

## Book Reviews

CARENZA LEWIS, PATRICK MITCHELL-FOX AND CHRISTOPHER DYER, *Village, Hamlet and Field: changing medieval settlements in central England*, Manchester UP, 1997. x + 255 pp. 2 tabs; 44 figs. £45.

This is an important book which will become essential reading for all those studying the English medieval landscape. It deals with those most intractable of issues, the origins of nucleated villages, and of the 'regular' open field systems with which these were intimately associated. The book is the outcome of a Leverhulme-funded research project which involved, primarily, the systematic mapping of a wide variety of information relating to settlement forms, soil types, past population densities and much else in four east Midland counties, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

The book begins with an excellent introduction, which explains the nature of the problem and succinctly reviews earlier research by historians, archaeologists and geographers. It goes on to describe the landscape and topography of the four counties, before presenting, in chapter three, the available evidence for the development of settlement in the region in the period up to the Norman conquest. Chapter four examines how settlement developed between 1066 and 1500, while chapter five – a model of clarity – examines some of the determinants of medieval settlement forms: population density, wealth, and the intensity of land use; the development of agriculture; changing structures of social and tenurial organization; and the impact of towns and trade. Chapter six examines in some detail the influence of these various factors, especially the role of lordship and the developing power of the state: the section on lordship is particularly subtle and stimulating. The chapter concludes with a forcible rejection of monocausal explanations of variations in settlement patterns: 'Every single agency that could lie behind village nucleation – lords, communities, population growth, the state, urbanization, soils – has been found inadequate *on their own* to account for the observed differences'. The final chapter presents a model which places nucleation, and the genesis of regular open-fields, within the context of broader currents of economic, social and cultural change. Population growth and pressure on resources, coupled with an expansion of the

market economy encouraged settlement nucleation and the laying out of extensive regular open field systems. Conversely, these developments failed to materialize where 'the arable contribution to the economy was less dominant' and where 'the pressure on the land never reached the point at which a transformation of the landscape seemed either necessary or desirable'. Both lords and communities may have been actively involved in landscape change, and replanning was one aspect of wider developments in the definition of property rights and in the growth of organizational structures in the period between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries.

The book is highly readable and full of stimulating ideas. But the principal arguments rest on a number of assumptions, widely shared by landscape historians, which perhaps deserve a more intensive scrutiny. Firstly, this writer for one still has doubts about the use of nineteenth-century maps to reconstruct detailed variations in medieval settlement forms. It is not, for example, entirely clear that a distinction apparent on a map of 1826 between a 'nucleated cluster' and a 'large nucleated cluster' need closely reflect the situation in, say, 1300. This, like the distinction between an 'interrupted row' and a 'small farmstead cluster', could also reflect changes in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Given the evidence quoted from villages like Sulby, where complex earthworks demonstrate that 'several phases of settlement have taken place' (pp. 125–7) before the fourteenth century, it seems odd that such a high level of stability is assumed over the subsequent long centuries.

Secondly, the discussion of settlement makes much of the evidence for 'planning', but the simple assumption that apparent regularity of form necessarily reflects reorganization at a single point in time sits oddly with the sophisticated, multicausal explanations offered for wider changes in the character of settlement. One wonders whether a simple village plan of rectangular tofts strung out along a street need always have originated in this way. Some, surely, could have come into existence through the gradual expansion of a settlement, adding toft to toft along a pre-existing roadway according to some simple customary principles. And as so often in discussions of settlement morphology, we are never told

how regular is regular. Certainly, in many cases regularity is in the eye of the beholder and these writers see it where this one would not. On page 59 we are informed that 'despite the superficially random and sprawling appearance of the settlements [in the Chiltern Hills], closer examination reveals a degree of regularity: the arrangement of interrupted row or common-edge settlements and single farmsteads seems almost standardized, with individual tofts set at regular intervals' (how regular is regular?). By page 219 this view, without further argument, has hardened into 'dispersed settlements ... exhibit some signs of deliberate organization'. They may, but given the momentous changes of the later middle ages it must be doubted whether this would be apparent in the spacing of farmsteads shown on nineteenth-century maps. In other regions of England, certainly, nineteenth century common-edge farms were often the survivors of once more continuous spreads of occupation.

Far more important, however, are two related problems. The main arguments of the book are firmly grounded in the widely shared belief that, because nucleated villages and regular open-field systems normally occurred together, they must have come into existence at the same time. Logically, at least, there is no reason why this should have been so. Villages may have come first, later expansion of cultivation producing complex, intermixed holdings which subsequently needed to be remodelled in 'regular' form. Connected to this is the issue of chronology. It is assumed throughout that nucleation was a long-drawn-out process occurring in the late Saxon and early post-Conquest periods. Outlying settlements were abandoned 'some time after 850, and were replaced by villages' (p. 235). 'By the late eleventh century some nucleated villages were already formed ... In the succeeding two centuries we assume that nucleation was continuing' (p. 238). The entire discussion of causes – development of a national state, proliferation of local lordship, rise of a market economy – is dependent upon such a chronology. Yet, as we learn on page 18, in the county in which the majority of archaeological fieldwork has taken place – Northamptonshire – many outlying farmsteads were abandoned *before* 850. In fact, a good argument can be put forward – and recently has been by Brown and Foard – that nucleation of settlement and the layout of regular open fields were distinct events, in Northamptonshire at least, the latter occurring more than a century after the former. The various influences and pressures on rural communities, discussed with such clarity and skill by Lewis *et al*, may well have led to the regularization of field systems. Whether they can explain settlement nucleation, however, will remain unclear until further fieldwork and

excavation provide us with a clearer picture of the chronology of this process, and of how this may have varied from region to region.

None of the above comments should be taken as criticism of this excellent and intelligent book, but rather as evidence of how stimulated this writer was by its subtle and sophisticated arguments.

TOM WILLIAMSON

AVRIL AND RAYMOND POWELL, eds, *A medieval farming glossary of Latin and English words taken mainly from Essex records, compiled by John L. Fisher*, Essex Record Office Publication 138, 1997. vi + 49 pp. £6.50.

This slim glossary, already well-known in its earlier edition to those who have worked with medieval manorial documents, and, no doubt, especially familiar to those who have worked with Essex material, has been republished by the Essex Record Office. The glossary provides a valuable supplement to more extensive medieval Latin and middle English wordlists and dictionaries; it also purports to deal in agricultural terms, although, even in this revised edition, the specificity of the title *Farming Glossary* is challenged. This does not matter at all, and simply reflects the nature of the work which, as the editors make clear in a brief sketch of the career of Canon Fisher, was the incidental product of many years toiling through Essex records.

As already noted, this is a revised edition; some Latin entries have been omitted whilst others have been added. Ideally, the user of the glossary would want to know a little more: the date of the first appearance of the word in Essex muniments would be valuable, although hardly so vital as to justify the additional effort on the part of the editors, as would some indication of the source. In this latter case, the earlier edition contained, sporadically, some such information but this has not been included here for reasons which the editors make clear in their introductory note. A bibliography has been included, detailing the national and local sources employed in the compilation of the glossary, as well as listing the manorial records in the Essex Record Office from which the bulk of the entries were drawn.

PHILLIPP SCHOFIELD

CHRISTOPHER JESSEL, *The Law of the Manor*, Barry Rose Law Publishers, 1998. xxxiii + 501 pp. £195 hbk; £88 pbk.

Most scholars of English agricultural history at some stage or another have come across terms to do with agricultural customs or tenures – related to the manor or things manorial – which they think they understand, but which they need to check just to be sure. They search high and low for that trusty compendium of English land

law which they always use on these occasions (say once a year), and which is now probably in its twenty-fifth edition. It is a much loved, and well-thumbed text but I doubt whether it has ever been read from cover to cover. Technically it cannot be faulted, but that is because technically it is written for the lawyers and not the agricultural historians. The frustration of trying to find that volume after a year of gathering dust is matched by the frustration of understanding its technical and archaic language when we do find it. What we really need is a reference book which is readable, has all of the technicalities but shorn of their archaic apparatus, and while written mainly for a legal audience does at the same time recognize that occasionally other users need to address manorial customs, tenurial descent, and common right practices, amongst a wide variety of other important land and tenure-based issues. Christopher Jessel's *The Law of the Manor* may just be the book we have been looking for. That is not to say it is without its faults, not least the fact that some of the historiography is remarkably dated or thin. For example, under enclosure (or as the index of the book has it, technically correctly, inclosure), agricultural historians might find it hard to believe that some reference to W E Tate and his *Domesday* is missing. More gravely there is the omission of his *Parish Chest*. And historians of entail will not find their favourite literature footnoted or listed, and yet to have illustrated the system historiographically would have been so valuable to historians and lawyers alike. Nevertheless, setting these and other omissions aside, this book deserves to be widely used by fellow agricultural historians.

At over 500 pages it may seem reasonable to split it into as many as 28 chapters, yes 28! But the typeface is much larger than we normally use and the page margins are very generous. Therefore the chapters are quite short, but in the end, because it is more like a source of reference and explanation than a cover-to-cover story, the format works quite well. The chapters are arranged in five parts. Part I is about the roots of the manor and the manorial system through its origins and operation, and part II explores the different lands and tenurial variations within manors. Part III is the longest and includes a disaggregation of the rights associated with manors, including mineral, common and pasture, and hunting, shooting and fishing rights. It also describes manorial revenues such as rents and fines, and others such as tolls, and finally it explains manorial obligations like homage and fealty. Part IV places the manor within the various settings in which it operated, including village, town, church, estate and royal demesne. Part V is a conclusion containing five chapters. It places everything else in a modern practical context. The volume is topped and

tailed by the usual legal textbook devices of a table of statutes and other laws, a table of cases, an appendix of precedents and a glossary.

