

Book Reviews

B M S CAMPBELL and M OVERTON, eds, *Land, Labour and Livestock: Historical Studies in European Agricultural Productivity*, Manchester UP, 1991. xvi + 500 pp. £65.

This volume is the proceedings of an international conference held at Bellagio in 1989. As with all such synopses the essays presented were quite diverse in their subject matter and in the way their authors interpreted such concepts as 'productivity'. The word is slippery to use and we are not much enlightened at the end of the volume as to its usefulness in historical terms. At this conference, however, the organizing principle was quite faithfully set out and followed, at least in outline. All the authors attempted to pitch their contributions on the historical experience of agricultural productivity, though some adhered to a dynamic interpretation and others were overborne by the stasis of traditional peasant regimes. The semantics of 'productivity' are discussed by the editors and the precept laid down in the Introduction was to investigate the causes of (and obstacles to) gains in physical output through time, nationally, regionally or sectorally. The result is not wholly satisfactory but the concentration of academic fire power on the interpretation of an enigma is impressive.

The papers, as published, are various in another respect. Some are specific explorations of the problems laid out in the Introduction: others are *pieces d'occasion* in its other signification. Recycling ideas or data is no bad thing in the interests of cultural diffusion, when the opportunity is apposite or when the author provides evidence of renewed thought or speculative innovation. Several in this volume, however, have tended to fire the boiler lightly and locomotion is discontinuous towards a clearer understanding of the theme animating the conference. One suspects that more was learned in the hotel bar or the *trattorie* of Bellagio than has appeared in print.

Part of the difficulty is of the editors' making. The Campbell-Overton conspectus of the historical tracing of productivity trends is too well known – for it has been much advertised – to refresh the international debate. The nature of their interest in the positive, but not necessarily effective or extensive, contribution of innovations to agricultural development has prompted two distinct responses: first, how to relate the concept to real experience in a periodic scale that differed markedly in divers essays; and secondly, how to show that the orientation imparted to the discussion by the editors' work will not fit particular circumstances, without openly repudiating their guidance. Several papers,

especially those on medieval England and the Low Countries, take the concept seriously and produce interesting data to underpin the argument about productivity, but at the expense, particularly in the two Winchester papers, of a clear perspective. Campbell also seems to force his material into a procrustean bed of model-building when he could have stressed the theme of diversity which his data command. But the chief problem arises with the second sort of paper, for instead of a specific analysis there resulted, on Italy or Ireland, for instance, papers which are constructed around a basic theme that defies specificity. It is interesting to learn what O'Brien and Tonido or Turner and Ó Gráda have given and their essays in fact are among the most interesting in the collection, but they are not papers determined by the overriding principle of the conference.

Having said that I find the structure of the volume deficient in rigorous cooperative interpretation and ratiocination by the editors and contributors, I should like to commend several individual essays for the outstanding quality of their argument and the clarity of their exposition. I intend to pass over in silence articles I found stale, unconvincing or defective. Among the very good, I count Tony Wrigley's excellent 'Energy availability and agricultural productivity', which addresses a real problem and runs through the pros and cons with panache, George Grantham's equally illuminating essay on French labour productivity in the wheat districts and Robert Allen's thoughtful comparison of 'two agricultural revolutions' in England between 1450 and 1880.

To sum up, this is a very useful book with much in every paper to stimulate thought or provide valuable information. The papers are well written and creditable to their authors. Too much of the volume is *deja vu* perhaps and nobody has effectively addressed the problem of colligation. A farmer who had read the book observed to me that he could not 'feel the soil' in the essays. They were too cerebral in the general sense that almost all academic writing on economic history is divorced from the practical experience of men. Altogether, I think the volume will 'do' for the investigating classes who will use it most often.

B A HOLDERNESS

LAWRENCE ALDERSON and VALERIE PORTER, *Saving the Breeds: A History of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust*, Pica Press, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, 1994. xii + 162 pp. 27 plates. £19.95.

Shorthorns, which accounted for about two-thirds of all the cattle in Great Britain in 1908, were (in their northern dairy form at least) a rare breed in 1975. There were over 100,000 Lincoln Curly Coat pigs in this country when the breed was first shown at the Royal Show in 1907; they were extinct by the late 1960s. Does it matter if a breed disappears? It could be argued that recognized and tightly defined breeds of livestock, with all their accoutrements of breed societies, herd books, shows, and judging points, are a relatively recent phenomenon, beginning in the eighteenth century, flourishing in the nineteenth, and coming under increasing pressure from the livestock breeding companies and their population geneticists in the late twentieth century. On the other hand, in addition to their intrinsic historical interest, it might be suggested that there is always the possibility of rare breeds having characteristics which, although presently obsolescent, may be demanded again by farmers if circumstances change. This is the argument which has been so successfully advanced by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust over the last twenty years.

It is perhaps surprising and regrettable that, to judge from the formal contacts between them, the members of the BAHS know little of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (the RBST), for their interests clearly overlap at some points. Those agricultural historians who wish to inform themselves of the activities of the RBST since its formation in 1973 now have a handy work of reference to which they can turn. The trust's prehistory is traced back to the Zoological Society's puzzlement about the best way to deal with a few domesticated animals kept at its Whipsnade zoo, and succeeding chapters describe the legal, organizational, and fundraising problems of establishing the trust, the technical problems involved in conserving genetic resources (stock imports, semen banks, surveys, breeding programmes, registration programmes, and even the question of what is a breed), the people involved, and the way the trust communicates with its members and others through its journal, *The Ark*, and its workshops, conferences, shows and sales. One of the authors (Alderson) has been closely involved with the trust almost from its inception, and his detailed knowledge of all the old and continuing arguments and decisions is apparent, although there are a few awkward moments when he is himself one of the protagonists in the story.

Whether or not the book can justifiably be described as a history must depend on one's definition of history, and there is insufficient space here to do justice to that question. Perhaps 'chronicle' would be a fairer description for what clearly sets out to be more a report of the trust's activities than any analysis of why things have happened. Here is

much detail but rather less setting of the detail in context. The writers assume a reasonable knowledge of rare breeds and their history in their readers, which may be justifiable if they believe that their readers will be drawn from among the members of the trust, but restricts its usefulness to others. We are told (p 59) that membership has risen from less than 100 in 1973 to more than 10,000 now, and it might have been interesting to have had some discussion of the reasons for this growth. Other similar organizations (for example, the Woodland Trust) underwent similar expansions at the same time: did the RBST expand for the same reasons? How important has the expansion of farm parks been in raising the membership? What proportion of the membership actively keep rare breeds? What proportion of rare breeds are kept as a visitor attraction? The book is littered with the names of the socially and agriculturally well-connected; how important were these connections? And how much of the success of the trust has been due to the immense amount of money and effort put in by one or two people?

Clearly this is a book which will be immensely useful to future historians of rare breeds and the rare breed conservation movement. It might have been still more useful with references, and the authors have not been well served by what was presumably their publisher's decision to maximise the print and minimise the margins and spaces on each page.

PAUL BRASSLEY

C BEALE and G OWEN, *Writtle College: The First Hundred Years, 1893-1993*, Writtle College, Chelmsford, 1993. 72 pp. Illus. £8.50 + 50p postage.

P HARRIS, *The Silent Fields: One Hundred Years of Agricultural Education at Reading*, Department of Agriculture, Reading University, 1993. xi + 175 pp. Illus. nps.

S RICHARDS, *Wye College and its World: A Centenary History*, Wye College Press, Wye, 1994. 336 pp. Illus. nps.

When future agricultural historians attempt to account for the growth in agricultural output in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century, one of the variables they will have to look into is the impact of agricultural education. Has education merely provided the icing on a cake baked by other hands, or has it provided the vital raising agent without which the whole thing would have fallen unpalatably flat? Have the agricultural colleges provided essential training for successive generations of farmers and farmworkers, or have they just provided a finishing school for the sons and a few daughters of the better-off farmers and landowners? Have

their products been snapped up by farming or mainly used by the ancillary industries? Has their main contribution been in research or training? Is it, indeed, possible to make an academic subject out of a practical calling like agriculture?

Given some interest in these questions, the appearance of these three books is therefore welcome. And given institutional propensities to mark their own anniversaries, it is no accident that they should all appear at much the same time, for they are centenary histories, and the 1890s were a great decade for the foundation of agricultural colleges. This was partly because the county councils, established in 1888, were given some responsibility for technical education, partly because the Board of Agriculture, established in 1889, was allowed to spend a few thousand pounds each year on education, and mainly because of the passage of the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act of 1890. This provided for a duty to be raised on beer and spirits to compensate the publicans of superfluous public houses whose establishments were to be closed down. The temperance movement was outraged by this endowment of the publicans, the government needed some uncontroversial purpose towards which the money could be diverted, and so it was decided to pass it to the county councils to be used for technical or agricultural education. Hence the rash of agricultural colleges and university departments established in the 1890s and financed by what became known as the 'whisky money', among which were the subjects of the three books under review here.

To some extent they all tell the same story. There are the pioneering days before the First World War, with very few staff, who spent a good part of their time with extra-mural classes (the principal of the Essex County Laboratories had a £15 annual motorcycle allowance in 1911) and few students, the majority of whom took the national diplomas rather than degrees, with heavily scientific syllabuses. The combination of the teaching, research and advisory functions continued into the First World War, when there were also the women of the Land Army to train, and beyond. The inter-war years formed a period of slow but more or less steady expansion ('stability and consolidation' is the phrase used by Richards for Wye), and the Second World War again involved research, advice, maximizing the production of the farms, and teaching the Women's Land Army. With the establishment of the National Agricultural Advisory Service after the war the universities and colleges lost their advisory function, but teaching and research expanded, until the final phase arrived in the 1980s, with the relative decline in the number of agricultural students and

diversification into related areas from the rural environment to horses and floristry. And if there are similarities in the stories, so are there similarities in all three books, as they cover administrative issues and describe the work and play of the students and the research of the staff, all illustrated by reproductions of old advertisements, syllabuses, examination papers, and photographs of staff and students wearing more jackets, ties and hats than would now be customary.

But there are also differences. Richards' history of Wye College is the most substantial of them. It is the only one to be properly referenced and have an index, and the one which best sets the story of the academic institution in the context of agricultural, social and educational change, although it might be argued that some of the conflicts between the apprentice patricians and the young radicals among the students that took place in the early 1970s are given less attention than they might have had. His chapters 3 and 6 contain the best short summaries of the politics of agricultural education in the pre-1914 and post-1940 periods that have yet appeared, at least in this reviewer's judgement. It is interesting to compare the extensive evidence and careful thought which went into the formation of agricultural education policy in the years before 1980 with the recent diversification of courses without benefit of central planning and in response to market forces. Beale and Owen's work provides the most extensive examples of this trend, as the finale to an account which covers the metamorphosis of the Essex County Technical Laboratories into Writtle College, decade by decade. Old students will find much material to refresh their memories, but historians will find rather less analysis of why changes occurred. The same criticism might be made of Harris's account of the department at Reading. On the other hand, he prints many verbatim transcripts of the memories of staff and students which will prove useful to future workers in this field. The last fifty pages of the book are devoted to the present state of the department.

It appears, therefore, that none of these books answers the questions posed in the first paragraph of this review, and, to be fair, none of them quite set out to do so. The accounts of Writtle and Reading will provide some useful evidence for anyone in future who wishes to examine the contribution of education to agricultural change, and Richards' thoughtful account of Wye will be worthwhile reading for historians of twentieth-century agriculture as a whole, in addition to those who concentrate upon the history of agricultural education.

PAUL BRASSLEY

R DOUGLAS HURT and MARY E HURT, comps, *The History of Agricultural Science and Technology: An International Annotated Bibliography*, Garland Publishing, New York and London, 1994. xiii + 485 pp. \$75.

