

Book Reviews

JACK R HARLAN, *The Living Fields. Our Agricultural Heritage*, CUP, 1995. 271pp. Illus. £32.50.

All civilizations, ancient and modern, are founded on agriculture. The author reviews the evidence for the origins and evolution of farming in various parts of the world, consciously seeking to present a balanced view based on the archaeology, botany, genetics, ecology and anthropology of domesticates and their wild relatives. The author expresses appreciation for the ways doors have been so generously opened to him everywhere in the eighty countries he has visited. There is abundant evidence of the firsthand insights he has gained. The book has all the hallmarks of the authority of scholarship – conciseness, lucidity, and the humility that arises from an acute awareness of how little is known about the past.

The author's approach is exemplified by his treatment of hunter-gatherer societies. He begins by emphasizing the enormous diversity encountered among their many tribes, and the methods used in exploiting the environment. The challenge of conveying some sense of that variety to the reader is met by selecting a few examples for illustration. Harlan takes obvious pleasure in demolishing earlier interpretations of the origins of agriculture – and no shortage of opportunity. Every model examined seems to generate evidence against itself, not least because it has been conceived, in Harlan's words, by 'middle class, university-educated, Industrial Age pragmatists, all looking for some golden bottom line that will explain it all'. Input-output studies, optimum foraging strategies, and all the other arm-chair-theories are products of the modern mindset. As the author asserts, it is unnecessary to discover mechanisms by which the planting of seeds had to be taught, discovered or diffused. Hunter-gatherers had, and continue to have, the preparatory knowledge required to take up farming, as and when they chose, within ecologically suitable limits. Agriculture emerged not from a single cause and location, but from many.

In exploring how far the processes of domestication might be attributed to evolution, as opposed to revolution, Harlan further warns of the complex nature of the evidence. The Aboriginal stamp on the landscape was by no means unique. Africans, the American Indians, and peoples across Eurasia must also have put their imprint on the fauna and flora, but the changes in those parts have subsequently been so radical as to leave little evidence. As the Aboriginal experience indicates, such changes made in the flora and fauna to benefit the hunter-gatherer did not necessarily lead to outright domes-

tication. After some 35,000 years, no true domesticates have emerged in Australia. The domestication of races of individual species is of a different order. A chapter on 'stones and bones' raises questions as the nature of archaeology and the dating of historical information. It sets the scene for chapters that look in turn at the archaeological record for plant and animal domestication in the Near East, Africa, the Far East, and the Americas. The penultimate chapter focuses on the techniques of bush fallow, and more generally on the various approaches of resource husbandry that have been adopted in respect of soil preparation, water management, sowing and reaping, the preservation of perishables, and food processing.

What emerges from the evidence so ably introduced and summarized in this volume is a synchrony around the world. People everywhere were moving in the direction of food production from the start of the Holocene. Perhaps as a response to the extinction of large parts of the Pleistocene fauna, humans all over the world had to turn to smaller game, more refined and more efficient stone tools, and a greater emphasis on plant foods. Although not necessarily threatened with a shortage of food, a crisis of sorts developed, pushing humans towards the cultivation of plants and domestication of animals.

For the author and reader two impressions emerge. A time and place for the emergence of agriculture cannot be identified for the overriding reason that farming did not come about that way. It emerged from long periods of intimate co-evolution between plants and man. There were many independent attempts made in many locations that fused, over millennia, to produce more effective food-production systems. The second observation is that the human species has become so completely dependent for survival on a few plant species that one could well ask which are the domesticated. Domesticated cereals could not survive without us, and we cannot survive without them. The symbiosis is complete. That is where human life now stands, but the ground is not very firm. The survival of five billion humans depends on a relatively small number of species.

JOHN SHEAIL

BRUCE D SMITH, *The Emergence of Agriculture*, New York: Scientific American Library, 1994. 230 pp. £19.95.

With the aid of hindsight, it has always been tempting to see the origins of agriculture as sympto-

matic of a radical change in much more than subsistence. The contrast between gatherer-hunters and farmers has been politically-charged, used to highlight contemporary differences between the 'primitive' and the 'civilized'. The concentration of archaeological work in south-west Asia (the source of many European domesticated crops and animals) and Meso-America (with the maize-beans-squash triad as the basis for the Aztec and Maya cultures) has promoted this vision of the 'agricultural revolution' as the historical basis of current global domination. Yet there are now at least seven areas of the world which can be argued to have witnessed a similar emergence of modern morphologically-domesticated plants and animals – south-west Asia, north and south China, sub-Saharan Africa, Meso-America, Andean South America and the eastern United States.

The Emergence of Agriculture is a timely review of the evidence for the earliest domesticates from these seven areas. This geographical coverage, a welcome change to many Eurocentric or Americocentric treatments, is matched by the incorporation of much of the latest work in comparative historical plant genetics and the direct AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometer) dating of relevant seeds and bones. Generally this book is a good introductory synthesis of the data and some of the traditional issues on a world-wide scale. The production is first-rate with excellent illustrations, very few typographical errors and represents extremely good value.

In covering such a wide area and offering an introductory chapter and a concluding one on explanations within little over 200 pages, Bruce Smith has set himself a challenging task. Anyone approaching this topic has a difficult line to steer between presenting the real but contentious states of the academic debates (for example, the implications of the AMS redating of mesoamerican plant samples) which are confusing for the general reader without background, and offering generalizations or simplifications which will annoy the specialist. Smith's largely successful strategy is to be generally cautious about interpretation in an empirically-based text, while presenting a strong narrative line. One gets a genuine sense of the excitement of research in this field and the fluidity of possible questions and potential answers: it is a book which should stimulate many readers into finding out more.

The problems with the book derive from conceptual issues, rather than the presentation of the data. Smith's own work in the eastern United States has been with floral rather than faunal evidence, and so far the nature of mutation and selection has meant that genetic studies have been more successful in

identifying geographically-delimited domesticated plant ancestors rather than their animal counterparts. One effect of this bias is that Smith tends to show more certainty about the identification of domestication in animals than many specialists would claim, as well as perhaps leading to his inaccurate characterization of the relations between genotypic, phenotypic and morphological variation. Inevitably in a book of this size and range there is some glossing over debates about the state of the data. Thus at the Grotta dell'Uzzo in Sicily, as in much of the rest of Europe (cf Rowley-Conwy¹), the domestic status of the cattle and pigs is highly dubious. But it is exactly these uncertainties which have wider implications than Smith is willing to admit. The difficulty is that despite giving useful examples of hunter-gatherer manipulation of the environment, including the intentional cultivation of wild plants, Smith is still working very much within the old paradigm of origins and revolutions, which relies on equating domestication with agriculture. This in itself begs several questions. Firstly, although Smith recognizes that domestication can be considered as both a status and a process, he suggests a definition which is, quite simply, wrong as far as most animals are concerned: ... we have to expand our earlier definition of domesticates as human-modified plants and animals to include this essential attribute: they have been changed so much that they have lost the ability to survive in the wild' (p 19).

By concentrating on defining seven 'primary centers', ie those where past domestication currently may be identified, Smith still adheres to a traditional 'revolutionary' view of the origins of farming, despite the fact that much of evidence quoted in the book suggests the opposite. He is aware of Hillman and Davies' work² on the processes of wheat and barley domestication in the Near East, yet fails to draw on the radical implications: that what they term non-domestication cultivation could well have taken place for 2000 years or more, while morphological domestication may have occurred extremely rapidly (within a few hundred years at most) as a result of a contingent change in the timing and technology of harvesting. In other words, one clearly could have, in theory and practice, agriculture without domestication, as with many root crops used today. To then claim seven centres as 'primary', but in effect based on the

¹ P Rowley-Conwy, 'Wild or domestic? On the evidence for the earliest domestic cattle and pig in South Scandinavia and Iberia', *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 5, 1995, pp 115–26.

² G Hillman and S Davies, 'Domestication rate in wild wheats and barley under primitive cultivation: preliminary results and archaeological implications of field measurements of selection coefficient', in P Anderson, ed, *Préhistoire de l'agriculture: nouvelles approches expérimentales et ethnographiques*, Paris: CNRS, 1992, pp 113–58.

contingency of genetic domesticability, seems less than useful in understanding the historical and social processes involved. Similarly, domestication has not been found a helpful concept for exploring subsistence changes and practices including intensive cultivation in much of the Pacific. Even if one does adhere to domestication (more broadly defined in terms of manipulative relationships) as a criterion of the emergence of agriculture, then many other areas could be seen as participating independently in the sorts of processes concerned – for example, Europe for dog, pigs and cattle; central and northern Asia for horse and reindeer respectively; and south-east Asia, Australia and other parts of Africa for root crops. All this calls into question Smith's traditional adherence to identifying core areas for the origins of agriculture (as currently defined) as a way of explaining its emergence. It also raises question marks about his generalized explanation that the intentional avoidance of risk or uncertainty in subsistence may be considered as the basis for agricultural 'emergence': the long delays in the adoption of certain domesticated crops as a subsistence mainstay in much of Eurasia and in eastern North America, among other places, suggests that this explanation is insufficient, at least.

A minor criticism is his use of uncalibrated radiocarbon age ranges when no actual radiocarbon determinations are given. This will not satisfy teachers who have to calibrate dates (the book will make a useful first year undergraduate text), and is potentially confusing for the general readership at whom this book is clearly aimed. Nonetheless, as a broad introduction to the origins of agriculture this book is recommended, even if one suspects that the geographical scope which is one of its major virtues contains the seeds of its own demise, by encouraging the reader to question the nature of the differences between centres and non-centres of agricultural emergence.

MARK PLUCIENNIK

H H LAMB, *Climate, History and the Modern World*, 2nd ed, Routledge, 1995. 437 pp. 120 figs; 11 tables. £60 hbk; £15.99 pbk.

The first edition of Lamb's book was published in 1982 and has proved a popular survey of the interactions between climate and history over the ages. It provides a brief introduction of how the earth's climate works, why it fluctuates and how we can reconstruct former climate from meteorological observations and a variety of proxy records from diaries and grain price records to tree rings and beetle remains. The main theme of the book is on climate and history. The subject is approached chronologically taking the dawn of history as the period when the last glacial phase terminated about

15,000 BC. Early civilizations, such as those of China, the Indus Valley and Egypt, are examined before moving into the Roman period, Viking times and into the Middle Ages. As more information becomes available, so the time period for each chapter decreases and the final two chapters of this section cover 1500 to 1950. Agriculture inevitably forms an important part of much of this section as food production was the key to survival. Although there is an emphasis on Europe, other parts of the world are covered wherever evidence has survived.

