

Book Reviews

The British Isles

ROSAMOND FAITH, *The English peasantry and the growth of lordship* (Leicester UP, 1997, pb edn 1999). xi + 304 pp. 31 figs. £19.99.

This important work on English rural society from the fall of Roman Britain to the end of the twelfth century was strangely neglected by a number of academic journals on its first appearance in 1997. The welcome publication of a paperback edition (with minor corrections) provides an opportunity to remind readers of the relevance of Faith's study to the work of a wide range of medieval historians. The book seeks to describe, date and explain the emergence of the classic manorialism which existed in England by the thirteenth century. Earlier historians have been divided on whether to see the peasantry of Anglo-Saxon England as enjoying a free status and relative freedom from seigniorial burdens or whether, as in more recent studies, to emphasize the manorial nature of Anglo-Saxon society with the distinction between the lord's demesne and the land of the peasants being in place perhaps as early as the seventh century. In a sense Faith manages to combine both approaches by distinguishing between the geld-free 'inland', characterized by a dependent and relatively heavily burdened population of smallholders and slaves, and the geldable 'warland' with larger farms of free tenants owing fixed and unalterable services and renders who were the precursors of those later described as holding land 'in socage'. In general, however, Faith's emphasis is on the relatively late spread of manorialism. She thus rejects the statement of tenant obligations in the famous, tenth-century *Rectitudines singularum personarum* as representative of English society as a whole at this date. Indeed, she lays particular stress on the importance of the developments that followed the Norman conquest, with an expansion of manorial demesnes and a decline in the numbers of freemen and sokemen, a process which continued in the twelfth century when the emergence of the new common law conception of villeinage was developed in relation to the appearance of new obligations (merchet, tallage etc.) to which peasants were liable.

Covering a period of almost a thousand years, Faith demonstrates a mastery of a wide range of types of

evidence, from place-names, topography and archaeology to formidably technical and difficult documentary sources. As its focus is mainly on rural social relations, her book has little to say on agricultural production or techniques although it does touch on matters such as the origins of the common fields, the rise of the nucleated village and the nature of household structure. At times, the actual social and economic reality underlying some of the legalistic terms used to describe social groups before 1100 is not always clear. Who, for instance, were the 'slaves' who made up nearly twenty per cent of the recorded population in some Domesday counties: surely not all of these people were specialist demesne workers? Furthermore, this is a densely-argued book which students will not always find an easy read. The non-expert reader would certainly have benefitted from greater historiographical guidance and from clearer contrasts with the more familiar manorial arrangements of later centuries in order to understand the technicalities of earlier social relations. Nevertheless, Faith's reassessment of pre-Conquest history and its re-evaluation of the traditional view of the twelfth century as a period of manorial 'dissolution' deserves to be widely-read by both teachers and students.

S. H. RIGBY

BRUCE M. S. CAMPBELL, *English seigniorial agriculture, 1250-1450* (CUP, 2000). xxvi + 517 pp. 51 tables; 82 figs. £60.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted, but it repays the reader's perseverance because it is presenting important ideas on the basis of high quality data that has been analyzed using novel techniques. The less resolute readers may be fearful of the dozens of maps and tables, the frequent use of technical terms, and the pages peppered with unfamiliar initials, such as WAGY (weighted aggregate grain yield). The book could have made more concessions to the less expert reader, because although in general the results are presented clearly, formulations such as 'work intensity was handicapped by a sub-optimal ratio of labour to land' could have been expressed in more accessible language. The book also deserves a more inviting title.

The basis for this study is the remarkable quantity of

reliable and detailed evidence assembled for lords and the state in the later middle ages. Campbell has transcribed every manorial account for Norfolk. As a leading figure in the 'Feeding the city' project, he has been able to add evidence for the counties around London. Professor John Langdon and a research project based at Belfast provided a nationwide set of data from accounts and the Inquisitions Post Mortem. The sample has obvious imbalances, particularly the heavy emphasis on East Anglia and the south-east, but there is a good deal of evidence from the midlands, west and north, making this the largest and most comprehensive collection of material on which any individual scholar has worked in this period.

The book begins with a helpful chronological orientation, a survey of the sources and an examination of lords' demesnes and their importance. Then successive chapters deal with demesne livestock, arable production, the choice of crops, productivity, and then after a brief excursus into the size of the population, a survey of changes within the period.

Campbell is frank in his acceptance that the demesnes which he is studying represent only a fraction, perhaps a quarter, of the productive land in medieval England, but they are the only holdings with plentiful information. It is difficult in a short review to do justice to the wealth of material and insights that are presented here. We see regional differences in a new light thanks to dozens of maps generated by the use of Geographical Information Systems, and by the use of cluster analysis to identify different types of demesne economies. The maps indicate a broad tendency for land values and the intensity in the use of land to diminish from east to west, but there is a patchwork of shading which immediately attracts interest. Why, for example, are meadow values as high in south Derbyshire as in Suffolk and Essex? We can see that a type of demesne economy, while most frequently encountered in one region, also appears in different parts of the country. For example, Campbell identifies extensive cultivation of oats as one type of demesne cropping, which is found, as we would expect, in West Yorkshire and Cumberland. There is also a group of such demesnes around London, where some manors were geared to supply London's demand for horse fodder. But one or two demesnes practising extensive oats cultivation are scattered over a dozen counties, from Cornwall to Suffolk. Differences in soil, climate and markets, combined with decisions by estate managers created an even more complicated and varied picture than we had realized.

We are presented throughout this book with ideas and generalizations which make us see the period in a new light. The main approaches are familiar from Campbell's earlier articles, but it is very useful to see them presented

together, and there is much fresh material. The themes include the rationale behind demesne production, the interconnections between arable and livestock husbandry, and the differences between regions. Problems to which he constantly returns are the advanced nature of the Norfolk farming system, and the technological and economic gap between Norfolk and much of the rest of the country. Another major concern is the economic character of the period around 1300, and the contrast with the period after the Black Death. He recognizes the high pressure around 1300, but cannot accept a Malthusian explanation of the fourteenth-century crisis. He prefers to see the Great Famine of 1315-17 as an accident of nature.

Many readers will find the chapter on population most challenging, because Campbell calculates the amount of food that could have been produced in England in c. 1300, and finds that it cannot have been sufficient to support more than 4.25 million mouths. This is a remarkable turnabout, because this suggestion is near to the figure of 3.7 million calculated by J. C. Russell in the 1940s, and universally regarded as too low by successive researchers, who have preferred an estimate in the range of five to six million, even as high as seven million. Perhaps it would have been preferable to have opened this debate elsewhere, because Campbell lacks the space here to consider the demographic details, and the chapter distracts the reader from the main themes of the book. His calculations are based on estimates of sown areas, yields and calories with inevitable margins of error. The calculation of over six million, most recently made by Smith, using back projection from the Poll Tax, must carry great weight. Campbell's calculations deserve discussion, but the problem is surely that the evidence is too imprecise. To take a single example, the assumption that the very large barley and dredge crops were used primarily for brewing ale takes too little account of the evidence for the consumption of barley bread before the Black Death. If it is assumed that a third of the barley crop was consumed in solid form, thereby giving the consumers many more calories than they would gain from ale, the estimate of the number of people who could be fed in 1300 would rise significantly.

Campbell has done more than anyone to open up a subject which was in danger of being confined within a rather determinist framework in the 1960s and 1970s. His picture of a flexible and adaptable system of grain production, based on his Norfolk researches, came in the 1980s as a breath of fresh air. In this book he still celebrates the achievements of Norfolk cultivators, but takes perhaps too negative a view of other parts of the country. For him (in a tone of real disappointment) the rest of England failed to follow the Norfolk example.

He uses pessimistic images, writing of a 'shadow' that lay across the land, referring to the constraints that prevented further 'progress'. The less Whiggish view that could be based on Campbell's pioneering work is that Norfolk developed its system of husbandry because it needed to, given the region's population density, urban population and commercial vigour. Norfolk agriculture achieved its results through sheer hard work, performed by ill-paid labour, and no blame should be attached to the inhabitants of other regions who could cultivate profitably with more extensive systems, without so much drudgery. The benefit of Campbell's approach, which is perhaps not as prominently and consistently displayed in this book as in his earlier work, is that it celebrates the ingenuity of cultivators. This could be observed throughout the country and at all periods. He, together with Brandon and Roden and other historians of regions with distinctive farming methods, taught us that medieval people were not trapped in mindless routines and rigid 'systems'. Researchers on the midlands, for example, do not find the same levels of productivity as in Norfolk, but can still see intelligent medieval managers of agriculture finding solutions to practical problems, within restricting circumstances of course, but also making choices and seizing opportunities.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

H. S. A. FOX AND O. J. PADEL (eds), *The Cornish lands of the Arundells of Lanherne, fourteenth to sixteenth centuries* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new ser., 41, 2000 for 1998). clvi + 279 pp. 1 fig; 3 maps. £18 incl p&p from Assistant Secretary, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 7 The Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ. Most of the documents printed in this volume derive from the extensive archive of the Arundell family, now preserved at Cornwall Record Office. Until 1991 this important collection – consisting of some 28,000 documents dating from the twelfth century to the twentieth – was housed at Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, largely inaccessible to historians. After lengthy negotiations and considerable fund-raising, however, the archive was sold by private treaty to the county record offices of Cornwall and Wiltshire. The two branches of the Arundell family – of Lanherne and Wardour – were joined by marriage in 1739; but their respective estates continued to be administered separately. It was, therefore, a relatively straightforward undertaking to divide the papers between the record offices in Truro and Trowbridge.

The documents printed here in English translation constitute a small but significant portion of the Cornish archive of the Arundell family, which has been subject to a full and detailed cataloguing programme at Cornwall Record Office. They consist entirely of rentals, surveys

and extents, ranging in date from 1343 to c. 1586, and encompassing the whole of the Arundell estate which lay scattered throughout mid- and western Cornwall. The documents provide evidence of the rents and services owed by the free and conventional tenants of the Arundell manors for their tenements, the bulk of which have been identified and located by Padel. This is, in itself, a significant achievement, revealing the extent to which the tenements of a single manor were spread across a number of different parishes.

The editors deserve praise both for their clear presentation of the texts and for their comprehensive introduction to them. Padel outlines the history of the various branches of the Arundell family, the growth of their Cornish estate between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and explains the operation of the manorial system in the county. The complexities of the different types of tenure and the geographical spread of tenements, often at some distance from the manorial centre, are described with exemplary clarity. He also discusses the nature of the documents printed and examines the different types of surname found in the texts. Meanwhile, Fox provides a masterly analysis of the sixteenth-century Cornish landscape as revealed by these surveys. He demonstrates how the small closes of the county, surrounded by their characteristically 'mighty great hedges', were well adapted both to arable and pastoral farming practices. Furthermore, he establishes the very considerable extent of strip-field farming in the west of the county, which has been underestimated by historians in the past, and explains that the small size of strips enabled a more equitable distribution of land and rent among the tenants. Finally, he contrasts manors on which tenements were prone to decline and decay with those on which they were more resilient, concluding that this was largely the result of varying demand for foodstuffs by tanners and cloth workers. He also demonstrates the weak state of hereditary succession among the Arundells' tenants.

This volume contains much to recommend it to the agricultural historian. It provides a considerable amount of information about the late medieval and early modern rural economy and society in a part of the country that is too often overlooked, and offers a context and framework for the further exploration of an archive that is only now beginning to yield up its treasures.

MARK PAGE

TERRY BARRY (ed.), *A history of settlement in Ireland* (Routledge, 2000). xv + 296 pp. 6 plates; 37 figs. £40. This short collection of essays reviews the work that has been carried out on Irish settlement during the past fifty years or so. The study of Irish settlement was effectively pioneered by Estyn Evans and T. Jones Hughes. Evans'

work was especially influential, offering a view of the Irish countryside that stressed its deep-rooted continuities, with the origin of key institutional forms like the clachan being extended back into prehistory. Inevitably, such an assumption strips away much potential theme, leaving the study of both prehistory and history with seemingly the same problem, a point well made in the chapter by Kevin Whelan when he quotes a typical phrase by Evans to the effect that in the far west, 'history and prehistory seem to co-exist and all time is fore-shortened into a living present'. Encouraged by the work of groups like the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement (GSIHS), and drawing on the interdisciplinary approaches and diverse methodologies being applied to settlement studies elsewhere, scholars have now built a more informed and critical understanding of how settlement in Ireland has evolved in the very long term. In the process, simplistic assumptions about the deep-rooted continuities of the Irish countryside have been abandoned and replaced by new themes that stress its continual flux and adjustment.