The real test of the usefulness of any volume like this is the degree to which the tables, the glossary and the index complement and serve one another in the reader's efforts to find a definition, check its historical context, and look for further details or sources. Most of the time this works, but occasionally it fails. Try looking for parliamentary enclosure for example. It does not appear under 'p' nor cross-referred under 'e' or 'i'. The general act of 1845 appears in the table of statutes, but not the other general acts of 1801 or 1836. Similarly, try looking for enfranchisement of copyholds. There is nothing under 'e', nor a cross-reference under 'c', and while the copyhold acts of the 1840s and 1890s, and the law of property acts of the 1920s are listed, the reader would already have to know of their connection with the enfranchisement process to look them up in the first place. The glossary informs the reader that 'enfranchise' is the verb to free, originally of slaves, then in succession bondsmen, copyholds and long leases. Therefore, eventually the more enquiring reader would get to grips with the copyhold legislation, but really this is rather too laborious a process. Therefore for the agricultural historian, and indeed any other user, the supporting apparatus of list and index which accompanies this book is not as good as we expect, and we would like a fuller index and a cross reference service provided in any subsequent editions. The author's defence that he is a lawyer not a historian, without 'the skills to recover the past' (p. xiii), is no defence at all. But to end on the down beat would not truly reflect the general enthusiasm I have for this book. The complicated tale of the manor is told really quite simply, which lawyers and historians alike will appreciate. In spite of its horrendous price, this will be a well-thumbed book for many years to come.

MICHAEL TURNER

DAVID HEY, ed., *The Oxford companion to Local and Family History*, OUP, 1998. x + 571 pp. £12.99 pbk.

It is not easy to review a book whose contributors read like a virtual 'Who's Who' of English local history studies. It is even more intimidating for the reviewer who owes so much, in a personal sense, to so many of them. For better or worse, about half of the seventeen contributors to *The Oxford companion to Local and Family History* have some part or other to play in my education as a local historian. Perhaps significantly, there is only one out-and-out family historian on the list, albeit an eminent one: Anthony Camp, until recently the director of the Society of Genealogists. This is an issue to which I will return later.

The content of the book is arranged alphabetically, from 'Abbey' to 'Arthur Young'. There is also an appendix of national and local record offices at the back. Including this is either a brave or a foolish act, since such things go so rapidly out of date. Leicestershire Record Office, for example, moved from the listed address some years ago and no attempt has been made to update the information for the new paperback edition.

Indeed, one omission in this section exemplifies the basic difficulty with such a publication. Anthony Camp's item on civil registration outlines the system very clearly (although, again, the date of the book's original publication shows: he refers to 'St. Catherine's House' when all such records have now moved to the Family Records Centre at Myddleton Place). However, the reader will search in vain for the address of either record office in the list of 'national record offices' at the back: surely an academic historian's error?

The 'family history' of the title has really been grafted onto a volume designed for local history researchers, with an inevitable bias in favour of the particular interests of the specialist contributors: 'agricultural history' gets the best part of five full pages; the historiography of local and regional history in England gets around four pages. The signed contributions of Charles Phythian-Adams on popular culture, Harold Fox on landscape history and Margaret Gelling on place names average about seven sides each. In contrast, the census gets only a couple of sides and wills get only one. I would not send the novice family historian to look in this book: there are much better guides to the basic sources available.

However, a newcomer to local history studies or a family historian seeking a good starting point for further research will find *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* invaluable. Not least, it makes much more important and scholarly work accessible to the non-specialist and this surely has to be a good thing. One is tempted to remark that it does not hurt academic historians, either, to have to reduce their specialist areas of study to just a few hundred words written for the general reader. Here, all the contributors have performed sterling feats of brevity and clarity. Every alphabetic entry, however brief, also carries excellent bibliographical details for further study and this feature alone will make the book useful to amateurs and professionals alike.

As a way of introducing students to the very best scholarship in an increasingly popular area of study, the paperback edition of David Hey's volume should certainly have a place on the bookshelf of every local history researcher.

SIMON PAWLEY

T. P. HUDSON, ed., *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of the county of Sussex, V(i), Arundel Rape (south-western part) including Arundel*, OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 1997. xxii + 279 pp. 14 maps; 57 illus. £70.

This volume is the eleventh to be published of the Victoria history of the county of Sussex, and it deals with the south-western part of the rape of Arundel. For the historic county of Sussex, this leaves volumes V (2-4) covering the rest of the rape of Arundel, and volume VIII covering the rape of Pevensey still to be published. In practice, volume V(i) covers the hundred of Avisford, located west of the river Arun and lying mostly on the fertile coastal plain of West Sussex, together with the borough of Arundel. The latter was the only substantial town in the hundred and owed its origins to its creation as a late Anglo-Saxon burh, in succession to nearby Burpham. In fact Arundel was even more important immediately following the Norman conquest since it was the head of a feudal honour which also included what was later in the thirteenth century to become the separate rape of Chichester.

Historically much of the area covered by this volume consisted of highly regarded arable land on the dip-slope of the South Downs and on the overlying Eocene deposits of the flat coastal plain. And where the Downs were cut through by the south-flowing river Arun there was rich brookland, as also alongside the numerous tiny streams (rifes) connecting either to the coast or to the originally wide Arun estuary. Rough pastures were primarily confined to the downland tops. It was an area of open fields and strong manorial control on the lower slopes, especially in the south. In the north there was more woodland, together with large amounts of medieval parkland. Arundel Great Park had all the medieval accoutrements of pale, deer and deerleaps, gates and oak timber, together with swine pannage and cattle agistments before it was transformed into a large farm in the eighteenth century.

Having introduced the reader briefly to the rape of Arundel, the south-western part then forms the subject matter. The arrangement of the volume is much the same as for older volumes, except that topographical and environmental history, together with economic and social history play a far greater role than in earlier volumes, with a more reduced wordage allocated to the familial descents so beloved of an earlier generation of VCH editors. And to help the reader through the entry for each parish there are now very clear sub-headings to indicate matter such as 'landscape history', 'settlement', 'roads' etc. And although such sub-headings are relatively standard throughout, there are other more particular ones which remind us of the more recent history of the

area, such as 'Felpham as a seaside resort', and which informs us that this small coastal village, referred to by William Blake as 'the sweetest spot on earth', became a resort in its own right for a genteel clientele from the middle of the eighteenth century.

For the agricultural historian there is much of interest in this volume. Over one-third of the text is devoted to the history of the town of Arundel, but the rest deals thoroughly with the rural parishes lying to the south and along the coastal stretch of Avisford hundred. In each case we have an account of their topography and settlement patterns, medieval field systems and their early-modern enclosures, which were executed in this area by agreement and through exchanges of strips. The three open fields of Arundel itself, for example, were enclosed by 1636. There are also accounts of other features of related interest, such as the wealden outliers of the Stoke estate which were first mentioned in 975, or the rabbit warren at South Stoke which operated from the 1490s to 1787. An intriguing mid-nineteenth century development came with the arrival from Holkham (Norfolk) of John Sparks at Yapton. In 1856 he established an agricultural engineering firm which hired out threshing machines and ploughing machines in this overtly arable district.

In the twentieth century the area has also witnessed the growth and decline of an extensive market gardening industry. The favourable local climate and the advent of railway linkages are advanced to account for the growth of the industry, together with the expertise developed within several local families such as the Marshalls from the 1880s. However, the industry has been troubled since the 1970s, and although the contraction in activities (and diversification) is noted at Barnham and Yapton, no explanations are advanced. Instead, a steadily advancing phenomenon in the area covered by this volume, and one well described, is that of urban expansion along the coast. The village of Felpham was enveloped by Bognor Regis after the Great War, and the safe sandy beach at Middleton ensured that town's piecemeal growth from the 1920s. Brickmaking was an obvious counterpart to such growth on the Eocene deposits of the coastal plain (and was an industry into which Sparks's later diversified) and this came to join other rural industries and fishing and maritime trades.

Here then is a volume rich in rural detail. The editorial work has been immaculate and the customary high standards of the VCH are maintained. It is also pleasing to note that among the wide range of cited sources, including the under-used documents in the Arundel Castle archives, there are many which have been written by local historians.

BRIAN SHORT

R. K. I. QUESTED, *The Isle of Thanet farming community. An agrarian history of easternmost Kent: outlines from early times to 1993*, Wye College Press, 1996. xiv + 364 pp. Illus. £12.

The Isle of Thanet is that part of northeast Kent which lies beyond the old Wantsum channel and north of the river Great Stour, an area of about 45 square miles in extent. To this small but distinctive subregion the author – who is better known for her earlier distinguished publications on the history of Sino-Russian relations – has been able to bring extensive personal knowledge and local reminiscences, for her father, Eric Qusted (1895–1991) farmed at Woodchurch near Birchington in Thanet between 1919 and 1970. The ten chapters deal logically with discrete periods of Thanet's agricultural history but, as is acknowledged in the *Introduction*, the treatment of the period up until the end of the eighteenth century is largely dependent on secondary source material and contemporary accounts of the locality which, while drawing upon some scattered literature, does not offer the reader anything new in matters of interpretation and at times the writing depends rather heavily upon a descriptive approach. The last three chapters, 'From the Agricultural Crisis to the Armistice 1893–1918', 'From the Armistice to Victory in 1945' and 'From Victory to Glut to Where? 1945–1993' make up a substantial proportion of the total text and are informed by the wealth of oral and family history sources which constitute the main justification for publication.