The third section of the book is entitled 'Climate in the modern world and questions over the future'. Its first two chapters bring the previous section to the present day with the remainder considering possible causes of climate fluctuations, how we can forecast what might happen in the future and what can be done about it? All the chapter titles and section headings to this point are identical to those of the first edition. A new chapter has been added on the subject of recent developments and the outlook. It refers to the mid-twentieth century cooling, the current warming, the ozone hole, pollution and storminess. Admittedly some of the earlier chapters have been changed slightly through updating and additions but the book is essentially similar to the first edition. All the diagrams and tables have been retained, even when important information should have been included. For example, the table listing the mildest winters in central England since 1659 (defined as having a mean temperature over December to February above 6°C) includes only 1935 and 1975 from this century. The recent spell of mild winters has been excluded as they occurred after the publication of the first edition. Similarly, the figure chosen to demonstrate changes of world temperature is still one published in 1963 and updated by Lamb to 1978; the dramatic increase of world temperature recorded since the 1980s has been omitted. Even though it is clear that Lamb is unsympathetic to the views of the climate modellers and their predictions about future climate based on the human-induced increase in carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere, it is something that should have been given more consideration. There are other examples of where updating should have been more thorough. In the chapter on 'What can we do about it?', there is reference to a recent (1979!) lecture by the chairman of Esso arguing that the world's known oil reserves were sufficient for less than thirty years consumption at the present rate. Half way through this period, the threat seems to have receded and supply is greater than demand.

Whilst still containing a lot of useful and interesting information about climate and its relationships

with history, it is disappointing that the second edition has not been a fuller revision. It could have incorporated some of the more recent advances in Alpine and Icelandic climate history for example, but the main problem is the dated nature of some of the diagrams and tables; misleading conclusions could be drawn from them.

P A SMITHSON

NICHOLAS JOHNSON and PETER ROSE, with further contributions edited by DESMOND BONNEY, *Bodmin Moor: An Archaeological Survey. Volume 1: The Human Landscape to c1800*, Cornwall Archaeology Unit; HBMCE; RCHME, 1994. 131 pp. 76 maps and illus. Pbk £45.

This volume presents the results of an ambitious collaborative project between local and national organizations, with the Cornwall Archaeology Unit and the RCHME undertaking the work, and funding coming from the RCHME and English Heritage. 193 km² of moorland was surveyed at 1:2500, combining aerial photographs, photogrammetry and field survey, with several core areas, covering a total of 15 km², surveyed at 1:1000. Fieldwork started in 1979 and continued into the mid-1980s. The results of the survey were aimed ultimately towards landscape management and archaeological conservation.

The survey aims and methodology are explicitly stated. All too often surveys are published where their purpose, level of accuracy and method of working are left unsaid, therefore it is hard, if not impossible, to assess their strengths and limitations. In the case of the Bodmin Moor survey a sound and thorough approach was adopted. The extensive use of aerial photographs worked well here because the landscape is predominantly grassland. Unfortunately aerial photographs, while still invaluable, are not as useful in some of Britain's more northerly moorlands which are often dominated by heather. Experience in the Peak District for example suggests that less than 50 per cent of the archaeology is visible from the air.

The survey covers all field earthworks and structures from the Neolithic to AD 1800 with the exception of industrial sites, which it is planned will be presented in a separate volume. The findings are divided into two halves. The first, the prehistoric landscape (with Romano-British data), includes ceremonial monuments, defended sites and many settlements and field systems. The historic landscape section again covers extensive settlements and field systems. There are profuse maps, plans and photographs throughout, including several large format loose-leaf illustrations. Only one glaring mistake was noticed, the reversal of the photograph in

Fig 43 compared with the plan on the opposite page.

The published report, of necessity with such a large project, gives only a detailed overview of the findings. Examples of detailed survey plans that are included give a glimpse of the wealth of material in archive. While unavoidable, this is still frustrating for the specialist, as it is these surveys that allow critical re-assessment of their interpretation. The present trend in archaeological publishing towards summary publication, while necessary due to the sheer amount of work undertaken and high publication costs, means that we increasingly have to take results on trust.

Turning to a more detailed review of the prehistoric landscape chapter first, the descriptive sections are organized by site type, but these are far more than catalogues. Most sections give a critical review of morphology, dating, and the place in the landscape. One minor criticism is that the final discussion section, mostly concerned with the chronological development of field systems, is not adequately illustrated. Phasing plans, showing areas of differential destruction for any given phase, would have been helpful.

The data include much that is new. In the context of Bodmin Moor, settlements, field systems, long cairns and stone rows are adequately recorded for the first time. Monument types not yet identified elsewhere in Britain include the embanked ceremonial avenue on Craddock Moor and several tor-cairns. The record of the complex range of variation in larger cairns (stone barrows) is particularly useful. This variation includes mound form, kerb type and central foci, including cists, standing stones, natural boulders and tors. The range is very different from such regions as Wessex, Wales and the Peak District. The complex, some would say over-complex, typologies devised by Lynch for upland monuments in Wales cannot be applied successfully in the South-West.

It is interesting that identifiable building platforms without stone footings are not common, those found were mostly associated with probable Neolithic enclosures. Away from South-West Britain, in areas like the Peak District and the Cheviots, the situation is reversed. Simple platforms are common, perhaps reflecting lower rainfall and thus less problems with waterlogging compared with the South-West.

Most important of all, the volume illustrates the sheer numbers of prehistoric sites on Bodmin Moor, many recorded for the first time. Systematic field survey, be it from the air or on the ground, clearly leads to significant increase in known sites wherever it is undertaken in uplands of suitable altitude, just above later ecological thresholds for viable culti-

vation. More importantly it allows the question of how people have organised themselves in the landscape at different times to be more successfully addressed. On Bodmin Moor sacred areas alongside farmed areas can be identified, as can the spaces between, where no features occur. With over 200 prehistoric settlements on Bodmin Moor now identified, together with over 500 km of ancient boundaries, this presents an ideal opportunity for research into such issues.

My only major complaint with the Bodmin Moor volume is that this opportunity was not fully grasped. Although there are many passing comments made, these are never successfully drawn together. This lack of vision and exploratory interpretation is a criticism that can be made of a number of volumes in which the RCHME have had a hand. They often play safe, not venturing into the underlying reasons for why things are as they are. Admittedly, one disadvantage of in-depth interpretation is that as our paradigms change this may in some respects date the volume. However, what is the point of collecting data if someone else is left to work out what it means? Who better to offer interpretation than the data collectors themselves? Even allowing for obvious uncertainties resulting from a lack of chronological definition on Bodmin Moor, I find it hard to believe that this should prevent model building. A presentation of multiple alternatives would have been desirable as the starting point for their testing by excavation and environmental work.

Amongst the issues that could have been more fully discussed are: What is the distribution of settlement in relation to topography and the fertility of soils? Does this change through time? Is the frequent reuse of sites in the medieval period evidence for continuity, or just the reuse of the best land? Do levels of settlement fluctuate through time and, if so, why? What can be deduced about the social structure of prehistoric groups on Bodmin Moor, given the apparent nucleation into large settlements not common outside South-West Britain except in hillforts? Or, is this an illusion, buildings being intermittently rebuilt, there never being more than a handful of dwellings occupied at any one time? To what extent was the landscape perceived in prehistory as containing secular and sacred space, with areas that contain only monuments and others with settlements, fields and monuments? Are there monuments of different form and function depending on which zone they occur within? What are the implications for the nature of society? Are there zones of mixed farming, archaeologically visible as field systems, and other zones used for only pasture? Do each have their own settlements and monuments? Are there monuments

that operate on an organisational level beyond that of the local farming families? What are the implications for discussions on status and hierarchical societies? Does change through time from the Neolithic onwards reflect transformations in perception of the land, from semi-nomadic tenure, exploiting the moor as part of a seasonal round, changing later to the owning of the land as part of a sedentary exploitation of the moor?

Unlike the Prehistoric landscape chapter, one gets the impression there was a feeling of being on safer ground with the medieval data. A succinct but clear summary is given of the settlement archaeology in relation to historical and place name sources. These are used to set the scene for placing the archaeological remains in a broader context. The archaeological remains mainly comprise 37 settlements together with extensive fields. Other features include transhumance huts and crosses, although the latter are only mentioned in passing, the emphasis on the medieval text being firmly on the secular. The thorough documentation of the now abandoned settlements and field systems illustrates their character in a clearer way than if they had suffered the ravages of modern farming within the current in-bye land, as have many of today's farms and fields that have medieval origins. The chapter presents a very useful picture of medieval upland land-use that is relevant for studies elsewhere, including evidence for transhumance and permanent settlement in farms and hamlets. The complex evolution of field systems in an upland environment, often using strip-like partition, and the division of the landscape into what can be called private and communal space, are particularly illuminating.

To conclude, perhaps the most fundamental point to be made is that archaeological surveys are often not published, as this is not seen as being as essential as the dissemination of excavation results. This publication illustrates the dangers of such thinking. Survey often provides an overview, allowing vital landscape issues to be addressed. Excavation often only starts to come into perspective when placed in a landscape context. Thus the Bodmin Moor volume is very welcome, particularly as archaeologically this is a rich area, demonstrating the exciting potential of many of our uplands.

JOHN BARNATT

WERNER RÖSENER, *The Peasantry of Europe*, Blackwell, 1994. xiv + 235 pp. 11 illus. 6 maps. £19.99.

This study sets out to summarize the distinctive character of the European peasantry, and trace its history up to the present day. It is one volume in a planned series, edited by Jacques Le Goff, which will tackle major themes in European history, and

will be published simultaneously in five European countries in their own languages. Two hundred pages is a sparing allotment of space for such a subject, and the text cannot linger on any aspect in detail. Yet it is markedly successful in giving a broad conspectus, pausing regularly to compare and contrast four regions of the continent which the author differentiates as west and central Europe, Scandinavia, eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean. He has no space to compare European peasantries with those of other continents, but he has an interesting passage about settlers in America who quickly shed their cultural baggage, and became profit-oriented individuals, associating with neighbours, but without needing the community of the village as they had known it in the Old World.

