient and present a rather lop-sided treatment of events. Indeed, the section on 'Communications and the spread of ideas' deals exclusively with technical and scientific advances of practical economic importance, as if these were the only ideas which had any geographical significance. In a sense then, this weighty and wide-ranging book is strangely narrow in its conception of the 'human activity' referred to at the start, and even the changes which are described seem rather drained of human content. The men, women and children that lived

through, and often died as a result of, the agricultural and industrial revolutions which Pounds describes — the people who contributed to these changes or fought against them — are consigned to a rather peripheral position within the categories of the narrative. Only rarely do individuals or groups emerge centre-stage, and for the most part seem to have been squeezed out by the sheer weight of empirical evidence on grain yields, crop rotations, tenurial systems, land use, GNP, population pressure and industrial output.

Yet such a total historical geography has scarcely even begun and to criticize Professor Pounds too strongly in these terms would be presumptuous. Historical geography has a great tradition of detailed and scholarly empirical research in which wide-ranging material is presented with consideration, skill and care. Ever mindful of regional variations, the historical geographer has often been cautious, even suspicious, of grand theory and abstract debate. The present volume is a considerable achievement and stands as a testament to this distinguished tradition. It will be welcomed by the specialist and non-specialist alike as a mine of detailed information, presented in a clear and readable form. Although the French *départements* of the Vendée and the Mayenne both suffer from misspelling (pp 213 and 429 respectively), these are very minor flaws in an otherwise beautifully published volume. Future historical geographies of Europe will probably paint a rather different picture from that crafted by Professor Pounds, but any such book will certainly owe an incalculable debt to his efforts.

MICHAEL J HEFFERNAN

DJ ODDY and DS MILLER (eds), *Diet and Health in Modern Britain*, Croom Helm, 1985. 326 pp, £22.50.

This is the second book to emerge from the Historians and Nutritionists seminar at Queen Elizabeth College, London University. The first, *The Making of the Modern British Diet*, appeared in 1976. The present volume contains fifteen essays, of which twelve are historical surveys.

The editors have eschewed any attempt to impose a thematic framework on the papers, on the grounds that seminar papers of this kind do not necessarily respond well to such treatment. As a result, the chapter titles have a disparate look. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that the volume as a whole is a random collection, since the authors' common interests tend to throw up, explicitly or implicitly, certain themes which are reflected in these chapters.

The most basic theme is whether people get enough food, of the right kind, to avoid starvation. Derek Miller's chapter usefully surveys the question of calorie intake in the world today, showing how very variable is the average intake in different parts of the world; in this context, use of averages may be more

than usually misleading. He also provides a cogent summary of current world food problems, which appear to be those of distribution rather than supply. Arnold Bender's chapter surveys the nutritional utility of those neglected items, fruit and vegetables. These are, it seems, every bit as good for us as we were told in childhood, but nutritionists find it hard to agree on the precise utility of any particular one. Valerie Johnston looks at one of the few well-documented sources on mid-nineteenth century calorie intakes, those of the populations of local prisons. These diets seem to have been very variable. One of the consolations of being sentenced to hard labour was that the diet was better; some prisoners protested at being taken off the tread-wheel for that reason.

Getting enough food to stay alive is one thing; the demand for food is another. As Magnus Pyke, writing in the context of the twentieth-century food processing industries, sagely remarks, the demand for food is a function of nutritional need, aesthetic appeal, and social taboo. Most food technologists spend most of their time enhancing the aesthetic appeal of foods. However, their work is not entirely frivolous, and at least two of their achievements (the pasteurization and dehydration of milk) have been of great nutritional significance.

Consideration of aesthetics and taboo leads to the interesting question of customary determinants of food demand; how much are people prepared to pay for a diet which is not merely nutritionally adequate, but palatable and conventionally acceptable? Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Pamela Mumford's chapter on low-cost diets is her suggestion that, for most of the period c. 1880–1939, the dietary needs of the 'average man' could be met on as little as five old pence (5d) a day. However, customary influence and the desire for greater palatability would have raised this figure considerably; present-day work may suggest that it should be doubled.

The influence of custom may also be discerned in some other chapters. Thus Dorothy Hollingsworth shows that, while class differences in nutritional terms have sharply narrowed in this century, there are still considerable differences in the actual types of food consumed. These differences are partly a matter of income, but also reflect the more conservative nature of demand from lower income groups, as yet hardly affected by middle-class worries about obesity and other food-related illnesses.

