

Book Reviews

P E MCGOVERN, S J FLEMING and S H KATZ, eds, *The Origins and the Ancient History of Wine*, Gordon and Breach, Luxenburg, 1995. xxiii + 409 pp. Illus. £55.

This impressive volume is an extremely valuable addition to the growing body of literature on intoxicants and stimulants in past societies.¹ It comprises twenty chapters packed with botanical, archaeo-chemical, philological, historical, epigraphic and archaeological information on viticulture and wine production and consumption in the Near East and the Mediterranean. The volume contains the proceedings of a conference held at Robert Mondavi Winery in the Napa Valley, California. Californian wineries, together with the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania funded the conference and the publication, which is the eleventh volume in a series on Food and Nutrition in History and Anthropology.

The volume opens with ancient philological sources on wine and a survey of ancient and modern perceptions of wine and wine drinking, followed by a series of six articles on the domestication of grapevine, the enology of ancient wines, and the detection of wine remains using a combination of archaeological and chemical techniques, with a number of case studies ranging from fourth millennium BC Iran (site of Godin Tepe), to Roman southern France and Byzantine Egypt. In recent years, organic residue analysis has been a quite successful and promising technique in investigating the content of ancient vessels and the function of processing installations, although the technique is more problematic when dealing with alcohol, as in this case. The discovery of what has been claimed as the earliest find of wine remains from Godin Tepe (on the basis of the presence of tartaric acid – which is specific to grapes and can be found only in small quantities in few other plants – and of the archaeological context) was the incidence which led to the symposium in the first place.

The second and third part of the book deals with historical and archaeological studies from Mesopotamia, Assyria, Anatolia, the Levant, Egypt and the Maghreb, and Greece. Through the detailed interrogation of a extremely diverse body of data, ranging from carbonized seeds, to iconography, pottery vessels for storage, transport and drinking,

wine making installations and ancient scripts, the authors reconstruct the exciting history of viticulture and wine making and drinking, which reveals more than an important aspect of the agricultural history: wine production and consumption (more than the production and consumption of other food items) was always a social practice connected not with what is usually called subsistence but with the dialectics of social interaction, primarily due to its intoxicating properties. As most of the studies in this book indicate, wine and wine drinking had elite connotations and was entangled with the dynamics of power, not only in environmental contexts which inhibited viticulture or made it extremely difficult, but even in areas with optimal ecological conditions such as the Aegean.

It is thus unfortunate that a number of contributors reproduce a static view on the history of viticulture and wine drinking, by subscribing to the old and discredited notion of the Mediterranean Triad which assumes a continuous and unbroken line of systematic viticulture and wine drinking, as a natural attribute of the particular geographical and cultural context. It has been repeatedly shown that the history of viticulture and wine drinking is a dynamic one with extreme fluctuations as a response to varied social processes, including elite drinking customs and etiquette, conspicuous consumption, and competitive drinking ceremonies.² Furthermore, it is unfortunate that there is very little discussion in the volume (with one or two exceptions) on those and other fascinating practices which link an agricultural commodity with issues of identity, domination and resistance, and notions of embodiment, among others. Nevertheless, this volume, in addition to its value as a rich source of information, demonstrates both the merits and the further need for integrated, interdisciplinary research on one of the most multi-dimensional and multivocal phenomena of the human experience, eating and drinking.

YANNIS HAMILAKIS

DAVID HALL, *The Open Fields of Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Record Society, volume 38, 1995, xii + 378 pp. £20 + £3 p&cp.

For twenty-five years David Hall has walked his way around Northamptonshire mapping the par-

¹ See, for example, the other recent volume on wine, O Murray and M Tecusan, eds, *In Vitis Veritas*, 1995; for a recent survey on intoxicants and stimulants see J Goodman, P E Lovejoy, and A Sherratt, eds, *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, 1995.

² See, for example, Y Hamilakis, 'Strategies for survival and strategies for domination: wine, oil and "social complexity" in Bronze Age Crete,' unpublished PhD thesis, Sheffield University, 1995; Y Hamilakis, 'Wine oil and the dialectics of power in Bronze Age Crete', *Oxford Jnl Archaeol*, 15, 1996, pp 1–32.

ishes, recording ridge and furrow and archaeological sites, and then spending many hours in the record office working through the deeds and other 'copious surviving records' in order to reconstruct an agrarian economy largely swept away by enclosure. Northamptonshire was the county of parliamentary enclosure, but the loss of an earlier way of life has not deterred Hall, who has patiently reconstructed the pre-enclosure county and its agricultural systems. It is a remarkable achievement, and the methodology – discussed in chapter 3 and again in the extended study of Ashby St Ledgers in chapter 10 – reveals just how complex it has all been.

The book has two parts: a series of essays on various topics, and a detailed gazetteer in which each parish and township is described with information about the fields, the agricultural system, the demesne and enclosure. The first part of the book is a veritable barn-full of information for anyone interested in open fields and their operation. There are detailed discussions of field orders and farming methods, the one reflecting the other in the need to maintain vigilance in enforcing the regulations if a mixed farming system on scattered holdings was to be maintained in an area short of adequate pasture. Two, three and multiple field systems are discussed: many townships had a two-field system in the thirteenth century, but a slow change across the county meant that most areas had three fields before the eighteenth century. There are chapters on demesnes, on the medieval farm, and on land uses and resources in the county, with a particularly interesting section on woodland, as well as some cautionary and helpful notes on identifying and dating ridge and furrow. And then, metaphorically gritting his teeth, David Hall launches into the question to which all readers will be awaiting an answer, the origin of open fields. 'Land holding in strips', he concludes, 'dates from the eighth or ninth century in the Midland region' (p 138). There cannot, perhaps, be a more definitive resolution to a long running debate.

Although David Hall is too modest to make much of it, there is also an important contribution to another debate in agricultural history. In an appendix, he lists 209 parishes containing 274 townships of which 37 had no open field data. In no fewer than 100 of the 274 Hall dates enclosure to the period prior to 1750. Thus in the county of parliamentary enclosure, more than one-third of the sample had been enclosed prior to the beginning of the movement in c 1760. It is no surprise to find that almost half of Northamptonshire enclosures date from the eighteenth century, but the data reminds us of the importance of the pre-parliamentary era.

This is one of those rare books in which the dust

jacket does not lie: it may be predominantly about Northamptonshire, but it certainly has 'significance well beyond the boundaries of a single county'. David Hall's book makes a major contribution to the study of the open fields based not on a handful of examples, but on long and careful study of one county, and through the methodology he describes we can all see the possibilities for work in other areas.

J V BECKETT

H S A FOX, ed, *Seasonal Settlement. Papers presented to a meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group*, University of Leicester, Vaughan Papers in Adult Education, No 39, 1996, iv + 69 pp. £4.

This collection of five short papers, with an introductory essay on 'Transhumance and Seasonal Settlement' by the editor, touches on a subject of great importance in English history. For some continental countries, the literature relating to transhumant settlement in particular is extensive, and for Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, where the custom itself survived until recent times, it is also considerable. For most parts of England, by contrast, it is as yet scanty or non-existent, and some of those at the conference seem to have doubted whether anything like the European pattern ever existed. Dr Fox disposes of these doubts with more patience, and certainly more learning, than this reviewer would have displayed. There can now be no better place to begin than his introduction. Its twenty-three pages are packed with perceptive hints and observations, supplemented by a wealth of bibliographical references – British and European – in the end-notes. By comparison the four following papers may seem slight; but Christopher Dyer (on Cotswold sheepcotes) and Peter Herring (on Cornish commons and *havos* place-names) discuss major topics which they explore more fully elsewhere.

The probability is that seasonal origins underlie a great many places in this country. Of course there was nothing here resembling the 'greater transhumance' of Mediterranean countries, where stock had to be driven hundreds of miles at certain periods to alternative pastures. But the pastoral implications of numerous English place-name elements, such as 'stead' and 'wick', the seasonal character of others, such as 'scale' and *denn*, and the humble status of many more, such as 'booth', 'cote', and *scydd* ('shed, hovel'), will often be found to point to it when followed up individually. They are frequently embedded in ancient common land, for example, and surrounded by other telling names and topographical features. The difficulty arises in finding specific local proof of their origins in medieval sources and in the belief that seasonal occupation

rarely survived the Norman Conquest. While that must be true in some areas, Professor Dyer and Dr Fox show that it was by no means always the case. Some forms of transhumance continued well into the early-modern era, and if medievalists looked beyond 1550, they might find quite substantial evidence of it. A very detailed description of a solitary sheepcote on the Marlborough Downs, occupied for three months in the year by the shepherd and his two grown-up sons at lambing-time, actually survives from the early years of the present century.

Until recent generations there were many other forms of seasonal settlement in England. Only the last paper deals with these: Dr Fox's study of the late-medieval 'cellar-settlements' of the south Devon coast, which subsequently gave birth to fishing-hamlets like Shaldon, Hallsands, Starcross, and Dawlish Strand. In a fascinating piece of reconstruction, he discusses their origins, occupations, buildings, morphology, links with inland places, and evolution into permanent villages. This essay raises many thoughts about other fishing-hamlets round the south and east coasts, in such counties as Hampshire, Norfolk, Yorkshire, Northumberland, and Fife, where 'cellar'-names sometimes still exist; about the ultimate, fugitive origins of what seem to be wholly new seventeenth-century towns, like Deal and Whitstable; and indeed about the distinctive fishing-quarters once appendant to ancient boroughs like Hastings and Folkestone. Behind all these places we find one seemingly universal factor: they developed on patches of foreshore, common, or waste. Common-land origins, moreover, often lie behind other seasonally-occupied sites not discussed in these pages: of potters, charcoalburners, quarrymen, tilemakers, brickmakers, limeburners, ashburners, clogmakers, chair-bodgers, pegmakers, and some types of industrial hamlet. Those of us who can recall the last days of such migrant activities will surely hope this conference report encourages further research, both in the medieval period and after. There is a world of interest here awaiting discovery.

ALAN EVERITT

N M HERBERT, ed, *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of the County of Gloucester, V*, OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 1996. xviii + 440 pp. Maps; illus. £70.