After a short foreword by Robin Glasscock, one of the organizing figures behind GSIHS, the book opens with a chapter on prehistoric settlement by Gabriel Cooney that is easily one of the best in the book. It skilfully summarizes a great deal of new data in a masterly way, being especially successful in the way it draws out broad shifts in the pattern of settlement and in the way it emphasizes what may have been different about Irish prehistoric settlement. Early medieval Irish settlement has long been a much debated issue. On the one hand, there is the abundant field evidence for ringforts (c. 60,000 sites), a type of settlement now known to have been mainly if not exclusively occupied c. 600–900 AD. On the other, there has been vigorous debate over how the supposed gaps in the pattern of ringforts might be filled, with Evans' notion of the timeless clachan being imaginatively drawn on by a range of scholars to fill out the early medieval landscape, albeit in a form that seemingly left little durable trace. These issues are dealt with in two chapters that tend to overlap in coverage. That by Charles Doherty is a particularly lively review. It firmly rejects the idea that the clachan had prehistoric roots but, mindful of how the wider European debate has run, does allow for what he terms 'pre-village nucleations', traces of which may lie buried beneath settlements that continued to thrive. Mathew Stout's essay examines the different sources of evidence for the period and, as one would expect, includes a substantial and well-illustrated section on ringforts. After a short essay by the book's editor, Terry Barry, that reviews the extensive survey work carried out on the different types of Anglo-Norman settlement, including castles, mottes, moated farmsteads

and tower houses, there is a thoughtful discussion of medieval urbanism by Brian Graham, one that is particularly good at setting the feudal context in which urban centres developed. Given how much recent work has addressed the matter, it is not surprising that the effect of the plantations on the Irish landscape is covered by two chapters. One by John Andrews deals with the thinking that lay behind the plantations as regards settlement, the other by Willie Smyth dealing with how changes in administrative and ecclesiastical structures affected settlement. These are both well-written, insightful essays. The chapter on eighteenth-century Ireland by Kevin Whelan is equally successful, presenting a well-framed contrast between the areas of population accumulation and the areas where the spread of stock farming led to clearances and settlement abandonment. Patrick Duffy's task of summarizing settlement changes since 1800 was particularly challenging, but he adopts the right balance between generalization and detail to make it an effective essay, with interesting comment on the destruction of settlement sites and buildings that took place across the twentieth century, either through population contraction and settlement abandonment, the Troubles or through recent farm improvement. Finally, rounding off the book is a wide-ranging and critical bibliographic essay by Anngret Simms, one that guides the reader through the changing viewpoints on Irish settlement and the published work that sustained them.

Whilst there is a degree of overlap between some essays that could have been edited out, the various essays in this volume come together very effectively as a coherent and well-judged text. Almost without exception, they review a great deal of material and debate and do so with a degree of style. Indeed, some essays are extremely well-written. When combined with the excellent maps and bibliographical support for the text, it makes for a very successful book, one that serves its purpose very well indeed.

ROBERT A. DODGSHON

ROBERT DUNNING (ed.), *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of Somerset*, VII, *Wincanton and neighbouring parishes* (OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 2000). xii + 276 pp. 34 illus; 33 maps. £70.

The latest volume of Somerset VCH surveys the parochial history of the south-eastern corner of the county, bordering upon Wiltshire and Dorset. The area extends from the edge of Salisbury Plain along the fringe of the Blackmoor Vale to the heavy clays of south Somerset. Although it is crossed by the busy road and rail routes from London to the west country, this remains a little-known district of small villages and isolated farms,

linked by a network of narrow, winding roads and lanes. The royal forest of Selwood occupied the eastern fringe of the district, and large areas of woodland survive on the steep hillsides. It contains only three small market towns at Wincanton, Bruton and Milborne Port, although the historically important markets of Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Yeovil and Frome are nearby. Industrial activity has included long-established textile trades, supplying woollen cloth for export from Bristol and the Dorset ports. The manufacture of gloves occupied many people as 'out-workers' in the villages, and silk-weaving became an important trade during the eighteenth century. The district has always depended mainly upon agriculture, especially on livestock farming and dairying, and this volume contains much of interest for agricultural historians. The large number of medieval mills suggests that arable cultivation was widespread, but cheese production was a major activity throughout the Middle Ages and became increasingly important from the sixteenth century. Cheese remained a major feature of all the local markets and fairs, with factors sending butter, cheese and pork to London and Bristol. With the coming of the railways, the sale of liquid milk became the mainstay of most farms, and large milk collecting and processing factories were established at Bruton, Temple Combe, Wincanton, Marston Magna and elsewhere. Milk production continues to be crucial, and many farms in the district are entirely given over to grassland and fodder crops. This volume was written before the recent collapse in the price of milk which is so badly affecting farmers throughout the region.

In the usual tradition of VCH volumes, we are provided with excellent information on the sources for each parish, as well as on manors, landowners, churches, population and social life. In particular, the meticulous accounts of manorial history, estates and tenures provide an invaluable and authoritative resource for local history. The sober presentation masks the skill and industry required to compile these useful summaries. The division into parishes inevitably means that some important aspects of agricultural history can merit only a brief mention or have to be searched for within each section. Information on marketing is restricted because many of the major markets and fairs were just outside the area. Likewise topics such as the long-established trade in young cattle and sheep from Wales, the effects of the disafforestation of the royal forest during the 1620s, and the major change produced by the railways which revolutionized life on the farms by the demand for a daily supply of liquid milk for the towns do not easily lend themselves to a parochial treatment. One general and depressing feature of life in the district which emerges very clearly from the parish histories is the decay and

cessation of local fairs, festivities and revels, and the closure of so many small public houses, shops, post offices, village schools and nonconformist chapels during the past century.

During the middle ages there was a major Augustinian monastery at Bruton, a preceptory of the Templars and later of the Hospitallers at Temple Combe and a small Augustinian priory at Stavordale, near Wincanton. The wealthy Benedictine nunnery at nearby Shaftesbury and several other local monasteries also possessed lands in the district. From the sixteenth century major landowners included the Berkeleys at Bruton, the Fox-Strangways family at Redlynch, the Medlycotts at Ven, near Milborne Port and the Hoares at Stourhead just over the Wiltshire border. The volume includes details of estate management, farming, tenures and improvements on these estates, as well as on the mansions, deer-parks, gardens, orchards, follies and farmsteads which they created. The well-documented information about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century leases and improved farming methods encouraged by the landowners, notably the introduction of new fodder crops, is particularly useful.

As with all recent VCH volumes, excellent maps of the hundreds and of each parish are included and there is a large selection of illustrations with many early views of churches, mansions and landscapes. This well-produced volume with the usual comprehensive references to documentary sources, maintains the customary high scholarly standard of the VCH.

J. H. BETTEY

JAMES A. GALLOWAY (ed.), *Trade, urban hinterlands and market integration, c.1300-1600* (Centre for Metropolitan History, Working Papers Series 3, 2000). x + 109 pp. 7 tables; 18 figs. £10.

This collection of papers stems from a symposium held in July 1999. Making current research and ideas more widely available in under a year is an impressive feat, though the need for speed (perhaps due in part to the pressure of exogenously imposed deadlines?) has not enhanced reader-friendliness. Most notably, the collection lacks an effective introduction. In some respects, this role is performed by the opening paragraphs of Dyer's useful 'summing up', but this by itself – naturally tucked away at the back of the volume – is no substitute for an initial discussion of the historiographical context. Essentially, the papers assess the degree of maturity exhibited by the (chiefly English) economy in c.1300 and the extent to which this situation was subsequently transformed (the bulk of the volume concerns the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). In particular, the authors respond to Masschaele's recent work on inland trade, in which he argues that England's marketing system was

highly sophisticated by c.1300 and characterized by a hierarchy of closely integrated town and country markets that were driven by urban demand.

Britnell kicks off by arguing that Masschaele's model significantly underestimates both the weight of rural demand in England at the turn of the fourteenth century and the extent to which marketing patterns were restructured in the later middle ages. In Britnell's view, the market environment that Masschaele envisages for 1300 was more in evidence at the close of the middle ages, an argument which neatly deflects the debate about late medieval urban decline more towards the 'changing relationships both between towns and between townsmen and their rural suppliers'. In this sense, this stimulating survey paves the way for the empirical contributions that follow. Galloway uses wheat price data derived from a handful of Winchester demesnes and from the London and Exeter assizes to argue that an integrated market for grain had to some extent emerged in southern England by the early fourteenth century. However, he notes that price volatility suggests that the grain market was only partially integrated at this time, and that it was also prone to periods of significant disruption in the longer term, especially in the two decades after the Black Death. Nightingale and Keene both exploit records of debt to depict changing patterns of economic integration over time. Nightingale's analysis of the cyclical expansion and contraction of credit in commercially precocious Norfolk in the first half of the fourteenth century suggests that Norwich's influence over the regional economy at that time was actually fairly limited, fluctuated considerably, and was generally in decline. Keene, meanwhile, investigates changes in London's hinterland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries using snapshots provided by debt cases from 1424 and 1570 and concludes that London was becoming increasingly dominant during this period, not least as a distributor of imported and manufactured goods, although the precise relationship between the metropolis and the provinces varied markedly.

Although, as Dyer notes, there are some notable continuities in the urban hierarchy from 1300 onwards, these papers nevertheless indicate that the marketing system of late medieval England was less well integrated and subject to more change than Masschaele's conception of economic development allows. This perhaps stands out most starkly in the comparative context offered by Eiden and Irsigler's lucid study of the development of Cologne and Nuremberg, which details the intensification of the already close economic and administrative interconnections between these cities and their hinterlands in the later middle ages. However, any conclusions drawn from this volume about the extent and progress of market integration should remain tentative: some of the essays

are very much, as labelled, 'working papers', containing new but provisional data and fresh but exploratory ideas. Another role that an introduction could usefully have fulfilled would therefore have been to assess the potential and the limitations of the various approaches and sources used. For example, given the significance of consumer demand, the behaviour of prices of cheaper bread grains and malting grains in the pre- and post-Black Death periods respectively may well be revealing. Moreover, the interpretation and use of debt records requires further consideration, not least because short-term fluctuations in credit appear to cast considerable doubt on the typicality of snapshots.

DAVID STONE

KATHERINE L. FRENCH, GARY G. GIBBS and BEAT A. KUMIN (eds), *The parish in English life, 1400-1600* (Manchester UP, 1997). xii + 276 pp. 16 illus; 6 figs; 7 tables. £45.

This valuable collection brings together fourteen essays, the majority of them by younger scholars, on the late medieval parish as a cultural and financial institution. The editors' concise introduction, especially valuable for its erudite summary of a surprisingly complex historiography, calls for more comparative approaches to local institutional cultures, both between medievalists and early modernists, and between practitioners of English and continental history. While Kumin's own analysis of the English parish in a European perspective is a significant (if tentative) step in this latter direction, the remainder of the contributors, although confining themselves to English materials, cumulatively provide a draft prospectus for the history of evolving communal identities. The collection is divided into three parts: parochial sources; community action and expectation; and groups within the parish. Against all the odds, the treasures of the book lie in the rather unpromising section on the variety, potential and limitations of the sources for the history of the parish.

The highlight of the collection is undoubtedly Andrew Foster's characteristically modest analysis of the geographical, jurisdictional and chronological distribution of the approximately 800 sets of churchwardens' accounts that have survived from the early modern period. Although Foster emphasizes the overrepresentation of urban (especially metropolitan) parishes in the sample, he is at pains to demonstrate not only the quite remarkable survival rates of rural accounts, but also the preponderance of parishes in the dioceses of the south and southeast, 'a fact that may have some significance for those historians who like to argue about the survival of catholic traditions nationally' (p. 82). This essay will be indispensable reading for any student exploiting

these sources in the future, and stands comparison with Margaret Spufford's formidable critique of the limitations of the probate inventory. Foster also, incidentally, provides some extremely suggestive evidence of the scale of church repairs and extensions in the years before 1625, findings which imply that the better known Laudian campaign of the 1630s aroused such hostility because they interfered with recently completed schemes for refurnishing and restoration.

Will Coster is only slightly less illuminating on the unexpected evidence of popular religion to be found in that other great parochial source, the registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, providing along the way a marvellous case study of Much Wenlock (Shropshire) where the vicar Sir Thomas Butler recorded his own attitudes to changes in ecclesiastical policy (pp. 106–8). John Schofield, meanwhile, presents fascinating and tantalising archaeological evidence for the internal furnishing and embellishment of the parish churches in the City of London in the period to 1550. Margaret Clark collects and juxtaposes the similarly fragmentary records of religious life in Tudor Cumbria, and concludes that the relations between the Celto-Norse people of the borders and Elizabeth I had less in common with those of the English south of the Humber than those of their distant Norwegian kinsmen who similarly resented a reformation imposed on them by Christian of Denmark (p. 72).

By contrast, there is rather less originality in the two subsequent sections, partly because several of the contributions are distilled from larger projects already in print. Nonetheless, Johnston and MacLean on the pattern of survival of summer festivals in the parishes of the Thames valley and Duffy on the rood screens of East Anglia, are invaluable in crystallising the evidence for the vitality of traditional religious culture in England well into the sixteenth century. The strongest of the remaining essays is Katherine French's study of the diversity of fund-raising practices in the parishes of rural Somerset, which she suggests reflect the various roles of the parish – religious, liturgical, social and economic – in the associational culture of its inhabitants. There is much of interest elsewhere, not least on the fate of town lands at the Reformation in Ken Farnhill's analysis of the Suffolk parish of Cratfield.