Despite the variety of countries and peoples with which the book is concerned, many features of the story reveal similar experiences, in the development of common-field farming, continuing colonization, the hardening of feudal demands by landowners, and peasant revolts from the Urals to the Atlantic. A divergent movement between east and west Europe sets in from the sixteenth century onwards, giving increasing freedom to the peasantry of the west, but deepening serfdom in the east.

Up to this point social structure and social relations seem to dominate the text, but the practices of agriculture are then discussed, paying attention to the produce, the influence of prices on peasants' choices, standards of living, and the form of peasant dwellings. The account of the so-called emancipation of the peasantry during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reminds the English reader forcibly of the differences between Continental and English experience, and is a salutary prelude to the final discussion on the role of peasants in Europe now and in the future. They are a deeply-rooted class of cultivators with a long history of flexibly managing through bad and good times, and of handling the land with a sense of responsibility to their heirs. The book is timely reading, for it sets the historical record of family farmers against a very broad European background, and at a moment when some of their virtues are better recognised than for many years past.

This reader found the chapter on the village community and the role of village meetings drawing on fresh evidence, without giving adequate guidance to the sources; meagre footnotes leave readers to guess them from the bibliography. Criticism must also be made of the translation which resorts to clumsy or incorrect terms because the translator is plainly unfamiliar with the conventional vocabulary of agrarian historians. Thus 'glebe' is unsettling when used as a synonym for 'land', and 'servile

labour farm' is better rendered as a 'demesne farm', 'the partition of common lands' as 'enclosure' and 'separation' as 'the consolidation of strips'. But in general the text is clear, it is certainly succinct, and it offers some colourful quotations from the German sources which the author handles with most assurance.

JOAN THIRSK

R H BRITNELL and B M S CAMPBELL, eds, *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086-c.1300*, Manchester UP, 1995. xi + 228 pp. £35.00.

Once every three years an Anglo-American Seminar on the Medieval Economy and Society is convened by Bruce Campbell under the auspices of the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers. It takes over a provincial hotel, and there over a long weekend, in surroundings designed for certainty, you will find behind every pilaster a medieval historian haunted by doubt. In 1992 it was the Grand Hotel Leicester, and the doubt was over the dynamic of the English economy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The doubts were sown by M M Postan. 'In the period 1000-1300', as Britnell summarizes Postan's views, 'rising population outstripped the growth of resources necessary for producing food, fuel and clothing, and this had adverse affects upon living standards. Within this paradigm, commercialisation, specialisation and technical change were peripheral topics for the history of the Middle Ages.' This view, 'the stagnationist paradigm' as it is termed here, is no longer sustained.

Commercialization has very properly been brought to centre stage. Essential reading are the most recent monographs of the two editors, Richard Britnell's, *The Commercialisation of English Society 1000-1500* (CUP, 1993; reviewed ante 41, 1993, p 188), and Bruce Campbell and others, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply* (Historical Geography Research Group, 1993; reviewed ante 43, 1995, pp 67-72).

This volume cannot be termed 'essential reading', but it does serve a useful purpose in indicating what the specialists were talking about in 1992. Two main areas of concern can be identified, focusing on each of the terminal dates for the volume. Building on the statistics for Domesday Book, two contributors offer models to indicate the level and growth of GDP in 1086 and in 1300. G D Snooks offers one model, based on a view of the Anglo-Norman economy which sees a clear division between a 'demesne' or a 'market' sector and a 'subsistence' sector. 'In 1086', we are told, 'the unfree peasantry was effectively excluded from the market sector by an oppressive feudal military elite.' Only with 'the decline of feudalism' could they be

liberated to take a part in the market, and their doing so 'was little short of a revolution'. This kind of thing would get short-shrift in any second-year essay. Under a more austere title, 'modelling medieval monetisation', Nicholas Mayhew presents an alternative model, which medieval economic historians will find rather more compatible with the world which they think that they understand. It is a challenging one, with GDP increasing from £0.3m in 1086 to a little under £5.0m in 1300, but, after making allowances for inflation, GDP per household increasing from only £0.75 to £1.00 over the same period. In an appendix Snooks and Mayhew, with Christopher Dyer as a neutral referee, comment on these calculations of GDP.

The articulation of this debate will be the most useful contribution of this volume, though it is another question whether a serial publication such as *Economic History Review* or *Past and Present* might not have provided more flexibility for its development. Any journal would certainly have been graced by Robert Stacey's chapter on 'Jewish lending and the medieval English economy'. This is a first-rate study, which covers the full chronological range of the volume. It argues that, 'by 1180, the balance of Jewish economic activity in England had already shifted decisively away from the combination of moneychanging, moneylending and bullion dealing on which the Jews of Norman England had depended, toward a much more exclusive reliance upon moneylending'; and it explains how this happened. Note must be taken finally of an important chapter by Bruce Campbell on 'measuring the commercialisation of seigneurial agriculture', which draws on the research project whose main findings are published in his 1993 monograph. The sample is ten counties, which produces 202 manors, whose accounts in the period 1288 × 1315 are brought in review. The sample seems odd only in including Northamptonshire: we have the manors of the Soke of Peterborough, but not those of Huntingdonshire directly to the south, or those of Ely in Cambridgeshire. This is not a sample which permits generalizations about the fenland. Within the main region, the material is very thoroughly described, and is very interesting. Practically anything could be marketed: 'Pig's innards, rotten pelts, old onions, chaff, nettles, and thorns all appear among the items sold, as do salmon, conger eels, and peacock's feathers.' It is shown that wool sales, 'did not dominate manorial revenues or even pastoral revenues to the degree that has sometimes been suggested'.

The seminar, on the basis of this volume, is seen as being lively but perhaps not quite ambitious enough. The careful reader will observe, though s/he will have to look elsewhere for the argument,

that the figures for population, on which our tutorials as well as our calculations of GDP are based, are again under review. Those for 1086 are being inflated, those for 1300 deflated: how, it is asked, could a figure of more than 5.00m in 1300 have been sustained? An answer might be found, for it may be that it is not just the economic modellers who are drawing too tight a distinction between the 'demesne' and the 'subsistence' sectors of the economy. If these arguments are to be taken further, we must turn from the account rolls to the surveys. The material has been collected by H E Hallam, in vol II of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*: a co-operative project might allow us at least to fix the goal-posts.

EDMUND KING

JOHN GOODACRE, *The Transformation of a Peasant Economy. Townspeople and Villagers in the Lutterworth Area, 1500-1700*, Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1994. xix + 322 pp. £49.50.

This is a very special book, long in the making, but likely to stand for many years as a highly original undertaking, a model of its kind. Starting as a PhD thesis in 1977, it has benefited from the author's further long, deep thought over nearly twenty years, his insights into landowning and land management, and, doubtless, his reflections upon not dissimilar changes going on in and around Lutterworth at present. The resulting book is a powerful and thought-provoking study, carefully differentiating the fortunes, and various mixes of activity of different classes and individuals in the town of Lutterworth and the farming parishes around in the two centuries between 1500 and 1700. Many strands of development are skilfully woven into one tapestry of agrarian and general economic change, while credible people stand throughout at the centre of the scene. The book is based on a thorough study of the documentary information in inventories, parish registers, surveys, lawsuits, and the like, and is then illuminated from an unusual source, namely, the famous pamphlets of John Moore, rector of Lutterworth, and Joseph Lee, parson at Cotesbach, waging verbal war with each other over the merits and defects of common field farming and enclosure in their neighbourhood. Dr Goodacre weighs their every word, and picks up many significant clues from odd phrases here and there which shed a flood of light upon the meaning of other information.

It is impossible in a short review to do justice to the subtlety of the final portrait of a local economy, undergoing change on many different fronts at once. It brings to life in a remarkably vivid way the challenges to individuals and classes, showing both the luckless people who did no more than

survive, and others who seized their chance and manipulated the world to their advantage. Out of this company of credible people come generalities, summing up the whole.

Basically, Dr Goodacre divides the enclosure movement between 1500 and 1700 into three phases, and then gauges the total impact in this region on farming and the town's trade. Before 1500 when enclosure affected about 17 per cent of the area studied, he sees it as a move into pasture farming at a very low level of efficiency and performance; landowners and farmers were making the best of a bad economic situation after the Black Death, though they produced some fine wool that went to Coventry, Gloucestershire and London to make high quality cloth. Lords, incidentally, also kept rabbits, and fed carp in their ponds, characteristic alternative activities chosen by their class at this time. The beneficiaries among lesser villagers were those who kept the manorial estate running for the lord, shepherds and park-keepers, for example, who turned their perks to good account, by keeping their own small dairy herd, or fattening a few beef cattle or wether sheep. Then in the course of the sixteenth century, as livestock fattening became a more obviously profitable enterprise, shrewd men used their common field holdings in conjunction with agistment rights and leases of enclosed pastures to produce mutton and a now coarse, rather than fine, wool, while maintaining the flexibility inherent in having arable crops in the common fields. They could sell grain at the market, and use their fodder crops, especially peas, to feed animals in early spring or winter when enclosed pastures had nothing to offer. They thrived upon the circumstances, in contrast with the owners of enclosed estates who clung to the old style of pasture farming, producing small sheep and fine wool, but a wool that did not have the robust future of long wool for combing and hosiery; it was the latter which would make Leicestershire famous in the future. The pamphleteer summed up a whole world of contemptuous observation when he referred to 'graceless graziers with innumerable tods of wool and droves of fatlings'. They were the thrusting, acquisitive, brash newcomers, in a different class from the men who had enclosed pastures in the fifteenth century. Between about 1580 and 1620 the graceless graziers took possession of more of the common grazing rights unused by poor men. Common parish herds and flocks dwindled, the families of the old-style pasture farmers died out, and old enclosures could now be divided into smaller units. Their stored fertility was exploited by the system of ley farming, offering special advantages in those frequent but short episodes of grain shortage in the first half of the seventeenth century.

The 1650s were a watershed when at least five parishes in the area were finally enclosed, between 1655 and 1665. Nevertheless, sixteen parishes remained open, and Dr Goodacre sees this phase not as the triumph of enclosure over common fields, but as the triumph of common field farmers in exploiting the advantages of both systems at once. His agricultural revolution in the seventeenth century, in short, consisted in the exploitation of this duality, though it benefited only the large farmers, growing grain and marketing it on a substantial scale alongside their livestock enterprises. It did not pay the small farmer who found he could buy cereals at the market cheaper than he could grow them.