This impressive work is the latest in the series of Bibliographies on the History of Science and Technology to be published under the general editorship of Robert Multhauf at the Smithsonian Institution. Designed for advanced students and scholars, it ranges over a wide range of topics including agronomy, meteorology, plant and animal science, veterinary medicine, entomology, nutrition, technology and agricultural policy. There are also sections on the less traditional biotechnology, the green revolution, women, and institutions. Particularly valuable are those which list the indexing and abstracting services, the bibliographies and catalogues, and the reference works, including electronic sources. As well as the books and articles written by historians the compilers have included the scientific and social science literature that is not published in historical journals but which will become increasingly important to historical research.

The compilers have not attempted to be comprehensive; indeed their aim has been to avoid an endless listing where the important is lumped with the trivial. Instead we are provided with a highly selective 'critical' bibliography intended to lead the scholar to the most significant literature in his or her field of interest. Of enormous value are the annotations which are brief, to the point and highly informative. Because of space limitations the literature on horticulture, viticulture, apiculture and other subject areas such as vegetables has been excluded and the compilers have also tried to avoid purely economic literature. There is a useful index which requires to be consulted since many of the c 1400 citations logically could fit into more than one section. Overall this is an important work of reference. Unfortunately, readers of this journal probably would find it prohibitively expensive to buy.

RAINE MORGAN

AXEL STEENBERG, *Fire - Clearance Husbandry. Traditional Techniques Throughout the World*, Poul Kristensen, Herning, 1993. 239 pp. DKK 375. Steenberg's association with the techniques and mechanics of fire clearance is now almost legendary. He laboured (literally) with Iversen and Troels-Smith in the now famous 'neolithic' experiments in chopping down trees with stone axes and swiddening in Draved in Denmark in the early 1950s, and now this work, published in what must be

about his 90th birthday, is a culmination of an abiding interest in fire, clearing and rotations.

The book has a wealth of references. What is most valuable is the inclusion in the text and the bibliography and the extensive German and Scandinavian languages literature that may well be new to the predominantly linguistically insular Anglo-American readership of this journal. It is also lavishly illustrated with many photographs, but the maps are often meaningless.

The book is arranged in three main sections: I, Fire clearance in modern and early modern times; II, Paring and burning, ecobuage, framiguare, Rasenbrennen, etc; and III, Fire-clearance in early medieval and prehistoric times, which ends with the Draved experiment. The reader is left a little puzzled about the rationale for this retrospective arrangement. Any sense of chronological progression and continuity is lost.

Another problem is that one regional or historical example follows another, in the various sections, sometimes as lengthy quotations, with little linkage or generalization, except in the last few pages. It is difficult to place the individual case studies and examples into a specific socio-economic, yet alone a politico-historical context. For example, Ester Boserup's seminal schema of agricultural intensification with increasing population receives no mention. Although somewhat qualified by recent work it would have been important as a means of analysing and generalizing about the agricultural systems discussed. In the same way the ethnographic context of the 'contemporary' examples in Section I, in say Papua New Guinea for example, passes one by. The picture presented is a static one. One has no idea how modern intrusions and influences into these societies have, or are likely to have, altered the situations outlined. As an example, the work of Townsend on 'Stone and steel tool use in New Guinea society' would be relevant.¹ This is not, one hopes, 'nit-picking' as there is now barely any society that remains truly 'traditional' and untouched by modern tools and markets, which alter productivity and techniques.

Historically the very existence of Iversen's postulated *landnam* phase of clearing in neolithic Denmark, which is perhaps central to much of the argument in Part III, has come under intense scrutiny in the work of Bogucki² and Rowley-Conwy³, and more recently Denevan has ques-

¹ W H Townsend, 'Stone and steel tool use in New Guinea society', *Ethnology*, VIII, 1969, pp 199-205.

² P Bogucki, *Forest Farmers and Stockherders: Early Agriculture and its Consequences in North-central Europe*, 1988, particularly pp 49, 79-90.

³ P Rowley-Conwy, 'Slash and burn in the temperate European Neolithic', in R Mercer, ed, *Farming Practices in British Prehistory*, pp 85-96.

tioned if slash-and-burn could ever have existed in Latin America, especially in the Maya lands.

What we have then, is a valuable compilation of literature and example that builds-up a convincing case for the ubiquitous use of fire in periodic vegetation clearing and turf-paring in many part of the world, at many different times. An awareness on the part of the reader of the recent debates will add new levels of understanding to the text.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

TOM WILLIAMSON, *The Origins of Norfolk*, Manchester UP, 1992. xii + 208 pp. 26 figs. 16 pls. £12.99.

This volume about Norfolk is one of the series titled *The Origins of the Shire* produced by Manchester University Press under the general editorship of Nick Higham. It deals with the topography and environment of the county, the archaeological background, the Saxon (Anglian) settlement, and its development to the Norman Conquest, which laid the foundation of medieval Norfolk.

The period is of great interest to both archaeologists and historians. Although the collection of archaeological data continues to increase, scholars of both disciplines have less evidence than they would like in order to write about the subject.

The book is divided into seven sections, the first dealing with the environment and topography, which sets the scene of a gently undulating landscape with 150 km of coastline, stretching to fenland in the west. The second section describes the prehistoric and Roman background. Axial field patterns in the Waveney valley (Fig 2.1) are assigned to the Iron Age, partly because a Roman road is aligned obliquely across them. The antiquity of such field patterns is not entirely convincing because they look like medieval fields and evidence is not given to prove otherwise, although the author does recommend caution in interpretation. Roman roads cutting across field systems are not sufficient evidence alone; medieval fields were laid out according to the local topography and would approach and continue beyond a Roman road obliquely if it suited the lie of the land. Nevertheless, Williamson's interpretation in no way detracts from the main themes and analyses of his book.

Evidence for the arrival of the Angles during the fifth century onwards is provided by early graves that are similar to those in northern Europe. Roman sites were abandoned on claylands, as the population declined, but many larger sites in the valleys continued in use. As elsewhere in the country, new settlements of the period predominate in river valleys and on light soils. Pollen analysis of peat from meres suggests an increase of pasture with

little woodland regeneration, but place-names refer to belts of regenerated wood. Early tribal names are preserved as hundred names. The large Spong Hill cemetery is interpreted as serving a tribal region rather than as belonging to one or a few nearby settlements.

The kingdom of the East Angles emerged from the tribal groups during the Middle Saxon period, 650–900; Bede's history records relationships with other kingdoms. Wheel-made Ipswich-ware pottery was used from c 650 and coinage appeared by 775. In the seventh century many settlement sites were relocated, to form a pattern similar to that of later villages. The large estates that were created can be reconstructed from the evidence provided by place-names, hundred boundaries and the Domesday survey of 1086.

In 865 the Danes came to Norfolk. Place-name names, except *Thorpe* and those containing a personal-name element, are concentrated in the east of the county, and lie in isolated locations. They probably represent peasant immigration, whereas places with personal-name components plus *tun* are likely to be centres of an 'elite'. The absence of pagan burials has been interpreted to mean that numbers of settlers were low. However, minor place-names such as *bekkr* and *gata* may indicate more extensive settlement.

The Domesday survey of 1086 shows a dense population and a complex manorial system, Norfolk being the most populous county of England with 27,000 recorded individuals and 726 vills. Population was concentrated in the south-east and in river valleys, associated with arable lands. The great estates became fragmented; in the resulting complex tenurial system it was rare to find manors in single ownership. Distribution maps show that sokemen were uniformly distributed but freemen occupied grazing areas on poorer ground with little arable or woodland. Estate qualifiers ('great and little', etc.) were not much used, suggesting that fission was then recent, Viking settlement provided social conditions that encouraged fragmentation. Hundreds were once related to royal manors, which were imposed after reconquest from the Danes, but some archaic aspects of the 1086 geld collection may relate to an earlier Danish administration.

The sixth section deals with Christianity and churches. A few Christian Roman finds are known but pagan cremation rites dominate in early Saxon cemeteries. Conversion during the seventh century followed national trends; two sees were created c 680. By the tenth century minsters held sway over the smaller churches that later became parish churches. The Domesday survey recorded 250 churches (only Suffolk having more), but as a pre-Conquest charter refers to 9 churches, of which

only 4 are recorded in 1086, even more existed. The large numbers of ecclesiastical buildings are related to the fragmented manors. Many churchyards have two churches placed in them and Reepham once had three.

The last section of the book deals with the Norman Conquest and after. Norwich was established as the Norman centre of medieval Norfolk with a new cathedral and castle. There were no regular planned vills, and settlement became more dispersed, spreading around greens and to the edges of commons. Farms were restricted to limited areas and were not uniformly scattered. Fields were more complex than simple two- or three-field arrangements and were associated with dispersed settlement. North and west Norfolk had an organized fold-course system, with animals grazing on heath and brought to folds on fallow land for manuring.

Sixteen excellent photographs are used in the book, many being the work of Derek Edwards, well known for his aerial photography. They are placed together in the centre and unfortunately are reproduced on the same quality paper as the text, which make them appear rather dull. Surely the publishers could have used good quality art paper, having decided not to disperse the plates throughout the text?

The book is well written and very readable. Tom Williamson is to be congratulated on his treatment of a subject that has many interpretations and differing opinions, and will continue to be debated and revised as more evidence becomes available.

DAVID HALL

W HASSALL and J BEAUROY, eds, *Lordship and Landscape in Norfolk 1250-1350. The Early Records of Holkham*, Records of Social and Economic History N.S. XX, The British Academy, 1993. 660 pp. 6 appendices. 2 maps. 3 tables. 3 microfiche. £55.

The Norfolk estate of Holkham Hall is best known for the agricultural improvements of the Coke family, its owners from the seventeenth century, and its fine Palladian hall. But the survival of one of the richest family archives still remaining in private hands offers an opportunity to study the medieval foundations of Holkham. This volume documents the early history of Holkham and covers the period 1250-1350. A second volume covering the period 1350-1600 is intended. In addition to setting the estate's history in a longer perspective, the volume is a rich source of material on the agricultural practices, economy and social structure of medieval Norfolk.

The documents printed here are the earliest in the Holkham archive. Original charters form the

bulk of both the collection and this printed edition. Additional material includes, among others, manorial documents and miscellaneous and royal documents. The main item of interest, however, is the so-called Neel Cartulary, compiled between 1414-60. It is an important testimony to seigniorial land management and is accordingly transcribed in its entirety and given a comprehensive introduction.

The introductory chapters trace the formation, order and survival of the archive. The organization of the archive, the editors suggest, is indicative of the efficient land management of the East Anglian lay landlord. The introduction considers the background to the social structure and physical nature of medieval Holkham. The editors detail the complex structure of the several manors of Holkham, particularly the manor of Neel. Attention is drawn to the Neel Cartulary which charts the genesis and development of seigniorial inheritance in the early fourteenth century; the documents also provide evidence of an active land market in Holkham. The discussion encompasses the system of peasant holdings, services and rent, the nature of fee and free tenants, and the distribution and significance of the sheep folds. A survey of agricultural practices reveals the existence of sheep/corn husbandry as far back as the thirteenth century. The editors clearly intend to show that the agricultural practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not entirely novel, but the peak of a long series of improvements. Surviving court rolls for the period allow a brief section on the social structure of the community of Holkham. They also permit an extensive prosopography of Holkham 1330-1350.

Moreover, this book makes a valuable contribution to landscape history. The text reveals a bustling landscape of gardens, hamlets and closes. A detailed overview of Holkham's medieval fields is provided. The topography of Holkham is vividly presented by the mapping of fourteenth-century fields and Holkham town. These are supplemented by detailed topographical information including an extensive gazetteer. As well as providing a comprehensive picture of Holkham, the work is an excellent methodological example of landscape reconstruction.

The editors have attempted to retain the feel and context of the source material. The documents are carefully edited with descriptions of handwriting, seals and endorsements. Marginalia are not ignored but included alongside the relevant charters. Microfiches depicting a selection of documents, maps and photographs of Holkham are a welcome inclusion. Unfortunately, some of the deeds and photographs are less than clear and, therefore, add little to the book. However, this does not significantly detract from the work. Overall, the result is

an accessible book with clear editorial methods, substantial cross referencing and an extensive index; it should prove a valuable source book.