Although the chronology of the essays in this collection has much to commend it, crossing as it does the traditional divide between medievalists and early modernists, one cannot help but feel that an opportunity to trace the impact of the evolution of the civil parish in its longer run context has been lost here. Although Gary Gibbs emphasizes the novelty of many of the duties devolved upon churchwardens in Tudor London, there is no explicit treatment of either the institutionalization of

the Elizabethan poor laws or the reformation of manners on parish identities. Kumin himself has written very persuasively on these themes elsewhere and a similar contribution would be welcome here. Stretching the chronology to 1640 would also have chimed with recent emphasis on the 'long reformation'. One might also question the wisdom of MUP in restricting this volume (a collection of essays which would be extremely student-friendly) to hardback only. Nonetheless, the subtitle of Andrew Foster's essay serves admirably as an epigraph for the collection as a whole: 'some problems to note, but much to be gained'.

STEVE HINDLE

F. G. EMMISON (ed.), *Essex wills: the commissary court, 1587–1599* (Essex Record Office, 1998). xiv + 341 pp. £14.95

This, the eleventh volume of abstracts of Essex wills, deals with the records of the bishop's commissary court. Although the jurisdiction extended in theory to about only a quarter of the county, in practice the court was used for the probate of wills from almost every parish. Thus the almost 1500 wills included here provide evidence of agricultural practice over the whole of the county. While much of early modern Essex agriculture was mixed in form (and became more so into the seventeenth century), thus defying the (sometimes overly schematic) ecological divisions, the wills still provide plenty of contrasts in regional emphasis, from the open field arable of the north-west of the county to the cattle and sheep economy of the marshlands. Where they include, as they sometimes do, the size and nature of landholdings, then they provide helpful evidence of the scale of agricultural enterprise that informed contemporary divisions between yeoman, husbandman and labourer, as well as the continuing importance, and sometimes surprising scale of dual economies for those otherwise labelled artisan. There is also evidence, especially from the lists of debts, of the nature of economic relationships, with, for example, servants being given the right to run their own livestock or take part of their pay in the form of grain. Beyond this there is evidence to be gleaned of the social and cultural practices that underwrote economic activity, from the important role played by widows as executrices and inheritors of land to the nicknaming of livestock. And, of course, the wills provide evidence aplenty for a broader range of topics within early modern society. Having been required for the purposes of this review to read the wills serially, I realise how much a systematic analysis of the evidence within these volumes could be made to provide. As this series draws to its conclusion, it is possible to appreciate the magnitude of the ambition of the late Dr Emmison and

the collective thanks owed to him and those (notably the Essex Record Office and Friends of Historic Essex) without whose backing such a project could not have been sustained.

JOHN WALTER

STEVE HINDLE, *The birthpangs of welfare: poor relief and parish governance in seventeenth-century Warwickshire* (Dugdale Society Occasional Papers, 40, 2000). 74 pp. 4 figs. £7.75 incl p&p, from The Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6QW.

The history of early modern poor relief has come a long way since Sidney and Beatrice Webb published in 1927 their classic *English poor law history, I, the Old Poor Law*. Whereas the Webbs tended to see the poor laws from a 'top-down' perspective, later generations of social historians have examined the local contexts of poverty and poor relief.

Dr. Hindle's booklet definitely belongs to the second historiographical tradition. Based upon archival research, the author raises a number of questions about early modern poor relief, including the impact of the government's Book of Orders campaign to enforce relief in the 1630s; how the system worked in practice in matters of who paid and who received; and, how it affected social relations and vice-versa at the parish level.

The study is based upon a discovery of overseers' accounts of 39 parishes in Kineton hundred for 1638-9, all but three of which were located in the mainly arable Felden region in the southeast of the county, and which are in the family papers of the county JP and antiquary, Sir Simon Archer. The author's transcribed accounts are published in an appendix that is 37 pages in length. In another appendix he provides quantitative information for the 39 parishes, including population figures, numbers of pensioners, totals of relief expenditure (absolute and per capita), and the proportion of the population receiving doles.

The study concludes that poor relief was more widely enforced in the 1630s than was previously thought. Although no overseers' accounts survive for any of the 39 parishes outside the Archer archive, their apparent enforcement of the Elizabethan relief laws represents 75 per cent of the 52 parishes in the hundred. Hindle found that women, many of them widows, formed 51 per cent of dole recipients. But another one third were adult males, many of whom were probably able bodied, while only one in 10 parishes mentioned putting the poor to work, all of which tends to confirm that the 1630s was a time of exceptional hardship in which unemployment was widespread. Where it is possible to learn about rate-payers, they represented between 31 and 38 per cent of the population, but even smaller proportions paid over

three quarters of the total. The hundred contained many closed parishes, which tended to have far fewer paupers than the open villages such as Brailes.

As to social relations and poor relief, Hindle found the system worked as a means of control for the gentry and parish elites over the poor, but also as an entitlement for paupers. Conflicts arose between disappointed claimants, who sometimes occupied the parish church, and hard-nosed overseers intent upon easing tax burdens. At this point JPs such as Archer were called to intervene and settle disputes.

The author might have shed more light on the economic and social contexts of poor relief by examining similar evidence from pastoral and manufacturing parishes in the Arden region north of the Avon, which was very different from the Felden. Moreover, the author's claim to have discovered a 'calculus of entitlement' in the enforcement of relief may be overstated and too dismissive of other, 'top-down' forces. Local conflicts resulted from the different interests of the parties, but they also arose from legislation that drew simplistic distinctions between deserving and undeserving paupers. No doubt, disputes over entitlements involved fairly ritualized 'negotiations' among the parties, but again the entire process was set rolling by legislation and orders from above and was often resolved by intervention from above through quarter sessions. So perhaps the Webbs' perspective needs to be reconsidered.

All told, this is a valuable contribution to the history of early modern poor relief, which it is to be hoped will stimulate more such research. The Dugdale Society did an outstanding job of producing the study.

LEE BEIER

The Pennard manor court book, 1673-1701 (transcribed by MICHAEL J. EDMUNDS with an introduction by JOANNA MARTIN) (South Wales Record Society, 2000). xxxvi + 109 pp. £19.50 incl p&p from The Treasurer, SWRS, 12 The Green, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8BR.

Most readers of this *Review* will be acquainted with the immense importance of manor court rolls as sources for the study of the agrarian economy from medieval times to the seventeenth century and beyond. The manor itself was long the focal point of local government and law enforcement, while the Courts Baron and Courts Leet governed daily life, promoted good agricultural practice, upheld local customs, regulated markets, dealt with petty felons and occasionally enforced national laws. The present book, based upon Michael Edmunds' diploma thesis from the University of Swansea, offers a transcription of the late seventeenth-century court book of the manor of Pennard on the Gower peninsula in South Wales. The original document, acquired by Glamorgan

Record Office in 1951, is a vellum-covered paper volume of one hundred and thirty pages and is of particular interest since it records the full gamut of court activity at a time when most English courts were falling into abeyance as Quarter and Petty Sessions usurped many of their functions. Preceded by an admirable essay by Joanna Martin covering the evolution and function of the manor court, the activities of its multitude of officials and the introduction of the manorial system in South Wales, Edmunds' transcription gives us the full text with all its eccentricities of spelling. Editorial insertions are kept to a minimum and only allowed to affect the flow of the narrative where obscure terms and place-names require explanation, while a valuable glossary of English and Latin terms and a comprehensive index of personal and place names will greatly assist local historians.

By the late seventeenth century this part of the Gower was essentially a cattle-rearing and dairying area with arable products accounting for no more than twenty per cent of the wealth of the farming population. As presentments to the courts reveal, moreover, the open fields had all but disappeared to be replaced by a network of hedged and ditched enclosures – a network which tenants were keen to expand by encroachment. The courts, however, presided over by a succession of stewards from the local gentry, were often obliged to turn aside from their concerns with the conveyancing of copyhold and customary land and various other duties to deal with the serious issue of illegal encroachment upon jealously-guarded common lands. Indeed, the ample evidence of disputes within this court book strongly suggests that the Gower commons had been gradually eroded by encroachment from medieval times.

Michael Edmunds is to be richly commended for this finely transcribed and handsomely produced volume which is a worthy edition to the expanding corpus of printed manorial records.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

HADRIAN COOK and TOM WILLIAMSON (eds), *Water management in the English landscape, field, marsh and meadow* (Edinburgh UP, 1999). xi + 273 pp. £18.95.

Although the authors may not be aware of it, this book is a third or fourth generation descendant of the seminal work of H. C. Darby on *The draining of the Fens* and *The medieval Fenland* which appeared in 1940. Those two books firmly positioned the British lowlands as a focus of study, a crucial interface of human action with the physical environment, steeped in a long history of struggle and effort – longer and more complex than even Darby himself realized. There followed a number of historical geographical studies on other lowland zones, June Sheppard on the Hull valley, Michael Williams

on the Somerset Levels, Hugh Prince on the wet prairie of the Midwest. At the same time historians such as H. E. and Sylvia Hallam threw new light on the antiquity of the Fenland reclamation, and Joan Thirsk revealed the complexities of the Lincolnshire coastal marshlands. This lineage is not irrelevant as all these past authors have provided a rich deposit of material, which in turn has spawned further studies, a number of which appear from the hands of contributors to this volume.

But to the present work. Its great value is to bring together lowland draining, underdraining and water-meadow creation and treat them for what they are – aspects of the greater whole – water management in a basically waterlogged countryside. As such these topics require more knowledge of hydrology, water management principles, soils and draining technology than has hitherto been common, and the chapters by H. Cook and D. Dent on these topics are welcome.

But the bulk of this book is a not unfamiliar 'history' of wetland conversion and management. The chapters on 'Draining of arable land in medieval England' by D. Hall, 'Post-medieval field draining' by Tom Williamson, 'Medieval reclamation of marsh and fen' by Robert Silvester, and 'Post-medieval drainage of marsh and fen' by Christopher Taylor cover much familiar ground, but nonetheless are necessary and valuable. Perhaps more exciting, for this reviewer at least, was Stephen Rippon's 'Romano-British reclamation of coastal lands' (much new material here), the two excellent chapters on the operation and ecology of water meadows, and their development in southern England by Roger Cutting and Ian Cummings, and Joseph Bettley respectively; and the history of 'floating' (i.e. irrigation) in the rest of the country by Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson. A. D. M. Phillips' work on the unseen, unsuspected and unsung triumph of the sub-surface draining of arable land – the sheer extent, effort and importance of which is rarely appreciated – is a timely antidote to the romance of the massive walls, complex sluices, new cuts and pumping stations that characterize the water management of the true lowlands.

Hadrian Cook and Tom Williamson's opening chapter on 'Landscape, environment and history' goes some way to bring these many themes together, stressing that the book is, among other things, an avowed 'attempt to bridge an interdisciplinary gap' (p. 1), which it does successfully. The section on the relationship between draining activity and economic activity (pp. 7–12) is good. But the other aim of providing a 'green history' does not seem to succeed as well. All human manipulation of the landscape is a piece of environmental history of a kind, but a 'green history' whets the appetite for more than that; for a discussion of ideas, attitudes and political

activism, as well as the politics of 'heritage' of archaeological and scientific special places. In the wider context there is passing reference to the importance of water resources and wetlands against a background of growing world population, but that is all. But who can doubt that in the developing world wetlands are considered 'wastelands' until cultivated, while in the developed world there is a constant conflict between preservation and conversion, which the work of E. Maltby and M. Williams, (*Waterlogged wealth: Why waste the world's wet places?* (1986) and *Wetlands: A threatened landscape* (1990), more than substantiates. Wetlands in the UK have not yet reached the status of near 'sanctity' that they have in the United States, but the passions are higher than this book would suggest. The 'Amberley Brooks' case study (pp. 237–9) is only one of a number that have erupted in the country. And although this reviewer is speaking from a position of current (late 2000) knowledge in the wettest autumn in the UK since reliable rainfall records were established over 225 years ago, who can doubt that water management of the lowlands is an even wider topic than this book suggests. It is an integral part of a wider hydrology that encompasses main drainage channels, urban sprawl, uncontrolled building, and the environmental perception of flood hazards. Water is all too near the doors of hundreds of thousands of homes, both literally and metaphorically.

These caveats aside, this is a useful, timely and informative book that summarizes a vast range of knowledge. For anyone interested in the history and workings of these very special and fascinating parts of the English landscape, it is a 'must'.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

PAUL T. HARDING and TOM WALL (eds), *Moccas: an English deer park. The history, wildlife and management of the first parkland National Nature Reserve* (English Nature, 2000). 348 pp. 27 tables; 140 figs. £20.

England has a tradition of parks going back 950 years. Originally deer farms, they developed into the hunting parks, landscape parks, and public parks of later centuries. Moccas Park, on the Welsh border, looks like a classic survival of the earliest type of park. Deer and sheep, confined within a cleft-oak pale, browse among pollard oaks of bizarre shape and improbable bulk. The strange beauty of extremely aged trees inspired a famous passage by Francis Kilvert, literary diarist of the 1870s. The timeless atmosphere is fully confirmed by lack of change in successive photographs of the ancient trees. (But the ground vegetation, alas, is reduced to either bracken or improved grassland, as in so many wood-pastures).