Looking over Thanet today, with views typically dominated by large fields in what is often a monotonous, bleak landscape, and with the cooling towers of the Pegwell Bay power station on the horizon, it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the picture presented of Thanet in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as 'a beautiful unspoilt island' and as 'still almost a natural paradise' (p. 85) with contemporary reality. In a section on 'environmental losses and gains since 1800' the author recognizes that under intensive modern farming methods the appearance of Thanet farmland is now less attractive than formerly, although a case is made that the number and range of variety of trees has increased in the area since the mid nineteenth century. One of the distinctive agricultural specialities of Thanet which has developed over the last hundred years or so is – along with potatoes – the growing of cauliflowers/broccoli which do not rank amongst the most aesthetically pleasing of field crops. Whilst 'collyflowers' had been grown in Thanet since at least 1750 (p. 80), the modern expansion of acreage is traced to the initiative of Barzillai ('Bar') Sackett (1844–1918) who was Eric Qusted's grandfather, and Augustus Brookman (1849–1942) who brought in new strains of seed from Brittany in the late 1860s. It was Sackett,

recalled as a 'true entrepreneur' who constantly patrolled his land in a trap, who pioneered the vegetable as a large scale field crop in Thanet rather than as, traditionally, a market garden subject. This is illustrative of the way in which the origins of so many UK local agricultural specializations need to be understood in terms of the endeavour and initiative of individuals. Twentieth-century developments in cauliflower production which are noted include more intensive production methods, road transport, improved packaging and cold store development. In contrast to the Cornish growers, co-operative marketing was met by Thanet producers with resistance until quite recently.

The largest market for this book will come from within what remains of the Thanet farming community who will particularly value the extensive references to their leading agricultural families. The general reader, who would have been assisted by a clear up-to-date map, may find the density of detail lies a little too thick on the ground at times. Whilst this book does not purport to be an analytical study in agricultural history, it is important for the subject that the reminiscences that the study contains are preserved, and in that sense the text is valuable. In a short appendix the author suggests that there is scope for further research in carrying on some of the themes pioneered by Dennis Baker and, in particular, attempting some evaluation of Thanet's role in agricultural innovation in the national context.

NICHOLAS GODDARD

MALCOLM THICK, *The Neat House Gardens: early market gardening around London*, Prospect Books, 1998. 175 pp. Illus. £12.50.

As Malcolm Thick explains, 'Market gardening is the Cinderella of garden history, or perhaps to call it the Ugly Sister would be more descriptive' (p. 11). Thus, it was his aim to redress the balance and write a general history of market gardening around London. He may well do so in the future – and he devotes three chapters to the more general history in this volume – but he was deflected by the desire to share his findings related to a single 'cabbage patch', as Shakespeare dubbed Denmark. The Neat House gardens began their life as an area devoted to the production of vegetables for the Westminster and London markets at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The extent of the gardens, located on the site of modern-day Pimlico, was never large, rising from an estimated 17 acres in 1614, to 39 in 1622 and at least 107 in 1675, but they were highly productive and the gardeners enjoyed reputations as the best in the country. High levels of production were achieved through advanced techniques: thorough tillage using spades and other hand implements guaranteed good soil quality; hot-beds

were constructed using huge amounts of night soil and street sweepings from the capital; glass bells also helped to extend the growing season; and cultivation in rows ensured that not a square foot of earth was wasted. The gardens produced a wide range of vegetables for middle and upper income tables but they became particularly renowned for the cultivation of asparagus and melons. Some produce was sold direct to customers or their servants who called at the gardens, although much was taken down the Thames into the City and Westminster.

Perhaps the most important question to ask about the significance of the gardens is whether or not the expertise fostered there had a significant effect elsewhere. It appears that the answer is firmly affirmative as far as gardening is concerned. The gardeners adopted an open door policy, inviting inspection and profiting through their sale of food and drink to visitors; there is no doubt that the kitchen gardens of the gentry benefited as a result. The effect on agriculture is more doubtful. The advocacy of thorough tillage may have had some effect although experiments with digging in agriculture were soon abandoned. However, the discussion of other garden-based developments including row cultivation and hoeing continued and may have received some impetus from those who visited the gardens.

Malcolm Thick's greatest disappointment is that few business records relating to the operation of the gardens have survived. Thus we know very little about the levels of man- and woman-power needed to keep the earth in good heart and bring forward its wonder crops year after year. Similarly, there is only a small amount of probate material to suggest levels of wealth and life-styles, although some benefit can be derived from the hearth tax returns for 1664. The majority of gardeners seem to have been comfortably off; of those assessed for the tax – and a few were not – half lived in houses of five or more hearths; most of the rest lived in three- or four-hearth houses. Moreover, some of the gardeners rose to positions of authority in the London Gardeners' Company. Eventually urban pressures grew too great for the gardeners and their days were ended by house-building at the start of the second decade of the nineteenth century. Small in scale, rich in significance and output, Malcolm Thick is to be congratulated on opening up this small corner of exceptional productivity to the gaze of garden and agricultural historians.

DONALD WOODWARD

JOHN CHAPMAN AND SYLVIA SEELIGER, *A guide to enclosure in Hampshire 1700–1900*, Hampshire Record Series XV, 1977. xi + 403 pp. 5 illus; 184 maps. £15.

JOHN CHAPMAN AND SYLVIA SEELIGER, *Formal and informal enclosures in Hampshire*, Hampshire Papers 12, 1997. 24 pp. Illus. £1.75 inc. p. & p.

The first and more substantial of these two publications, both published by the Hampshire Record Office, is a guide and resource for research rather than a book to read from cover to cover. The second is a booklet, aimed at a more general audience, though both works will be of interest to readers of this journal.

The book is, as the title says, a guide to enclosure in Hampshire 1700–1900. It is divided into five main sections: a parish by parish summary of information on field systems, commons and enclosure; a complete list of all parliamentary enclosures in the county with summary information; a complete list of all known formal enclosure agreements in the county with summary information; a register of all enclosure commissioners known to have worked in the county; and finally a series of detailed maps showing the locations of enclosures, fields and commons where known.

The parish summaries include Ordnance Survey grid references and the names and areas of known open fields. This is followed by cross references to any parliamentary enclosures or formal enclosure agreements. Full information on any known or suspected informal enclosures is provided in the parish summary. This generally takes the form of the last known mention of any open fields together with the earliest date by which they are known to have disappeared. Commons are treated in the same way as field systems.

The parish summaries are followed by summaries of Hampshire's 162 parliamentary enclosures. Each entry starts with an Ordnance Survey grid reference and the names of the parishes or manors affected. This is followed by full references to the act and award. The acreages affected are given. Where known the names of fields and commons affected are listed. This is followed by the names of enclosure commissioners. Where values or surveyors are known to have been involved their names are also given. The total number of allottees is provided and those allotted more than 10% of the total are named and the size of their allotment given. The notes at the end of each entry give relevant cross references to other entries and references to the relevant map.

The sixty formal enclosure agreements for the county found by Chapman and Seeliger are detailed in the next section. The format corresponds to that described above for parliamentary enclosures. Each entry is headed by the parish, manor or tithing affected. References and dates are provided for any known agreement and award. The

acreages enclosed and the names of pieces of land affected, the names of commissioners, surveyors or valuers are given where known. Again allottees with more than 10% of the total are listed together with the size of their allotments. Any cross references to relevant maps are contained in the notes which follow each entry.

The next 28 pages list all the enclosure commissioners known to have been involved in parliamentary enclosure or formal enclosure agreements in the county. Each entry gives all known residences of the commissioner, the period in which he was active, the number of Hampshire awards (parliamentary and formal agreement) he was involved in and cross references to those awards in the previous two sections of the book. Where known, the number of enclosures in which each commissioner was involved outside the county are given though without specific references. This latter information is clearly not comprehensive as it would require research on the same scale as that in this volume for every county in the country, a feat regrettably beyond the capacity of even such prodigious researchers as Dr Chapman and Dr Seeliger. This section will provide anyone researching a particular enclosure with the kind of background information on the commissioners that it would normally be quite impractical to attain. It would also make an excellent starting point for much needed systematic research on the activities of enclosure commissioners.

The last substantive section of the book contains 184 maps. The Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 provisional series has been used as a base. Fields, commons, and enclosures have been superimposed where precise boundaries are known. In other cases approximate locations have been indicated. In a few cases the reductions necessary to fit the map on a page have rendered it less legible than it might have been. However, this is not a serious problem and the only alternative would have been to produce a larger format book at a considerably higher price.

The book is completed by two indexes. The first covers all persons mentioned in the text whether as commissioners, valuers, surveyors, or allottees. This will prove a minor godsend to the researcher interested in the activities of a particular individual. The second index is of place names including fields, commons, manors and tithings. Again this will prove useful to the local researcher. All in all this is a very thoroughly produced book which must have involved an enormous amount of work. For the period 1700–1900, enclosure is now better documented in Hampshire than any other county. One can only hope that this kind of work will be emulated elsewhere.

The second publication is the twelfth in the Hampshire Papers series and effectively forms a companion work to the Guide, containing a fuller analysis of the

various forms of enclosure than the introduction to the Guide. This booklet contains much introductory information on enclosure and is very nicely illustrated with reproductions of enclosure maps, enclosure acts, commissioners' minute books, estate maps, tithe maps, enclosure maps, enclosure awards and first edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps. It would therefore make a very good introduction to enclosure for a local history class. But it also contains material of considerable interest to other readers.

Parliamentary enclosures, of which there were 162, only affected some 14 per cent of the county area. As the authors show this is a potentially misleading statistic. Two other forms of enclosure proceeded alongside parliamentary enclosure. Firstly, there were also sixty enclosures by formal agreement. The authors have already analysed these in this journal (43 (i), 1995, pp. 35-46). These generally covered smaller areas than parliamentary enclosures and were much more common in the eighteenth than in the nineteenth century. Secondly, there were a considerable number of informal enclosures. The nature and extent of informal enclosures in Hampshire is presented here for the first time. These were enclosures where no formal agreement appears to have been made though tacit agreement must have been present. The authors calculate that 51 per cent of the field systems present in Hampshire in 1700 disappeared as a result of informal enclosure, compared with 33 per cent by parliamentary means. This statistic does not, however, appear in the booklet but in the introduction to the Guide. Similarly, full statistics on the extent of formal agreements are not to be found in the booklet but only in the earlier article. So one needs to read all three publications to get a sense of the relative extent of the three types of enclosure. Unfortunately due to the paucity of the documentary evidence the area enclosed by informal agreement cannot be measured though the authors conclude that it greatly exceeded that by formal agreement (2.23 per cent of the county area) and may have equalled that enclosed by act (14 per cent of the county area). Thus the generally accepted view that after 1700 virtually all enclosure was by act of parliament cannot be sustained for Hampshire. Nor as the authors pointed out in their 1995 article would it seem to be true of Sussex, Dorset, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire or Cumberland. However, given the amount of work which has clearly gone into the Hampshire project it may be a long time before the national position becomes clear.