D MARSH

ROBERT M TOWNSEND, *The Medieval Village Economy: A Study of the Pareto Mapping in General Equilibrium Models*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993. xxii + 145 pp. £19.50.

The origins and rationale of subdivided commonfields, with their fragmented and dispersed landholdings, have long exercised an abiding fascination upon scholars from a variety of intellectual backgrounds. Over the past thirty years some of the most innovative work has been done by a succession of North American economic historians and econometricians – Carl Dahlman, Donald McCloskey, Stefano Fenoaltea, and now Robert Townsend – who have enlisted economic theory in an endeavour to establish what real economic advantages such an ostensibly inefficient system of land-holding may have offered and what gave it such a remarkable power of survival so long after the circumstances of its creation had disappeared into the mists of time. Here, McCloskey's proposal that scattered landholdings may have represented a primitive form of risk aversion in a hazard-prone world which offered few alternative forms of 'insurance' has been especially provocative. As debate has progressed, however, so the growing abstraction of the argument and sophistication of the theory have increasingly restricted participation to those as much if not more at home in economics than history. This applies particularly to Robert Townsend's *The Medieval Village Economy*; a book written in the language of economics by a master of modern economics for fellow economists. Advance praise on the rear dustjacket from a quartet of distinguished North American economic historians hails it as a pioneering work of micro-economic theory, the sub-title proclaims it as *A Study of the Pareto Mapping in General Equilibrium Models*, and closer inspection confirms that this is more an exercise in economic model building than historical analysis or reconstruction. Most agricultural historians will be more than willing to take its logic and mathematics on trust, but they will be less happy with Townsend's portrayal of the agricultural regime which his model is intended to elucidate, and they will be downright dissatisfied by his failure to couch his conclusions in terms which they are capable of comprehending. Townsend's appeal at various critical points in the model-building process for 'further data acquisition and analysis' is therefore likely to pass unheeded because unappreciated.

Townsend's medieval villagers inhabited a high-risk agrarian world, partly because of the

frequent and essentially random shocks inflicted by adverse weather, fungoid diseases, and the depredations of birds and insects, and partly because of the prevailing 'hostile, militaristic environment'. It was a world of low living standards, self-sufficiency and recurrent famine. Land-holdings were characterized by their extreme spatial fragmentation and yields by their high variability, both from year to year and place to place. There was little storage of grain from one year to the next and no apparent borrowing/lending between lords and villagers. As evidence he cites several seventeenth-century field maps, the Winchester Pipe Rolls for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and a few other near contemporary series of manorial accounts relating to manors in southern England. Thus represented and documented (medieval historians have long since appreciated the error of taking the evidence of the Winchester estates as representative of agrarian conditions in thirteenth-century England as a whole) it is a world almost certainly more artificial than real which, in its emphasis upon economic autarky, violence and uncertainty, and the persistence of commonfield farming over much of the country from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries, is at odds with much recent historical writing on the subject. The latter now dates the origins of regular commonfields to the ninth and tenth centuries, stresses the solid institutional and economic achievements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and lays particular emphasis upon the growing commercialization of economic life. Few medieval village economies can ever have fitted Townsend's precise description and never for more than part of this long period. True, Townsend is led by his own model to question whether reality was ever quite as he characterizes it, but this is unlikely to surprise or impress those sceptical of the initial scenario which the model was designed to explain. Nor are historians likely to be won round by the author's professed method of proceeding pedagogically 'from the relatively simple to the relatively complex'. Those able to cope with early chapters on 'Uncertainty and Landholding Patterns' and 'Storage as Risk Reduction' are likely to have been left far behind by the time they reach the economically demanding chapters on 'Rentals with Unobserved Outputs', 'Sharecropping with Unobserved Inputs', and 'An Incentive Theory of Landholdings', which offer virtually no concessions to those interested in the conclusions if unable to follow the method and reasoning by which they were derived. This is a pity, for there is scope for a highly constructive dialogue between economists and historians if they can only find a common language in which to converse. Of course, this presupposes that there is a desire for such dialogue

in the first place, which in this particular instance must be doubted. For Townsend the medieval village economy is more a vehicle for demonstrating the potential of general equilibrium modelling than an object of interest in itself. He will not be disappointed therefore if his book makes little impact upon those endeavouring to research the medieval village economy from the records of the period, for its intended readership plainly lies elsewhere.

BRUCE M S CAMPBELL

R W HOYLE, ed, *The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522*, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Gloucestershire Record Series, vol 6, 1993. xlv + 265 pp. £30.

Together with the lay subsidy returns of 1523–27, the military surveys of 1522 are one of the most important sources for English history at the end of the Middle Ages. As Cornwall's work has shown, they provide unrivalled information about population totals and the social and geographical distribution of wealth. Unfortunately, few of the 1522 returns now survive, probably because the Exchequer returned them to local commissioners as part of the preparation for the 'Amicable Grant' of 1525 (p xvii). Certainly, the Gloucestershire return survives among the Berkeley muniments rather than at the PRO. Yet, if anything, the information provided by the 1522 survey is even more useful than that contained in the taxation returns of subsequent years. Whereas the subsidy returns simply list taxpayers, their wealth and tax-renders, the 'Muster' returns of 1522 were intended to name the lords of manors, their stewards and local rectors, along with the names, wealth and military equipment of tenants and servants, and a list of those fit for military service. The survey has often been seen as simply the pretext to gather the information needed for a forced loan but Hoyle convincingly argues that the government was also serious in its military intent, even though the Gloucestershire commissioners' failure to link lords and tenants consistently did reduce the utility of the survey as a source for raising military retinues.

In an introduction which offers much food for thought, Hoyle stresses the need to read the Muster returns in the light of the specific practices adopted by particular groups of commissioners, practices which could vary even within particular counties. For instance, the Gloucestershire commissioners treated the poor in three different ways in different parts of the county, the tendency to omit the poor in the Cotswolds hundreds meaning that, surprisingly, the later subsidy returns actually contain more names than those listed in what should have been the fuller muster return of 1522 (pp xxii–xiv).

Conversely, many wealthy individuals listed in 1522 are omitted from the subsequent taxation returns which, even allowing for migration and mortality, suggests that 'the subsidy assessment was made less rigorously than is often assumed' (p xxix). Finally, whilst historians have used the surveys of the 1520s as indicators of previous economic change, they have tended to forget that the tax-burden of the 1520s had an economic impact in its own right. Here Hoyle emphasizes the role of taxation in slowing down economic activity in the first half of the sixteenth century and thus the impact of the state on economic development. This is an excellent edition of a fascinating source, an edition which will be indispensable for local historians but which has a relevance for all historians of English society and economy in the later medieval and early modern periods.

S H RIGBY

TEOFILO F RUIZ, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1994. xvi + 351 pp. £43.95.

The geographical area covered in this beautifully written and well documented monograph comprises present-day Old Castile along with the coastal region to the north of the Cantabrian Mountains – Cantabria and the Basque Country. Within its bounds lay the ports of Santander and Bilbao and the important urban centres of Valladolid and Burgos. The pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela crossed the northern part of the Old Castile, replete with its itinerant salesmen. As Teofilo Ruiz informs us, enterprising pilgrims, with one eye on salvation and the other on profits, did not enter or leave Spain empty-handed. More significantly in the long run, over the difficult and twisting yet well-traversed passes of the Cantabrian range, mule trains brought in increasing loads of luxury woollens and silks from Flanders and the Moorish lands for the wealthy oligarchy. As for generations of Castilian farmers, at best they scraped a meagre existence from the production of more mundane staples such as cereals (barley, wheat, rye), flax, wine, livestock, honey and wax. Later, with the consolidation of the internationally famous transhumant flocks of the Meseta, Castilian wool would be transported in a northwards direction for export to England and the Low Countries. At an earlier stage, iron, hides, fat and horses were the main items dispatched to northern Europe through the Castilian ports on the Bay of Biscay.

The Cuban American historian, Teofilo Ruiz, is already well known for a number of seminal articles in this field, although this volume betrays ample evidence of a substantial modification of his ideas.

In essence, he portrays Old Castile during the Middle Ages and beyond as an area of surprising climatic and geographical diversity. While he is far from being a geographical determinist, in general the high altitude, poor soils and unpredictable climate of this part of northern Spain, excluding the coastal belt, are considered to be extremely hostile to the farming community. Medieval Castile was fabled for its 'ten months of winter followed by two months of hell'. As travellers recounted, the agricultural population of the high plateau, or Meseta, were the perennial victims of a never-ending sequence of floods, frost, hailstorms, drought and snow which destroyed crops and frequently resulted in great scarcity. In addition, as the historiographical debate has established, late medieval Castile suffered from endemic political chaos consequent upon the peculiar nature of the Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Moorish invaders. An important theme of this book – hinted at in the subtitle of the work 'continuity and change' – is the manifestly unfavourable impact of the *Reconquista* on Castilian society. A further valuable contribution is that Ruiz also furnishes a detailed account of the daily struggles of peasants, artisans and merchants in all corners of medieval Old Castile both in the countryside and the towns. He skillfully charts and illustrates a succession of conflicts between both lords and peasants as well as between the patrician elites and the urban poor, many of which were marked by wanton violence and destruction, especially in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In search of a general interpretation of the economic crisis which beset late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Castile, Ruiz firmly rejects traditional Malthusian approaches of the type used to explain developments north of the Pyrennes. Although he considers such theories as applicable to certain areas of northern Europe, most notably parts of England and France, he demonstrates convincingly that there was no demographic pressure on the Castilian countryside with its small and scattered population. The crisis of late medieval Castile, he contends, was not the result of the Black Death. In fact, the crisis preceded the plague's onslaught. Instead, in common with writers like Angel Garcia Sanz, he maintains that the region suffered from important shortages of agricultural labour from the 1290s onwards due in large part to the opening up of al-Andalus to Christian settlement.

Within this historical framework, the middle sections of the book focus on the nature of rural life. A series of chapters offer a typology of peasant obligations and conditions, a description of how peasants lived and worked the land, the choice of

crops and farming methods. In general, Ruiz shows that while forests were burned or felled in parts of the plain to make way for cultivation, the mountain regions of Cantabria and the Basque Country retained an adequate supply of wood. Throughout northern Castile a biannual crop rotation was practised. Often, more than half of the arable land was left fallow while the other half was cultivated, with the fields being rotated (in theory) the next year – a system known as *año y vez*. In common with many other areas of Europe before the eighteenth century, there was never enough manure to go around, a factor which helps to explain the extended fallowing in order to replenish the soil. After presenting an overview of Castilian agriculture, Ruiz goes on to provide a detailed case study of the domain of the monastery of Santa María la Real de Aguilar de Campóo, for which a rich documentation exists. These lands were under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Burgos on the banks of the Pisuerga and constituted a prosperous agricultural area at the crossroads of several trade routes. He also offers a fascinating study of the market for land in northern Castile, arguing that after 1250 those peasants who sold their lands did so largely because of the opportunity to migrate south provided by the redistribution of Moorish property following the Reconquest. Other transactions took place for a variety of reasons, such as to settle an inheritance or to pay off Jewish money lenders.

Overall, Ruiz's splendid monograph is a work of considerable reflection and maturity. It demonstrates a fine understanding of the diversified landscape of Old Castile and reflects the author's excellent detailed knowledge and grasp of his source material. Although thoroughly conversant with the many and contentious ideological debates and controversies among Spanish and other medieval historians of different tendencies and schools, Ruiz's approach is essentially empirical. For my part, I found it convincing and highly readable.

JOSEPH HARRISON

LUCIE BOLENS, *L'Andalousie du quotidien au sacré, XIe – XIIIe Siècles*, Variorum, Aldershot, 1990. xx + 282 pp. Illus. £43.50; LUCIE BOLENS, *La Cuisine Andalouse, un Art de Vivre, XIe – XIIIe Siècle*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1990. 352 pp. nps.

