

Book Reviews

R. H. BRITNELL, *The Commercialisation of English Society 1000-1500*, CUP, 1992. xiv + 273 pp. 3 figs; 5 tables. £30.

This book makes an important contribution to our understanding of social and economic change in the Middle Ages, and henceforth everyone working on the period must read and use it. Its arguments are too complex to be adequately summarized in a review. Britnell analyses and explains the main developments in economy, society, and government in half a millenium, based on wide reading of the voluminous historical literature, much of it produced in the last thirty years, and on a remarkable knowledge of primary sources. The period is divided into three sections, 1000-1180, 1180-1330, and 1330-1500, and each of these in turn is examined under the headings 'Markets and rules', 'Trade and specialisation', and 'Lordship'. Much of the discussion is naturally concerned with markets, towns, and trade, but the agricultural economy and social relations in the countryside figure prominently in the argument, so this is very much a book for agrarian historians.

An important theme is the transformation in commercial life between the eleventh and thirteenth century – indeed, a change concentrated mainly within the period 1180-1260. The underdeveloped state of the market economy in the eleventh and much of the twelfth centuries is emphasized. England lacked a close network of formal markets; many payments were still made in kind, and obligations discharged by service; and insecurity of property rights inhibited commercial development. In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries the trading network was extended with the proliferation of chartered markets and new towns. The amount of currency in circulation greatly increased. Agricultural production for sale expanded, and a growing security of tenure and market regulations gave people the confidence to buy and sell. There was development also in the land market and the labour market. After 1330 the trends seem more contradictory. Britnell insists that this was a period of commercial contraction, though he resists the notion that it saw much urban decline, other than the shrinkage occasioned by the reduced population. He stresses the gains in productivity, personal freedom, and the tendency for farming for the market to be conducted increasingly by those below the ranks of the lords, but doubts whether there was any more capitalism in this period than in the thirteenth century.

The importance of this interpretation of the period is that it marks a move away from demo-

graphic explanations which have influenced us so much in the last forty years. Britnell often compares the eleventh with the fifteenth century: these were periods with similar levels of population, yet with very different economies, because the commercial development of the period 1180-1260 could not be reversed – the market network persisted, together with the economic behaviour associated with it. Britnell modestly suggests that he is reviving an older pre-Postan view of the period, associated with such names as Gras and Lipson, but his late twentieth-century approach is very different from that of those worthy pioneers. Britnell focuses less on the institutions that fascinated them and more on the experience of the people involved in economic change. And his new view of commercialization is more coloured by concepts of social domination than earlier notions of natural market growth.

Some attempts at generalization about long term social and economic change can be glib and reductionist. This book refuses to gloss over the complexities of the period, though it helps the reader by highlighting the main trends. Its quality lies in its capacity to make the reader stop and think. The insight, for example, that thirteenth-century peasants sold a higher proportion of their crops than did the lords from their demesnes is bound to offend the prejudices of those brought up on 'high farming' and 'federated grain factories', yet as expounded here it must be correct. Similarly, the notion that lords were progressively hedged about with rules and restrictions in the period 1180-1330 is not the conventional view of the social and political history of the period – and yet it stands up to closer scrutiny.

A book packed with so many generalizations and interpretations is bound to raise critical questions at one point or another. This reader felt uneasy about the assessment of the market before 1180, perhaps because it is based too much on a literal interpretation of the formal evidence for markets, when informal trade may have been more active. Similarly, one feels that Britnell's view of the period after 1330 is excessively negative, and gives insufficient weight to structural change. But it is a measure of the book's quality that in order to formulate a disagreement one has to take account of a formidable array of logical reasoning, backed up by a convincing battery of supporting information.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

MARJORIE KENISTON MCINTOSH, *A Community Transformed: The Manor and Liberty of Havering, 1500-1620*, CUP, 1991. xviii + 489pp. 10 figs. £50.

Essex has been fortunate in the survival of its records, its record office and the historians that have been attracted to work on its history. Having begun as an early modernist, Marjorie McIntosh found that she needed to become a medievalist to understand the early modern history of Havering. Her account of medieval Havering (*Autonomy and Community: the Royal Manor of Havering, 1200-1500*) appeared in 1986. This volume carries the story down to 1620 with a glance towards the eighteenth century. Sometimes one detects a medievalist's priorities. *A Community Transformed* is an attempt to write a comprehensive and total history which is both informed and sophisticated. There are chapters on 'Life and death', 'Changing economic patterns', 'Religion', one on other aspects of social change, and finally two on the jurisdiction and politics of the manor and liberty. It is richly documented, perhaps too much so, and I came to feel that it is a work to be read selectively rather than in its entirety.

The chapter on the family shows the McIntosh technique at its best: the interweaving of extensive tabulated material with striking anecdote and carefully worked out narrative. Her account of agriculture and economic life I found less satisfying. There is excellent material on the function of Romford market, but the sources for the history of landholding are not terribly good. Because the crown barely functioned as a landowner in Havering in the later Middle Ages, its own records are inadequate (the survey and map of 1618 are problematic), and large areas of land passed out of its control to become freehold submanors. The registration of land transactions was not compulsory, rentals or surveys of the submanors have survived but infrequently. (I remain sceptical of the comparison of 'acres' in the 1352-3 extent with those used in a survey of 1617 on pp 109-10, table 2.5 and other locations.) The penetration of the Havering landmarket by Londoners is well shown as well as the high turnover of resident families. The discussion of social control, where the number of cases concerning sexual misdemeanours increases abruptly after 1576 (coincidentally with the death of Sir Anthony Cooke) raised for me the twin questions of whether they really indicated any increased concern with deviant behaviour, and what Cooke had been doing *informally* to punish such behaviour in his lifetime.

The section of the book which I enjoyed most is perhaps that which is least obviously interesting,

the gradual decline of Havering's civil and criminal jurisdictions and their transfer to the central courts or the Essex Quarter Sessions. Here we have an early contribution to what will surely become a central element in the debate on the nature of power in early modern society and replacement of the self-regulating community by central courts, staffed by professional lawyers. In the case of the manor court, we are shown how the arbitration of cases was replaced by the jury trial, and the trial of felonies was abandoned. It met less frequently. The homage came to be formed of landowners to the exclusion of yeomen and craftsmen. The court of the Liberty of Havering seems to have been active whilst Sir Anthony Cooke lived, but after his death the Quarter Sessions quickly established their dominance over the criminal business from the liberty.

The puzzle is why the inhabitants acted cohesively to protect their liberties in the fifteenth century, but allowed them to atrophy in the sixteenth. It is clear that nobody in Havering was terribly bothered and that the liberty's own officers were instrumental in opening the liberty to the Quarter Sessions. It may also be that they brought its downfall by exhibiting partiality to litigants, poor standards of record keeping, and, in 1607, commencing litigation in Star Chamber over the election of a JP.

Havering is far from unique in making this switch from local to national jurisdictions. The question here, and elsewhere in the book, is whether Havering may justly be called precocious and if so, by how much. There was certainly a great increase over the sixteenth century in the number of cases in the London courts from all parts of the country (C W Brooks, *Pettyfoggers and Vipers of the Commonwealth*, 1986, table p 51), but much of this is doubtless an increase in litigation overall rather than a switch between jurisdictions. The explanation for Havering's surrender of its liberties may lie in a general explanation of social change rather than the particular circumstances of the liberty.

I also felt that the shortage of comparative reference left unresolved the question of whether ancient demesne tenure aided the precocious commercial development of Havering. I am not convinced that this was a prime determinant in Havering's development, but the work on other areas of London's commercial hinterland which might decide this point remains to be undertaken. It would be a shame if the claim of precocity was allowed to pass unchallenged, worse still if it discouraged others from reading the book. For those in sympathy with the author's aims, it is a challenging and thought provoking work.

R W HOYLE

DAVID LEVINE and KEITH WRIGHTSON, *The Making of an Industrial Society: Wickham, 1560-1765*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991. xxi + 456 pp. £45.

Wickham was 'an industrial parish in a pre-industrial age'. Situated on the southern bank of the Tyne across the river from Newcastle it was at the geographical and economic heart of the north-east coalfield. It is thus both the first northern parish and the first truly industrial parish to be the subject of an intensive early modern 'community study'. More specifically this book is 'an attempt to reconstruct the making of Britain's first industrialised society' (p vii). Wrightson and Levine have a distinguished track-record in writing this kind of history and on the whole this new addition to their work maintains the high standards of its predecessors.

Elizabethan Wickham was essentially an agrarian community. Coal had been mined in the parish since the Middle Ages but towards the end of the sixteenth century, and especially during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, mining developed at a 'prodigious' rate in response to demand, particularly from London. After 1578 the right to mine coal was transferred from the bishop of Durham to the crown who promptly sold the rights to a group of Newcastle merchants who eagerly exploited their opportunity. Mining activity declined somewhat during the remainder of the seventeenth century, but renewed activity occurred at the turn of the eighteenth century, when Ambrose Crowley opened an ironworks in the parish in 1707, and the development of the wagonway system facilitated the extension of the mining area.

Mining development dominated the economic and social history of the parish. Traditional agriculture was severely disrupted by mining, most dramatically when mining activity spoiled and devastated agricultural land. It is not surprising therefore that the copyholders were in conflict with the coal-owners, and by the mid-seventeenth century they had lost the battle to retain their rights. As farm sizes became more polarized, patterns of agricultural production also changed as farmers moved towards the keeping of oxen and horses for the haulage of coal.

Social change followed in the wake of economic change. A new class of 'Gentleman Copyholders' emerged and the village became dominated by a new population of wage-dependent and highly mobile industrial workers. The outcome was a society more socially differentiated, and one with new institutions; for example, the Halmote or manorial court was replaced by Vestry. Yet the

community did not break down under these stresses: it was not subject to 'social dislocation'.

Studies of this kind are crucially dependent on the survival of adequate historical sources and many of the disappointments in the book are simply a consequence of the silence of the historical record, particularly before the eighteenth century. We have no information on the number and location of pits in the village, the amount of coal they produced, the detailed technology of coal production, or the size of the workforce and the wages they earned. In particular the pitmen themselves left few personal documents such as wills or inventories. Inevitably therefore, the discussion sometimes lacks the detail that is the hallmark of a local study. At other times a very heavy burden of interpretation is put on fragmented and ambiguous evidence. The historical experience of the parish itself also makes for difficulties of historical analysis. The family reconstitution of the parish relies on only a small proportion of the families because levels of migration were so high and in consequence its results may be more subject to bias.