The latest instalment of the Gloucestershire VCH deals with the Forest of Dean, the distinctive area between the rivers Severn and Wye, a region with an unusual history and where numerous ancient customs and rights have survived into the twentieth century. At its heart is the large area of the former royal forest, comprising some 24,000 acres; this was

not permanently inhabited until the eighteenth century and was not included in any civil or ecclesiastical parishes until the mid-nineteenth century. During the Middle Ages the restrictive forest law was enforced throughout the forest and the surrounding parishes, from the royal castle overlooking the Wye at St Briavels. Later the forest became a valuable source of shipbuilding timber, particularly oak for the Royal Navy, while 'free miners' acquired customary rights to work the rich deposits of iron ore and coal. Throughout the eighteenth century invasion by squatters eventually created over twenty new villages and hamlets together with the new town of Cinderford, supported by rapid industrial expansion with deep coal and iron mines, foundries, quarries and, later, chemical works. Remote from established villages and neglected by the Church of England, the rough, wild nature of the squatters' settlements was only partially civilised by the efforts of the numerous nonconformist chapels; although the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable programme of Anglican church building in the forest. The character of the inhabitants, conditioned by their defiant struggles to preserve their rights, the isolated nature of the industrial settlements and the distinctive landscape of the region, continue to set it apart from the rest of Gloucestershire.

This large volume traces the history of the original extra-parochial forest area as well as that of the fourteen surrounding parishes. It includes accounts of the extensive parish of Newland with its fine medieval church, Flaxley which was the site of a Cistercian abbey, the port of Lydney on the Severn, the medieval market town of Mitcheldean and the town of Coleford which obtained a charter for its market and fairs in 1661. Naturally much attention is given to the administration of the royal forest, the working of the Verderers' Court, the exploitation of the timber and the remarkable development of industry. Agricultural historians will be interested in the account of the long tradition of common rights and pannage within the forest, the fierce defence of these customs, the creation of numerous 'assarts' throughout the Middle Ages and the reclamation of rich alluvial lands along the Severn. Woodland management included a programme of large-scale planting carried out during Charles II's reign, and the replanting of large areas of former agricultural land at Staunton with timber trees by the Crown Commissioners during the 1820s. Attempts to change the customs and management of the forest led to frequent disputes and violent confrontations with the commoners, including the so-called 'Skimmington' riots of 1631.

As with other recent volumes, there are numerous well-chosen illustrations giving a flavour of the

varied social and industrial background, together with useful maps. For an adequate understanding of complex areas such as this, maps are of great assistance to the reader, and even more would have been useful. Particularly welcome is a long final section on the royal forest, including its boundaries, administration, courts and society, as well as descriptions of each of the major industries which have had such a dramatic impact upon the landscape and society of the forest. The volume will provide an invaluable source of information and reference for anyone interested in customary rights, unusually widespread licence for mining and squatters' settlements, the protracted struggle of determined inhabitants to preserve their ancient privileges, and in the development of rural industries.

There are numerous references to trade on the rivers Severn and Wye, providing raw materials such as iron ore, coal, charcoal, cattle, hides, timber and bark for the trade with Bristol and further afield by ships, barges or 'trows' from ports such as Lydney and Newnham. The hamlet of Gatcombe on the Severn was formerly an important centre of trade and shipbuilding, ships and barges were also built at Lydney, where a yard was established for building frigates in the seventeenth century, and on the Wye at Brockweir and Redbrook. Redbrook was also the site of one of the most important copper works in England, and later a large tinplate works was established there. In addition to the normal task of providing authoritative and comprehensive references to the relevant documentary sources, the editors of this volume have been faced with an unusually large number of records relating to the royal forest, as well as with many documents from the archives of local landowners, notably those of the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle and of the Beauforts of Badminton. Notwithstanding the formidable amount of material, they have produced an excellent account of this remarkable area which still retains many of its distinctive characteristics.

J H BETTEY

C M WOOLGAR, ed, *Household Accounts from Medieval England*, Parts 1 and 2, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series XVII and XVIII, British Academy and OUP, 1992 and 1993. xvi + 812 pp. 3 plates. Part 1, £45; Part 2, £40.

These meticulously compiled volumes are the results of over a decade's worth of research. One can well understand that because, first of all, Dr Woolgar had to comb through local and national archives for surviving accounts relating to management of households belonging to the nobility, gentry and clergy. This can have been no easy task, for household accounts are not always separately recognized by compilers of catalogues; they are

sometimes listed indiscriminately with manorial accounts which (because they could provide evidence of title) survive in much larger numbers than their domestic cousins and usually swamp them in any collection. The surviving household accounts are listed in an appendix to the second of these volumes, an appendix which will now always be the standard point of departure for social and economic historians who wish to use this rich type of document. Second, Dr Woolgar has provided full transcriptions of a sample of accounts, avoiding the more fragmentary documents which have survived (in part) because of re-use of their parchment for other purposes (a mirror case in one instance) and avoiding those very late medieval accounts which have little formal arrangement, being not unlike what you or I might jot down on the back of an envelope in order to eke out a salary. The task of transcription must have been arduous (not that it shows); the accounts are full of obscure terms, for items of clothing for example, or for the fish which was consumed in huge quantities in all households (the beautiful index lists a great number of fish-related words according to species or method of preservation or type of culinary preparation). Third, there is a detailed and definitive introduction which includes discussions of parallel material from the continent.

The earliest household accounts date from the 1180s when many estates were switching from the old inelastic system of manorial food rents to more sophisticated arrangements for supplying the central household. By the end of the thirteenth century two types of household account were especially common: 'diet' accounts in which the basis of accounting was a record of consumption day by day (*per dietas*, whence 'diet' has come to mean 'food') and accounts arranged according to commodity or household department. At this time and during the fourteenth century accounts were becoming more elaborate; attempts were made to estimate weekly expenditure, presumably in an effort to rationalize and control, and there was a greater elaboration of commodities and departments. The close of the Middle Ages was marked by accounts which were less formed in arrangement and style; this trend was associated with a move away from conspicuous public living of which the pomp of formal accounting and auditing was a part.

These volumes contain material of great interest far beyond the activities which went on in grand medieval households: funerals, hospitality, almsgiving, building works, hunting, travel – and the rations of bread given to the countess of Warwick's bear in 1420. For agrarian historians household accounts are rich sources for all kinds of topics, but perhaps especially for regional varieties in diet and

for markets. By using Dr Woolgar's index we can tell that rye was used in the bakery of the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield when he stayed at Beaudesert, Warwickshire (1461), by Richard Turberville for his household at Sampford Peverell in east Devon (1358), by the bishop of Carlisle (1485) and by an unidentified household near Boroughbridge, Yorkshire (late thirteenth century). We therefore begin to see a geography of rye consumption, of course only imperfectly because the accounts printed by Dr Woolgar do not provide a complete coverage of the country. Of all the households with accounts printed here, cider was consumed only in the establishment of the Turbervilles at Sampford Peverell, Devon; the Welsh borders and the south-east, two other notable medieval cider producing regions, are not well represented in this collection. The most localized food of all was the gannet, consumed only in the household of Lord John Dynham at remote Hartland in north Devon. In 1372 he purchased twenty-seven, using six as a gift to a local landed family and the rest at his own table. Hartland looks out across the sea to Lundy where gannets are mentioned as early as the thirteenth century, because of their food value; today Witherby's *Handbook of British Birds* lists Lundy as the only English gannet colony to struggle into the twentieth century. Information in the accounts on purchases at markets is very good though it is not comprehensive because generally place of purchase is only specified where extra expenses were incurred in transport; in any case most medieval households were spared the current national obsession with 'shopping' because many items could be provided from the estate. For those items which had to be bought a hierarchy of journeys to markets is well illustrated by the account of Robert Waterton of Methley near Leeds (1416). Sea-water fish were sought as far afield as Boston; rather humdrum items such as wax and soap came from Hull; Wakefield provided a craftsman to repair a vase of gold; a bottlemaker was found at Oulton; Malmsey and rumney wine came from London. The account does not specify where 2d was spent in purchase of the equally necessary *arsnyk pro distrucione ratonum*.

These brief comments will serve to give a faint taste of the great wealth of detail contained in medieval household accounts. Christopher Woolgar's two volumes provide, for household accounts, the same kind of definitive introduction which Paul Harvey's *Manorial Records of Cuxham* gave for manorial accounts. Perhaps one other class of medieval rural account needs now to be explored in equal depth, namely the detailed listings of tithe payers and their produce which some landlords

maintained in order to account for the annual profits of their spiritualities. But will there be time?

HAROLD FOX

DAVID BUISSET, ed, *Estate Maps in the Old and New Worlds*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1996. xii + 184 pp. 8 colour plates; 99 figs. £43.95.

The starting-point for this set of six well illustrated and referenced essays on the history of estate mapping was the 1988 series of Kenneth Nebenzahl jr lectures in the History of Cartography, presented at the Newberry Library, Chicago. The editor sets out a theme for the volume, to relate the need for the precise recording of boundaries and structures by means of maps to changes in economy and society. He contributes not only an introductory definition of the estate map, and a concluding note, but two substantial essays on estate maps in the Old and New Worlds. Their content is intended, he notes in his preface, to fill perceived gaps in the coverage of the original lectures. The resulting collection is still uneven, for despite the value of Buisseret's surveys, the rest of the contributions leave important regions insufficiently explored, notably mainland America. The authors are P D A Harvey: 'English estate maps: their early history and their use as historical evidence', Sarah Bendall: 'Estate maps of an English county: Cambridgeshire 1600-1836', and, with two inter-related essays, B W Higman on maps of Jamaica made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their making and their interpretation.

Buisseret's chapter on Europe is an uneven survey. It contains a valuable fifteen-page section on the development of the German estate map, but other important regions receive less attention. The Netherlands are noted in a single page, with one colour plate, and France is even more briefly dismissed on the grounds that estate maps concentrated on mines and forests rather than on agricultural land. The inclusion, also in colour, of the plan of housing in a village near Lille, by Christophe Verlet, is a hint that there is more to say, and, unmentioned in this chapter, the use made of estate plans by the *Inventaire Général*, in their finely-illustrated regional volumes on the French iron industry, demonstrates a rich tradition of cartography at estate level.