Moccas has another claim to fame. It is one of the best localities in Europe for the rare creatures and plants,

especially beetles and lichens, which live in or on specific parts of ancient trees. Trees scattered in grassland, a kind of northern savanna, are traditionally neglected by ecologists as not being proper forest and by agronomists as not proper grassland. As one contribution puts it, 'Deer parks are amongst the most artificial of our wildlife habitats'. (Even English Heritage's *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens* used to contain few if any examples earlier than 1700). However, increasing knowledge of wood-pastures, their history and equivalents in other countries and continents, calls this into question: places like Moccas are ecosystems in their own right. They, not forests, are the usual habitat of old trees and of all that depends on old trees. Veteran Trees Initiative, co-producer of this book, results from the revival of interest in the functioning and significance of ancient trees.

The book has 29 chapters on aspects of the history, trees, wildlife, land-use, and conservation of Moccas Park. The authors include such renowned specialists as John Phibbs on park design and Colin Welch on beetles. Another is Francis Chester-Master, latest in a long line of owners who have understood and appreciated what makes Moccas special.

The beauty and ecological significance of Moccas Park depend on its history. Phibbs shows that (contrary to appearances) it went through a phase of formal landscape design in the eighteenth century. But its earlier, more significant history is still mysterious. Where did the ancient oaks – and some yet older, known from paintings but no longer extant – come from? When were they last pollarded? Why is most of 'Moccas Park' in Dorstone parish, not Moccas?

One piece of evidence of which more might have been made is that on the map the park overlaps a rectangular enclosure with rounded corners, the characteristic shape of a medieval deer-park. It displaced a parish boundary, which would date it to the twelfth century. Is this the origin of the present park, later enlarged by taking in more land? Many of the ancient trees, however, stand outside this medieval boundary; there is ridge and furrow of medieval cultivation, both inside and outside; and some of the ancient trees sit on cultivation ridges. Mystery deepens.

The book brings together studies from many different disciplines, as all historical ecology must. The editors are to be congratulated in persuading 23 authors to produce generally excellent work. But the contributions are not fully linked together. For instance, by exceptional good fortune, a pollen deposit exists within the park itself, going back some 10,000 years. It is a pity that this was not especially studied in the part from 1000 to 300 years ago, when independent evidence for the site's history is badly needed.

Recommendations for the future are somewhat generic, perhaps because they compromise between divergent interests and objectives. The uniqueness of Moccas centres on its ancient (pre-landscaping) trees, and the conservation proposals centre on planting new trees, but the links between these are not set out. The Beetle Oak is a pollard famous for its size, age, and rugged beauty, and because it is the unique habitat of a certain beetle. Oaks of the next younger generation show no sign of replicating these values: they differ in genetics and history as well as in age. The seventeenth-century Club Oak is a magnificent tree but in a different way: another 300 years will not turn it into a Beetle Oak. As a minimum, any future Beetle Oak will have to be (1) propagated from the Beetle Oak itself, and (2) made into a pollard. How planted trees are expected to reproduce the values associated with existing trees needs to be spelt out. The details are what matters.

This is a well-produced, very readable book, which should provoke thoughts among readers interested in wood-pastures anywhere from Texas to Japan.

OLIVER RACKHAM

PHILIP MORGAN and A. D. M. PHILLIPS (eds), *Staffordshire histories: essays in honour of Michael Greenslade* (Staffordshire Record Society and Keele University, 1999). xi + 304 pp. 10 tables; 23 plates; 8 figs. £15 from Centre for Local History, Keele University ST5 5BG.

Michael Greenslade's pivotal role in Staffordshire historical studies, as editor both of the VCH and of the Staffordshire Record Society, is honoured appropriately in the long-running series known as Collections for a History of Staffordshire. After a personal appreciation by Christopher Elrington, colleagues and friends have offered in tribute twelve essays that reflect his wide range of interests in the county's history. Some of the best – including that on the architecture and Romanesque sculpture of Tutbury Priory – are not direct concerns of this journal. Three chapters are of particular interest. In the first, it is refreshing to find a VCH man who has the opportunity, and the inclination, to speculate. Nigel Tringham, a prominent contributor to the VCH volume on the Staffordshire Moorlands, tackles the tantalising, but slender evidence that the Earl of Chester's fee of Leek was based on a pre-Conquest estate. The parish was the largest in Staffordshire and contained three chapelries and several townships; the area is well-defined geographically by rivers and ridges; Anglo-Saxon tun names surround Leek and minor place-names indicate late clearances on the edges of the parish. A group of at least four pre-Conquest crosses stand in Leek church or churchyard. On the other hand, signs of minster status are lacking and the Domesday Book evidence is

unhelpful. The late Anglo-Saxon estate that was probably centred on Leek was already greatly reduced in size by 1086.

Christopher Harrison writes about a series of enclosure riots that took place on Cannock Chase between 1580 and 1582. Hedges and fences enclosing hundreds of acres of woodland were burnt down, but this was not simply because of anger at the loss of pasture rights. Dr Harrison tells a much more complicated, detailed and convincing story centred on the rivalry between local magnates, the Astons and Pagets. He produces extensive archival evidence to prove that the violence was directed and controlled. The conclusions that he draws from this local study are of wide general interest. In particular, he notes that of the five main riots, four included or were centred on a holy day. He dryly observes that one rioted in one's spare time. Mortal conflict was rare in what was an accepted form of direct action. 'Fire on the Chase' was not a community revolt against injustice, but the exploitation of tension within the community by a criminal sub-group.

In a final chapter, Tony Phillips revisits Lord Ernle's 'golden age of farming' to question the current view that Staffordshire farmers moved in 'a straight line progression from tillage to grassland' between 1840 and 1870. He starts by plotting the evidence of agricultural land use and cropping obtained from tithe files and preambles of c. 1840 for each parish and compares his findings with similar evidence obtained from agricultural returns of c. 1870. Having discussed the reliability of this evidence, he turns to a detailed examination of the cropping books of the Trentham estates of the dukes of Sutherland. These provide a general endorsement of his conclusion that historians have overestimated the 'greening' of Staffordshire in this period. By 1840 Staffordshire had more grassland than Caird claimed. During the next thirty years the overall balance of grassland and tillage remained broadly uniform, with if anything a slight shift to tillage. Many farmers were unprepared to abandon their mixed farming systems. Dr Phillips concludes that changes in agricultural land use were more complicated than present studies allow and that further research is needed to establish the patterns of agricultural land use in the immediate post-Napoleonic War period. His findings are clearly of interest to agricultural historians beyond Staffordshire.

DAVID HEY

STEVEN HOLLOWELL, *Enclosure records for historians* (Phillimore, 2000). xiii + 175 pp. 8 tables; 43 figs. £15.99. This book has a number of aims. Firstly, it is primarily intended as an introduction to the records which the historian can use to study enclosure. Secondly, it

provides an overview of the processes of enclosure which generated many of the documents discussed. Thirdly it introduces some of the major historiographical debates around enclosure.

An introductory chapter contains a brief overview of enclosure from the fifteenth century through to the nineteenth. The author notes that nationally, non-parliamentary enclosure affected more land than parliamentary enclosure. However, although the book is nominally about enclosures of all kinds, the treatment of non-parliamentary enclosure and its documents is rather brief, being confined to ten pages of text in Chapter One. The remaining five chapters, which constitute the real substance of the book, are devoted to a consideration of parliamentary enclosure. This the author is well placed to do, having researched the subject for ten years and written a Ph.D on parliamentary enclosure in Northamptonshire.

Chapter Two elucidates the early stages of an enclosure. Documents discussed include: proposals to enclose; notices of the intent to enclose, notices of meetings of proprietors; petitions to the House of Commons to submit a bill; counter-petitions, consents; the House of Commons *Journal*. The third chapter completes the treatment of the parliamentary process with discussions of enclosure correspondence; enclosure bills; committee meeting minutes; and finally the act itself. A very thorough and helpful discussion of the characteristic provisions of the enclosure acts takes up much of the chapter. As should now be obvious the range of documents discussed is fairly exhaustive.

Chapter Four discusses the work of the commissioners and the surviving documentation. Chapter Five does the same for the surveyors and quality men and ends with a discussion of enclosure maps and awards. The sixth chapter considers some of the broader historiographical debates, such as the decline of the small landholder and the relationship between parliamentary enclosure and agricultural improvement. In the process Hollowell introduces further documents not produced by the process of enclosure but nevertheless considered useful for the study of parliamentary enclosure, including land tax assessments, tithe files and the 1801 crop returns.

The author has gone to considerable lengths to help the novice historian get underway. This extends from recommending that new researchers arrive at the record office with a number of sharp HB pencils to explaining how to produce an enclosure map where none exists. One very helpful feature of the book for first-time researchers is the facsimile reproduction of sample documents followed by the author's transcription. The context in which enclosure documents were produced is also set out very thoroughly. In fact at least as much of

the book is taken up with a detailed account of the processes of parliamentary enclosure as with a discussion of the records.

Perhaps in consequence of this, the treatment of some of the records is too brief. For instance, the discussion of the work of quality men (who supplemented the work of surveyors by assessing the quality of the land) gives no information as to the content of the quality books they compiled. Enclosure awards, the most voluminous and complex of enclosure documents, are treated in under two pages, the same space as is devoted to a discussion (albeit illuminating) of the use of surveyors' chains in the same chapter.

However, the real weakness of the book is in the inadequacy of the account of the secondary literature. For example, we are told that, since the early twentieth century, the origins of the three field system have been largely neglected. While the bibliography lists David Hall's *The open fields of Northamptonshire* (1995) the existence of chapters therein on the origins of the open fields and the development of field systems in Hollowell's own county seem to have escaped notice. The statement on page three that population began to rise steadily within a hundred years of the Black Death does little to instil confidence. The discussion of parliamentary enclosure and agricultural improvements does not refer to Robert Allen's *Enclosure and the yeoman* (1992), though again this is in the bibliography. Donald Ginter's *A measure of wealth* (1992) is cited but the discussion of the pitfalls of using the land tax neither makes clear the importance of this book for those who wish to use the land tax assessments nor provides a comprehensive summary of Ginter's work in its place.

This book provides a thorough introduction to the processes of parliamentary enclosure and, with the exception of the record formed by the landscape itself, which is omitted, a comprehensive listing of the relevant records. As such it will be useful to its intended audience of local historians. Unfortunately, the account of the substantive and methodological secondary literature is less than authoritative and needs to be treated with caution.

LEIGH SHAW-TAYLOR

DAVID W. HOWELL, *The rural poor in eighteenth-century Wales* (University of Wales Press, 2000). xv + 317 pp. 11 tables; 2 figs; 1 map. £35.

A great deal of the material assembled in this workmanlike and solidly-researched book has appeared in one guise or another in chapters and articles published both by Dr Howell and others. Indeed, much of the first half of the volume, dealing with settlement patterns, the farming community and craftsmen and artisans, is essentially a summary of existing knowledge and offers

little in the way of new material. The overture complete, the curtain rises on the first act in Chapter 4 when Howell comes to grips with the rural poor whose relative prosperity declined as the eighteenth century wore on. To some extent, this too is standard fare (wretched housing, poor diet, loss of common rights, growing indebtedness, escalating poor rates etc) but it is deeply felt, levelheaded, authoritative and packed with detail. David Howell's judgements are always tempered with common sense. After all, as with the farming population where, for every recalcitrant, dog-in-the-manger tenant there was a good husbandman, so for every poor man whose poverty was no fault of his own there was a light-fingered and idle villain. Forget the comfortable image (created by nineteenth-century political polemicists) of the tenant farmer living in a state of equality with his labourers and sharing a common distaste for the landowning classes; labourers and servants stole with impunity from their employers, disappeared from service before their time was due and occasionally resorted to poisoning their masters. Meanwhile employers beat, tortured and raped their servants, like the Rhosili farmer hanged in 1799 for starving to death his nine-year-old employee. Rural Wales, like rural England, was a raunchy, violent and dangerous place in the eighteenth century. Despite the growth of Methodism among the middle-classes, church attendance was minimal, few marriages were sanctified by religion, and superstition was rife, with folk beliefs co-existing alongside nominal Christianity. If a belief in supernatural forces helped people to cope with the crises of life, so did gambling, football, church-wakes, cock fighting and fornication all of which (apart, perhaps, from the latter) were associated with notions of parish solidarity and a sense of community. This applied particularly to the booze-fuelled and violent inter-parochial football games which, despised by nonconformity, declined in the nineteenth century throughout Britain as a whole with the abandonment of the Old Poor Law and the belief that in any case people's energies might better be channelled into commercialism and wealth creation.