To be effective, consumers must be able to back up their demands with cash. Thus economic constraints on nutrition also form one of the themes here, perhaps most clearly in Forrest Capie's survey of the inter-war demand for meat. From this it emerges (*inter alia*) that income-elasticities of demand for most kinds of meat were greater than one, and that price elasticities for imported meats were greater than those for the home product. These are perhaps not surprising con-

clusions, but useful ones in view of the paucity of such studies to date. Economic constraints, and those of wartime rationing, are also explored in Hollingsworth's chapter on consumption since c. 1939.

The role of government also makes an appearance, if indirectly; it underlies much of the research effort detailed in Colin Holmes's chapter on arable farming, and is the essence of John Hurt's chapter on school meals and milk, which succinctly shows the inadequacies of these programmes, until boosted by the Second World War.

One theme which the editors do refer to is the parallel drawn between nineteenth-century Britain and today's 'Third World'. This is the implicit lesson to be drawn from Ian Buchanan's chapter on the connection between condensed milk, insanitary conditions, the housefly, and deaths from infantile diarrhoea in colliery communities before 1914; a Third World theme if ever there was one, and a fascinating if slightly nauseating piece of detective work. In such circumstances, the undoubted attractions of condensed milk for the poorer consumer (Hurt, p 188) backfired badly.

Finally, three chapters are devoted to marketing. Richard Perren examines the meat trade before 1939, and Peter Atkins fruit and vegetables in the century to 1950. Both are useful contributions to an area which is both unjustly neglected and difficult to work. John Mark examines the brewing industry in this country, combining an analysis of the economics of production and distribution. Devotees of real ale and local brew may be comforted, not only by the success of the Campaign for Real Ale, but by the fact that small breweries are protected to some extent from competition by sharply-rising distribution costs as distance from the production centre increases.

In sum, these essays show the continuing benefits to be derived from the interaction of nutritionists and historians. There is clearly much scope for further work, and future publications such as this one will be very welcome.

PETER DEWEY

B A HOLDERNESS, *British Agriculture since 1945*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985. 185 pp. £17.50.

The perils of writing recent agricultural history are probably less than those which attend the writing of the history of recent political events, especially since writers on agriculture have a solid and fairly uncontentious body of statistical and other material at their disposal. It is therefore perhaps surprising that this book is the first to attempt a comprehensive treatment of the post-1945 years. It is certainly a welcome pioneer.

There are eight chapters in the book. The first is a brief setting of the legacy of the Second World War; there follows a discussion of the relations between the

farming industry and government in the period before and after accession to the EEC. The remaining chapters deal with the pattern of farming activity, marketing developments, the economic aspects of farming (in the form of prices, productivity and investment) and manpower. The final chapter is on the 'social bearings of agriculture'.

The comparatively modest length of this book may conceal the fact that it has a large story to tell; nothing less, in fact, than the story of an agricultural revolution (although the author eschews such a description). What better title for a period when, Dr Holderness writes, 'The yield of arable land may have risen by well over 80 per cent since 1940 and of grass land by half or more' (p 103)? He could have added that the growth of gross output since the late 1930s (2.3 per cent per annum) stands favourable comparison with that of industry. This achievement is all the more remarkable when it is considered that the labour force has fallen by about one-half, and the area of agricultural land has contracted by about one-tenth.

The processes by which this revolution has come about are not unfamiliar; first of all in the story comes long-term support from government; a complete reversal of the relationship to which agriculturalists had perforce become accustomed since the repeal of the corn laws. Support came mainly in the form of price support, improvement grants and technical advice. Against this background, farmers and landowners invested heavily in machinery, chemicals and improvements to their fixed capital. To achieve economies of scale whereby these investments could be made to pay their way, there also occurred a substantial farm amalgamation movement, particularly marked since the 1960s. A parallel development was the decline of the workforce. Taken with the sharp drop in the number of farms, the net effect was that 'About two-thirds of agricultural households disappeared in the course of a generation' (p 154). Thus the technical changes had large social consequences; perhaps it would be not fanciful to compare them in magnitude with those that attended the enclosure movement at the end of the eighteenth century.