The English material is discussed in two chapters. The sixteenth-century part of Harvey's elegantly constructed general essay on English estate maps draws on his other publications, but the later material is fresh and welcome. Of particular interest is the discussion of the rôle of the surveyor and his increasing need for cartographic skills. The chapter is amply illustrated, the monochrome reproduction

of co
shari
the p
ing c
the f
the s
notal
Fairb
corre
cent
date
estate
Sarah
choo
by th
lege.
grow
eigh
cont
estate
of i
Tres
Cloth
Th
by B
Indie
to Se
runs
Miss
of th
two
cons
the c
and
surv
wher
virgi
The
lette
and
the
surv
Libr
and
Fair
it is
incl
wor
Car

MA
A
(
Wit
of

of coloured maps being generally successful, but sharing with the rest of the volume the problem of the publisher's choice of an off-white paper, reducing clarity and contrast. Harvey's coverage ends in the first half of the eighteenth century, earlier than the span examined by the other authors. Hence the notable surviving collection of papers left by the Fairbanks of Sheffield, which comprise field books, correspondence and accounts as well as maps for a century from 1750, falls outside its scope. This end-date also excludes surveys of open fields made for estates as a preliminary to parliamentary enclosure. Sarah Bendall, in her essay on Cambridgeshire, chooses a county rich in maps, and characterized by the institutional landowner, the Cambridge college. Her end-date, 1836, allows emphasis on the growth of map production at the end of the eighteenth century. The stress in both of these contributions is on agricultural aspects of the rural estate, without consideration of the development of urban mapping, as exemplified by Ralph Treswell's surveys of the London properties of the Clothworkers and of Christ's Hospital.

The transatlantic half of the book is introduced by Buisseret in a summary of mapping in the West Indies and on the mainland. Some emphasis is given to South Carolina, within a mainland survey which runs rapidly from the St Lawrence to the Lower Mississippi, with a glance at the unrealised potential of the rich collections of maps in Mexico. Higman's two chapters on the estate maps of Jamaica are of considerable interest, deriving from research into the economic history of the island's trades in sugar and coffee. Jamaica is particularly fortunate in the survival of maps from the early eighteenth century, when plantations were becoming less separated by virgin land, making accurate definition imperative. The concerns outlined here are reminiscent of the letters written by the Fullers, Sussex ironmasters and absentee owners of Jamaica plantations, about the problems of their boundaries and the need for survey. The archive in the Jamaican National Library is remarkable for the survival of field books and draft maps, apparently comparable with the Fairbank material. Valuable as these two essays are, it is disappointing that the volume could not have included more detailed examination of mainland work, notably the surveys of estates in South Carolina.

DAVID CROSSLEY

MARK OVERTON, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850*, CUP, 1996. xiv + 258 pp. £12.95 (pbk).

With every passing year the existence or otherwise of the agricultural revolution seems to become

more rather than less of a problem. To Lord Ernle and his generation it was obviously something which took place alongside the industrial revolution, but such simplistic associations have been questioned and debated over the past thirty years. Kerridge, E L Jones, and others argued a case most recently taken up by Gregory Clark, for a revolution which was more or less over and done with by 1770. So complex did the discussion become that a decade ago Joan Thirsk suggested abandoning the term altogether, while G E Mingay having – with J D Chambers – retained the older chronology in his 1966 textbook, wrote in his editorial introduction to volume 6 of the *Agrarian History* (1989) that the classical agricultural revolution 'has long been abandoned in favour of a much longer time span'. To aid this longer span, in 1968 F M L Thompson invented a second agricultural revolution (post-1830), while in 1992 R C Allen asserted that 'there were two agricultural revolutions in English history – the yeomen's and the landlords', one in the seventeenth and the other in the eighteenth centuries. Most recently, as readers of this journal will be aware, Mark Overton has sought to put the agricultural revolution back into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His new book is an extended discussion of these ideas.

Overton's view is built up from the work he has been doing on East Anglia over many years: significant and sustained increases in output and productivity brought changes which in the eighteenth century enabled England to escape the Malthusian trap, while changes in marketing, landholding, field systems, farm sizes, property rights, enclosure and social relations, served to transform the agrarian economy on to a capitalist and highly productive basis. These developments, he argues, were nothing short of an agricultural revolution. In turn they led directly to the emergence of a distinctly English rural class structure of landlord, tenant farmer and agricultural labourer.

The key issues are tackled in chapter 3, in which Overton presents a range of data, some of it derived from his earlier work on inventories, but much of it reworked from other published sources. He argues that 'output increased by some two and a half to three times between 1700 and 1850', and even though the sown area doubled the majority of the increase was a result of changes in land productivity. In addition, labour productivity doubled between 1700 and 1850, while 'the key development was the integration of grass and grain and the ability to support a higher density of livestock while simultaneously extending the arable area' (p 131). This occurred initially through convertible husbandry, and then through rotations based on the principle of the Norfolk four-course: it made more efficient

use of nitrogen for arable production and increased the output of fodder per acre. The impact of these changes was enhanced because of related developments including the increased commercialization reflected in the development of the market, the gradual elimination of customary tenures and their replacement by leasehold farms, and the disappearance of common rights.

This book should restir the agricultural revolution pot. By placing it firmly into the period 1750–1850, Overton implicitly questions the findings of R. C. Allen, Gregory Clark, and many other recent writers. There is, therefore, likely to be much discussion of his figures, particularly table 3.11 (table 1 in his *Review* article and annoyingly unsourced in the book), which purports to show rising output and productivity. Much of the data is far from ideal, but where he does have comparable figures the index of growth seems to indicate that the pace of growth was not necessarily faster in the second half of the eighteenth century than in the first half, but that it was distinctly quicker in the period 1800–50. This would not be entirely out of line with other assessments in recent years, and whether the data is really firm enough to carry his argument must be open to debate.

The agricultural revolution was originally conceived in terms of qualitative changes in the agrarian economy c 1750 – c 1850. A generation of agricultural historians working with both qualitative and quantitative material have argued the case for a revolution which was effectively over by 1770. Overton has redirected attention to the original concept, now with quantitative support and using a sophisticated analytical framework well beyond the level of a textbook (as this book is labelled). Not everyone will agree with him, but he has at least produced a statistical framework for debating one of the key issues raised by Chambers and Mingay thirty years ago, and often forgotten since: the remarkable success of English farmers in feeding a population which grew from under 6 million in 1750 to nearly 18 million in 1851 without resort to massive imports which would have slowed down the industrial revolution, and without much by way of new machinery. This may not end the debate about the agricultural revolution, but it will at least give future participants a new base from which to begin.

J V BECKETT

ALAN ARMSTRONG, ed, *The Economy of Kent 1640–1914*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Kent County Council, 1995. xiv + 318 pp. 25 tables; 8 figs; 29 plates. £35. This book is the third in a series of volumes which constitute the Kent History Project; when com-

pleted these will provide a comprehensive history of the county from the earliest times to the present day. The *Economy of Kent 1640–1914* has eight chapters: 'Population' (Mary Dobson 1640–1831 and Alan Armstrong 1831–1914), 'Agriculture' (Gordon Mingay), 'Industry' (David Ormrod 1640–1800 and James Preston 1800–1914), 'Road, rail and cross-channel ferry' (Theo Barker), 'Kent and the sea' (Robin Craig and John Whyman), 'The towns' (Christopher Chalklin), 'Labour' (Tom Richardson), and Alan Armstrong draws together some conclusions on 'Wealth and Welfare in Victorian and Edwardian Kent'. As Joan Thirsk points out in her foreword, one of the strengths of the book is that a number of the contributors, who will be well known to readers of this *Review*, have lived and taught in the county and many of the essays are written with an appreciation of broad issues in English economic history as a whole.

As is to be expected, agrarian themes often permeate the individual chapters given that, as David Ormrod observes, in Kent before about 1800 'most manufacturing activity operated under the shadow of agriculture'. The two early Kentish industrial specialisms both had strong agricultural linkages; cordwood for charcoal made up 50–70 per cent of the total costs of Wealden wrought iron production while Wealden clothiers utilized farm profits to maintain their financial independence. Agriculture and other primary activities dominated the labour market in Kent for much of the period covered by this book at the end of which agricultural labourers, at 11.5 per cent of the workforce, were still the largest occupational group in the county.

Kent, of course, has traditionally been known as the 'garden of England' but in his chapter on agriculture Gordon Mingay stresses the diverse nature of Kentish farming which reflects the distinctive settlement history of the county, the marked variations in soil types, and differing degrees of accessibility. The popular Kentish image of orchards and hop gardens is misleading because, as Alan Everitt has also emphasized, the county contains substantial tracts of historically unproductive land, whether it be heath, downland, marsh, or clay. Mingay examines the complexities of Kentish agricultural history although more might have been said about the dynamics of locational change in agricultural specialisation. In posing the question as to whether Kent experienced an 'agricultural revolution' Mingay stresses the uneven temporal and spatial pace of agricultural development within the county, for while there were districts which were agriculturally advanced at an early date there were others, such as the more remote parts of the Weald, which were renowned for their backwardness throughout much of the nineteenth century. The

railways helped to improve market accessibility, but it is worth noting that according to contemporary accounts visitors who traversed the central part of the county on their way to Canterbury for the 1860 RASE show – a scene from which makes an attractive jacket illustration – found little to impress them agriculturally.

Overall this is a valuable book which deserves to reach a wider audience than those with an immediate interest in the county of Kent. While it is suggestive of many research themes which require further investigation at the local scale, it will need to be read with the other volumes to appreciate the full richness of Kentish historical experience. The final volume in the series is planned as *Kent in the Twentieth Century*, and in the conclusion to his chapter Gordon Mingay looks forward to the massive agricultural changes which have taken place in the county since the 1950s. The agricultural history of the recent past deserves detailed scholarly appraisal and in Kent this will no doubt demonstrate how the county has come to be what has now been termed 'the garden centre of England'.

NICHOLAS GODDARD

MELVIN HUMPHREYS, *The Crisis of Community: Montgomeryshire, 1680–1815*, University of Wales Press, 1996. xv + 293 pp. £25.

The past two decades have witnessed a quantum increase in the outflow of works dealing with the economic, social, cultural and political history of Wales at regional, county and local levels. The present volume represents a further contribution to the *Studies in Welsh History* series, and its elegantly-written and logically-argued pages are a credit both to Dr Humphreys himself and the scholarship of the series editors. Buoyed up by Humphreys' admirable prose, the reader is carried on a lengthy, but never tedious, journey through a century of Montgomeryshire history in which he is exposed to the broad vista of county life. The approach is a conventional one in which chapters on the rural community, land ownership and management are succeeded by discussions of education, belief systems, politics and rural administration, leading to a final and highly-detailed consideration of crime and order in Montgomeryshire society.