LEIGH SHAW-TAYLOR

G. E. MINGAY, *Parliamentary Enclosure in England: an introduction to its causes, incidence and impact, 1750-1850*, Longman, 1997. vii + 168 pp. 4 maps. £11.99 pbk. Professor Gordon Mingay's long-standing interest in the subject of parliamentary enclosure is well known, and, indeed, some of his own early writing helped to spark the modern phase of interest in the topic. It is therefore a great pleasure to welcome this volume, which succinctly summarizes the present state of our knowledge and the various controversies which still exist. It offers a balanced coverage of the classical works and devotes a chapter to modern views on the scope and nature of parliamentary enclosure, stressing the regional and chronological variations which receive scant attention in much of the literature. The objectives of the process and the gains which accrued from it are discussed in some detail, and the actual mechanics of obtaining an enclosure, often ignored but crucial to the outcomes, have a chapter in their own right. Professor Mingay has interesting comments on some of the more neglected motives for enclosure, pointing to its considerable significance as a means of freeing land for non-agricultural purposes, notably urban expansion, mining and quarrying, and not merely in the newly-industrializing areas of the North and Midlands. He also lays great stress on the importance of parliamentary enclosure as an instrument for improving roads. He points out that many individual acts in the early period and later parliament itself laid down strict criteria for the newly-built roads, and the prospect of a major improvement in local transport conditions must have been an element in the calculations of many of those contemplating enclosure. The highly controversial issue of the costs of enclosure and the impact of these on the various strata of eighteenth and nineteenth century society form a focus for a further chapter, and he devotes a complete chapter to the single issue of 'Parliamentary Enclosure and the Cottager', perhaps the most debated aspect at the present time. As a well-known protagonist in the debate, he offers some telling rebuttals to those who see enclosure as a main cause of rural poverty. He points out, however, the potentially disastrous impact which enclosure might have on particular groups in local society. The maps are already familiar to students of the enclosure movement, being based on those of Michael Turner and Rex Russell, illustrating the general distribution, and before-and-after situations in Lincolnshire, respectively.

Throughout, Professor Mingay stresses the variability of the process, both regionally and in terms of each individual enclosure, a point so often overlooked in much of the more polemical writing which the subject has attracted. He illustrates also the highly complex and variable rules which characterized many of the areas

subject to common rights prior to enclosure, a factor frequently ignored by those attempting to draw general conclusions about the effects of the process. One minor criticism would be the use of the dates 1750 to 1850 as the boundaries for the study. While this covers the overwhelming majority of the parliamentary enclosure movement it seems curious that both the start and the end should be excluded, especially since omitting the two ends somewhat distorts the regional pattern. As a geographer, I would also personally have been interested in rather more maps illustrative of the variations which are discussed, for example a map of the great waste enclosures and another of the small fragmented enclosures as a contrast to that derived from Russell. Having said this, this book is a very valuable addition to the literature on enclosure, especially as it is within the pocket of the student and the general reader. Perhaps it is too much to expect it to supplant the outdated and partial views derived from the Hammonds and from Slater which remain so deeply entrenched amongst the general public, but this scholarly, readable and balanced account certainly deserves to do so.

JOHN CHAPMAN

P. S. BARNWELL AND COLUM GILES, *English Farmsteads 1750-1914*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1997. xiv + 175 pp. 150 illus. £15.

*English Farmsteads 1750-1914* is a very welcome and useful addition to books on historic farm buildings. It is based on recording work carried out between 1992 and 1995 in five different parts of the country, chosen because little or no recording had previously been done there. The work is well and lavishly illustrated with photographs, plans, axonometrics and various other drawings. Block plans are used to show the general form and development of the farmstead, including the position of the house.

The five areas were chosen to cover different farming methods. Three are basically arable, but with different emphases, being in west Berkshire, south Lincolnshire and north Northumberland; the two sections in south Lincolnshire are slightly contrasting in that one is fenland and the other nearby upland. South Cheshire provided a predominantly dairy area with emphasis on permanent grass and east Cornwall an upland area. Between forty and fifty farms were examined in each, more in Lincolnshire. The farms recorded are listed, but the basis on which they were chosen within the areas is not stated. The terminal date was chosen to allow the effect on new and earlier farm buildings of the great depression in farming after about 1878 to be assessed.

The book begins with an important introduction by N. Harvey, president of the Historic Farm Buildings

Group. The main part of the work describes the five areas; in each the local development of farming, land ownership and topography are discussed, followed by a detailed examination of the farmstead, and of the individual buildings of which it is formed. Care is taken to show how the various buildings related to each other, as well as showing their relationship to the type of farming.

The areas examined are all different. In Berkshire, buildings were altered or added to rather than completely re-built; farmsteads tended in consequence to be informal groups of buildings. Aisled barns were built into the early nineteenth century. One barn on staddles was found. Provision for cattle in Lincolnshire did not appear much before 1840, and the cowhouses were then small, a point the reviewer has found in nearby south Nottinghamshire. The lack of early pigsties leads the writers to suggest that pigs were fattened in the yards. North Northumberland was an area of large farms, with a distinctive barn developed for fixed threshing machines, generally powered by steam or water. Provision of horse yards suggests that, as in Lincolnshire, horses were kept in the open at night, at least in summer. In Cornwall the most distinctive feature was the bank barn (locally chall barn), a low barn built over cow housing, sometimes with power for threshing. That steam power was not used to drive the machinery may well have been owing to the small size of the farms, making such provision uneconomic. Changes in cowhouse design in Cheshire throughout the period are noted. An interesting excursion outside the period was the recording of a post First World War council small holding, noting continuity in the general layout with earlier work.

The book ends with a chapter drawing together the findings and discussing the effect of published planned farmsteads. Structural details are also discussed, but the different types of truss found over stables in Berkshire and Cheshire are surely related to the height of the loft walls, rather than having a regional significance (fig 7.15a & b).

Lack of reference to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century textbooks on farming has affected some conclusions and interpretation of buildings. For example Loudon calls horizontal boarding at the bottom of barn doors a 'lift', not a threshold. This was to enable the doors to clear manure in the yard, and, supplemented by a cloth hung above, to catch grain with flail threshing, as well as to keep out small animals. The term 'hammel' is misused, being defined by Loudon, Scott-Burn, Stephens and Morton as a loosebox for two or three cattle with an opening into a small yard. Winnowing could be with an artificial draught or winnowing machine, not just a natural wind across the threshing floor. No reference is made to portable threshing machines being used on the threshing floor of traditional barns. Sub-division of

shelter sheds for loose cattle could also be to prevent bullying and promote equal feeding. There has been some confusion on feeding of cattle in Lincolnshire: Caird states that some farmers were changing to chaff mixed with linseed in the mid-nineteenth century, not that this system had been in use for the previous half century.

These are, however, minor defects in what is a very important and useful survey, considerably extending our knowledge of farm buildings.

J. E. C. PETERS

JOSE IGNACIO JIMENEZ BLANCO, *Privatización y apropiación de tierras municipales en la Baja Andalucía: Jerez de la Frontera, 1750–1995*, Biblioteca de Urbanismo y Cultura; EMEMSA; Ayuntamiento de Jerez, 1996. 333 pp. No price given.

When Alfonso X liberated the Andalusian municipality of Jerez de la Frontera from the Moors in 1264, he handed over vast tracts of forested mountainsides (*montes de propios*) to its inhabitants. Two generations later, Fernando IV granted the population of Jerez more territory in order to compensate them for the past sacrifices as well as to secure the continued support of this important frontier town. Legally, the *montes de propios* were treated as private property owned by the town government. Throughout the next six centuries, these lands were to remain the main source of income for the town's coffers. Owners of livestock were forced to seek representation on the local council (*cabildo*) since the latter determined both the amount of land available to individuals and the costs of grazing. After 1750, however, due to strong demographic pressures, Spain witnessed an intense process of privatization of municipal lands. This culminated in the infamous Madoz disentailing legislation of 1855 which was introduced by the liberals to pay off mounting debts and finance public works. The Madoz Act called for the selling off of municipal lands by auction to the highest bidder. As José Ignacio Jiménez Blanco recounts in this detailed and well written monograph, up to the end of the eighteenth century the *montes de propios* of Jerez de la Frontera were largely used by locals for the production of acorns while – in the absence of transhumance – the adjacent valleys were dedicated to the pasturing of cattle and horses which fed upon the acorns. The area was a fine example of the *monte mediterráneo*, resplendent with wild olive trees (*acebuches*) in the lower zones and gall oaks (*quejigos*) and cork oaks (*alcornoques*) on higher grounds.