Evidence for the advance of large-scale grain farming is seen in the appearance of wagons on farms, carrying heavier loads to more distant places. Meanwhile, the average common field farmer did a bit of everything, growing cereals, keeping a few cows, and breeding a few sheep for others to fatten; the fattening of bought-in sheep became one of the large farmers' sidelines on enclosed summer pasture.

The economy of Lutterworth town is fitted into this pattern of change in a careful analysis of the occupations of dynasties and individuals who prospered. Farming families built cottages on freehold land, added brewing and baking to their other activities, and turned farmhouses into alehouses and inns. When specialists gradually took over from them, the inns of the town became the usual, well-furnished centres for travellers and merchants. Lutterworth developed no particular industrial speciality, as did Hinckley with hosiery, but it steadily built on its good trading situation close to a Midlands crossroads.

This local study is a fine example of the way detailed research finally brings us face to face with an explanation of changes in the local economy which has the ring of truth, but which departs significantly from the conventional generalities. Its argument will be hotly debated by those who prefer one story to explain everything. But it is, in fact, more lifelike to see a variety of manoeuvres in play at different periods and in different parts of the country, even though common field farmers and enclosers everywhere were engaged in the same struggle for dominance. Dr Goodacre takes a long step forward in identifying the strategies in play in good grazing country in south Leicestershire. He opens up the yet more ambitious prospect, to which Professor Charles Phythian-Adams refers in his weighty Foreword, of arriving one day at a taxonomy of farming communities, all undergoing the same revolution, but experiencing, and using it, perhaps, in different ways.

Gratitude for this sophisticated and imaginative work does not silence all criticism. The index is a thoroughly poor guide to the contents of this memorable book. It totally fails, for example, to signal illuminating comments on bread baking, on fish (carp), pigs, poultry keeping, and woad. Yet six clean pages stand at the end; readers will have to supplement the index with their own.

JOAN THIRSK

THORKILD KJAERGAARD, *The Danish Revolution, 1500–1800: An Ecolhistorical Interpretation*, CUP, 1994. xii + 314 pp. 20 illus. £35.

This is a stimulating and thought-provoking book, with implications far beyond the narrow limits implied by its title. It seeks to demonstrate that Denmark's agricultural system had reached a point of non-sustainability by the beginning of the eighteenth century and was only able to avoid a repetition of the problems of the later Middle Ages by wholesale reorganization, with repercussions not only on agriculture but throughout the whole of Danish social and political life. Over-exploitation of the forest, massive drifting of sand over agricultural land in Jutland, and problems of water control together led to, and were symptoms of, a major ecological crisis. The first of these drove the population to burn turf, straw and cow-pats as an alternative to wood, with a consequent reduction in land fertility which tipped an already-precariouly-balanced agricultural system into a downward spiral. It argues that action was thus inevitable, and took the form of a major revolution in agricultural methods, especially the widespread use of clover and other nitrogen-fixing plants, and of marl. Coupled with this, a decline in the use of wood for fuel and its replacement by other materials for both houses and field boundaries allowed woodland recovery, and resulted in the emergence of a new sustainable rural economy by the end of the eighteenth century. This was, however, achieved at some cost in the form of cold houses, higher disease levels amongst the population, and a fall in general living standards which, it is argued, reached an all-time low about 1800. It was only when coal began to be imported in quantity and imported ready-manufactured goods replaced the Danish-made alternatives that the fuel crisis was finally solved.

It is part of the author's contention that enclosure and the creation of freeholds played little part in stimulating the improvement of the agricultural system. Indeed, he claims that enclosure and the movement to freeholding often led to stagnation and chaos, and that there is a negative correlation between areas in which social reform was or had been carried out and areas of economic growth. He

sees agrarian reforms arising primarily from the power struggle between central royal authority and the old aristocracy rather than from any specific agricultural imperative. The crown needed the farmers as allies, and both giving them the freeholds to their land and allowing them to enclose bought their support and weakened the grip of the landed aristocrats. Those who remained tenant farmers were still in a relatively good position, since they were protected by the long-standing prohibition on closing down farms or allowing them to be subdivided. The losers were the cottagers, servants and farm labourers who were deprived of access to common rights but usually received no compensation, since there was no compulsion on the farmers to offer any land or other alternative. Upward mobility in the rural community became increasingly difficult, while downward mobility affected the younger sons of many farmers.

Kjaergaard argues that the effects of the revolution on the landscape and environment were largely positive. The new landscapes which emerged were more colourful and attractive, with a more varied cropping pattern replacing the old cereal monoculture and the new hedgerows breaking the monotony of the old open fields. The changes also led to a greater diversity of wildlife, with increased numbers and a wider range of plants, birds and butterflies spreading through the Danish countryside. Ultimately all these developments owed their existence to the new 'scientific farming', with technological development 'a decisive prerequisite for the major changes'.

Thorkild Kjaergaard has written a challenging book, many of whose implications stretch far beyond Denmark and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, he briefly expands his arguments to other European countries during the same period, and alludes to possible parallels with parts of present day Latin America, Africa and India. His views are undoubtedly controversial at times, and may not find favour with all scholars of agricultural history, but they will certainly need to be addressed. David Hohnen has performed a valuable service by making this book available in a clear and readable English translation.

JOHN CHAPMAN

LAURENCE WIEDMER, *Pain quotidien et Pain de Disette. Meuniers, Boulangers, et Etat Nourricier à Genève (XVIIe–XVIIIe Siècles)*, Passé Présent SA, Geneva, 1993. 511 pp. np.

This is a doctoral thesis on the daily bread supply and the millers and bakers of Geneva in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It faithfully examines the administrative documents of the town, so that the formal structures of control over bakers

and millers, and the official marketing regulations are fully described. Familiar strategies, such as the building up of grain reserves in good times, are enumerated, and the level of stocks, price fixing, and costs of storage are analysed. At the more personal level, millers' routines are uncovered in chapters on their mills (whether owned or leased), the art of milling, types of flour produced, and millers' incomes and lifestyle, as shown in their inventories. Geneva was a wheat-eating citizenry, accepting maslin, barley or oats in years of shortage, but it ate pure rye bread only as a very last resort. A similar profile is given of the bakers, their working day (baking sessions took seven hours, and they usually baked twice a day), their family dynasties, marriages, and incomes. The years of grain shortage are also enumerated, though crises became less frequent and died away in the eighteenth century.

This is a careful study of the formal documentation, but it does not move adventurously outside this safe palisade to pick up clues in casual, literary, or building, sources which might tell us which classes of households baked at home, and which did not, and how they rated the quality of shop and home-made bread. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, fourteen bakers sold ready-made bread, while seventeen public ovens were available to which women brought bread kneaded at home. The number of public ovens barely increased as population rose, yet the author asserts that the majority of households throughout the eighteenth century continued to make their own bread. The reader is left with lingering doubts about changing routines in the period studied. Nor is any reference made to the baking of pies by bakers; did they, or did they not, engage in this too, to use the heat of their cooling ovens, and satisfy the demand for instant food from roving sojourners in the city? For comparative purposes, this is a useful study of town bread supplies, but its exclusively administrative viewpoint will disappoint the women who handle bread in the kitchen.

JOAN THIRSK

PIERRE DE SAINT JACOB, *Les Paysans de la Bourgogne du Nord au dernier Siècle de l'Ancien Régime*, Association d'Histoire des Sociétés Rurales et Editions Universitaires de Dijon, Rennes, 1995. xxxvi + 644 pp. 270 fr.

By a quirk of fate, some gems of academic writing fail to receive the attention they merit. Arguably *Les Paysans* has been one such book but its re-publication as part of a promising new venture offers the chance of it reaching a much wider audience.

In May 1993 a new historical association was

founded in France to promote research and teaching in the broad domain of rural history. The *Association d'Histoire des Sociétés Rurales* seeks to meet this objective by organizing regular conferences, producing a journal (entitled *Histoire et Sociétés Rurales*), and publishing a collection of books which will comprise both new works and reprints of classic studies long out of print. The first conference was held at the *Université de Rennes II* in October 1994 and was devoted to a critical review of the current state of rural historical studies in France. The proceedings appear in *Histoire et Sociétés Rurales*, 3, 1995, and consist of three dozen papers grouped around seven themes which review French rural research in the past and at the present, and then explore the relationship between rural history and other branches of French history and with cognate disciplines (agronomic science, archaeology, geography). Each section ends with a substantial bibliography. French scholars are concerned about the apparent decline in the vitality and visibility of their subject, both among researchers and undergraduates. Their vision of the alleged well being of rural studies in other parts of Europe and its relative invisibility in France does not accord with my perception, but this may be a case of the grass always being greener elsewhere. For anyone with a research interest in the rural history of France this volume must be essential reading.

The first volume of the *Bibliothèque d'Histoire Rurale* (edited by Ghislain Brunel of the *Archives Nationales* and by Jean-Marie Moriceau of the *Centre de Recherche d'Histoire Quantitative de l'Université de Caen*) is a handsome reprint of the *doctorat d'état* by Pierre de Saint Jacob, which was published in 1960 but passed with precious little notice in review sections of learned journals. In an extremely informative preface Dr Moriceau hints why this may have been so. After having corrected the proofs, Saint Jacob died at the age of 53 before his treatise appeared and before he was able to occupy the chair of modern history that had been created specially for him at the *Université de Dijon*. His earlier career evokes that of many French historians of earlier generations, with some years as a teacher in village schools and the rest of his life being spent as a history teacher in a *lycée*. That post at the *Lycée Carnot*, of course, enabled him to work in the *archives départementales de la Côte-d'Or* that formed his main source, and gave him access to the *Annales de Bourgogne* and several local history journals which formed the main outlets for his numerous articles devoted to the agricultural history of Burgundy.

Les Paysans is an austere and sober text, the culmination of almost three decades of research. It explores the evolution of rural life in a varied stretch of territory including the woods and pastures

of the Morvan, the famed vineyards around Dijon, and the ploughlands and meadows of several fertile valleys during the 'long eighteenth century' from the 1680s to 1789. The thesis is structured into three main parts, which present the *pays* c 1685, trace social and economic changes during the last century of the *ancien régime*, and then review the economic crisis in northern Burgundy in the 1780s and its relation to the Revolution. In the late seventeenth century the province was an essentially rural region composed of communities which had suffered the ravages of war, disease and disruption and bore the burden of complex, heavy taxation and labour dues imposed by its *seigneurs*, but still had communal systems of cultivation and many communal land resources (woods, rough pastures) in place. During the eighteenth century extensive sections of land were purchased by bourgeois, noble and ecclesiastical investors, and the spread of physiocratic notions (although limited) favoured agrarian individualism and the decline of traditional communal systems. Fiscal impositions were not lightened. Widespread desperation during the 1780s resulted in hostility between the several social classes in the province, with the well being of ordinary farmers and the rural poor not being relieved by the Revolutionary encouragement of individualism, partible inheritance, the sale of communal lands and the subsequent loss of collective resources.