Perhaps the most valuable service which Dr Holderness performs is to bring together from a wide variety of sources (to judge from the bibliography; there are unfortunately no footnotes) the essential details which enable the bare bones of the above story to be fleshed out. The most useful chapters in this respect are those on the pattern of farming and on prices, productivity and investment. The former is a comprehensive treatment of the essential changes which have occurred in crops and livestock. It will surprise few to be told that traditional rotations are now conspicuous by their absence in the grain-growing heartlands of southern and eastern England, but we are also told what has taken their place (chiefly feed barley, it seems). The complex and changing

structures of livestock enterprise are dealt with cogently. The chapter on the economics of farming is particularly useful for a discussion of the structure of markets and elasticity of demand. Given the tendency of affluent communities such as the British (even during the current period of high unemployment) to spend proportionately less of their income on food as time goes on, it is perhaps surprising that farmers and the food industries have been as successful as they have been in persuading the public to shift to new forms of consumption, but this has undoubtedly happened; the outstanding success story here is the broiler chicken, but there have also been significant advances in dairy products and baking.

These chapters will be found by many to be especially pertinent since they supply most of the answers to the questions; what has been going on in agriculture since the war, and how has it arrived at its present position? The remaining chapters fill out much of the institutional and human aspects of the industry. Perhaps the weakest chapter is the last one, which is at rather too high a level of generalization to add much to what is fairly common knowledge about the social geography of agriculture.

Some minor criticisms may be made; there seems to be some statistical confusion attaching to the terms 'tillage' and 'arable' on p 43, and the discussion of the complex subject of energy input-output relationships on pp 116-17 is rather over-compressed. While there is a statistical appendix, it would have been still more useful to have included some form of output index which would enable the reader to appreciate the varying importance of different products to the agriculturalist. On the less technical side, one could take issue with the statement on p 132 that Britain has no peasantry. That said, Dr Holderness has written a work which should constitute essential reading for all who are interested in recent British agricultural history.

P E DEWEY

N SWAIN, *Collective Farms Which Work?*, CUP, 1985. x + 235 pp. £25.

In the Soviet Union, growing investments in agriculture have failed to solve the endemic inadequacies of collectivized agriculture. In China, the much-vaunted commune system is fast disintegrating in favour of a market-oriented, mixed co-operative/private system which is generating marked inter-regional and interpersonal inequalities. Hungary, however, seems to offer a case of successful collectivization, achieved without bloodshed, and able to meet the demands placed upon it by urban consumers, and by the need for an export surplus. Nigel Swain's book seeks to explain how this success has been achieved, in particular with regard to the social relations created since collectivization in the Hungarian countryside.

After an introduction which sets agriculture in the wider context of Hungary's economic system and its evolution, the first part of the book examines the basis of collectivization's success: the symbiosis of 'socialist wage labour' and 'family labour' in the agricultural co-operatives. On the one hand, consolidation and mechanization of the cooperatives, backed by ample state financing, has turned them into *de facto* state enterprises, able to pay predetermined wages to co-operative members, who occupy increasingly predetermined and specialized roles in the agricultural division of labour. On the other hand, 'petty commodity production' on household plots, using family labour, has flourished under liberal legislation on plot size, use of co-operative inputs, and marketing of private produce.

Part II then examines the social composition of the cooperatives. The spread of machinery, chemicals, and modern mass production techniques has led to the emergence of a sizeable stratum of élite, skilled workers, who resemble in many respects industrial skilled workers: this group includes drivers, mechanics and livestock workers. The bulk of the workforce, undertaking relatively unskilled tasks mainly in crop production, are women and older workers, who also rely more on their private plots to supplement their lower wages. Meanwhile, management has changed from a politically-based bureaucracy to a technocratic hierarchy, based on advanced technical or administrative skills. Many of the tasks performed by this expanding hierarchy, in agronomy, accountancy, engineering, etc, would in most Western agriculture be undertaken by external service agencies. Co-operative management, like the skilled workers, increasingly resemble their counterparts in industry, notably in the growing importance of academic qualifications, coupled with continued emphasis on political reliability.

The final part of the book then shows how this social structure functions in the operation of the co-operatives. Although there are still direct political controls by the Party over the appointment of top managers, the co-operative's leaders enjoy very great operational autonomy. The symbiotic family economy based on household plots provides them with a safety net in the event of production or marketing failures, and they have also developed a wide range of non-agricultural ancillary activities. However, the central authorities' monopoly of credit allows them considerable control over major investments, and ensures that the co-operatives do not stray too far from the central planners' guidelines. Despite the formally democratic structure of co-operatives, it is clear that ordinary members participate very little in decision-making except in times of crisis; and given the fragmented nature of agricultural work, there is no opportunity for the sort of informal worker pressure that is commonly found in factories in Eastern Europe.

In exercising their control, the main objective of management is to maximize their own, often very substantial, bonuses for expanding output, while maintaining satisfactory incomes and workloads for the membership at large.