In subsequent chapters Howell delineates an under-class with its own standards of right and wrong and its customary methods of dealing with malefactors which were often at odds with statutory law. The poor were hostile to strangers, defiant of authority, resentful of demands for militia service and jealously protective of customary usages when manorial lords attempted to enforce their legal rights. Within the moral economy of the poor of rural Wales, poaching, smuggling and wrecking (often accompanied by great violence) were viewed as legitimate customary activities, in a sense symbolic of resistance to the laws of an anglicized ruling class. Again, when the notion of a fair and just price for

bread was threatened by the illegitimate activity of traders in or exporters of corn, food riots inevitably followed. As the moral economy of the lower orders was challenged, so the labourers, artisans, craftsmen, lead miners and colliers (both male and female) took to the streets, their collective solidarity normally encouraging the 'authorities' to take appropriate action. In his detailed, and wholly admirable study of crime and criminality, Howell takes as his primary source the Great Sessions court records between 1730 and 1800. Not surprisingly he finds a violent and unsqueamish society in which trivial disputes were normally settled by fighting (sometimes involving manslaughter) and where murder and domestic violence were commonplace. Men were murdered for money and within the throes of a family vendetta; girls were murdered for being pregnant, and unwanted infants destroyed by their mothers. However, larceny and assault in their various forms (attacks on persons, arson, livestock maiming and breaking fences and enclosures) predominated among indictable offences. People pilfered and purloined out of poverty, for drink, to procure the means of escape from drudgery and many other reasons besides. Indeed, so serious was endemic thieving in Wales that the propertied classes in a district frequently came together to bear the cost of prosecuting felons and of paying the multitude of informants and spies who thronged the watchful and intrusive rural society. Punishment, of course, was harsh, although despite the whippings, imprisonment, brandings, and transportation, death sentences were relatively rare. In contrast to the situation in England, late eighteenth-century Welsh justices commuted to transportation some 80 per cent of indictments for capital offences so that sheep stealers, horse thieves and highway robbers rarely encountered the hangman's noose. Murderers, however, could expect short shrift and while juries out of common humanity rarely returned guilty verdicts against girls convicted for infanticide, the knotted rope awaited others who took life.

David Howell shows throughout his text that riot, popular resistance and crimes against property were primarily the responses of a hungry and impoverished people. Men may have reacted violently against authority, but before the 1790s, when a palpable disaffection with the gentry and social institutions may be detected, there was little real evidence of Jacobinism. Howell's scenario was enacted against a social background of tacit deference which did not begin to break down before the Rebecca Riots of the 1830s. He is careful to remind us that the responses of the poor to their lot probably differed very little between Wales and England and I am inclined to wonder whether too much recent historical writing has tended to over-emphasize alleged differences

between the two communities rather than to underscore essential similarities. I suspect that language apart, the world views of the eighteenth-century Welsh labourer, weaver, blacksmith, wheelwright, shepherd, or cowman was little different from that of his English counterpart. True, things may have changed under the influence of nonconformity by the mid-nineteenth century, but the probability is that for the previous hundred years one could substitute 'Britain' for 'England' or 'Wales' with impunity as far as the rural poor are concerned.

Despite the rather mundane earlier chapters, Dr Howell's book comes fully alive in the second half when he unearths a great deal of new material which is assembled and interpreted with considerable skill and verve. Perhaps I am being pedantic in finding archaisms like 'must needs pay attention', 'meaner sort' or 'poorer sort', and 'want of' irritating, but I do worry for the future prospects of the sub-editor who failed to comment on the observation: 'The people who lived in rural Wales were for the most part country dwellers'! That unfortunate also failed in proof-reading to note some curious juxtapositions (page 189 and pages 123-4) which render the text meaningless. But these are minor criticisms of a highly-detailed book which deserves a place on the shelves of social historians of the eighteenth century, be they from Beccles or Bala.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS, *Principal family and estate collections: family names A-K* (Guides to Sources for British History 10, HMSO, 1996). xviii + 118 pp. £30; ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS, *Principal family and estate collections: family names L-W* (Guides to Sources for British History 11, Stationery Office, 1999). xiii + 182 pp. £39.50. £50 the two volume set.

For anyone starting out on historical research, whether as a young postgraduate or an old trooper embarking on a new topic, it is an immense boon to find a detailed and easily accessible guide to the available sources on the chosen subject. When, as the doyen of scholars in the field, Sir John Habakkuk, points out in the Foreword to these volumes, the chosen subject has any links with the ownership, management, and utilization of land, the surviving records of the major landowners provide the principal key to most aspects of the social and economic history of Britain from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries, and many would claim that the records of landowning families are more important than public records for many aspects of agricultural history, for example in recapturing medieval farming systems, investigating the effects of enclosures, or compiling data on rent movements. With a team under the leadership of R. J. Olney, himself well-known for his works on

Lincolnshire landowners and agriculture, the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts has now provided this splendid guide to the records of upwards of 120 families, some still in private hands but many deposited in county record offices, university libraries, or the British Library.

For each of the chosen 'principal families' the guide gives an excellent account of the history of the family and its estates, detailing the grants, purchases, marriages, inheritances, and the disposals through forfeitures, inheritances, and sales, an account that goes far to explain the dispersal of records among different repositories, the contents and locations of which are carefully described. Thus, for the first time, it is possible to discover virtually at a glance what the several components of any one family's records are, and where they are to be found. These components, moreover, are fully analyzed, so that one can tell which repository contains deeds, leases, estate accounts, building plans, colliery records, farm accounts, school records, church material, political papers, family diaries, and for what dates, and so on. All this is treasure almost without price for the researcher – which is just as well at £50 the set; a public service to encourage scholarship would have made these volumes available at a price which impoverished graduate students could afford.

It is excellent to be given the key to unlock the riches of 120 families, and ungracious to look a gift horse in the mouth. Euphoria should, however, be tempered by some appreciation of the limitations of the 120. The Lambton earls of Durham are not here, and they might be considered a 'principal family' and certainly have left many records; the Grimston earls of Verulam were perhaps less than 'principal', but it is curious that the one reference to Gorhambury is under the Townshend family, the building accounts having descended through a Townshend marriage to a co-heir of the Bacon family. Even more curious, these Gorhambury building accounts are to be found in the Huntington Library, and although the Huntington is mentioned elsewhere, particularly in the entry for the Grenville dukes of Buckingham, it is not clear how consistently collections outside the UK have been included. The Preface promises that the guide 'will describe the most extensive and important family and estate collections of the United Kingdom', and while prominent Scottish and Welsh families are included, alongside the inevitably English majority, principal Irish landed families appear to be limited to the Hills, marquesses of Downshire, and Shirley of Ettington (Warwickshire) whose main estates were in Co. Monaghan, though the Vane-Tempest marquesses of Londonderry might be ranked among the greatest of Anglo-Irish landowners who, with the Wentworth earls

Fitzwilliam, have a secure place in the guide. It is also probably inevitable that the great bulk of the landed families in the guide belong to the titled aristocracy; only ten per cent of the entries are for untitled families, and half of those were, like the Wyndhams of Orchard Wyndham, untitled only because of the extinction of the Egremont peerage and other former peerages, leaving seven families which never entered the titled aristocracy, Williams Wynn of Wynnstay towering above them as the largest landowner in Wales. There were a few other commoners among the great landowners with important collections of records who one might have expected to see here, such as the Chaplins of Blankney and the Sykes of Sledmere, but only a few.

These gaps are mentioned simply as a warning to users that the guide is not completely exhaustive, and that it should not become the sole recourse of those intent on finding out about the nature and whereabouts of the records of landed families. It will surely instantly and deservedly become their first resort.

F. M. L. THOMPSON

WILLIAM LINNARD, *Welsh woods and forests: a history* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2000). v + 247 pp. 23 tables; 97 figs. £19.95.

Welsh woods are, with few honourable exceptions, in a poor state. In metaphor and reality they cling to the steep hillsides and rough places. Their past is complex, their future perilous. There are few highly-trained foresters in Wales and they have little influence in woodland restoration. Commercial pressures, political indifference and insensitive owners determine matters. The broad-leaved woodland is mainly coppice oak on ancient enfeebled stumps – no younger seedling trees, the ubiquitous sheep sees to that. The grazed woods are aesthetically pleasing to an untutored eye, but quite wretchedly poor to forester and knowledgeable naturalist. The statistical majority of the near 12 per cent of Wales nominally forested comprises the uplands planted with conifers during the post-war dash for timber reserves by a state frightened at the dearth of pitwood and timber, 90 per cent of which had been imports in 1914.

A thorough understanding of how Welsh woodland has come to its present state is an absolute pre-requisite to any sensible programme for its restoration. William Linnard received high praise in 1982 for the scholarly, readable version of his Ph.D. thesis published by the National Museum of Wales as the first edition of this book. It was soon out of print. This new edition by Gomer brings the history up to date with chapters covering the period of Forestry Commission activity since 1919. It also benefits by new research on earlier periods and much improved illustrations.

The woodland history is told straight with little comment as to the consequences of the exploitative misuse of woods as they dwindled from 90 per cent land cover in prehistory to 4 per cent in 1914. History, however, is Linnard's purpose and he is a splendid tutor to the growing audience who wish to back their conservation impulses with a solid background of woodland history. He offers plenteous detail from primary documents whilst maintaining a clear sweep to the story.

Linnard charts the re-forestation of postglacial Wales from pollen evidence. Pine comes and goes. Oak starts its long struggle to survive depredation by people and stock. The Romans clear and use forest, the Normans far more, breaking up the near universal lowland forest. The process of selecting fine trees is under way, impoverishing the genetic base for successor woods. The Cistercians assart great areas for their flocks. Underwood and small wood is cut on increasingly short rotations to char for smelting and lime burning. Forest laws, the key to any structured long-term management of woodland, are largely ignored in Wales. There is a first wave of tree planting vigour a century after John Evelyn gave the wake-up call. Thomas Johnes around 1800 spearheaded the activity, planting vast numbers of larch and oak at Hafod.

In 1919, the infant Forestry Commission faced a situation where almost half the remnant woodland area was classified as 'devastated scrub'. The conifer-clad hill land which causes such widespread present day anguish was largely planted in two decades after 1945. These plantations comprise low quality trees and in their present roughly managed state are wind prone and near to stagnation until mechanically clear-felled, a far cry from the silviculture envisaged when they were optimistically planted. To convert these to mixed, productive and conservation-rich continuous forest cover will be a truly daunting task.

In a rare aside, Linnard chides today's foresters for rediscovering the 'multiple use' concept. In early times this was 'multiple exploitation' of an overwhelming forest cover by a tiny population. The new attempt at 'multiple use' must battle to create a modern ethos and technology of woodland management in the face of a large, heavy-handed population that seems to know little and care less. The hope is that this erudite, stylish history can urge those who do have a say in the fate of Welsh woodland to follow paths of enlightenment.

HOWARD OVENS

JOHN BURNETT, *Liquid pleasures: a social history of drinks in modern Britain* (Routledge, 1999). viii + 254 pp. 39 tables; 2 figs. £14.99.

There are several reasons why the history of food and drink is an area of growing scholarly interest. First, the

'cultural turn' of the social sciences in the last ten years has encouraged work, both theoretical and empirical, on consumption. Food and drink have played their part, as the commodities most frequently in demand, and the more recent 'material turn' seems likely to re-emphasize this. Second, food and drink have become front page news, with a seemingly endless stream of health and risk-related stories about BSE and GM foods. This has encouraged a delving into the history of food scares and moral panics. Third, the feature sections and colour supplements of the same newspapers, along with the best seller shelves of high street book shops and the schedules of prime time television, are increasingly dominated by cookery and the output of celebrity chefs. The popular enthusiasms that lie behind these trends have persuaded academics to reconsider their neglect of the foodways part of the taken-for-granted world. In short, the fuller potential of food and drink is now being exploited by historians, as both fuel and fun, and also as commodities that bear meanings ranging from those associated with market forces, and the 'risk society', to the creation of bodily identity.

John Burnett has written a book that contributes much to the history of drink. He defines his subject widely, including water and milk in addition to alcohol, hot beverages and soft drinks. Essentially it is a chronological story divided into commodity themes. This is an effective approach, which gives the author scope to explore in detail the contingent histories of each drink in turn. It is easy to criticize such a 'vertical' method because, in the wrong hands, it can lead to the neglect of those 'horizontal' factors such as social class, which give analytical coherence and a basis for a comparative understanding. Professor Burnett does not lose sight of the broader issues and the various chapters, while not sharing much in terms of a theoretical underpinning or citations to the general literature on consumption, do provide a satisfying and balanced set of stories. The final chapter, a Conspectus, draws the disparate threads together. The row hoed by the author is on the same side of the vineyard tilled by those in the 'developmentalist' tradition, such as Stephen Mennell and Sidney Mintz. Ideally one would have preferred the choice of approach to have been discussed in greater depth, informed perhaps by the controversy surrounding Ben Fine's 'systems of provision', but epistemological ingredients are not part of the recipe.

Starting in the seventeenth century, Burnett brings his story up to date, for instance discussing the quality of drinking water in 1995 and the effectiveness of milk pasteurization in 1998. Consistent with his other, influential work, he situates drink in its economic and social context and we can see how trends in consumption emerged

from a complex web of structures and processes that include cultural and political forces, technology and purchasing power. He sees drink as a cause as well as an effect of social change.