Pierre de Saint Jacob adopted a sober, measured style in his prose which was unbroken by statistical tables, maps or diagrams. His pioneering graphs of changing grain prices and taxation levels were banished to an appendix; his approach was emphatically literary rather than quantitative. He employed *ancien régime* expressions of weight and measure, but offered no conversion to metric equivalents to assist the reader. The bulk of his text is not an easy read, but without doubt his conclusion is brilliantly incisive. Overall, this is a masterly exposition of the demise of traditional communal systems in the face of capitalist innovations, of the exploitation of the poor and weak by the rich and powerful, and of the erosion of collective forms of welfare leaving the needy to their own devices and to an uncertain future. The moral of the book is eternal. *Les Paysans de la Bourgogne du Nord* is unquestionably a classic whose reappearance in a very attractive binding and at a very reasonable price will be welcomed and, I hope, will receive the critical claim that it deserves.

HUGH CLOUT

PENELOPE J CORFIELD, *Power and the Professions in Britain, 1700-1850*, Routledge, London and New York, 1995. x+259 pp. 24 illus. £45.

One of the more intriguing questions for historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revolves

around the issue of power and, in particular, its transference from the landed aristocracy to the middle classes. Clearly at the heart of this transfer were the professions, groups who wielded power through their specialist knowledge and set up informal mechanisms of control and self-regulation. Penelope Corfield's book is not simply a discussion of individual professions, although she is happy to estimate numbers and to look in some detail at particular groups, it is also a sustained essay in the growth of professional power set loosely within the context of some of Michel Foucault's ideas.

Corfield argues that in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the existing social hierarchy was challenged by a group of power-brokers whose stature depended on control of key areas of specialist information: these were the professions, and their guns were primed with knowledge. The emergence of the group was a reflection of the growing tertiary or service sector within the United Kingdom economy. A profession was already an indication of social status in the early eighteenth century but the position grew stronger as regulation and the imposition of standards helped to raise consumer confidence. By 1851 England, Scotland and Ireland all had a skilled service sector, and much of the book is concerned with demonstrating how the importance of these sectors was much greater than the mere number of professionals would have suggested.

None of this is perhaps entirely surprising, but readers of this journal may have more difficulty accepting Corfield's definition of professionalization as inextricably linked to urbanization (p 23). No one is likely to question her assertion that most towns developed a basic core of professionals, but this is not quite the same as seeing professional people as a rising social group associated almost exclusively with urban growth. Since every parish, whether rural or urban, had a church, it also had (whether resident or absentee) a clergyman, and some (we learn) even doubled as land agents (p 129). Of land agents themselves we hear next to nothing (except for a brief comment on Ireland pp 30-1) although there were not far short of 20,000 of them by 1851 while nearly 6000 veterinary surgeons and farriers must have spent much of their time in rural communities (p 32). Some professionals of course went on tour, notably clerics visiting their poorer benefices, but also barristers, actors, dentists, architects, engineers and others. Rank-and-file attorneys 'lived outside the towns', and some medics were neither more nor less than 'unglamorous village sawbones' (p 215).

Corfield is interested in power, but just how much did these people really wield? The influential

clergyman more often than not required the landowner to sit regularly in the family pew; the land agent was hardly independent; and the local attorney lived a mundane and humdrum life in which the idea of his acting as a local power-broker is unlikely to have figured highly. Perhaps some of the satire and caricature which goes into making up a fascinating chapter in this book was not actually so wide of the mark as we might assume. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that the book is anything other than a scholarly assessment of a significant and growing social group which exercised rather more power than might have been anticipated purely on the basis of numbers. Corfield traces the growth of the professions with some care, but what makes the book interesting is the provocative interplay of evidence about growth and 'regulation' with suggestive comments on the exercise of power not primarily through politics – although as early as 1733 nearly 11 per cent of MPs were practising lawyers – but through notions of power exercised in the respect afforded to them, and bolstered by qualifications, professional associations and institutions, and regulation of numbers. The book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature of social power exercised by those with an intangible expertise.

J V BECKETT

ANGUS J L WINCHESTER, ed, *The Diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, Cumberland, 1756–1781*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Extra Series, XXVII, 1994. xlii + 518 pp. £36.

At first glance Isaac Fletcher's *Diary* seems a pedestrian record. It was written in pocket-books which allowed him only four or five lines to each entry, and he relates only the most obvious events in his daily life as a Cumberland Quaker, yeoman farmer, local lawyer, and man of affairs, with business interests in Cockermouth and Whitehaven. Yet we owe Dr Winchester a deep debt for recognizing its importance and the skill and imagination he has brought to the task of editing it. Fletcher was neither imaginative nor observant outside the range of his own concerns; here is no Dorothy Wordsworth or Francis Kilvert. But he was methodical and precise in what he recorded and his diary extends over a whole generation. Dr Winchester has thus been able to use it to recreate a wonderfully vivid, human portrait of Cumbrian society, at the farming and business level, in the eighteenth century.

He has done so by following up Fletcher's multifarious interests in impressive detail, and by truly massive research into his Quaker background and

the close-knit family-world that moulded so much of his life. The task has taken seven years to complete, but they have been years well spent. We are given not only a perceptive introduction, but seventeen pages of notes to the text, seven appendices, a useful glossary, and thirty-five pages of biographical notes.

It is impossible to do justice to this wealth of information in the space of a review. But in addition to the introduction, the topographical notes in Appendix III, the letters of Isaac Fletcher and his delightful wife Susanna in Appendix IV, and above all the biographical notes, must be singled out for praise. It is worth reading the latter through from beginning to end for the fascinating picture they give of some 168 people who figure with special prominence in the diary. They bear ample witness to the riches of the biographical approach to the study of provincial society. Ninety-two of those mentioned were fellow-Quakers of Fletcher, a clear indication of the degree to which he, like most Friends, then thought and operated through the denominational connexion. The great majority came of families with deep and enduring roots in the area; the web of local intermarriage Dr Winchester has brought to light is indeed striking. But I also counted at least thirty places outside Cumberland with which Fletcher had more or less intimate dealings, either on business or denominational matters, and often on both. London, Bristol, Birmingham, Coalbrookdale, Galloway, Philadelphia, Virginia, and Maryland all figure among them. For the Quakers of west Cumberland, at least, horizons were clearly far from limited. They were further broadened in that no fewer than ninety-six travelling ministers visited the Quaker meeting at Pardshaw during the period covered by the diary, many of them from other northern counties, but at least seven from America.

Fletcher's prim little Georgian farmhouse at Underwood in Mosser, like the Pardshaw Meeting House itself, still happily survives. Mosser lies on the north-western edge of the Loweswater fells and is one of the eight out-townships of Brigham parish. It was originally St Bees property, and developed from a humble 'shieling on the moss' (*mos + erg*), first recorded in 1203. Though it covered only 1018 acres, 14 or 15 holdings had apparently been carved out of it by Fletcher's time, all of them isolated steadings or grouped in the two tiny hamlets of Upper and Lower Mosser. Two of these are recorded in *The Place-Names of Cumberland*; but several more can be traced back to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and a few (to judge from their name-forms) must be of medieval origin.

Underwood itself comprised two holdings in the seventeenth century; but both of these came into Isaac Fletcher's hands, one through his father's marriage to Margaret Allason in 1693, the other through his own marriage to Susanna Harris in 1743. He extended his farm a little by enclosing his share of the waste and the last remnant of the moss. As it was recorded in 1840, Underwood thus came to comprise 107 acres. In short, it was a typical Cumbrian yeoman's holding, larger than most in Mosser, and quite sufficient to afford a livelihood from his mixed-farming activities.

But like many men in the area, particularly Quakers, Fletcher was a restless, energetic individual, intelligent too, and socially as well as economically ambitious. The busy market town of Cockermouth, scarcely four miles to the north, afforded one opening, while the Lowthers' new port of Whitehaven, only ten miles away, attracted many in the neighbourhood to venture into overseas trade. The picture we are given is thus a very different one from that depicted a generation or so later by Dorothy Wordsworth in the heart of the Lake District. Though farming may have remained Fletcher's chief concern, and there is much of interest about it here, the diary is also dominated by references to his legal work in the Cockermouth area, by divers ventures into local industry and leadmining, and by commerce with Ireland and America, as well as his involvement in Quaker affairs.

Neither for him, however, nor for others equally anxious to prosper by diversifying their activities, is this a typical story of Quaker success. Time and again, the complex business partnerships entered into to raise capital or the like ended in personal quarrels, family disaster, and sometimes bankruptcy. Such tragedies were a matter of much concern to Friends generally at this time, as they were to other Dissenting groups, and unhappily they sometimes became entangled with the doctrinal feuds that were likewise rending the connexion. Perhaps Isaac Fletcher's most useful and profitable activity, in the end, was his clearly able work as an unofficial lawyer, working in with attorneys in Cockermouth, and with the Lowthers' land agent, John Wordsworth, the father of William and Dorothy.

Yet there was a great deal more to Isaac Fletcher's life than that. There is much of homely affection and simple human kindness in these pages too. Illness, mortgages, and other misfortunes could not prevent him from writing a perfectly splendid letter to his nephew in Philadelphia in 1770, trusting that he would soon 'arrive safely again in Old England, the Paradise of the world, the land of wealth & plenty!'

ALAN EVERITT

ARTHUR L STINCHCOMBE, *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1995. xviii + 361 pp. 5 maps; 7 tables. £29.50.