To a considerable extent we are on a familiar path, previously trodden by David Howell and Phillip Jenkins, among several others. Here are the embattled and indebted gentry, increasingly absent from their estates, allegedly distanced from their tenants by their abandonment of traditional Welsh values in favour of anglicised cultural influences, and harassed by the *angst* of male line failure. As the corrupt and spiritually-impoverished Established Church succumbed to the growing influence of

Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, and the political and administrative oligarchy of the great gentry gave way to increasing middle-class involvement, the attractions of landownership in Wales progressively diminished and by the end of the eighteenth century many estates were left under the control of the reviled land agent. And here too, are the agricultural tenants, continuing in much the same vein as they had done for many generations, against a background of steadily increasing rents, wages and poor rates which had effectively eroded their standard of living by 1800. As uplands enclosure heralded the loss of customary rights and the engrossment of farms eliminated the lower rungs of the farming ladder, an increasingly literate and educated farming community, we are told, smouldered with resentment, especially where they were obliged to pay tithe to what they perceived as an alien church. This applied equally in proto-industrialized textile towns like Llanidloes and Newtown where the libertarian and democratic notions embodied in nonconformity spurred on challenges to oligarchy politics and the apparent incompetence of rural administration. Concurrently the poor continued to be poor, and in some cases to get poorer as the eighteenth century drew to a close. As the local gentry approached their task as magistrates with little more than tepid enthusiasm (as they did their role in the county militia), the poor were exposed to the tender ministrations of the farmers and other 'middle class' members of the community. The former, as resentful and grudging payers of escalating poor rates, had little interest in ameliorating the lot of their less fortunate brothers, and developed a progressively contemptuous attitude towards poverty. Thus the House of Industry became a means of reducing 'idleness and profligacy'; a squalid and foetid institution whose very brutishness deterred people from wanting to go into it. Among the impoverished, petty pilfering and livestock and food theft were almost institutional, and might even have been seen as a means of supplementing a living rather than any manifestations of criminality. In a deeply inquisitive community where everyone knew their neighbour's business, many minor crimes against property were either ignored or dealt with in an extra-judicial manner through the mechanism of private settlement or more rough-and-ready means. Accordingly, unpopular individuals who were beyond the embrace of communal loyalty could anticipate a harsh response to any malfeasance. Except in the cases of violence and assault, Dr Humphreys tells us, people only turned to the law courts '... when the normal channels of neighbourly harmony and community convention failed to resolve a problem'. The drink-induced violence of some of the gentry, the terrible (but under-

standable?) crime of infanticide among the poor, and other serious offences attracted the attention of the courts of Quarters and Sessions. Yet even here, despite the expansion in the number of capital crimes, many managed to avoid the gallows as juries contrived to return 'partial' verdicts and circuit judges were prepared to exercise clemency on the receipt of character witnesses.

It is extremely difficult, in the course of a brief review, to do justice to Dr Humphreys comprehensive coverage of a very broad subject, and leaving aside the somewhat lame and lacklustre conclusion, his book is a fine example of the genre. It does, however, give rise to a number of points for discussion which in themselves reveal the paucity of work in Wales respecting the *minutiae* of rural life and, at the same time exposes our lack of clarity in interpreting some of the more significant issues. Typically, in discussing industrial and textile activity in the Welshpool area, Dr Humphreys draws attention to the enforced use of the packhorse as a consequence of poor local road conditions, thereby reminding us both of David Hey's study of the packhorse in Derbyshire and Yorkshire, and of the fact that detailed investigation may well reveal that this humble animal represented rather more than a footnote in the economic history of Wales. But this is a minor issue relative to other questions which cry out for the attention of the local historian. How, for example, was rural change in lowland Montgomeryshire influenced by developments in the adjacent English counties? Is it possible to quantify the degree to which greater dependency on day labour pauperized a growing sector of Welsh society – if, indeed day labour did lead to pauperization? According to Dr Humphreys the fact that many farmers worked alongside their men, and themselves undertook seasonal labour on larger farms, 'were levelling influences, tending to fuse the farming community and prevent the emergence of a caste system'. I have my doubts about this rather comfortable notion which, as David Pretty has shown, certainly did not apply later in the following century. The myth of a classless peasant society united in its dislike of the gentry, does not square with the attitudes of farmers towards the poor, with their venal approach to the grain market in times of scarcity, or their concern to conduct aspects of their social activities well apart from their labour forces. This question demands close attention, perhaps involving a study of the social origins of Welsh farmers rather along the lines of that undertaken by A W Ashby in the 1920s.

Whether Montgomeryshire was a true microcosm of Wales as Dr Humphreys suggests, is also a matter for debate. Certainly the experience of the

uplands closely reflected that of the northern and western counties, although it is difficult to see much parallel between the rich and fertile vales of the Severn, the Dyfi and elsewhere with, for example, the lowlands of Cardiganshire. Soil, climatic and geological conditions apart, a casual comparison of the scale and quality of surviving vernacular architecture bespeaks a very different agricultural world. Moreover, the comparative lack of proto-industrialized communities in the west would have had important implications for social, cultural and economic life.

Meanwhile was there, as the book's title implies, a genuine 'Crisis of Community' in eighteenth-century Wales? To the poor at the fringes of society, forced by economic circumstances to quit their family hearths for America, the sense of crisis was no doubt acute. It is unlikely, however, that the gentry and the larger and middling farmers were touched by crisis in any direct manner. The alleged abandonment of traditional paternalistic values by the gentry, much-condemned in Welsh historiography, was to some extent a reaction to changing economic conditions; a response to an increasingly mercantile and capitalist oriented approach to land management. Upland enclosure (which, in any case rarely resulted in the loss of cottages built by encroachers), the insistence on 'good husbandry' clauses in tenancy agreements, and the move towards annual tenancies, could be interpreted as evidence for rational estate management with just as much justification as interpretations based upon such notions as 'exploitation' and 'dispossession', if and when these occurred. In any case, one man's dispossession is another man's opportunity, and the engrossing of farms on many Welsh estates provided all manner of openings for energetic and competent tenants, allowing them to survive the vicissitudes of changing market fortunes. Evidence from many parts of Wales suggests that where the landlord was an absentee he quite reasonably expected a decent return from his property, but he did not (with a few significant exceptions) employ his agent as a Himmleresque instrument of terror bent on exacting the last penny from the downtrodden tenantry. As Dr Humphreys shows, the Montgomeryshire gentry, many exasperated by the continual munificence expected of the residential squire, pursued the easier course of non-residence and thereby reneged upon some of the duties expected of them. Nevertheless, as a whole they retained a profound and continuing interest in their Welsh properties and the myth of indifference, largely fostered by nineteenth-century radical polemicists, can no longer properly be sustained.

R J MOORE-COLYER

JOHN BECKETT, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles, Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921*, Manchester UP, 1994. xi+308 pp. 8 figs, 12 tables, 21 plates. £45; £14.99 (pbk).

John Beckett has presented us here with a masterly study of the social and financial history of a great aristocratic house. In some ways, the story of the Grenvilles that he tells was a typical one in the annals of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aristocracy: a rise to greatness during the eighteenth century, followed by varied fortunes in the nineteenth. Very few of the twenty-odd dukedoms of Victorian England were old-established titles, such as those of Norfolk or Northumberland: most were eighteenth- or nineteenth-century creations. In other ways, however, the Grenville story was a quite exceptional one. Nearly all Victorian aristocrats were indebted to some degree, but none to the extent of the second Duke of Buckingham (1797-1862), who came closer than any other to bringing about the total and permanent financial ruin of his house, very nearly making the Grenvilles the first landless dukes.

Beckett begins his story, however, not with the Grenvilles, but with a remarkable fourth baronet, Sir Richard Temple of Stowe (1675-1749) who in 1697 inherited a very modest estate with an income of about £2200 pa, and 'outgoings accounting for 87 per cent of this sum' (p 17). Temple was, however, a very able man who rose through state service, mainly military and diplomatic, becoming Baron Cobham in 1715, and Viscount Cobham in 1718. He amassed a considerable fortune, and married a wife who brought with her a portion of £20,000, but he invested his fortune in stocks, bonds, and shares rather than in land. Cobham's marriage was childless, but he broke the entail of his estate, and succeeded in settling all of his wealth upon his favourite sister, Hester, who had married Richard Grenville of Wotton (1678-1727) in 1710. Hester's eldest son, also called Richard (1711-1779) therefore inherited both the Temple and the Grenville estates, some 7000 acres, and a large fortune, which he laid out upon judicious land purchases, and the building of a magnificent stately home at Stowe. Groomed by Cobham, he was also an astute politician, becoming Earl Temple in 1752, but he too died childless, and his greatly extended estates passed to the son of his eldest brother, George Grenville (1712-1770) who had served as Prime Minister between 1763 and 1765. It was his son, also called George (1753-1813) who inherited the properties and the title in 1779. He was created Marquis of Buckingham in 1784. Throughout the middle years of the eighteenth century, the Grenvilles had been very active politically, working

in close alliance with the Pitts. The first Marquis undoubtedly benefited from his political connections, for he was able to secure for himself a number of lucrative government offices, as well as promotion within the peerage. In 1775 he married Mary Elizabeth Nugent, a substantial heiress, through whom the Grenvilles inherited estates in Ireland, Cornwall, and Essex. In 1796 the eldest son of the first marquess, later the first duke, married Anna Elizabeth Brydges, heiress of the third Duke of Chandos, who brought to the family her estates in Hampshire, Middlesex, and Somerset.