Despite these problems with their sources, the authors maintain their high standard of scholarship in a book which is well-written and easy to read. Not only does it provide a particular account of the development of a coalfield parish, for if the authors are correct in asserting that 'parochial diversity was subordinate to a common experience' (p 429), then it could also to some extent be representative of the north-east coalfield as a whole.

MARK OVERTON

MICHAEL LESLIE and TIMOTHY RAYLOR, ed, *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England. Writing and the Land*. Leicester UP, Leicester, 1992. xiii + 241 pp. 21 figs. £35.

The essays in this collection are mostly based on the Hartlib Papers housed at the University of Sheffield, which are being transcribed and edited through funding from the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. Apart from Joan Thirsk, who has written the first essay, the contributors are specialists in English literature. All are concerned with the relationship between writing on husbandry and actual practice.

This relationship has long been one of Joan Thirsk's principal concerns. Here she develops her Neale lecture of 1982 to identify some of the sources for the new ideas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She demonstrates the influence of the writings of Cato, Varro, Columella and Palladius, which made their first impact in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and whose popularity can be judged by the fact that surviving copies are often underlined and annotated. She goes on to

show how native writers on husbandry, starting with Fitzherbert in 1523, followed paths opened up by the classical writers by producing popular manuals during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

If the manuals appear to have been well-read, identifying their readers has proved troublesome. Much work remains to be done in local archive collections detecting brief references to such books. One such source which has not been noticed here is 'A note of all my bookes taken October 24 1633', in which Samuel Bower, the minister of Warmsworth, South Yorkshire, includes works which can be identified as Gervase Markham on husbandry, William Lawson on orchards and Charles Butler on bees, together with the *Faithful Farrier* and possibly Fitzherbert. Bower had a circle of friends in neighbouring parishes to whom he loaned his books. (See D Postles, 'The memoranda book of Samuel Bower', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 56, 1984, pp 119-29.) Such circulating private libraries were probably a major way of diffusing ideas.

Agricultural historians will surely welcome the interest of literature specialists in tracing and proving such connections, in considering the intellectual climate in which manuals were published and discussed, and in the textual criticism of the works of John Evelyn, John Beale, and Thomas Carew. In the second essay of this collection Andrew McRae shows that the gentry who returned to demesne farming felt comfortable with classical texts which emphasized the role of the 'house father' who was concerned with both 'profit and pleasure', but he goes on to challenge the assumption that gentlemen comprised 'the bulk of the readers'. Although Fitzherbert and Heresbach appear in the libraries of gentlemen and noblemen, some of the high-selling texts are conspicuously absent. Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, which went through twenty-three editions in eighty-one years (making it one of the fifteen most popular books in Elizabethan England), is not recorded in the published catalogues of major private libraries of this period. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Tusser was read lower down the social scale: his style suggests that he aimed at this end of the market.

That remarkable man Samuel Hartlib was involved in many of the innovations and publications of the Interregnum years. His importance as an agricultural 'improver' is well known. Yet clearly there is still much to learn about him. In an interesting essay Timothy Raylor considers Hartlib's book on *The Reformed Common-wealth of Bees*, published in 1655. Raylor argues that Hartlib's bee-keeping project was not a whimsical irrelevance but a serious economic proposition in response to

the difficulties faced by the sugar trade. Bees could flourish in the English climate, they needed little attention and were cheap to keep. Thousands of hives across the country would help solve unemployment and poverty and reduce the trade deficit. Nor were the advantages merely economic. To the Hartlib circle bees were a unique natural source of divine wisdom and a model for humanity. Of impeccable character, they combined the virtues of sound economists and good husbandmen.

The different perspectives and interpretive techniques of the specialists in English literature (together with the recent work of archaeologists on the layout of formal gardens) undoubtedly add a great deal to our knowledge of agriculture, horticulture and silviculture in early-modern England. This interdisciplinary collection of essays offers many insights into the intellectual climate of the 'improvers' and opens up many new paths of enquiry. Samuel Hartlib would have approved of the eclectic approach of this circle of scholars.

DAVID HEY

JOHN CHAPMAN, *A Guide to Parliamentary Enclosures in Wales*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1992. 200 pp. 2 maps. £12.95.

By comparison with England's 5341 parliamentary enclosures, the 229 enacted for Wales were generally late, some 50 per cent taking place after 1840, and rarely involved the enclosure of open field, there being little open field in Wales by the second half of the eighteenth century. In his introduction to this volume, John Chapman speculates on the circumstances underlying the halting, gradual and partial adoption of the parliamentary mechanism for the enclosure of the commons and wastelands of Wales. Among those identified are the continuing tradition of enclosure by agreement, a lack of appropriate expertise among those in Welsh society who might have been expected to serve as commissioners and surveyors, and a general ignorance among Welsh landowners of the required parliamentary procedures, the last two conditions exacerbated by Wales' necessarily limited participation in the early phases of parliamentary enclosure directed to the enclosure of arable open field. Maps showing the Principality's enclosure acts and awards by date draw attention to marked local and regional variations in enclosure chronology which, Chapman suggests, are only likely to be explained by local studies focused particularly on the activities and attitudes of landowners within those areas.

The major part of the volume comprises a handlist of Welsh parliamentary enclosures. Recognizing the need to improve on earlier inaccurate or incomplete listings by Bowen and Dodd, Chapman has sought to provide for Wales a work

comparable in scope with that already available for England in Michael Turner's edition of W E Tate's *Domesday of English Parliamentary Enclosures*, published in 1978. Some differences of presentation arise from the contrasting experience of the two countries. Thus Chapman presents a single list for each ancient county of Wales: he does not follow Tate in listing separately different categories of enclosure, most significantly those which involved open field and those which did not. But the main differences between the two works arise from the fact that Chapman, with only 229 enclosures, is able to present more information about each than was possible in Tate's *Domesday*. In addition to the information common to both volumes (act and award dates, acreages, and present locations of awards), Chapman identifies commissioners ('valuers' for enclosures carried out under the 1845 General Act) and surveyors where known, and lists the principal allottees and amounts allotted, and the location of any surviving papers. Analytical sections provide a full alphabetical directory of all the commissioners acting in Welsh enclosures and a county-by-county summary of acreages enclosed. Although these acreage totals depend in part on estimates, Chapman believes that the total Welsh parliamentary enclosure acreage of 525,880 given here is nearer the truth than his earlier estimate of 1.18 million acres based on the inflation of results from a small and, it turns out, unrepresentative sample of enclosures.

This volume will be widely welcomed by Welsh historians and by those interested in the history of enclosure more generally, for both of whom it will become a standard work of reference. The research on which the volume is based has clearly been wide-ranging and meticulous, although a misplaced heading which apparently locates many of the Pembrokeshire enclosures in Radnor, and a listing for commissioner John Matthews, born 1733 died 1848, point to some lack of care on the part of either author or publisher in the matter of proof reading.

JOHN R WALTON

ADRIAN HALL, *Fenland Worker-Peasants: The Economy of Smallholders at Rippingale, Lincolnshire, 1791-1871*, Supplement Series, 1, of the *Agricultural History Review*, British Agricultural History Society, 1992. 62 pp. £10.

This publication is very welcome, both for itself and as the first of a new series of 15-30,000 word essays to be published by the British Agricultural History Society. It will help to counteract the impression held in some quarters that the society is too closely associated with the development of capitalist farming, and not enough concerned with

broader rural history. There are two distinct parts to the monograph - the first twenty-three pages summarize some of the debate about the English peasantry and set up a general model which is then tested against some of the evidence available for a parish in south-west Lincolnshire (thirty-seven pages).

Rippingale is typical of the long string of villages on the west side of the Lincolnshire fens, which had a foot in each of two land-use zones: arable on the upland, pasture on the fen. Rippingale may be somewhat distinctive in increasing its pasture acreage after enclosure, since fen drainage made arable farming much easier in the fen. It is also probably distinctive in having been a parish of small farms and small holdings despite being very largely in the ownership of a single important absentee proprietor (Heathcote).

Nevertheless, Rippingale chooses itself for such a study because ten estate rentals and surveys at well-spaced intervals between 1720 and 1871 provide a comprehensive view of farming. These records have been combined with wills and inventories, glebe terriers, the enclosure award of 1803, the census enumerators' books of 1841 and 1851 and crop returns of the late 1860s.

No use has been made of the censuses of 1861-71 and the parish registers, and little use has been made of the trade directories and the land tax assessments (which in this case run down to 1838). These sources would have deepened the analysis, but might have taken the study beyond the bounds of a booklet of this length. It is also worth saying that Adrian Hall's research period was truncated because he left history teaching for the information technology industry, so one is grateful to him and his mentors for rescuing work already accomplished.

In the long continuum between landless labourers and capitalist farmers in Rippingale there survived into the last quarter of last century a third group of families the author prefers to call worker-peasants. A few were craftsmen or tradesmen with little or no land, but most were dual occupationists: either small holders who also worked on other men's land, or trades/craftsmen with land. Hall has divided the group into five categories in an extended and important piece of analysis, which could have been presented better if more use had been made of tabulations.

Hall also makes out a good case for the survival of a peasantry similar to that on the continent, provided that exact parallels are not expected. Thus, for example, the balance between subsistence and market-oriented production in the two situations is difficult to know. Moreover, even given the potential of many revisionist case studies of this kind, it is difficult to imagine that the macro-economic

contrasts between England and much of the continent will ever disappear.

Nevertheless, for some historians the survival of anything resembling a 'peasantry' in the nineteenth century is still perhaps a news item: the news from Rippingale is therefore very welcome. It would have been still more interesting if the author had been able to give us his views on some other aspects of the 'peasant' debate, such as that recently published in the *Journal of Peasant Studies* (and now in book form), the work of Alan Macfarlane, and of various authors in R. M. Smith's *Land, Kinship and Lifecycle*.

A wide variety of historians and geographers will find it useful to have this monograph on their shelves and one hopes they are not too put off by the price of £10 for sixty-two pages. Your reviewer suggests to librarians that they should catalogue the booklet as a free-standing item, rather than letting it get relatively lost within a run of the *Agricultural History Review*.