If you are interested in farming, this book is probably not for you! Few readers of this journal will feel compelled to plough through these nearly 400 close-packed pages. On the other hand, if you are interested in political sociology with a Marxist slant this may be your cup of tea. Essentially, what Arthur Stinchcombe is trying to do here is to give an overall explanation of the relative degrees of slavery experienced in the Caribbean islands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The crucial element appears to have been the presence of sugar plantations. The islands with plenty of fertile low-lying land, with easy access to the sea and shipping, became the great sugar producers, and sugar was a slave crop. So the more sugar plantations, the more slavery. Thus a scale of slave exploitation can be established, with the great British sugar islands at the top having the most coercive slave regimes, followed by the French, then the Dutch and Danish, and the comparatively benevolent Spanish at the bottom. The Spanish were really only interested in finding gold and silver, not in cultivating sugar, so had fewer slaves. Locked on to this scale of slave coercion is a class analysis in which the British planters ruled their islands for their own commercial gain, colour being a crucial determination of class. The islands of other countries, which used less slaves, had more genial social systems, in which shades of colour were comparatively insignificant. The Spanish again were more relaxed in these matters. Indeed, having placed all the various islands into his ranked categories, the Spanish islands emerge really as being unlike the others. They were more like South American countries in their political sociology, being run by charismatic dictators in fancy uniforms. As for the British islands, whose planters the author seems to go out of his way to vilify, he argues that the extensive freedom from control that they were allowed to enjoy from London enabled them to operate the most repressive systems of black slave exploitation. Even after the African slave trade was ended and slavery itself abolished, the British colonies were able to set up a system of quasi-slavery for indentured Indian labourers. In the colonies of other countries, where control from the metropolis was greater, freedom of the local authorities to exploit black slaves was more constrained and the slaves themselves enjoyed greater freedoms. Of the various islands Haiti enjoys a detailed examination, because of the black slave revolution there which so frightened the Southern States of America in the period before the Civil

War. He chooses not to comment on how effectively the self-liberated slaves there used the total freedom they took for themselves! So this is a substantial study but not one which can be read through lightly. It is not based on original research, but aims to use secondary sources to create an overarching analytical structure by which the degrees of slavery in the region can be assessed. There are some awkward uses of English, such as his continued use of the first person, and his somewhat risible use of popular language: 'But except for the poor sods who died in such battles, such stubbornness was not ordinarily relevant to the military problem' (p 40). But perhaps the most serious problem with the book is the absence of any reference to the terrors of the slave-based social system operated by Africans in Africa from whom the slaves had originally been bought. Even if the English or British (the author is a little confused about these terms) operated the most severe system of slavery in the Caribbean they did not use their slaves for human sacrifice as was common in Africa. It was better by far to be a slave on a British sugar plantation than decapitated or buried alive in the funeral rites for a dead chief!

A J H LATHAM

ROGER J P KAIN and RICHARD R OLIVER, *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue*, CUP, 1995. 873 pp. £135.00.

This large volume represents a much-needed index and description of the tithe maps of England and Wales, and results from a Leverhulme-funded investigation lasting five years, which was also sponsored by the Public Record Office (to whose staff the volume is dedicated). This will become the standard work of reference to the tithe maps, but it also contains analysis, contextual material and a great deal of insight into cartographic representations of mid-Victorian rural England and Wales. As such it now takes its place beside the earlier Kain and Prince *The Tithe Surveys of England and Wales* (1985) and the Kain *et al*, *An Index and Atlas of the Tithe Files* (1986). Presumably the tithe schedules, which accompany the maps, will not merit such exhaustive treatment, although they too are central to any understanding of the process of tithe apportionment! They do, of course, receive some treatment from the authors in this volume.

The tithe maps resulted from the great government-sponsored cadastral survey of the early Victorian period which has yielded something in the order of 11,800 large-scale detailed maps. The introduction to the volume explains the background to the survey – the commutation, the definition of the tithe districts, the corn rents, the commissioners

and valuers. There is a short section explaining the use of the data base and then there follows the main part of the volume: a county-by-county catalogue. Each county has a chapter introduced by a brief analysis of the available maps, with their distribution by tithe district shown by a map which also indicates the tithe-free areas of the county. Within each county there is an entry for each tithe district (most usually a parish but possibly a hamlet or other part of a large parish) which lists dates of apportionment, dates of the map, acreage, scale of map, class (1st or 2nd), name of cartographer, topographical features shown such as 'Giant's grave' (Wye, Kent), 'Castle ruins' (Thanington, Kent), cartouche details. A detailed and extremely useful final chapter summarizes much of what went before, and appendices list assistant tithe commissioners and local tithe agents, and tithe map-makers.

The existence of this volume will undoubtedly save researchers a great deal of time spent previously in tracking down tithe maps to find small amounts of information, and the PRO reference numbers also supplied will also aid PRO searchers. It should be noted, of course, that such references are those relating to material held in the PRO, and that maps held in local archive offices will have locally-relevant references. The book does not inform us as to whether a map also exists for a tithe district in a local record office but to do so would have entailed a truly Herculean task. As it is, the authors and their collaborators and publishers are to be congratulated on the fine production of this most useful work of reference.

BRIAN SHORT

GÖRAN HOPPE and JOHN LANGTON, *Peasantry to Capitalism: Western Östergötland in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography No 22, CUP, 1994. xxi + 457 pp. £40.

This is an extremely detailed and well researched piece of scholarship. It tells that important story of the transition from peasant agricultural production, largely for the purposes of self-sufficiency or very local exchange, to capitalist agricultural production largely for sale. In order to explore this central adjustment the authors have carefully blended a series of theories about the transition with the real-life experiences of communities in one region of Sweden in the nineteenth century. Along the way they pose and attempt to answer some very diverse questions about the structure of peasant society, and the ways that structure had to adapt, or readily adapted to, changed circumstances. These questions involve issues such as farm sizes, agricultural employment, non-farm but parallel rural activities, and the relationships which developed intra-

community, and externally with urban development.

The story is about the parishes and communities of the hundreds of Aska and Dahl in southern Sweden. They are declared as a region embracing a 'new regional geography'. What is new is that this study breaks free from conventional regional studies which are either not regions, but more like 'lumps' of territory gouged out of one or other compass point, or are regions because of their uniformity. Instead the chosen region has a sharply defined geography of contiguous places – like all good regions – but it is one which has been chosen precisely because of its varied rather than uniform physical characteristics. In this way the authors are better placed to test and illustrate the importance of theories of capitalist development, theories which can genuinely have wide applicability through the contrasting habits and attitudes even of near neighbours in space, but who are distant from one another in terms of economic and social development. The incoherence of the region therefore, as a laboratory for testing theories and ideas, becomes a distinct virtue. Another virtue is the eschewing of the systematic approach to the study of human and historical geography (compartmentalized in the habit of chapter headings, such as social, economic, demographic). Instead the authors adopt a more holistic, ecological approach, and explore the concepts and methods of 'time-geography', recognizing that human socio-economic processes may be set in space but they also move through time in a way that the systematic approach to human geography or the time-based cross-sectional approach to historical geography may be unable fully to conceptualize and capture. Human interactions are complex in time-geography terms. At one level, in modern parlance, there was a lot of networking taking place in nineteenth-century Sweden. So it is the study of process as much as of necessary outcome which is important in this work.

The empirics throw up results which are no less interesting for the fact that they might be highly predictable. The relative uniformity of peasant life in 1810 – the beginning of the study – was not as uniform on closer inspection, and similarly the developments by 1860 – the end point of the study – resulted in a series of societies rather than a single society. The processes of change had taken place at a variable pace in different places but also across different kinship groups. It was the direction of change towards the market which was the unalterable fact, and even though by 1860 peasant farming had not yet ceased to be a way of life for everyone, it was surely on the horizon. It is not necessary, therefore, to complete the story to the point where everyone is on a so-called capitalist footing, or

indeed has deserted agriculture for urban and industrially-based modes of production. The outcome or end result is not of the fundamental importance, but the process whereby the outcome is achieved is.

More precisely the study region is located a little over 100 miles west south-west of Stockholm. These two contiguous hundreds measure about 22 miles from north to south as the crow flies and perhaps 6–10 miles at their broadest point. I only quote these dimensions to emphasize the very small size and local nature of the study. This is nothing new to historians of Britain who have been fed with a constant flow of equally local and intimate histories – contrasting communities here, parish studies there, the odd special reference to the county of this and that, and the regional study of north, south, east and west. Such studies have become meat and drink both to the generalized histories and to particular studies, either in contrast to or in support of theories and empirics on agricultural, economic, and social change. Long may it be so, and in turn this study of Western Östergötland also makes generous reference to local Swedish studies, and also to those which are more familiar to historians of Britain. In the fullness of time the results derived from this book will be widely quoted in other studies of European peasant agricultural development. My fear, however, is with the general insularity of the British, an insularity born of the fact that the parallel developments in Britain took place at a different time, at a different pace, and very often in a markedly different way. The detailed research in this book, even though in a widely circulated CUP series, may be relegated to the barest footnotes in the future historiography of British agricultural history. That may happen unless more historians than is currently the case take up and run with the theories of the development of the peasant economy and society, and in particular break free from the major constraint of chronology. This is a study of nineteenth-century Swedish development, which, apart from some well-known remnants of peasant survival into nineteenth-century Britain will find few chronological parallels this side of the North Sea. It is for historians of the eighteenth-century, or more likely of early-modern Britain, to plunder this book for its exposition of theory through the laboratory of its empirics. I hope that they do so.

MICHAEL TURNER

DAVID FITZPATRICK, *Oceans of Consolation. Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia, Cork, Cork UP, 1994. 663 pp. Illus. £37.50 hbk; £19.50 pbk.*

This book contains many surprises. On the surface, David Fitzpatrick's project is that of an obsessive

editor. He has reproduced fourteen series of letters (one-third by women) written between 1843 and 1906. They are the correspondence of emigrants, or their families, living in Ireland and Australia. Although a total of 111 letters are reproduced, they are worth reading in full.

The first thing that strikes any reader is the eloquence of these correspondents, most of whom are semi-literate. It was the emigrant, Michael Normile, who gave this book its title when he confessed to his father that letters from Ireland gave him 'an ocean of consolation'. Another emigrant, William Fife, recalled bidding farewell to his children in unforgettable words. He wrote:

Although I parted with you in Body my heart and the affections of a Father went with you... I hurried Down close to the side of the water thinking I might have got one sight of Fathys Black Bonnet or your Jacket as I would have Known either. I would have waved my hat and you your hand For the last time. But I could see neither thoug I looked with more Desire than the Watchman Doth for the Morning... The cry of my heart at that moment was Farwell Farewell Farewell My Children though not one tear could I Drop.

The editorial policy of retaining the original spelling, punctuation, and syntax evokes not only the language, but also regional accents. Bidy Burke, writing to her family in Galway, said that Australia was 'agreen' (agreeing) with her 'will' (well). She continued in this reassuring tone: 'I go to Mass every Sunday a nine clock and to vespers at night & so does Patt so ye neadend [needn't] be uneasy atall about us. This is the finest Country in the wourld for young people that takes care of themselves'.