At the time of the death of the first Marquis in 1813, the family fortunes were at their peak. Debt levels were negligible, and the Grenvilles owned some 56,000 acres of land in England and Ireland, returning a rental of £64,635 in 1815, and £67,126 by 1831 (pp 133-4), in addition to a considerable fortune in stocks. The family had risen through political activity, the securing of lucrative government offices, extremely judicious marriages, the fortunes of inheritance, and wise investments in stocks and shares. Unlike the dukes of Bridgewater, Sutherland, or Devonshire, however, they owed no part of their income to the industrial development of their estates. Richard Grenville (1776-1839), who became the first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos in 1822, continued to buy land, but he was a profligate, and the rot of the family fortunes had already set in by 1827, with the duke facing debts of £300,000. From 1833 to 1839 the administration of the estates was placed into the hands of trustees. If ever a family needed the succession of a 'saving son', it was the Grenvilles in 1839. But the second duke proved to be even more profligate than his father, borrowing and mortgaging recklessly, and even persuading his son and heir in 1845 to allow a breaking of the entail of the estates, so that he could mortgage even more. At its peak in 1847 the Grenville debt stood at very nearly £1.5 million, something like the entire freehold value of all the Grenville lands. Debt servicing and other outgoings were costing £83,000 a year, while the family income was only £61,000 a year (p 229). In 1847 trustees insisted that control of the estates should pass to the second duke's heir, the future third duke. Beckett comments sadly on the second duke:

By 1848 he had quarrelled with his daughter, separated from his wife, and was refusing to communicate with his son. He treated them alike with contempt, conjuring up in his own mind a conspiracy in which they were determined to destroy him. So obsessed did he become, that by 1848 it is hard to believe that he was either rational or sane. He was also bankrupt.

It would be very interesting to know just how the second duke had managed to dissipate so vast a fortune, but he kept no accounts, and as Beckett admits, 'The evidence is simply not good enough to draw decisive conclusions about Buckingham's difficulties'. At any rate, in 1848 the sales began: almost everything had to go, including the contents of Stowe House, which were auctioned in that year. However, by highly judicious financial management, the third duke was able to save some 10,000 acres of land, and Stowe House itself. By 1883 he was enjoying a rental of £18,000 a year, and had even bought back for Stowe some of the treasures that had been sold from it in 1848. Incredibly, he died in 1889 entirely out of debt. He had been 'the safe duke', who had saved the family from total disaster. As such he stood in the same tradition as the seventh Duke of Bedford, the eighth Duke of Devonshire, and the third Duke of Sutherland who had also retrieved their families' fortunes, albeit from a far less parlous state than those of the Grenvilles. Ironically, however, the third duke died without male heirs, and so the dukedom died with him. Stowe and its estates passed on to other hands, and in 1921 they were sold as part of that great land transfer which took place after the First World War. In 1923 Stowe was opened as the public school that still stands on the site, preserving one of the greatest of aristocratic homes for posterity.

In the long debate over the nature and significance of aristocratic indebtedness that has gone on since the 1950s, the story of the Grenvilles lends more support to the views of David Spring than to those of David Cannadine or Michael Thompson. We need more aristocratic studies of this quality.

ROSS WORDIE

M J DAUNTON, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1700-1850*, OUP, 1995. xvi + 620 pp. £45 (hbk); £14.99 (pbk).

'The starting-point of my survey', writes Martin Daunton in the opening pages of this book, 'is the performance of the economy, but the aim has been to integrate social and political history into the analysis.' It is a brave aim: putting the people back into economic history is no mean feat after many years in which economic and social history have been pulled in different directions. But Daunton largely succeeds in a substantial, well written text book which reveals his splendid grasp and understanding of the period and subject matter. The book has six main sections, covering agriculture and rural society, industry and urban society, 'Integrating the economy' (including transport and banking), poverty, prosperity and population, and public policy.

Readers of this journal will be mainly interested in the first part of the book, and in Daunton's understanding of the role of agriculture in the economy, although they will need also to dip into later chapters for his discussion of marketing, wages, poverty and other 'rural' matters. But these chapters offer us an opportunity to see how a 'mainstream' economic historian might now understand the agricultural history of the period. What is immediately clear is that Daunton has digested R C Allen's recent work, and his substantial chapters on agricultural production, landownership, and enclosure, take an — on the whole — firmly Allenesque line. Thus the agricultural revolution is seen to have been more or less complete by 1770, the rise of the large estate at the expense of the small owner altered the balance within rural society, and whatever the social implications of enclosure, it made little difference to agricultural output. Daunton concludes that 'the major changes in agricultural productivity occurred in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, within a framework of relatively small-scale yeoman farming, through their greater care of the soil and intensification of the work-rate on the farm' (p 57).

In adopting this line of argument and juxtaposing it with the concerns of the classical economists that population towards the end of the eighteenth century was outrunning food supply. Daunton not only shows how far we have travelled from the Chambers and Mingay approach thirty years ago, but like Allen and others who argue in the same manner, he struggles to explain how a rapidly rising population was adequately fed, at least before the introduction of artificials in the 1830s, which he recognizes as giving agriculture a significant boost in the nineteenth century. In this respect I wonder if he has given sufficient weight to the recent work of Overton and Campbell, which is mentioned in his further reading but not really developed in the text.

My other reservation with this book concerns its size. Daunton writes in the acknowledgements that he originally intended to write one book covering 1700-1914, but changed direction as his manuscript grew. The result, for a self-proclaimed textbook, is a very large tome. How attractive its densely printed pages will prove to undergraduates, particularly in these days of potboiling modules, must be more doubtful. OUP have kept the paperback price to £15, and the book is certainly worth placing on student booklists, but maybe the new climate requires us to rethink what we recommend and how we package 'textbooks'? My sense, after using the book with undergraduates, was that this was a little too advanced for the levels that first and second year undergraduates can now expect to achieve.

Finally, for the name of a former vice-chancellor of Oxford University to be spelt in different ways on adjacent lines not once but twice (pp 66, 87) does not suggest this book was very carefully copy edited.

J V BECKETT

TOM WILLIAMSON, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, Alan Sutton: Stroud, 1995. 182 pp. Illus. £18.99.

Garden and landscape historians have tended to treat their subject as a branch of art history and have viewed changes largely as stylistic sequences governed by landscape artists or designers and supported by contemporary literary or philosophical comment. This book endeavours to investigate the development of eighteenth-century parks and gardens in the broader context of social and economic change. It questions the acceptance of some literary influences and cautions us about too readily applying political labels – Whig or Tory – to architecture or landscapes early in the eighteenth century.

The writer emphasizes the necessity of viewing the design of a house and its garden and park as an interrelated process in order to understand the 'polite' patrons who not only lived in them but used them to impress and entertain. The parks in particular were not always exclusive. The enlightened landowner allowed the 'polite' public in to view his taste and achievements. His own tenants were also allowed limited entry to village fetes and the agricultural and horticultural shows that had their origins there. The landowner often blurred the visual boundaries of his park by including some grazing land for sheep and cattle. Conversely, park-land tree-planting spilled over into the surrounding countryside. Some landowners built public roads through their parks. Nor was the old order and symmetry of the baroque garden quickly cleared away in the eighteenth century. Vestiges remained beyond the 1760s and the writer qualifies the old, generalised view that 'Capability' Brown was a universal destroyer of old gardens.

Whilst the 'polite' recreations of hunting and shooting are dealt with, little is said about the rapidly growing interest in angling. Many gentlemen were developing the rivers that ran through their estates by constructing weirs and waterfalls, fish ladders and fishing bridges. The water bailiff on some estates was as important as the gamekeeper and many landlords allowed the 'polite' public to purchase licences to fish.

The book is appropriately illustrated and well argued on the whole. There are few errors of fact, though the author misunderstands the purpose of the willow-tree fountain at Chatsworth. A 'merry conceit', indeed it was, but this does not mean that

it 'showered unsuspecting visitors with water'. Like the Bosquet du Marais (1672) at Versailles, which inspired it, the tree functioned as a weeping willow and visitors were unable to pass beneath it.

The book's style is marred by a few clichés and the occasional jargonese of sociologists. So we read that 'the late eighteenth century was a period in which the social map was being redrawn' and in which there was 'upward mobility' and 'markers' for the historian to observe. What does the writer mean by 'the picturesque package'? The index is largely concerned with places and names (including those referred to in footnotes). However, there are omissions and it is less adequate on topics and themes; for instance, 'grass' and 'turf' are omitted even though part of a chapter deals with these features in the landscape of the park.

The book is a timely check to the hitherto narrow approach of conventional landscape and garden histories. It crosses boundaries of historical study and leaves many interesting assertions to be weighed in the light of further and closer research.

J T BRIGHTON

NORMAN SCARFE, *Innocent Espionage: The la Rochefoucauld Brothers' Tour of England in 1785*, Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge, 1995. 292 pp. Illus. £25.

The history of tourism and tourist writing is currently fashionable. Observations by past travellers are invaluable to historians for the varied insights and brief flashes that illuminate all aspects of life. When they are the insights of foreign travellers they bring the added dimensions of fresh eyes and ears and comparisons with experiences in their native land.

This book gives us a view of rural, urban and industrial England as seen by two young, enlightened French aristocrats and their tutor. Their descriptions of cities as varied as London, Bath and Bristol and towns like Liverpool, Sheffield and Derby are valuable, especially when interpolated with comparisons with Paris and other French towns. Occasionally, one feels that the spectacles of these anglophiles are rather too rose-tinted. They admired, like Voltaire, Montesquieu and others, the parliamentary system, commerce, agriculture, landscape, industry and technology. The fact that the travellers were foreign and, in the eyes of watchful English factory owners, did not pose the threat of industrial espionage, enabled them to see and describe machinery and processes forbidden to most British enquirers. Their freedom to view and make notes accounts for the book's title.

The Frenchmen's comments on the revolution taking place in English agriculture are more sketchy and far less revealing than those of their Suffolk

friend, Arthur Young, both in England and in their own land. Their tour of England did not take them north of Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield and omitted the important agricultural counties of Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

Contemporary illustrations are generally well chosen to illustrate particular observations in the text and the footnotes are useful. There are a few editorial oversights when the Frenchmen are in error; for instance, the duke of Devonshire was not the owner of Matlock (p 49). Conversely, the Frenchmen were not wrong in mentioning slates as a product of north Derbyshire (p 51); a number of quarries on the gritstone and grit-shale outcrops produced them. Nevertheless, the record of the tour is informative and entertaining. There are flashes of unconscious amusement as when the two young beaux fail to mention Chesterfield's renowned crooked spire, having gone to the parish church to view the ladies.

The book has a good introduction and epilogue and a fairly full index.

J T BRIGHTON

NORMAN FOX, *Berkshire to Botany Bay; The 1830 Labourers' Revolt in Berkshire*. Littlefield Publishing, Newbury, nd. 162 pp. nps.