DENNIS MILLS

ROBERT WOODS, *The Population of Britain in the Nineteenth Century*, Macmillan (Studies in Economic and Social History), 1992. 88 pp. £5.75

In this well-known series, population trends in modern Britain were surveyed initially in M. W. Flinn's *British Population Growth 1700-1850* (1970) and Rosalind Mitchison's *British Population Growth since 1860* (1977). The former came to the end of its useful life with the publication in 1981 of the findings of the Cambridge Group, in *The Population History of England 1541-1871* by Wrigley and Schofield; and the latter, though a highly competent demographic survey, was not conspicuously successful in setting the trends in a broader historical context. The decision of the editors to commission this title is timely, and they could not have found a more capable specialist to do the job than Robert Woods, an historical geographer whose own research has done so much to illuminate the subject in recent years.

The book begins with a brief discussion of the demography of Malthus's Britain, concurring with the recent tendency towards the rehabilitation of the father of population studies, who could not have foreseen the changes which the nineteenth century would bring. This is followed by chapters on sources and on migration, where the author stresses that much remains to be discovered about the operation of push and pull influences, the extent to which entire families were involved, and the 'stepped' nature of the movement. Next, marriage patterns are discussed. The central place ascribed to buoyant nuptiality in the later eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries by Wrigley and Schofield is accepted, and Woods shows (with reference to contrasting counties such as Durham, Norfolk and Wiltshire) that regional variations were very marked during its subsequent diminution. However, the late nineteenth-century fertility decline was primarily a consequence of falling marital fertility: the various theories that purport to explain this are reviewed, with the author leaning towards the more sociological approaches of writers such as Banks, rather than relying on mechanistic explanations centring on industrialization, urbanization, or a prior fall in infant or child mortality. On mortality in general, McKeown calls the tune: however, his work is discussed in the light of more recent research, and much more regional research is necessary before we can confidently attach precise weights to the various factors of improvement at work.

This conclusion epitomizes the book. As a result of recent advances in demographic history we are now much better informed about historical population trends, but commensurate advances in our understanding of causation have yet to be realized. As a neat summary of the present state of play, Wood's book is excellent. Technical complications are as far as possible subdued and every opportunity is taken to encourage a more disaggregated approach. In this agenda, historians with rural interests clearly have a large part to play. While the amount of space allocated here to rural areas cannot be large, Woods makes a number of points of interest to readers of this journal. These include the effects of heavy emigration on rural marriage rates (pp 41-2), and confirmation that infant mortality in agricultural labourers' families was very low and declining - he is, however, probably the first to make the point that it was falling less rapidly than in other social classes in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

W. A. ARMSTRONG

ROGER WELLS, ed, *Victorian Village. The Diaries of the Reverend John Coker Egerton, Curate and Rector of Burwash, East Sussex, 1857-88*, Alan Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1992. 369 pp. £16.99 (hbk); £9.99 (pbk).

This book contains 9 per cent of the diaries, with an excellent commentary taking up about 40 per cent of the book's length. Extracts for each year are followed by the relevant footnotes, requiring readers to keep track in two sets of pages at once. Footnotes at the bottom of each page, or comments in distinctive type within the text would have been preferable. Use of the book for research purposes will be inhibited by the absence of an index. There

are twenty-nine photographs, but these are not keyed into the text, and their captions are minimal.

Burwash was a large parish in the Weald, with three settlement nuclei and many scattered dwellings. Originally a market town, it stood on a major highway and was still a service village. Many residents were classic dual occupationists, combining trades and crafts with farming. Roger Wells has already made Burwash widely known as a centre of popular politics and protest in earlier decades of the century, and this vein continued in Egerton's time.

In one sense Egerton was a typical Victorian parson: a scion of a landowning family (in Cheshire), an Oxford graduate, and an appointee of his uncle who had bought the Burwash advowson. In other ways he was unusual: a close observer of all his flock, sympathetic to their needs but not romantic or gullible; a man who called himself the village 'boss', but did not take himself over seriously. He would join the villagers at play and in physical labour, despite being overweight.

His diaries have little to say about farming, except for the particular problems of hop growing and harvesting, and of tithes on hops. However, a very wide range of other rural topics appears. Obviously he recorded the affairs of his church: the services, the choir, church rates, Anglican groups, and many visitations. The latter let us into the lives, present and past, of many parishioners. In addition, Egerton was much involved in the maintenance of law and order, the business of the Guardians, the school, the running of a friendly society, the encouragement of emigration, local politics, and many other village activities and issues. His style is pithy and the selection of extracts has made them readable and informative without being over repetitive.

Most entries pass without editorial comment, for example, only sixteen notes for 1877, but they are sometimes longer than this review. In effect, the notes are an embryo book in themselves, but their structure is a slave to the diaries. So it is to be hoped that Roger Wells will go a step further and write his own book about Victorian Burwash. Meanwhile readers can enjoy themselves at modest cost.

DENNIS MILLS

BRIAN SHORT, ed, *The English Rural Community. Image and Analysis*, CUP, 1992. ix + 239 pp. £12.95 (pbk).

This is very much a product of the University of Sussex, based as it is on a lecture course given there under the leadership of Brian Short. I suppose to many Sussex University is at first glance an ivory tower *par excellence*, its campus set in the South Downs with a fine county town at its back door.

Yet circumstance has gathered there a group of scholars who have been prepared to look critically at the green and pleasant land that is their milieu.

All the essays focus on the image and reality of the English countryside, for at times many of the authors exceed their brief of just dealing with rural communities. For this welcome, wider critical perspective, we must surely thank the clear but generous direction of the book's editor. Short's opening essay and his own contribution on the long-term evolution of differences within the settlements and landscapes of the English countryside set the tone for the rest of the volume. And by 'long term', Short considers both long term structural processes and historical context. This is not a volume of essays on the history of the English countryside with an epilogue dealing with the post-war rural Britain tacked on at the end.

Amongst the other essays, I particularly liked John Lowerson's essay on the mystical geography of the English countryside. The tension between the old and new religions through time is revealed in a most stimulating manner. The significance of places like Glastonbury for Christians and New Age travellers, and the contestation between different groups over such places are topics which will bear much more examination thanks to Lowerson's starting point. I found Stuart Laing's essay on images of the rural in popular culture on the other hand disappointing. This again is an under-researched area – the rural soap operas have still to attract the proper attention of academics. Laing also neglected the links between popular culture and advertising and the media. The final essay in the book by Susan Wright introduces us to the new and exciting work on gender, civil society and locality in a clear and succinct way.

The paperback edition looks like an archetypal coffee-table product – a Victorian painting on the cover, plenty of photographs, though it is a pity some of the photographs, particularly the Dixon Manor series, could not have been in colour. In packaging it reminds one of the recent Mingay three volume set on the English countryside. But that is where the similarity stops. This time the unsuspecting reader who purchases this volume will learn a great deal about the English and their countryside. For this CUP, Brian Short and his collaborators are to be congratulated for bringing substantive and critical issues about community and country life to a wider audience.

ANDREW CHARLESWORTH

N J G POUNDS, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales: A Social and Political History*, CUP, 1991. xvii + 358 pp. 87 figs; 6 plates. £30.

M W THOMPSON, *The Decline of the Castle*, CUP, 1987. viii + 212 pp. 114 illus. £17.50.

Although from the same press, these two books would seem to have been independent in their commissioning and editorial oversight. The later-period work was completed in 1986 and emerged first, in time to appear in the footnote references of the other, completed in 1990, and a time-lag of review allocation and execution allows both to be reviewed here together. Their heavy binding and high-quality paper might suggest that we have yet more coffee table castle-books but in fact each is a work of scholarship, solid in every sense, but varied in approach and presentation.

Pounds' study manages to escape its card-index origins in an impressive trawl of the printed archive sources and the specialist literature. This is achieved partly by successfully communicating the enthusiasm that sustained a lifetime amateur interest which was maintained from transatlantic bases, like the exiled Jacobite dreaming by the Arno of his lovelier Tees; and partly by the freshness of the arrangement of even very familiar subject matter. One notes in particular the very original mapping of data, in the best tradition of the Cambridge school of historical geographers with their motto for the Middle Ages since Pelham and Darby in 1936: 'if it moves, map it'.

Although castles had their times of siege when the principal agrarian function was a place for safeguarding beasts and provisions, Pounds sets their history in a context of much longer periods of peace, when castles fall more within the precinct of this *Review*, as orchards yield their fruit, moats are fished, rabbits breed in the castle warrens on the slopes, moatside meadows are mown, parkland grazed and the castles share with the manor houses the role of administrative headquarters for seignorial demesnes. The claim to be a social history is fully justified.

Thompson, after years of service as Inspector and guardian of the King's Works in two kingdoms, relaxes from excavation reports to produce a series of essays, less encyclopaedic than Pounds, so that the overlap of subject is the less serious. The essays are research-based, and the six pages of footnotes are not confined (as they are in Pounds) to printed sources. There is a select bibliography (which would have been useful in Pounds, which has nine blank pages at the end, to clear some of the thickets in the 41 pages of his footnotes). The illustrations, oddly not listed on the contents pages, are varied, and correctly claimed as 'chosen to further under-

standing of the text rather than purposefully to beautify it'. There are three referenced appendices: one listing those castles already derelict in the fifteenth century; another, the state of decline in those mentioned by Leland in the middle of the next century; and a third the 'slightings' and Parliamentary demolitions of 1642-60.

The 'decline' in the title is treated not simply as a matter of obsolescent military technology but as a social transformation with a long nostalgic continuation into a period of domestic peace. There is an interesting comparative treatment of the role of the château in the French countryside.

In the Middle Ages a peasant pawn might marvel at the contrast between his cot and the crenellated castles on the English chessboard. In a later century did not Bunyan's Pilgrim view Doubting Castle – a site not to be found in either of these books – rather less respectfully? Thompson's final 'Nostalgia' chapter deals with the Gothic renaissance, and concludes in this century with a pawn – promoted to a rook through the profits of grocery – who built his private Disneyland fantasies in the Devonshire countryside at Castle Drogo.

MAURICE BERESFORD

ROBIN GLASSCOCK, ed, *Historic Landscapes of Britain*, CUP, 1992. 256 pp. 4 maps; 125 plates. £29.95.

This is the latest in a long line of books to use the best from the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs. It consists of an introduction and eight chapters, written by the editor and six other historical geographers, and takes us chronologically from prehistoric and Roman to modern landscapes of Britain. Each chapter is illustrated by between ten and eighteen air photographs, some of which, having been taken up to fifty years ago, are now historical documents in their own right.