The picture this book gives is one of a rather stable agricultural system, which seems to have resolved the perennial conflict between 'socialist' industry and 'petty capitalist' agriculture by effectively industrializing the latter in a *social* as well as technical sense. The result has little to do with socialism as most would understand it, except in the important sense of offering security of income to agricultural workers on a collective basis. In his conclusion, Swain suggests that there is no technological justification for the great divide between management and labour in Hungarian cooperatives: management's monopoly of power serves rather to secure Party control in a still-hostile countryside. It remains to be seen whether further economic and political reforms could lead to a more egalitarian and democratic agricultural system in Hungary.

HUGO RADICE

CHRISTOPHER JOHN BAKER, *An Indian Rural Economy 1880-1955: The Tamilnad Countryside*, OUP, 1984.

xxii + 616 pp. 9 maps, 30 tables, 16 graphs. £24.

The rural economy of a country such as India is of interest not only to scholars studying third world countries but also to those interested in pre-industrial economies and agricultures of the past. In dealing with a major area of India — the Tamilnad region in the extreme south-east of the country — Baker makes an important contribution to the rapidly expanding literature concerning the rural development of the Indian subcontinent. Also, despite its title, it is a book about far more than just the Tamilnad countryside. A large section is given over to the towns and industry and another to the role of the state in the region's economy. The result is a big, sprawling book, the price of which will unfortunately discourage its purchase by all except libraries and the specialist. Despite this caveat, however, there is much of interest and indeed fascination in Baker's book. To a certain extent, the size of the book is justified by the area it covers — the Tamilnad region covered 48,500 square miles and contained a population of 29 million in 1950 (or nearly three-quarters of the population of England at the same time). The topography of the area is diverse, ranging from river valleys cutting east through the countryside to the Indian Ocean to plains and uplands in the west, and accompanying these differences in terrain are notable variations in the local agriculture and economy, from rice paddy cultures in the river valleys to grain and cash-crop regimes in the west.

The seventy-five year span that the book covers can most simply be split into two periods. The first—from

1880 to the mid-1920s — encompassed a period of economic and agricultural expansion and increasing involvement in the world economy. It was an era in which much new land was exploited, particularly on the plains and in the Kongunad (a large upland area surrounded by hills in the west of the region). The second period — from the late-1920s to the mid-1950s — was one largely of economic retrenchment and of extreme difficulty for the rural economy in particular, which only began to experience substantial improvement in the period following the second world war. Much of the trouble in the Tamilnad economy of this time simply stemmed from the downturn in the world economy as a whole. Nonetheless, there is also evidence that the rural sector in particular of the Tamilnad economy had overreached itself by the late 1920s and was entering a long period of stagnation and underinvestment. In fact, crop yield data (as presented by Baker on pp 508-12) show a decided decline for all crops over the period from 1904-5 to 1953-4, which would seem to be a typical response to over-exploitation of land resources, as land fertility was gradually depleted. Again, only in the post-war period, accompanied by strong government intervention, was this trend reversed.

Altogether, Baker's book is strongest in the panoramic view it gives of the Tamilnad economy for the period, which not only includes the rural economy but the urban economy as well, with the role of the state also coming under strong scrutiny. It is much weaker on the minutiae of agricultural life and society. The rigid tripartite division of the area into river valleys, plains, and Kongunad that Baker follows hides a great deal of diversity in individual farming, even within these regions, a diversity which is only lightly acknowledged. There is also little of the individual Indian farmer or anything that might give an indication of the welfare of the people living at the time. For instance, some discussion of mortality and fertility among the rural population would have been useful, if only to tie it in with the evidence for declining crop yields. As it is, we are left with the largely unexplored paradox that, although grain and other crop production was falling off during the period from the beginning of the twentieth century to at least 1945, the rural population in the region was steadily increasing (pp 135-6).

Despite these omissions, however, Baker contributes much to the knowledge of Indian agriculture and economy leading up to the 'Green Revolution' period of the 1950s and afterwards. In particular, he makes a perceptive point (on pp 520-33) concerning the importance of the pre-colonial Tamilnad society in maintaining the shape of agriculture in the area even after the British came, and how this age-old structure in society is still making its presence felt in the rural development of India today.

JOHN LANGDON

Shorter Notices

MASIE BROWN, *The market gardens of Barnes and Mortlake*, Barnes and Mortlake History Society, 1985. 44 pp. 6 maps, 4 plates. No price.

This carefully researched and informative piece of local history deals with commercial gardening, mainly in the nineteenth century. The author includes some evidence of commercial gardening in the area from the seventeenth century and it is a pity that she did not make more of this information to attempt a complete review of gardening from its first appearance.

The chapter on land use, ownership, and development is a confusion of acreages, dates, and statistics. The succeeding chapter on the gardeners is interesting and here good use has been made of research material. The reasons for the eventual decline of gardening in the area are well analysed and illustrated: the creation of a national supply for London with the development of the railways, competition for garden ground from property developers and the decline in manure supplies from London. The railways did, however, allow early crops to be marketed in the North and suburban villa-dwellers sought to delay the demise of remaining commercial gardens because they liked the semi-rural aspect created by the gardens between their houses. When their interests were threatened, the gardeners proved to be keen political lobbyists.

The wretched condition of many garden labourers is clearly described. The relatively high weekly earnings in the summer did not compensate for low winter wages and the hard toil of piecework.

The illustrations are well chosen and the maps clear and informative. The pamphlet is a useful addition to our knowledge of commercial gardening around London.

MALCOLM THICK

NICK LYONS (ed), *Small Houses since 1750 in North-west Lincolnshire*, Scunthorpe Borough Museum, Scunthorpe, 1985. xvi + 32 pp. Illustrated. £6 incl p & p. This publication consists of a series of A3-sized illustrations clipped together with notes and introduction to form a pack intended primarily for teaching purposes. The illustrations consist mainly of houses and cottages from various periods up to the present day but reproductions of such documents as a probate inventory, a large-scale Ordnance Survey map, and pattern-book plans are included together with the

material for a cut-out model of a row of three cottages. There are extensive notes explaining the illustrations and amplifying them with further documents and sketches. The introduction, which is itself extensively and usefully referenced, sets the examples illustrated into their context in Lincolnshire and, to some extent, into the national context.

Although this publication is a venture to be welcomed and will help the school-children of the Scunthorpe district to be far better informed about the disappearing vernacular architecture of their locality than most it has its limitations which work against the wider circulation it deserves. The first limitation is the format which makes it very difficult to house in any library. An A4 size for introduction and notes with the illustrations folded from A3 to A4 would have been more convenient. The second is the title which implies a book about farmhouses whereas this one is almost entirely about cottages. The third is the text which no doubt was written with the needs of the classroom in mind but which mixes commendable use of quotations and supporting references with some surprising statements of which the most extreme is that 'Building techniques and house plans in England evolved over time but did not differ markedly from place to place at any given period.'

As a teaching aid — its intended purpose — this publication will surely be very useful indeed. One hopes that its example will be widely followed; but one hopes even more that it will be an example modified to make such material much more widely available.

R W BRUNSKILL

ROBIN HILL, *Shropshire Sheep, a History*. Shropshire County Museum Service, Acton Scott Working Farm Museum, 1984. 16 pp. £1.50 plus 25p p & p. Accounts of the origin of livestock breeds must take an overview to avoid becoming bogged down in the detail of individual breeds. Here there is no such restraint and the author admirably fills in the detail that must be omitted from larger works. He traces the history of Shropshire sheep from their obscure origin in the Middle Ages through the first recognizable descriptions in the eighteenth century and improvement by introduction of Leicester and Southdown influence, to its wide popularity, along with other Down breeds, during the nineteenth century. The

importance of the Shropshire at Victorian agriculture shows and the establishment of the Breed Society in 1882 are illustrated by informative old prints and photographs. Maps of the distribution of pedigree flocks and the destination of exports add to the surprising amount of information packed into a few pages.

Largely through the demand for export to the Americas and the Antipodes, the breed was at its height between 1880 and 1920, after which the fear of foot and mouth disease eliminated this outlet. Despite efforts to

revive the breed between about 1940 and 1970, it declined and is an example of a well-known breed that has become rare overnight, with the knowledge of very few people, and at a time when considerable efforts were being put into conserving so-called rare breeds such as the Jacob and Soay, whose numbers are more numerous.

Robin Hill has provided a model breed history combining a popular treatment with a scholarly approach, and given a good bibliography.

M L RYDER

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CONTENTS

THE REGIME OF CHARLES, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, IN NORTH WALES AND THE
REFORM OF WELSH GOVERNMENT, 1509-25.

By S.J. Gunn

THE PERILS OF A WEST INDIAN HEIRESS: CASE STUDIES OF THE HEIRESSSES OF
NATHANIEL PHILLIPS OF SLEBECH.

By Clare Taylor

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