Mr Fox's sympathetic interest in the Swing revolt in his part of Berkshire was stimulated by the reading of the Hammonds' classic *Village Labourer* in the 1940s, and confirmed in 1969 by Hobsbawm's and Rudé's now standard study. Thereafter Fox has examined many of the sources, including central government records, among them the Home Office and Treasury Solicitor's papers, together with some of the more localised documentation. He has also discovered details of a dozen or so of the transportees' subsequent life in exile from Australian archives. One or two are shown to have prospered there, but there is no substantive evidence that more than a couple ever returned to English shores.

Fox focuses on one epicentre of the revolt, a geographically very small area, south-west of Newbury. As might be expected, the local sources throw up additional important information about these 'victims of Whiggery' at the notorious Special Commissions of Assize which tried Swing rioters, 138 of them from Berkshire. For example, the only man hanged in the county, for the common act of demanding cash contributions from the crowd's targets, 'Captain' William Smith, and one of his co-accused, had not only been in trouble before, but had been bound over to keep the peace nine years earlier, towards the very same gamekeeper and an estate bailiff who they were convicted of robbing in 1830. Wives of transportees, only two of whom are known to be reunited with their

husbands, are subsequently encountered in receipt of public assistance, bearing bastards, and – after 1835 – incarcerated in New Poor-Law Bastilles.

However, Fox's original arguments are unconvincing. He provides no hard evidence in support of his claim that locally-produced threshing machines, costing a mere £8 10s, first advertised in 1829, were quickly and widely purchased by farmers in his district in explanation of why there were so many of the hated decimators of winter-time employment for Swing to target here within a year. Fox's assertion that the men of Kintbury were selected mercilessly for prosecution owing to the influence of one local major landowner and Whig MP for the county, the octogenarian Whig Charles Dundas, loyally supportive of his party's new prime minister's determination to prove himself as fierce an upholder of law and order as his Tory predecessor, the Duke of Wellington, is based on circumstantial evidence rather than a detailed analysis of the Home Office's precise legal strategy. Fox correctly insists that many skilled service-sector workers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights and other artisans, were leading rioters, and rightly attributes this to the adverse impact of technology on their living standards, but this qualification to Swing's status as the 'last labourers' revolt' is well established in recent historiography.

Finally, professional historians, not least this reviewer, ought to welcome contributions from enthusiasts exploring the minutiae of revolts from an intensely localized perspective, who are now freed from the worst restrictions imposed by the traditional rigours of commercial and academic publishers. But the opportunities deriving from desk-top technology should not perhaps preclude some advice from experienced editors.

ROGER WELLS

MATTHEW CRAGOE, *An Anglican Aristocracy; The Moral Economy of the Landed Estate in Carmarthenshire, 1832-1895*, Oxford Historical Monographs, Clarendon Press, 1996. 280 pp. £40.

As many of us have long suspected, the landowning gentry and aristocracy of Victorian Wales played a far more significant role in shaping contemporary life than much of the modern historiography would suggest. In this revisionist work Matthew Cragoe sets the landed classes within their real context and in so doing adds to the growing corpus of studies which criticize the rather tired 'them and us' model of later nineteenth-century rural Wales. As he reviews the role of the landowner in estate management, farming, local administration, politics and the Established Church, he constantly exposes the flaws in the conventional view of a countryside seething

with discontent as a nonconformist Welsh-speaking people squared up to their Anglican, anglicized English-speaking masters. Whereas isolated cases can be found to substantiate this view – originally elaborated for political reasons by contemporary radical polemicists – it is, as a general model, grossly simplistic. Indeed, despite tensions over game preservation, the hostilities of the 'Tithe War', and the vicious campaign of the radical press, 'The farming classes of Wales stolidly refused to be agitated on issues relating to their relationship with their landlords throughout the century'. As Thomas Gee and his followers found when tenants refused to contribute towards the establishment of the Land League in Wales in the 1880s, farmers were not prepared to upset the carefully balanced duties and entitlements embodied in the 'moral economy' of the estate.

Within the general framework of the 'moral economy' argues Dr Cragoe, the aristocracy effectively discharged their traditional paternalistic function consonant with their concept of Christian duty. If they devoted less time to their local administration duties as the century wore on, they accepted without question their individual role as leaders of society and guardians of the material world in which all had to live. Dr Cragoe finds common cause with Prys Morgan in questioning the frequently articulated view that the aristocracy had deserted their native language and reneged upon their earlier function as guardians of the Welsh cultural tradition. While it is undoubtedly true that, as with other social groups throughout Wales, fewer members of the landed classes spoke the Welsh language than had been the case a century previously, the fact remained that they continued actively to support antiquarian activity, the *eisteddfodau* and other manifestations of indigenous culture. Concurrently they were prepared to subscribe generously to the building of schools and chapels and, as JPs, to acquiesce to the licensing of meeting houses, actions which would no doubt find favour with dissenting freeholders and enfranchised tenants.

In the main, of course, the landed gentry were staunch churchmen and as such played an important part in the physical and spiritual reforms of the Established Church in the middle and later decades of the nineteenth century. The unreformed Church, plagued by pluralism, absenteeism, incompetent clergy and physical dilapidation, proved an easy prey for radical polemicists opposed to church rates, burial rituals and religious education policy. In 1851, a mere 20 per cent of worshippers attended an Anglican church, but within fifty years, the reforming zeal of Connop Thirlwall and William Basil Jones as successive bishops of St David's had

so boosted attendance that the Church had become once again the largest single religious body in Wales. As pluralism and non-residence declined, and appropriately-trained clergy from St David's College, Lampeter, were presented to livings, the church emerged from its eighteenth century stupor to become a major spiritual force. As grants from Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were supplemented by gentry contributions, some 827 new churches were built in the Principality between 1831 and 1900, while others were extensively restored. The Carmarthenshire landowners, in common with their colleagues elsewhere, were sometimes less than critical in their choice of appointments to livings, yet they gave generously to ecclesiastical building projects – often of increasing architectural elaboration. Interestingly enough, Dr Cragoe reminds us, many members of the Nonconformist fold demonstrated a lingering affection for the Church by contributing handsomely to building ventures, which prompts questions as to the true extent of anti-clericalism and anti-landlordism among this class. If some educated middle class dissenters viewed the Anglican establishment and its gentry supporters with disdain, others, especially among the rural labourers and small farmers, preoccupied with earning a daily crust, were probably indifferent to the polemics emanating from chapel and meeting house.

Throughout much of Dr Cragoe's discourse, sacred cows, if not dismissed to the nether pastures out of sight and sound are, at the very least, hobbled and muzzled. In his admirable discussion of political representation and electoral behaviour in Carmarthenshire, for example, he addresses the thorny question of political coercion, much-invoked in nonconformist anti-landlord rhetoric. How realistic were the assertions of mass evictions of tenants voting against their landlord's interests, put about by the vernacular press? Hardly at all according to Dr Cragoe. Taking as an example the 50,000 acre estate of Lord Cawdor from which it was alleged that several hundreds of recusant tenants had been dismissed following the 1868 election, Cragoe finds that a mere eight had been turned off, and even in some of these cases bad farming, poaching and other misdemeanours were as much the cause of their dismissal as political issues. In any case, the bellicose attitude of dissenting ministers who threatened their flocks with spirited and social ostracism, (if not eternal damnation) were they to cast their votes for the Conservative cause, was just as deserving of the opprobrium of history as landlord coercion. To be fair, as Cragoe concludes, hard and fast evidence of coercion on either side is difficult to establish, and more local studies will be required before the jury can reach an unequivocal verdict

on this particular issue. As far as the aristocracy were concerned, however, it is probably reasonable to assume that few would have been prepared to risk the communal hostility following a run of evictions, besides which, in view of the shortage of capital-rich tenants to take up vacant farms, wholesale dismissals would hardly serve an estate's best interests.

Although some might argue against Dr Cragoe's claim that the Welsh aristocracy 'provided almost all the initiative and capital for agricultural improvements', he demonstrates convincingly that in Carmarthenshire at least they attended assiduously to their estate management duties. Faced with a generally undercapitalised tenantry whose 'peasant' mentality favoured the hoarding rather than investment of profits, and whose social attitudes underpinned the notion that status within the community rather than economic efficiency should shape their farming activities, this was no mean task. To an essentially resident landed gentry (only 10 per cent of the land in Carmarthenshire entered in the 'New Domesday' was owned by non-residents), ensuring family succession to tenancies and thus cementing the 'moral economy' of the estate was accorded high priority. Thus, despite the replacement of long leases by annual tenancies, there is virtually no Carmarthenshire evidence to substantiate the radical claim that Welsh landowners 'screwed-up' their rents and inevitably let vacant holdings to the highest bidder. In fact, widows and children were granted succession to tenancies largely as a matter of course. Meanwhile, in a perfectly rational manner rents were periodically adjusted according to changing economic circumstances and ultimately reflected the productive potential of the land. It was, of course, fundamentally important that estate offices maintained their holdings in tenantable condition, and Dr Cragoe finds impressive evidence of expenditure on farm rebuilding and land drainage in the mid- and later nineteenth century. How far this impressed the tenantry and created an infrastructure for improved farming is not entirely clear, although the seeming indifference of tenants to the provision by the estate of improved bulls, stallions and ewes for their use, might suggest that beyond improving the capital value of estates such expenditure yielded little reward. Again, the general failure of landlord-inspired agricultural societies is often associated with the recalcitrancy of the farming population rather than with the economic and technical impracticalities of many of the suggestions and plans adumbrated by those bodies. It is instructive, for example, to compare the enthusiasm of Carmarthenshire farmers for the practical dairying demonstrations given by peripatetic lecturers from the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, in the 1890s, with

their generally torpid view of the agricultural societies.

Whereas the gentry's star waned after 1889, their informal prestige in rural society lingered on, and Dr Cragoe is able to conclude that 'For much of the century, the aristocracy were regarded as the legitimate governors of Wales, and the loyalty of the tenantry was not in question'. In a work demonstrating masterly use of a wide variety of sources, Cragoe focuses on a number of pivotal issues in Welsh rural history. If his study is occasionally repetitious, sometimes marred by a rather eccentric approach to Welsh orthography and slipshod proof-reading, it is nevertheless a fine piece of scholarship. In charting a careful course through the somewhat murky waters of later nineteenth century Carmarthenshire, Dr Cragoe's book will prove an important launchpad for further studies of Victorian rural Wales.

R J MOORE-COLYER

NIGEL GOOSE, *Population, Economy and Family Structure in Hertfordshire in 1851: The Berkhamsted Region*, University of Hertfordshire Press, 1996. 414 pp. 10 maps; 16 tables. £14.95 (pbk).

The Hatfield (later, Hertfordshire) Research Resources Project was started in 1989 with a view to establishing a computerized collection of historical data, to supply local schools with documentary teaching packs and a machine readable datasets for project work, and to lay the foundations for a series of publications in Hertfordshire history. These datasets have included, for example, pauper apprenticeships, 1599-1876, and Bastardy and Removal Orders. However the largest single objective has been to computerise data for the 167,298 individuals listed in the 1851 census enumerators' returns for the county. This is the first time that coverage of an entire English county has been attempted. The basic inputting for 1851 is now completed and the outcome is planned to appear in a series of twelve volumes. The book under review marks the first stage of publication, and the greater part of what lies between its covers is 285 pages of census returns, printed largely as set down by the original enumerators, for two market towns (Berkhamsted and Tring) and six villages, together making up the Berkhamsted registration district of west Hertfordshire. This amounts to 11,578 individuals, or 6.9 per cent of the county population. In addition, there is a comprehensive index of names, amounting to another 45 pages. Full credit is given to a small 'volunteer army' of local historians and genealogists who have helped in this work and to the enthusiastic cooperation of the county record office and the local studies library. However, it is clear that much of the leadership and coordination

has been provided from the University of Hertfordshire, particularly by Nigel Goose and his research assistant, Paul Sawtrell.

Whether trawling through these published returns or by accessing the dataset, present and future generations of Hertfordshire local historians and genealogists will have reason to be grateful to those who have undertaken this heroic task. Moreover, a wide range of readers – with no special interest in this county or any intention of mining the voluminous details – will profit considerably from Goose's 67 page introduction and commentary. Although primarily thought of as an expert on seventeenth-century demographic sources, he shows here an impressive command of the literature on nineteenth-century Hertfordshire and also of the existing critical literature on the census enumerators' books. Appropriate comparisons are made with other studies in respect of age and sex distributions, household size and composition and migratory flows, sometimes closely matching existing findings for other communities, sometimes bringing to light significant variations. Agriculture is discussed in some detail, confirming that the district was dominated by substantial arable farms, servantless indeed, but heavy employers of male labour all the same. Most interest, perhaps, attaches to the section on straw-plaiting, a cottage industry still expanding in the mid nineteenth century. In a series of vivid comparisons this activity is shown to be associated with a strikingly high overall female occupational participation rate and with the availability of relatively more work for married women than has been found even in the cotton manufacturing town of Preston, or the Staffordshire Potteries. Straw-plaiting also provided much work for children who as teenagers were more likely to reside at home than were those employed in domestic service, or on the land. These circumstances must have been beneficial in supplementing family income, although the downside was experienced in notorious educational backwardness, with Hertfordshire experiencing the lowest literacy rates in England and Wales in 1840. Today, on the evidence of this book, the position is transformed, for the county's historians are bidding fair to establish Hertfordshire as a pace-setter for others to follow.

W A ARMSTRONG

TREVOR HICKMAN, *The History of Stilton Cheese*, Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1995. 160pp. Illus. £7.99; and AVICE R WILSON, *Forgotten Harvest: The Story of Cheesemaking in Wiltshire*, Avice Wilson, Calne, 1995. 218 pp. Illus. £12.50.

These two attractively presented histories of regional cheeses could be said to be as different 'as chalk from cheese', a phrase that derives from one

of the counties under study, Wiltshire. While both draw on oral evidence and photographs, the study of Stilton cheese is published as part of 'The Best of British in Old Photographs' series and as such is dominated by photographs with text in support of the illustrations. It is clear that much work has been undertaken in preparation of this book and many sources consulted. However, it is unfortunate that in places Hickman's text is presented in a confused manner with some repetition and a strange use of tenses. Conversely, Wilson's book is a scholarly attempt to plot the progress of cheesemaking in Wiltshire using a variety of sources and with supporting academic apparatus such as footnotes, appendices, index and glossary.

Both publications follow a similar format and examine the history and location of cheesemaking, the processes involved, the development of cheese, and the changing fortunes of the industry. However, Wilson also examines closely the role of transport, foreign competition, and the marketing of Wiltshire cheeses while Hickson concentrates more on the towns and villages associated with Stilton.

The actual story of the two cheeses, while ultimately different, has similarities, many of which mirror the fortunes of other regional cheeses. The origins of both cheeses are obscure and their precise locus changed over time. The heyday of Stilton cheese was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as road transport increased and the cheese was served to travellers in the nearby post-houses situated on the Great North Road. When these posthouses declined from the 1840s due to rail transport, the cheese industry was adversely affected.

Cheesemaking had always been an important part of Wiltshire farming. Until the fifteenth century cheese was made from ewe's milk and, therefore, was just as likely to be found in the chalkland areas of southern Wiltshire as on the estates in Avon dale in the northern part of the county. However, after the dissolution of the monasteries and the subsequent sale and division of land, dairy farming increased and by the seventeenth century cheesemaking was largely of cow's milk and was predominately in north Wiltshire. As with the Stilton industry, the heyday for Wiltshire cheese appears to have been in the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth century when the arrival of the railway led to its decline. The routing of the London-Bristol railway (opened 1841) by Brunel through Swindon and Chippenham, the major cheese area, rather than further south outside the main dairy district, resulted in many farmers moving from cheesemaking to exporting liquid milk.

The establishment of cheese factories in the two areas had different effects. In Wiltshire cheesemak-

ing survived because of the commercial dairies but Cheddar cheese was produced rather than Wiltshire cheese which was less suited to factory conditions. As a result, the art of making Wiltshire cheese was almost lost in the twentieth century. However, a glimmer of hope has appeared in the 1990s with a few private enterprises once again producing Wiltshire cheese. While the move to factory production hastened the demise of the Wiltshire, the converse was true for Stilton, where the transition from farmhouse to factory in the Melton Mowbray area ensured not only the survival of the local cheese but its successful expansion. The changing fortunes of the industry in both areas owed much to the enterprise of individuals. For example, in Stilton it was the purchase of inns by Cooper Thornhill in the eighteenth century and the establishment of factories by Henry Morris in the late nineteenth century that helped Stilton to expand and survive. In Wiltshire, at the end of the Victorian period, Charles Maggs opened cheese and butter factories to combat the earlier establishment of the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company (later Nestlé's) which produced condensed milk. However, the Maggs' company, while helping farmers to survive, also hastened the demise of Wiltshire cheese by concentrating on producing butter and Cheddar cheeses from the Wiltshire dairy herds.

Both books provide a fascinating study of the development of regional cheeses which will be of interest to a wide audience. However, both writers tend not to set their particular subject in the broader context of recent research, though Wilson shows some awareness of academic debates on the topic. Wilson's study also examines cheesemaking in the context of the rural economy of Wiltshire and demonstrates how the whole farming system in north Wiltshire was geared towards cheese production. Serious researchers will find more of substance for their own work in *Forgotten Harvest* than in *The History of Stilton Cheese*.

CHRISTINE HALLAS

JAMES SIMPSON, *Spanish Agriculture: the Long Siesta, 1765-1965*, CUP, 1995. xx + 316 pp. £40.

During the final decades of the *ancien régime*, Spain's expanding population, as elsewhere in Europe, began to exert strong pressure on the resources of the ailing nation. Although nineteenth-century Spaniards were spared the worst aspects of famine, traditional agriculture south of the Pyrenees languished under a series of almost insurmountable obstacles to sustained progress. Not until the economic boom of the mid-1960s did the backward Spanish countryside witness a marked increase in

labour productivity which finally permitted sizeable transfers of resources to industry and the service sector. In his well crafted monograph on Spanish agriculture from 1765 to 1965, a period which he amusingly labels 'the long siesta', James Simpson argues that while it is certainly true that Spain's climate, landscape and soils were, in the main, far from favourable to generations of cereal farmers or olive growers, poor natural resources alone cannot explain the painfully slow progress of low-yielding traditional agriculture. Other factors which he singles out for criticism include mistaken government policies, such as ill-considered tariff and price intervention and the lack of support for cooperatives, along with weak urban demand for both farm products and agricultural labour. Export-led growth in such promising areas as wine and olive oil proved difficult to achieve due to product adulteration and the availability of cheap substitutes, while Spain also suffered from a series of technical restrictions on the improvements of yields in dry-farming. Whatever the case, with his detailed knowledge of rural Spain and profound sympathy for Spanish farmers, Simpson forthrightly rejects the hackneyed stereotype of a nation of 'backward' peasants who allocated their resources inefficiently and consistently failed to respond to the golden opportunities presented by expanding world markets.

The book begins with Simpson's own carefully compiled estimates of agricultural output and productivity. His findings contradict the contentious claims of Leandro Prados that Spanish agriculture experienced notable change after the mid-nineteenth century. In common with the Grupo de Estudios de Historia Rural, Simpson demonstrates that the pace of change only began to quicken during the early years of the twentieth century, not least due to advances in livestock farming and horticulture. Unfortunately, most of these hard-won gains were dissipated in the course of the destructive Spanish Civil War and the disastrous autarkic experiments of early Franco regime. Next, he highlights the enormous diversity of Spanish agriculture and distinguishes four main regions. To no one's surprise, labour productivity comes out higher in the North and the Mediterranean than it does in the Interior and Andalusia. Agriculture in the North is shown to be based on tiny farms, with adequate rainfall allowing for labour-intensive systems of mixed husbandry. Even though the population was adequately fed, the low levels of integration in product markets produced pathetically low disposable incomes. Elsewhere, irrigation helped Mediterranean farmers to specialize in high value fruits and vegetables for urban and international markets. In sharp contrast, Andalusia and the Interior, which together

accounted for four-fifths of the cultivated area, were the perennial victims of summer droughts. As a result, the considerable problems facing Spanish farmers are shown to have varied enormously according to regional location.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the increasing demand for foodstuffs was largely met by extending the cultivated surface while utilizing existing technology. This process was aided by changes in property rights which strengthened individual ownership. Transport improvements after 1850, consequent upon construction of the railway network, led to greater market integration and an increase in farm specialization. In general, the extension of the area cultivated and improvements in market integration between 1700 and 1900 allowed farmers not only to feed a population which doubled its size, but also to meet increasing international demand for products such as wine and olive oil. What a pity that the most sharply rising increases in demand after 1880 were for meat and dairy products, in which Spain suffered from comparative disadvantages! Lastly, Simpson stresses, all of these developments took place against a background of little or no improvement in land and labour productivity.

Simpson goes on to show that the commercial success of new irrigation schemes from the late-nineteenth century onwards depended not only on the construction of reservoirs and canals, but also on a wide range of complementary inputs, including new crops, scientifically selected seeds and artificial fertilizers. Despite its long-term potential, the contribution of irrigation remained small before 1936. In consequence, low cereal yields and the limited extension of irrigation meant that improved labour productivity in dry-farming areas could only be achieved through mechanization. Even so, he insists, 'rational' farmers were naturally reluctant to mechanize at a time when they possessed cheap and abundant supplies of labour, not to mention the high cost of draught energy or the weakness of links between the agricultural and industrial sectors. However, after the mid-1950s Spanish agriculture began to alter beyond all recognition. The rural exodus of both agricultural labourers and peasant farmers to the cities and northern Europe created labour shortages in the countryside, leading to an increase in real wages, thus providing the necessary stimulus to mechanization. As a result labour productivity, which increased by about a third between 1900 and 1950, went on to triple over the next two decades. Spanish agriculture, Simpson tells us, although still lagging behind its northern neighbours, was at last emerging from its slumbers.

JOSEPH HARRISON

JANKEN MYRDAL, *Landbon, Ladan och Lagan ...*, Kungl. Skogs-och Lantbruksakademien, Stockholm, 1996. 336 pp. nps.

This volume of the Royal Academy for Forestry and Agriculture is a tribute to Professor Janken Myrdal who occupies Sweden's first chair of agricultural history at the Agricultural University in Ultuna. It contains twenty-two representative contributions of Janken Myrdal's publications in scientific journals. The contributions are arranged under five headings: 1. Historiography, in which Swedish agrarian history is placed in its broader European setting and methodological context; 2. Studies from the Iron Age through to the sixteenth century; 3. Contributions centred on eighteenth and nineteenth century topics; 4. Ethnographic studies; and 5. Aspects of agrarian history in the light of political and social conditions. There is also a full bibliography of Janken Myrdal's publications, 1972-1995. The range of his work is wide. At one level it follows in the tradition of Sigurd Erixon, Gösta Berg and their contemporaries in Denmark, Norway and Finland. There is detailed work on simple farming implements such as the spade and the fork, with special studies (in English) on the hayrake and plunge churn. The tradition emerges again in an entertaining paper on 'Fences, time use and the local community' which is based partly on a number of diaries kept in former times by *bonder* who were encouraged by the local agricultural societies. 'Den dumma bonden' (the dumb peasant, though 'peasant' is scarcely an accurate translation) is anything but dumb in the light of innovations studied by Janken Myrdal and often anything but illiterate. At a higher level, Myrdal follows in the tradition of Gunnar Utterström, one of the pioneers of Swedish agricultural history.

The tribute has been supported by *Kgl. Patriotiska Sällskapet*, an institution which was founded in the middle of the eighteenth century and which did so much in early days to foster agricultural improvement. *Kgl. Skogs-och Lantbruksakademien*, partly in association with other Swedish institutions, has published some forty volumes over the last few years which are major contributions to Swedish agricultural history. They include several written in collaboration with Swedish historical geographers.

W R MEAD

J L VAN ZANDEN, *The Transformation of European Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Netherlands*, VU University Press, Amsterdam, 1994. xii + 199 pp. £30.

Professor Van Zanden's work is becoming increasingly familiar to British agricultural historians but unfortunately far too much of it is still inaccessible because of language barriers. It is important there-

fore that we take notice when one of his major works is translated from Dutch into English. In this case we have his 1985 doctoral thesis, but very much in a revised, as well as translated, form. The main title is a little misleading since this is a case study of the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, though the author does place the agricultural history of the country in wider European and chronological contexts, in comparisons with England/Wales, Belgium, and France. The book is essentially an analytical history of Dutch agriculture employing the basic tools of analysis of modern economic growth – measures of output and productivity at national and regional levels, and where appropriate the closer analysis of factor productivity. The story is about the processes and dynamics of economic change, with also an important final section on some of the social structural changes that modernization involved. The availability of factor sources – principally land and labour – their relative prices, relative terms of trade, and therefore relative substitutability defined the decision making processes of the farmers. Yet it is not a tale which is wholly inward looking because the farmers not only responded to the relative costs and returns of factors at their obvious disposal, they also responded to the market and in general to external stimuli. This included changes in local demand, and responses to the external situation especially once improvements in the transport system allowed a full participation in international markets to occur.

The analysis of these factors and their outcomes identifies several clear adjustments in modern Dutch agriculture relative to its pre-modern origins. By the second half of the nineteenth century unit labour costs relative to land prices had risen, encouraging technological change which was labour saving. An obviously related consequence was a reaction against large farms with large labour bills and therefore the extension of small family farms with limited inputs of non-family labour. Specialization also became a feature as the century progressed and this had a knock-on effect in the more specialist capital inputs which were required. The emphasis therefore was less on agriculture as a kind of neutral method of employing the land, and more on the process of exploiting and maximizing the output from that land. In other words the adjustment was from relatively passive to increasingly more active modes of economic behaviour. As Van Zanden himself puts it in a succinct concluding chapter, 'Agriculture thus became an "extractive industry", in which farmers employed capital and labour to extract food from the land; it also evolved into a kind of process-industry, in which farmers transformed imported inputs into export products'. This may not sound particularly different from what

we encounter in other parts of western Europe, but this short review cannot possibly do justice to the detail involved in Dutch agricultural change nor its regional complexity, especially in the formerly relatively backward eastern part of the country on which Van Zanden places much analytical emphasis. Yet whether the Dutch experience was or was not radically different will have to wait until someone has the courage to write the same book, but without the sub-title.

MICHAEL TURNER

A M MANNION, *Agriculture and Environmental Change: Temporal and Spatial Dimensions*, John Wiley, 1995. x+405 pp. Maps; illus. £17.99.

In this large, densely packed, and heavily illustrated text, Mannion reviews the various sources and manifestations of the environmental impacts of agriculture. The volume begins with a survey of the relationship between agricultural systems and ecosystems, with due emphasis placed on their differing energy requirements. There then follows two historical chapters, the first of which explores the beginnings of agriculture, and the second agriculture in prehistoric and historic times. Approximately ten pages of this chapter cover agricultural change between 1500 and the First World War, with events in the United Kingdom granted rather more than three pages of coverage within this. The book then moves on to consider in turn four different types of agricultural system: transitory agriculture (nomadic pastoralism and shifting cultivation), and arable, pastoral, and mixed farming systems within settled agriculture. Arrangements in different parts of the world are outlined in full. The chapter on mixed farming includes a section on the recent rise of organic farming in the developed world. Successive reviews of the environmental impacts of agriculture in middle and high, and low latitudes cover such topics as biodiversity loss, soil erosion, agricultural impacts on water quality, and desertification. There follows a chapter on new developments, which includes discussions of biotechnology, genetic engineering and global warming. A concluding chapter looks at the challenges for the future, which are many and serious.

This is a book for the bookshelf rather than the bedside table, to be referred to rather than read from cover to cover. Given the book's extraordinary scope, it is perhaps also inevitable that the author should from time to time review texts rather than the original work on which texts are based. It is perhaps also inevitable that, sooner or later, the reader will identify certain topics which appear to have escaped the author's attention. The 'deeper' history of soil erosion, which is probably as old as

arable agriculture itself, is one. The implications of the widespread use in irrigation systems of irreplaceable 'fossil' groundwater, both for the future of irrigation and for sea level, is another. Nevertheless, the book is impressive as a work both of digestion and synthesis. The bibliography of some 1000 or so items is testimony to the magnitude of the author's

task and an invaluable source of reference in itself. Mannion's book will appeal to those agricultural historians who are disinclined to treat narrow specialism of period and place as an invitation to consider everything else an extraneous distraction.

J R WALTON

Notes on Contributors

NESSY ALLEN is Senior Lecturer in the School of Science and Technology Studies at the University of New South Wales. She teaches courses on the history of ancient and modern western cosmology, the history of medical theory and practice, and the social history of science and technology. In 1992 she introduced a course on women and science, which is her main research interest. At present she is involved in a major project concerned with the careers of eminent Australian women scientists who were active during and after the Second World War.

STEPHEN CAUNCE is Lecturer in Economic and Social History in the School of Business and Economic Studies at the University of Leeds, where he has taught since 1989. His PhD research into East Yorkshire farm servants in the twentieth century was published as *Amongst Farm Horses: The Horselads of East Yorkshire*. Later work in museums on the nature of the industrialization process in West Yorkshire has led to a concentration on Yorkshire as the setting for a case study of the causes of economic and social change and modernization over the past four centuries.

STEPHEN HUSSEY is the current Essex County Council Research Fellow in Local History at the University of Essex, Colchester. Having published works on nineteenth-century rural incendiarism and also women's agricultural work between the two world wars, he is now researching and writing a book which examines the rural working-class household in the period from 1918 to 1950.

PHILLIPP SCHOFIELD holds a Wellcome Research Fellowship at the Cambridge Group for the History

of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge, where he is presently investigating the impact of harvest failure upon the late medieval English peasantry. His doctoral thesis, which he undertook at Oxford, was an examination of change on a Westminster Abbey manor during the second half of the fourteenth century; sections of this have been published in *Economic History Review* and elsewhere. In addition to his research project, he is preparing a more general work on the English peasantry in the later Middle Ages.

ANDREW WATKINS was both undergraduate and postgraduate at the University of Birmingham. For his doctoral thesis he studied society and economy in the Forest of Arden in the later Middle Ages, and he has published a number of papers based on this research. His main fields of interest are agrarian, particularly pastoral, and the functions of small towns and their markets within fifteenth-century society. Recently he has started to look at the fifteenth-century agrarian history of Herefordshire. He teaches history at the Coleshill School in Warwickshire.

ROGER WELLS is Reader in History at Christ Church College, Canterbury. He is the author of *Insurrection: the British Experience 1795-1803*, 1983 and *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801*, 1988. More recently he has edited the sociologically-oriented diaries of a Sussex incumbent, *Victorian Village: the Diaries of the Reverend John Coker Egerton of Burwash 1857-1888*, 1992, together with producing many articles on English social history.