The central focus of the book is on the meaning of 'home' within a culture which is highly migratory. This theme is not a new one for rural historians, particularly not those writing about Ireland. Over the past decade, the interest shown to migration by Fitzpatrick (himself an emigrant from Australia to Ireland) has been extremely fruitful. In this book, however, he has travelled a long way from his earlier 'push-pull' models, multiple regressions and significations, and statistical tables, (although the reader will find some of these in the book). Rather, he is concerned with personal representations of migration. As he points out, statistical inferences are hazardous and 'incomprehensive to the actual immigrant - either content or unhappy according to disposition and experience'. It is way Fitzpatrick has dealt with the experience and representation of migration that makes this book novel.

For academics, the book contains a sophisticated and subtle critique of the conventional historians' craft. With delicacy and in self-deprecating tones, Fitzpatrick discusses the innumerable ways historians 'cheat' by careful selection of evidence, unprovable

claims of representativeness, and the careful juxtaposition of quotations. For historians who find his meticulous attention to every syllable intimidating, the critique is devastating. Fitzpatrick reproduces every letter in its entirety and subjects every word to penetrating analysis. He follows this with a detailed reconstruction of the circumstances of writing. Family historians have here a model in reassembling local and family records. Finally, there are a series of thematic chapters which look at broader questions, including the 'ceremonies' of communication, the politics of reciprocity, processes of inter-familial negotiation, and images of Ireland and Australia. The book concludes with a series of 'reflections' on culture, identity, and home.

The book is a treasure-trove for the agricultural historian. The letters are a glorious source in their own right. The writers detail their impressions of land policies, investment in technology and seed, seasonal fluctuations in agricultural prices, local amenities, and relationships of power within the village. We learn a great deal about cows, horses, and pigs from their correspondence. The radical transformation that Ireland underwent in the half century after the famine is seen here from a different angle. Precisely because of the contextual framework that Fitzpatrick provides, the book enables us to question, if not overturn, some of the prevailing myths in Irish historiography, such as the idea that those who failed to emigrate were 'captives' in a dull, restrictive country. Indeed, Fitzpatrick convincingly shows that the evidence of these correspondents suggests that those who remained often viewed their position with satisfaction and, even, an exalted sense of well-being. In Fitzpatrick's words: 'The choice facing the emigrant was not between a ruined world and a place of hope, but between two environments offering disparate prescriptions for human happiness' (p 560).

Despite the intellectual strengths of this book, it would be unfair not to draw attention to the way the book has been produced: wide margins positively incite annotation; there are 66 beautifully reproduced photographs, sketches, and maps; and although the volume is a 'door stopper', once started, it cannot be put down. And that is my only warning.

JOANNA BOURKE

GILBERT SCHRANK, *An Orkney Estate: Improvements at Graemeshall 1827-1888*, Tuckwell Press, 1996. xii + 131 pp. £8.99.

There exists a long tradition of studies of estate management in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland. Several volumes published by the *Scottish History Society* contain discussion and selected docu-

ments relating to improvements on the Grant of Monymusk, Argyll and Sutherland estates while that by I H Adams concentrates on the role played by Peter May one of Scotland's most influential land surveyors in agrarian change in the North East. In addition, journals such as *Scottish Studies* and the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* contain a number of papers on aspects of the improving movement. Unfortunately however, few monographs based on detailed study of local and regional archives have been published. The pioneering work of P Gaskell on Morvern and M Storrie on Islay and Ardnamurchan has been followed by only a small number of significant local studies, notably I Mowat's book on Easter Ross and S Knox's study of Shetland. The publication of Gilbert Schrank's research on the Graemeshall estate on the Orkney Mainland is therefore especially welcome.

In the introduction, the author emphasizes that the study will focus on the agents of change and the methods of implementation. He goes on to argue that the personalities and characters of the improvers are a key element in understanding landscape change and patterns of landed investment. His assertion that the relationship between lairds and their factors has been seldom studied is more questionable. Overall the introduction is very brief and takes into account only a fraction of the issues and research on the Highlands and Islands.

The main body of the book is divided into five chapters. Chapter one shows how the Orkneys experienced change during the middle decade of the nineteenth century, much later than on the Scottish mainland. In the early nineteenth century, most cultivated land was still in runrig and common-ties accounted for 45 per cent of the land area. Overland transportation was poorly developed and cultivation was carried out on lands close to the sea. The rural economy was also dependent on a number of proto-industrial activities; spinning of linen yarn, straw plaited hats and kelp, a raw material for the soap and glass industries of Scotland and England.

The author suggests that economic change in Orkney was a two-fold process. Initially, there occurred a narrowing of the economy as rural industries collapsed and this phase was followed by intensive agricultural modernization. The former subsistence economy based on grain production gave way to beef cattle fed on sown grasses and root crops. Live cattle exports to ports such as Aberdeen and Leith was the key to the profitability of the new order and with the introduction of regular steamship services in 1836, this became feasible.

Chapter two is titled 'The Graemeshall Estate', and begins with biographical details of the estate

owners, the Sutherland family, and their factors David Petrie and his son David junior, who managed the estate for almost 80 years. The author explains at length how successive lairds exercised influence over their estates from a distance pursuing careers elsewhere. This state of affairs generated much correspondence between laird and factor and led to the preparation of detailed reports, surveys and rentals. Many of these were carefully preserved by the factors and are now deposited in the Orkney County Archives. The latter part of chapter two focuses on what could be regarded as the final decades of the 'old order', characterized by minimal change in agriculture and a local economy that supplemented its meagre earnings from the land with kelp gathering. The personalities involved in estate management also changed: the old laird died in 1818 and was succeeded by a minor, Alexander Sutherland Graeme, bringing the appointment of a trustee, John Irving, while the retirement of David Petrie in 1827 brought the appointment of his son as factor. Sutherland Graeme's twenty-first birthday also occurred in 1827 and paved the way for sustained improvements at Graemeshall.

Chapter three provides a fascinating account of the lifestyle of the three men who were to re-shape the estate's landscape and economy. Petrie the local man, Irving in his youth a companion of Sir Walter Scott and typical example of the Edinburgh Enlightenment, and Sutherland Graeme, a Scot who was able to take advantage of his professional education to seek career and social opportunities beyond Scotland choosing to live near Hastings.

Chapter four begins by describing the elements of the 'new style' farming: enclosure, drainage projects, roads and bridges and long-term leases. Graemeshall was the first Orkney estate to attempt comprehensive improvement and although eventually successful, many factors slowed progress. Much of the chapter examines seven issues which Schrank identifies as particularly problematic. These include the decline of the kelp industry, low prices for agricultural products in the 1830s and related arrears of rent, the laird's conspicuous consumption, delay in dividing communities, tenant resistance to change, and perhaps not surprising, given the distance involved, conflict between Petrie and Irving.

Chapter five analyses the estate rentals before, during and after the main phase of improvement. What these confirm is a picture of attempted improvement that coincided with a period when the Orkney economy was in recession. Rentals stagnated and arrears of rents increased, yet expenditure was at its greatest. Moreover, drainage and road building was undertaken before government grants were available and it was only through land sales that the fiscal condition of the estate was

safeguarded. In contrast, other landowners delayed improving their lands until rising cattle prices triggered an economic boom in Orkney in the 1850s and 1860s. Graemeshall, with some of the best cattle land in Orkney, also profited from the economic upsurge and this is reflected in a marked upturn in rentals and the disappearance of arrears of rents. The latter part of the chapter reviews the evidence and statements given to the Crofter's Commission which visited Orkney in 1888, providing a valuable picture of the thinking and experiences of the smaller tenants on the estate. The commission's decisions led to reductions in rent and served as a reminder that landlord domination on this and other estates was beginning to be eroded. Ironically, this was at a time when the old laird's son had returned to live in Orkney, had rebuilt Graemeshall house and was taking an active part in estate management and the social activities of the parish.

Overall, this book is a very useful study of local agricultural change. Although the author appears to have made thorough use of the estate management papers the reader may find that there are some themes which are largely overlooked. Fishing and the development of the planned village of St Mary's are only fleetingly mentioned and we are not told much about the new farm buildings or field patterns that followed improvement. The book is illustrated by a number of interesting photographs; however, a more detailed map of the estate and some cartographic treatment of the rental statistics would have been helpful. Nevertheless, this publication is most welcome and it is hoped that it might encourage further local and regional research on agrarian change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland.

D G LOCKHART

RICHARD PERREN, *Agriculture in Depression, 1870-1940*, CUP, 1995. vi + 81 pp. £6.25.

For nearly thirty years now the Economic History Society has been commissioning its series of pamphlets in economic and social history. This one by Richard Perren is the first to appear with its new publisher, the Cambridge University Press. These studies are 'intended for students and their teachers', and 'designed to introduce them to fresh topics and to enable them to keep abreast of recent writing and debates'. Perren's contribution on *Agriculture in Depression* will not disappoint. Although it is hardly a fresh topic, nevertheless a great deal of good research has been completed in recent decades. This research may have come in the wake of T W Fletcher's invitation of the early 1960s to view the classic depression of the period 1870-1914 (or more narrowly 1879-96) with different eyes, but it has taken Fletcher's story into new realms of detail and

analysis. Perren has synthesized this research both in the script and in a usefully annotated bibliography, which is equally usefully categorized under subject headings. This was the period when British agriculture had to come of age in an expanding world of competition. It lost its cloak of unnatural protection when the corn laws were repealed in the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century it also lost its natural protection of accessibility. Capital investment, prairie methods, bulk transportation, and general technological change allowed north American grain producers, for example, to overcome production disadvantages and the costs of distance to compete successfully in the British market. The problem of perishability was also overcome through those technical changes which allowed frozen or tinned products also to compete with fresh products relatively successfully. Adapt or perish, specialize and survive became important radical ideas for an otherwise conservative agricultural sector.

Historians all too easily use great moments in history to divide their chronological interests. The Great War has become the great divide between the nineteenth century and modern times. The freshness of Perren's script is to remind us that the fluctuations in prices, incomes and general prosperity of late nineteenth-century British agriculture did not end with the advent of the war. After a brief period of expanded hope for the industry in 1916-21 with a return to protection through price support (at least from 1918 when the Corn Production Act of 1917 began to have some effect), it actually slid into a deeper depression in the 1920s, continuing into the 1930s, when that price support was suddenly removed in 1921. The role of the state, at times neglectful, is particularly well handled and revealed by Perren.