The work of Lucie Bolens is not well known to English agricultural historians, but she is the supreme authority on the early agricultural history of southern Spain. So the two volumes of her work reviewed here give an opportunity to survey and appreciate its breadth, scale, and importance for European agricultural history. Lucie Bolens was born in Algeria, is a professor of history in the University of Geneva, and always writes in French,

but her subject matter is Andalusia, and in writing on Moorish Spain, she is constantly opening up fresh views on the interchange of farming methods, crops and food habits between the Arab world and southern Europe. Since much of English farming history, in fact, demonstrates the drift of agricultural and horticultural influences from the Mediterranean to northern Europe, her work is highly important in tracing the beginnings of a slowly advancing tide. It is full of discerning insights.

Professor Bolens's first publication was her doctoral thesis in the form of a typescript (1974), later issued in book form by Droz in 1981, on medieval farming treatises which emanated from Andalusia. Now nineteen of her essays that have appeared between 1978 and 1990 are brought together in one volume by Variorum, while, in the second work reviewed here, she writes on Andalusian cuisine between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, interspersing her historical observations with recipes taken from documents of the same period.

On Andalusian cooking and entertaining Professor Bolens shows the breadth of her experience and learning, when spanning two very different cultures. She knows, she says, that she could unleash a storm by equating nougat with turrón and halva, but long reflection and experience instil hope in a tolerant dialogue between nations. Certainly, this book from a historian appears at the right moment to stimulate fruitful ideas on some of the connections between the Christian and Islamic worlds, now that we eat the food of all nations, and are prepared to test their recipes in a strong spirit of curiosity and acceptance.

The volume of Professor Bolens's essays by Variorum deals with the remarkably innovative period, agriculturally, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, when scientists, philosophers, theologians and translators in the kingdom of Seville were mounting a cultural renaissance, and travellers from the east called Andalusia a terrestrial paradise. Politically, she sees it as a period when centralization collapsed, and regional differentiation flourished. Culturally, it was a period when Arabs, Jews, and Christians lived peaceably with each other.

Arab princes maintained experimental gardens, and encouraged the study of ancient, including classical, texts on agriculture. Thus the practices of Arab and Roman farmers were examined by the scholars alongside indigenous Spanish farming. Population was rising, and agricultural was stimulated. But the circumstances of the ensuing agricultural revolution were wholly different from those which we in Britain associate with such a transformation. It did not need large farms and a large scale of operation to function at its best. Cultivation in Andalusia was generally in the hands of small-

holders, and was more like market gardening. The experimentation which interested the intellectuals called for careful observation, intensive toil, and attention to detail. Landholders were ideally equipped, having a religious belief that Nature was sacred and was the giver of all benefits, and being willing and able to offer unstinting labour. Theirs was exactly the style needed for undertaking new ventures.

The second essay entitled 'The agricultural revolution in Andalusia in the eleventh century' sets the intellectual background of the renaissance by analysing three treatises from Seville which illustrate the way farming lore was being gathered from many quarters. Columella featured as the dominant authority among Roman authors, and it is worth noting that he was born in Spain, where his uncle farmed. The newly-compiled Arab treatises had an essentially practical purpose to arrive at the best systems for dry and for irrigated cultivation. Among other concerns, ploughing and hoeing routines had to be carefully chosen to suit the climate, different soils and situations, and to retain moisture. Essays follow which analyse a number of varied themes in agricultural practice and the accumulation of knowledge. Methods of improving the fertility of the soil come under scrutiny, irrigation techniques are illuminated by legal documents which guarded individual rights to water. (One of the new crops of this period, sugar cane made heavy demands on water, every four days from March to July, every eight days from July to October.) The fourth essay examines the first attempt at plant classification by the botanists between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and shows the close attention then being paid to techniques of grafting. The fifth essay sheds light on vine cultivation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, despite Islamic opposition to alcohol. An important essay follows on the haricot bean, which has been mistakenly described as a first-time introduction in the fifteenth century from America. Professor Bolens has found eleven varieties of this bean named in an Arab manuscript, giving it a much earlier history in Asia and Africa, and underlining one of her main themes, that the Mediterranean was a remarkable centre of distribution for new plants and new varieties, not least from India. A fascinating essay follows on the foods used for bread in times of famine between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Contemporary texts named more than seventy possible ingredients, among which feature bitter fruits like acorns which were cooked first to eliminate their acidity. This helps us to understand equivalent references in English documents to the use of acorns in times of scarcity.

Further essays deal with liquids used in cooking,

condiments, and the appearance of couscous in Andalusia in the thirteenth century, hard wheat having arrived, along with rice, as an innovation in the tenth century. Professor Bolens associates the introduction of couscous with the ascendancy of berber dynasties in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which had the effect of mingling African traditions in handling grains with the established bread tradition of Europe. Some short essays, using a thirteenth-century cookery book and recipes from other scattered sources, sensitively analyse the Arabs' appreciation of flavours (as in sorbets) and colours, and the significance attached to colours, taken from plants, for clothing and the adornment of skin and hair (including henna).

An essay on the gardens of Andalusia demonstrates convincingly the rich miscellany of plants and the elegantly formal layouts already found in princely households in southern Spain long before the new wave of plants arrived from the New World, and inspired another horticultural renaissance. Indeed, the whole volume illustrates more effectively than anything yet in print the first reasonably well documented agricultural/horticultural revolution in European experience. In due course that phase of change lost momentum, but it was galvanized again, carried to new heights, and influenced a larger territory in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The focus of the liveliest and perhaps most purposeful activity at that stage, however, moved northwards.

In the eleventh to thirteenth centuries Andalusia stood at a vitally important crossroads in the Mediterranean where several different civilizations met. Professor Andrew Watson explored some of its agricultural innovations in his book in 1983, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World*, but Professor Bolens is the best guide yet in surveying the scene, both agriculturally and culturally. Every essay is furnished with a bibliography for further reading, and many have appendices of documents translated from the Arabic. Her work must take first place on what may prove to be a new shelf of exciting books on agricultural history, exploring the world-wide exchange of farming experience, and giving due credit to the contributions both of scholars and practical farmers. This last theme is prominent in Mauro Ambrosoli's book on botany and agriculture in western Europe, 1350–1850, reviewed in *Ag Hist Rev*, 42,1, 1994, pp 91–2 (in its Italian version though soon to be published in English). It is also the theme of Gang Deng, a Chinese scholar, who won a prize at Milan in September 1994 at the International Congress of Economic History, for his book on the role of the *literati* and of technical books in long-term agricultural development in China. As we would expect,

the perspectives of historians are being lengthened just at the time when producers also are being forced to review agriculture in world terms.

JOAN THIRSK

J-M MORICEAU, *Les Fermiers de l'Île-de-France. L'ascension d'un patronat agricole, XVe–XVIIIe siècle*, Fayard, Paris, 1994. 1070 pp. Fr 250.

This vast and ingeniously researched book presents a vision of rural France in the past that is profoundly different from the widely-accepted stereotype of largely self-sufficient peasant households operating on the margins of the commercial economy. Jean-Marc Moriceau focuses on an elite group of tenant farmers who cultivated the rich soils of the inner Paris Basin and took full advantage of their location and environmental and social circumstances to supply the growing capital with grain and fodder. With 400,000 inhabitants living within a 30 km radius of Notre-Dame, Paris was the largest focus of food consumption in western Europe in the early 1300s; by 1780 that total was to increase to 860,000. Moriceau's dual concern is with the distinctive social evolution of these tenant farmers and their role in the improvement of agricultural techniques. Eighteenth-century taxation records for the *élection* of Paris provide a starting point, enabling him to identify the names of large tenant farmers on the plains of 'France' and Multien, extending north of the capital toward Senlis and Crépy, and of Hurepoix to the south of the city. Of course, parts of these immensely fertile areas are now covered with suburban housing estates, airports and motorways, but many of their substantial farm buildings and large fields remain in the present landscape.

These *pays*, with their navigable rivers, highways and networks of local markets, had responded to the growing demands of Paris for foodstuffs in medieval times, but then suffered widespread damage during the Hundred Years War. In the second half of the fifteenth century local landlords enlisted successful family farmers as tenants to promote the recovery of their estates, often making advances of capital, livestock and seeds to assist the process, and establishing favourable leases of nine, twelve or even thirty years. An elite group of tenant farmers duly emerged, who arranged strategic marriages for their children in order to enhance their control of farmland. They devoted particular attention to educating those sons who would not be destined to work the land in order to prepare them for alternative careers, typically as priests or grain merchants, or more rarely as public officials in Paris. These powerful tenant dynasties once again played a decisive role in restoring the *pays* of the Île-de-France following the Wars of Religion. They

employed triennial rotations more flexibly, with new fodder crops being introduced and vital supplies of manure being obtained from cattle as well as from sheep.

During the seventeenth century, heavier taxation, worsening climatic conditions, fluctuating commodity prices, and increasing demands for food from the capital accelerated agricultural change and created new challenges and opportunities for these tenant dynasties, which typically produced seven or eight children per marriage. Some families managed to innovate successfully between 1650 and 1750, increasing their hold on land resources and generating quantities of fodder for urban horses, as well as abundant supplies of grain. Traditional crops such as rye and maslin were abandoned in favour of wheat to satisfy the Parisian taste for white bread. These dynasties duly enhanced their wealth and strengthened their social position in the countryside. They purchased land as well as renting it, and played a major role in the commercial life of their home villages and market towns. Their solidly-built farmhouses contained the material expressions of wealth, including silver ornaments, silken clothes, and books. Other families were less successful and abandoned farming to their more innovative and efficient neighbours, directing their energies to trade, the law, administration or colonial service.

Paying meticulous attention to demographic conditions as well as to the evolution of social and economic circumstances, Moriceau chronicles the activities of these gentlemen farmers who fostered links between Paris and its hinterland, and often managed to amass property and savings, as well as acquiring the tastes and fashions of Parisian elites. He employs a dazzling array of archival sources to trace the changing fortunes of his selection of tenant dynasties across three and a half centuries, making use of documentary evidence from the *archives nationales*, seven *archives départementales*, and a host of *commune* depositories, as well as papers held by lawyers and local families. Seven annexes, covering 150 pages, provide essential statistical evidence on demography, crop yields, prices, taxation and rents, as well as an illuminating essay on the diversity of local measures of land, grain and other agricultural commodities in the Ile-de-France prior to the Revolution. More than 600 items are included in the bibliography which direct the reader to international debates in rural history as well as to the intricacies of agricultural change and the fortunes of tenant households within a 30 km radius of Paris. The text is complemented by numerous quantitative maps and over a hundred statistical tables. Without doubt, *Les Fermiers de l'Ile-de-France* is a superb example of a regional monograph in the

very best French tradition. At 250 francs it is remarkably good value for money.

HUGH CLOUT

AMY LOUISE ERICKSON, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, Routledge, 1993. xiii + 306 pp. £40.

This is a lively, incisive study of women (mostly those living in the country rather than in towns), viewed from a fresh vantage point. It investigates women's command over their property, both land and movables, in the three separate phases of their lives, as single women, wives, and widows. It uses as its main source of information the probate accounts presented by an executrix, or by an administratrix in cases of intestacy, in the ecclesiastical courts. Nearly three-quarters of all probate accounts were filed by women, usually a year after the inventory of goods had been drawn up, when debts had been paid, expenses were known, and the residue was ready to be distributed. The clerks of the court scrutinized the accounts closely, disallowed some expenses, and presided over a fair distribution of what was left, following as best they might the terms of the will. Probate accounts were first used by Clare Gittings in 1984 in a study of funeral rites, but they are only now being more systematically and fully exploited. They give a unique view of ordinary women's experience in handling property, and Dr Erickson provides a wide-ranging and satisfying account of them, set against the background of current legal theory, and drawing comparisons with the experience of women of the gentry and noble classes.

The largest samples of accounts used here are taken from Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, southern Northamptonshire, and West Sussex, with additional small numbers from Somerset, Dorset, and Hampshire. Where available, these documents are examined alongside the relevant wills and inventories, and although at every turn Dr Erickson is obliged to call for more research, she is plainly carving out a new path in the history of property relations between men and women, which others will surely follow. They can look forward to a veritable feast of information, for thirty thousand probate accounts survive in the various archive offices.