Not all the air photographs are successful. There is a tendency to use many high-level/total landscapes which fade out in the distance and lose clarity. There are also a number of high verticals which are reproduced at a small scale and thus consequently not easy to understand. The contrast between these and the single-site low-level obliques, for which the Cambridge Collection is rightly famous, is marked. Most of the latter are superb, for example the visually striking and highly informative view of watermeadows at Britford, Wiltshire. Others, like the view of the prehistoric Scamridge Dykes, Yorkshire, while being excellent photographs tell us little.

Though the editor claims that the photographs are integrated in the text, this is not really so. As a result the only real explanation for most of them lies in the, inevitably, short captions. This is a pity, for one of the basic problems of air photographs is

that they are, by their very nature, non-selective and thus to achieve their proper value as historical documents they need to be interpreted. By themselves air photographs will only confuse or baffle those for whom they are not an every-day research tool. Here, the enormous value of the four interpretive line drawings which accompany a handful of the photographs only points up the lack of them elsewhere. Though, unlike the earlier volumes in this series, the book is not explicitly designed as a commentary on the air photographs, there is still a need to explain what the photographs actually show. The text rarely seems to relate to the accompanying photographs except, sadly for the readers of this journal, in chapter seven which is mainly concerned with Victorian urbanization and wherein lie two of the four explanatory diagrams. This is not to say that the text is poor. All the chapters give the current historical geographer's view of the British landscape and they are full of perceptive ideas and thoughtful insights.

The fact that the photographs are only referred to in the chapters they are set in and never related to other places, no matter what they show, leads to oddities. Thus, in the chapter on Georgian Britain a splendid photograph of Holkham Hall is used to illustrate the section on designed landscape. The caption interprets the plan of the 1734 house by Kent and also mentions the surrounding park by Brown. Yet the most obvious feature, the elaborate garden of c 1850 around the house, by Nesfield, is not mentioned. Likewise the excellent picture of the flight of locks at Devizes, Wiltshire, illustrates the advances in communication in the eighteenth century. But the caption ignores the huge railway embankment of the 1850s, now abandoned, which tells us as much of the unfulfilled hopes of the Victorian burghers of Devizes as of the collapse of rural transport in this century.

Despite these criticisms this is still a very useful book. This reviewer would certainly recommend it to undergraduates and extra-mural students as an excellent introduction to many of the problems of the history of the British landscape. For the rest of us – we can lie back and enjoy the views.

C TAYLOR

KATHERINE BARKER and ROGER KAIN, eds, *Maps and History in South-West England*, Exeter Studies in History, 31, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1991. xii + 148 pp. £8.95.

One by-product of the establishment of the University of Exeter's Centre for South-Western Historical Studies has been a steady stream of attractively produced and modestly priced collections of conference papers, of which *Maps and History in South-West England* is the latest. The most

engaging essay in the collection is William Ravenhill's on 'The South West in the eighteenth-century re-mapping of England'. Here he points out that Cornwall (though why?) was the first English county 'to be released from the trammels of ... cartographic bondage' imposed by the copying and vulgarization of Saxton's surveys during the seventeenth century, and that in the south-west as a whole there was a good deal of activity during the eighteenth-century cartographic revolution, as one might expect in a still heavily commercialized region. The histories which Ravenhill's maps illuminate tend to be of the cultural and military kind. Maps of types more useful to agricultural historians, and themselves often products of change in the countryside, are discussed here in chapters by John Chapman (enclosure), Roger Kain, Richard Oliver and Jennifer Baker (tithe), and Richard Oliver again (Ordnance Survey), all containing much of value to readers of this *Review*. For example, Chapman notes that enclosure maps are complex and varied documents because enclosure itself was a long drawn out process with many local variations, not least in the south-west; the authors on tithe maps give a valuable tabular summary of features, many of them agricultural, shown on the uniquely rich collection of surveys for the region; Oliver successfully finds much of interest in the history of the Ordnance Survey in the four south-western counties, including a map made by the Board of Ordnance in the 1780s (well before the foundation of the OS) showing the countryside around Plymouth and apparently with complete details of field boundaries.

Two chapters deal with maps from particular estates. Katherine Barker has the hardest job of all: to decode the messages carried on a highly unusual 'area map' of part of north Dorset, richly pictorial, rather random in content and corresponding to no known administrative area. But she modestly untangles the tangle, at least in part, by suggesting that the map could have been used as an *aide mémoire* by officials of the bishop of Salisbury (who had many manors and rights within the area), more specifically to assist in the perpetuation of manor boundaries and rights of common. Graham Haslam provides an excellent account, with much previously unpublished information, of the surveyors of the duchy of Cornwall from John Norden onwards. There are, though, two odd statements here. One (p 63) is that some surveyors did not show farm buildings on their maps because 'landlords had no interest in ... fixed capital assets'. Landlords *did* have an interest in the buildings of their tenants, because their quality affected rentals; surveyors did give details of buildings in some written surveys and they did often show them in

plan or perspective on their maps; moreover, agricultural historians and students of vernacular architecture may use these drawings for they can be reasonably accurate. It is also odd to read (p.60) that resident landowners with manors close at hand were the least likely to commission estate maps because of personal knowledge of their local fiefs. This is not borne out by the facts; moreover there was more to the commissioning of these maps than a simple desire to record, for was not many an English estate office symbolically adorned with the cartographic equivalents of those 'enormous pictures ... rustic art from the previous century ... the wealth of centuries transmuted into ornament' which the Prince of Lampedusa gazed wistfully upon in the office at the Villa Salina?

H S A FOX

CHRISTOPHER DYER, *Hanbury: Settlement and Society in a Woodland Landscape*, Leicester UP, Leicester, 1991. viii + 73 pp. 13 maps. No price stated.

Sometimes (but rarely) a press calls for someone to paint the Sistine Chapel: and sometimes (and equally rarely) for minaturists. In its heyday a glory of the Leicester University Press list was the flow of *Occasional Papers in English Local History* begun by Herbert Finberg and continued into four series by his successors in the headship of the Department of English Local History: thirty-six *Papers* in as many years, but now (we understand) to be numbered among the victims of the market forces of the nineties. These miniatures showed what could be done to advance the frontier of knowledge in a few score pages. Finberg himself set the example of *multum in parvo* with his 'Roman and Saxon Withington: a Study in Continuity' (Series I, no 4), the pages of Margaret Spufford's 'Chippenham' and Hallam's 'Elloe' were as instructive as any long book, and with *Hanbury the Papers* have defiantly ended not with a whimper but a bang.

Professor Dyer's study of this Worcestershire parish is the product of his own researches and those of an extra-mural class; it has a firm archival base in the public and diocesan records; although it reports no excavations in *Hanbury* it draws on extensive field-walking and has ground surveys of earthworks. Apart from the forty Romano-British find-spots recorded in Figure 3, the eighty messages of Figure 13, deserted since 1350, indicate not an empty parish but one more stage in the 'restructuring of the agrarian economy' which the essay follows back to its prehistoric roots and forward to the present day. The topographical information is particularly well displayed and the nature of the developed 'woodland landscape' (which did not exclude open fields) clearly explicated both in tables

and maps, a feature too often absent in studies of bocage.

In its physical features as well as in its documentation the recreation of a non-champion parish village is full of obstacles, here surmounted by assiduity, and a fine example to be followed by others elsewhere. This essay from the Birmingham School is in the best Leicester tradition, for most authors in this series of *Papers* taught English local history by exemplar rather than exhortation. If it had to come to an end, then, like the martyrs of old, the victims' names will be honoured when the executioners are in oblivion, and *Hanbury* perhaps be as much a place of pilgrimage as Withington and the New Lands of Elloe.

MAURICE BERESFORD

DANIEL W BROMLEY, ed, *Making the Commons Work. Theory, Practice, and Policy*, ICS Press, San Francisco, 1992. xii + 339 pp. 9 figs; 9 tables. \$44.95 (hbk); \$14.95 (pbk).

This collection is based upon a number of papers originally presented at a 1985 conference on common property resource management, with some additional contributions. The general objective is to counter the predisposition of development programmes to view the exploitation of resources in common as inherently destructive, and in any case inefficient. Instead, the authors seek to demonstrate the conditions under which the exploitation of resources in common contributes to the preservation and maintenance of a resource base, as against the imposition of private rights which can set in train a process of degradation. In his introduction the general editor, Daniel Bromley, lays emphasis on two linked misapprehensions in the property-rights literature: first, that use in common is equivalent to open access usage; and second, there is no such thing as a common resource, only resources which are managed in common, by the state, or by private agents. This accentuates the fact that the question of the commons is a matter of decision-making behaviour, and not primarily one of resource utilization.

Readers of this journal will be familiar with the development, since the later 1960s, of a property-rights paradigm applied to the transition in Britain from the working of land in common to the holding of land in severalty, a process often identified with the enclosure movement, but not in fact entirely congruent with it. Most prominently exposed in North and Thomas' *The Rise of the Western World* (1973), other contributors to this genre were Furubotn and Pejovich, Cheung and McCloskey, all of whom, as it were, brought Chicago economics to the English countryside. Contributors to this volume tend to refer most

frequently to a 1968 *Science* article by Hardin, 'The tragedy of the commons' as the key summary of the approach that they seek to counter. Hardin had argued that the use of commons embodies the free-rider problem, in which the cost to an individual grazing an additional cow or sheep is borne by all users, leading to overgrazing and possible destruction of the resource. Such a consequence follows not from use in common *per se*, however, but from open-access exploitation – where the resource is open to all able to cover the costs of exploitation, such as time, implements or livestock. Exploitation in common is distinct from this: it implies a decision-making framework and a restricted right of entry to the resource. This conception of 'common property rights' converges with that of 'private property', since the latter presupposes a legal and institutional framework that can assign rights over identifiable resources to specified agents, and enforce such assignation. There is nothing magic about private property rights; it is just that the rights and duties involved are more obvious, although the implicit costs of the enforcement apparatus required are generally overlooked. Failure to appreciate this point has resulted in international development agencies promoting the reassignment of resources managed in common to private holders who lack means and motive properly to exploit and maintain the resources, leading to their degradation and of the environment in general.

Two theoretical essays are placed at the beginning of this book, the first of which by Runge examines the theory of collective action in terms of game theory, and the second of which by Oakerson lays out a general framework for the understanding of resource management as a form of institutionalized decision-making. Oakerson's essay was available in advance of the writing of the eleven case-studies that follow, which range from Japan to Morocco, and from pasture to sea fisheries. Of particular interest to historians of English agriculture will be a contribution jointly authored by Bruce Campbell and Ricardo Godoy which compares the evolution of common tenure in the Andes and medieval England; but the great care that has been taken in editing this volume means that readers are likely to be drawn to hitherto unfamiliar territory and problems. All too often the joint efforts of academics fall from the press as unreadable concoctions, unrelated and poorly edited. The editors of this collection present a model of what co-ordinated common effort can achieve – a fitting exemplification of the thesis of the book.

KEITH TRIBE

DAVID GRIGG, *The Transformation of Agriculture in the West*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992. xv + 141 pp. 26 figs; 26 tables. £30 (hbk); £11.95 (pbk).

Since agricultural policy arguments are still preventing agreement between western Europe, North America and Australasia in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations, the appearance of an account of the process of agricultural change in these countries is timely. The emphasis is on the last two hundred years, but some of the discussion goes back to the tenth century AD. Much of the book is concerned with farm land and labour: the amount used, its productivity and changes therein, and the way it was organized. There is also a chapter on the growth of markets, a 'prime stimulus' to the adoption of new crops and techniques, and largely brought about by falling real transport costs, according to Grigg. The concluding chapter discusses agriculture's contribution to economic development and the reasons for the change from shortage to surplus since the 1950s.

Many students will seize eagerly upon this book as a concise and intelligible source of data and essay material. If they want a rapid summary of what happened they will not be disappointed; if they want to find out *why* it happened they will not be so well served. If they wish to follow up what they read here they will not be helped by the absence of specific references. There is a list of further reading, but it is not organized by chapter, and only fifteen of its ninety-two items were published after 1984. What evidence is there that 'animal feedstuffs were, from the early nineteenth century, made up by compounders rather than on the farm' (p 8)? Who are all the historians who have written about '...the mid-eighteenth century, the period once described as the "agricultural revolution"' (p 33)? Whether or not it was it all worthwhile, and who gained or lost, is only discussed in the last two pages. Neither is there much in the book to guide students through the academic controversies of recent years. But with only 132 pages of accessible text to get through they will, to paraphrase Disraeli, lose little time in reading it.

PAUL BRASSLEY

STEPHAN R EPSTEIN, *An Island for Itself. Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily*, Past and Present Publications, CUP, 1992. xvi + 464 pp. 11 maps; 24 tables. £50.

The explanations for the economic and social gulf between northern and southern Italy have long intrigued historians, and Stephan Epstein renders a significant contribution to this important debate. Although this subject is likely to stir only limited interest among British agricultural historians, Epstein's book still has much to offer them. His

method and his conclusions offer a fresh perspective on two major debates: proto-industrialization, and the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This is demanding scholarship, and Epstein neither makes any concessions to his readers nor shirks any of the tough issues on these topics.

Epstein rejects the conventional description of the later Middle Ages as a period of economic decline. Instead he stresses the beneficial effects of the redistribution of income among society's lower orders, increased labour mobility, and the shift in comparative advantage of regions after the Black Death. Thus the Sicilian economy moved towards a more pronounced regional specialization of production in the fifteenth century: grain markets and livestock regions became more clearly defined, and infra-regional trade in minerals, textiles, manufacturing goods, silk and sugar increased. Epstein argues that, when combined with flexible market institutions, the increase in comparative advantage in population and resources forged 'regional commercial integration', which itself formed the basis for economic development in later centuries. Thus the book presents an optimistic assessment of Sicily's performance in the later Middle Ages, although the conclusion offers a few suggestions for the seeds of its backwardness in the early modern period.

The emergence of greater regional specialization is an observable phenomenon in many areas of late medieval Europe, but Epstein's innovation is to stress the importance of market structures in determining the pace of each region's path of development. The region is regarded as a discrete geographical unit in this context, for there were limits to the area over which market information could be effectively conveyed. Thus he believes that economic development is a function of different patterns of commercial activity, but that the extent and nature of commercial activity is determined by the institutional structure of markets.

Epstein concedes that market structures are themselves defined by a range of social, economic and political forces, but places particular emphasis upon the power of feudal lords or urban institutions to influence trade. Real forces, such as population decline, stimulated changes in demand, but *institutional* forces allowed that demand to be effective. By stressing the institutional and political constraints on marketing opportunities, Epstein adopts a broadly Marxist approach, although his stance is more sophisticated than in some Marxist interpretations. He shows that Sicilian market structures were sufficiently flexible in the later Middle Ages to reduce transaction costs for those wishing to participate in the market. This encouraged a greater proportion of produce to enter trade, which in turn shaped the processes of regional specialization.

Epstein has further developed this general argument in a recent London School of Economics working paper.

This is a complex and wide-ranging thesis, whose implications warrant serious attention. For example, the decline of English markets after the Black Death is often taken as a symptom of economic depression, but Epstein's work implies that historians should shift the focus of their attention to consider the reduction in seigneurial control over marketing, and the flourishing of informal trading centres: to what extent were English regional market structures leaner and fitter by 1500, and to what extent did this dictate the pace of regional development?

Any historian seeking to explain the processes of economic change in medieval and early modern Europe will have to reckon with Epstein. Too often, dialectical approaches to this subject have displayed only a nodding acquaintance with the primary material, but Epstein's thesis is rooted in extensive research. Yet some reservations remain. The demographic sources are limited, and not all historians will agree with Epstein's population estimates for late thirteenth-century Sicily. Here the evidence is straining to fit the model. The study might also be accused of bias towards Messina and the north-east. Similarly, the fifteenth-century is much better documented than the thirteenth, and so Epstein is unable to construct a clear picture of Sicily's marketing structure and regional integration before the Black Death: hence the extent to which the processes described by Epstein were 'new' in the fifteenth century remains slightly blurred. There is also a tendency to employ the phrase 'institutional factors' in a rather eclectic manner: beyond a certain level, it is not always clear what is meant by the term.

Those who prefer more functionalist approaches to economic history may ultimately remain unconvinced by Epstein's basic argument, but the book remains a provocative, stimulating and conceptually impressive work.

MARK BAILEY

DENIS COSGROVE, *The Palladian Landscape, Geographical Change and its Cultural Representations in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Leicester UP, Leicester, 1992. xv + 270 pp. 85 figs; 3 maps; 1 table. £45.

It is the unfortunate fate of neo-classicism, at least in the English-speaking world, to have become associated with the supply of a species of architecture which is a more eloquent testimony to wealth than to taste. Indeed, it might be argued that even in earlier times the greatest appeal of neo-classicism lay in its capacity to demonstrate authority and opulence. A genealogical link may thus be traced

from Quinlan Terry and his imitators to the pattern-book Palladianism of earlier times.

In this volume Denis Cosgrove sets out to place the work of Andrea Palladio within the context of its place and period. The later fate of the style is not a major part of his concerns. Nor to any great extent (and more surprisingly) is the link between Palladianism and the exercise of power: the analysis is not in any fundamental sense either economic or sociological. Rather, we are invited to see Palladio's work in the Venetian republic as part of 'a cosmology which united the arts and sciences, grounding both in a rigorous intellectual explanation of humans' place in nature'. In one direction, architecture's geometry and rules of proportion reached down into 'more mundane activities like survey, drainage, the shaping of fields, canals and city streets'. In the other, 'they gave access to fundamental knowledge of created nature itself: the pattern of the heavens, the size, structure and the geography of the earth and the nature of the human body and spirit'. Thus 'architecture was an integral part of a primary geographical act, a cosmogony'.

The process of 'making a world', as practised by the Venetians and Vincentines in the towns and countryside of the sixteenth-century Veneto, is traced in a succession of chapters each treating a different aspect of an evolving landscape. 'Renaissance Venice and the terraferma' sets the scene by outlining the changing relationship between Venice and its lands in both their practical and cultural expressions. Attention then turns to Vicenza, the home of Palladio's early patronage and work, in a chapter which also explores the tension-laden relationship between the patriciate of that city, with its independent traditions, and that of Venice. The Palladian villa and the Palladian estate are treated separately in chapters which are concerned with the spiritual and aesthetic appeal of 'holy agriculture' as well as with the landscapes and built-forms to which this developing interest gave rise. A chapter on 'Water and the Palladian landscape' examines the work of the Venetian Ministry for Uncultivated Lands. It was an organization not unaware of the cosmological import of its activities. 'The rhetoric of reclamation', Cosgrove tells us, 'sought to locate the practical transformation of the environment into a grander scheme of nature and relate divine and human action with respect to altering nature'. 'Measuring and picturing the land' develops the interesting notion that map, picture and written record served as overlapping and not, as in their modern sense, conceptually distinct tools for use by those intent on taming the landscape. The development of triangulation in cartography and perspective in art is linked: 'the culture of landscape penetrated deep into all forms of represen-

tation so that the boundary between the local map and the painting was by no means impermeable'. The final chapters, 'The Euclidian ecstasy: describing and transforming the great machine of the world' and 'Landscape as theatre', place architecture and landscape in a broader cultural context, the first focusing on 'mathematics and geometry as key metaphors for the conception of human life and nature underlying the Palladian landscape', and the second on the metaphor of theatre which linked the landscape of the Veneto to the world beyond.

It will be apparent from this outline that the text is wide-ranging in scope and unconstrained in its intellectual ambitions. As a kind of Cook's tour of many different aspects of the history of the Venetian republic in the late Renaissance, it has much appeal. The suggested links between Palladianism, the cosmos, cartography, perspective, and reclamation are novel and interesting. However, there will be those who will feel that the imaginative interconnections which the breadth of approach make possible do not sufficiently compensate for the fact that little is really treated in adequate depth. This is a text which offers numerous pointers to where it is going next, but somehow never quite enough substance when it gets there.

Given the general orientation of the analysis, one would not expect to find significant additions to our understanding of the economic history of the Venetian Republic. More unexpected is the somewhat two-dimensional treatment of social and cultural matters. In the introductory sections, 'conventional' cultural geography (a category which poses more problems of definition for this reviewer than it appears to do for Cosgrove) is criticized for, among other things, its 'assumption of social uniformity'. But sensitivity to social diversity is not a central feature of Cosgrove's analysis either. Admittedly, such diversity is from time to time acknowledged. We are told, for instance, that 'the nobles who played on that stage [of the Palladian urban landscape] never forgot that its spectacle depended upon the peasantry who worked the land'. And yet, observations of this kind serve to circumvent rather than to engage serious discussion of the social formation and its tensions. Discontent is alluded to rather than analysed, while Martines' insistence that 'Renaissance treatises on architecture are profoundly class-conscious' sits oddly alongside the treatment they receive here. Also conspicuous by its absence is any real debate about popular culture and the way it fits into the broader picture. In contrast to the work of Simon Schama, this is Culture not culture, offering few insights into 'the physical and mental bric-a-brac which describe a culture' and which brought Schama such an embar-

rassment of riches in his analysis of the Dutch golden age.

JOHN R WALTON

JAVIER VIDAL, *Transportes y Mercado en el País Valenciano (1850-1914)*, Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1991. 296 pp. No price stated.

Regional studies have flourished in recent years in Spanish economic history. The pathbreaking publication of a book edited in 1990 by Prof J Nadal and Dr A Carreras (*Pautas Regionales de la Industrialización Española*) has obviously exerted a profound demonstration effect. This book revealed the degree of regional disparities in modern Spain. It also proved that the lack of national aggregate data could be partially offset at the regional level.

In *Transportes y Mercado*, Vidal analyses the forward linkages of a railway network upon the economy of the provinces of Alicante, Castellón and Valencia over the period 1850 to 1914. As the economic historian of transportation knows only too well, forward linkages related to market integration defy any attempt at being encapsulated in quantitative form. Though Vidal has failed to make any progress in that direction, he has produced, however, a rounded picture of the role played by the different means of transportation – road, rail and coastal shipping – for the conveyance of commodities in eastern Spain. To some extent, Vidal has thus departed from previous works in the field of Spanish transport which, for the most part, generally focus either on traditional or on modern transportation, but hardly ever on the two at the same time.

Transportes y Mercado is divided into four chapters. In the first two, Vidal has concentrated mostly upon the transformation of the road system. In the first chapter, he offers an exhaustive account of the major improvements in road building which took place between 1750 and 1850, in particular along the Madrid to Valencia axis. While the chapter is particularly rich in information about projects and effective road building, little attention is however devoted to the number and seasonal availability of road carriers. To the author, increased road capacity prompted an expansion of regional traffic. On the other hand, an effort has been made by Vidal to assess the demand for transportation services in the years prior to railway building. As a proxy, Vidal has made extensive use of turnpike receipts. They failed, however, to provide any evidence about the nature of the traffic. In the next chapter, the author pushes forward his analysis to cover the period following the emergence of the railway. It is shown that the circulation of goods intensified as both systems complemented each other, road carriers

acting as natural feeders to railway companies. It is argued that carters and coastal ships competed successfully with the railway on account of its higher rates. Furthermore, the nature of freight traffic with the prevalence of primary goods and small hauls acted too against the interest of railway companies. Nonetheless, the argument is based on poor evidence about the real cost of transport. As a general practice, railway companies resorted to extensive price discrimination in spite of the fact that their legal rates were indeed relatively high. Neither does Vidal take into account the higher speed and regularity of rail traffic over traditional carriers.

In chapter 3, the author recreates the various steps which led to the full development of the regional railway network. It included a fair amount of narrow gauge lines which complemented the broad gauge lines of the companies operating at the national level. Vidal shows how the latter failed to grasp the traffic opportunities of the regional economy. Therefore, local interest groups struggled hard to link by rail the major production areas of the interior to the export centres on the shore. In the last chapter, Vidal has depicted the impact of the railway upon the regional economy by concentrating on various commodities which are of particular interest to Valencia. As the main staples for export, Vidal has selected citrus fruits and wines. Fertilizers, livestock and rice were also closely related to the local economy. Among industrial goods, the intensive traffic of coal and textiles reflect the extent of structural change in the Valencian economy throughout the period under scrutiny. Special emphasis has been placed upon the impact of the Great Depression. Unfortunately, the poor quality of the data, in particular for narrow gauge railway companies, has prevented the author from identifying major traffic flows within the eastern region. He has contented himself with the evolution of railway traffic to depict the competition from imported goods endured by local producers either in the agricultural or textile sector.

As a general appraisal of *Transportes y Mercado*, I wish to make some final comments. First, the reader will undoubtedly miss a detailed map showing the exact location of the numerous places which are quoted in the text. Regarding geography, the reader might also show some concern about the title of this book. Indeed, while 'País Valenciano' corresponds to a modern administrative partition of Spain, most of the analysis bears upon Valencia, one of the three provinces included within its territorial borders. Second, the awkward style renders some parts of the book, in particular the first chapter, difficult to read. Third, while it is obvious that regional studies benefit from a higher degree

of detail than national case studies, some of the information provided in this book has only a marginal interest. At times, the inclusion of excessive information makes it difficult to follow the argument. On the other hand, the reader will surely appreciate the vivid portrayal of local politics and economics behind railway development. The struggle among local elites, and the clash between national and regional interests are indeed major issues in Vidal's book. Finally, the reader with an interest in agricultural topics will find the data on the marketing of oranges, rice and livestock, particularly useful.

A GÓMEZ-MENDOZA

JOSÉ MIGUEL MARTINEZ CARRIÓN, *La Ganadería en la Economía Murciana Contemporánea, 1860-1936*, Serie Técnica y de Estudios, 8, Consejería de Agricultura, Ganadería, y Pesca, Región de Murcia, 1991. 223 pp. No price stated.

Murcia now has a strong group of agrarian historians associated with its university, and this study of pasture farming is an effective demonstration of their lively reappraisal of agriculture in the province. It concentrates on pastoral husbandry, evidently much neglected by historians hitherto in favour of the arable sector. The bias will be thoroughly familiar to British readers. The cereal farmers of Spain have always captured most publicity from historians, while pastoral husbandry was in the hands of small men, and has passed virtually unnoticed. When wool production lost importance in the Spanish economy in the second half of the nineteenth century, that fact obscured all consideration of compensatory developments with other livestock. Now with the help of many statistics, and an innate sympathy for pastoral communities, the balance in Murcia is redressed for the period 1860-1936. The author sees pastoral and arable sectors well integrated in the plains of Murcia, while transhumance was practised in the mountains. Small farmers, who were lessees and not owners, were responsible for significant increases in the production of goat's milk, goat meat, and pork, and in assessing their full contribution to the rural economy the author does not omit poultry, eggs, honey, rabbits, and silk production. All this was achieved by intensifying the use of the resources already available within the region, improving the native breeds (an English breed of pig hastened fattening), and giving up the use of asses for work in favour of mules, which were more expensive to feed, but more efficient on the land.

The present-day crisis in our understanding of environmental changes is plainly shifting the viewpoint of scholars when judging agrarian regimes of the past, and some of the judgments passed here

disclose an appreciation for sustainable agricultural systems that did not rely heavily on resources brought in from outside the region. Terms like the 'equilibrium of agriculture', and 'regional ecosystems' are used, and reference is made to the 'autonomous agricultural system' prevailing among pastoralists in Murcia as late as the 1960s and 1970s.

The book is repetitive in places, and as usual with Spanish academic studies, lacks an index. But it is a landmark in the study of regional economies, rescuing peasant agriculture from the ignominy usually heaped on it by those who have preferred to extol the grand spectacle of ever-improving cereal production by large farmers. Incidentally, this work notes the brighter fortunes of the pasture farmers in the late nineteenth century, in contrast with the cereal growers. Many such parallels with the British experience appear.

JOAN THIRSK

J R MCNEILL, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World. An Environmental History*, CUP, 1992. xx+423 pp. 20 plates; 8 maps and figs; 28 tables. £40.

McNeill argues a case. It is essentially that the ecological degradation characteristic of the mountain areas around the Mediterranean Sea is a relatively recent phenomenon (within the last 200 years); that the degradation results, fundamentally, from the overloading of inherently unstable human-support systems through the integration of once remote areas into the world market economy; that the life-support systems decayed to such an extent from deforestation, erosion and soil depletion that they could no longer support former levels of population; and that the resultant emigration reduced the amount of labour available to the point where it could no longer even support itself. This thesis is demonstrated with evidence from five selected areas: the Taurus Mountains in south-western Turkey, the Pindus of central Greece, the Lucanian Apennines in southern Italy, the Alpujarra of the Sierra Nevada of Spain, and the Rif Mountains of Morocco.

Background is provided by a review of Mediterranean mountain environments (chapter 2) and an outline of their historical experience down to AD 1700, as illustrated by the five selected areas (chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides a general discussion of the distinctive human-support systems developed in the mountains during the period 1700-1900. These rested upon the exploitation of mountain soils and upland pastures, but - critically - also depended upon a variety of auxiliary activities such as migrant labour, military service, and craft work, all of which presuppose access to a market. Chapter 5 traces the experience of the five areas

since about 1700. Similarities and differences emerge, not only in the timing of the different phases of exploitation but also in the extent of the resulting degradation. Thus, the Pindus has experienced massive emigration since the 1880s and is full of 'shell' villages, whilst the Rif is clearly overpopulated in terms of its current support-systems; the Taurus may only just have reached the threshold of unsustainability or what McNeill calls 'overshoot', when ecological disaster begins. Chapter 6 reviews the ways in which market integration, combined with the extension of state power and the alienation of common pastures and forests, brought over-exploitation of mountain resources and at the same time gradually undermined or destroyed auxiliary activities. The penultimate chapter (chapter 7) summarizes the potential effects of the local mountain economy upon the ecology before evaluating the evidence for ecological damage and landscape change.

The case is vigorously argued, but with a touch of humour and some colourful phrases which make the book enjoyable to read. McNeill strays perilously close to repetition, but the amount of detail at his command allows him to veer away. Inevitably for a work on this scale, there are minor mistakes here and there. For example Piri Reis was not 'an Ottoman traveller' (p 98) but a naval officer who served the Sultan in the Red Sea as well as the Mediterranean, and Leake crossed the Taurus in February 1800, not 'around 1820' (p 289). It is odd, too, that C Delano Smith's book, *Western Mediterranean Europe* (Academic Press, 1979), is omitted from the fifty-eight page bibliography and perhaps even more curious that no reference is made to William McNeill's work on Greece which also dwells on the distinctiveness of the mountain way of life and its recent vicissitudes. But this is carping. Altogether, in arguing his case, McNeill has produced a valuable synthesis of material about the Mediterranean mountains which many, interested amateur and specialist alike, will find informative, useful and stimulating.

J M WAGSTAFF

STEPHEN J HORNSBY, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton. A Historical Geography*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. xxvi + 274 pp. 66 figs; 20 tables. £33.95.

This book is a work of regional historical geography. It is clear, however, that Cape Breton in this period was closely connected with the Scottish Highlands (for the source of much of its population), with the Channel Islands (for the capital for the fishing industry), and with both Boston and the eastern seaboard as well as with west coast North America (as Cape Breton people emigrated in

numbers in the wake of the mid-nineteenth-century potato famine). In exploring these and other connections, Hornsby clearly shows how the development of agricultural society and economy, and rural-based industry was in one island bound up with circuits of capital and labour on international scales. Yet Cape Breton is, or more correctly was, an island with a peculiarly Highland Scottish influence. Gaelic is no longer strong there, but the agricultural landscape is the result of Highland influence as emigrants from one marginal economy established a new life for themselves in a similarly marginal environment.

Even this imprint, and that of the Irish, Acadians, and others in Cape Breton, was not the same across the island. Hornsby stresses the difference between the 'backlands', with poorer soil and less-developed agriculture and kin connections within the subsistence farming community, and the richer 'frontlands', with their emphasis upon a market-oriented economy and individualistic farming practices. In both, rural industry – in coalmining, in cod fishing – supplemented returns from the land as did seasonal migration away from the island.

The picture we are given is very detailed and essentially economic. If anything, the detail is too much and rather less attention to minutiae might have made for a clearer understanding of some of the more important large-scale issues. Interesting allusions are made to linguistic and ethnic divisions of labour within the mining populations, to kin-based connections with family in Scotland or in the urban centres of Canada. But the work offers relatively little insight into what might broadly be called social and cultural questions. This is partly a matter of emphasis, of course, but it may also be a result of the structure of the book which concentrates its analysis of rural economy and agricultural settlement through fairly thickly-cut 'time slices' for the early and late nineteenth century, and at the end of the 1800s, with a further short chapter on the potato famine of the mid-1840s. Despite the stated intention at outset for a regional geography, knowing how Cape Breton life was influenced by the ebb and flow of externally-derived circumstances is on occasion made difficult by this structure and by the systematically economic focus.

CHARLES W J WITHERS

MARIO SAMPER, *Generations of Settlers: Rural Households and Markets on the Costa Rican Frontier, 1850-1935*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1991. xvii + 286 pp. £18.95.

Samper's aim in this book is the historical analysis of peasant farmers who 'are neither fully traditional and subsistence oriented, nor totally mercantile in their productive activities, their values and their

social relations'. This he does by focusing on the history of the north-western part of the Central Valley of Costa Rica from the mid-nineteenth century to 1935.

What marks this period was the formation of an agro-export economy in which production of commodities, such as coffee, by peasant households played a crucial role. The period began with the settlement of land by a geographically mobile and personally free population on the agricultural frontier. These households, relying mostly on family labour, became part of a global market through credit, processing and trading networks. During this process, individuals found themselves enmeshed in complex and contradictory relations which created opportunities for accumulation for a stretch of time, but then increasingly became unfavourable inducing migration from the area.

Samper explains the profound transformation in the period under study in terms of three interrelated processes. At a regional level, it was a combination of expulsion and attraction factors that induced the first wave of migration to the agricultural frontier. The permanent settlement later led to outmigration of the offspring, as previously abundant land became scarce and demographic and socio-economic pressure intensified. At the level of productive units, associated with market-orientation, intensification of land-use patterns in terms of labour inputs and yields per area was observed, resulting in changes in the technical and social organization of the productive units. At the intersection of these two processes, the basis of economic interaction, Samper claims, was differentiation, that involved both reciprocity and exploitation, with emphasis increasingly on the latter over time. Opportunities of surplus generation and accumulation, which in the beginning were open to many, became the monopoly of the few.

The multi-layered empirical analysis comprises the changes in the composition, uses and allocation of factors of production in the various spheres of economic activity, at the regional level as well as the level of the productive units. In keeping with his argument about the creativity of human beings, Samper also discusses household strategies in response to changing circumstances brought about by the increasing commodification of input and output markets. The peasant domestic units exist in a dynamic macro-context which determines them as well as being determined by them. The typology of domestic units (where production and consumption are organized around the household) is based on the latter's surplus generating capacity.

Mario Samper's book should be considered an important contribution to the literature on rural areas in a multitude of ways. At one level, the

analysis represents a critical stand against the simplistic characterizations of the Latin American rural reality in terms of the traditional 'latifundia-minifundia' duality, by stressing constantly the significance of middle peasantry. This point is made especially well in a fascinating final chapter that draws on comparative material from other parts of Latin America, as well as the Caribbean. The wealth of empirical data gathered from a variety of sources such as probate inventories and oral histories is used effectively in capturing the dynamics of change.

At a more theoretical level, the analysis is a response to the question of whether peasant farming is compatible with the development of capitalism in agriculture. This question, which has some of its roots in the debate among some of the leading Socialist theorists at the turn of the century, has generated a substantial literature in social sciences. Samper claims that not only is peasant farming compatible with capitalism, but in Costa Rica (and elsewhere) it has in fact been the result of capitalism. It was promoted by both the owners of capital and the state. This claim begs the question: what was the nature of the Costa Rican state, and its relation to different socio-political groupings at the time, that informed this behaviour? What was the political legitimation used by the state at the beginning and then at the end of the period, when circumstances had changed? The analysis is somewhat lacking in this respect. More importantly, however, Samper's theoretical claim, although captured by his empirical analysis, is not complete. For if it is the forces of capitalism that in the beginning engendered peasant farming, it is also the forces of capitalism, as his analysis reveals, that later undermined it. With this in mind, one could begin to answer Samper's call to reconsider the traditional conceptualizations of capitalism: the particularity of agrarian capitalism's relation to peasant farming needs to be understood within the broader social context in which they are both situated.

SERAP A KAYATEKIN

SIMON G POWELL, *Agricultural Reform in China: From Communes to Commodity Economy 1978-1990*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992. viii + 231 pp. £40.

When China began its rural reform in the late 1970s and early 1980s, followed by rapid increases in its total agricultural output and, in particular, its grain output, it looked as though that China was well on its way to solve its long-standing grain supply problems and to sustained rural development. Indeed, many observers and analysts at the time were unusually optimistic in their assessment of China's rural reform measures. Powell's book is a useful contribution. It will help researchers to

rethink many issues. Its chief virtue is that unlike many authors before him, Powell looked beyond the short-term efficiency gains associated with the rural reform, and focused instead on long-term obstacles to sustained rural development in China.

The book has eight main chapters. The first two are devoted to discussing the two principal planks of China's rural reform package: changes in management forms and the emphasis on developing a diversified rural economy in place of the monoculture of grain production under Mao. These are then complemented by six regional chapters, respectively on the periurban areas of suburban Nanjing and Taihu of southern Jiangsu, the intermediate regions of Xuhuai in northern Jiangsu and Yanbei in Shanxi, the resource-rich Nenjiang prefecture in Heilongjiang and the mountain region of northern Guangdong. The selection shows a heavy bias in favour of Jiangsu but, considering that Jiangsu remains one of the most diverse provinces in China in terms of both its varied natural conditions and the stages of development reached by its constituent parts, the choices on the whole appear to provide a balanced cross-section of spatial differentiation for China. Spatial differentiation in development is indeed another main theme of the book. The author appears to have regarded the cross-section provided by his six cases as also representing rural economies at their distinct stages of development.

The six case studies rely principally on secondary Chinese sources ranging from local publications, national press and radio reports, and of course articles from such popular journals in the field as *Nongyi Jingji Wenti*. The author's marshalling of such previously-underutilized materials is skilful, and he demonstrates a deep understanding of the long-term developmental problems both for China as a whole and for the six regions in particular.

The principal conclusions from the book might be summarised as follows. Owing to an extremely deficient transport network and poor transport facilities, and an inefficient and underdeveloped commercial system (in no small measure due to bureaucratic rigidities), the state has for decades pursued a policy of regional grain self-sufficiency,

and one does not expect this to change soon. At the same time, the state has for decades paid low prices for grain and, because of the current pressures on the state budget, this situation is also unlikely to change. Poor local agricultural infrastructural systems in many regions have further meant that in these regions, great proportions of resources have had to be used for grain production, thereby preventing them from diversifying into more profitable occupations. Unless such regions could find ways of building up their local resource base and undertaking the necessary infrastructural investment, thereby raising grain yield and releasing resources for more profitable uses, they will remain poor. Successful regions like Taihu and suburban Nanjing, favourably endowed as they are with natural resources and being close to the major urban centres, are those that have been able to utilize their local advantages and to diversify their local economies. Although other regions do not share the same advantages, one must expect that their long-term development will depend on local people utilizing, in their own way, whatever advantages they have, undertaking the necessary infrastructural investment, overcoming the grain supply constraint, and releasing resources for more profitable undertakings.

While the book deserves praise, a number of shortcomings remain. First, its heavy reliance on the secondary sources, most of which were published before 1985 (at a time when the former commune system was being disgraced), has meant that some of the discussion on the commune may be open to question. Reliance on the secondary sources also more generally raises questions about the data's authenticity, despite the fact that the author has been careful to exercise a critical approach in his use of the materials. A final point to mention concerns the book's presentation. No separate bibliography is provided. Given that the book relies so heavily on secondary sources, this is an important weakness. In my own reading, I experienced endless frustration in trying to keep track of the references.

MINQUAN LIU

Shorter Notices

PHILIP LYTH, *The Pinfolds of Nottinghamshire*, Planning and Economic Department, Nottinghamshire County Council, 1992. 19 pp. No price stated.

Philip Lyth has an informed eye for detail in the landscape, as his study on the ground of an Anglo-Saxon charter of Southwell showed in 1984. Here he displays the same discerning eye in an illustrated booklet on pinfolds (better known to southerners as 'pounds') in Nottinghamshire. A historical account of the pinfold (a manorial responsibility, requiring a pinder to recover straying animals, and lock them up until their owners appeared and paid a fine to retrieve them) is followed by a gazetteer, dividing them into four categories. Twenty pinfolds survive in good order in the county, others are recognizable but neglected, in other cases sites are identifiable but no more, while the existence of some is indicated only in place names. Their present state and use is shown to be highly varied, as vegetable gardens, weedy patches, war memorials, or public sitting places with benches.

Some Nottinghamshire parish councils clearly deserve warm praise for their effort in preserving pinfolds, and the excellent photographs given here will undoubtedly enable many more people to recognize them elsewhere. The county council is also to be congratulated for its support of this highly attractive publication.

JOAN THIRSK

HAROLD FASSNIDGE, *The Quakers of Melksham 1669-1950*, Bradford-on-Avon Friends, Bradford-on-Avon, 1992. 186 pp. Illus. £4.50.

This is an interesting and well-produced study of the Society of Friends in the Wiltshire market town of Melksham. It is based on the copious minute books and other records of the society and includes considerable detail about the fluctuating fortunes of the Quakers throughout Wiltshire from their establishment during the mid-seventeenth century. As such, it is a useful addition to local history studies in the county.

The interest of the book for readers of this *Review*, however, will stem from the diverse membership of the local Quaker community. The Wiltshire Quakers were to include members who became eminent and wealthy physicians, merchants, clothiers and manufacturers, including the Fry family, notably Joseph Fry who abandoned a lucrative medical practice to found a chocolate-making firm in Bristol. Others became bankers, or, during the nineteenth century, were linked in marriage to

families such as the Barclays, Frys, Gurneys and Lloyds. Marriages within the close-knit Quaker community also influenced the rise of the Fowler family of Melksham from small-scale clothiers and mercers in the early eighteenth century to become the best-known advocates and manufacturers of steam ploughs in the country. Through his family relationships, John Fowler (1826-64) was able to develop his drainage plough with the help of fellow-Quakers such as Albert Fry of Bristol, Ransomes and May (later Ransomes and Sims) of Ipswich and George Stephenson. Fassnidge quotes but does not attribute a comment made at the Great Exhibition of 1851 that 'but for the American reapers, Mr Fowler's drainage plough would have formed the most remarkable feature in the agricultural department'. Shortly afterwards John Fowler established his engineering works at Hunslet, Leeds. This is a good example of a well-researched and interestingly presented local history.

J H BETTEY

HUGH ROGERS, *Bottisham Enclosed - 1801*, Staine Hundred Local History Society, Bottisham and Cambridgeshire Libraries, 1992. 52 pp. £3.50.

This monograph provides the background to the parliamentary enclosure of Bottisham in Cambridgeshire, and offers the sort of material which illuminates the human side of the process. Although the award is not given in full, detail is presented that sheds light on the objections and manoeuvrings that inevitably accompany such activities. The author sets the enclosure against the background of rising prices due to the Napoleonic War, but it would have been useful to know also how this particular enclosure fits in with the movement in both Cambridgeshire itself, and the country as a whole.

In the discussion on the impact of the enclosure, the author reminds us of the consequences both to the landscape and to the village population. The advent of agricultural depression so soon after the enclosure had its main effects on the peasantry, as a study of settlement certificates makes clear. From the physical aspect, there appears to have been a classic transition from the rather bleak and open view to the hedged landscape associated with enclosure.

There seems to be very full surviving map evidence from this parish: a pity then, that the maps in this monograph are on the whole rather confusing. Some unified graphic style would aid comparison, as might a wider distribution through the text.

This becomes particularly obvious when one looks at the aerial photographs which illustrate points made in the text so well.

While this monograph goes some way to satisfying the curiosity naturally felt about the underlying mechanisms of enclosure by Act of Parliament, there is a feeling of dissatisfaction. More could have been made of the material gathered, perhaps by using a more tightly argued structure, and offering some analysis based on the detailed award.

SYLVIA SEELIGER

ROY BRIGDEN, *Agricultural Hand Tools*, Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough, reprinted 1993. 32 pp. Illus. £2.25.

Much agricultural history is written from the point of view of technical change and 'progress'. This tends to obscure the fact that many of the tasks on the farm continued to be carried out in the same way and with the same tools from at least the Middle Ages until after the Second World War. 'Even the large, capital-intensive holdings continued into the 20th century to rely considerably on human muscle' (p 3). Hand tools remained in use longer on small farms and the change everywhere was a slow one, 'a developing conjunction between old and new...the rising cost of manpower tipped the balance progressively in favour of the new' (p 3).

It is these hand tools which are the theme of this recently reprinted Shire Publications. Like all the booklets in this series, a remarkable amount of information is compressed in a readable form into its thirty-two pages. This intensity leaves little room for introductory paragraphs or conclusions to chapters, and results in a rather abrupt style, but this is a small price to pay for the quantity and quality of the factual information. It is fully illustrated using photographs from trade catalogues and farming text books as well as from the superb photographic collection at the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading.

The subjects covered include field work (paring, burning, ploughing and hedging), seeding, weeding, harvesting and crop processing. Livestock and dairying are deliberately omitted as they are covered by other books in the Shire Album series. Not only the tools are described, but also the processes such as the craft of hedging for which they were developed. Regional differences in, for instance, hoes and bill hooks, which have changed little since the Luttrell Psalter, are discussed. The slow, labour-intensive work of dibbling, only possible in areas of very low wages, and of flailing where, at most, seven bushels of wheat per man-day could be produced, are described. This booklet provides a

timely reminder of the human grind and sheer hard work behind the statistics of yields and labour productivity with which agricultural historians are more familiar. But reading about the objects is only second-best to seeing the real thing and the booklet ends with a useful list of museums with relevant displays.

This publication is necessarily brief and descriptive. It is only able to hint at the wider question of 'progress'. In the same way as our dismissive attitude towards the agricultural systems of third world countries and primitive societies is now being replaced by a respect for some of their ecologically sound practices, so we are coming to be more cautious in our acceptance of the great modern goals of mechanization and intensification. As Roy Brigden says, hand tools can be used in terrain unsuited to modern machines, and as yet no satisfactory machine has been invented to lay hedges.

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS

B L TURNER, II, W C CLARK, R W KATES, J F RICHARDS, J T MATHEWS, and W B MEYER, eds, *The Earth as Transformed by Human Action*, CUP, pbk edition, 1993. 713 pp. £27.95.

This large volume takes as its theme the 'global and regional changes in the biosphere over the past 300 years'. The book has some forty-two chapters, arranged into four principal sections: changes in population and society, transformations of the global environment, regional studies of transformation, and understanding transformation. It grew from a symposium at Clark University in 1987, at which authors were invited to present papers on the theme of the book, echoing an edition entitled *The Earth as Modified by Human Action* published some 100 years previously, in 1885, by George Perkin Marsh.

Following the 1987 symposium, the editors commissioned an impressive team, largely of eminent geographers, to contribute chapters to a volume 'with a broad audience in mind'. It was first published in 1990; this 1993 paperback edition is a direct reprint of the 1990 hardback. Hence, potential purchasers should bear in mind, first, that the volume is now showing its age – for example, the 'global warming' debate, and particularly the contentions concerning the consequences for agriculture, receives rather less treatment than readers might be expecting – and, second, that the editors do not seem to have been afforded the opportunity to make corrections to the text – for example, on p 405, printing errors remain in both the text and in the diagram. Even the back cover says 'four principle sections' – an unforgivable error by Cambridge University Press! Nevertheless, the wealth of material in the volume should be sufficient for the text to serve as a first recourse for those

students and teachers in North America interested in human impact on the environment and in recent environmental history. There is, however, very little on the British Isles or the near continent; though the text might serve as an antidote to Eurocentric publications, it will, I suspect, be regarded by EC residents as somewhat deficient in examples closer to home. Chapters that adopt a regional theme include ones focusing on 'Tropical frontiers' such as Amazonia, Borneo and the Malay Peninsula, on 'Highlands' (Caucasia; East Africa), on 'Plains' (Russian plain; US Great Plains), on the 'Populous south' (Mexico, Nigeria [*sic* – hardly south!]) and the 'Populous north' (Sweden [populous?], Switzerland, and the North American Hudson-Raritan basin).

Some of the writing, particularly in the foreword and in several chapters in section I, is unnecessarily florid. The ubiquitous first-person plural serves as a bad example for undergraduates (who *are* 'we' – geographers? humans? HM the Queen?). Overall, though, this is an authoritative volume, with many first-rate diagrams and with useful references (given chapter-by-chapter). At £27.95, it is now a worthwhile library purchase, and is worthy of consideration by the more affluent student. Other, very readable, and more affordable, single-author treatments of a similar theme, are those by I G Simmons (1989) and by A Goudie (1990); each is as, or more up-to-date than this volume, and each has greater time perspective; but neither has such a strong emphasis on processes nor has such detailed regional studies as are contained in this weighty reprint.

F M CHAMBERS

Tools and Tillage, Vol VI: 4, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, 1991. 64 pp. DKr 100.

As usual, this issue is worldwide in its scope and covers a diversity of subjects. The contributions are linked by their basis in primary research and marked by a precise documentation of working processes, detailed description of tools and the techniques of their use. Ancient methods of field terracing and associated tillage methods in the mountains of China, for example, are described using archaeological and literary evidence. The earliest indications of such activity go back as far as the Zhou Dynasty (1100–700 BC) and became widespread particularly in south China where population growth made the creation of additional crop bearing land essential.

Water flowing down through the terraced fields from natural mountain springs enabled a measure of temperature control to be exercised for the benefit of the growing plants. Rice seedlings require a slightly higher temperature so the cold mountain waters were made to pass directly through the paddy fields. Later in the growing cycle, when a lower optimum temperature is desirable, the streams were made to flow around the fields to cool the water already there.

Literary evidence is again to the fore in an article from India where there is discussion of a Sanskrit manual of agriculture in which a type of plough widely used in the Ganges valley was very clearly described in great detail. With the addition of a funnel placed behind the handle, it could be used as a seeder-ard. Observation of practical experience is the theme of Axel Steensberg's report of a visit to Papua New Guinea in the 1970s where he made a full record of the production and demonstration of a stone axe. It is a carefully fashioned tool with the blade slotting into a wooden socket, held tight with a rattan binding and this then bound to a fork-shaped handle. In the hands of a skilled user, the axe took only seven minutes to bring down a dole tree 17 cm in diameter. Studies of this sort, Steensberg argues, are valuable when doubts are cast on the ability of Neolithic agriculturists to have cleared large areas of forest with tools of a similar nature.

The remaining three contributions take the form of studies arising from archaeological finds. From a Chalcolithic settlement (c 1400–1000 BC) in western India came a bone ard-ploughshare and something else that may be an antler seed drill. A short stretch of stone paved road near to Arhus in Denmark that was constructed in the late Iron Age to cross a waterlogged valley was excavated in 1954 and revealed a fragmented paddle spade in the foundation layer, beneath the gravel and cobbles. It had obviously been broken on the spot, in the course of the road's construction. Archaeological investigation of a series of twelve domestic rubbish tips on a farm in York County, Virginia, produced a ploughshare which from the circumstances of the find could be accurately dated to 1670–90. As such it provides the earliest material record of a seventeenth-century American plough and opens up further work on plough origins and diffusion in this period.

ROY BRIGDEN