Jimenez Blanco's impressive study traces the origins of the Jerez's traditional patrimony in the late middle ages followed by its almost complete disintegration during the final years of the *ancien régime* and the various

phases of nineteenth-century liberalism. He also casts a critical eye on the organization of the residual lands which, for 'strategic purposes', survived the disentailing process down to the present day. What he uncovers from a mass of documentation is impressive and fits nicely into the lively ongoing debate south of the Pyrénées on the fate of Spain's peasant farmers during the liberal era. Almost three decades ago, Joseph Fontana argued for a 'Prussian model' of agrarian reform in nineteenth-century Spain which allowed agriculture to adapt to the needs of modern capitalism without substantially weakening the position of the dominant classes. This 'reform from above', aimed at averting a violent revolution from below, is said to have excluded the peasantry who are portrayed as the primal victims of the legislation, expelled from the lands which they had traditionally cultivated and subsequently proletarianized. The other main losers, as elsewhere, were the church and the municipalities. The latter were impoverished by the liberal state which forced them to exchange land for public debt. Fontana's Prussian model was applied to Andalusia by the leading scholar, Antonio Miguel Bernal. Yet lately this Marxist approach has come under strong attack from a number of young researchers. Antonio Cabral, whose studies of the province of Cádiz include Jerez de la Frontera, questions the received wisdom that the landlords lost nothing while small peasants, landless labourers and municipal councils were ruined. Instead, he contends that, even after the 1855 Act, much land remained in the hands of the peasantry. Jiménez Blanco's revisionist account argues that the initial aim of the liberals, as manifested in legislation of 1813 and 1822, was indeed to create a large group of self-sufficient peasant proprietors in a clear attempt to establish social harmony, widen political support for the new order and extend the market for agricultural products. The results, however, were not always in line with the expressed intentions of the early reformers. To begin with, successive legislation left ample room for manoeuvre on the part of the threatened municipalities. Moreover the original reform project was not shared by all liberals and became a dead letter during the rule of the more conservative *moderados*. In addition, the aims of Spain's agrarian reformers were modified over time in response to fluctuating social, economic and political circumstances often beyond their control. Before 1855, the radically inclined *progresista* faction defended the peasant component of agrarian reform. However, the Madoz Act cut off this option by selling off the land to the 'haves' rather than the 'have nots' at enormous economic and social costs in the long term. Jiménez Blanco's splendid book is an important contribution to the agrarian history of southern Spain and adds significantly to the general

debate on the aims and achievements of the country's liberal reformers.

JOSEPH HARRISON

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS AND TOM WILLIAMSON, eds, *The farming journal of Randall Burroughes, 1794–1799*, Norfolk Record Society, LVII for 1993, 1995. 138 pp. Illus. £15.

Although a considerable quantity of farming journals and diaries has survived, and a number have now been transcribed, the publication of *The Farming Journal of Randall Burroughes* is a welcome event. As a source, the farm diary is distinct from other types of farm records. Many diaries provide an insight into the focus, concerns, and strategies of the farmer keeping the journal as he planned, undertook, and finally examined the results both of his routine practices and of changes and innovations. On the other hand, they generally lack the structured data available in labour books, farm accounts, and the like. In collections where a number of different sorts of records have survived, a good diary can provide the narrative to complement and enhance the statistics of other records. While the Burroughes archive deposited at the Norfolk Record Office includes only the journal, Randall Burroughes was a coherent and comprehensive diarist. He wrote a particularly informative account of the daily running of the farm and the relationship between the farmer and his workforce. In addition, Burroughes recorded an unusual amount of data. These make it possible to relate statistical details generally found only in other types of records to a narrative missing in labour books and accounts. Thus, the perks earned by the labourers, the treatment of growing crops, the feeding regime of livestock and the like, can be related to the productivity of labour and wage rates, crop rotations and yields, livestock weights and age at slaughter.

This journal is significant for several other reasons. Randall Burroughes was a landowner and farmer at Wymondham, on the claylands of southern Norfolk, in the final years of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth. The journal was kept between Michaelmas 1794 and the end of December 1799. It is important in both time and location. During the period, Britain was at war with France, and there were particularly bad harvests in 1794, 1795, and 1799. The holding was in Norfolk at the time when the county was under the influence of Thomas William Coke of Holkham. Although there is no indication that they met, Coke and Randall Burroughes were contemporaries, and Burroughes appears to have been influenced by the events at Holkham. Unlike Holkham, Wymondham is not on the easily worked, light sandy soils of the north of the

county, but instead on the heavier, more difficult, soils of the south. The journal explores many of the problems of heavy soil agriculture – the impact of wet weather on the daily farm labour routine, the vital importance of soil conditioners, the underdraining techniques employed in East Anglia before the introduction of mass-produced tiles – so helps to balance the conventional image of Norfolk farming.

The excellence of the diary is matched by the introduction, footnotes, and glossary. The archival research done by Tom Williamson and Susanna Wade Martin makes them particularly well qualified to undertake this work. The editors identify and explain elements and concepts central to the farming regime of Randall Burroughes. This has been done using a good general knowledge of the techniques of agriculture along with a combination of extracts from the diary and a variety of contemporary printed and archival material. They have thereby produced a text that is sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to interest and enlighten the more knowledgeable reader, and, at the same time, contains good general information to provide a background for anyone new to the subject.

The book is ideal reading for anyone interested in agrarian history, particularly for those seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the farming calendar and the relationship between a farmer and landowner and his environment.

BETHANIE AFTON

JANICE E. CROWTHER AND PETER A. CROWTHER, eds, *The diary of Robert Sharp of South Cave. Life in a Yorkshire village 1812–1837*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series 26, British Academy and OUP, 1998. lvi + 666 pp. £35.

This is a gem. The bulk of the volume comprises Sharp's daily diary from 1826 to 1837, though there is a major gap for the year 1828. Sharp compiled it for periodic dispatch to his son, William, domiciled in London with his family, and working for the publisher, Longman, to keep him in touch with events in this modest East Riding market town to which his parents had moved in 1804. Robert was the master at the Anglican school, though his teaching activities – which he clearly relished – are but rarely mentioned. Virtually everything else which moved in South Cave was, together with Sharp's observations of other events, mostly regional and 'national', though on occasion literally global.

Diarist Sharp was an intellectual; he read broadly and avidly, and the editors have compiled an appendix listing the works and authors cited by him. He also literally digested the contents of the press, local, London dailies, and periodical; until late 1830, he subscribed to William

Cobbett's hugely influential *Political Register*. The editors believe, on fairly solid grounds, that Sharp was a shoemaker by trade. He certainly spent much of his leisure time in the private house of another and practising cobbler, who had for a time lived in London, Old Willy Atkinson. Here an assortment of friends convened regularly to discuss current affairs over their pipes. Sharp was, like so many of his original trade, a Cobbettite, though not an uncritical follower. Despite his employment, he was virulently anti-Anglican, and the diary is peppered with derisory, and oft hilarious comments on the incumbent, his curate – dubbed the vicar's apprentice – and a host of other features, including the quality of sermons (and their regular inaudibility) as the schoolmaster was required to attend two services on Sundays in order to register and then control his young charges. How he really maintained himself in post, to the point of defeating an attempt to bring his school formally within the national schools district organization, is unclear. He does observe on 12 March 1830, that 'the parsons and patrons' would have sacked him 'if they could have their own wills and ways. But I remain not by their permission but in spite of them'. Although Sharp had a strong puritanical streak, for example abhorring gambling, fox-hunting and game-shooting, he exuded a good-humoured tolerance of his neighbours' penchant for drunkenness, and if he periodically complained over the thieving propensities of some of the 'idle' poor, he repeatedly expressed sympathies for local under-employed, underpaid and underfed farmworkers. He also condemned enclosure, and through the medium of the diary gave his son details of farmers and their open field holdings at his birthplace, Barming (on the coast some six miles south of Bridlington), in 1739. This revealed one large, nine modest (58 to 130 acres) and nine small farmers (12 to 46 acres), together with six smallholders of under ten acres. Sharp's father was among the latter group. Like Cobbett, Sharp was particularly critical of the rise of large farms tenanted by substantial capitalists, a feature of South Cave too and reflected in the decline in the number of farmhouses, and he was also incensed at such farmers' refusal to compensate labourers with allotments for their loss of access to commons and wastes. In Sharp's diary we gain some intimate insight into that rarely documented phenomenon of this period, the knot of countryside political radicals and what they really thought, a phenomenon which but for such sources would have been largely lost to history.

As a literate and numerate man, Sharp played a broad role in local society. A sometime holder of unpaid parish offices, he also earned more through a range of employments including friendly society clerk, letter writer, accountant, collector of local and assessed taxes, and land

surveyor. For a few years he experimented with shop-keeping, though its day-to-day running was left to his wife. Some of the detail revealed here about such modest entrepreneurship also comprises a rare historical record of rural retailing, a very common form of dual-occupancy. In short, the diary throws considerable light on a rural community, and historians will be surprised at the rich rewards garnered by trawling through the details as recorded by Sharp.

Only an impertinent reviewer would try to pre-emptively enumerate these, but an exemplification of one significant theme might be less offensive. In his classic article on 'moral economy', E. P. Thompson wrote that 'every harvest was accompanied by talk of mildew, floods and blighted ears', a comment which this reviewer once felt exaggerated. Sharp proves Thompson's point. Although Sharp had some personal interest in farmers' prosperity, not least through his land surveying, which often established precise acreages for the purposes of contracts for harvesting and stock grazing on root fodder crops, a combination of his sensitivity to the adverse effects of rising prices for plebeian consumers, the fact that he himself was dependent on the market for everything other than possibly some vegetables, and his animosity to especially farmers' incessant complaints over weather, harvest prospects and market conditions, generated his perennial suspicion over farmers' motives. 'To hear the farmers talk you would think that there is nothing but famine staring us in the face'; 'they say barley is ripening very unkindly... what they call night ripe or Moon ripe'; 'another such [wet] day and all the wheat will be sprouted'. Market-day manoeuvrings between farmers and corn factors at South Cave are also repeatedly documented. On occasion Sharp unambiguously endorsed moral-economic notions, among them the need for legal powers to force all farmers to 'bring their articles to market in a regular way', rather than withhold stock in attempts to drive up prices. Like Cobbett, Sharp argued that farmers should campaign for lower rents, rather than clumsily contrive to push product prices upwards, and specifically condemned the biggest local landowner for being 'a great ... stranger here as any Irish absentee' who spent none of the income derived from his South Cave estate in the place itself. Not surprisingly, Sharp loathed the corn laws as symbolic of the self-interested use of oligarchic political power by the aristocracy; the country was 'kept under the tyranny of a corn monopoly'. Although the diarist was very friendly with the drunken miller Marshall – 'the man of dust' – he condemned his parsimony and several of his sharper business practices, including flour adulteration. Sharp adopted several of Cobbett's derisory linguistic devices – 'jolterheads' and 'bull frogs' among them – and agreed with the great

polemicist's view that 'where the countries are most fertile the poor live the worst'. 'Prodigality and penury rule the land'. Nor did Sharp invariably restrict expression of such opinions to Old Willy's parlour; sometimes he spoke out, thus suggesting that even in the heart of Tory-dominated rural England, radical interpretations of the great issues during the last decade of Hanoverian rule found their relatively humble articulators.