Women's property was subject to several different jurisdictions, and these did not speak with one voice: the common law was harsh in dealing with married women's movables, ecclesiastical law was more reasonable and realistic, manorial and borough customs imposed their own varying rules about widows' rights to land and buildings (and these could change during this period), while the courts of equity were ready to listen to plaintiffs if they

had the money to pay for a remedy against gross injustices. Inadequate indexes prevent Dr Erickson from making more than a modest foray into proceedings in the equity court of Chancery.

The author's main tasks are to show the general experiences and expectations of women when handling the property of their kin, and to explore the policies and decisions of the church courts. The results are clearly summarized as the argument proceeds, the statistical evidence is generously supplied, and a picture of property relations emerges which is new at many points, puzzling and thought-provoking at others. Some conventional assumptions have to be entirely discarded, others have to be modified, while the geographical analysis of the records reveals differing conventions, locally entrenched, which have yet to be explained. Wills made in Yorkshire, for example, were more likely to endow women with land than in Lincolnshire or West Sussex; hence single women were more likely to be found living off the land or their rents in Yorkshire than further south. In Cambridgeshire, for unknown reasons, the court was more generous in its provision for widows and children than in Lincolnshire and West Sussex.

Our general belief that men were bequeathed land while women received movables is not upheld everywhere, and certainly not in the Yorkshire evidence. Even when women did receive movables, Dr Erickson makes the important point that their value was often the equal of land in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Only in the eighteenth century did consumer goods multiply rapidly and fall in value, making for unaccustomed problems in equating them with land. Ecclesiastical courts favoured a rough equality among heirs through most of the period, despite the theoretical tyranny of primogeniture. But most surprising of all is the way women, before marriage, protected their property, and that of their children at second and third marriages, by simple or informal marriage settlements. Often their existence emerges only casually or by implication, but Dr Erickson has a watchful eye. She convincingly shows how the documents glide carelessly over these sensible and practical arrangements between men and women, which softened the impact of rigid theories.

Much other miscellaneous information is garnered here to shed light on other aspects of women's lives. Food allowances and the costs of bringing up girls and boys were evidently judged the same by the probate courts, in contrast with the food allowances for men and women that were ordained by JPs when assessing wages at Quarter Sessions. Women were regular users of the money market to build up both their own savings and the bequests of money which they guarded for young children

till their majority. Facilities for taking such monies were offered by towns, and even villages sometimes, which were then made available as loans at interest to local people. The practice is already known in towns, but the detail brought to light here calls for further substantiation, if possible, in village documents.

This study is written in a spirited feminist vein, which does not allow conventional masculine viewpoints, for example on widows, to pass without comment. So its original insights are mingled with some acerbic judgments that hit hard and true. But it is firmly anchored to a sound, scholarly base, and makes invigorating reading. It is not entirely free of small errors. The legal year before 1752 did not start on April 1 but on March 25; Thomas Tusser's services to the farmer is misunderstood when he is denounced as an execrable versifier; and Thomas Tryon would have been surprised to hear himself deemed the successor of Gervase Markham. But the author succeeds in maintaining a sympathetic relationship with all her readers, and says much to stimulate reflection.

JOAN THIRSK

SHEILAGH OGILVIE, ed, *Proto-Industrialization in Europe*, special issue of *Continuity and Change*, 8, 2, CUP, 1993. 204 pp. £14.95.

It is now more than twenty years since the term proto-industrialization first came into popular use, thanks largely to the work of F F Mendels, and later of Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick and Jurgen Schlumbohm (KMS). Its genesis (particularly the KMS version) owed much to earlier writers of the German Historical School and the concept has always had a more sympathetic reception and more influence upon research on the continent than in Britain. In this country it met with some hostility. This was partly because of the influence in the 1970s and early 1980s of macro-economic and econometric approaches to industrialization, but also because of a deep suspicion of stage theories of growth, particularly those derived from a Marxist perspective as was prominent in the KMS analysis. In addition, with no counterpart in English historiography to the Annales School or to the Swiss-German folklorist tradition and with a marked separation of economic from social and cultural history, the interdisciplinary nature of the hypotheses and ideas surrounding proto-industrialization fell largely upon stony ground. With one or two significant exceptions, it is only very recently that various aspects of the proto-industrial model have been applied to empirical work on a range of British regions. The appearance of this special issue is thus timely for British scholars. The sophisticated and questioning framework of ideas surrounding

the notion of proto-industry as it has now developed is likely to be both useful and influential for the new generation of researchers in this field.

The editor's valuable review article surveys the development of the proto-industry literature in the last decade or so, stressing that the varied impact of proto-industrialization in different European regions owed much to social institutions: land tenure systems, the state, guilds and communal structures. The survey is thorough, wide ranging and provides an excellent set of footnotes. Surprisingly, most of the issues still actively debated are those which were at the top of the agenda more than a decade ago when various surveys of the early literature started to appear. For example, only limited progress appears to have been made concerning the parallels between European proto-industry and contemporary development issues since Mendels first linked his research to initiatives being discussed by the World Bank. Yet both Ogilvie and the essay by KMS refer to the importance of research on proto-industry for our understanding of contemporary forms and locations of domestic industry.

The core of this volume is the essay by KMS, written partly in response to a piece by Wolfgang Mager which also appears here. Mager argues that the usefulness of the concept of proto-industry should be separated from the more questionable idea of proto-industrialization. He provides a helpful survey of the very different raw material and technical requirements of various proto-industrial sectors suggesting that these are the key to understanding the nature of links between agriculture and industry and the connection or lack of connection between decentralized and later, more capital intensive, forms of manufacturing. KMS rightly criticise this rather narrow view of proto-industry, pointing to the wider set of connections between peasant ecosystems, demography, family life, and capital accumulation which the broader concept of proto-industrialization elicits and which promoted the idea of an organic transition from a phase of proto-industrialization to industrialization proper. KMS admit that it is now necessary to differentiate and modify the model to further exploit its heuristic value. In particular they see a need to look more closely at the varying nature of family economies: income earning opportunities and the work process can no longer be seen to determine household structure and demographic behaviour directly or necessarily particularly where proto-industry provided independent incomes for individuals rather than families.

What remains very much an unresolved issue in this debate is the usefulness of proto-industrialization as a concept identifying the key

features and dynamic elements of the early modern European economy. Clearly, compared with the 'transition debate' of the 1950s and earlier, the ideas surrounding proto-industrialization have helped to improve our understanding of the mechanics of change a great deal. But the dynamism of urban growth, of agricultural change (*per se*) and of sectors of the economy which, for technical reasons, were never organized along proto-industrial lines, must always feature in any theorization of the rise of industrial capitalism: a point which it is not clear that KMS accept.

The volume also includes three interesting empirical studies by Marco Belfanti (on central and northern Italy), Marcus Cerman (on nineteenth-century Vienna), and Francois Hendrickx (on two communities in Twente in the Netherlands). Belfanti demonstrates the nature of restrictions placed by Italian cities and guilds on the expansion of industries in the countryside and shows that the forms of rural industry which did succeed, principally branches of silk manufacture, did not result in the sort of population growth or social change which the Mendels' model anticipates. Cerman's piece suggests that the ideas surrounding proto-industrialization as a research agenda should be applied as much to urban and to centralized as to rural household production. He uses census data from three periods to consider the impact of domestic manufacturing and the rise of the factory upon the age and rate of marriage and household composition. His findings are broadly in line with expectations of the model until factory manufacture dominates, at which point the differences between households of male factory workers, artisans and domestic workers become indistinguishable. The problem with this study is that the absence of employment information for women make it impossible to know if households are characterized by a family economy dependent on one or another form of industry and the separate impact of migration and urbanization could well be more important than the nature of employment in influencing household composition. The Netherlands research, an excellent study, looks at one community which industrialized in the nineteenth century and one which passed from proto-industry to re-ruralization. Both witnessed a series of marked changes during the expansion of proto-industry but neither experienced significant change in demographic behaviour, perhaps because of the low level of proletarianization: the degree of dependence on manufacturing could always be adjusted in recession by a shift back to the land. In addition, the difference in demographic behaviour between the two places appears to have resulted from differences

in moral restraint imposed by Catholics on the one hand and orthodox Protestants on the other.

The quality of the empirical studies, together with the wide ranging nature of the theoretical debates addressed, makes the volume essential reading for all historians interested in socio-economic change, early industrialization and debates about the impact of domestic manufacturing in specific regional and institutional contexts.

PAT HUDSON

PATRICK O'BRIEN and ROLAND QUINAULT, eds, *The Industrial Revolution and British Society*, CUP, 1993. xii + 295 pp. £27.95 (hb); £9.95 (pb).

When is a *Festschrift* not a *Festschrift*? Two possible answers: when the publishers do everything possible to conceal from the bookshop browser that the book is a tribute to Max Hartwell written by former pupils; and when the introduction defines it as a 'Textschrift'. The book comprises 'wide-ranging surveys which are intended primarily for a student readership'. A reviewer must therefore judge it at three levels: as a collection of essays, as an exploration of the continued relevance of the ideas of one of our most distinguished economic historians, and as a potential addition to undergraduate reading lists.

Taking these criteria in reverse order, the authors all avoid narrow presentations of personal research: this is no collection of would-be journal articles. Several essays will certainly be used in teaching, notably O'Brien's impressive introductory survey of modern conceptions of the industrial revolution, Gilbert's re-appraisal of Halévy's thesis concerning religion and political stability, and Quinault on political reform. However, the publishers' obvious desire for student sales is unlikely to be satisfied, as it is hard to imagine any one course using both Von Tunzelman's strongly economic review of technological and organizational change in industry and Lacqueur's essay on sex and desire; the latter briefly discusses the population history of the period but its heart (or loins) is set on exploring more salacious matters. Hawke's chapter on 're-interpretations of the industrial revolution' covers very similar ground to O'Brien less well. Stevenson's 'social aspects of the industrial revolution' is too general, a re-assessment of the standard of living debate being just one of his many themes. Conversely, Philips on the law, courts and punishment takes too narrow a theme. While the authors have stuck to their briefs, the choice of themes was clearly constrained by the book's function as *Festschrift* and has not resulted in a balanced set of review essays.

The distinction of many of these authors is itself a tribute to Hartwell's teaching, but the book has

relatively little to say concerning his special interests. O'Brien argues for the continued relevance of the industrial revolution as a concept, although we should perhaps understand it more as a qualitative transformation of parts of the economy than as a particularly remarkable quantitative expansion in national output. However, other contributors find it of only tangential relevance to their particular themes; Bythell, discussed below, specifically rejects Hartwell's outlook and argues for continuity. As far as the standard of living debate is concerned, Jones' brief concluding memoir of Hartwell simply observes of it, 'the less said the better'. In sum, Hartwell may believe that economic changes in eighteenth-century Britain 'constituted the greatest single divide in human history', but this is not the apparent consensus among these particular pupils.

This review mentions every author in the collection but will identify three of greatest interest to rural historians. Firstly, anyone interested in this period should read O'Brien's introductory review which effectively criticises the work of revisionists such as Crafts, noting the dearth of statistical evidence on which their arguments are built. He devotes a significant section to the relationship between industry and agriculture. Overall agricultural productivity rose more rapidly than that of manufacturing, hence 'agriculture should be ranked among the modernising and in the long-run perspective as a leading sector for the economy' (p 25). O'Brien's other chapter, on the role of the state in creating the preconditions for industrialization, is another useful survey with a middle-of-the road conclusion: the Hanoverians made a positive contribution, but more by what they did not do than what they did, and by being less incompetent than continental regimes.

Bythell emphasizes the agricultural sector in his account of 'women in the workforce'. The replacement of farm service by labouring greatly reduced female participation rates, and women were increasingly drawn into domestic service in towns, promoting migration. Richards provides a valuable survey of regions which were geographically peripheral to industrialization and shows they were in different senses casualties. East Shropshire exemplifies rural proto-industrialization; Ironbridge was for a time the epitome of the new industries, but by the early nineteenth century the area was marginal. North Shropshire had a quite different role, supplying food to the north-west. The impact of industrialization on the Scottish Highlands was generally negative: imported factory goods squeezed out local craftsmen; booms in kelp or herrings were short-lived and little of the wealth created remained in the region; successful sheep-farming had weak linkages to the rest of the Highlands economy.

