

Book Reviews

M JONES, *England before Domesday*. Batsford, 1986. 174 pp. 41 figures; 20 plates. £17.50 (hardback); £9.95 (paperback).

R V Lennard called Domesday England 'an old country'; for Jones it is an ancient one. It is the argument of this book that much of it dates from prehistory. The rich Domesday meadow of the Upper Thames valley had been open grassland since the second millennium BC; Domesday's managed woodland goes back in some form to the fourth millennium, and as coppiced plots to the first. If the major change in the post-glacial landscape was the clearance of the wildwood, that too was prehistoric, the open and chequered landscape of Domesday England achieved by the turn of the Christian era. If 'age' has become 'antiquity' in Dr Jones's analysis, his argument suggests only *modern* man is vile. The English environment was formed through six millennia of human activity, which spread the simplified, steppe-like eco-system of agriculture, and in the process helped the formation of podzolized heath and moor where round barrows bury not only the agents of this desolation but the archaeological evidence of the once richer environment. All this at the expense of the wildwoods' diversity. But our prehistoric ancestors enriched as well as simplified. Their mixed landscapes of clearance and managed woodland provided habitats for a wider flora and fauna, their gathering places supported an enormous variety of life — though cereal-eating beetles and human intestinal parasites make the ecological equation of 'variety' and 'virtue' dubious. Hand-in-hand with the spread and intensification of prehistoric agriculture went the multiplication of our categories of agricultural weeds. The dreary impoverishment of monoculture is our own invention.

The tools of landscape and environmental archaeology have pushed back the frontiers of knowledge beyond the documented historical period, which is less than one-tenth of this book. The results may occasionally leave the historian uneasy. Political and social as much as economic factors must have formed Jones's 'landscape of ancestors' and even more so the boundaries already clear in the second and first millennia BC. Pressure on resources is only one element in the definition of property rights, albeit a fundamental one. But for his period and methodology, consideration of such factors might invite unfounded speculation. Archaeological excavation is geographically patchy, but even allowing for this there is a *positive* lack of evidence for some of his continuity arguments in midland and eastern England. Since these are precisely areas argued to have changed during the historical period, more attention to the evidence of that period was necessary

here. Yet these are minor criticisms beside his overall achievement. Excellent illustrations, detailed exemplification and clear, accessible exposition combine to make this essential reading for all those unfamiliar with the findings and methodology of the burgeoning area of environmental archaeology.

PAULINE STAFFORD

PAUL COONES AND JOHN PATTEN, *The Penguin Guide to the Landscape of England and Wales*. Penguin Books, 1986. 348 pp. 83 illustrations. £6.95.

Books about landscapes, real and imagined, fearful and utopian, are currently much in favour, and represent in many respects a strange amalgam of circumstances, some to do with the long and strong tradition of landscape description and analysis by geographers and local historians, some reflecting the value afforded to landscape as nostalgic and as therapeutic release from the times of economic depression in which we live. All the more important, therefore, that new offerings of this *genre*, notably those that follow in the much-respected Hoskins tradition, should be lively, well-informed, well-written, and visually attractive.

Two well-known historical geographers, Paul Coones and John Patten (until recently making the landscapes of the historic present as Minister of State for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction), have produced a well-structured introduction to the landscapes of England and Wales, combining scholarly authority and caution with the narrative skills necessary for the telling of this most fascinating selection of stories.

After a short and pithy introduction on the nature of landscape, the authors launch forth boldly but selectively into a series of descriptions, of varying length, of the main periods of landscape development. Thus, successive chapters deal with: The Natural Landscape; Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes; Dark Ages Landscapes; Medieval Landscapes; Pre-industrial Landscapes; Landscapes of the Industrial Revolution and the Victorian Era; with a conclusion on The Modern Landscape. A similar sequence is followed in each chapter: an initial outline and explanation of the characteristics and changes for each period being followed by detailed analysis of some selected and representative sites. The Medieval Landscapes chapter (Chapter 4), for example, treats of Domesday England, the Normans and Wales, the economic background to the medieval landscape, medieval agrarian landscapes, forests, chases and parks, castles, fortified houses and moated settlements, rural settlement, and towns. The illustrative examples (twelve individual sites plus a group

of 'failed' new towns) include Branton Great Field, Corfe Castle, Tintern Abbey, Old Sarum, and Burford.

An inevitable problem with a work such as this is that of condensation of such a massive range of landscape types and experiences into a single book. Unevenness of treatment of particular periods is an almost inevitable consequence. While the very long first chapter on the natural landscape is an important base, one wonders about the need for so much detail of geological sequences (including such credible but curious designations as 'Permo-Triassic landscapes'), when later on little is said about fortified sites and monasteries, for example. Other gripes might include the short shrift given to the Roman villa, the very traditional analysis of the data from Domesday Book, the excessively short and in some respects trivial last chapter on the modern landscape, and, in particular, the extremely poor quality of reproduction of photographs. This having been said, the authors have obviously followed their own interests and styles (including comments which give an occasional hint of the House of Commons in its more jocular moments), and have avoided the common but irresponsible way of presenting the past as a series of neat and undisputed progresses towards a better material life for the population at large (hence their section on 'landscapes of wealth and poverty' in Chapter Five). Full map references are given for the sites chosen as examples, and the maps and drawings are helpful. This book deserves a popular following, which will be increased if the publishers give the necessary and urgent attention needed to improve the quality of reproduction of photographs in subsequent printings.

R A BUTLIN

MARJORIE KENISTON MCINTOSH, *Autonomy and Community: the Royal Manor of Havering, 1200-1500*. CUP, 1986. xiv + 319 pp. £30.

The manor of Havering was held by the crown throughout the later Middle Ages. A multitude of references in royal administrative records, detailed manorial extents from 1251 and 1352-3, and a series of manor court rolls from 1382 onwards (with some earlier fragments) would have been enough to stake its claim for attention. But, as it is revealed to us in this admirable study, the history of Havering has other more distinctive attractions. The manor was a large one that stretched northwards from the northern shore of the Thames to include the villages of Havering-atte-Bower and Hornchurch and the market town of Romford. It contained 16,000 acres spread across a variety of soil types. Dr McIntosh's account of the agrarian and demographic history of this extensive area, which she explored initially in

her *Economic History Review* article of 1980, makes a vivid contribution to our knowledge of the relationship between population and resources in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Romford lies only thirteen miles from London, so that the opportunities for marketing agricultural produce were unusually good; the market there was already by the fourteenth century a source of supply for the capital. The absence of earlier court rolls precludes the study of this aspect of the manor's economy before the Black Death, but the book is rich in information concerning the commercial activities of Havering people after 1350. It is a further point of interest that Havering illustrates the development of legal practice relating to ancient demesne in the thirteenth century and shows how tenant rights affected the way in which the manor could be administered. The discussion here extends to show that some Havering men were drawn into the Revolt of 1381, which explains why court rolls are now available only from 1382.

As the book's title suggests, and as chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate, Havering was in many respects more like a free borough than an ordinary manor in the later Middle Ages. The crown had no direct interest in the administration of the manor court there, which was occupied more in resolving conflicts within the community than with the enforcement of seigneurial control from without. This autonomy, added to the manor's exceptional commercial development, means that many of the conventional distinctions between urban and rural society are here inappropriate. Moreover, exceptional freedom and commercial opportunity worked extraordinary effects. Under the influence of London and Londoners the manor moved vigorously in the later fifteenth century towards a higher concentration of property and greater economic specialization. Fatstock and dairy produce were the main components in agricultural development. 'By the end of the fifteenth century, Havering displayed many features of a capitalist agricultural organisation as it developed in other regions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' (p 227). Opinion has moved strongly in recent years in favour of an integrated approach to rural and urban history, and this study provides powerful encouragement and assistance to research in that direction.

R H BRITNELL

ALFRED W CROSBY, *Ecological Imperialism. The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. CUP, 1986. xvi + 368 pp. 7 figures, 20 plates. £27.50 (h/c), £9.95 (p/c).