Professor Burnett shows a good awareness of regional variations of both production and consumption of the drinks under scrutiny. The study is resolutely one of Britain, however, a focus that is difficult to maintain when discussing that most global of commodities, Coca Cola, or the supply chain of tea and coffee. A little more by way of international comparison would have helped the reader to appreciate why Britain has at times been eccentric in terms of the organization of its food system and the quality of its products. An example is milk, in which the government and the industry lagged years, sometimes decades, behind the regulatory regimes of North American and Continental countries with regard to the spread of disease.

Put the kettle on. It is time for a good, strong cuppa, which, by the way, John Burnett informs us can be classified as either a mild excitant or a psychoactive drug. Or maybe we should try to emulate the eighteenth-century foundrymen who he claims slaked their thirst with 8–24 pints of beer in a shift. On second thoughts, let us keep a clear head and leave such levels of consumption to the present leader of the Conservative Party.

P. J. ATKINS

DAVID HANCOCK, *Old farm dogs* (Shire, 1999). 32 pp. £2.95; MARTIN WATTS, *Working oxen* (Shire, 1999). 32 pp. £2.95; FRED HAMS, *Domestic ducks and geese* (Shire, 2000). 40 pp. £4.50.

How delightful it is to receive three more volumes in the Shire series, which now amounts to over four hundred non-fiction paperback titles! Watts' Hancock's, and Hams' efforts live up to the Shire traditions of utility and readability, and in all carry about them that flavour of beguiling charm which one has come to associate with the series. The texts are amply and clearly illustrated, in Colonel Hancock's case with nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs wherein the depicted homespun rustics (usually stricken in years) are every bit as interesting as their canine servants.

Martin Watts considers the evolution of the domestic ox, its subsequent function in medieval agriculture, and more especially the role played by ox-cultivation in the determination of systems of land measurement. The standard story of the decline of the ox in favour of the quicker and more flexible horse in the eighteenth century is rehearsed, and we read that apart from a few cases (usually involving Devon, Sussex, or Hereford animals) ox-cultivation became a rarity by the middle of the following century. Nevertheless, oxen continued to

be valued as beasts of burden in wartime, although such was the British army's lamentable ignorance of animal husbandry that they managed to lose eleven per cent monthly of the 40,000 oxen employed in the Boer War. The ox, of course, develops his powers by pushing against a withers yoke which, in England had replaced the head yoke by the fourteenth century. This, as Watts explains, led to a quantum increase in efficiency and as housing and shoeing methods improved so did work outputs expand. Despite the apparent simplicity of the equipment required for ox-draught as opposed to horse-draught work, great skill and patience was demanded in training oxen, as experienced by those involved with Dexter cattle at the Iron Age reconstruction site at Butser in Hampshire.

Unlike the horse, which needs to be broken (by a variety of means and gradations of severity), the ox has to be induced to cooperate with man. Dogs come somewhere in between and can be persuaded to do as bid by a carefully-balanced regime of reward and punishment. David Hancock shows just how enormous is the international range of farm dog types, 'the unglamorous, unsung heroes of the canine world'. Whether he writes of 'driving', 'herding', 'pinning', 'heeling', and 'gripping' breeds, of 'header-stalkers', of 'Turnspit Tykes', or grotesque 'holding dogs' like the Neapolitan Mastiff or the Majorcan Perro de Presa Mallorquin, Hancock does so with the enthusiasm of a lifetime devotee. As he describes how the pastoral dog throughout Europe evolved according to climate conditions, he laments the dangerously narrow genetic base of many contemporary breeds. All Bearded Collies, for example, currently registered with the Kennel Club can be traced back to one of twelve dogs, which inevitably means that breeders of the future will need to be extremely vigilant if they are to maintain the robustness and vigour of the breed. Worrying too is the general decline in the demand for working farm dogs as the fortunes of farming continue their downward progress. Meanwhile as the various breeds are required less for their ability and prosperity to work, they are now tending to be bred for showing purposes which, in some cases, is altering the very nature of the creature. Whether or not one takes the view that to breed an animal for aesthetics rather than utility is to demean that animal, contemporary breeders are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that characteristics essential to a working breed are not lost in the pursuit of trivial and usually irrelevant show points.

Can one demean a duck? As a hapless child who was obliged to forage for duck eggs in muddy and malodorous farmyards unattractive even to the most extreme green primitive, I rather doubt it. Ducks, in my view, take stupidity to the point of genius, although I am sure

that Fred Hams, who writes with eloquence and affection of Buff Orpingtons, White Campbells, Appleyards, Saxongs, and Dutch Hook-Bills, would violently disagree. Hams describes the origins of domestic ducks and geese, descended (with the exception of the Muscovy) from the wild mallard and Grey Lag and Asiatic Swan Goose respectively, and shows how the various meat and egg-producing breeds came into being. Pivotal to these developments were importations of the Pekin and Indian Runner breeds in the nineteenth century, so providing genetic material for the evolution of the English table-breeds and that layer par excellence, the Khaki Campbell. Although the large flocks of laying ducks common to generations ago have disappeared, and table-ducks are now produced from specialist cross-bred strains, a surprisingly wide range of earlier breeds continue to be maintained by enthusiasts under the watchful eye of the British Waterfowl Association and the Poultry Club. Hams, like Colonel Hancock, rightly appeals to these bodies to ensure that in the drawing up of breed standards characteristics of utility are not sacrificed to mere aesthetic considerations. After all, modern mass-produced duck meat is to all intents and purposes flavourless pabulum and in the future there may be some demand for the more deeply-flavoured flesh of the traditional breeds.

A goose, maintained Dr Johnson, is a silly bird; too big for one, not big enough for two. Perhaps, but the bird has long been a vital component of the agrarian economy, especially in eastern England, as witness the great goose fairs of that region. Indeed, one of the principle objections to the drainage of the Fens in the seventeenth century was grounded in the notion that drainage would interfere with goose breeding. By the early twentieth century most British commercial goose breeds were based upon a cross between the large European goose and the English white goose, although, as Fred Hams observes, many others, including the Buff African, the Pilgrim, the Brecon Buff and the Pomernian were, and continue to be, kept for fancy. There is at present a trade for large, deep-breasted and well-fleshed geese for the Christmas market. I would like to agree with Hams that if this trade expands we might once again see the autumn stubbles full of Michaelmas geese, but somehow I rather doubt that this will come to pass. The combined and baleful forces of agribusiness and the supermarket, assisted by that handmaiden of standardization, the European directive, will almost invariably stifle any move in that direction.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

ALAN H. FIELDING and PAUL F. HAWORTH, *Upland habitats* (Routledge, 1999). xvi + 141 pp. 32 tables; 22 plates; 7 figs. £15.99

This is one of a series of Habitat Guides intended to cover the 'ecology, fauna, flora, conservation and management issues' of a range of British habitats. The series would appear to be aimed at sixth-form biology and geography students and the 'intelligent amateur'. The scope is wide, far too wide to be successfully condensed into a slim volume with only 110 pages of text. The main emphasis should surely be on the upland habitats and their associated animal and plant life. Yet this accounts for less than half the book. The major habitats are dismissed in ten pages of which the actual text amounts to only four, being frustratingly disrupted by numerous 'species boxes' (giving illustrated profiles of characteristic animals and plants), tables and figures, some of doubtful value. Is it really necessary to devote a precious page to listing upland Red Data species? And what are we supposed to make of Table 2.9 giving the distribution of 13 National Vegetation Classification communities (referred to by code only) in 13 unspecified regions of Britain? While the species boxes are interesting in themselves they contribute little to a rounded picture of the habitats. Gully, cliff, scree and flush habitats are to all intents ignored and there is no reference to the limestone country of the Peak District and north Pennines, nor to the altitudinal limits of the selected species. Amazingly there is no mention by name of hare's-tail cotton-grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), even in the case study of the south Pennines; the least willow (*Salix herbacea*) features only in the birch species box and the rest of the dwarf shrub willows are ignored. In the brief section on the upland climate it should have been emphasized that the rapid reduction in the growing season with altitude is largely attributable to the small temperature range of our oceanic climate, a point well made by Professor Manley, and the zonation diagram, Table 2.2, has no associated comment on the effect on zonation of progressing eastwards away from the highly oceanic climate of the west coast.

The chapters on Management, Conservation and Case Studies are much more satisfactory and readable, the text being far less disrupted. In contrast to the chapter on habitats, grouse moors and golden eagles each benefit from five pages of text. There are short sections on grazing and forestry and a final chapter giving various suggestions for practical work. Incidentally, rhododendron is not just 'a localised problem in parts of Snowdonia'.

The black and white photographs tend to be rather fuzzy and the line drawing in the species boxes could be improved. I would not have recognised that of stiff sedge (*Carex bigelowii*); crowberry looks more like cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) and cowberry (*V. vitis-idaea*)

is shown having strongly emarginate leaves. Several Latin names are misspelt, as is Manley throughout, and several species are absent from the Index.

All in all I found this a disappointing book.

G. HALLIDAY

Elsewhere and General

KENNETH F. KIPLE AND KRIEMHILD CONEE ORNELAS (eds), *The Cambridge world history of food* (CUP, 2000). xlii + 2153 pp. 204 tables; 120 figs; 19 maps. £95. This is a remarkable work. It consists of two volumes, both over 1,000 pages long, containing 169 chapters by 158 authors, each article averaging ten pages, about 8,000 words. The two books weigh over 4 kilograms. Over four fifths of the contributors are American. Somewhat strangely, given the title of the work, only a tenth are members of departments of history. This is partly explained by the purpose of the editors, one of whom, Kenneth F. Kiple, edited an earlier Cambridge world history. He writes: 'This work together with its predecessor, *The Cambridge world history of human disease*, represents an effort to encapsulate much of what is known about human health as a new millennium begins'. This perhaps is not what agricultural historians would expect from a volume with the title *The world history of food*. However, it is almost impossible to define and limit food history. Food is so fundamental to human survival that there are few aspects of life that it does not permeate.

This is a reference book; but the reader will be helped by reading the editor's introduction, an overview of the contents. The work is divided into seven parts. Part 1 consists of six chapters on the diets of prehistoric peoples, mainly assessing the methods by which these can be reconstructed. Several writers touch on the possibility of the diet of hunter-gatherers being superior to that of the earliest farmers. Parts II and III will be of more interest to agricultural historians, describing systematically the major sources of food and drink. There are ten chapters on the cereal crops. These do not follow a prescribed format, but most have something on the botanical characteristics of the plant, its domestication and early dispersal; a few chapters have material on the modern distribution and production, such as that on sorghum. In contrast the chapter on wheat discusses only the evidence for domestication and early dispersal. There follow chapters on root crops, vegetables, nuts, spices, sugar and oils and fats. Plants are followed by accounts of animals as a source of food; aquaculture is discussed, but deep sea fishing only in passing. Few animals are omitted as a source of food; horsemeat and dogs receive their due, also insects and llamas. The yak and its products of meat, blood, milk – from which butter is made

to produce tsocha, or butter tea – is well discussed. A following part deals with dietary liquids; this quite rightly includes a chapter on water, for it was the role of water as a carrier of disease that prompted the production by fermentation of wine and beer, a process that like boiling reduces the chance of infection. East Asians produced few alcoholic beverages, so the boiling of water for tea probably served a similar function.

Part IV of volume one deals with nutrients, deficiencies, surfeits and disorders. Chapters cover vitamins, minerals, proteins and fats and then deficiency diseases such as beriberi, pellagra and scurvy, chronic disease and food related disorders including lactose intolerance. Although most of these chapters contain some historical material, they are written for and by nutritionists and other medical scientists. At 381 pages this part would make a substantial book in its own right.

Volume 2 contains the largest part of the book of immediate interest to agricultural historians: 250 pages on food and drink around the world, divided into 23 regional chapters and a final chapter on culinary history. These chapters vary a great deal in length and type of content. Thus the first chapter deals with the origins of agriculture in the Near East; the second, on the Middle East and south Asia is concerned essentially with cooking. The chapter on south east Asia deals systematically with the crops and animals used for food. The section on China discusses the historical roots of Chinese cuisine. In the European section, there is an excellent article on the Mediterranean diet, but with little history, whilst the complementary chapter on southern Europe contains much about the supposed threefold influence on food – Christianity, humoral physiology and the courtly aesthetic – little on changing production and consumption of food. The chapter on the British Isles has a rather strange view of their agricultural history and food consumption. The section on the Americas seems seriously unbalanced with 35 of the 82 pages devoted to the Caribbean and the Arctic; the remarkable expansion of food output in the continent in the modern period hardly gets its due; South America receives six pages only.

There follows a very interesting section entitled History, Nutrition and Health. This includes two chapters examining the arguments of Thomas McKeown about the role of nutrition in the decline of mortality since 1750, a chapter on famine, with some historical material, but more on modern methodology, and a survey of work on height and nutrition. This section also includes a chapter on food fads, largely about the United States, which adds some humour to an otherwise justifiably serious volume. Two views of vegetarianism are included in this Part. A final Part deals with contemporary food related policy

issues, ranging from biotechnology to food toxins, and from food subsidies to food additives, all mainly about the United States and concerned only with very recent history.