South Australia developed as a high-wage monoculture, tightly integrated into the home economy.

In sum, a valiant attempt to get a *Festschrift* published in these austere times, some interesting and useful essays, but ultimately one for the library.

HUMPHREY SOUTHALL

JOHN R. MCLANE, *Land and Local Kingship in Eighteenth-Century Bengal*, CUP, 1993. xxv + 342 pp. £40.

For the past twenty or so years historians of India have been busy challenging the enduring dichotomies that for so long structured an 'imperial history' of the sub-continent. Long gone now is the belief that the British ruled easily and evenly across India. British rule was, rather, fragile, contested and dependent upon the collusive activities of *zamindars* and other local notables. Long gone, too, is the view that the eighteenth century in India was a Black Century – a century when the despotic rule of the late-Mughal Empire fell apart under the weight of its internal contradictions and when India was delivered into a despairing cycle of economic decline, political dislocation, and social and legal anarchy. Chris Bayly and others have taken a lead in challenging this apocalyptic reading of eighteenth-century Indian history, and now John McLane has provided chapter and verse on its inadequacies. McLane is not averse to reading Indian history by reference to his own preferred dichotomies – moral versus contractual economies, bodily coercion versus impersonal legal systems – but he is too good a historian to allow these dichotomies to occlude some important continuities in the life of eighteenth-century rural Bengal as its inhabitants moved from Mughal to British imperial rule.

McLane's book falls into two parts. Part I is concerned to examine the changing relationships between landholding arrangements and revenue collection systems in eighteenth-century Bengal and local systems of (Hindu) kingship. The second part of the book fleshes out this general account, which is based largely on secondary sources, with a painstaking account of the Burdwan raj. The Burdwan raj was one of the six great estates (*zamindaris*) that contributed a majority of the rental and other incomes upon which the Mughal Court (and later the East India Company) so clearly depended. As McLane points out: 'By the mid-eighteenth century it [Burdwan raj] covered some 5,000 square miles and was a virtual Hindu kingdom within the weakening provincial Mughal hegemony' (p 125).

Part I of *Land and Local Kingship* will probably be of most interest to the general reader. McLane has written an accessible and often gripping account of the precise ways in which surplus was extracted

from Bengal's cultivators throughout the eighteenth century by a variable pyramid of *zamindars*, *mansabdars*, *jotdars*, *Company officials* and other, lesser, tax and rent-collectors. McLane tells us when and where and how the revenue was collected. He also tells us how the extraction of revenue was justified in Bengal, where Hindu *zamindars* far outnumbered the higher non-Hindu *mansabdars*, by reference to prevailing Hindu conceptions of kingship. The good Hindu king was expected both to provide political gifts and patronage to his subjects (the subject matter of chapter 5) and to exercise a coercive physical presence over the *raiya*s (cultivators) in order to secure the surplus upon which his superiors ('justifiably') relied. (Coercion is the subject matter of chapter 4, which draws tellingly on the work of Foucault.) McLane's particular achievement is to show how these twin aims or duties came into conflict with one another as the more commercially-oriented rule of the East India Company became secure from about 1765. The company was more effective than the late-Mughal Empire in maximizing – or seeking to maximize – the flows of tribute due to it, and it duly put pressures on local kings/*zamindars* to 'serve the extractive goals of the colonial state', rather than to 'indulge their dependents, exercise reciprocity, or focus on the ritual elements of kingship' (p 307). The *rajas* survived (very often) in a shifting political environment, but they did not survive amid the struggles between Europeans, Mughals and Marathas entirely on their own terms. What was left was a hollow form of kingship which was increasingly strong on coercion and commercialization, and much weaker in respect of gift-giving and the established requirements of a moral economy.

If *Land and Local Kingship* has a weakness it is that it repeats this important finding – on the (changing) mutual dependence of colonial rulers and local Hindu notables – on too many occasions. The second part of the book mainly serves to confirm, albeit very eloquently and precisely, the arguments set out in Part I. Readers of this journal might have been better served if McLane had moved sideways to look at what was happening *on the land and in the fields*, in terms of cropping patterns, agricultural productivity and the marketing of an agricultural surplus. Most of these points are mentioned but they are not taken up at any length. But this, of course, is to criticise a book for not being another book, which is never very fair. In terms of what McLane has set out to do this book can surely be commended. It is well researched and well written and its broad arguments are both important and persuasive. *Land and Local Kingship*

will undoubtedly come to be seen as a landmark study in its field.

STUART CORBRIDGE

T M DEVINE, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands*, Manchester UP, 1994. xiv + 258 pp. 36 illus. £40 (hb); £14.99 (pb).

The disentanglement of historical fact from the plethora of fiction and myth about the Highlands and Highland society is a major theme of Scottish history. Over the past generation around thirty scholars have diligently researched into related topics bearing on this subject. Drawing on their work, and including his own substantial contributions in this area, the author presents an authoritative survey of the state of current knowledge. Attention is given not only to distinguishing fact from romantic fiction but also to explaining how and when the myths evolved.

Sixteen chapters clearly outline the main areas of clanship and Highland culture, the economic structure, political and social conflict, religion, and the role of the landlord and the nation state. In many ways this is a story of centre and periphery. Even within Scotland itself the gulf between Highland and Lowland society was almost as great as that between it and England. Separated by religion, language, and the level of economic resources, the Scottish Highlands experienced a different pattern of development from the rest of the country. But their cultural isolation did not necessarily lead to a strong sense of community. In chapter 3, which details the transformation of Gaeldom, the author stresses the point that Gaelic society and clanship were in decay long before the eighteenth century. But from the 1760s onwards the pressures intensified as everywhere the *baille*, the traditional township settlement of multiple tenancies and the stronghold of communal farming, was broken up in the interests of commercial agriculture. It was replaced by the large farm controlled by a single tenant, where sheep were the main crop and high cash rentals were the chief incentive. The crofts that became the refuge of the traditional cultivators were often situated on marginal land and deliberately set at too small a size to provide a living. Landlords conveniently found work for any surplus labour on profitable non-agricultural activities such as fishing, linen manufacture or kelp-burning. Other traditional features of life fared no better, and even Gaelic, dealt with in chapter 8, started its retreat from the late fourteenth century. In subsequent centuries the pressure on the native language, both from the state and the religious establishment,

became stronger. Its plain inconvenience was demonstrated as more of the population were forced from the region in search of permanent or seasonal employment.

The discontent on the part of the crofters that ended in the disorders of the 1880s underlined the fact that this was not a land of ancient landlords, nor had it a tradition of unity. Over the previous two centuries both landlord and tenant had been vulnerable to economic adversity. But whereas the landlords could extract themselves by selling up or changing the use of their land, crofters, who now made up the bulk of the population, had a far more restricted range of choice. By 1850 a substantial number of the older landlord families had been supplanted by newcomers with money made elsewhere. This group found themselves with estates which they valued firstly for their scenery and sporting rights, and secondly for any revenue raising enterprises like sheep farming. As the indigenous peasant inhabitants had been marginalized from these activities they contributed little in rents and, with the decline of some of their by-employments, it was inevitable they were valued least of all. In those districts adjacent to the developing industrial regions Highlanders quietly took the route out, often of their own accord and with a real sense of alienation. Yet despite their economic problems and earlier disorders, the Highlands nevertheless gained an important place in the popular perception of nineteenth-century Scotland. These sentiments were strong among the military establishment which had always provided an important source of outside employment for the Highland male. It is ironic that by 1881 the wearing of tartan trews was ordered even for Scottish Lowland regiments which earlier had won battle honours fighting against Highlanders.

The style of the book is direct and it should have a wide appeal. One of its strengths is that the linkages between the Scottish Highlands and the rest of Britain, including Ireland, are brought out. Also, important general themes, like the 'pull' and 'push' explanations of emigration, are examined. Those areas where there are gaps, as for example the neglected parallel subject of Lowland clearances in the late eighteenth century, are also indicated; so too are the variations in practices and conditions between different parts of the Highland region. As is appropriate for a survey work of this kind, the footnote references have been kept fairly sparse, and each chapter ends with a helpful list of titles for further reading. Some readers might wish the book had ended with a more general chapter drawing together the various themes covered, but this is a small criticism. Its format makes it very

useful both for teaching purposes and as an introduction for those wanting to pursue a general interest in the subject.

RICHARD PERREN

C B PHILLIPS and J H SMITH, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540: A Regional History of England*, Longman, 1994. xv + 416 pp. Illus. £19.99 (pb).

Other volumes in the Longman regional history series edited by Barry Cunliffe and David Hey appear in two volumes dividing at 1000 AD, but the massive industrial development of Lancashire and Cheshire in recent centuries led to the decision to begin the present volume in 1540. Thereafter the discussion is conducted in five major chronological sections ending in 1660, 1780, 1860, 1920, and 1974; inevitably this leads to an element of overlap and the need to refer back to earlier sections to trace the continuity of specific themes. Like most of the volumes in the series this is largely a work of synthesis, dependent on the interests of earlier historians. Not surprisingly, the discussion of industry is rich and purposeful, providing a clear picture of developments: no less than ninety pages are devoted to industry before 1920 and there are further sections on towns and transport. Landed society fares well with forty-six pages on the wealth and life styles of those above stairs and on the lower ranks who serviced the nobles. Much detail is provided but structures and trends are difficult to discern until we come to the well-thumbed evidence of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Agriculture receives relatively short shrift – a mere seventeen pages for the period 1540–1920. The specialist will learn little new. But does this matter? The series is not aimed at a hyper-critical academic audience. If this highly competent, well-illustrated volume helps to provide an increasing awareness of past developments among the general reading public it will have served its purpose.

DONALD WOODWARD

ROLLO ARNOLD, *New Zealand's Burning: The Settlers' World in the Mid 1880s*, Victoria UP, Wellington, NZ, 1994. 319 pp. NZ\$39.95 (pb).

A decade ago a reviewer of Rollo Arnold's *The Furthest Promised Land* described that book as a remarkable *tour de force*. *New Zealand's Burning: The Settler's World in the mid 1880s* repeats and expands upon that success. Like its precursor it is a well-made book of the highest intellectual quality. It is also, and alas this is not often the case with agricultural history, a gripping read, a book which it is very hard to put down. The cover picture 'A

coach driving for life' sets the tone repeated not only in illustration but also in text. Thus on p 56 we read of how Mrs Richardson protected her children from fire by putting them into a tunnel 'hollowed in the creek bank as a store for meat and butter'. Nearby the Lehmanns saved themselves by scrambling into their potato patch and covering themselves with the green potato tops.

The book is an adventure not simply in its subject matter: the settler's life was certainly an adventure of which the fire hazard was but a small and occasional part. It is also methodologically innovative and experimental in using fire, the tool as well as the adversary of the colonist, as a unifying theme for discussion of the New Zealand of the 1880s 'moving past the virgin phase' (p 10). However, the book is assertively anti-reductionist: 'practising historians know that history is not one thing but many things' (p 113). And its philosophy is idealist in its quest to 'get some understanding of the minds of those who first shaped and used them (a variety of colonial institutions)' (p 10). 'We have deliberately endeavoured to see the settlers on their own terms and not to look at them from the false perspective of some other society's agenda' (p 10). This latter is a particularly bold position, and in my view a welcome one, in contemporary New Zealand where so much scholarship is driven by concern for the Treaty of Waitangi and its present implementation. A good dose of intellectual pluralism is very necessary in such contexts.

The book is then in two closely related parts: 'Fire Storm Summer' and 'Anatomy of a Settler Society'. There is inevitably repetition but not to excess. The first chapter launches directly into the drama of the fires of the summer of 1885–86 at the individual scale. The main focus of the remainder of this part is events in Hawkes Bay and Taranaki and subsequent relief and reconstruction, followed by three short chapters on events elsewhere. The second part employs these dramatic events and Arnold's wider reading of the sources, provincial newspapers in particular, for purposes not only of dissection but of synthesis. Some of the emphases are predictable, thus 'town' and 'country' each get a chapter. Others are less so, the rich discussion of 'patterns' ranging from the significance of the phases of the moon (even for election dates) to the relative insignificance of class. Fire brigades receive a whole chapter which exposes not only the constant and widespread nature of the fire risk but also a context of competing priorities, contradictory attitudes, and thus confusion.