ROGER WELLS

BARRY REAY, *Microhistories: demography, society and culture in rural England, 1800-1930*, CUP, 1996. xxv + 288 pp. 49 tabs; 36 figs; 29 plates; 1 map. £40.

In this ambitious and stimulating study of the three parishes of Boughton-under-Blean, Dunkirk and Hernhill in the Blean area of Kent, Barry Reay seeks to entwine two historiographical strands which have all-too-frequently tended to diverge, even in the 'new rural history'. On the one hand, the demographic techniques of the Cambridge group (especially family reconstitution) are brought to bear on a core sample of 401 families to facilitate analyses of trends in marital and extra-marital fertility; on the other, more intimate social and cultural details are revealed through the imaginative use of qualitative sources such as petty sessions records, school log books, and the reports of the medical officer of health. In this latter enterprise, Reay has two further invaluable weapons in his methodological armoury: the remarkable investigation carried out by the barrister Frederick Liardet in his role as investigator for the Central Society of Education in the wake of the *Last Rising of the Agricultural Labourers* of 1838 (about which Reay wrote so passionately in 1990); and a series of oral histories gathered both by Michael Winstanley in the 1970s and by Reay himself in 1991-92. Accordingly, the thematic chapters range from the purely demographic (dealing with fertility decline; and with health) to the broadly cultural (the social economy; class; family life and kinship; and literacy), with one especially significant contribution (ch. 7 on sexuality) standing somewhere between the two.

The result is a thoroughly absorbing book which is able not only 'to inject some class and cultural context into the demographic analysis' (p. xxi) but also to go some way towards answering Edward Thompson's famous question: 'how did a society whose manifest ideology was paternalism feel from below?'. The inequalities of wealth and power to which the inhabitants of the Blean perforce accommodated themselves are vividly encapsulated by the fact that the annual dog-biscuit bill of one of Hernhill's absentee landlords was the 'equivalent of the yearly wage of two agricultural labourers' (p. 15). In this context, it is little surprise that Reay's evocative reconstruction of the multi-faceted social economy

through which the poor put together a living (ch. 4) should include such incisive discussions of both credit and of theft.

Reay modestly but convincingly challenges a whole number of shibboleths held dear by early modernists and nineteenth-century specialists alike. He is particularly concerned to demolish the Laslett-Robin model of a 'bastardy-prone sub-society', and indignantly rejects the loaded language historians have brought to bear on this emotive subject (p. 190). He argues that whenever the demographic transition was completed in the Blean it had a history which stretched back to the early nineteenth century, and speculates about the earlier history of the 'push him off' method of birth control and the abortions to which his twentieth-century oral informants refer (p. 259). His discussion of 'literacies' (the plural is significant) self-consciously emphasises those least affected by the nineteenth-century transition to predominant literacy, and concerns itself with the ambiguous significance of literacy for those (particularly the agricultural labourers) who stood at the interface of the oral and the literate, both within their own households and over their life-course. In this, as much else, Reay had successfully brought the insights of a distinguished historian of the seventeenth century to the very different terrain of the nineteenth. For early modernists in particular the challenge is now to find a research method which might allow the analysis of the transformation of rural England from the Terling reconstructed from hearth tax records and probate inventories by Wrightson and Levine to the Blean recreated here through 'total reconstitution' of census and parish register.

There are, inevitably, criticisms. Although Reay argues (almost in passing) that the most significant fall in family size occurred in the period immediately following the institution of the new poor law of 1834 (p. 64) and that 'playing the poor law system' (pp. 128-30) was a central plank in the makeshift economy, there is rather less on the meaning and experience of parish relief than some readers might expect. Historians of religion and crime might also feel that their interests receive short shrift. But this is arguably to miss the point. Reay regards his project as 'strategically situated social history', reconstructing 'knowable communities' in the wider worlds of demographic, social and cultural change (p. 262). As a series of essays demonstrating the importance of local context for the understanding of the variegated process of social change, *Microhistories* successfully combines the merits of the long and highly-developed tradition of English local history with those of the ethnographic tradition of *Quaderni Storici*. Whether or not Reay would follow his Italian counterparts in wishing that his project might render macrohistorical analyses irrelevant, it is to his

credit that all our 'visions of the people' – in the seveneenth-century as well as in the nineteenth – will be influenced by his determination to interpret 'place' in terms not only of *class* but also of *locale*.

STEVE HINDLE

MARION SHARPLES, *The Fawkes family and their estates in Wharfedale, 1819–1936*, Thoresby Society, Leeds, 1997. xvi + 210 pp. Illus. £15.

This is another of those useful small monographs that help inform 'broad brush' publications which identify national trends. The book is derived from a M.Phil dissertation and although Marion Sharples is the author, due to her illness the thesis was edited for publication by Gordon Forster and David Steele of Leeds University. The context of the book holds no real surprises in terms of the process and progress of a landed estate but it is scholarly in its research, is very readable, has drawn on a wide variety of sources and contains a wealth of detail. The structure of the book is thematic. The family and its management of the estate is examined in the first few chapters while the second part of the book concentrates on agricultural practice, farmer responsiveness and local diversity. A useful survey of sources identifies the problems inherent in this type of research and throughout the work there are attempts to position the findings in a broader context.

Generally the Fawkes family were efficient stewards of their estate, being responsive to opportunity but drawing in their belts in difficult periods. They were progressive estate managers and in the late 1820s were spending in excess of an estimated 15 per cent of their income on land improvement. They continually encouraged farmers to move more fully into mixed farming. The position of the estate, on the outskirts of the West Riding conurbation meant that land values were high. The Fawkes family were able to capitalize on demand and sell portions of their estate in order to retain the rest. The growth of social concerns and leisure interests in the late Victorian period also advantaged the estate as land was sold for reservoirs, a hospital and golf course. In addition the proximity to the West Riding also enabled sales of perishable products and the estate benefited particularly from the sale of milk.

In common with other estates, the Fawkes estate carried the financial burden of encumbrances and settlements throughout the nineteenth century. It is estimated that in 1899 the family's debt stood at c. £100,000, probably little changed since 1824. Financial crises occurred at specific points during the century but were largely related to family events such as death and generous settlements rather than to exogenous factors. The family's dairying business which had been established in 1888 was

sold in 1899 along with part of a valuable collection of paintings to service debts. The estate was able to stave off the worst effects of depression by building on the advantages of mixed farming and taking full advantage of nearby markets.

The family were at the forefront of developments in agricultural education and were keen to disseminate progressive ideas in agriculture. They were instrumental in the establishment of both the Yorkshire College (which subsequently became the University of Leeds) and the Yorkshire Agricultural Society. Due to the encouragement of Frederick Fawkes, President of the Yorkshire Council for Agriculture Education, land near York was purchased in 1938 for educational purposes. This later became Askham Bryan Agricultural College.

In the second part of the book the close oversight of tenant activity by the estate's agent is examined and a useful analysis of MAF statistics is undertaken. Finally a brief and rather inexplicable comparison of the experience of estates in the East Riding is undertaken. The conclusion drawn is that the experience of the Fawkes estate in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was similar to that of many other estates. The study concludes by showing that the family had proved the success of their strategies for survival and even by the 1930s they still owned over 4000 acres.

Overall this is a valuable and well written study and is recommended to those with an interest in agrarian history at both local and national level.

CHRISTINE HALLAS

VICENTE PINILLA NAVARRO, *Entre la inercia y el cambio: el sector agrario Aragonés, 1850–1935*, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, Madrid, 1995. 546 pp. No price given.

With the odd exception, such as in the writings of Leandro Prados, it is commonplace for all general interpretations of modern Spanish economic history to single out the agricultural sector as a leading factor behind that country's relative economic backwardness before the outbreak of the Civil War of the late 1930s. Yet for over two decades Spain's agricultural historians have been demonstrating the existence of dynamic change in the countryside, especially during the first third of the twentieth century. This optimistic approach to Spanish agriculture, first elaborated by the Catalan historian Roman Garrabou in the mid 1970s, and reinforced by the detailed and exhaustive studies of the Grupo de Estudios de Historia Rural in the 1980s, forms the background to Vicente Pinilla's nicely constructed account of Aragonese agriculture from the middle of the nineteenth century to the Spanish Civil War. Indeed, Pinilla's work, published by the Ministry of Agriculture, is the first volume to appear

of a third generation of research consisting of regional approaches to Spanish agriculture at this time. As such, it will surely be a model for future investigation. Its title *Between Inertia and Change* bears witness to a marked dualism in this region of north-eastern Spain between the remarkable transformation which took place in the irrigated lands of the Ebro valley in the province of Saragossa and the limited possibilities for growth and development in the dry farming areas of Huesca and Teruel. Pinilla's painstaking approach builds up a detailed picture, based on a variety of hitherto little consulted data, of the contrasting fortunes of the two zones, focusing on the role of the environment on potential economic development, the availability of water resources, soil quality, climate and altitude.

Part Two of the work details changes in agricultural production, particularly from the late 1880s onwards. Here he shows that cereals dominated Aragonese agriculture throughout the period. The vine, hit by the ubiquitous phylloxera outbreak of the 1890s, experienced a sharp reduction in the surface area planted, despite the introduction of American vinestock, at considerable cost to the region's small landowners. The most rapid changes occurred after the turn of the century with the introduction of industrial crops, especially sugar beet, forage and alfalfa, thanks in no small part to the provisions of both irrigation and artificial fertilizers. If the general outlines of Pinilla's study were already familiar to specialists, his use of sources and careful marshalling of the evidence make this a most valuable contribution to our growing understanding of Spanish agriculture during this formative period.