The author's earlier publication, *The Columbian Exchange. Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*,

aroused considerable interest when it appeared in 1972. This new volume will come as no disappointment.

It begins by highlighting the paradoxes whereby those parts of the globe which are most like Europe in terms of population and culture are also particularly remote from Europe — across major oceans. Although these lands now hold the world record for the export of foodstuffs of European provenance, there were no crops of wheat, barley or rye, or cattle, sheep, pigs or goats, to be found within their borders 500 years ago. Indeed, there were still only 5 million whites in North America in 1800. South America had less than half-a-million, and Australia only 10,000 whites. New Zealand was still Maori country. The deluge took place between 1820 and 1930, when the equivalent of a fifth of the entire population of Europe moved to the 'new' lands, and flourished wherever it was possible to raise those commodities in demand back in Europe, and wherever the resident population was too small to meet that demand.

In setting out to explain why the migrants were so successful, the author recalls the impact of the first humans to reach America and Oceania, who found it so easy to slaughter the larger animals as to eliminate them altogether. The Amerindians, Aborigines and Maoris were in effect shock troops, clearing the way for a second wave, which began with the *marinheiros* of the post-medieval period, when, in the author's colourful language, 'chickens met kiwis, cattle met kangaroos, Irish met potatoes, Comanches met horses, Incas met smallpox — all for the first time. The countdown to the extinction of the passenger pigeon and the native peoples of the Greater Antilles and of Tasmania had begun.' The world's greatest demographic disaster had begun — the lands opened up by Columbus, Cook and other *marinheiros* became charnel houses. European diseases spread so rapidly among the indigenes that smallpox broke out often far ahead of its source, affecting peoples who had barely heard of, let alone come into contact with, the white invaders.

Twentieth-century technology alone could not have achieved so great an impact. It was the combination of the *marinheiros* and 'their portmanteau biota' that brought about a revolution more extreme than any since the extinctions of the end of the Pleistocene. The author cites the spread of weeds (the tramps of our flora) and the experience of New Zealand to illustrate why it was so one-sided an affair. The Empire never struck back. Contemporary observers expected something of an equal exchange between mother country and colonies, or at least something in proportion to the size of the flora and fauna. Even in respect of diseases, it was all 'wondrously one sided' — venereal syphilis being

the New World's only important disease export, and, despite its notoriety, even this never stopped population growth in the Old World.

So many book titles give an exaggerated impression of what might be found between the covers that it comes as a shock to encounter a title that hardly does justice to the contents. The book's global sweep encompasses the course of events in both the Old and New Worlds since man first made any impact on earth. Written in an extremely readable style, the text is likely to be quarried for its many stimulating ideas, and the references for an introduction to the enormous literature which already exists on what another reviewer has called the 'biopolitics of civilization'.

JOHN SHEAIL

J V BECKETT, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914*.

Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986. 512 pp. £22.50.

Dr Beckett's textbook will occupy the commanding heights of this territory for years to come. In some 500 pages he has summarized and synthesized a vast bibliography of secondary literature on the role played by the English aristocracy in government (central as well as local), in public administration (in the shires and at Westminster), and above all he has surveyed the manifold connections between this highly important social group and the long-term growth of the economy from 1660 to 1914. The book deals not only with landed estates but includes chapters on the aristocratic contribution to the spread of communications, to the development of towns and to the rise of modern industry.

From the Restoration down to the Great War, a rather closed, fairly small and socially homogeneous élite ruled over a population and presided over an economy that grew more rapidly, urbanized more extensively, industrialized to a far greater degree and opened up its frontiers to international commerce more thoroughly than any of its European neighbours. How the English aristocracy consolidated and maintained political authority as well as cultural hegemony over a society undergoing such rapid economic change is the big question that informs this excellent book. In some ways that may appear as a surprising theme for Dr Beckett to tackle because his scholarly reputation rests upon impressive contributions to agrarian history. Furthermore, modern economic historians are inclined to leave the exploration of supposed connections between 'sub- and superstructures' to Marxists or their colleagues in general history. Nevertheless, Dr Beckett's invasion of this particular and highly contested territory is to be commended because some real expertise of how and why agriculture,

industry and towns developed from 1660 to 1914 is, potentially at least, as relevant to explanations for the long survival of aristocratic authority as any knowledge of politics, however detailed and scholarly. Moreover, his book is timely because its publication follows hard upon Jonathan Clark's controversial attempt to present 'English Society, 1688-1832' as an *ancien régime* almost undisturbed and unperturbed by the social or economic changes of the Industrial Revolution. Dr Beckett would agree and indeed his book suggests that the *ancien régime* survived almost intact through to the 1880s. Thereafter and right down to 1914 power slipped only slowly from the grasp of England's aristocracy.

The book very properly opens with definitions and enumerations of the aristocracy. Familiar and fine distinctions are elaborated upon between nobility and aristocracy, peerage and gentry, baronets and gentlemen. This discussion ends up with the usable notion of aristocracy as a governing class (titled and untitled) recruited from a small social group with fairly well defined boundaries. As the Stones have also recently demonstrated, the British élite was anything but open, especially after 1688. An almost indispensable passport for entry took the form of landed estates of a certain size, which were, however, difficult to acquire and to build up because the legal and social obstacles deliberately erected by kin groups who already possessed much of the land at the end of the seventeenth century restricted its turnover and sale to aspiring aristocrats. The ownership of land remained stable and by European standards highly and increasingly concentrated.

Although passwords and the styles of behaviour required to carry ambitious families into this exclusive estate could be acquired at public schools and ancient universities, family pedigree counted for far more when it came to the creation of peers and baronets, for election to Parliament, in obtaining the highest ranks in the army and the navy and in the selection of men for top posts in diplomacy and the civil service. For example, it was not until two centuries after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that the House of Commons contained a majority of members socially representative of industry and commerce. Only 14 per cent of all new peers created between 1837 and 1881 came from families that were not aristocratic or gentry, and the overwhelming majority of that tiny proportion happened to be merchants and bankers ('gentlemanly capitalists') rather than industrialists.

Young Englishmen and women needed much more than 'love' to break through the fortified barriers of birth and hereditary privilege. Overwhelmingly the sons (including younger sons) of the aristocracy married within a socially-defined circle. With a few notorious exceptions, misalliances

with actresses, singers and beauties of the day remained the stuff of novels and drama rather than upper-class life. Only 3 per cent of aristocratic men married the daughters of wealthy merchants in the eighteenth century. When attitudes towards 'out-marriages' softened in the Edwardian era, brides tended to emerge from banking circles or the United States and reflected the integration of land, city and transatlantic wealth.

Paradoxically in the most bourgeois and industrial of European societies the authority and values of aristocracy were, in Dr Beckett's words, 'accepted and everyone else conformed' and he suggests, 'a major reason for this acceptance is that the aristocracy never became anachronistic and a primary reason for this was their positive economic contribution'. Dr Beckett is concerned that 'the aristocracy have not generally received a good press for their contribution to economic development'. And he is determined to confront the rather negative view of their role conveyed most recently by historians such as Michael Bush, Martin Weiner and Harold Perkin whose writings form part of a radical antipathy to aristocracy that runs back through Henry George, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Spence and Tom Paine to Adam Smith and beyond to the English Revolution.

In the other camp no less a thinker than Edmund Burke would have applauded the scholarship and style that a judicious modern economic historian has unearthed for the defence of aristocracy which was, all too often in Burke's view, 'rashly slighted in the shallow speculations of the petulant assuming coxcombs of philosophy'. But what does Dr Beckett's case for a positive economic contribution add up to and what does it explain?

First and famously, as owners of up to 75 per cent of the nation's cultivable land the aristocracy fostered agrarian progress upon which industrialization and urbanization depended. Agricultural history is Dr Beckett's own well cultivated territory and he is suitably cautious in delineating and appraising the part that great proprietors played in the one sector of the evolving economy that they dominated as a birthright. He certainly appreciates that 'the central purpose of an estate was to produce a level of profit sufficient to support the lifestyle expected of an aristocrat. He had to finance portions and jointures, a London household, electoral expenditure and other outgoings depending on his personal predilections.' Nevertheless, the pursuit of profit for whatever reason may have redounded to the good of the national economy. In commercial societies throughout Europe aristocrats were drawn into the exploitation of resources they inherited, not only land but also coal and other minerals located on their domains. What is more at issue is how active and entrepreneurial was that involvement particu-

larly during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution?