Much more detail has now been added to the story of crisis and survival in British agriculture, and Perren performs an important task by making this story available in an uncluttered way. In short this is a very readable summary of the headlong and near fatal decline of British agriculture in the seventy years after 1870.

MICHAEL TURNER

M A HAVINDEN and E J T COLLINS, eds, *Agriculture in the Industrial State*, Rural History Centre, University of Reading, 1995. iv + 232 pp. £9.75. This volume contains twelve chapters and is divided into three parts. The first part, 'Agricultural production and trade' has six chapters, the second, 'Some results for rural areas', contains three chapters and the final part, 'Effects on governmental policy', contains another three. In addition, there is an introduction by Michael Havinden, who is also the

author of the final chapter in part three and which is really a conclusion drawing together some of the important sub-themes of the whole volume. In their introduction the editors admit they are covering a huge topic and as comprehensive treatment is impossible the contributors have tried to draw attention to key issues. Readers will find that both the positive and negative effects of industrialization on the agricultural sector are covered. The nature of demand for agricultural products by the industrialized countries, and the problems this has created for primary producers in these countries (and in the underdeveloped world) are well known, but they are subjects that still merit further investigation, as this book shows.

In the first chapter Ted Collins charts the changing pattern of declining income elasticity of demand for food in Europe, followed by Louis Ferleger who deals with comparative advantage and crop specialization in the nineteenth century. The chapter on European agricultural productivity and industrialization since 1890 by Patrick O'Brien and Leandro Prados de la Escosura is the only one to have been published before. Their scope and treatment of the subject constitutes a major piece of work, and in some ways provides a core for the whole book. Although the main focus of most articles is Europe, with some reference to the experience of the United States, David Grigg's chapter advances the general perspective taken by O'Brien and Prados de la Escosura by providing a world classification of agricultural systems and their characteristics. Peter Wickens' study of external demand for wool upon Australian and South African sheep farming underlines the contrast between two very different social and production systems. Leos Jelecek deals with some of central Europe by covering the changes in production and techniques in Bohemian agriculture from 1870 to 1945, drawing largely on Czech sources. In part two Michael Thompson informs us about the agricultural sub-structure which he defines as the inputs of services and products. Peter Dewey analyses the decline of the agricultural labour force and Michael Havinden the effects of de-industrialization on rural areas. In the first of the two main chapters in part three John Bowers criticizes European agricultural policy from 1945 to 1986, and Keith Howe brings this story up to date by reviewing recent changes in European agricultural policy.

Most of this book was given as papers at the International Economic History Conference held in Berne in 1986, but the ten year publication delay since then has given the editors the opportunity to include the chapters by Patrick O'Brien and Leandro Prados de la Escosura and by Keith Howe. In all cases authors are returning to subjects where

they have already published so this volume adds to an established body of research. Some of them have taken advantage of the long publication delay to revise their chapters and incorporate some results of the most recent research. Ted Collins has even gone beyond that, to include a projection of income elasticity of demand for food in Europe by the year 2000 of zero, which means by then aggregate demand for food will grow no faster than total population. Seen against this John Bowers' and Keith Howe's studies of the unintended, but generally undesirable, effects of EEC agricultural policy have particular force. This book should make a useful addition to agricultural history libraries and course reading lists and, bearing in mind its low price, one that can be made at a reasonable cost.

RICHARD PERREN

KENNETH BLAXTER and NOEL ROBERTSON, *From Dearth to Plenty: The Modern Revolution in Food Production*, CUP, 1995. xvii + 296 pp. £40.

The late Sir Kenneth Blaxter was one of the more distinguished agricultural scientists of recent years, known especially for his work on the now widely used Metabolisable Energy system for determining the energy requirements of ruminants. At the time of his death he was writing this book. It has been completed by his colleague Noel Robertson. In his preface Blaxter tells us that he was moved to write by a combination of pride in the achievements of the farmers and scientists who have transformed agriculture over the past half century, and anger at the insufficient recognition given to them.

The main part of the book, the preface tells us, 'deals with the discoveries that were made and the people who made them'. It is laid out like an agricultural textbook, with chapters on measurement (mostly concerned with the development of statistical analysis); mechanization; soils, fertilisers and water relationships; weeds, pests and diseases; and plant breeding. Then follows a chapter on changes in crop husbandry systems, covering the development of silage, the introduction of forage maize and oilseed rape – identified here as a new crop, although seventeenth-century farmers might not agree – and the numerous innovations in cereal husbandry. The chapters on animal husbandry follow, as in the conventional textbooks, dealing with the discovery and solution of mineral deficiency problems, animal breeding, animal health, and animal husbandry systems. This is the heroic view of agricultural science, in which the secrets of nature are teased out by the 'selfless work and the inspiration of a relatively few scientists' (p 85). It is written in the style of a textbook which has been careful to note the authors of the seminal papers. Unfortunately the referencing does not

always help to identify these works: we are told (p 71) that 'Many individuals have contributed to our understanding of this phenomenon [cation exchange] but among British workers, Schofield, Beckett and Tinker should be mentioned.' This sentence illustrates two of the problems of this part of the book: the story is told largely, although not exclusively, from a British viewpoint, and only Tinker's work appears among the selected references at the end of the chapter. Neither is the index of much help, being entirely free of personal names.

The impact of agricultural science is discussed at the beginning and end of the book. The first two chapters are concerned with agricultural revolutions past (chapter 1, in which the period 1700-1860 is identified as revolutionary) and present, and especially the years 1936-86. The modern revolution is characterized as one in which land and labour productivity increased markedly. No mention is made of capital productivity, which, considering that it did not increase much, and may have fallen, is perhaps just as well. The authors also analyse gross output, input and incomes at constant prices, and conclude that since net farm income was less in real terms in 1985-7 than in 1935-7, farming had returned to the status quo. This conclusion is hardly justified, given the decrease in the real price of agricultural products. Perhaps it might have been more useful to ask what farm output and income would have been in the absence of technical change and government support.

The final part of the book claims to explain how the science-based revolution happened (mostly by a concise history of UK government funding for agricultural science over the last fifty years), and what should be done as government support for science is withdrawn. In other words, it argues that the agricultural output expansion of the period 1936-86 occurred because agricultural science successfully developed new methods. Its contribution to productivity could 'be judged from the small sample of improved production reported here' (pp 266-7). Thus it is assumed 'that the technological advances reported in part 2 justify the support [to science] already given' (p 252). Farm income support was apparently no more than 'a useful adjunct to science-based enterprise development' (p 266).

It is not easy to determine the readership at which the central core of the book is aimed. Its language is too technical for the general reader, although it would be a useful text on the development of agricultural science for agricultural students. Perhaps its purpose is made clear in the final chapter: it is a plea for continued funding for agricultural research, addressed to the senior civil

servants and politicians who decide such matters. Here Blaxter's pride and anger appear most clearly.

PAUL BRASSLEY

RICARDO ROBLEDÓ, *Economistas y reformadores españoles: la cuestión agraria, 1760-1935*, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, Madrid, no date 146 pp. np.

ALBERTE MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, *Cooperativismo y transformaciones agrarias en Galicia, 1886-1943*, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, Madrid, 1995. 286 pp. np.

Before Spain embarked on the belated process of full-blooded industrialization in the early 1960s, a prosperous agriculture was usually seen as both a necessary condition for more rapid economic expansion and also a guarantee of social stability in a nation prone to rural revolt. Ricardo Robledo's fine study of the long-term contribution of Spanish economists to tackling the perennial 'agrarian question' concentrates on three main phases: the limitations of Enlightened reform during the final years of the *ancien régime*, the creation of a free market in landed property in the nineteenth century together with the rise of agricultural exports, not least wheat, wine and olives, and finally the mounting tensions and ill-fated attempts at agrarian reform during the Second Republic which prefaced the outbreak of civil war in the 1930s. Recent research by agricultural historians south of the Pyrenees places much greater emphasis on the not inconsiderable strides made by Spanish farmers in the first three decades of the present century. Alberte Martín López's detailed study of agricultural change in Galicia at this time, focuses on the Catholic-dominated cooperative movement in north-west Spain and its role in such advances as the redemption of Galicia's notorious leases (*foros*), increased mechanization, and the slow shift from subsistence agriculture to livestock farming.

JOSEPH HARRISON

PETER MICHELSEN, *Vand til Tørstig Jord*, Christian Ejler's Forlag, København, 1995. 160 pp. 240 DKR.

Peter Michelsen, for many years curator of the Open Air Museum at Sorgenfri near Copenhagen, has had a life-long interest in the use of water for irrigation. It began in his home country where irrigation has been used in a number of ways, especially in Jutland. Since his retirement, Michelsen has gathered together his observations from around the world in *Water for a Thirsty Earth*.

The book falls into three parts. The first concentrates on Europe. Perhaps surprisingly for most readers, it looks in detail at irrigation in the Nordic countries. The second part deals with familiar practices in the Mediterranean area. Finally, there is a

review of sample areas from the rest of the world in the treatment of which attention is also paid to the side-effects of large-scale schemes. There are 96 illustrations and an English summary.

W R MEAD

BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Conferences and meetings 1996-7

Saturday 7 December 1996

at the Institute of Historical Research, London WC1

Farming in Adversity: Patterns of Response

Dr Phillip Schofield (Oxford) • Dr Elizabeth Griffiths (Kent) • Professor Hugh Clout (UCL)

Dr Alun Howkins (University of Sussex) and Dr Linda Merricks (University of Surrey)

Details from Dr John Broad, History Dept., University of North London, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB (E.mail J.Broad@unl.ac.uk)

Saturday 8 February 1997 at the University of Lancaster

in conjunction with the Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster

Pastoral Farming in the Northern Uplands

Mary Atkin (Kendal) • Dr Richard Hoyle (University of Central Lancashire) •

Dr Angus Winchester (University of Lancaster) • Dr Mary Higham (Clitheroe) •

Dr Charles Searle (WEA Cumbria)

Details from the CNWRS, Fylde College, University of Lancaster, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4YN (E.mail Christine.Wilkinson@Lancaster.ac.uk)

7-9 April 1997

The society's Annual Conference will be held at the University of Portsmouth

Details will be available in January 1997 from Dr John Chapman, Dept. of Geography, University of Portsmouth, Lion Terrace, Portsmouth, PO1 3HE (E.mail chapmanj@geog.port.ac.uk)