There will be few who do not find something to interest them in this work. Many of the essays are interesting and informative, and it is an invaluable work of reference. It has an index of 251 pages, and a historical dictionary of the world's plants, sadly unillustrated, covering 173 pages. But for agricultural historians there is a shortage of material on the history of food production and consumption in the last 200 years. Furthermore there are some odd imbalances in the allocation of space: thus a chapter on chicken eggs gets eight pages, a chapter on cattle, surely more important, six only. In the section on dietary liquids, coffee receives 13 interesting pages; but so too does khat, a leaf of an evergreen tree, chewed in east African and south western Arabia to give a mild euphoria. Fungi receive 20 pages, the longest chapter in the book, but surely not the most important food, whilst algae get 18 pages, of which six pages are a list of the names, Latin and local, of the world's edible algae. It is worth recalling that whilst thousands of species of plants and animals are used as food, the great majority of the world's calorific supply comes from very few sources. Even today over half the supply comes from cereals and roots, and before the nineteenth century 70 per cent.

DAVID GRIGG

JACQUES CAUVIN, *The birth of the gods and the origins of agriculture* (CUP, 2000). xviii + 259 pp. 8 plates; 70 figs. £37.50.

The transition of society from a food quest based on hunting and gathering to subsistence forms located in herding and plant husbandry effected a total transformation of virtually all aspects of human life from the most natural to the most symbolic. Since Gordon Childe first postulated the 'Neolithic Revolution' in 1925, developments in archaeological science, themselves of bewildering multi-disciplinarity, have facilitated novel perspectives on this most basic of the problems of pre-history. Jacques Cauvin's book, presented here in a rather lugubrious and heavy-handed translation by Trevor Watkins, sets out to synthesize current thinking on the development of the Neolithic in the Levant and Anatolia and, in presenting a mass of archaeological data for the Natufian culture (c. 12,500–10,000 BC), to claim that far from being a response to environmental degradation or population pressure, the evolution of agriculture was rooted in profound cultural change. The book is set within a framework of reaction against the pervasive and narrow perspective of economic determinism, and in advising a cautious approach to conclusions based solely

on scientific positivism, Cauvin argues that observed facts often required to be viewed from a non-materialist standpoint. The Natufians occupied much of the Levant from the Euphrates to Sinai in a benevolent environment rich in wild resources. They were a sedentary people (a necessary precondition for agriculture), who showed a progressive tendency to group themselves into ever-larger communities, who possessed a complete tool kit, and yet, 'only became agricultural by means of a particular adaptation or some specialization of their original functions'. In other words the Natufians were apparently quite satisfied with their ancestral system of survival and their conversion to agriculture awaited an appropriate cultural development.

In proffering suggestions as to why an apparently agreeable subsistence base should be put aside in favour of an agricultural one in the pre-pottery Neolithic of the Levant, Cauvin offers a series of fascinating and controversial views on the development of 'religion' and religious symbolism among these ancient pre-agricultural Levantine communities. By 9500 BC symbolic figures of Woman and the Bull, variously modelled in stone and baked clay, are found among Natufian artefacts and, in the next two millennia, in agricultural contexts in Anatolia where frescoes of enormous bulls surrounded by tiny armed 'stick-men' symbolically signify the relative importance of man and beast. Cauvin believes that the female figure (the proto-Mother Goddess?) and the zoomorphic male, often represented with human figures in an attitude of supplication, indicates an awakening of awareness of the divine, the immanent and the transcendent. Suffering, death, light, reproduction – all are represented symbolically through these figures as men struggled to render the world intelligible, and as cultivation and herding spread through the Levant and eastern Anatolia, so spread the Female Divinity and the Bull. As his imagination evolved, and he became aware of an 'immaterial' world and the belief that he could do things for himself, so man was stimulated to new initiatives. Previously he had been a mere spectator in the natural cycles of reproduction; now with appropriate propitiation of the deities, man could himself become a proactive producer. This Lévi-Straussian view of man's deeply subconscious craving for progress (echoed, of course, in Ian Hodder's thesis which engages with the natural human tendency to push back the wild and extend the domestic) is in itself perfectly logical but, as Cauvin readily admits, a good deal of the speculation as to agrarian origins is yet to be substantiated by archaeological evidence.

Brilliantly ingenious as Cauvin is, many of his arguments call for us to believe absolutely that the figurines, the frescoes, the modelled skulls, masks and 'sanctuaries'

have a purely 'religious' meaning. Ultimately, for all the invocation of such disciplines as psychology, social anthropology and linguistics, to say nothing of molecular and palaeobiology, these silent and often enigmatic artefacts are open to a multitude of interpretations. Cauvin asks us to believe that Levantine Neolithic society, unlike the British Neolithic four millennia later, was egalitarian and socially unstratified. This presupposes that some sort of communal discussion preceded decisions over sacrifice, over whose heads were removed for ritual embellishment, who played what part in which particular ritual and so on. I find it extremely difficult to conceive of a situation in either pre-agricultural or farming contexts where some form of social organization (and the inevitable stratification) was not involved in both the physical and psychosymbolic aspects of the food quest. The shaman, the medicine-man, or the priest-king possessed of arcane knowledge (or able by persuasion or sleight-of-hand to convince others that he enjoyed that knowledge) must have been a prominent figure from the earliest times.

Cauvin proposes a variety of intriguing options to explain the gradual spread of agriculture from the Levant throughout Europe and Asia. Sceptical of the notion of indigenous development among Mesolithic communities, he finds little evidence to link the agricultural diaspora to climatic change and raises serious doubts about the dominant theory of population pressure. Given the convincing archaeological evidence for enormous inundations around the fifth millennium BC (substantiated by folk myths in the ancient world) he hints at the possibility of natural catastrophes drawing people together around their deeply-entrenched cultural values at this time. These cultural values (a new religion and a new economy) together developed self-belief and promoted a sense of purpose and a sense of expansiveness. Like the native peoples of America confronted by the technologically (and to them almost magical) Spanish conquistadores, Mesolithic societies could not fail to be impressed, if not overawed by the dynamic qualities of this new culture. All of which, of course, is based upon a certain logical deduction and carefully-drawn analogy, with hardly a shred of unequivocal archaeological evidence. The case is unproven and is likely to remain unproven for generations. But this is a brilliant, provocative and occasionally wayward book which, if read alongside T. Douglas Price (ed.), *Europe's first farmers* (CUP, 2000), will provide more than ample food for thought for prehistorians and historians of human culture both within and beyond the confines of Europe.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

DAVID GERVERS (ed.), *Dating undated medieval charters* (Boydell Press, 2000). vii + 237 pp. 2 plates; 34 figs; 1 map. £40.

This is a collection of papers originally prepared for a conference hosted by the Collegium Budapest (Institute for Advanced Study) in Budapest in 1999. To this origin it owes four interesting studies (by Zsolt Hunyadi, Attila Zsldos, László Veszprémy and Ivan Borsa) concerning early Hungarian charters and other records, which in addition to their intrinsic merits, significantly advance the amount of information on this subject currently available in English. The innovative core of the volume, meanwhile, concerns the use of computerized data bases for the dating of the thousands of undated medieval charters surviving either as originals or (in even greater profusion) as copies. The principles set out here develop from dating methods already commonly employed in a more rudimentary way. David Gervers and Rodolfo Fiallos, in separate papers, explain the technique developed at Toronto for the DEEDS project, which depends on the extent to which the formulaic elements in the drafting of charters changed over time. Matching the formulae of any single undated charter with computerized models whose date is known cannot guarantee a close dating, but can frequently provide a much more precise estimate than that to be obtained by alternative methods. It can also – a point emphasized by Georges Declercq – help identify charters whose formulae are sufficiently anachronistic to brand them as forgeries. Interesting parallels between this sort of data-matching and the principles of dendrochronology and geological biochronology are identified in papers by András Grynaeus and Jozsef Pálffy.

Although the DEEDS procedure can demonstrably succeed in cases where charter witness lists offer little help, Maria Hillebrandt and Trevor Chalmers, in two separate papers, demonstrate that data-banking witness lists, and matching witness groups in undated charters with those in dated ones, can work well as an alternative or auxiliary way of using computers in the dating of charters. In some cases, indeed, this procedure may well be more accurate than the DEEDS method. Both authors nevertheless recognize that its efficacy is likely to be greatest in the analysis of large collections from a single institution or restricted geographical region, since repeated witness clusters are not likely to occur in other contexts.

The development of computerized techniques is at an early stage, and the costs of using them is likely to restrict their application. Economic considerations imply that the DEEDS principle would probably be more adaptable than the witness-list principle in allowing existing data bases to be adapted for new collections, provided that the chronology of charter formulae can be shown to be reliably

consistent over extensive regions. This sort of possibility is on the agenda for exploration in forthcoming stages of the DEEDS project.

Other papers in the volume explore the chronology of charter formulae without the use of computers, sometimes generally supporting the principles on which the DEEDS project is based (as in Marjorie Chibnall's paper on Suffolk charters), sometimes commenting more sceptically (as in the two papers in French by Véronique Gazeau and Benoit-Michel Toch). Such differences are not surprising. The DEEDS principle is likely to be at its most rewarding in contexts where large numbers of charters were written for parties subject to a single legal system (provided that legal formulae have not become so standardized as to preclude rapid variations over time), and is accordingly more likely to obtain good results in thirteenth-century England, say, than tenth-century Provence. Nicholas Vincent's paper revises the chronology of the development of the English royal *inseximus* in the light of his important new compilation of the charters of Henry II and Richard I of England, due to be published in 2003. As these papers show, there will always remain ample space for traditional charter scholarship in the dating of charters and in defining developments in practice and procedure, especially in contexts where particular formulae are rare, or where the construction of standard formulae was inhibited by political fragmentation. However, the case for considering computerized methods in handling some of the largest charter collections is unanswerable, and those writing for this volume are to be congratulated on their contribution to the discussion, backed by experience and results, of how this can best be done.

RICHARD BRITNELL

WERNER RÖSENER, (ed.), *Kommunikation in der ländlichen Gesellschaft vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2000). 412 pp. 11 tables; 20 figs. DM 89.

This volume, entitled, 'Communication in rural society from the middle ages to the modern', arose out of the first conference of the Arbeitskreis für Agrargeschichte, the German equivalent of the BAHS. The weight of the work lies in the early modern period. The authors comprise some of the leading scholars active in German agrarian studies today, and their contributions, whilst generally narrowly focused, provide an excellent introduction to the type of work being undertaken in this field in central Europe.

'Communication' is a concept that has become increasingly important in German historiography in the past two decades, strongly influenced by the work of sociologists such as Niklas Luhmann or Pierre Bourdieu.

It has served to redirect the attention of agrarian history away from identifying the legal parameters of feudal society and landownership, or seeking to quantify social structure, to the meanings, discourses and symbolic actions by which everyday interaction and political culture came to be expressed. However, the conceptual focus on practice, on communication as an act, seeks to avoid the more sterile reaches of the 'linguistic turn' and simply recording standard phrases, gestures and symbols. Several of the pieces betray the influence of Anglophone historians such as E. P. Thompson on social conflict and Roger Schofield on literacy.

In fact, the majority of the contributions deal with well-worked themes in each period. Werner Rösener and Klaus Lorenzen-Schmidt examine the relations of authority and the production of legal documents in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially interactions between lords and peasants in the setting down in writing of local custom. Rudolf Schlögl and Gunter Mahlerwein trace the parameters of intra-village conflict across the late sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries, demonstrating how social polarization was partly conditioned by what constituted 'public' matters considered suitable for the attention of the village community, and channels of redress beyond the environs of the village open to differing groups. Reiner Prass and Clemens Zimmermann focus more directly on 'media'; the former on the determinants of literacy in two statelets in late eighteenth century northern Germany, and the latter on the reception, and impact of the introduction of the telegraph and telephone in the modern period.

These concerns rest largely within the territory of social history, especially intra-community conflict and the relations of peasants with higher authorities. It is a little disappointing to find very little on transport infrastructure, migration and changes in agriculture, commerce and marketing. Nevertheless, the standard of writing and research is very high, with striking conclusions and suggestions for further research. Any notion of a smooth, linear progression towards ever-denser networks of communication and increasing homogeneity in rural life is confounded by the arguments presented here. Enno Bünz provides a lengthy examination of a late medieval church that appears far more active, if not always effective, in the countryside than historians of the post-Reformation period might suppose. Visitations and attempts at diocesan and parochial level to regulate and alter village culture are not solely a product of the age of 'confessionalization.' Renate Blickle's work on petitioning by Bavarian peasants argues that the 'demonstration' is not just a phenomenon of modernity. Prass's work suggests that historians have underestimated the importance of family circumstances in the

transmission of literacy skills, while Andreas Gestrich's study of the worker-village of Botnang during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shows a very high level of use of local libraries and cultural associations bound into the labour movement.

A review such as this cannot hope to do the thirteen contributors justice. However, mention should be made of Werner Troßbach's careful examination of the use and value of memory in sixteenth-century court cases in a period he sees as marking a transition from reliance on 'memory' to an inter-generational 'handing down' of information that increasingly brought regulation into the written record. Similarly, Werner Rösener's study of peasant assemblies in the south-west is a strong articulation of the increasingly accepted argument that 'manifests' (Weistümer) appeared as a result of the gradual dissolution of the manorial economy in the late medieval period, leading to conflicts over rights and an initiative to record that largely came from lords defending their interests against both other lords and peasant subjects, rather than being the expression of autonomous, long-standing village communes. These essays should indeed, as the editor hopes, provide a strong impetus to further research, and it can only be hoped that the future work of the Arbeitskreis will lead to volumes of similar quality.

PAUL WARDE

SUSAN BUCK SUTTON (ed.), *Contingent countryside: settlement, economy and land use in the southern Argolid since 1700* (Stanford UP, 2000). xii + 391 pp. 50 tables. 56 figs. £52.50

Susan Sutton has edited an important book. At almost every point it challenges accepted interpretative wisdom about the Greek countryside and deepens our understanding of the processes actually at work there. *Contingent countryside* is the third unit in the publication programme of the Argolid Exploration Project, an interdisciplinary, multi-period research project in progress in the south-eastern corner of the Peloponnese, Greece, since the 1970s but with antecedents in the 1960s or even 1950s. The first unit (M. J. Jameson, C. N. Runnels and T. H. van Andel, *A Greek countryside*, 1994) is a comprehensive presentation of the results of archaeological, historical and environmental research in the area, though it was heralded by a more popular survey (T. H. van Andel and C. Runnels, *Beyond the Acropolis*, 1987). The second unit (C. Runnels, D. J. Pullen and S. Langdon, *Artifact and assemblage*, 1995) publishes the pottery and lithics found during site survey. The volume under review contains fourteen papers which set out, to quote the editor, 'an understanding of the material conditions of rural Greek life as mutable and negotiated in ways that complement both archaeological interest in the

fluctuations of the Greek past and recent shifts in anthropological conceptions of modern Greek kinship, religion, gender and identity'. Most of the papers were written in the 1970s and revised in the 1980s when this reviewer was privileged to read several of them. The delay in publication, though regrettable, allowed the authors to reflect on the preconceptions through which they approached their initial research. In her valuable introduction Sutton reveals how rural Greece has often been viewed with the perspective of survivalism, romanticism and 'urban disdain'. Without necessarily realizing it, these standpoints shaped our interpretations of what we saw and experienced. We often disregarded the knowledge of local people in favour of the interpretative insights of universal models. Accordingly, many readers will find the reflections of Sutton and her colleagues on their intellectual development and practice applicable to themselves.

There is much here about the agricultural history of southern Greece. Peter Topping provides an initial chapter linking the Greece of prehistory and antiquity, which is the focus of the first two units in the series, and the emergence of the modern state, the Greece which is the background to most of the book. Hamish Forbes compares censuses and cadastral surveys from c. 1700 with ethnographical data to produce an understanding of how the land was exploited under Venetian rule. A similar study using Ottoman material for the period 1715 to 1821 would have been interesting. However, family histories, ships' registers and marriage contracts are employed by Marina Petronoti to show how the development of long-distance shipping affected local land use after Greek independence (1830), while Sutton herself exploits nineteenth- and twentieth-century national census and local demographic records to reveal how the opportunities for securing wealth not only from agriculture but also from other activities interacted with population migration and settlement pattern development. An examination of changes over a hundred and fifty years in house size, form and configuration by Mari Clarke questions the widespread assumption by archaeologists of the close fit between house size and the number of its inhabitants. Clarke complements this with a study of how activities carried out by individuals in the household have changed over the period 1880–1996. Claudia Chang's reflective study of the location, shape and meaning of sheep folds questions the stereotypes of pastoralism which have long remained unexamined, at least in the archaeology of Greece. The forms and functions of other contemporary structures in the countryside are also examined by Priscilla Murray and Nick Kardulias with a view to improving the understanding of the archaeological traces of human activity

in the area. The advantages of holding land in scattered parcels, normal today, are stressed in studies by Hamish Forbes and Keith Adams which argue that landownership is a conscious strategy of household economy, adapted to ecological diversity and risk minimalization, rather than a perverse survival of the pre-capitalist social practice of partible inheritance, ill-adapted to modern efficiency requirements. Similarly an examination of mutual aid and reciprocity between intensive pastoralists and cultivators by Harold Koster challenges the accepted notion that all relationships between non-kin families in the Greek countryside are agonistic. Forbes and Koster combine to test the 'tragedy of the commons' hypothesis in the context of the southern Argolid, concluding that sustainable pasture exploitation broke down under the influence of distant market forces. The book ends with a study of how one craft potter has adapted to varying marketing conditions (Kardulias) and an examination of how hand weaving has survived in the area (Joan Koster).

MALCOLM WAGSTAFF

JOHN MAJEWSKI, *A house dividing: economic development in Pennsylvania and Virginia before the Civil War* (CUP, 2000). xx + 214 pp. 23 tables; 3 maps. £30.

To many historians, slavery and the South's defeat in the Civil War together constitute the great tragedy of American history and the great justification for northern industrial and agrarian capitalism. Like any tragic hero, the antebellum South had a fatal flaw – slavery – that brought about its self-destruction. John Majewski is fascinated by this drama, which he examines by comparing the economic stagnation and decline of antebellum Virginia to the dynamic growth of Pennsylvania. He finds that Virginia's commitment to slavery 'shackled the invisible hand of the market' (p. 172) throughout its history. Slavery stunted urban growth because plantations' self-sufficiency lessened demand for domestic manufacturing. Virginia's staple crop, tobacco, grown mostly with slave labour by the early nineteenth century, required little processing and was shipped by British brokers, further minimizing the state's need for an urban commercial centre. Most importantly, the economic incentives of slave agriculture resulted in large farms and a countryside with markedly lower population density, and far fewer customers for manufactured goods, than the densely populated, free, white, consuming hinterland of Philadelphia. Had it not been for slavery, the author implies, Virginia might have rivalled Pennsylvania's explosive growth in the decades leading up to the Civil War. Richmond might have been another Philadelphia, or at least another Baltimore.

This is the big story in *A house dividing*. It is not,

however, the best or most convincing part of the book. What is original and noteworthy in Majewski's research is his careful, critical comparison of 'improvements' in the two states, that is, the construction of canals, turnpikes, and railroads. In reconstructing the investment history of what he calls developmental corporations in two representative counties, he found important similarities and differences in the ways Virginians and Pennsylvanians financed transportation projects. Both Virginia planters and Pennsylvania yeoman farmers were enthusiastic and generous boosters when it came to supporting canals and turnpikes. They reaped sufficient reward from rising land values and long-term local and regional economic development to bear the disappointment of little or no direct return on their investment. Majewski uses this point well to argue that individuals' economic calculation could be based on projections of community well-being, sometimes to the apparent contradiction of personal self-interest. He also shows that the anti-capitalist label often attached to the South did not fit Albemarle County, Virginia, whose rural boosters actually invested more per capita than did farmers in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

Majewski suggests that the most telling differences between the two groups were political. Petty disputes between localities delayed infrastructure construction in Albemarle and so diverted the energies and monies of the Virginia Central Railroad that its intended trunk line never reached the burgeoning markets of the Midwest. Similar problems arose in Pennsylvania, as local demands for branch lines along the Pennsylvania Railroad nearly bankrupted the state. But the mighty PRR was centrally planned and financed by wealthy merchants and industrialists in Philadelphia. Their vision and political clout pushed the trunk line through, connecting Philadelphia and Harrisburg to Pittsburgh and ultimately Chicago.

How does the victory of Philadelphia oligarchs – precursors of the Robber Barons – jibe with Majewski's central argument, that Philadelphia developed a diverse, dynamic industrial economy because of the early concentration of population in its agricultural hinterland? And how does his portrayal of fairly generic American capitalist values at work in rural Virginia mesh with the other half of the argument, that Virginia's economy declined because of slavery? I see no necessary connection between them. The story Majewski tells of slavery vs. northern industry is a skillful, intelligent synthesis of the economic history literature; it includes a number of astute modifications of leading interpretations. But the empirical heart of this book lies elsewhere. The conclusion I draw from Majewski's findings is that making the great leap to heavy industry required a concentration of capital

that no group of southern merchants or industrialists achieved. I suspect their lack of cohesion had less to do with slavery and the thinness of southern markets than with the aspect of Majewski's research I wish he had developed further: that slavery, the extreme form of social control, coexisted with a more democratic exercise of power in Virginia than appears to have been the case in the keystone state of Pennsylvania.

Last, I hope that in his next book the author will refrain from melodrama. At the conclusion of an early chapter he compares Albemarle planters and businessmen to 'a shipwrecked crew facing the open ocean on a frail lifeboat. All had to row together to avoid a most unhappy fate' (p. 36). Business is typically 'flourishing' and 'vigorous' or falling toward disaster. Economic history does not need hyperbole to fascinate and convince its readers.

ANNE KELLY KNOWLES

JOHN B. REHDER, *Delta sugar: Louisiana's vanishing plantation landscape* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1999). xv + 355 pp. Illus. £35.

The origins of the sugar industry in Louisiana reach back to the late eighteenth century when refugees from political upheavals in the French Caribbean came ashore looking for new opportunities to apply their knowledge of producing sugar. The wealth this new industry generated permitted a small class of plantation owners to adopt aristocratic airs, savour connections to French culture, and to build along the banks of the bayous the mansions that would become its memorials. The slaves who worked the plantations find little place in nostalgic recollections of this society. The Civil War ended slavery but not exploitation: down to very recent times Louisiana sugar continued to depend on an exploited, largely African-American, work force that on some plantations even as late as the 1960s was paid in scrip accepted only at the company store (pp. 152–3). Over the last two centuries, the sugar industry has accommodated itself to the levees, swamps and waterways of the Mississippi delta to produce a distinctive cultural landscape.

John Rehder brings to the study of this region a cultural geography tradition that is closely associated with the late Fred B. Kniffen with whom he studied at Louisiana State University. Kniffen was interested in settlement patterns and in other built features of the landscape, particularly house types which he used as indices of cultural diffusion. Kniffen was a devotee of fieldwork as a source of data. Rehder began the fieldwork on which this book is based while working on his Ph.D in 1969 when many plantation buildings from the nineteenth and early twentieth century still survived. It is the loss of these landscape features over the past

thirty years, not the loss of the sugar industry which is still very much present, that he chronicles in this book. He regrets these recent disappearances from the plantation landscape and invites us to share his nostalgia.

After a brief introduction to the history of the sugar industry, Rehder settles to two themes. One is the classification of plantation buildings by their cultural origins. Plantation mansions are French Creole, Anglo Tidewater or Upland and Lowland Anglo, each of which has its distinctive exterior appearance and interior floor plan. Likewise he identifies the plantation workers' houses, known as quarter houses, the name coming from slave quarters (p. 100), as small creole, shotgun, and bungalow, and maps their distribution in the state (p. 102). He briefly discusses the other buildings, including churches, company stores and barns, with a far longer section on the sugar factories. This is an authoritative, well-illustrated review of the subject. The second theme is the destruction of many of these buildings in the years down to the writing of this book. His 1969 research provides a base against which to measure the extent of the loss. Technological change has led to fewer but larger factories. Companies buy up plantations, amalgamate operations with the result that the former plantation administrative centres lose their purpose. Mechanization of fieldwork reduces the demand for labour, and the employees who remain prefer to live in nearby towns. The expanding chemical industry takes up plantation land along the Mississippi. So factories, quarter houses, company stores are pulled down. Mansions fall into decay. Rehder writes about these developments in very general terms with no serious attention to the economics

of the industry and then examines what has happened on six sample plantations.

Madewood plantation is the exception in his sample because it has experienced minimal landscape change. Why? 'Madewood endures because its owners want it to endure' (p. 292) is his simple answer, on which he briefly elaborates. He likens plantations to that other font of nostalgia, the family farm. The key to maintaining traditions, he claims, is family rather than corporate ownership. Madewood is one of three plantations owned by a local family that has an attachment to place (p. 293) and is preserved 'simply out of family tradition' (p. 303). The Madewood mansion is owned separately from the plantation, by a New Orleans family, who open it to tourists. Here, on the threshold of a discussion of the problems and politics of historical preservation, he ends his book.

Surely, the issue of how the plantation landscape might be preserved is a logical extension of his research. Some mansions have been restored, and are on the tourist route. They are impressive, and feed the romance of gracious antebellum living. But they are only one part of the story. Preserving the material culture of slave life is not so easy to do. Would it be possible to bring together in the grounds of some mansion examples of quarter houses, a plantation store, old milling and manufacturing equipment, to give an impression of what life was once like in the sugar industry? Has this been done in Louisiana? There are such museums in many other sugar-producing regions. Another chapter dealing with this third theme could have made a fitting conclusion.

J. H. GALLOWAY