JOSEPH HARRISON

BRIAN SHORT, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain*, CUP, 1997. xviii + 380 pp. £45.

In 1981 David Spring delivered the Tawney lecture to the Economic History Society on 'Land and Politics in Edwardian England' (subsequently published in *Agricultural History*). In the same year Avner Offer published his *Property and Politics 1870-1914*. To many of us these were ground-breaking studies: before 1980, economic historians rarely worked on landownership in the period after the great agricultural depression and many books on the theme ended with a short 'sunset' chapter, picturing the twentieth-century owners of land dwindling in number and status, within a world of debt, depression and death, taxation, rural poverty and the casualties of 1914-1918 completing their ruin. Brideshead had finally succumbed to the age of Hooper.

There were obstacles to investigating the financial state of landowners in the twentieth century, in particular the difficulty of finding good primary sources. The

state, in the nineteenth century, had quantified and described many aspects of rural life, through a series of royal commissions and select committees. Record offices housed large collections of estate archives from the nineteenth and earlier centuries. Much less was available, however, for the twentieth century. The surveys of the state were closed for periods ranging from thirty to 100 years. In some localities, archivists were not interested in gathering bulky modern archives, which often came with restrictions placed upon their use. Many estate owners and their agents were unwilling to allow scholars access to their 'modern' records, in some cases their unwillingness being strengthened by their suspicion that left-wing academics were looking for material with which to blacken them.

There existed, however, a vast survey of land-ownership and land values for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the so-called 'Domesday', which was one result of Lloyd George's people's budget of 1909-1910. The records of the survey were released by the Inland Revenue Office in the late 1970s: Brian Short has now (following his earlier articles and short book of the 1980s) written an excellent and very detailed account of the surviving archives. His purpose is the exploration of an archival source of enormous size (he estimates some 40 million pieces of information for England and Wales). His book serves admirably to lead scholars through the intricacies of the interrelated material in its various locations.

When the archives were released, the Public Record Office decided to keep the field books (IR58) and the Ordnance Survey record sheets (IR121, 124-35). The remaining material was offered to county and other record offices, some of which declined the whole, some only accepted part. It is disappointing that Short's list of valuation documents held in local repositories contains so many 'not known', 'no information' or 'no reply' returns. Record offices receive too many questionnaires, but 'no reply' from the National Library of Wales? And did not the PRO keep a record of whom were sent what, possibly even a receipt? These are national archives. The North Yorkshire set was housed, filthy and unlisted, in need of repair, in an unheated workhouse. Short in his appendix records that Sheffield Library staff alleged they had refused the valuation maps, but the South Yorkshire CRO claimed that the Library had destroyed them. Many of the archives are unlisted and so currently untraceable. County boundary changes in 1973 and later have further complicated the location of material: some areas have been in three counties in the last twenty-five years.

In general Short's explanatory text is excellent for England and Wales, rather more abbreviated for Scotland and Eire, and there could be no discussion of

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Northern Ireland as all the material is missing. The book has an admirable bibliography and a useful index. It is generally free of misprints, although BPP LXXII, 1874 should be *Return of the Owners of Land*, and there is a curious error on the copyright page which suggests Short's title was once *The Land of Edwardian Britain*. As well as detailed descriptions of the process and product of the survey, Short includes a number of case studies. He warns that there are problems, but shows just how useful the material can be for research into land-ownership, housing, land use, industrial and commercial structures (including farm buildings). Agricultural historians will be interested in his case study of the Ashburnham estate in East Sussex. Using the field books and plans in the PRO, and the valuation books in the East Sussex CRO, Short shows which properties the estate held and to which parish they belonged. Valuations were rare on this estate, and tenure was rarely recorded, but property descriptions were generally very good. The sizes of holdings, tenancy agreements and rents are noted. Information on houses includes the number and use of rooms in 238 houses. The principal house was carefully described, down to the colours of some rooms, the outbuildings, the home farm, the lodges and the garden. A farm description, quoted by Short, includes the building material of the farm and its outbuildings, and a sketch plan of the layout of the cart lodge, stable, store room, granary, loose box, meal rooms, oast kiln, cow lodges and pig pound. Combined with MAF returns of 1909, census material and surviving farmsteads, it would be possible from this material to reconstruct an immensely detailed agricultural survey of this or other estates in late Victorian and Edwardian England.

Ten years after the great valuation began, it was still not complete. It was drowning in its own details: the outbreak of the 1914 war and some adverse judicial decisions caused additional problems, and in 1920 it was finally abandoned. Enough remains, however, to provide material for an army of agricultural historians. Short's book is the essential guide to the use of the 1910 'Domesday' archives.

BARBARA ENGLISH

ROBERT F. ASH, ed., *Agricultural development in China, 1940–1989. The collected papers of Kenneth R. Walker (1931–1989)*, OUP, 1998. xi + 367 pp. 112 tabs; 7 figs. £45.

Kenneth Walker, of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, had a considerable influence on the study of the modern Chinese agricultural economy during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This volume, which starts with a short introduction from the editor, brings together papers published by Walker (mainly in

*The China Quarterly*) between 1964 and 1989. It also includes a previously unpublished study by Walker of the provincial-level impact of the so-called 'Great Leap Forward' on grain production and food supply, a study which, with characteristic unrelentingness, describes how and explains why widespread rural famine occurred.

Walker's academic background seems to have been a fairly conventional one for a British agricultural economist – his doctorate from Oxford University's Agricultural Economics Research Institute was on the competition between the Forestry Commission and the agricultural industry for marginal land in Great Britain. At Oxford, like so many others, he was influenced by Colin Clark whose ability to gain insightful understanding of economic development from world-wide quantitative evidence has become legendary. The result was a relentless, possibly obsessive, attention to detail in Walker's work (which is manifested in the number of tables in this book). How he came to focus his intellectual energies on China and how he became adept at using Chinese-language information sources (an important characteristic of his later work) are matters on which the book's editor is silent.

The volume essentially covers the Maoist (collectivist) and Dengist (reformist) periods of Chinese agricultural history, and only touches upon the topical concerns of rural industrialization and regional disparities in rural development. The book is, however, more than simply an historical record since the subject matter has present-day relevance for at least three reasons. Firstly, Walker's writings stress the persistently central role (at times inhibiting, at times facilitatory) of the agricultural sector in China's economic development, a feature which is as relevant today as it ever was. Secondly, agricultural problems in China (especially in the grain sector) remain of major concern both within the country and in world markets. Thirdly, the continuing lack of a 'solution' to China's agricultural problems has led to some disenchantment with the private farming which was encouraged during the reformist period and to the possibility of a degree of re-collectivization being introduced at the local level. Walker's papers are valuable aids to the understanding of the origins of such contemporary issues.

Two strands run through the book. One is Walker's interest in the institutional aspect of China's agricultural development. In particular, he focused attention on the theoretical case for collectivization and on the vexed question of incentives in a collective economy. The second is Walker's interest in the grain sector. The central economic issue for China has long been its ability to feed a large and often densely distributed population, and Walker immersed himself wholeheartedly in collecting

statistics and in making calculations and estimates to assess production and consumption trends.

Ultimately, however, the modern reader must squirm a little at Walker's approach. His 'fieldwork' was conducted in libraries rather than in the Chinese countryside, and one suspects that this was not entirely due to the practical difficulties of working in China in his time. Further, he worked comfortably within a conceptual and practical framework of top-down planning, grandiose management, satisfaction with aggregate statistics and single-minded productivism. Now that such a framework is largely discredited, agricultural economists are increasingly open to anthropological, sociological and even ecological perspectives, and they are more inclined than in Walker's day to consider the impacts of economic developments on ordinary people. Accordingly, Walker's library-based academic method and its focus on major institutions and on central government policy today seem coldly technocratic.

T. N. JENKINS

ROSEMARY FENNELL, *The Common Agricultural Policy*, Clarendon Press, 1997. xiv + 439 pp. £48.

This is a very thorough, intense and detailed study of the evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy, extending to over four hundred pages. It has been written by an agricultural economist but the author deliberately avoids technical economic analysis: in only one of the book's thirteen chapters does the reader require a reasonably sophisticated knowledge of economics.

The author seeks to explain why the policy-makers acted as they did: 'what were their intentions in devising and implementation of the policy; what have they had to say about its effect, and how has the outcome compared with their intentions?' (p. iv). The evidence is drawn primarily from literature emanating from the institutions of the European Union, and particularly the Commission, rather than that of economics and other academic disciplines. This emphasis is clearly reflected in the narrative as well as the bibliography, which is large, extending to some eight pages of institutional references, compared with just over two pages of 'other references'. Economists requiring a survey and evaluation of the economics literature on the CAP may be disappointed. Thus, for example, the 'economics chapter' provides little on the various empirical estimates of the economic costs of the CAP or on the practical and theoretical limitations that are inherent in this kind of analysis. This, however, does not detract from the merits of the book, as it is pitched at a wider audience; indeed non-economists may regard it as a blessing!

The coverage and detail of the book is impressive. It is well written and its writing must have been a

monumental task, as indeed is its reading. The early chapters cover the foundations of the CAP in the 1950s and 1960s, and it is interesting to read how far-sighted were policy-makers in their analysis of the problems that were subsequently to bedevil the CAP, even if the policies adopted failed to reflect their foresight. The subsequent chapters are thematic, focusing on specific aspects of the CAP. Two chapters provide statistical evidence on farm incomes within the EU, as well as a discussion of the problems of their measurement, comparability, interpretation, and questions of welfare, household and non-farm income sources. Some of this is fairly technical but a thorough discussion of income issues is to be welcomed given the centrality of agricultural incomes in policy formulation. Further chapters discuss price and market policies, the reasons for their pre-eminence over structural policies (a major criticism made of the CAP), the famous and to some, infamous, Mansholt Plan, the weaknesses of structural policy, the *ad hoc* measures to help disadvantaged farmers and problem regions, production and marketing policies, commercial policy, and the most recent policy dimensions concerning environmental issues and rural development, culminating in a final chapter on unresolved issues. In this the author essentially does a stock-taking exercise, covering all the different aspects of policy, their successes and failures and potential future directions. The unresolved issues are many, so much so that the reader might wonder as to what precisely the CAP has achieved.