Historians may sympathize with Dr Beckett's wish to 'redress the balance' in favour of aristocracy but a close reading of the case studies and noble name after noble name that he musters leads this 'coxcomb' to conclude that (despite some well-advertised examples to the contrary) the English aristocracy neither managed nor led the rather slow progression to a more productive agriculture. What it did was to preside gracefully over the work, vision and expertise of lesser men: owner-occupiers, large tenant farmers and agronomists such as William Marshall.

By 1660 aristocrats had already withdrawn some distance from farming and thereafter their absences from the countryside became a cause for social concern. Home farms remained less for experimental and demonstration purposes but rather to supply great houses with fresh provisions. The divorce between ownership and control in British agriculture is now recognized as premature. Stewards who ran aristocratic estates were seldom trained in agronomy and held their positions in order to safeguard their master's rents. Moreover, as Dr Beckett observed, 'Between the best and least well managed estates a great gulf yawned.' By standards set in industry and commerce the rates of re-investment from rents collected on the larger estates were not particularly impressive, at least not before 1815; while the laws pushed through Parliament by the landed interest, first to subsidize and then protect the cultivation of grain, raised the value of farmland and depressed the rate of industrialization. Aristocrats also used their political power to speed up the slow but voluntary evolution from open field to enclosed farms. Dr Beckett supports the orthodox and positive view of parliamentary enclosure but modern research pioneered by Havinden and reinforced by Yelling, Snell and Allen begins to question the presumed connection of enclosure to the growth of yields per acre. In the short term, the effects of politically inspired changes in agrarian property rights consisted essentially of a transfer of income to landowners and an increased incidence of under-employment among the rural workforce. At the end of his balanced survey of 'Aristocracy and Agricultural Revolution' Dr Beckett simply suggests their 'contribution to change was much more positive than their image as *rentiers* would suggest'.

Turning to manufacturing, most historians now agree that aristocrats played a negligible part in that leading sector. Their estates provided industry and towns with major raw materials: mineral ores, stone, slate, timber and above all with coal. Very sensibly, as the owners of these potentially valuable property rights, they provided the threshold funds and politi-

cal support required to mine, cultivate and transport raw materials to works, factories, towns and ports. As with agriculture, aristocrats usually stood at some distance from direct involvement with the exploitation of natural resources and tended to operate through lessees and occasionally through managers. They then collected royalties, rents, wayleaves and interest. But it would be interesting to discover the degree to which they funded the risks involved in searching and boring for minerals. The legal frameworks under which individuals owned and exploited mines and quarries varied across Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dr Beckett would probably agree that some international comparisons may be required before we can conclude that the English way of affording absolute subsoil rights to landowners constituted a more cost-effective system of supplying the national economy with minerals and energy supplies than, say, the more centralized systems pursued in France and some German princely states. To uncover details of an English aristocracy facilitating the exploitation of its property rights in minerals, stone and timber is interesting but hardly surprising. And the rents obtained from such riskless forms of enterprise may have been 'excessive'?

Surely similar sorts of questions arise wherever historians seek to evaluate the 'aristocratic contribution' to the spread of a communications network or the development of towns? It may not be sufficient merely to document the examples and to pinpoint the numerous cases of aristocratic investment in parliamentary promotion of turnpikes, canals, railways and housing. Their inherited wealth and political authority placed aristocrats precisely in positions where they could obstruct or facilitate the development of transportation and towns. Again the 'proportions' of aristocratic incomes invested in social overhead capital cannot be described as anything remarkable. Moreover, Dr Beckett is too good a scholar to hide examples of aristocrats who for the sake of privacy or for aesthetic predilections of their own resisted canals and railways and the 'encroachment' of towns and populations. Most, for the obvious enrichment of their families and for the preservation of their social estate, went along with the onward march of progress. For all that effort the aristocracy demanded and received 'heavy' compensation for their land as well as seats on Boards through which they safeguarded their rights to be consulted, placated and above all remunerated. Radicals (and no doubt many entrepreneurs who at the time sensibly kept their heads down) found the obeisance and money paid to aristocracy offensive. But a majority of businessmen, the professional and especially the working classes considered the order to be perfectly natural.

Was the manifest lack of challenge to the political and pecuniary claims of aristocracy rooted (as Dr Beckett argues) in a widespread recognition that the contribution of the ruling élite to making Britain into the 'first industrial nation' and the 'workshop of the world' had been positive and important? Contemporary perceptions on this issue are difficult to sum up. But the 'facts' so carefully assembled by Dr Beckett hardly support a case for the economic significance of aristocracy. Indeed the technical innovations, entrepreneurship, risks, organization and drive required to carry the economy to the pinnacle of its international success, at the end of the Victorian boom, came overwhelmingly from groups lower down the social scale.

And so apparently did most of the capital required to fund the slow and steady rise in the rate of net investment which occurred for two centuries after the Restoration. Although the point will never be nailed with statistics, Dr Beckett's admirable summary of that contentious issue of aristocratic debt leaves an impression that the savings which flowed from other social groups into the hands of the aristocracy may on balance have been used to sustain its conspicuously delightful style of life.

Defenders of aristocracy may rejoinder that this did not matter very much. Some even go further and assert that the upper classes' high propensity to consume maintained levels of effective demand and employment. Unfortunately the counterfactuals implicit in these lines of argument are impossible to test. At first sight the economy appears to be 'awash' with investible funds. But investment particularly in the infrastructure and housing was interest-elastic. Net domestic capital formation did not grow at a particularly impressive rate, especially after 1873 when the economy came under greater competitive pressures. Banks of the day were not attuned to listen, let alone search for smaller and riskier ventures in domestic industry and commerce. On the contrary the City and, increasingly after 1844, provincial bankers demanded from their clients precisely the kind of security and credentials to borrow funds that the aristocracy so manifestly possessed. Furthermore the fastidious and cosmopolitan tastes of the upper classes did nothing to promote the diffusion of techniques of mass production which carried American and German industry ahead of Britain towards the end of the nineteenth century. Their 'bespoke' style of consumption, emulated by those just beneath them in the social scale, helped to maintain the craft tradition in British industry long after its day was over.

Except by implication, Dr Beckett did not elaborate upon the traditional case for aristocracy, namely that it provided society with political stability and good government 'on the cheap'. It is certainly true

that England's first estate performed political and administrative functions that were only slowly professionalized and properly remunerated. Just how well the aristocracy ran central and county government is too large a question even to raise in a review. But the myth of an inexpensive state has been a long time dying. Over the period 1660 to 1914 per capita taxation in Britain was higher than anywhere else in Western Europe. Most of these taxes went into the acquisition and defence of the largest occidental empire since Rome. The British Empire was also the creation and creature of aristocracy. Imperialism played no small part in the long political survival and continued accumulation of wealth by the nation's hereditary élite; and the costs and benefits of both Empire and aristocracy are now beginning to be weighed up in the cold light of history.

For years to come Dr Beckett's text will be a point of embarkation for historians concerned to explain the survival of aristocracy in this most commercial and capitalist of European societies. Perhaps at the end of that voyage of enquiry (which must include some comparisons with even more anachronistic hereditary élites who survived elsewhere in Europe) that fact will no longer seem paradoxical. After all it is political change and not political adaptation and stability that is unusual. I suspect moreover that when all the research is in, the hegemony of aristocracy in England from 1660 to 1914 had little to do with its special contribution to the long-term development of the nation's economy, which probably grew despite and not because of its hereditary ruling élite.

PATRICK O'BRIEN

DAVID W HOWELL, *Patriarchs and Parasites: the Gentry of South-West Wales in the Eighteenth Century*. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1986. ix + 310 pp. £27.

More than twenty years ago Professor G E Mingay wrote that before a comprehensive picture of the eighteenth-century landed gentry could be assembled there would need to be detailed accounts of the gentry of particular areas. He wrote primarily in the context of England, but with the publication of David Howell's new book it is Wales, and particularly south Wales, which has received the most attention in recent years. When added to Philip Jenkins's and Joanna Martin's work on Glamorgan, this study of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, the post-1974 county of Dyfed, provides us with a splendid portrayal of the south Wales gentry. Much of the story, it has to be said, does not come as a surprise, but the meticulous documentation confirms what might have been anticipated and helps to provide firmer grounds for

painting in the comprehensive picture for which Professor Mingay was looking.

The gentry of south-west Wales turn out to have been relatively thin on the ground (even when the group is defined in such a way as to include a number of peers whose lifestyle was essentially similar). They were also poor, at least by comparison with their counterparts in Glamorgan and England. Largely as a result, their hands were often tied. Many of them, for example, were interested in improving the value of their estates and the efficiency of management, but because they had small properties and were relatively impecunious this proved more difficult to achieve in practice than in theory. Few landlords had the capital to invest, and little was done to improve farming through the terms of leases — partly because this would have involved a movement away from the three-life lease, which remained common. By 1800, they had achieved only limited success in persuading their tenants to adopt improved farming. Similarly, the opportunities for coal mining often had to be passed over to companies, or occasionally to partnerships of gentry, in order that sufficient capital could be made available. The consequence was that coal income seldom contributed substantially to landed revenue, and in general the gentry role in industrial development was severely curtailed.

Despite these constraints the gentry of south-west Wales were no Squire Westerns; indeed, Howell's study confirms — if it was ever necessary — how even in the furthest corners of Wales Macaulay's picture of an inebriated squirearchy simply does not ring true. The majority were cultured and refined (though a few admittedly drank too much), they had libraries, and they encouraged the Welsh language. Such interests were perhaps not surprising in view of their education and upbringing, and their links with the social round of London, the spas, and even the Continent. A number built houses and laid out parks, and their overall quality of living was not dissimilar to that of their colleagues in Glamorgan. An underlying tendency towards Jacobitism in the first half of the eighteenth century did not really affect their basic loyalty or their interest in politics, although sitting MPs seem to have been generally undistinguished at Westminster except in so far as they represented local interests and needs when required to do so. Their forte, so to speak, lay in the locality, as justices of the peace, and officers of the militia. If a few of the gentry neglected their local duties, the majority were model paternalists, and most of them made a positive contribution to the life of the region. Most people seem to have accepted that they were doing a good job, and harmonious relationships were the order of the day. Apart from occasional differences of opinion regard-

ing enclosure, this tranquil picture only began to change towards 1800 when the gentry's relations with the rest of society became strained. Howell sees dissent — which the majority of the gentry distrusted — as the medium through which social dislocation was channelled.

Overall, this is a splendid study. Although primarily providing a detailed picture of what was happening in one region, because it is set in the broader context of the questions raised about landed society over the past two decades it also adds to our knowledge of the gentry in the distant counties, and at the same time provides evidence which will help historians to draw firmer conclusions about the overall position of the gentry during the eighteenth century.

J V BECKETT

PAUL BRASSLEY, *The Agricultural Economy of Northumberland and Durham in the period 1640–1750*. Garland Publishing, New York, 1985. iii + 224 pp. \$28.

The publication of an Oxford BLitt thesis originally presented in 1974 may at first sight seem rather pointless, particularly as a digest of it appeared in 1984 as Chapter Two of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, V, i 'Regional farming systems', incorporating more recent related work. While the editors of the Garland series in British Economic History (Peter Mathias and Stuart Bruchey) offer no introductory account of the purpose of the series, it must be assumed that its purpose is to make more readily available, in their original form, significant postgraduate dissertations in British Economic History. While one may have mixed feelings about such a general venture and the attendant problems pertaining to their dates of origin, in this case the venture may be justifiable in respect of the incorporation of an interesting series of case-studies of the economic history of individual estates in Northumberland and Durham in the period 1640–1750.

After an introductory section which deals briefly with the nature of agriculture in the north-east before 1640 and the physical background to farming in the region, the work divides into four chapters and a concluding section. The first chapter is concerned with factors affecting demand for agricultural produce, including changes in the size and distribution of population, the relationship between population and industrialization, the wages and employment trends of agricultural and industrial workers, and short- and longer-term changes in food supplies and food prices. The population figures are mainly derived from sixteenth-century estimates, the Hearth Tax returns, and notes by Bishop Chandler during a Durham diocesan visitation in 1736.

Useful data for agricultural workers' employment conditions and wages are derived from an interesting series of labour accounts, notably those for the Shipcote and Park estates at Gateshead. The overall indications are that in the period concerned prices in the long term were stable against a rising demand for agricultural produce in the region, indicating an increase in agricultural production.

The remaining three chapters are devoted to an analysis and proof of this proposition of an increase in agricultural production. Chapter Two thus deals with aspects of landownership, and includes detailed case-studies of estates with widely differing histories of acquisition and development, notably the Percy estates, which differ from most in respect of their scale, distribution, absentee owners, and archaic systems of rent and fine. It was possible for land to be bought and retained at this period, even at times of adverse economic pressure, because of the easy availability of mortgages and other types of credit. Rents generally increased, indicating that debts could be serviced by increased rents at a time of increasing demand and yield. Changes in the structure of agriculture are discussed in Chapter Three, including enclosure and the regional variations in estate management practices. Chapter Four is concerned with technological aspects of farming and indicates the relatively late experience of the region of the innovations associated with the initiation of the agricultural revolutions further south.

The dissertation is well written, and the principal theme logically and coherently developed and illustrated. Current postgraduates looking for an example of high quality thesis-writing and construction will find a useful model here. That having been said, one still wonders whether — given the price of the book — it might not have been wiser to update the original thesis in the light of much more recent material and ideas and to produce something of even greater value than this valuable period piece?

R A BUTLIN

MAURICE BARLEY, *Houses and History*. Faber and Faber, 1986. 290 pp. £27.50.

In the introduction to his latest book, Professor Barley tells us that the title was originally to have been *The Archaeology of the House* and that this title was abandoned lest the prospective reader anticipate an account of the excavated remains of the past. Such a title would have been misleading anyway in that the book depends on archaeology in the wide sense of studying surviving buildings through fieldwork and history in the sense of studying documents about buildings. In fact the book is a social history in describing the life-style of various social groups through their dwellings.

More than half the book is devoted to the period 1066 to 1550 and readers familiar with the author's other books will be surprised at the balance between the two parts, but he explains that England and Wales are exceptionally rich in the survival of domestic buildings of the Middle Ages and the later buildings can here (in contrast to many Continental countries) be studied by reference to the earlier. In his preface Professor Barley explains that his attempts to understand the vernacular houses of the countryside led more and more to study what is often called 'polite' architecture, and, implicitly, that houses of town and countryside should be considered together. Only one chapter of the eight in Part I is devoted to Small Houses; the remainder include chapters on Royal and Aristocratic Houses, Manor Houses, the houses of Monks and Clergy and the houses of all the wealthier classes in the towns. Archaeology in the narrower sense of excavation is represented in the first chapter on Anglo-Saxon houses. Many readers will find this closely-written but wide-ranging half of the book of special value.

Rather less than half the book is devoted to the rather shorter period of 1550 to about 1850, a period with an even greater abundance of buildings and documents available for study. Here the proportions are changed in that one chapter out of six refers to the architecture of Country Seats, while there is a long chapter on Farmhouses and Cottages, a short chapter on Parsonage Houses, but nothing on the palaces of bishops, and a chapter on Urban Houses which extends to the terraced cottages of industrial workers. In this part as in the other there is a great deal about building materials and constructional methods. Readers devoted to vernacular architecture may find this part of the book rather compressed.

In the book as a whole there are over 200 illustrations comprising photographs and drawings which are mainly plans and isometrics. All have a welcome freshness. Most of the photographs have been taken by the author and are correspondingly appropriate but it is a pity that in an otherwise attractive piece of book production so many of the photographs have been reproduced in a size too small for their full quality to be appreciated. The plans come from many sources but most have been re-drawn in a consistent style and illustrate the points made with great clarity. Most of the isometrics illustrate buildings more completely than is possible in single photographs while some of the isometrics succeed in making clear quite complex matters of sectional design.

There is only one distribution map, but an interesting one. It is a tentative attempt to show where and in what intensity medieval peasant houses survive in England and Wales. It is equally interesting

in showing where they do not survive: Cornwall and half of Devon, all the western half of Wales, the Limestone Belt, and also the whole of England north of a line joining Liverpool and Norwich, except that some survival in the Vale of York is balanced by lack of survival in most of the East Midlands.

There is no doubt that *Houses and History* makes an important contribution to the literature on its subject. It provides an overview which is welcome at a time when many studies of houses are of individual examples or of parish or county groupings. It is up-to-date in a subject which is rapidly developing. But above all it is authoritative. Based on a lifetime of intense activity by its author, it contrives neatly and attractively within a convenient format a distillation of its subject which will be useful both for the specialist and for those who see evidence from houses giving light to illuminate their own subjects.

R W BRUNSKILL

MICHAEL TURNER (ed), *Malthus and His Time*. Macmillan, 1986. xx + 244 pp. £29.50.

Malthus exercises a perennial fascination over scholars. This latest addition to the corpus of Malthusian literature had its origins in a conference held in 1980 which heard over 170 papers (a Malthusian crisis indeed!), fifteen of which now appear in this slim volume. Such a number squeezed into 244 pages has created an unreasonable pressure on resources with the result that some of the essays are too short to be effective. Nevertheless, the general impression is of a stimulating collection that adds something both to our understanding of Malthus and of the society in which he lived.

The essays are arranged in four themes: population, land, labour, and capital. In the first, E A Wrigley demonstrates that Malthus, although a poor prophet of future demographic and economic trends, was a remarkably astute observer of past ones. Barry Stapleton shows that Malthus's jaundiced views of the reproductive habits of farm labourers were based on real life in the Surrey parishes where Malthus had his living. J P Huzel argues (again) that Malthus was wrong in seeing a link between the Old Poor Law and population growth. Lars Magnusson examines the empirical evidence behind the remarks on Scandinavian population in the second edition of the *Essay*; and François Pradel de Lamaze searches for evidence of Malthusianism in south-west France.

Part II contains four essays: a useful survey of the course of rents in the age of Malthus by Prof Mingay; a tantalizingly brief sketch of the consumption habits of the landed classes, 1790-1830, by David Cannadine that does not really succeed in

exonerating them from the charge of abdicating their responsibility to the lower orders; a valuable study by Michael Turner of the corn crises of 1795 and 1800 which demonstrates that Malthus had good cause to worry about the balance between population and resources; and a characteristically original analysis by Wray Vamplew of the operation of the corn laws.

Parts III and IV are generally less successful, although Bernard Eccleston's discussion of labour markets is a useful insight into the complex realities of labourers' earning; Malthus was more aware of these than some of his contemporaries. Similarly, Anne Digby shows that between the publication of the first edition of the *Essay* in 1798 and the New Poor Law, Malthus's opinions on poverty were complex and evolving. Annie Vinokur's account of Malthusian ideology is also complex, but here the quality stems more from the author than from her subject. The three essays in Part IV, by François Crouzet, B L Anderson and Edmond Cocks, on Malthusian concepts of capital, stand somewhat apart from the rest of the collection; their focus is directed at the less demographic aspects of Malthus's writings.

Malthus emerges from this scrutiny remarkably well. Some of the authors seem not to like him or his ideas a great deal. But none can deny that Malthus was a major social philosopher living at a time when Britain was experiencing the greatest economic and social transformation in its history. This was Malthus's opportunity and he seized it.

L A CLARKSON

JONATHAN BELL and MERVYN WATSON, *Irish Farming 1750-1900*. John Donald, Edinburgh, 1986. viii + 256 pp. Illus. £14.

There are few works that detail how agricultural tools and machinery were used and particularly how they fitted in to the farming systems of a certain area. This book is most welcome, therefore, in outlining the use of both traditional cultivation implements used in Irish farming in the period 1750 to 1900 and tools and machinery introduced, more or less successfully, in that time. In all cases the implications to the farming system and on the social level are investigated as far as possible. The subject is a very broad one and the authors are the first to point out that their study is an introductory one.

Some implements, such as spades, characterized as the 'most distinctive Irish agricultural implement' and ploughs, are given separate chapters. Others are grouped into the type of cultivation, such as the preparation of land for crops which concentrates on drainage, sowing, harvesting, and threshing and winnowing. Certain crops are treated individually,

notably potatoes, flax and hay because of their importance to the area. Chapters on 'Landlords, Farming Societies and Agricultural Improvement' and 'The Theory and Practice of Improvement' serve to introduce and draw conclusions to the work.

Whilst most of the improvements were implemented on larger holdings the authors stress the contrasts found both regionally and across the social scale. Sources for the larger holdings are more readily available through the publications of the Farming and Agricultural Improvement Societies and Farming Journals but a wide variety of evidence has been looked at for the smaller holdings, including oral evidence. Likewise the pictorial sources are drawn from many areas and cover both the older and newly introduced methods using, for example, working demonstrations in museums to redress the balance towards the new improvements. The book overall reinforces recent thinking which has begun to question the established view that Irish agriculture during this period was very backward. This is achieved through a study of the farming techniques and how they were often closely adapted to local conditions, both physical and social. In many cases the introduction of improved methods would only prove suitable where there were economies of scale, and elsewhere the traditional farming systems continued to work well.

ANNIE HOOD

ROGER J P KAIN with RODNEY E J FRY and HARRIET M E HOLT, *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-Nineteenth Century England and Wales*. CUP, 1986. xxviii + 651 pp. 582 figures, 108 tables. £55.

Roger Kain's *Atlas* appears with great timing on the 150th anniversary of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 (TCA). It is billed as a sequel to his joint volume with Hugh Prince, *The Tithe Surveys of England and Wales* (CUP, 1985). The ESRC, at a time of severe pressure on its resources, must be congratulated for supporting the project on which the *Atlas* is based. This has been public funding well spent.

The TCA coincided with a turning point in British agrarian history. The open fields with their communal arrangements had all but disappeared, encroachment on the wastes in many places was at its furthest limits, and improved farming techniques were accomplished facts if not necessarily of universal usage. Just around the corner was 'High Farming' — new investment, drainage, scientific methods in the use of fertilizers and dramatic increases in crop yields. What we get from the Tithe inquiry is

a remarkable supply-side cross-sectional view of English and Welsh farming c1840.

The TCA commuted tithes to a fluctuating money payment. This was based on an average of the actual value of tithes paid in each parish or township over the previous five years. This value was then apportioned among the properties of each tithe district according to the land use of each component farm or field. The inquiry enacted to achieve this reached out to 14,829 tithe districts in England and Wales, and found that tithes remained to be commuted in over 12,000 of them. Of the three categories of document that the inquiry generated — the maps, apportionments and the files — the present work is devoted to the files, a wealth of materials on matters agricultural and procedural prepared by the local tithe agents or assistant tithe commissioners. A tithe file was opened for each of the 14,829 tithe districts. Without further details the reader should be aware that the information generated was not always consistently presented across the country. The local commissioners or agents perceived their counties to be characterized by either arable or pastoral farming. For arable counties they inquired into the titheable acreage, the acreage of arable, meadow and pasture, woodland, common, orchards, gardens and hops, with separate acreages for arable crops, together with yields and prices with which to calculate the value of gross output. After all it was directly or indirectly a financial arrangement which was in the process of commutation. In the pastoral counties they inquired into the ploughed acreage, the pastoral acreage including seeds, and the course of crops, which, as the author explains, allows estimates of the acreages under individual crops to be made. Quite clearly, therefore, the detail on land usage is not as comprehensive for the pastoral as for the arable areas, and because of problems over misreporting livestock numbers — the basis of valuation of the titheable produce of grassland — the livestock data have only been indexed, not mapped, in the *Atlas*. Even where parts of tithe districts were tithe-free, the produce of the whole tithe district was commonly enumerated. The author rejected those districts where less than 90 per cent of the total acreage was covered. Various other problems — especially tithe commutation at the time of parliamentary enclosure — ensure that what remains for analysis is a sample of English and Welsh farming c1840.

The *Atlas* sets out to accomplish two objectives, literally an atlas, and also a substantial index. From the wealth of quantitative data contained in the files the author presents what he calls a flavour — but I think more akin to a feast — of the distribution of farming practices in England and Wales. For each of thirty-one English counties there are up to

twenty-two maps displaying parish or township distributions of, for example, arable, pasture, woodland and commons acreages as a percentage of the tithe districts, the distributions of various crops as percentages of the arable, and yields per acre of those crops. For all of the Welsh counties and for Yorkshire West and East, Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire, there are tabular land use aggregates without maps, and for the remaining six counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Middlesex, Cumberland and Westmorland, the survivals of data are too few for analysis. This three-tier division was determined by the survival of usable data. Basically, if 18 per cent of the tithe districts in a county had acceptable data then that county was given the full treatment in terms of maps and summary statistics. The mapping was achieved by computer. The package and method which presents the data in the best light at the local level, but also allows cross-county comparisons to be made, is the GIMMS-IV package, using choropleth maps with uniform class intervals within each type of map. The maps themselves now stand as the means of communicating the agricultural history of the period without further analysis, though a short text accompanies each county to indicate, amongst other things, the individuality of the local commissioners and agents, giving some flavour of how they perceived their task and their local countryside. The author also presents tabular estimates of broad county land and individual crop usage, and average crop yields. Finally, for England and Wales there are summary maps set at the county level showing various crops as percentages of the arable, showing average yields, and giving a regional assessment of the gross output of wheat, barley, oats, and all grains combined. There are also summary tables indicating the acreage and output of specific crops for England and Wales, together with an interesting comparison of land use across time ranging from the 1801 crop returns through to the 1872 June returns, using the tithe files, amongst other sources, for intermediate comparison. My calculations indicate that for England in 1801 wheat, barley, oats, pulses and turnips were distributed in the proportions 34, 19, 27, 18, and 9 per cent, and in 1836 they were 38, 23, 18, 7, and 15 per cent. Although wheat, barley and turnips had been in the ascendancy, the combined acreage under all arable crops had increased from about 6.5 million acres to nearly 9 million. Average crop yields do not appear to have changed much over the same period; wheat yields for example were about 20/21 bushels per acre in 1800/01 rising to only 21.7 bushels in 1836.

As an aid to the user of the tithe files in their raw state the author has completed his *Atlas* with remarkably detailed Place and Subject Indexes. The

first lists all of the nearly 15,000 tithe file districts within their counties along with their unique PRO reference numbers, includes a description of the status of each district — parish, township, etc — and indicates the categories of documents contained in the files. The subject index, which is cross-referenced with the PRO numbers, is arranged in counties and then under 182 subject headings. To do justice to the indexes would require a review in its own right. Needless to say the range of subjects is as comprehensive as this reviewer could imagine.

The data on which the *Atlas* is based is now in the public domain, available through the ESRC Survey Archive at the University of Essex. It will take a long time fully to appreciate the scale and worth of this work. This reviewer is still digesting the enormity of the project, and as such this review is little more than a potted guide, but he feels confident that users of the *Atlas* will agree that Dr Kain has provided a masterly and scholarly reference work.

MICHAEL TURNER

MARIE HARTLEY and JOAN INGILBY, *Dales Memories*. Dalesman Books, Clapham, 1986. 142 pp. Illus. £7.95.

In 1954 Maurice Beresford reviewed *Yorkshire Village* by Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby. He noted how, without claiming to write economic history, the authors had succeeded in doing so. Now, some thirty years and several books later, the two writers have once again entered the sphere of economic history. However, this publication is concerned with much wider topics. Miss Hartley and Miss Ingilby also range happily through social, architectural and agricultural history. Their parameters are neither temporal nor topical but geographical, as all the contents relate to the Yorkshire Dales.

The book opens with a fascinating account of the fluctuating fortunes of the deer, from the chases of the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century when the deer finally died out (though recently, due to afforestation, they have returned). The next chapter concentrates on corn mills or, more specifically, on those occurring in one small area, Dentedale. It is this micro approach that is so valuable to other historians writing more general regional or national studies. Barns are examined in the following two chapters and provide a wealth of information on barn types and individual buildings. With the careful plans, neat line drawings and attractive photographs supporting the narrative, the details given here will enhance the recent national barn survey.

Mountain sheep and the local incidence of transhumance (with reference to Ladurie's *Montaillou*) are scrutinized and a clear picture of sheep movement

and the problems inherent in such an activity emerges. The useful study of some early nineteenth-century Dales emigrants, their motivation and destination, will provide flesh for the statistical bones of other historians' researches.

The final chapter is entitled 'A Sheaf of Memories'; the reminiscences of eight different individuals/families are recounted and serve to highlight the whole emphasis of the work. The book is a collection of studies of landscape, people, and events which together formed the living community of the Dales and which are epitomized in Marie Hartley's painting on the cover. The contents are painstakingly researched and though some of the complicated accounts result in complex sentence structure, the careful reader can follow the meaning. For the serious researcher the sources are well footnoted and placed at the end of the book.

Dales Memories combines successfully many disparate elements. It is yet another triumph for Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby and demonstrates that the honorary degree recently conferred upon them by York University is well deserved.

C S HALLAS

FRANCESCA BRAY, *The Rice Economies, Technology and Development in Asian Societies*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1986. xvii + 254 pp. 3 maps, 22 figures, 15 tables. £22.50.

Ms Bray's latest book will arouse controversy. It labels 'primitive' Asian historical methodology, dismisses 'Eurocentric models' as inapplicable, and challenges the notion that Asia's rural economies are changeless. The author claims wet-rice cultivation has led to developments unlike those in Europe. However, this work is not a rehash of the hydraulic societies/oriental despotisms hypotheses. Indeed the writer makes plain their weaknesses. Asian socio-economic history is seen as having been shaped by rice's nutritional value, higher yield than other cereals, varietal multiplicity, and water needs. Its domestication resulted in high population densities accompanied by land-saving, labour-using technologies, favouring peasant agriculture. The plant's labour requirements have facilitated the introduction of commercial crops and rural manufacturing but discouraged the emergence of capitalist farming, a rural proletariat or release of workers to urban areas.

Rice-growing processes are explained and the evolution of cultural techniques traced. In antiquity, farmers already practised seed selection, transplanted seedlings, and used shallow ploughs and harrows. Among later pre-modern innovations were simple sowing and weeding machines and commercial fertilizers. Hydraulic technology advanced from exploitation of natural marshes to the construction of

bunded fields and artificial ponds, then to tank-fed canal networks, and, finally, to deltaic flood plain systems.

Water control calls for resources unavailable to the cultivator and conflicts over water use necessitate collective management. Examination of past and present government works leads the writer to note their dependence on the cooperation of villagers, whose involvement in planning and decision-making is recommended. Many older projects, however, were initiated by religious bodies, wealthy individuals, and local communities. State schemes, except the deltaic, often merely extended or integrated such undertakings.

Along with intensive rice production developed tenancy. But the skill required of cultivators, it is argued, protected tenants. According to the author, landlords lose power when they become absentees, a proposition which, if substantiated, could illuminate the study of Asian political history.

Bray's concerns extend to the present and the future. She discusses rural-urban income inequalities, western agricultural machinery, group farming and the 'Green Revolution'. Official support for land reform and rural industrialization is urged.

One wishes for a more extended treatment of the many issues raised. European historians might find their area's agricultural development too narrowly described. Large farms, a rural proletariat were less widespread, mechanization and labour-shedding more recent than Bray's Euro-model portrays. Asianists will be grateful for the highlighting of similarities among rice economies. Doubtless, an explanation of the enormous differences in economic development found in the vast region where rice is the staple would have been even more appreciated. Why, today, is Japan urbanized and industrialized whereas Southeast Asia remains largely rural and agricultural? What accounts for Japan having a capitalist and China a socialist economy? Since the theories the author criticizes seek to treat such matters, these questions cannot be considered irrelevant. Nevertheless, this study, the product of Ms Bray's first-hand experience and wide reading of Chinese, Japanese and European sources, will provide rice economy specialists with several insights and much on which to argue and reflect.

P K HALL

SANDRO ROGARI, *Ruralismo e Anti-industrialismo di Fine Secolo. Neofisiocrazia e Movimento Cooperativo Cattolico*. Le Monnier, Florence, 1984. 272 pp. L20,000.

Agriculturists for many centuries lamented the low levels of productivity of Italian agriculture. Dr Rogari describes the curious, and virtually

unknown, episode of an Italian agronomist who argued, in the 1880s-90s, that scientific methods, in the form of nitrogen induction in the soil, promised limitless increases in productivity, which would result in world-wide economic and social consequences. The author of this old-new agricultural utopia, Stanislao Solari, was a former naval officer, who combined an ingenuous positivist faith in technical progress with an unusually modern vision of a unified world market. He argued that nitrogen induction was not dependent on capital, and that climate alone marked the limits of productivity and hence the optimal choice of crops, from which he deduced (ignoring all other factors of production) that transport costs would thus make American grain uneconomical in Europe. On this somewhat shaky foundation he erected an elaborate superstructure, in which the dangerous and perverse effects of industrialization and urbanization would be checked, competition and conflict over markets for manufactured goods would cease, with a return to the land as the only true source of wealth and the emergence of a natural, climatically-imposed equilibrium of agricultural production, with related but subordinate transformation industries.

Solari's ideas, like those of so many other prophets, would be of little importance, were it not that the nitrogen technology (both through chemical additions and rotations) was experimented and publicized successfully in central and northern Italy, and for a brief period (1896-1906) was adopted by the nascent Catholic political movement as part of its programme to redeem Italian peasantry through agricultural cooperatives. Dr Rogari follows with clarity the troubled relationship between the successive Catholic movements and Solari's extremely sectarian followers, explaining convincingly why and how the latter were increasingly marginalized. But for readers of this journal, the main interest lies in the effective diffusion and application of agronomic ideas, among some lay as well as Catholic circles, which presumably contributed towards the very sharp rise in Italian agricultural productivity which occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century, as well as in Solari's extraordinarily archaic and ahistorical belief, as late as in the 1890s, that agriculture could substitute industry.

STUART WOOLF

KEVIN STARR, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era*. OUP, 1985. xi + 380 pp. £21. Kevin Starr began pursuing the idea of California, what it has meant to Americans and non-Americans alike since its first sighting by white men in the 1540s, in a companion volume, *Americans and the California Dream*, published in 1973. That focused

largely on the north of the state and ran up to 1915. The present volume, somewhat despite the subtitle, concentrates on the south and on Los Angeles and its environs in particular, ending in the late 1920s. The author has set himself a prodigious task in attempting to identify the various components of place and culture, idea and reality, myth and function but he does, to a large degree, succeed. It is also true that drive occasionally falls victim to detail and focus to overwide angles, but the work is never dull even at its most discursive.

Starr very rightly begins substantively with the Hispanic rancheros who, despite their fate as non-economic men, their status- rather than their goal-orientation, their Catholicism and their largely racially mixed origins, have come to serve as California's communal ancestors. It is perhaps a pity here that Starr does not investigate the cultural reverberations in the claim in Kenneth Goode's *California's Black Pioneers* that they included Pio Pico, the last Hispanic governor, though Starr might reply that he is pursuing white America's view of the period, one given major definition in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* in 1884. That sentimental yet so welcomed mixture of pro-Indian, pro-Hispanic, pro-pastoral and anti-entrepreneurial arguments reminds us that it has never been California's role to mirror realities.

This is pointed up in the title of Major Benjamin Truman's 1874 treatise *Semi-Tropical California* which helped introduce the climatic into the composite idea so inaccurately: semi-arid would have been the far better description. Such promotional tracts lead on to the entrepreneurs who had so much to do with selling the idea of southern California in particular, men of the order of Harrison Gray Otis and their writers, pre-eminently Charles Fletcher Lummis. Gray's motives are easily understood: he wished to make money from rising real-estate values. Lummis's drives were more complex, some of them shared and more obvious in the work of Joseph Pomeroy Widney, whose major preoccupation is given by the title of his 1907 work, *Race Life of the Aryan Peoples*. There were many of that generation who saw the West in general as a refuge from the mongrel hordes now sweeping into eastern cities from south-eastern Europe and some saw southern California, as Starr shows, as the new regenerative Aryan paradise. He does not, however, consider the idea which might emerge from a reading of Jackson Lears's *No Place of Grace*, that such boosters were also attracted by the possibilities of a non-industrial, antimodernist society. Antimodernism, as defined by Lears, might explain why a region so heavily populated by midwestern Protestants so easily accepted its Catholic past.

Starr deals in detail with the arts of the region with particular reference to the Arroyo culture. His

descriptions highlight the fact that the work focuses mainly on a middle-class world. There are occasional mentions of ethnic groups but little of the lower classes, something that follows from the largely literary sources used. The full descriptions of the new agriculture, especially of the orange and the grape, do not make it clear who benefited from them if showing how the region did, its image partly fixed forever in the labels on the orange boxes increasingly sent east and abroad with the advent of efficient refrigeration.

No study of what California means to the world could ignore Hollywood and Starr gives that subject two full chapters. These do not quite do the necessary job for they do not establish the form and content of the idea as held from the outside. There is too much of a jump to the chapter on Arthur

Page Brown and San Francisco architecture and the two chapters on California Progressivism needed sharper focus, while as the bibliography frankly admits, they do pay very close attention to the work of Richard Hofstadter and George E Mowry who produced their major statements in 1955 and 1958 respectively. At this point readers may feel that they are learning little new and not quite enough about why Progressive political reforms helped refine the California idea.

It would be wrong, however, to end on a negative note. There is much to be admired here; the learning, the breadth of reference, the style and the commitment to the subject are laudable. This is a worthy successor to the companion volume.

R A BURCHELL

Notes on Contributors

N J MAYHEW has been an Assistant Keeper at the Heberden Coin Room in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford since 1971. In addition to purely numismatic work his special interest lies in the application of numismatic evidence to historical problems. His recent publications include 'Frappes de monnaies et hausse des prix en Angleterre de 1180 à 1220' in *Études D'Histoire Monétaire* ed John Day, Lille, 1984, and he is currently engaged on a study of Scottish Medieval Prices.

DR MADELEINE GRAY is a former archivist who received a PhD in Welsh history from the University of Wales in 1985. She is at present based in Cardiff and works as a freelance cataloguer, researcher and lecturer. She has published several articles on local society and the property market in south-east Wales in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and is currently editing the final volume of Sir Joseph Bradney's *History of Monmouthshire* for publication by the South Wales Record Society.

DR GAVIN BOWIE works for the Hampshire County Museum Service, and is currently curator of the new Eastleigh Museum, which opened last year. He has been researching into and lecturing about aspects of modern agricultural history since 1978, mainly in his spare time. He has just completed an assessment of the role and function of watermeadows in the rural economy of Wessex, 1640-1850, and is currently investigating the world of enriching and exciting manures in English agriculture in the first half of the nineteenth century.

DR J PHILLIP DODD is editor of *Cheshire History*. His main research work has been on British agrarian history and he has published several books, the latest being *A History of Frodsham and Helsby*. He is a part-time tutor for the Department of Extension Studies, University of Liverpool. Currently he is working on Reports of the Select Committees on Agricultural Depression in their role as a medium for promoting agricultural protection.

C M ANN BAKER and her husband, PROFESSOR C MANWELL, have been until recently, members of the Department of Zoology, the University of Adelaide. Miss Baker worked for a number of years as an Advisory Officer with MAFF, and most of her research has been concerned with the genetics and evolution of domesticated animals. She is co-author of *Molecular Biology and the Origin of Species*, and an honorary member of the Australian South Devon Cattle Breeders' Association.

DAVID GRIGG has been in the Department of Geography at the University of Sheffield since 1959. His earliest research interests were in English agricultural history and *The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire* was published in 1966. After some twenty years concerned with other aspects of agricultural change his current interest is again in modern English agricultural history.

Shorter Notices

LAWRENCE STONE, *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642*. Ark, 1986. xv + 185 pp. £3.95.

Lawrence Stone's book, a well-known guide for generations of undergraduates to the upheavals of seventeenth-century England, was first published in 1972. It availed itself of the methods and terminology of the social sciences and conveniently divided its discussion under the headings of presuppositions, preconditions, precipitants and triggers. Equally confident in its handling of the socio-economic aspects of the gentry controversy and the politics of Parliament, it provided a suggestive and challenging guide to the complex related problems of the crisis in early Stuart England. Though described as a second edition the present volume is largely a reprint and is substantially the same book which appeared in 1972; only a supplement of sixteen pages — 'Second thoughts in 1985' — is new. The justification is that 'much of the new work [since the early 1970s] either supported, or at least did not directly contradict, what had been said originally, and that the areas in need of serious modification were relatively small'. Although not fundamentally untrue, a relatively brief appendix hardly provides sufficient space for a proper assessment of the incredibly prolific recent historiography of the English Revolution.

R C RICHARDSON

NIGEL HARVEY, *Historic Farm Buildings Study: Sources of Information*. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 1985. vii + 76 pp. (Obtainable from Miss Frances Campbell, MAFF, Farm Buildings Group, Great Westminster House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AE.) £5 incl p & p.

The value of standing farm buildings as evidence for agricultural history is being increasingly recognized as the buildings themselves fall increasingly under threat from obsolescence followed by demolition. There has been a feeling that official policies favoured demolition without thought of the consequences for agricultural history let alone for the preservation of the agricultural heritage. Now the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has recognized that the work of its Agricultural Development and Advisory Service should include some acknowledgement of the 'historical content' of farm buildings and has commissioned this study by Nigel Harvey to help its officials.

Mr Harvey's enquiries have revealed the existence of a substantial amount of information in published or report form on historic farm buildings and a large number of organizations and individuals engaged in their study. Inevitably some errors have crept in and

some omissions been made: for instance the first specialized conference on historic farm buildings was the meeting of the Vernacular Group in December 1966; the meeting of December 1977 was the second; the first systematic survey of historic farm buildings, that of D C G Davies submitted as a thesis in 1952, might have been mentioned; and the work of English Heritage includes much more than listing and maintenance of properties in care, for that body provides grant aid for the repair of many historic farm buildings whether ancient monuments or historic buildings. However, corrections and additions are invited and we can expect that successive editions of this valuable report will become even more comprehensive.

The report is more than a bald collection of facts and lists; it includes pertinent comments and snippets of fascinating information as well as thoughtful recommendations. All students of agricultural history through the medium of farm buildings stand in debt to Nigel Harvey for his efforts and MAFF for its sponsorship.

R W BRUNSKILL

G E MINGAY (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. Vol 1, xvi + 363 pp; 48 plates, £10.95; Vol 2, ix + 335 pp; 50 plates, £10.95.

This is an unabridged paperback edition of the two large volumes on the Victorian countryside that appeared first in hardback in 1981. The considerable reduction in price over the original should bring this collection within the price range of a number of readers who until now have had to resort to their local libraries whenever they needed to refer to it. The size and coverage of this work, with its forty contributors and forty-six chapters, encompassing all aspects of Victorian rural Britain from 'The Model Village' to 'Rural Crime and Protest', and 'Agriculture and Science' to 'Landscape in Nineteenth Century Literature', already ensure that it has a wide readership. The individual chapters are conveniently grouped into five sections which cover 'The Land', 'Agriculture and the Countryside', 'Country Towns and Industries', 'Landed Society', and 'Labouring Life'. Besides being a source of reference, these sections permit the reader a wider view of particular themes. They allow the major topics to be followed, if not in every aspect, then at least in their most important features. The fact that the sections contain between six and thirteen chapters provides the reader with a number of different perspectives for each one. There are also

three chapters that deal specifically with the issues that were of special concern for Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The standard of all sections and chapters is high, and as they are written to appeal to the layman as well as the expert this should also commend the volumes to a wide readership.

RICHARD PERREN

NOEL NEWMAN, *Recollections of seventy years' farming in Bottisham*. Staine Hundred Local History Society, 1986. 27 pp. Illus. £1 (+ £0.25 p & p).

This short tract, written by a farmer who started work on a Cambridgeshire farm just prior to the First World War, gives some interesting insights into the practical aspects of farming rotations in the Bottisham area early this century. It concentrates on the four-course system incorporating sheep folding most common in the vicinity. The text is supported by some very good photographs of subjects not frequently recorded. The style, however, is extremely brief, and is tantalizing for all that is left unsaid. Additionally, over half the work is devoted to farming practices at the turn of the century, with the vast changes effected since then, including the introduction of the tractor, being given in outline only. In all, an interesting work that could have done with much expansion and a little more organization.

ANNIE HOOD

H ST G CRAMP, *A Yeoman Farmer's Son*. Oxford Paperbacks, 1986. 182 pp. £4.95.

When this book was first published as a hardback in 1985 it was acclaimed as a sequel to *Lark Rise*. While it is not quite in the same class there are similarities. Essentially the account is a catalogue of Harold St George Cramp's memories of growing up as a yeoman farmer's son and of the village community which formed his environment between the First World War and 1930. The book supports those agricultural historians who hold that the yeoman farmer survived and, in some cases, thrived into the present century. Some interesting details of farming practice are given; the continuing existence of the barter system, the relationship between yeoman seller and dealer buyer, the use of luck money, and the importance of the milk cheque are all graphically described. Both the thrift and the opportunism of the yeoman farmer are highlighted. One of the main impacts of the book is the underlying optimism despite the frequent voicing of despair by Yeoman Cramp. As his son explains, 'Farmers have a perverse philosophy: trouble or its prospect make delightful conversation when you know that you're basically safe.'

The author seeks to make the book a literary as

well as an historical work. Washday meant that the orchard 'looked as if the mainmast of a full-rigged sailing ship had collapsed across it', and there are some memorable phrases: 'The Great War scratched at our calm for a time.' Repetition occurs in several places and by the end of the account this becomes irritating.

Generally the book is easy to read and may well achieve popularity. For the agricultural historian, however, it provides no new insights and will take its place with the increasing number of anecdotal accounts of our recent rural past.

C S HALLAS

E CSIZMADIA and M SZÉKELY, *Food Economy in Hungary*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1986. 218 pp. £12.50.

It has to be said that this book is something of a struggle. It is a struggle primarily, and most regrettably, because of the translation, which is not by a native English speaker and is often impenetrable and peppered with interesting and occasionally amusing neologisms. It is further marred by some unnecessary exposition of Marxist-Leninist theory and a generally pedestrian style.

This said, for those interested in Hungarian agriculture, the struggle is worth it. The book contains a wealth of statistical material about Hungarian agricultural performance and a thorough presentation of the financial regulators governing state and cooperative farms. There is also a full discussion of issues such as the role of small-scale family farms, the efficacy of farm partnerships and joint ventures, 'technically-oriented production systems', pricing policy, vertical integration, and the pattern of state procurement. The book certainly does not belittle Hungary's achievements, but neither does it ignore its failures. The discussion of farm efficiency and productivity is particularly telling.

The publishers claim that the book will be of interest to a wider audience of Third World readers, yet the book is weakest at explaining which policy factors led to Hungary's agricultural success. A straightforward historical account such as Ferenc Donáth's *Reform and Revolution* (Budapest, 1980) is more suited to this purpose. Nevertheless, as a complete and up-to-date English language source book on the state of Hungarian agriculture in the mid 1980s, Csizmadia and Székely's book is excellent.

NIGEL SWAIN