What emerges from this wealth of detail is an evaluation of New Zealand 'settling down'. The urban element is not neglected but Arnold is

anxious to assert the primacy of the rural in this particular context. His conclusion emphasizes two dimensions, the centrality of family life both in work and in recreation – and each was to be had in abundance – and the ‘element of altruism ... implicit in the widespread self-help of those communities’ (p 282). The objective he sums up as ‘the way of life to which so many of the tenant farmers of Victorian England had successfully aspired but with the added bonus ... of the freehold’ (p 282). If this necessitates an internal focus the external contacts are certainly not ignored. There is frequent discussion of ‘home’, but equally frequently continental European names have a conspicuous place. Taranaki’s dairy industry, the commercially adventurous character of which in its early years Arnold emphasizes, drew on European and American as well as British models, and Swiss expertise was needed to establish the first cheese factory. The experience of the province’s first dairy farmer who walked Taranaki’s first Jersey cow 130 miles (from Marton to Bell Block) exemplifies another of Arnold’s themes, the tenacious courage and not least stamina of the settlers, women as much as men, an attribute now too readily forgotten or wilfully ignored in dubiously speculative accounts of the morality of European settlement. Arnold does not ignore, though he certainly does not emphasize, the shortcomings of this yeoman (one of Arnold’s favourite words) world, shortcomings which he sums up as ‘a hunger for land (which) caused it to ride roughshod over Maori rights and over ecological considerations’ (p 283). These are issues which necessarily and rightly concern contemporary New Zealanders. In widening our focus and understanding of the settlement process Arnold has provided not only a splendid and satisfying book about our past but an essential tool, if at times I suspect an unpopular and misunderstood one, for our making of its future.

PETER J PERRY

DANIEL SAMSON, ed, *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800–1950*, Acadiensis Press, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1994. 272 pp. \$19.95 (pb).

This is the fourth volume in the Gorsebrook series on the political economy of Canada’s Atlantic region (which includes the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland). In addition to the editor’s substantial and enlightening introduction, his afterword, and his essay on rural industry in Inverness, Nova Scotia, 1899–1910, five other writers make contributions, using (with the exception of the last) local historical material to illustrate and clarify broader changes affecting the economy of the region. They

deal with: farm households and wage labour in the early nineteenth century; the process of capitalist transformation and its effects on rural households in Hopewell, Nova Scotia, in the later nineteenth century; the nature of the fishing industry of Newfoundland’s north-east coast in the first half of the nineteenth century; settlement in New Brunswick under the province’s Labor Act, 1919–1929; and the reflection of historical changes in the fiction of two Nova Scotia authors writing in 1954 and 1963, Charles Bruce and Ernest Buckler.

This wide range of subjects, locations, and periods requires the reader to have some knowledge of current lines of historical discussion in Canada, and in particular, that concerning the place of agriculture and rural industries in Canada’s wider economic development. This background is provided by the editor’s introduction which, furthermore, discusses the peculiar historical characteristics of the Atlantic provinces and their position in the story of Canada’s industrial revolution. The following essays are intended to highlight the rural background to industrialization – and the arcane problem of defining ‘rural’ in this region’s case is not overlooked. Major themes which unify the various subjects are given as issues of transition, and the differences between town and country.

Among the conclusions which emerge are the prevalence of farm-based wage labour in the north-eastern Maritimes, the increasingly commercial nature of production and trade as a result of demographic pressures, and the flow of rural labour into industrial occupations, as illustrated by the coal-mines of Inverness, Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick during the 1920s rural workers proved themselves capable, against hostile interests, of securing and retaining forested farm lots, primarily for the purpose of cutting timber for pulp and paper manufacture; while in Newfoundland, fishing based on the household created a class of independent free labourers and small capitalists. Finally, the two novelists mentioned above showed how rural communities, though quite distinct from urban ones, were finding their traditional values increasingly under pressure from modern influences.

The book offers more than a small number of detailed local studies serving to illustrate the variety and complexity of rural societies in the Atlantic provinces. It provides the reader also with an opening into important debates (with ample references to further reading) which surround the historical view of these societies; and, in general, it succeeds admirably in its main objective of placing the countryside at the centre of the region’s history.

G E MINGAY

JEAN-CLAUDE TOUTAIN, *La Production Agricole de la France de 1810 à 1990: Départements et Régions. Croissance, Productivité, Structures, Economies et Sociétés: Cahiers de l'ISMEA (Série Histoire quantitative de l'économie française)* Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1992-93. 3 vols, 1078 pp. Fr 240.

Numerous contemporaries and historians, running from Arthur Young through Karl Marx and Emile Zola to Eugen Weber, have castigated the backwardness of the French peasantry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whether or not there was an agricultural revolution in France in that period has been a question long-debated by historians, economists and geographers from France, Britain and North America. The character, timing and location of changes in agricultural productivity and organization, and the contribution of those changes to overall economic development in France, have proved difficult to pin down. For a long time it has been a common assumption that the agricultural sector developed only slowly and that it acted as a brake on French economic progress. Recently, a group of revisionist historians have begun seriously to challenge that assumption and to construct a much more favourable case for the growth of productivity and for significant structural and organizational changes in French agriculture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Underlying this debate is, of course, the fundamental difficulty of formulating robust generalizations which capture the complexity of agriculture as an economic activity and which embrace both a long historical period and a deep geographical diversity. As the historiography of the 'Agricultural Revolution' in England has shown, such debate also thrives on the ambiguities of qualitative evidence and on the uncertainties of casual analyses of quantitative sources. In relation to France, it has also (somewhat paradoxically) been the case that the sheer mass of agricultural statistics from its 30,000 or so communes checked their rigorous analysis despite ambitious projects such as the one in which Jean-Claude Toutain has been engaged.

In 1961 and 1963 Toutain published two volumes which analysed quantitatively agricultural production and productivity in France as a whole from 1700 to 1958; then in 1971 he published a similar analysis of food consumption from 1789 to 1964. Now, in three volumes, he offers a quantitative analysis of agricultural production, productivity and growth at a sub-national scale from 1810 to 1990. Relying mainly but understandably (given that he is dealing with the whole of France over almost 200 years) on agricultural statistics which have been published, Toutain conducts a massive exercise in comparative statics, examining the condition of

agriculture in 1813, 1840, 1862, 1892, 1911 and 1929 and in the period 1962-1990. Geographically, the *département* is the smallest unit of analysis which he employs and these are also grouped into twenty-one regions to permit analysis and comment at a scale intermediate between that of the nation and the *département*. In the first volume, an introductory chapter which draws substantially on Toutain's earlier work sets this present study within the general context of the debate about the pace and character of French economic development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is followed by three substantive chapters: the first examines farming structures and production during the first half of the nineteenth century (in 1840 and in some respects in 1810), at the end of the century (1892) and in 1929, and then compares the 'historical' period (1810-1938) with the 'contemporary' period (1950-1990); the second constructs measures of productivity for 1840, 1862, 1892, 1911 and 1929, and compares them with those for the 'modern' period (1962-67 and 1986-88); the third presents an analysis of the growth of agricultural production from 1810/1840 to 1892 and to 1929, and then from 1962 to 1990. Volume 1 contains the text but also includes more than 100 tables; volumes 2 and 3 comprise almost 300 tables.

The conclusions to this impressive quantitative compilation are presented in a final chapter of fourteen pages in volume 1. Some of the findings are unsurprising. For example, Toutain identifies in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a growing regional specialization, and a national and international commercialization of agriculture in France, and he confirms that in terms of productivity the differences among *départements* diminished between 1840 and 1929 but were accentuated again thereafter. Other conclusions are more remarkable. For example, Toutain claims to have demonstrated that by the mid-nineteenth century the regions of northern and northwestern France (including Brittany) were the richest agriculturally and that the distribution of the production of fruits and vegetables has been constant during the last 150 years, determined by the facts of physical geography and population density. His final, overall conclusion is that one cannot justifiably speak of an agricultural revolution in France before 1960. Such a conclusion, in the light of the plethora of changes identified by Toutain, is only sustainable because he has not defined the term 'agricultural revolution'.

While Toutain's monitoring of agricultural change in this major project in historical economics has usefully made accessible to interested scholars a mass of statistical data, his interpretations of that data will remain open to question by them.

However admirable the scale of this enterprise in data collection and standardization, it remains fundamentally descriptive rather than analytical and contextual. For example, no serious study of the pace and character of agricultural change in France during the last 200 years can afford to ignore, as this one does, the role of the state both in promoting change and in preventing it through protectionist policies. There are other remarkable features of this study. It astonishingly ignores significant, substantial, related work – not only that by Hugh Clout on the transformation of agricultural land-use in France between 1815 and 1914 but also that by J Pautard on regional differences in the growth of French agriculture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most disturbing of all, however, is that these three volumes concerned with the *regional* character of French agriculture include only one map, indicating the boundaries and constituent *départements* of the planning regions of France created in 1960 which Toutain employs as the framework for his study. Whatever his case, Toutain could have made it much more powerfully had he mapped and not just tabulated his data. There should undoubtedly have been a fourth volume: an atlas.

ALAN R H BAKER

POUL VERNER CHRISTIANSEN, *En Østjysk Landsbys Rødder*, Tilst, Kasted, Geding Lokalhistoriske Forening, Århus, 1992. 127 pp. nps.

Local history studies are popular in the Nordic countries and they tend to have a focus on agrarian topics. This monograph, the product of a local history study group illustrated with field sketches by two of the participants, digs into the roots of Geding a hamlet near Århus in Jutland. It opens with a chapter on the late Middle Ages, but is concerned principally with the period of Danish absolutism (1661–1849), during which Geding had a population of between one and two hundred, with six to nine farms (all save one owned by freeholders). Initially the seigneurial rights belonged to the crown, but during the seventeenth century they were acquired by the owners of the manor of Ristrup (a colourful succession of noblemen including a minor poet). The history of the settlement is written first in terms of the conflicts between the freeholders and the manorial owners: subsequently, of the disagreements between the freeholders and the smallholders and farm labourers.

Sources for the study are located principally in the *Landarkiv* at Viborg and in the archival collections in Copenhagen – recalling the comprehensive *Udskiftning* documentation from the Danish enclosure movement and the first formal census materials. Geding was subject to *Udskiftning* in 1732 and its

first census was held in 1787. In anticipation of their need to consult original documents, enthusiastic members of the study group even learned to read the Gothic script. Church records, manorial ledgers, deeds, wills and a scattering of letters complement the generous records of court proceedings. Legal issues range from significant challenges concerning the misuse of the turbaries to minor sentences imposed upon local miscreants. The appendices include lists of the field names compiled from the *Matrikel* of 1683 and the taxation records of 1781. The names of peat bogs recall their importance in the local economy. Meadow names were collected by a teacher in 1826.

The merit of this modest book lies in the example that it sets for other groups to follow. Historians who wish to illustrate the broader generalizations of their own work will find in it a variety of economic and social detail. By a strange coincidence, Adam Thorpe's *Ulverton* (Martin Secker and Warburg, 1992) was being read when Poul Verner Christiansen's monograph arrived for review. The realities of life through the centuries in the hamlet of Geding provided an entertaining complement to Thorpe's inventive work of fiction.

W R MEAD

ERIC J EVANS, *Tithes: Maps, Apportionments and the 1836 Act*, Chichester, British Association for Local History, 1993. 32 pp. £4.50.

Reader beware! Although advertised as a revised edition, this is in fact a straight reprint of Eric Evans's useful little pamphlet of 1978, with a new introduction summarizing the more important work on tithes published over the past fifteen years. So if you already have the first edition this is probably not for you. On the other hand, if you missed the first edition before it went out of print, then this really is a handy little booklet if you want to come to terms with the complex problems relating to tithe collection prior to 1836, the background to the tithe commutation legislation and the Act itself, and the act in practice beyond 1836. Unfortunately the final chapter on the processes of commutation beyond 1836, which is the one likely to be most useful to agricultural historians, is also the one which has dated most since 1978, predominantly as a result of the researchers of Roger Kain and Hugh Prince. The chapter does not spell out the processes of commutation clearly enough, while recent local work suggests that Evans's conclusion that 'tithe commutation was accomplished with remarkable smoothness and lack of rancour' (p 25) is too simplistic. But for anyone wanting an informed, brief guide to tithe commutation this remains the most accessible publication available.

J V BECKETT

D J SMITH, *Discovering Horse-drawn Vehicles*, Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1994. 176 pp. £4.99.

What is it about horse-drawn vehicles that causes normally sane people to sit under a searing July sun in the crowded main ring of a country show to await the arrival of a brewer's dray or to gawp at a top-hatted type perched on a gig pulled by a sweating cob? This reviewer would like to think that people were drawn to such spectacles by an appreciation of the role of these vehicles in the pageant of social history or, perhaps, by a fascination with the technical achievement of their designers. But these are probably fond imaginings. A few may thrill at the sight of a whippetree or pole-bar or at the prospect of the application of a roller scotch, but most are motivated by the same sort of nostalgia that characterises the vintage car show or that ultimate non-event, the traction engine rally.

Mr D J Smith, whose expertise and encyclopaedic knowledge of the genre has been revealed in a variety of works, provides us in the present volume with an extremely useful reference work, impressive by the sheer scope of its coverage. If the breathtaking gallop through transport history from the discovery of the wheel into the mid-nineteenth century may prove unsatisfactory for economic historians, and the technical minutiae and coverage of driving methods slightly tedious to the non-specialist, the descriptions and illustrations of an extraordinary range of vehicles will be appreciated by students across a variety of disciplines. Berlines, landaus, clarences and barouches rub shoulders with brewers' drays, farm carts and fire engines. How many readers of nineteenth-century novels have an accurate or even vague visual image of the various horse-drawn vehicles mentioned in their pages? For that matter, how many students of military history could succinctly describe a World War I mobile pigeon loft, or a travelling cooker and Mark II horse ambulance of the same period? Very few indeed, I suspect. But they should not despair, for if they have Mr Smith at their side, all will soon be revealed. Dray vehicles, milk floats, furniture pantechnicons, undertakers' carriages; little escapes Mr Smith's attention, and his somewhat terse descriptions of each are occasionally enlivened with anecdote. It is comforting to read, for example, that during the course of the development of the omnibus in the 1890s, 'decency boards' were incorporated to screen the lower limbs of female passengers and thereby to limit any testosterone surge among their male counterparts. Writing of the rather alarming 'crane-necked phaeton', a decidedly dangerous sporting vehicle, Mr Smith tells us of the notorious Lady Archer who often drove one of these death-traps and was described, somewhat

equivocally, '... as renowned for her skill with the whip as for the cosmetic powers she exercised on her complexion'. Again, drivers of the cabriolet insisted that it be drawn by a tall thoroughbred horse accompanied by a dwarfish groom known as a 'tiger' on account of his striped livery. Such absurdities of fashion speak volumes for Victorian attitudes and it is probably not without significance that the cabriolet was a favourite conveyance of Charles Dickens.

This is a most excellent reference work but does not pretend to be an economic history of horse-drawn transport. A mere two and a half pages are devoted to builders and materials, horse types receive only a passing mention, while trade economics are ignored. It would be extremely interesting to know more of the builders of these vehicles, the cost structure of their trade and temporal changes in its organization. How did changing fashion dictate demand for different vehicles and thereby influence profitability? Who were the designers of the conveyances described and how were their plans modified on a local basis? I am sure that Mr Smith would join me in welcoming a companion volume addressing these and kindred questions, and so adding substantially to our understanding of transport economics before the motor car.

RICHARD MOORE-COLYER

SOMERSET AND SOUTH AVON VERNACULAR BUILDING RESEARCH GROUP, *Somerset Villages. The Houses, Cottages and Farms of Chiselborough*, Somerset Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury, BA5 8DB, 1993. iii + 104 pp. £9.25 (inc p&cp).

This report, the fifth in a series, is a study of thirty-eight standing buildings of the parish of Chiselborough in south Somerset close to Montacute and Yeovil. Most are of rubble stone with Ham stone dressings from nearby Hamdon hill, new builds of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century or squatters' cottages of the mid-eighteenth century. All but two farms are within the modern village area. Parish and manor were coincident and in the absence of probate material in Somerset the buildings are instead correlated with estate records, maps, surveys, rentals and manorial court records. The attempt to relate surviving buildings to historic tenures is the chief interest of the volume. The editor estimates that 58 per cent of early seventeenth-century houses and 74 per cent of squatters' cottages survive. Losses are noted and located. In the nineteenth century properties were divided to accommodate a growing population. Each building is described, sketched in plan form with occasional sections, elevations and some details of beam mouldings, and accompanied by notes on

the development of tenures on that site. The whole record is categorized according to the typology of plan forms found elsewhere in the county and prefaced by a useful summary of current research on the area's local history. The standard of recording is variable and not all the buildings have been fully surveyed. Of one cottage the study cheerfully

reports that the internal features of the plan are 'based on the recollection of a previous occupier before both houses were substantially renovated'. Yet, one might wait forever for the excellent whilst this good piece of collaborative local research is used.

PHILIP MORGAN

Notes on Contributors

BARRY HARRISON is a lecturer in history and local history in the Department of Adult Continuing Education at the University of Leeds, where he has taught since 1966. He is joint author of *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland* (Edinburgh, 1984) with B Hutton, and of *The North York Moors: Landscape Heritage* (Newton Abbot, 1989) with D A Spratt, and he has written a number of articles on local history, landscape history and vernacular architecture for local and regional periodicals. He is researching field systems on the Wessex chalklands and vernacular buildings and farming in Swaledale (North Yorkshire). He is currently President of the Vernacular Architecture Group.

VIVIENNE POLLOCK is curator in the Local History Department of the Ulster Museum. After her doctoral research on the history of Ulster fisheries undertaken at the University of Ulster at Coleraine under Peter Roebuck, she was appointed as assistant keeper of agriculture and crafts in the Ulster-American Folk Park, a museum of emigration in Co Tyrone. She is now presently researching the general social and economic history of Ulster since 1600 with particular reference to the physical, technical and historical contexts of the collections in her care and to the specific areas of rural and maritime history.

JOHN CHAPMAN, of the Department of Geography, Portsmouth University, has worked for many years on various aspects of enclosure and is director of the National Enclosure Project. He is the author of numerous papers on enclosure, and of *A Guide to Parliamentary Enclosures in Wales*. He has also published on other aspects of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agriculture and on the development of Portsmouth.

SYLVIA SEELIGER is a research associate in the Department of Geography at Portsmouth University, currently working on the National Enclosure

Project. She has also participated in a soil erosion project, as well as working on ancient woodland. Women as landholders is the subject of her doctoral research. Her latest publication is *A Guide to Enclosure in Hampshire 1700-1900* with John Chapman.

RICHARD MOORE-COLYER is reader in agrarian history at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. His various books and articles reflect broad interests in the cultural and agricultural history of the nineteenth century. He is also interested in prehistory, and is currently preparing for publication a series of studies of plant and animal husbandry in the second millennium BC.

RICHARD ANTHONY was brought up on a farm in Cambridgeshire, and is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh where he was awarded his PhD in 1993. He has had articles published in the *Economic History Review* and *Scottish Affairs*. His thesis is due to be published during 1995 under the title *Herds and Hinds: Farm Labour in Lowland Scotland, 1900-1939*. He is presently training as an accountant in London, although he retains a strong interest in modern rural history.

ALUN HOWKINS is a senior lecturer in history at the School of Cultural and Community Studies, University of Sussex, where he has taught since 1976. He is the author of *Poor Labouring Men* (1985), and *Reshaping Rural England, 1850-1925* (1991).

JOHN LANGDON is a professor of history at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. He is the author of *Horses, Oxen and Technological Innovation* (Cambridge, 1986) and numerous articles and chapters on medieval technology and agriculture. He is currently working on a book about the milling industry in the later Middle Ages, as well as beginning research on medieval transport.

Notes and Comments

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

The BAHS holds three conferences a year. The first is its annual residential Spring Conference held at a different location each year in early April. The second is a one-day conference on a local history theme on a Saturday in September, again at a different location each year. There is some doubt over the future of this conference as the one scheduled to be held in Birmingham for September 1994 had to be cancelled because of insufficient support. This was a great pity as the conference organizer had arranged an exciting programme of papers on the Midlands in the eighteenth century. Members of the society who feel they would like to attend a conference at this time of the year, and can suggest either local themes and venues, or strategies, which they believe would tap an existing market and draw in a significant audience are invited to contact the Autumn Conference organizer, Dr Richard Hoyle of the University of Central Lancashire at his home address, 37 Lower Bank Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 4NS. The final conference is also a one-day conference which is held at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, University of London on the first Saturday in December. For the last six years this conference has been organized by Dr Peter Dewey from Royal Holloway College, University of London, Egham. Peter will now be taking a well earned rest after six successful conferences, and from 1995 he will be handing over to Dr John Broad of Whitelands College, University of North London.

The society's next conference will be the 1995 Spring Conference will be at the University of Sheffield from Monday 10 to Wednesday 12 April. The local organizer is Professor David Hey, Division of Adult Continuing Education, 196-198 West Street, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S1 4ET. The 1995 Autumn Conference is still provisionally arranged for the south of England and will be organized by Dr Richard Hoyle. Looking ahead to 1996 the Spring Conference then will be held at Roehampton, Surrey. The local organizer is Dr Peter Edwards, Department of History, Roehampton Institute of Higher Education, Digby Stuart College, Roehampton Hill, London SW15 5PH. Dr Edwards has already arranged a number of papers which will include, the geography of food production, women as landowners, and market gardening. As an added attraction the conference will also involve a field trip to Young's Brewery at Wandsworth! The dates that you should keep free in your 1996 diary are Monday 1 April to Wednesday 3 April, and further details can be

obtained either from Dr Edwards or the BAHS Secretary. The 1997 Spring Conference will be held at the University of Portsmouth and Dr John Chapman will be the local organizer.

CALL FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS

The society is always glad to hear from those willing to offer papers at conferences. If you have one to offer you can either contact one of the conference organizers, or the BAHS Secretary who acts as an overall conference co-ordinator. You should supply a title for your paper and some details, preferably in the form of a short synopsis, together with an indication of which conference(s) you will be available to deliver it to. The addresses of the organizers of the forthcoming conference are given above. The BAHS Secretary is Dr Richard Perren who can be contacted at the Department of History and Economic History, Taylor Building, University of Aberdeen, Old Aberdeen AB9 2UB, Fax 0224 272300.

REQUESTS FOR HELP

As part of our service to readers Notes and Comments now includes a section under this heading. This is designed for all members of the BAHS, but particularly those who are not attached to an academic institution. We hope this will provide assistance for two types of problem: firstly, those thinking of carrying out research and who have chosen a topic, but are not too sure where to begin, or want to know who else has worked on that particular subject; and secondly, those who are well into a project but need further information to fill in gaps, or require advice on methodology. From time to time we have published lists of research in progress, but as there are intervals of some time between their appearance it is hoped this spot will fill the gap where someone wants information in the short term. This service is open to all members and if you feel it might be of some help to yourself, you are urged to send your name and address, along with your request, to the Secretary of the BAHS, Dr Richard Perren, Department of History and Economic History, Taylor Building, University of Aberdeen, Old Aberdeen, AB9 2UB.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN CHINA

The China Agricultural History Society and the Agricultural History Society of the United States are planning to hold an international symposium in Beijing, China in mid June 1996 on the theme of the origins and the diffusion of agricultural systems in the world. All historical periods are to be covered. Further details will be published in the