The discussion of incomes policy is particularly interesting although the author does not consider what income and employment in agriculture might have been in the absence of the CAP, for example in a more or less free market situation. The sections on eastern enlargement of the EU and environmental policy are also thought provoking. In conclusion, the appropriateness of the continuation of a sectoral policy for agriculture is seriously questioned and the proposal made that the EU's objectives might be better achieved, not only by further policy reform of the CAP, but by a broader multi-sectoral approach to rural areas and their problems. Despite the CAP's long history, the author demonstrates that there are clearly important unresolved issues and whilst the reader may not agree with all the conclusions in the final chapter, it is a stimulating and thoughtful one. This is a valuable book which fills a large gap in the literature of the CAP and the history of the EU and the author is to be congratulated.

GARTH HUGHES

B. POWELL AND N. WESTACOTT, *The Women's Land Army, 1939-1950*, Sutton Publishing, 1997. 126 pp. Illus. £9.99.

Indifferent as I am to the opinions of post-Freudian analysts, I freely admit that among my most treasured possessions from childhood is a pair of rather ragged shorts cut from my mother's Land Army corduroy breeches. It will come as no surprise then, that my reading of this book, comprising more than two hundred photographs celebrating the achievements of the Women's Land Army during the last war, was an experience wherein enlightenment was intermingled with *frisson* and nostalgia.

Under the direction of the inimitable Lady Trudie Denman, Women's Land Army county committees were established in 1938, and the Army itself officially formed in June 1939. As recruiting got underway numbers of landgirls expanded from 7445 in November 1940 to a peak of 77,000 in August 1943, after which recruitment declined in the face of advancing demand for women to work in munitions factories. Clutching their joining certificates and copies of W E Shewell-Cooper's *Land Girl*, a manual for volunteers published in 1941, the girls, some eagerly, and some with misgivings, underwent a brief period of training before being allocated to farms. While some volunteers travelled each day from their homes, others were billeted with farmers and their workers, the remainder being lodged in hostels which might vary in salubrity from a dank Nissen hut to a palatial country house. Many, of course, were away from home for the first time, and it required considerable strength of character to cope with the temporary severance of family ties, the social and cultural isolation of rural life and, in the case of town bred girls, the frequently churlish attitude of their country cousins. But there were compensations. Saturday nights out on the town with the girls (the more pleasurable if a RAF or USAF base happened to be nearby), membership of the YFC, tea parties with the local gentry, and other innocent diversions provided some escape from the agricultural treadmill.

Powell and Westacott's book, based upon a large collection of photographs accumulated after an appeal in 1994, is divided into a sequence of sections dealing with aspects of the landgirl's life, each preceded by a brief introduction. Admirable as the photographs are, the book tells us little about the landgirl's attitude towards her work, her hopes, concerns and fears; or of the often ambiguous attitude of her employer and his male workers. As the authors freely admit, the photographs were submitted in the main from W.L.A. members who enjoyed their days on the land; those for whom it was unmitigated hell (and there were many) are not represented in this volume. Thus we have smiling girls on

tractors, girls leading horses, happy looking maidens hoeing mangolds under the sunshine, bare legs tanning in the harvest fields and so on. Not much sign here of the rotten winter jobs: mucking out bullock yards by hand, picking brassicas in January frost, ploughing hour upon hour in driving rain on a cableless Caterpillar tractor, one's shoulders protected by a hessian sack! And how clean and well-scrubbed some of the girls seem, looking for all the world like Stubbs' haymakers or Francis Wheatley's milkmaids! This is especially so in the minority of carefully-posed photographs in the collection. In one case three girls are creosoting a poultry house, a worthy and creditable task, although surely not one to be undertaken in shorts with what appears to be an artist's paintbrush.

But these are carping criticisms and one is constantly impressed both by the range of work and the sheer hard labour undertaken by members of the W.L.A. I shudder at the thought, let alone the sight of a rat, and cannot but admire the enthusiasm with which the two hundred W.L.A. pest controllers went about their noisome and grizzly task in the winter of 1942. Again, it was fascinating to read of all-female itinerant threshing gangs, the photographs of which invite comparison with Hardy's description of threshing in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. One particular (posed) photograph of girls loading 18 stone sacks of wheat on to a trailer recalled for this reviewer many hours spent dragging 'railway sacks' of grain across rutted fields, and the silent prayers of thanks offered for the development of the tanker combine. On many holdings the arrival of the landgirls coincided with the arrival of the farm's first tractor, perhaps on hire or on loan from the War Ag. There was much muttering and moaning among the rural wisecracks as to the competence of females with machines, particularly with the early tractors which were frequently reluctant to start and often eccentric in steering and braking. Yet, for all the comment, the girls mastered the tractors and appurtenant machinery with no difficulties, and as the war passed on even the most obscurantist males grudgingly admitted that the women at last were doing a man's job.

In fact, they did an absolutely vital job. Without the W.L.A., the armed services and prisoners-of-war, Britain could not have farmed its way through the period of hostilities, which makes it all the more surprising that demobilized landgirls (unlike their colleagues in the fighting forces) received no monetary gratuity. Since Vita Sackville-West's 1944 volume there appear to have been few attempts to produce a definitive scholarly history of the W.L.A. Although the official records were destroyed after the War, there remain collections in local archive offices which might form the basis of such a work; compensation in a sense to surviving W.L.A. members treated

in so offhand a way by a niggardly government. Powell and Westacott's collection of photographs duly whet the appetite.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

ROY BRIGDEN, *Ploughs and Ploughing*, Shire, 1998. 32 pp. £2.95; DAVID HANCOCK, *Old Working Dogs*, Shire, 1998. 32 pp. £2.95; IVAN G. SPARKES, *Old Horseshoes*, Shire, 1998. 32 pp. £2.95.

These three volumes comprise reprints originally published in the 1970s and 1980s in the informative and lavishly-illustrated 'Shire' series. Brigden's rather breathless run through the history of the plough from ard to three-point linkage includes much useful technical detail and an excellent section on the craft of ploughing itself, a craft whose mastery raised the dignity of the practitioner above the common run of labour. The development of the light 'Rotherham' plough, a defining moment in the history of British agriculture, occurred in response to the need to reduce draught power and as these implements became factory-produced, so their basic features were incorporated in ploughs for the next century or so. Nevertheless, the village ploughwright's craft was still required as ploughs evolved in accordance with regional and local needs and soil types. In the early nineteenth century, for example, visitors to local and national agricultural shows were able to inspect a great variety of ploughs, some matched to soil characteristics and others to seasonal requirements.

Despite the appearance of steam ploughing in the 1870s, the self-lifting ploughs of the inter-war period and eventually of Harry Ferguson's mould-breaking three-point linkage system, ploughs were predominantly pulled by animal power from the Bronze age to the outbreak of Hitler's war. Draught animals, of course, needed to be shod, and Ivan Sparkes' *Old Horseshoes* traces the horseshoe from the Roman *sola ferrea* via the early nailed shoes of the fifth century, to the racing plates and ploughing shoes of the present day. In so doing he emphasizes both the variety of design and the ingenuity with which shoes met the conformational and veterinary needs of animals of different shapes and sizes. The farrier's art seemed capable of accommodating every contingency from overshoes, mud shoes, leather shoes (for ponies dragging movers across genteel lawns), shoes for oxen, donkeys, laminitic animals and so on. I have long

been impressed by those scholars who can sustain, over a long period, a narrow focus on the arcane and esoteric, particularly where this involves mastering a vocabulary of technical terms often of baffling complexity. Sparkes manages to write interestingly on the horseshoe without feeling the need to resort to the sort of exclusionist language employed by many commentators on equine and equestrian matters.

So too does Colonel Hancock in his volume *Old Working Dogs*, meaning, incidentally, working dogs formerly numerous, rather than working dogs stricken in years. Having been bitten by, mauled by, and generally pestered by dogs for a long while I am not over-enamoured by the creatures. Yet I found Hancock's work of abiding interest. Whether he is describing terriers, shooting dogs or pastoral working dogs, he writes with the sort of enthusiasm which one might expect of a regular contributor to *Dogs Monthly*. What is particularly remarkable (and this is paralleled in sheep, cattle, pigs and horses) is the steep decline in the number and range of local types, when the list of recognized Kennel Club breeds is compared with the situation in the past. If animals like the Sealyham, the Cardiganshire Corgi and the Sussex Spaniel are now numerically weak, the Wheaten Norfolk Heeler, the Antrim Glenwherry and the Sussex Bobtail are finally extinct, with the usual implications for genetic diversity. Like other volumes in the 'Shire' series, this is a most useful little reference work. I did not know, for example, that the Pembrokehire Corgi probably originated from Swedish Vallhund blood introduced by early Scandinavian settlers in south Wales, or that that most unprepossessing of dogs, the Dandie Dinmont (chosen, peculiarly enough, for stardom by Scott in *Guy Mannering*), is close to extinction. Referring to the inevitable whiff of anthropomorphism among breeders of élite animals, Harriet Ritvo observed some ten years ago that in the pursuit of pedigree such people celebrated themselves as well as the breeds they were perpetuating. In this context I loved Colonel Hancock's rather sniffy references to the 'artisan sportsman' who prized Scottish Deerhound blood in their lurchers; men 'who show no respect for pedigree'. But the three volumes mentioned above lend lustre to the Shire pedigree, and one looks forward to more in the same vein.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER