

The AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW



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PART I

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*

'Twenty-five Years On'

JOHN HIGGS

From the Colonies: a Tempered Tribute

WILLIAM N. PARKER

Harvest Customs and Labourers' Perquisites in Southern England, 1150-1350:

the corn harvest

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Annual List and Brief Review of Articles on Agrarian History, 1975

RAINE MORGAN

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'Twenty-five Years On'

By JOHN HIGGS

"ANOTHER society? A new review? A review competing for attention with the spate of contemporary letterpress, and a society demanding, in these days of cruelly straitened incomes, yet another guinea? The venture might well seem foolhardy indeed; and when it was first mooted, there were many who shook their heads in dismal anticipation of failure. But those who believed that there was room and need for such a society spared no effort to bring it into being; and it seems that their faith is being rewarded. Already within a few months of its foundation, the British Agricultural History Society counts two hundred members, and at the moment when this first issue of its journal goes to press, there is good hope that it will soon number many more."

Thus opened the first—and indeed so far the only—Editorial of *THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW* which appeared in Volume 1 for 1953. The first twenty-five years have seen a steady, if not spectacular, increase in membership which now stands at about 800, a figure not to be compared with distinguished contemporaries such as the Economic History Society or the Royal Agricultural Society but comfortable enough to enable us to publish two issues of the *REVIEW* a year without raising the subscription to an unrealistic level.

It is difficult to know how to judge the success of a society other than from crude membership statistics, but one might hazard a guess that over the years influence, reputation, and respectability have also grown. The Society has numbered among its members the foremost agricultural historians of the day, its meetings, though never largely attended, have provided an important forum for discussion, its *Journal* has become an essential source for agricultural historians, not only in this country but in many countries abroad; and in a period during which agricultural history has become an established

subject in its own right the Society has helped many to gain a foot on the ladder. It has deliberately eschewed a popular approach to agricultural history which, perhaps, some in the early days hoped it might take. It has rather pursued a policy of sound historical scholarship but has always encouraged the non-historian who had a contribution to make.

In its domestic affairs the Society has led a largely tranquil and trouble-free life for there have been no notable scandals. Any historian delving in the fairly voluminous archives would find little on which to sharpen his sickle, other than the odd letter from R. H. Tawney explaining why his subscription was in arrears or that in 1961 the Treasurer and Secretary suppressed the disreputable fact that those attending the Annual Conference got free wine at the expense of the Society. Occasionally, a fragment of human feeling shines through the more formal exchanges of views between officers, as when the Editor writes to the Secretary: "Broadwater now have all the material for what I personally regard as the dullest issue of the A.H.R. that we have ever published. Owing to 'X's' excessive prolixity it runs to 64 pages without book reviews." Or simply, "Friday 18th is all right. . . Let me know if you would like to lunch on bread (home-baked) and cheese and beer (home-brewed) at Sheffield Terrace," which perhaps contains a crumb of comfort for the social historian in that by 1959 the Editor did not make his own cheese.

The origins of the Society go back about a year before its official founding. Memory of the occasion is somewhat blurred and the archives are totally silent on the subject. A meeting took place in a rather unpleasant draughty room in Holborn on a cold and wet spring morning in 1952. It had been convened by G. E. Fussell (later to be President of the B.A.H.S.), and was attended by a rather small handful of people. The main object of the meeting was to consider

the formation of an agricultural history society. In the event most of it was taken up by the late Jack Stratton, a distinguished Wiltshire farmer, seeking support for a new edition of T. H. Baker's *Records of the Seasons, Prices of Agricultural Produce, and Phenomena, Observed in the British Isles*, first published in 1883.

So anxious was Jack Stratton to achieve his ambition that he dominated the meeting almost to the exclusion of other discussion—reading long extracts from Baker, and returning to the relationship between farming and the weather every time any proposal was made. In the face of this endearing monologist progress towards the foundation of a society proved nearly as elusive as progress towards the re-editing of Baker. However, agreement was reached, more or less in the doorway, that a further meeting would be convened by Edgar Thomas and John Higgs of the University of Reading at a later date. Though it had no direct connection with the fortunes of the Society, a rewrite of Baker appeared in 1964 entitled *Seasons and Prices* by E. L. Jones.

A further meeting to launch the Society was held at the Science Museum on 25 September 1952, and this meeting was attended by 420 people—more by far than have ever attended any meeting of the Society since its foundation. This was really a very remarkable attendance figure which rather overwhelmed the organizers. What, may one ask, did all these people expect to gain from having an agricultural history society?—for comparatively few of them joined it when it came into being. The archives indicate a very wide range of interests represented; among them were large numbers of people from the agricultural industries, machinery manufacturers, seeds merchants, and so on. There was an equally large number from agricultural teaching institutions, agricultural societies, research stations, and the Ministry of Agriculture. There were representatives from many museums connected with agriculture, and more than a smattering of farmers; but historians with an interest in agricultural history (it is perhaps too early to speak of “agricultural historians”) were few in number.

A few people had come to oppose the idea of a society; some thought it would conflict with the Economic History Society, while others argued that founding a new society could only detract from existing ones, and in the prevailing economic climate the time was not ripe. The great majority of speakers, however, welcomed the idea and expressed support for it, and, possibly since at that stage in the Society's history support cost nothing, the meeting closed with overwhelming agreement to go ahead with the founding of a society.

Before the close of the meeting a Provisional Committee was elected to bring the Society into being. The Chairman was Sir James Scott Watson, then Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, who played a decisive role in getting the Society launched. The Secretary was John Higgs, then Keeper of the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading (thus starting a close association between the Museum and the Society which has continued ever since). The other members were Frank Atkinson, then Curator of the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle; G. E. Fussell, who even then was one of the best-known writers on agricultural history; Alexander Hay, then Secretary of the Association of Agriculture; Walter Minchinton, now Professor of Economic History at Exeter University; Francis Payne, then a Keeper at the Welsh Folk Museum; Edgar Thomas, then Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Reading; and Robert Trow-Smith, who was with *The Farmer and Stockbreeder*.

The Provisional Committee set to work to prepare a draft constitution and organize an inaugural meeting of the Society. At its first meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture in November 1952 it occupied itself with such weighty matters as how to convene a meeting of a society which did not exist. Did you ask people to join first, or did you hold an open meeting with sufficient meat on the menu to attract people to come and then hope to ensnare them? In the event it was agreed to hold an open meeting, and a press notice was drawn up inviting the attention of all those interested

in any aspect of rural history so as to cast the net as wide as possible.

The inaugural meeting of the Society was held in the Great Hall of Reading University on 13 April 1953, and was attended by just over one hundred people—less than the initial interest at the Science Museum might have indicated but the organizers were reasonably satisfied. The meeting was welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor of Reading University, J. F. (now Lord) Wolfenden. Sir James Scott Watson gave a paper on 'The Scope of Agricultural History', Sir Frank Stenton, a former Vice-Chancellor of Reading, spoke on 'The Manor in English History', and the day was rounded off with a visit to the Museum of English Rural Life which was not yet open to the public.

During the afternoon, at a business session, the Society was born. If memory serves, it was not an acrimonious occasion, and the distinguished cross-section of the community who had paid 10s. 6d. for registration costs and their lunch were well disposed towards the draft constitution which was quickly adopted after the insertion of a clause aimed at making the society as safe as possible from any predatory intentions of the Inland Revenue. Officers and an Executive Committee were duly elected, and some aspiring members stayed behind to pay their subscriptions before leaving Reading, thus saving the Society what some thought of as crippling postal charges.

The Executive met for the first time that day, and consisted of all the members of the Provisional Committee with six additions. John Cripps, now Chairman of the Countryside Commission, who was not present at the meeting and who declined to serve; Roger Dixey, then of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute at Oxford; Capt. E. N. Griffith, then Chairman of Rotary Hoes Ltd; Stuart Maxwell of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland; George Ordish, then of Plant Protection Ltd (who got the Society's early letterheads printed free and later became Chairman of the Executive); and Joan Thirsk, a research assistant at the University of Leicester, and since Editor of the Journal and now Chairman of the Execu-

tive Committee. Of that committee four members are either among the Officers or Committee today.

The Reading meeting elected as first President of the Society Sir James Scott Watson, who served in that capacity until 1959. There have been six Presidents since: Sir Keith (now Lord) Murray, who was Chairman of the University Grants Committee; R. V. Lennard, Emeritus Reader in Economic History at the University of Oxford; H. P. R. Finberg, Professor of English Local History at the University of Leicester; G. E. Fussell, who may be said to have started it all; Professor W. G. Hoskins, Professor of English Local History at Leicester; and J. W. Y. Higgs.

Of Treasurers there have been two: Edgar Thomas, whose good-humoured Welsh wisdom often prevented the other Officers and the Executive Committee from lapsing into solecism, and whose experience as Secretary of the Agricultural Economics Society for twenty-five years was of enormous benefit to the Society in the early days; indeed the connection with the Agricultural Economics Society helped the B.A.H.S. in many ways. In 1964 he was succeeded by Andrew Jewell, Keeper of the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading, who remains in office today.

The first Secretary was John Higgs, who retired in 1964 and was replaced by the late T. W. Fletcher whose untimely illness led to his resignation in 1966. He was succeeded by Michael Havinden of the University of Exeter, who also still holds the office.

In some ways 1964 was a watershed year for the Society, for it not only lost the Treasurer and Secretary who had served it since the beginning but the Editor also announced that he would wish to retire in the next year or so. Herbert Finberg was appointed Editor by the Executive Committee shortly after the first Reading meeting. In selecting Finberg the Committee made a bold choice which was to have a profound impact on the development of the Society, on the standard of its publishing, and on his own thinking and directions in life. After a lifetime in publishing Finberg had gone

to Leicester in 1952 as Reader in English Local History. He brought to the creation of the REVIEW not only his profound experience in printing and typography but also a solid background of historical scholarship. He accepted the editorship with characteristic reluctance, but he then turned his energies to the creation of a REVIEW of such significant standards that it soon attracted attention on all sides. As Editor he was a hard taskmaster; printers, contributors, and secretaries sometimes opened his communications with fear in their breasts, even though a puckish good humour underlay his benevolent autocracy. He, more than any other single person, left his mark on the early years of the Society, and influenced its development even more widely than through its Journal. He retired from the Editorship in 1965, and the Society marked his seventieth birthday in 1970 by a special supplement to Volume 18 published in his honour, *Land, Church, and People*, edited by Joan Thirsk. When he died in 1974 the Society lost a wise friend and counsellor.

Herbert Finberg was succeeded as Editor by his former colleague Joan Thirsk, who was by now Reader in Economic History at Oxford, while she in turn was succeeded in 1972 by Gordon Mingay, Professor of Agrarian History in the University of Kent. Under successive Editors the REVIEW has maintained the high standards with which it began.

It would be tedious in the extreme to catalogue or categorize the articles printed in the REVIEW; they have been catholic in taste, range, and period. They number some which have since become classics in their own right. Mention must be made of two features which have appeared regularly in the REVIEW, and become indispensable. The first is the *List of Books and Articles on Agricultural History*, which first appeared in Volume 1, and the second is the catalogue of *Work in Progress*, which first made its appearance in Volume 3. By 1955 the Editor was already able to report that he was receiving more material than he could accommodate; in 1974 the present Editor reported that he was receiving thirty-six articles a year, and that he could only print ten, but he added that he still

lacked good articles on pre-nineteenth-century topics and short articles—it would seem that prolixity remains a vice.

The business affairs of the Society have always been conducted with a minimum of fuss and formality. Indeed, the minutes of both the Annual General Meetings and Executive make dull reading for the machinery gives the appearance of having worked well and smoothly. So smoothly, in fact, that without too fertile an imagination one might suspect a modicum of rigging... Editor to Secretary, 23 March 1960: "I enclose my sub. for the B.A.H.S., also a signed nomination form into which you can insert any names you like for the Committee." Occasionally the Committee was faced with weighty problems as in 1956, when the Chairman reported that "No mechanism exists for the removal of members who do not pay up."

The Society was much helped in its very early days by a grant from the Association of Agriculture of fifteen guineas, which at that time was a princely sum. This early relationship, brought about by the presence of Sandy Hay on the Executive Committee, led to a very fruitful co-operation over the first ten years or so in the holding of joint conferences on a wide variety of themes. Indeed joint conferences with a range of societies have been an important side of B.A.H.S. activities.

The location of the annual conferences of the Society has ranged over a wide area of England from Devon to Durham; one has been held in Dublin. But it must be to the shame of a British Society that it has never met in Scotland or in Wales. In 1959 the Scottish members did in fact organize a joint meeting with the School of Scottish Studies which appears to have been a success. It is reported in the minutes of the Executive that the sum of £4 17s. 6d. profit from the Scottish Conference be earmarked for future Scottish conferences; so far as is known it remains earmarked.

In fact the collective wisdom of the Executive over the years has had an important impact on the development of studies in agricultural history. By its encouragement of young people to give papers, by organizing large numbers of con-

ferences, by sponsoring or obtaining sponsors for publications (such as *Essays in Agrarian History*, edited by W. E. Minchinton in 1968), and in numerous other ways.

An event of great importance to the Society was the announcement by Herbert Finberg in 1956 of his plan for a mammoth *Agrarian History of England Wales*, to be published by Cambridge University Press. The project certainly had its roots in Finberg's close relationship with the Society and its members. The project was outlined by Finberg in an article in Volume 4 of the A.H.R. for 1956, in which he wrote:

The initiative in this project comes from the Department of English Local History in the University College of Leicester. Many members of the British Agricultural History Society will be personally engaged in this enterprise and all will probably wish to be informed of its progress, for the Society brings together in its membership those historians, economists, and working farmers whose interest in agrarian history is most alert. The pages of this REVIEW, therefore, will naturally reflect from time to time our interest in the project. Indeed, the REVIEW provides an eminently suitable channel of communication, of discussion, and even at times of healthy controversy between those who will be working on the History. Therefore, without pledging the Society to give more than this degree of moral support, the Executive Committee has agreed that the project is one in which it may appropriately take a sympathetic interest.

The anticipated close relationship developed and continues: the first volume to be published, Volume IV (1500-1640), was edited by Joan Thirsk; the second, Volume I, ii (A.D. 43-1042), by Finberg himself; while of the two volumes now in preparation, Volume V (1640-1750) is also edited by Joan Thirsk, and Volume VI

(1750-1850) by John Higgs and Gordon Mingay.

And so the Society stands at the threshold of its second quarter-century. If the foregoing review appears to lack substance then it will be well to remember the words of Henry James: "It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature." Twenty-five years is, hopefully, a short period in the life of the Society, and it is difficult, if not wellnigh impossible, for one who has been so closely involved to stand back and assess with any degree of impartiality success and achievement. If some of the gallant 400 who attended the meeting at the Science Museum were disappointed then it may indicate that the Society has concerned itself with the grass-roots of agricultural history rather than with antiquarianism and curiosities; they may have found what they were seeking in the proliferation of steam rallies and vintage tractor shows rather than in the pages of the AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW.

For the Society, warts and all, appears to have created a genuine fellowship of those interested in agricultural history. Future historians may find it difficult not to conclude that it has had a very significant influence on the development of the subject in a critical period. A period that saw the creation of chairs and departments of agricultural history appearing in our universities, that saw a growing awareness among the general public of the historical contribution of agriculture to the economy and to the environment, and one in which 'purer' historians stopped looking down their noses and asking, "What exactly is agricultural history?" The founding members of the Society and those who came after them can be modestly pleased with their achievement; if in chronicling it this contribution has concerned itself too much with the minutiae and insufficiently with the broader vision then, with Macaulay, "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history."

From the Colonies: a Tempered Tribute¹

By WILLIAM N. PARKER

HISTORY is useful, if at all, to "point a moral and adorn a tale." The tales told by agricultural historians, both British and American, are endless—many of them well told in the pages of the *AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW* and its American cousin, *Agricultural History*. But what are the morals to which the stories lend point? I suggest that there are two: one is the importance of productivity growth in agriculture for modern industrial civilization, the other is the meaning and significance of that curious concept, "freedom," which has played so prominent a role in agrarian history, and now is in need, I think, of revival in a re-defined form.

The productivity growth which agricultural history describes is largely a result either of economic expansion in a world of increasing returns or of a technological change, itself deriving either from desperate contrivance stimulated by economic expansion or from the growth of scientifically established knowledge at a deeper level than that to which mere contrivance can penetrate. The origins, meaning, and effects of freedom are observed in the history of agrarian organization, i.e. of the economic and legal bonds which have attached men to the soil and to one another. Technology and organization, the two great subjects of economic history, form the underlying concern also of agricultural historians; without understanding of their joint effects in rural life, the history of a region's wealth and of its social development remains sealed.

¹ This article constitutes the response by the author to the editor's invitation to contribute, on the occasion of the Society's twenty-fifth jubilee, a discussion in which "the author would address himself more to the failings of the subject, what requires to be done in the field, and how scholars might go about it." Needless to say, in such an impertinent discussion, justice cannot be truly done either to the work of some scholars, who need no ghost come from the dead to tell them these things, or to all the excellent and enlightening work done in other areas and directions.

In both these compartments of our subject the experiences of Britain and America have differed, and those differences, compounded by differences in source materials, methods, and the intellectual climate in which the histories have been written in the two countries, have produced different bodies of literature. It may be of interest to ask how far the methods and perspectives of one national group of historians may be applied to the materials and problem of the other.

I

Concerning productivity growth, two sorts of questions may occur to an American scholar looking at the British experience: one has to do with quantities, the other with processes.

The quantities we wonder about are aggregates, and for British agriculture we wonder—is there really no way to construct them? One recalls the thesis and early articles of E. F. Gay, the charismatic American figure, a kind of "mute, inglorious Clapham," in whom the curiosity for quantification was strongly developed. His dissertation in Berlin in 1902 asked essentially, how much of the arable land in Britain was enclosed for the sheep farming of the sixteenth century? The answer—of the order of 4 per cent—though based on doubtful evidence still leads one to worry about the representativeness of the pamphlet literature on which Tawney built his concern. Gay's relation to "literary" historians was in this instance much the same as Clapham's relation to the Hammonds on the effects of the later enclosures. But unlike Clapham, Gay buried his figures deep in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, and released so few copies of his dissertation that they were overlooked, even (according to Heaton) by Tawney.² Might not one get

² Edwin F. Gay, 'Inclosures in England in the Sixteenth Century', *Quart. Jnl. Econ.*, xvii, 1903, pp. 576-97; Herbert Heaton, *Edwin F. Gay: a Scholar in Action*, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, pp. 55-6.

now a national inventory of the British land not perhaps for 1550 but, say, for 1760, and again for the early and mid-nineteenth century? Is it almost time to bring together the splendid county and local studies into a national synthesis, carrying forward the synthesizing efforts of Chambers and Mingay?³

Along with the amounts of different kinds of land enclosed and the amounts of fallow brought into cultivation, might we ask, not on a comprehensive basis, but from a representative sample of agricultural districts between 1760 and 1850, by how much—very roughly—was the food supply increased? All this could lead to the overwhelming question—by what means was Britain's growing population fed in these critical decades before the massive imports of overseas meat and grain? Could not some balance sheet be constructed to show the relative importance of dietary changes—whether restrictions or improvements (*pace* Hartwell, Hobsbawm)—increased grain yields and meat supplies at home, Irish and other imports, and finally the new crops and abandonment of fallow? The value of quantitative work of this sort is not, of course, its deadly accuracy. The demands it places on one's credulity in making and accepting estimates in order to fill empty boxes is its weakness. Its value, when it is done, is to give a sense of proportion among the elements in the history. Did turnips or clover, or both together, feed—by way of meat animals or richer and better tilled soil for the grain crop—30 per cent of the population increase, or 80 per cent of it in the industrial revolution? Again, the very fragmentary answer of a young American scholar, C. Peter Timmer, a few years ago, gives some clues.⁴

Nor is one impelled to questions like these in quest merely of a balanced and comprehensive description, à la Clapham, of an age or a movement. Without a preliminary set of quantities establishing relative magnitudes, deeper analysis of the historical process by means of a macro-

economic model is not possible. Consider, for example, T. S. Ashton's famous speculation at the end of *The Industrial Revolution*. He writes of the population growth in the industrial revolution:

There are today on the plains of India and China, men and women, plague-ridden and hungry, living lives little better, to outward appearance, than those of the cattle that toil with them by day and share their places of sleep by night. Such Asiatic standards, and such unmechanized horrors, are the lot of those who increase their numbers without passing through an industrial revolution.⁵

Now this is a statement about two relationships: that of industrialization to food supplies, and that of food supplies to population growth. We cannot surely say that in the absence of the industrial changes, population would have grown as it did, or that, if it did, there would have been no effect on agricultural change or the trade balance in agricultural products. Still, one thinks, with careful research into what did happen and a study of comparable situations, we can say *something*, even *something* about where the probabilities lie. Ashton is guilty here of an exercise in the notorious "hypothetical history," the history of what did not happen. Without such mental exercises, many of us think, it is not possible to make *any* meaningful statement about what is important for historical change. Yet such exercises are mere barren expressions of prejudice unless derived from a wide base of actual historical experience and a deep foundation of social and economic theory.

Another point must be made to emphasize the importance of theory. Mere quantities can tell us nothing except what is large and what is small, set against some standard. But some quantities, which measured unweighted in a static context, may seem small yet produce large social and economic results. This phenomenon—the "yeast" or the "dyestuff" phenomenon—is responsible for the persistent and irritating emphasis on the growth of trade, at

³ J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880*, 1966.

⁴ C. Peter Timmer, 'The Turnip, The New Husbandry, and The English Agricultural Revolution', *Quart. Jnl. Econ.*, LXXXIII, 1969, pp. 375-95.

⁵ T. S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830*, 1960, p. 161.

the expense of attention to agrarian history, appearing in those late nineteenth-century writers concerned with mercantilism: Ashley and Cunningham or, in the twentieth century, Lipson, and most recently in Sir John Hicks's *Theory of Economic History*. A little trade leavens (or contaminates) the whole agrarian lump, producing in an agrarian society a commercial infection which spreads not only through prices, credit, and money but also through the nerves of political behaviour and structure, reaching at last the heart: the values men have and the esteem in which they hold one another. Mere quantification cannot tell us this; "mere" economic theory can tell us part of it, but the rest must be supplied by a theory—or at least a well-articulated hunch—about political and social relationships. One must measure the proportion of trade to total production, not against standards of absolute size or "static" welfare but against a critical threshold beyond which a body of social effects is produced. It may be that 5 or 10 per cent of traded goods in the social product is a critical mass such that irreversible processes of social change are set in motion. To say this is simply to say what everyone else knows, but what agrarian historians, especially when their quantities show the vast size, the heavy weight of agriculture in past economic life, can easily forget: namely, the moral of the fable of the lion and the mouse.

Productivity growth in agriculture, then, cries out for measurement and analysis. But discussion of causes, even in advance of measurement, is far from a barren exercise. First, there is the sheer expansion of the agrarian world with a growth of population and demand. Its effects have run in two channels—a channel labelled "new information" and one labelled "economies of scale." For Britain in modern times the first of these is of lesser importance. If England and Wales had a fairly full agrarian settlement at Domesday-Book time, peasants and lords may have known well what they were doing as they retreated or advanced the margin of cultivation or altered the balance of pasture and arable over succeeding centuries. Yet memories are short, and penetration into

woodlands, highlands, or drained marshes need not have been always on a Ricardian curve of declining productivity. An American, with a history full of unexpected bonanzas during settlement, wonders whether any such were experienced by Britain as resettlement or conversions between pasture and arable occurred. In any case, because of her involvement in trade, Britain's food and fibre supplies benefited more than those of any other country from the new areas of the world about which information was yielded as settlement proceeded. Here new knowledge is almost inseparable from the action of economies of scale and the stimulus of commercialization in these new areas. Those effects have been present in Britain as well: indeed, interregional competition around concentrated market areas, induced by urbanization, transport changes, and the growth of commercial services and business and market communications and practices, is a perfectly universal feature of Western agricultural history.

All these sources of agricultural change—frontiers, markets, and the specialization of farming districts—are not systematically treated, so far as I know, in the literature on Britain. There is, for example, one absolutely remarkable feature of the "classic" agricultural revolution—not only in England but also on the Continent in the nineteenth century, as the three-field system with fallow rotation was displaced. Agrarian improvement here was drawn out of the production system by commercial profit opportunities, by the possibility of trading a surplus; it was not pushed out by weight of numbers and the discontent of empty stomachs. In this appears the whole advantage of the capitalistic "West" over the other areas of the world. This route of advantage kept England—and later Europe—more than one jump ahead of the grim Malthusian reaper. Wherever agricultural history has examined it, the conversion to continuous cropping, with the accompanying organizational changes, was made to earn a quick buck, or guilder, or pound. Given this fact, it is again puzzling that not more is known about the costs and returns, either in physical or money terms, of enclosure. The recent specu-

lative articles of Donald McCloskey at Chicago have raised interesting questions about enclosure as a response to altered conditions of risk.⁶ Peter Timmer, in the article already referred to, makes a guess at rates of return. Chambers and Mingay tell us just enough about labour requirements to arouse our appetite for more. To be sure, one can never hope to construct the profit and loss accounts; the controlling price network as it was at the time can never be known. But some sampling in specific districts and cases might tell a large part of the story in detail.

Apart from its sheer economic effects, technological change is important—at least in the world American economists inhabit—as a process. It is an example, a very tangible example, of the other dynamic processes—intellectual, artistic, organizational—in history. But we feel it is also important in and for itself, since on its pace and direction, on its social controllability, seems to hang the future of the world's physical environment. Eric Jones's recent concern with the history of the environment appears to lead the way for historical studies of ecology.⁷ Agricultural history has much to tell us also about the path of technical change and what has affected it. The history, it seems to me, falls into two phases: the folk and the scientific, with the decisive dividing line coming somewhere in the twentieth century. Turnips and clover, to be sure, were not primitive magic, but neither could they be called scientific discoveries. Until recent decades, and even now in many places and points, agricultural technology made its way in the world through a multiplicity of variation, natural selection, and diffusion, aided by some conscious imitation and uncritical experimentation. The world's plant and animal strains have existed, we know, *in posse* if not *in esse*, for a very long time. Until the dubious revelation of modern genetic knowledge, most technical change occurred through their natural

adaptation in the many environments to which they spread. The growth of trade, human migrations, and the "pull" of markets on ambitious agriculturists gave artificial impetus to the process, and bits of knowledge encrusted with myth helped it along. Concerning the cluster of techniques known as the agricultural revolution, one wonders, then, how did it spread? One clue of how it spread would be a mapping of *where* it spread, not merely a county-by-county mapping, but a close mapping to show what kinds of soils, men, and tenure arrangements were most compatible with the innovations. In the marvellous compilation of regional studies in volume iv of the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, and in her own work in that volume, Joan Thirsk shows what may be done for the seventeenth century.⁸ One awaits the later volumes with mounting impatience.

In the history of technological change in agriculture, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are a transitional period between idiosyncratic folk-lore and the deadly accuracies of modern science. It was a time when the striving after science was present and growing, but not the means of its accomplishment. Some of the most amusing bits of American agricultural history are the stories of frauds, intentional or unwitting—the theory that large, woolly cotton seeds would produce large, woolly plants, or that a cow's milk yield could be predicted by the shape of her "escutcheon."⁹ These are not folk wisdom; they are examples of a folk foolishness possible only in a folk on the scent of science, and led astray by quackery. Has Britain similar stories, or is gullibility the peculiar weakness of American yokels? More seriously, there is also from the nineteenth century the history of mechanization, about which Americans have had so much to do, and even more to say. Paul David's article, 'The Landscape and the Machine', is a tangible and sensitive statement of the diffusion problem, the adjustment of an American artifact, the reaper, to

⁶ Donald McCloskey, 'The Persistence of English Common Fields', 'The Economics of Enclosure: a Market Analysis', in William N. Parker and Eric L. Jones (eds.), *European Peasants and Their Markets*, Princeton, N.J., 1975, pp. 73–160.

⁷ Eric L. Jones, 'Afterword', *ibid.*, pp. 327–60.

⁸ Joan Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iv, Cambridge, 1967.

⁹ Arthur H. Cole, 'Agricultural Crazes', *Amer. Econ. Rev.*, xvi, 1926, pp. 622–39, details other manias for specific novel crops.

English terrain and farm structure.¹⁰ Speaking strictly—usually not a desirable thing to do in economic history—the story of farm machinery belongs to industrial rather than agrarian history; it is the first point at which truly modern institutions of technical change impinge on our terrain. But the adjustment of the machine techniques of the industrial revolution to the infinite variability of the land, the variety of crops and operations, the range of farm sizes and organizational forms, and the uneven levels of skill and aptitude in rural populations, is an important part of agrarian history, past and present. The picture is one of a machine technology unfolding, from one operation to another, and one crop to the next, in a sequence guided largely by the ease or difficulty of the task, and conditioned greatly by the awkwardness of applying mechanical power on the farm prior to the invention of the internal-combustion engine. Of interest, too, is the exact mode of adaptation of the machine techniques to local conditions, the native technical skills required, and the specific efforts of machinery firms to advertise, finance, distribute, and service their products. Not only in technique but also in business organization, the farm machinery industry lies along the interface between agriculture and industrial capitalism.

Finally, among the sources of productivity growth, the nineteenth century contains the prehistory of what was ultimately of the greatest phenomenon of all: modern agricultural research. In America, we are much concerned with how this came about, and in particular the three components in the movement—the intellectual, the political, and the organizational. It was a development of peculiar complexity. In Europe, science—even early agricultural improvement—was in part, as I understand it (perhaps because of an overdose of Lord Ernle in graduate school), an aristocratic pastime, and partly a result of royal sponsorship in universities and institutes. In either case, even if responsive to market demands and opportunities, it was well insulated from popular pressures, from

the philistine demand for immediate, useful results. In America the problem was to obtain for this work the sponsorship of a democratic state, without cutting off its intellectual roots. Indeed, between 1870 and 1930, agricultural science had to develop not simply new fertilizers, milk separators, or modes of traction, but an intellectual capital of theories and research techniques, in soil science, genetics, and environmental management, from which the modern productivity boom was to derive. The science of statistics—an approach highly consonant with Baconian empiricism—was developed, I am told, largely in Britain to serve agricultural research. Are these parts of British agrarian history? Perhaps so, just as farm machinery has its links both to industrial supply and to agrarian demand. Agriculture has in neither case been simply the passive recipient of what science and industry has had to offer. Its tasks and demands, the pressures of world food and fibre markets on world supply, have induced and stimulated research, affecting its direction, and giving it its sponsorship. The socio-economic organization, control, and direction of modern technological change is a topic of high priority for economists and economic historians today, and in it agricultural history has an important contribution to make.

II

To speak of the history of freedom—so favourite a pastime of the Victorians—is almost an embarrassment today. One knows what it means when mouthed by “libertarian” business men or young radicals—freedom from taxes, freedom from social services and social responsibility, freedom from any external control in the market-place, or in the bedroom, the ultimate unravelling of the individualistic, anarchic, anti-corporatism that is our inheritance, Tawney told us, from the Reformation. When little business men in America speak of freedom this is what they mean, and in America, before the era of subsidization and modern equipment, farmers were little business men—Republican (in the North), cantankerous, contrary (a word which when accented on the second syllable

¹⁰ Paul A. David, *Technical Choice Innovation and Economic Growth*, Cambridge, 1975.

had a particular meaning). But when big business men today speak of freedom, they are suspected of a sneaking weakness for corporate organization, with freedom for that organization from other forms of social control. Agrarian historians are similarly suspect when they use the word. Particularly on the Continent they may be suspected of sentimentalizing the corporate life in a hankering after village and manor. In modern society, after all, the individual scholar is himself a bit of an anachronism, particularly the historian with his antiquated and laborious technology of archival research—card files and note-taking, his impressionistic artistry, and his reactionary adherence to eighteenth-century rhetorical standards in English composition. But if the general historian is a craft-shop artisan, perhaps the agrarian historian is a peasant born too late, bound to the soil, with career and interests forming the intellectual counterpart to a rural commune of city-dwellers returned to the organic society of an agrarian past, as a refuge from, and an example to, the modern self-destroying world. So at least may be a suspicion about our activity and our association with one another. Nor is it refuted by the record of German agrarian historiography in the Nazi period. The compatibility of the corporatism of the peasant and the industrialist have been dominant facts in continental political history, and agrarian history, if it idealizes the past, helps to provide the hazy glow that shrouds the naked realities of a corporate state.

From such deceptions English agrarian history, at least since the days of Seebohm Rowntree, has, it seems to me, been quite free. The intensely factual, empirical, and unromantic streak which foreigners see in the English mind and character has no doubt been largely responsible for this. No one can really much idealize a medieval village, or even a nineteenth-century Cranford, who faces the facts of its narrow and uncertain life. What looks changeless and organic on the surface is—for the individuals in it—anxious, risky, and seething. But there are other reasons for the relatively unsentimental attitudes of modern English

agrarian historians. English agrarian history has been largely a success story by the standards of modern economic development. Of course, now that the long-run is upon us all—and despite Keynes's wisecrack, we are not all dead—it may not quite appear so. Did free trade, the Empire, and agricultural improvement at home let things in England shift too far from the ideal balance of an *Agrar- oder Industriestaat*? But that is hardly the fault of the agricultural sector, whose behaviour after 1846, within its complicated social and tenurial structure, in fitting to changed markets, increasing efficiency, conserving the land and the landscape, and releasing "factors," appears by the crude standards of the world's development to have been impeccable. Among large countries, the American is next best in some of these respects, but American agriculture, carried along on the turbulence of frontier settlement, slave emancipation, and world markets in the nineteenth century, had a far stormier career. There are miseries in American agricultural history—long-standing regional running sores, and times of widespread distress and panic—that might induce even the least sentimental to look back on an earlier, happier, yeoman past. British agriculture never, so far as I can learn, had its populists, or even its Poujadists. By the time it was attached to world markets its sturdy yeomen were gone beyond recall.

Yet an earlier generation of English agrarian and political historians wrote much on the growth of "freedom"; its record was taken to be one of the glories of English civilization. This was not the anarchic freedom of the free competitor in agriculture or in commerce. Nor was it the simple freedom of a corporate entity, be it village, guild, manor, trade union, or corporation at joint stock, to regulate its life and that of its members without interference. Rather the concept analysed by nineteenth-century English historians meant freedom of the peasant from the legal forms of serfdom and manorialism, as well as the freedom of lords and commons from the king. In England, as in all early modern states, the four-way struggle of king—nobility—bourgeoisie—peasantry decided

whose and which freedom was supreme. But Americans, at least, still believe that from English agrarian and political history came the modern freedom of the citizen under law, representative institutions, and guaranteed rights, including the right of all to own land and the right of none to own labour.

Is the matter then to be left there? Are the great constitutional lawyers and the historians of the legal and political forms of English agrarian and commercial society to have the last word? From the neglect of questions of organizational forms and their evolution on the part of English agrarian historians today, one would think so. It is a neglect that extends today not only to the objects of the older concern: peasants' or tenants' status, but also to the forms of social organization and political action in the last two centuries. Has English agriculture lived in a sociological and political vacuum since the enclosures? It is the silence in this forest and in these fields that an American agricultural historian, his head spinning with farmers' revolts, New Deal legislation, co-operatives, corporate forms, finds most deafening. The pioneer books of Mingay and Thompson are notable exceptions.¹¹ One feels sometimes, though it is not a guest's place to say it, that in the furrows of British agricultural history the engineer and the geographer hold the plough, and sit, in an American phrase, in the catbird's seat. One knows that English agrarian historians do not lack "heart" but what they write does seem on balance to do so. Where increasingly quantities, models, and scientific explanations obsess American historians, chaining up their nerves and constricting their blood vessels, it is the soil, field patterns, and archaeological remains to which English historians seem to look for their certainties and their salvation. The problem in both cases, as I see it, is not to avoid the use of such hard evidence as statistics or artifacts, but to incorporate them, together with all the well-

worn documentary evidence, into a synthesis of rural social and economic history. In such a study the examination, even of a speculative sort, of lost social forms—the life of the family, the pub, the market-place, the state—must take a larger part than it has in either British or American historiography. Never, surely, has the study of the mediating agencies that have formed between the rural dweller, his physical environment, and the society and state at large been so timely, and so potentially fruitful. It is in the record of the human groupings "in whose service is perfect freedom," in the whole modes of human social behaviour and adaptation, that modern Britain and America may find some perspective on the structural problems that bedevil them.

* * *

On reflection, it occurs to me that the Agricultural History Society is itself one such grouping—one to which I have been attached for half its life and nearly one-quarter of my own. On behalf of its American counterpart I send it greetings and best wishes for continued life and continued vigorous health. The strictures on its past work made here are strictly my own, and come, I like to fancy, from my faith that historical scholarship is, and of right ought to be, useful, or if not clearly useful, then at least complex in confronting human social complexity. The work published in the AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW over the past twenty-five years has added many dimensions and much detail to that complexity. Perhaps I should close murmuring off-stage a parody of Holmes's lines about the chambered nautilus that American schoolboys used to learn:

Build thou more stately models, O my soul,
As on the swift seasons roll
Leave thy archival past
Let each new construct, fancier than the last
Shut thee in from heaven with a dome
more vast
Till thou at length art free . . .

¹¹ G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Paul, 1963; F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 1963.

APPENDIX

Some Not Very Hard Data on Articles in the *AHR* and their
Distribution by Field and Period.

No tribute from an American scholar would be complete without a nosegay of statistics. I have accordingly conducted a survey of the articles appearing in the *AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW* since its founding, classifying them according to period, subject matter, and time of publication, in the hope that it would bear out some of the generalizations appearing in the foregoing pages. As is often the case, the statistics speak with forked tongue. They equivocate with my generalizations, like drink with lechery. Of 196 articles in twenty-five years, the distribution, as my research assistant¹² and I would compute it, is as follows:

Agricultural practices and techniques 51

¹² Ms. Laurie Nussdorfer, A.B. (Yale), M.Sc. (L.S.E.).

Social and tenurial structure 17
Economic conditions and phenomena 30
Political and social conditions 33
Materials and methods of research 38
Studies combining several of the above,
studies of foreign agricultures, biographies 27

This tabulation indicates that only 17 out of the 196 articles deal with the sorts of problems I am urging in the second section of my remarks above; if categories 2 and 4 are combined the number rises to 50, still less than the number dealing with practice and technology. Of course, if this tabulation may to some minds modify the strictures I have laid on the bias of the *REVIEW*, that fact is itself an indication of the value of quantification of this sort.

ARTICLES IN A.H.R., 1952-76,
BY SEXENNIAL, SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION, AND PERIOD TREATED

Year of publica- tion	Total 196	Subject category*				Period treated				
		1	2, 4	5	3, 6	Pre- Conquest	Medi- eval	1500- 1800	1800- present	General or none
1952-7	29	9	5	7	8	2	1	7	4	15
1958-63	40	10	11	14	5	4	5	13	8	10
1964-9	52	13	15	8	16	3	9	9	16	15
1970-5	65	16	16	8	25	4	7	20	23	11
1976-	10	3	3	1	3	—	—	3	5	2

- *1. Agricultural practices and techniques
2. Social and tenurial structure
3. Economic conditions and phenomena
4. Political and social conditions

5. Materials and methods of research
6. Several categories and agricultures outside Britain,
and biographies

Harvest Customs and Labourers' Perquisites in Southern England, 1150-1350: the corn harvest¹

By ANDREW JONES

I

IN manorial documents of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a recurrent theme is the speedy and efficient use of the customary labour force on the demesne at harvest. August and September were months when demands on the customary tenants were greater than in any others. These coincided with the counter-pressure of the tenants' own harvest. Perhaps in order to lessen any clash of interests, and to ensure work of a satisfactory standard, a widespread and well-regulated system of labourers' perquisites existed. The tenants fulfilled their obligations and took their rewards; so much is common knowledge.² While perquisites were not confined to harvest alone, it was then that a tenant probably stood to benefit most from them, and it is in their description of harvest allowances that the sources elaborate most. Despite much work on harvesting and harvest customs, perquisites have attracted little attention. When we examine them more closely two aspects stand out. First, there is the customary relationship between lord and tenant in which the provision of certain sorts of carefully defined labour was rewarded with an equally well defined structure of payments in kind. Secondly, there is the measurement of the perquisite, or the way in which it was allocated. Although little is known about measurement in rural England six or seven centuries ago, customals contain much information on a variety of measures. Maitland once suggested that a man's limbs were the things with which

Nature had endowed him to measure distance and quantity.³ In fact, the villagers of the thirteenth century relied on the size of their limbs and on the strength in their bodies to measure many of the perquisites of harvest. These two themes (the customary relationship and the measures) are largely inseparable, for the size of the perquisite depended upon local custom. A fair amount of fragmentary detail is known about both, but it is only when we study manorial customs as widely as possible that their unity and ubiquity become clear. This article seeks to describe harvest perquisites throughout southern England, and it is based primarily on the customals of the great ecclesiastical estates in East Anglia, the west Midlands, the south-east, the south, and the West Country. Recourse is made wherever possible to manorial account rolls to show how customs worked out in practice. Throughout, the discussion is limited to those men and women, usually of servile status, who owed labour services on the demesne as a part of their rent.

II

By the thirteenth century the custom of rewarding harvest labour with sheaves of corn was both old and widespread.⁴ Sheaves were often given for the range of tasks on the demesne: reaping, binding, stooking, carting, and stacking. Reaping, for which we have most information, was commonly rewarded with one sheaf for each half-acre, a half-acre representing the day's labour. However, there were some manors where tenants took three sheaves a half-

¹ I am very grateful to Dr P. D. A. Harvey for reading this article in draft and for making many suggestions, without committing him in any way to the views expressed.

² R. V. Lennard discusses perquisites in so far as they affected harvest yields in 'Statistics of corn yields in medieval England: some additional critical questions', *Economic History*, III, 12, 1937, pp. 325-49.

³ F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, Cambridge, 1897, p. 428.

⁴ The *cotsetle* of the eleventh-century *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* received a sheaf for reaping an acre of oats a day: F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, Halle, 1903, pp. 445-6.

acre,⁵ and others where the customary reward was as many as four sheaves a half-acre.⁶ On many manors, labourers, including reapers, were given the normal harvest sheaf (in contrast to those sheaves which, as perquisites, were of a different size), though customals often specified which sheaf was the perquisite.⁷ But there were manors where reapers were given special sheaves which differed in size from harvest sheaves. Statements which contrast the size of the two sheaves are rare; those that occur suggest that the reaper's sheaf was often larger than the harvest sheaf.⁸ Where the reaper's sheaf was specially measured, there were two main ways in which this was done. First, there are occasional statements about the precise length of the binding (*corrigia*): the sheaf *per corrigiam* is quite common, the definition of the *corrigia* is rarer. Secondly, some perquisites were bound with the longest stem available. These two ways may be contrasted with the way in which sheaves of stubble were measured. This was often more haphazard, such as the amount a man could encircle in an arm.⁹

The human body was used to provide standard lengths for the customary binding. On a number of manors in Somerset the circumference of the reeve's head, or that of the hayward, was the basis. At Stogursey and Rodway, in 1301, the reaper's perquisite was tied in a binding which stretched twice round the hayward's head.¹⁰ This measure was also used at Dundon

(1287) and North Curry (1314).¹¹ A commoner measure was the distance from the sole of the foot to the knee. This was used in manors in Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire.¹² At Frampton-on-Severn (Glos., 1301), it appears that this binding was the garter around a man's leg.¹³ A variation on this custom was observed at Inkpen (Berks.) where the binding was measured in the following way: the hayward took a length of binding, placed his foot in the middle, and knotted together the two ends above his knee, leaving room to place his hand quite easily between the binding and his knee; the loop so formed then became the circumference of the sheaf. The customal also laid down that the hayward (or whoever was used as a standard) was to be of medium height, "neque nimis longus neque nimis curtus."¹⁴

In addition to lengths which, in their origin, appear to have allowed for variations, there are examples of bindings of an exact length. At Woolstone (Berks., 1221), for example, the customal recorded a length of 52 inches, and that of Hurstbourne Priors (Hants., c. 1270-80), one of 4½ feet.¹⁵ There are two examples from manors of Battle Abbey, both 3¾ feet long.¹⁶ An extremely interesting point of detail occurs in the Hundred Roll entry for Haseley (Oxon.)

¹¹ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, ed., *Two registers formerly belonging to the family of Beauchamp of Hatch*, Somerset Rec. Soc., xxxv, 1920, p. 36; *Calendar of the manuscripts of the dean and chapter of Wells*, Hist. MSS. Comm., 1907-14, I, p. 334.

¹² Crawley (Hants., c. 1280): N. S. B. & E. C. Gras, *The economic and social history of an English Village*, Harvard Economic Studies, xxxiv, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, p. 235; Brightwell (Berks.): B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 58v; Merton and Burbage (Wilts, 1340): Hampshire Record Office: Mottisfont Priory register, 13M63/3, fos. 75r, 90r; Mongewell (Oxon., 1279): *R.H.*, II, p. 774.

¹³ "... per ligamen quod possit circuire tibiam [inter] plantam pedis et genu..." (a binding which goes around the leg from the sole of the foot to the knee): P.R.O., E 142/8, m. 6.

¹⁴ B.M., Loans MS. 29/55, fo. 24v.

¹⁵ K. A. Hanna, ed., *An edition with introduction of the Winchester Cathedral customal*, M.A. thesis, Univ. of London, 1954, II, p. 637; I, p. 298 (hereafter cited as *W.C.C.*). I am grateful to Mrs Hanna for permission to use her thesis.

¹⁶ Brightwalton (Berks.) and Bromham (Wilts.): S. R. Scargill-Bird, ed., *Customals of Battle Abbey*, Camden Soc., n.s., xli, 1887, pp. 61, 78-9.

⁵ As at Osmington (Dorset, 1317): B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fo. 10r. At Ilmer (Bucks., 1337) the rate was three sheaves a day: P.R.O., SC 11/79.

⁶ As at Knowle and Holfield (Dorset, 1317): B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fos. 16v, 21r. At Fordington (Dorset, 1322) the tenant of a *ferlynglond* received eight sheaves for each acre reaped: P.R.O., E 142/23, m. 5.

⁷ E.g., the tenth sheaf cut, or the last sheaf carted.

⁸ At East Winterslow (Wilts., 1327) the perquisite was "one great sheaf": *Abstracts of the inquisitions post mortem relating to Wiltshire from the reign of king Edward III*, I, Wilts. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc., 1909, p. 3. At Haseley (Oxon., 1279) the cottars were given "one great sheaf, such as they could bind in one binding"; here the binding measured 2½ feet, and the sheaf so bound stands in implied contrast to the harvest sheaf: W. Illingworth, ed., *Rotuli Hundredorum*, Record Comm., 1812-18, II, p. 772 (hereafter cited as *R.H.*).

⁹ See Appendix.

¹⁰ P.R.O., E 142/8, mm. 7, 9.

where the length of the customary binding was said to measure $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet and one barley corn. This provides an obvious link with linear measure in general, for three barley corns were held to make an inch. Presumably the corn was included to ensure that the binding really did measure $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet.¹⁷

As we have seen, one method of measuring the sheaf on the bishop of Winchester's manor of Crawley (Hants.) used the band stretching from foot to knee. The same custumal provided an alternative. The tenant could bind his sheaf with the longest stalk growing on the land over which he reaped: "debet eligere ligamen suum de blado longiori in dicta terra excepto blado de tuff" ad dictam garbam ligandam aut recipiet garbam per corrigeam. . .¹⁸ At first sight, the reference to "blado de tuff" seems obscure, but a comparison of the Crawley custumal with others helps establish the meaning of the phrase. On another of the bishop's manors, Knoyle (Wilts.), the sheaf was bound with a sheaf cut from the same corn reaped; at Tidenham (Glos., 1306) the sheaf was tied in a stalk of the corn reaped, yet cut near the ground; at Godalming (Surrey) the binding was cut as near the ground as possible; and at Borley (Essex, 1308) the *tofscchef* was tied in a binding which was "... cut, not dragged from the ground by its roots."¹⁹ The "blado de tuff" at Crawley and the *tofscchef* at Borley were probably identical. While the corn was reaped in the usual way, high on the stem, the corn stalk used as a binding for the perquisite was cut right down at ground level.²⁰

¹⁷ R.H., II, p. 773; P. Grierson, *English linear measures*, Reading, 1972, p. 14.

¹⁸ Gras, *op. cit.*, p. 235; above, n. 12.

¹⁹ B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 67v; *Abstracts of the inquisitiones post mortem for Gloucestershire*, v, 1302-58, Index Library, British Rec. Soc., XL, 1910, p. 69; P. Woods, 'The parsonage or rectory manor of Godalming and a fourteenth-century custumal thereof', *Surrey Arch. Coll.*, XXII, 1909, p. 133; W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in the Early and Middle Ages*, 4th edn, 1905, p. 579; the etymology of *tof-* is obscure: it does not appear to be noticed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *English Dialect Dictionary*.

²⁰ This appears to have been a common practice in the Middle Ages: I have traced examples in at least fifteen counties in southern England. Its advantages are discussed by F. G. Payne, 'The retention of simple agricultural techniques', *Gwerin*, II, no. 3, 1959, pp. 129-30.

The size of the perquisite was then determined by the length of the *one* stalk.

General statements of custom are more common in custumals than the precise definitions of the *corrigia*. For example, the Glastonbury Abbey surveys c. 1235-52 describe perquisites in considerable detail yet never state the length of the customary binding.²¹ However, many custumals contain entries suggesting that a customary binding was used. Typical entries are those which mention simply "a binding," the "fair sheaf," the "measured sheaf," the "standard sheaf," the "lawful sheaf," and the "sheaf of the measure of the manor."²²

III

Apart from the binding used, perquisites were often distinguished by their name. We have already noted the *tofscchef* at Borley. The *copschef* occurs at Knoyle (Wilts.) where at harvest the tenant had a choice: he could take the thirteenth sheaf from each acre of corn he reaped or he could take one "*copsef per anti-*

²¹ C. J. Elton, ed., *Rentalia et custumaria . . . monasterii beate Marie Glastonie*, Somerset Rec. Soc., v, 1891 (hereafter cited as *Rentalia*).

²² Sources in order of quotation: Welbourne (Lincs., 1288): P.R.O., C 133/51/9, m. 8; Steeple Ashton (Wilts., 1341): P.R.O., SC 11/699, m. 6, and the estates of the bishop of Worcester in 1299: M. Hollings, ed., *The Red Book of Worcester*, Worcester Hist. Soc., 1934-50, I, p. 95, III, p. 302, IV, p. 374; Melksham (Wilts., 1296): P.R.O., SC 11/711, and Wantage (Berks.) and Swyncombe (Oxon.): M. Chibnall, ed., *Select documents of the English lands of the abbey of Bec*, Camden Soc., 3rd ser., LXXIII, 1951, pp. 50, 88 (hereafter cited as *S.D.B.*); Charlton and Netherhampton (Worcs., c. 1240): W. H. Hale, ed., *Registrum . . . Prioratus beate Marie Wigorniensis*, Camden Soc., XCI, 1865, pp. 72a-b, Odiham (Hants., later thirteenth century): P.R.O., SC 11/589; at Lavant (Sussex) a tenant had been accustomed to take a sheaf bound in "a strap of assize," but the service and thus the perquisite had lapsed by the time the custumal was compiled, c. 1284: B. C. Redwood and A. E. Wilson (eds.), *Custumals of the Sussex manors of the archbishop of Canterbury*, Sussex Rec. Soc., LVII, 1958, p. 20; Ashbury (Berks.): S. R. Wigram, ed., *The cartulary of the monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford*, II, Oxford Hist. Soc., XXXI, 1896, p. 357 (the editor has placed this custumal under "Hungerford," but it probably refers to Ashbury: the heading reads "in manerio de E."—pp. 356, 317, n. 1); Lambourne (Essex, 1283): St Paul's Cathedral Library: WD 16, *Liber 1*, fo. 42v: I am grateful to Mr A. R. B. Fuller, the cathedral librarian, for access to this MS.

quam mensuram" for each half-acre.²³ The same choice confronted the virgater at Kingston Deverill (Wilts.), a manor of Netley Abbey. For each half-acre reaped he could take two *copsiue* or the tenth sheaf.²⁴ The choice had once existed at Lacock (Wilts.) but had been abandoned by about 1280 when the new customal was compiled.²⁵ It appears from these examples that the *copschef* was smaller than the harvest sheaf, two being equivalent to one harvest sheaf. If so, this suggests it was measured in a special way. The etymology of *copschef* is not at all clear, but it possibly means "head-sheaf" or "tall sheaf."²⁶ The examples of the *tofschef* discussed above seem to refer quite clearly to a long binding rather than a long sheaf, so perhaps the *copschef* was a different sheaf again, or perhaps it just meant that the binding used was "tall." Our limited evidence has suggested that some perquisites were larger than the harvest sheaf, but the *copschef* (and perhaps the *tofschef*) appears to have been smaller in circumference. The *meneschef* is a second sheaf named in the Borley customal. It was a sheaf given for carting the stooks from the fields, and was recorded as a perquisite for the same service at Isleham Magna (Cambs., 1279) and at Waltham (Hants.). As a "middling" sheaf, the *meneschef* was not measured specially but was taken from among those on the cart.²⁷ The *reveschef* occurs in customals mainly from the West Country.²⁸ At Arne (Dorset, c. 1175-80) when the customary tenants helped cart the harvest home, they received (presumably individually) four *garbe ad reusief* on each day they so worked.²⁹ At Sturminster Newton (Dorset) the cowherd received one *revesef* for each half-acre he cut when pressed into reaping; and the ploughman at

Overton (Wilts.) was given one *reyuesshef* for the same service.³⁰ Other examples of named sheaves include the *workcef*, provided for a day's reaping at Bladon (Oxon., 1279), and the *wen-sesf* ("wain-sheaf") which occurs in two Glastonbury customals, Sturminster Newton (Dorset) and Longbridge Deverill (Wilts.).³¹ This was a perquisite for carting sheaves, and, like the *meneschef*, was a normal harvest sheaf. At Fornsett (Norfolk) by 1273 the *customarii* were allocated 4 bushels of barley "*pro eorum reposesof*"; here the reapers' perquisites had been commuted in part for a lump gift.³²

IV

The distinction between the harvest sheaf and the perquisite was certainly an old one,³³ and it appears to have been observed in many different parts of the country. However, once reaping and binding had taken place, it was only natural that the rewards for binding, stooking, carting, and stacking were taken from among the harvest sheaves.³⁴ On many manors, this custom extended to reaping too, the reapers simply taking a sheaf "from the row" (*de renco*). In the Glastonbury Abbey surveys this phrase was used to contrast the harvest sheaf with the sheaf *per corrigiam*.³⁵ Examples of the sheaf *de renco* occur in several customals from the south and west of England.³⁶ It was, of course, a "middling" sheaf, its allocation supervised by

²³ *Rentalia*, p. 93; *W.C.C.*, II, p. 467.

²⁴ *R.H.*, II, p. 851; *Rentalia*, pp. 88, 135.

²⁵ F. G. Davenport, *The economic development of a Norfolk manor, 1086-1565*, 1906, appendix VIII, p. xxxvii.

²⁶ On some manors of Shaftesbury Abbey in the later twelfth century gifts of sheaves "*ad ligamentum*" were contrasted with sheaves "*sine ligamento*." The former were probably in a customary binding, the latter were probably ordinary harvest sheaves: B.M., Harley MS. 61, fos. 57v, 60r, 61v-62r, 65r.

²⁷ There were exceptions to this general rule. At Wrangetage (Somerset, c. 1314), a manor of Wells Cathedral, a stacker received a sheaf "*per corrigiam*": Somerset R.O.: DD/CC/131911a/4/10.

²⁸ *Rentalia*, pp. 59-61, 156, 160-3.

²⁹ As at Sixpenny Handley (Dorset, c. 1175-80): B.M., Harley MS. 61, fo. 57v; Chilbolton (Hants.), Ham and Little Hinton (Wilts.): *W.C.C.*, I, pp. 224, 348, II, pp. 614-15; Swainston (I.O.W., 1354): B.M., Add. MS. 6166, fo. 120v; and Benham (Berks., 1341): P.R.O., SC 11/46.

²³ B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 66v.

²⁴ Wiltshire Record Office: 492/30.

²⁵ W. G. Clark-Maxwell, 'The customs of four manors of the abbey of Lacock', *Wilts. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Mag.*, XXXII, 1902, p. 332.

²⁶ *English Dialect Dictionary*, sv "cop-".

²⁷ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 579; *R.H.*, II, p. 505; B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 28v.

²⁸ Perhaps "reeve-sheaf": it may have taken its name from the way in which the reeve sometimes acted as an independent arbitrator of sheaf-size.

²⁹ B.M., Harley MS. 61, fo. 61r.

one of the manorial officers.³⁷ At Bitterne (Hants.), however, the tenant who reaped half an acre a day took the best sheaf he could from that half-acre.³⁸

On other manors the reaper still took his sheaf *de renco*, but each man's allocation was made in advance: he took the tenth sheaf he cut, or any other specified. In fact, there are examples of the tenth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twentieth, and fiftieth.³⁹ This custom was well developed on two Hampshire manors of the abbey of Bec. At Monxton the virgater received the seventeenth, eighteenth, or last sheaf he reaped each day, while at Quarley he took the seventeenth sheaf, save on Tuesdays and Thursdays when he took nothing.⁴⁰ At Stockton (Wilts., c. 1250) a cottar could take the sixteenth sheaf for reaping half an acre of wheat, and the fourteenth sheaf for half an acre of oats.⁴¹ These examples suggest a regional custom centred in the south and west, but it is possible that it was much more widely spread. Certainly, it was found in Kent where tithe disputes show that the custom of reaping for the tenth sheaf was known.⁴² Reaping for the

seventeenth and the twentieth sheaf was also practised in Oxfordshire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At Waterperry in the 1330's and 1340's the harvest was regularly reaped "ad xx garbam," while at Forest Hill, in Edward I's reign, the harvest was reaped "pro xvij garba."⁴³ Where a custom like this was established there is little reason why we should expect to find it recorded on account rolls. Thus it may have been widespread while remaining largely hidden from view. A search through other account rolls may yield some further examples.⁴⁴

V

Alongside the many examples of attempts to define the size of the perquisite and the conditions under which it was taken, there is a great deal of less detailed information. The more cryptic entries can usually be interpreted in the light of those examples discussed already. Thus, where reapers simply took a sheaf from those they had cut, this was obviously a sheaf *de renco*.⁴⁵ With binding, stooking, carting, and stacking, tenants often received one of the last sheaves bound, one of the last stooked, one from the last cartload of the day, or one of the last stacked.⁴⁶ These were middling sheaves,

Woodruff, 'Some early visitation rolls preserved at Canterbury', *Arch. Cant.*, xxxii, 1917, p. 153.

⁴³ Bodl. Lib.: MSS. Ch. Ch. c. 27, Oseney rolls 48-59; c. 26, Oseney rolls 20, 22.

⁴⁴ At Westcot (Bucks.) in 1299 the reeve's explanation for the small amount paid out in reaping was "non plus hoc anno quia residuum mesciebatur ad garbas": P.R.O., SC 6/763/16; at Wroughton (Wilts.) in 1312 the twentieth sheaf took the place of cash when the residue of corn was reaped after the *magna precaria*: "... residuum bladi metebatur pro xx garba ad tascham": Winchester Cathedral Library: box VI, roll K, m. 3. I am grateful to Canon F. Busby, the hon. archivist, for access to the Cathedral's MSS.

⁴⁵ As at Brompton (Somerset, 1343): "... he shall have a sheaf from among those reaped": P.R.O., SC 11/564.

⁴⁶ Binding: Buckland and Abload (Glos., c. 1265): W. H. Hart, ed., *Historia et cartularium monasterii sancti Petri Gloucestrie*, Rolls Ser., 1863-7, III, pp. 64, 167; stooking: Cakeham and Sidlesham (Sussex): W. D. Peckham, ed., *Thirteen customs of the Sussex manors of the bishop of Chichester*, Sussex Rec. Soc., xxxi, 1925, pp. 7, 30; carting: Ferring (Sussex): *ibid.*, p. 72; stacking: Bishops Cleeve (Worcs., 1299): *Red Book of Worcester*, IV, p. 336; Hutton (Essex): *Customs of Battle Abbey*, p. 95.

³⁷ At Knowle (Dorset, 1317) the reaper's sheaf was a *garba mediocris de renco*: B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fo. 16v; at Whitchurch (Hants.) the reaper received *una garba mediocris per liberationem seruientis*: B.M., Harley MS. 1616, fo. 32v.

³⁸ B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 28v.

³⁹ Tenth: Alciston (Sussex, c. 1284): *Customs of Battle Abbey*, p. 28; Kingston Deverill (Wilts.): Wilts. R.O.: 492/30; at Knowle (Dorset, 1317) the tenant who collected up sheaves took the tenth out of 60: B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fo. 16v; thirteenth: Knoyle (Wilts.): B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 66v; Chippenham (Wilts., 1282): P.R.O., SC 12/16/52; fourteenth: Stockton (Wilts., c. 1250): *W.C.C.*, II, p. 469; fifteenth: Winterbourne Stickland (Dorset, 1334): B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fo. 37r; sixteenth: see Stockton above; seventeenth: Monxton, Quarley (Hants.): *S.D.B.*, pp. 46, 58-9; eighteenth: Monxton (Hants.), Hungerford (Berks.), Brixton Deverill (Wilts.): *ibid.*, pp. 46, 67-9; Hinton (Wilts., 1341): P.R.O., SC 11/699, m. 3; Wishford (Wilts., 1315): C. R. Straton, ed., *Survey of the lands of William first earl of Pembroke*, Roxburghe Club, 1909, II, p. 548; twentieth: Marlborough and Tilshead (Wilts.): *Abstracts of the inquisitions... relating to Wiltshire... Henry III*, III, 1903, p. 162, VI, 1906, p. 359; fiftieth: Milburne (Dorset): *S.D.B.*, p. 90.

⁴⁰ See n. 39. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² R. Graham, ed., *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, I, Canterbury & York Soc., LI, 1952, pp. 358-9; C. E.

"neither the largest nor the smallest."⁴⁷ Occasionally, an extra ray of light is shed on the way things worked. At Wishford Parva (Wilts., 1315), for example, the customary tenants carted sheaves all day if required and took one sheaf each, or, at the least, one sheaf for every three cartloads they took from the fields.⁴⁸

There were, as we might imagine, exceptions to these general rules. At Cherhill (Wilts., 1265) when a virgater carted sheaves, he and a fellow tenant joined forces, and together they took each day "four sheaves of corn selected and of the best." At Ringstead (Norfolk, c. 1240) a tenant who carted sheaves received "the best sheaf he could take from the last cartload," a privilege shared by the tenants at Winterbourne Monkton (Wilts.), Sturminster Newton (Dorset), Kingston Deverill (Wilts.), and Woolstone (Berks.).⁴⁹ These examples stand in contrast to those where the carter's perquisite was the *meneschef*. Tenants could obviously take an unfair advantage of their lord's generosity. This seems to have been the case at Povington (Dorset), a manor of the abbey of Bec. When the custumal was compiled around the middle of the thirteenth century the scribe saw fit to explain why those who carted sheaves in autumn had been disciplined over the sheaves they took as perquisites. The men, it was claimed, had taken advantage of the laxity of successive bailiffs in taking at the end of the day's work four sheaves each, the largest they could bind. This practice was stopped, and the lord's action justified by a scriptural quotation. Henceforth the carters were limited to one normal sheaf each. Fairness, as interpreted by the lord of the manor, triumphed over the self-interest of the tenants, but the episode is an interesting example of the elaborate lengths to which the lord felt obliged to go in order to change a local custom.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ As at Tidenham (Glos., 1306): *Abstracts of the inquisitiones* . . . Gloucestershire, v, p. 69, and Osmington (Dorset, 1317): B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fo. 10r.

⁴⁸ *Survey of the lands of . . . earl of Pembroke*, II, p. 548.

⁴⁹ *Abstracts of the inquisitiones . . . relating to Wiltshire . . . Henry III*, I, p. 43; W. H. Hart and P. A. Lyons, eds., *Cartularium monasterii de Rameseia*, Rolls Ser., 1884-93, I, p. 409; *Rentalia*, pp. 61, 82; Wilts. R.O.: 492/30.

⁵⁰ *S.D.B.*, p. 62.

Elsewhere, to ensure that the lord was not cheated, the reeve, hayward, or bailiff was often on hand to distribute the perquisites. At Holworth and Osmington (Dorset, 1317) the reapers received three sheaves from the hands of the bailiff (*serviens*) for each half-acre they cut. Similar restraints operated on some of the manors of St Swithun's Priory, Winchester, at Monxton (Hants.), and at Shrivenham (Berks.).⁵¹ At Thursford (Norfolk), a manor of Binham Priory, two carters received between them two sheaves "of any sort of corn which the bailiff wished to give them." The reeve at Cutsdean (Worcs., c. 1240) exercised similar discretion, for the binder took "such a sheaf as the reeve wished to give him."⁵²

VI

Some sources suggest that the provision of sheaves was one phase in the development of an older tradition. The custumal of St Swithun's Priory is particularly illuminating here. At Ham, near Hungerford (Wilts.), the virgater who carted sheaves received his lunch or two sheaves in the evening; at Patney (Wilts.) the same gifts were offered; while at Wroughton (Wilts.) the cottar who reaped half an acre a day was given one sheaf "for a meal."⁵³ Such arrangements were by no means confined to the one estate or to the one county. At Tilshead (Wilts.), for example, the *custumarii* took one sheaf of corn each in place of their supper on those days they carted. At Eastbourne (Sussex, 1253) twelve cottars worked when summoned; their lord supplied food, except in autumn when he gave them sheaves only. Smallholders at Sandon (Herts., 1297) were given one sheaf each for their food every Wednesday throughout harvest. At Hindringham (Norfolk) the tenant who stacked sheaves received one meal "ad primam" from the lord, provided his own

⁵¹ B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fos. 10r, 15v; *W.C.C.*, II, pp. 445, 487, 566; *S.D.B.*, p. 46; C. D. Ross, ed., *The cartulary of Cirencester Abbey, Gloucestershire*, 1964, II, p. 435. Their participation supplied an element of independent, disinterested judgement, just as the use of the reeve's head provided an independent measure.

⁵² B.M., Cotton Claudius D. XIII, fo. 80r; *Registrum . . . Wigorniensis*, p. 103b.

⁵³ *W.C.C.*, I, p. 342, II, pp. 370, 480.

lunch, and received a sheaf in the evening. Another tenant, who carted three times in autumn, was allowed, presumably on each occasion, bread and cheese or a sheaf.⁵⁴ Perhaps the provision of sheaves had developed from an earlier and more general distribution of food, of which the three or four autumn *precarie* "ad cibum domini" were survivors. The constant provision of food would have proved expensive to maintain and cumbersome to administer. The gift of a sheaf was a simple way of avoiding the expense while maintaining the goodwill of the tenant. If the provision of sheaves originated, at least in part, in this way, it represented a stage in the changing nature of harvest "payments." We have seen how at Fornsett towards the last quarter of the thirteenth century the distribution of sheaves had been superseded by a lump gift of grain to the customary tenants.⁵⁵ A few other examples of the continuing process can be traced in custumals, and many account rolls show harvesting "ad tascham," suggesting the final withdrawal of customary labour and its rewards. On some manors changes occurred quite early on. By about 1240 the tenants of the abbey of Ramsey at Ringstead (Norfolk) were receiving a lump sum of 12d. "for the sheaves they used to receive."⁵⁶ The difficulty which faced the manorial lord and his auditors was that the cost of the perquisites, when assessed in terms of cash, could outstrip the value set on the work. When this was discovered action was taken, as at Odiham (Hants., later thirteenth century). Walter le Bole, a semi-virgater, had received one sheaf "de assisa" for each half-acre he reaped, but the custumal noted that the service had lapsed because the perquisite had proved more valuable than the work.⁵⁷ Another more restricted example comes from the manors of Milton Abbey in Dorset. At Osmington various manorial labourers (*operarii*) were given 6d. "for the sheaves they were accustomed to receive in autumn," provided that the

harvest had been reaped by customary labour. At Lyscombe the ploughmen and the shepherd each received 12d., while at Woolland each ploughman was given 7d. for their sheaves.⁵⁸

VII

These *operarii* on the Milton Abbey estates were not full-time *famuli* but tenants whose conditions of tenure included service as manorial workers when required. It was common on a number of manors in Dorset for people in this position to receive sheaves at harvest, perhaps in recognition of their service throughout the year rather than for any one harvest task, perhaps because their position as *operarii* excluded them from boonwork, thus (but for this concession) depriving them of the perquisite. The early twelfth-century surveys of Melbury Abbas and Compton Abbas recorded gifts of sheaves to the swineherd "when the tenants reap," while at Sixpenny Handley (c. 1175-80) each ploughman received a sheaf when reaping took place, and a further two sheaves when the harvest was carted home.⁵⁹ In the same way the cowherd and swineherd at Sturminster Newton received a sheaf each when the main body of tenants reaped.⁶⁰ At Bleadon (Somerset) the shepherd received a generous perquisite of barley sheaves for his work with the demesne flock: "a load of barley sheaves, as large as he can bind together, lift, and carry away. . ."⁶¹ Elsewhere, special provision was made for those whose duties involved a long stint at harvest. At Bromham (Wilts.), for example, the hayward and shepherd each received sixty sheaves "of middling corn" for watching over the demesne at harvest, a service which must have meant a lot of night work.⁶²

Harvest was an especially busy time for the reeve, yet he was compensated in part by the

⁵⁴ *Abstracts of the inquisitions . . . relating to Wiltshire . . . Henry III*, xi, p. 360; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, i, p. 64 (no. 188); St Paul's Cathedral Library: WD 16, Liber 1, fo. 141r; B.M., Stowe MS. 936, fos. 2v, 7r.

⁵⁵ See n. 32. ⁵⁶ *Cartularium . . . Rameseia*, i, p. 411.

⁵⁷ P.R.O., SC 11/589.

⁵⁸ B.M., Add. MS. 40886, fos. 10v-11r, 27v, 29r.

⁵⁹ B.M., Harley MS. 61, fos. 48v, 49v, 57v.

⁶⁰ *Rentalia*, pp. 93-5.

⁶¹ E. Smirke, 'Notice of the custumal of Bleadon and of the agricultural tenures of the thirteenth century', *Memoirs . . . communicated to the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1851, p. 207.

⁶² *Custumals of Battle Abbey*, pp. 81-2.

free board he usually received at the lord's table.⁶³ On one or two manors we find that an extra allowance was made to the reeve, namely the ears of corn which dropped from the sheaves into the carts when carting was in progress. These odd sweepings were known as *brut-corn* or *brot-corn*. The perquisite was recorded in the custumals of Laughton (Sussex) and Odiham (Hants.). A variation of this custom was recorded at Meonstoke (Hants., c. 1272), where, at the third autumn *precarie*, the reapers were given bread "made from the corn which falls from the sheaf." Elsewhere, things did not always fall out so favourably. At Cuxham (Oxon.) the *brot-corn* was accounted for by the reeve, and the amount swept up entered on the account roll.⁶⁴

Ultimate responsibility for the honesty of the customary work-force at harvest seems to have lain with the hayward or beadle. On their shoulders fell the burden of ensuring that any loss or damage to the crops was made good. They were to guard against pilfering, and against the careless handling of sheaves. To help them meet this obligation the lord of the manor sometimes gave them a small piece of land sown with demesne seed, from which they made good any defects in the harvest.⁶⁵ In turn the beadle and hayward would have had power to extract satisfactory work from the reapers and other labourers. In this way they were helped, firstly, by the obligation placed on many freeholders and *custumarii* alike to supervise their *familia* or the *custumarii* in general at the *precarie*; and, secondly, by the *ripereve*, a man hired or elected from among the tenants themselves for

the duration of the harvest.⁶⁶ The perquisite could always be withheld if there was any slackness.⁶⁷

VIII

As we have seen, account rolls can provide the detail which shows how some of the customs were applied. On occasion they provide information which went unrecorded in the extent or custumal, or which fills out our knowledge where no custumal now survives. At Sevenhampton (Wilts.), for instance, the short extent made no mention of harvest perquisites, yet a contemporary account roll (1272-3) shows that sheaves were given for reaping, one per half-acre, provided that the work was extra to the normal week-work and the autumn *precarie*.⁶⁸ This was probably a principle widely adopted. While it is unlikely that other account rolls will add greatly to the examples discussed above,⁶⁹ the information we have considered is probably enough to suggest that custumals were not just repositories of theory. While customary labour remained important to the demesne economy, it was probably common for tenants to receive sheaves at harvest.⁷⁰ Where account rolls remain silent, other sources suggest this,⁷¹ and accounts themselves often recorded such customary perquisites as the sower's *sedlop*, or the mowers' sheep (*madschep*).⁷² Where these continued, it may not be so unlikely that some of the colourful customs considered here did too.

⁶⁶ At Cuxham the *ripereve* appears to have been sent to the manor by the landlord: Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 145, n. 9.

⁶⁷ As is implied at Overton (Wilts.) where the beadle was to hand over the perquisite "provided the land is reaped satisfactorily": *W.C.C.*, II, pp. 464-5.

⁶⁸ M. W. Farr, ed., *Accounts and surveys of the Wiltshire lands of Adam de Stratton*, Wilts. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc., Records Branch, XIV, 1959, p. 48.

⁶⁹ See p. 18.

⁷⁰ Not that customary labour would have accounted for all the harvest; frequently it did not. At Overton (Hants.) in 1232 23s. 2½d. was paid in reaping and binding "to those who had no sheaves": Lord Beveridge, 'Westminster wages in the manorial era', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., VIII, no. 1, 1955, p. 30.

⁷¹ See n. 42, and W. O. Ault, 'Some early village by-laws', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XLV, 1930, p. 211.

⁷² As at Combe (Hants.), where the *sedlop* is recorded in the account rolls of 1306-8: *S.D.B.*, pp. 151, 164; the *madschep* is described in Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 112, and I hope to discuss it more fully elsewhere.

⁶³ H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor*, Cambridge, 1937, pp. 177-8.

⁶⁴ P.R.O., SC 11/877, m. 3d, SC 11/590; B.M., Loans MS. 29/55, fo. 5v; P. D. A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village*, Oxford, 1965, p. 47; the meaning of *brot* is given in *ibid.*, p. 47, n. 3.

⁶⁵ As at Sutton (Hants.): P.R.O., DL 43/8/26, m. 1d, and Badbury (Wilts.): *Rentalia*, p. 60. At Hardwick (Cambs., 1251) the beadle received a rood of wheat called *dewerode*, while at Kelshall (Herts., 1251) the beadle received an allowance of grain to make good any losses: B.M., Cotton Claudius C. xi, fos. 138v, 145r. Other references to the responsibility of beadle or hayward at harvest on the Glastonbury Abbey estates may be found in *Rentalia*, pp. 95, 103, 141.

APPENDIX

Sheaves of Stubble

Human attributes other than the size of the head and leg were used to determine the size of the sheaves of stubble and reeds. The measures employed were the picturesque ones which attracted the attention of Coulton and Bennett.⁷³ The number of sheaves of stubble which a customary tenant collected up in the wake of the harvest for one work was either a straightforward number, for example, 25, 50, or 100,⁷⁴ or a certain number of heaps, each containing a certain number of sheaves, usually five, sometimes ten.⁷⁵ The perquisite was one of the sheaves bound up in the course of the day. The colourful descriptions of the Glastonbury Abbey surveys refer not to the perquisite itself but to the size of the

⁷³ G. G. Coulton, *The Medieval Village*, Cambridge, 1925, pp. 46-7; Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

⁷⁴ North Waltham (Hants.): B.M., Egerton MS. 2418, fo. 47r; Bitterne (Hants.): *ibid.*, fo. 28v; Balsham (Cambs.): B.M., Cotton Claudius C. xi, fo. 124r. At Damerham (Wilts.) fifty sheaves of reeds were collected for one work: *Rentalia*, p. 108.

⁷⁵ Sixteen heaps each of 5 sheaves at Swanthorpe and Aldershot (Hants.): F. J. Baigent, ed., *The Crondal records*, Hants. Rec. Soc., 1891, pp. 87, 98; 15 heaps each of 5 sheaves at Overton (Wilts.): *W.C.C.*, II, pp. 458-9; 10 heaps each of 5 sheaves at Sutton (Hants.): P.R.O., DL 43/8/26; 8 heaps each of 10 sheaves at Bincombe (Dorset, 1376): *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, III, p. 381; 5 heaps each of 10 sheaves at Mapperton (Dorset) and at Meonstoke (Hants.): P.R.O., E 142/23; B.M., Loans MS. 29/55, fo. 5v.

ordinary sheaf of stubble or reeds.⁷⁶ The intention behind them was to ensure that the work was done properly, that the sheaf was the correct size. Thus, the sheaf of stubble had to be a size which would fit snugly under an arm, the hand gripping the edge of the tunic.⁷⁷ A variation involved the hayward or reeve measuring the sheaf: it was stood in the mud, the hayward then gripped his hair below his ear, and the sheaf was passed through the circle so formed. If it left no mud on the hayward's face or arm it was too small, and the tenant was under suspicion of shoddy work. No mention was made of any perquisite.⁷⁸ While it is easy to dismiss this sort of custom as unlikely to have happened, account rolls show that large quantities of stubble were sometimes gathered in, so it may not be too fanciful to suppose that these checks were carried out.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ At Damerham (Wilts.) each sheaf of reeds had to be of a size "which a man can take up in an armful": *Rentalia*, p. 108.

⁷⁷ As at Nettleton (Wilts.), Sturminster Newton (Dorset), Bincombe (Dorset), Swainston (I.o.W.), and Swyncombe (Oxon.): *Rentalia*, pp. 68, 82; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, III, p. 381; B.M., Add. MS. 6166, fo. 121r; *S.D.B.*, p. 88.

⁷⁸ As at Longbridge Deverill (Wilts.) and Inkpen (Berks.): *Rentalia*, p. 135; B.M., Loans MS. 29/55, fos. 24v-25r.

⁷⁹ At Thorney (Sussex), 1295-6: "in MCC garbis stipule colligendis ad xij opera, videlicet C garbas pro j opere": P.R.O., SC 6/1030/30. In 1380, 4,000 sheaves of rush were provided for Thomas Arundel from his Cambridgeshire manors, but probably not all by customary labour: M. Aston, *Thomas Arundel*, Oxford, 1967, p. 223, n. 4.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

J. H. Betty is Senior Lecturer and Staff Tutor in Local History in the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Bristol. He has written on various aspects of local history, particularly on Dorset, and is at present engaged on a detailed study of agriculture and rural society in the county during the seventeenth century.

John Higgs is President of the British Agricultural History Society and Chairman of the Standing Conference for Local History. He is joint editor with Gordon Mingay of Volume VI of the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*. He farms in Oxfordshire and Dumfriesshire, and is a consultant on rural development to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

Andrew Jones is Assistant Archivist in the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock. In 1975 he completed a Southampton Ph.D. on *The Customary*

Land Market in Bedfordshire in the Fifteenth Century. His current interests include a study of manorial customs in general.

Dr J. M. Lindsay is a Lecturer in Geography at the Polytechnic of North London. His recent research concerns aspects of the development of woodland management systems, particularly in Scotland.

Professor William N. Parker of Yale University is a past President of the Economic History Association and a Member of the Executive Committee of the American Agricultural History Society. His recent work includes *European Peasants and Their Markets* (edited with Eric Jones), *The Structure of the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South*, and *American Economic Growth: An Economist's History of the United States*, edited with Lance Davis and Richard Easterlin.

Forestry and Agriculture in the Scottish Highlands 1700–1850: A Problem in Estate Management

by J. M. LINDSAY

At present the nature of forestry in the Scottish Highlands is governed largely by policies designed to use effectively the type of land most readily available for afforestation: this is usually hill ground, most of which can be expected to produce profitable crops of timber only if certain species are planted after improvement by ploughing, drainage, and fertilization. During this century, extensive upland planting of Sitka spruce, Lodgepole pine, and a number of other exotic conifers has become characteristic of Highland forestry.¹ Land suited to more varied and productive management is seldom available.

The principal factor restricting use of land for forestry is the perceived need to preserve agricultural units. Hill sheep farming predominates; the limited area of low sheltered ground available is vital to hill farmers for winter grazing and production of winter fodder. The same low ground is, however, the most desirable category for afforestation, and thus forestry is seen in some quarters as a threat to the viability of Highland agriculture.² There is therefore a conflict between the interests of farming and forestry which creates management problems on a local scale, and is also an obstacle to the formulation of satisfactory land use policy. At present governmental policy tends to favour agricultural interests; the Forestry Commission, for example, must consult the Department of Agriculture over each proposed acquisition of land for planting.³

¹ H. L. Edlin, 'The Forestry Commission in Scotland, 1919–69', *Scott. Geog. Mag.*, LXXV, 1969, pp. 84–95; D. N. McVean and J. D. Lockie, *Ecology and Land Use in Upland Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1969, p. 58.

² Advisory Panel on the Highlands and Islands, *Land use in the Highlands and Islands*, H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1964, pp. 7–8, 32; McVean & Lockie, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–1.

³ McVean & Lockie, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–60; J. T. Coppock, 'Land use policies in Scotland', *Scott. Forestry*, xxvii, 1973, p. 186.

This conflict is not altogether a recent development, and has affected the relationship between agriculture and forestry in earlier periods. Although agriculture tends to receive priority at present, it cannot be assumed that this has always been the case; it is intended here to examine the nature and development of competition between forestry and agriculture in the past, and the ways in which attempts to resolve the conflict have affected the form of land use. Particular attention will be given to the use of the semi-natural deciduous woodland of the southern Highlands during the period 1700–1850.⁴ Then, as now, the southern Highland counties contained a few woods of native Scots pine, but they also formed the main centre of development of oak tanbark coppice during that period. As shall be seen later, coppice in particular was incompatible with stock farming, and woodland usually occupied part of the low ground required for wintering.

I

It is first of all necessary to look briefly at the ways in which stock farming made use of wooded ground. Until the middle of the eighteenth century infield-outfield agriculture, associated with joint tenancy, was found throughout Scotland, and forms of infield-outfield organization characterized Highland agriculture well into the next century. These systems have frequently been described; there has, however, been a tendency to over-emphasize the importance of cultivation in the Highlands, and much more attention has been paid to summer

⁴ The southern Highlands are here taken to include the counties of Argyll and Perth, as well as parts of Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire. The term "semi-natural" is used to describe woodland which is predominantly self-sown rather than planted.

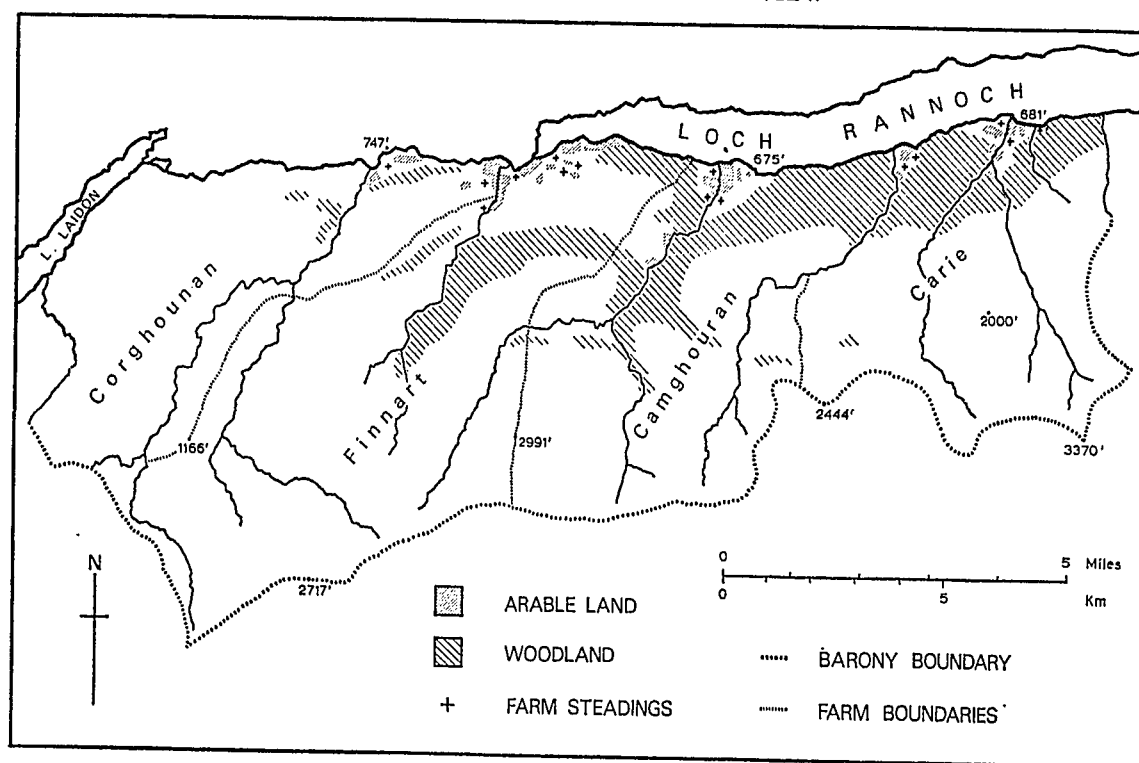


FIG. 1. The barony of Slisgarrow, 1756.

transhumance than to other aspects of the pastoral regime.⁵

Animal husbandry was of primary importance in the traditional Highland economy. Figure 1 illustrates the land use of part of the north Perthshire estate of Struan in 1756. The barony of Slisgarrow was divided into four farms, each subdivided into two or more groups of joint tenancies. Rough pasture accounted for 79.6 per cent of the total area, and most of the remainder (19.8 per cent) was under woodland of pine and birch; infield, outfield, and riverine meadow together amounted to no more than 0.6 per cent.⁶ Cultivation was perforce very

limited; as in many other parts of the Highlands the paucity of the grain supply made it necessary to import meal regularly from the Lowlands.⁷

Highland grazing stocks consisted of cattle, sheep, horses, and goats, but cattle were economically most important. The export of store cattle was the only major source of cash in the Highland economy, providing a means of paying for meal and other imports, while dairy produce formed a substantial part of the diet.⁸ The traditional small Highland sheep were not regarded as hardy; they were kept in relatively small numbers, and the meat and wool were mainly used domestically.⁹ Small horses (garrons) were used for a number of purposes; in some districts they were semi-feral and broken for work only when necessary. Goats too were semi-feral, and important to an extent which has only recently been appreciated; they provided both milk and meat for domestic use, and

⁵ For descriptive accounts see M. Gray, *The Highland Economy, 1750-1850*, Edinburgh, 1957, pp. 11-41; J. A. Symon, *Scottish Farming Past and Present*, Edinburgh, 1959, pp. 12-26, 119-33; T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830*, 1969, pp. 119-34. For an evolutionary approach see R. A. Dodgshon, 'The nature and development of Infield-Outfield in Scotland', *Trans. Inst. Brit. Geog.*, LIX, 1973, pp. 1-23.

⁶ Fig. 1 is based on a plan of Struan by John Lesslie, 1756, Scottish Record Office (hereafter S.R.O.) RHP.3480. The proportions are derived from Lesslie's memoir accompanying the survey, S.R.O. Exchequer Papers E.783/98, fol. 31.

⁷ S.R.O. E.783/28/1; see also Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-4.

⁸ Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8; Symon, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-3.

⁹ I. F. Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 1961, p. 79.

were also very efficient grazers capable of thriving on vegetation inaccessible or unpalatable to other domesticated animals.¹⁰

Animals were pastured on the uplands in summer, and in some, but not all cases, much of the community spent a few weeks after mid-summer on isolated pastures (shielings) with the milch cows. Summering on hill pasture is usually explained as a means of conserving low pasture and, more important, protecting the unfenced crops from damage: the period between sowing and harvest could last from late April to early November. In the barony of Slisgarrow detailed regulations of the 1770's controlled the movement of stock on upland pastures between 1 April and late August annually, but the movement of animals was not restricted in the winter half of the year.¹¹

After harvest it was no longer necessary to keep the stock away from the crops, and stubble was a useful source of fodder. Large areas of hill pasture were in any case almost valueless by the beginning of winter; their vegetation could sustain only those animals capable of ranging rapidly over wide areas. Even red deer winter if possible on sheltered sites with access to valley grass and arable land, especially when snow is lying at the higher levels.¹² The wintering range consisted of the lower hill pastures and the valley bottoms; the use of hay and other types of cut fodder was limited, and the methods of winter feeding and seasonal movement between districts, later developed in extensive sheep farming, were not then practicable.¹³

The stocking of farms was controlled by

customary methods of "sourcing," in which the carrying capacity of common pasture was assessed in terms of "souns" or "sowms." Handley has suggested that the basic soum was the grass required by one cow or four or five sheep, whereas a horse required two souns.¹⁴ Tenants were allocated souns on summer pasture in proportion to the sizes of their arable holdings;¹⁵ distribution was therefore roughly related to tenants' shares of wintering capacity. A formalization of this principle can be seen in the legal action of "sowming and rowming," in which the use of certain types of common grazing was granted to landowners in proportion to the wintering capacity of their lands.¹⁶

It is probable that wintering capacity determined the total number of souns allocated on a farm as well as their distribution among tenants. The degree to which summer pasture was used depended on the number of animals which could be brought through the winter alive, and it may be suggested that the ceiling imposed by sourcing was intended not to check overgrazing of summer pasture but to remove any incentive for tenants to retain far too many animals at the beginning of winter in the hope that enough would survive to produce a large summer stock. Rennie nevertheless observed in 1814 that although summer pasture was used only to 10 per cent of its capacity in the Highlands as a whole, more animals were wintered than could adequately be fed.¹⁷ It is probable that the number of beasts retained was generally set at or above the maximum which in local experience could be expected to survive a normal winter. It has been estimated that in the early eighteenth century the average winter mortality of Highland cattle stocks was 20 per cent; according to Rennie 30 to 50 per cent of

¹⁰ Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-1; M. Campbell, 'Goat-keeping in the old Highland Economy—3', *Scott. Studies*, ix, 1965, pp. 182-4; B. R. S. Megaw, 'Goat-keeping in the old Highland Economy—2', *Scott. Studies*, viii, 1964, pp. 215-16, provides an assessment of the numerical importance of goats.

¹¹ S.R.O. E.788/20/1, E.788/20/4.

¹² A. S. Mather, 'Red deer land use in the northern Highlands—1', *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, lxxxviii, 1972, pp. 42-4.

¹³ J. A. S. Watson 'The Rise and Development of the Sheep Industry in the Highlands and North of Scotland', *Trans. R. Highld. Agric. Soc. Scotl.*, 5th ser., xlv, 1932, p. 8; W. J. Carlyle, 'The Away-wintering of Ewe Hoggis from Scottish Hill Farms', *Scott. Geog. Mag.*, lxxxviii, 1972, pp. 105-7.

¹⁴ J. E. Handley, *Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century*, 1953, p. 100. There was some regional variation, and the basic ratios were modified to make allowance for animals of different ages and types.

¹⁵ Smout, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹⁶ W. Bell, *A Dictionary and Digest of the Law of Scotland*, rev. edn, Edinburgh, 1861, p. 773.

¹⁷ R. Rennie, 'Of those Obstacles to Improvement which are Local', pp. 393-413, in Sir John Sinclair (ed.), *General Report of the Agricultural State and Political Circumstances of Scotland*, v, Edinburgh, 1814, p. 398.

the whole stock might die in a harsh winter with heavy snow, while the remaining cattle would be too emaciated for profitable sale.¹⁸

As the availability of wintering determined stocking capacity, it was clearly necessary that wintering ground should be fully utilized. Animals were allowed to range freely over grass, stubble, and any other vegetation available; death from exposure was common. The limited supply of cut fodder was reserved for the few animals enclosed overnight or housed indoors; milch cows were given preferential treatment, and sheep were also often housed for at least part of the winter. At the end of winter came "lifting day," when the enclosed animals were assisted or carried to the first spring growth; after an exceptionally hard winter cattle in Slisgarrow were said still to be weak in early June.¹⁹

A major modification of the Highland grazing regime took place after the introduction of extensive sheep farming in the eighteenth century. The first flocks appeared in the south-western Highlands shortly before 1760, some were established north of the Great Glen by 1790, and few parts of the Highlands remained unaffected in 1820.²⁰ The effects of sheep farming on a society and economy ill equipped for radical change have been fully described elsewhere.²¹ Small tenants could not participate to any extent, and their pastoral requirements conflicted with those of sheep. In the north eviction and displacement were common; mass clearance was less evident in the south, where the scale of operations was smaller.

The main element in Highland sheep husbandry was the wedder stock, pastured on the upland in summer and wintered at lower levels;

breeding stocks of ewes were generally much smaller, and remained on the lower pastures throughout the year.²² Wintering capacity continued to limit the size of stocks, and summer pastures were still under-utilized. In many parts of the Highlands large populations of small tenants remained after the establishment of sheep farming, grazing smaller stocks than before on more limited pastures. Wintering continued to be vital, both for the introduced stock and for the remnants of traditional Highland husbandry.

II

A number of misconceptions cloud the history of Highland forestry. Thus it is commonly accepted that the deforestation of the Highlands resulted largely from commercial exploitation. According to a widely held belief, much of the Highland area was formerly covered by pine-dominated forest, and despite a long history of sporadic exploitation and other types of damage this was supposedly still largely intact in 1600. After that date, however, there is said to have been an invasion of English iron-smelters who caused considerable damage. The rate of destruction supposedly accelerated greatly, especially after the Highlands were finally pacified in 1745, and in the following hundred years ironmasters and timber merchants from England almost completed the process of deforestation.²³

There are many reasons why this explanation should be rejected. These cannot be reviewed fully here, but it may be noted that although commercial activity does indeed seem to have increased as the eighteenth century advanced, woodland covered little of the Highland area, perhaps 5 per cent, when the first reliable survey of the Scottish mainland was carried out about 1750.²⁴ If this proportion of woodland was able to support the commercial felling which took place during the phase of greatest activity which

¹⁸ D. S. MacLagan, 'Stock-rearing in the Highlands, 1720-1820', *Trans. R. Highld. Agric. Soc. Scotl.*, 6th ser., II, 1958, pp. 66-7; Rennie, *loc. cit.*, p. 398. For a detailed example see J. Henderson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sutherland*, 1812, p. 174.

¹⁹ Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 79; Smout, *op. cit.*, p. 131; S.R.O. E.783/60/257 (1).

²⁰ Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8; MacLagan, *loc. cit.*, p. 68; Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-8, 96-7.

²¹ See for example Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-104; A. J. Youngson, *After the Forty-five—the Economic Impact on the Scottish Highlands*, Edinburgh, 1973, pp. 170-9.

²² Watson, *loc. cit.*, p. 9; MacLagan, *loc. cit.*, p. 69.

²³ Thus see F. F. Darling, 'History of the Scottish Forests', *Scott. Geog. Mag.*, LXV, 1949, pp. 133-4.

²⁴ For a map based on this survey, see A. C. O'Dell, 'A View of Scotland in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century', *Scott. Geog. Mag.*, LXIX, 1953, pp. 58-63.

followed, it is difficult to accept that commercial felling had an important role in the overall deforestation of the Highlands, and little satisfactory evidence has in fact been offered to support the sweeping claims made about its destructiveness.

Woodland may be subject to management or exploitation; these terms are here used to denote utilization respectively with and without regard to the subsequent productivity of the woodland involved. The established view of Highland woodland history emphasizes exploitive felling of pinewood; the history of deciduous woodland is thus largely disregarded, and management is evidently assumed to have been absent or insignificant.

Contemporary and modern evidence, however, indicates that although a certain amount of native pinewood remained by 1700, particularly in the central Highlands, deciduous woodland was more extensive; birch was common everywhere, and oak was also prominent, especially in the south and west.²⁵ At that time the deciduous woodland of the Highlands was largely open to casual domestic use, but after 1700 there was a growing incentive for landowners to cut and manage their woods of oak and other species as coppice for commercial markets.

Coppicing utilizes the tendency of many trees to produce supplementary shoots, and ordinarily a series of crops can be obtained from each cut stump or "stool." Varied markets were available for coppice timber between 1700 and 1850. In Scotland the best oak was largely used to produce wheel spokes; inferior oak and other timber went largely for use as domestic or industrial fuelwood or charcoal. Bark was, however, the most important product of oak coppice as it was the principal British tanning agent until the late nineteenth century. In Scotland bark prices rose slowly from about £2.50 per ton in 1700 to £6 in 1790, but during the period of wartime demand and inflation of the next twenty-five years prices rose as high as £20 per

ton; other barks could also be sold at prices consistently lower than those of oak. All bark prices fell after 1815, and by 1850 oak prices were again around the level reached in 1790.²⁶

Coppice was consequently very important for some time, and much of the oakwood of the southern Highlands and other districts came under coppice management. During the eighteenth century the value of other types of woodland also rose, although less markedly, and it is then that conflict between the interests of forestry and agriculture seems first to have become a matter of general concern to landowners. Small as the total area was, Highland woodland being mainly distributed along ocean and lake shores, on the lower sides of river valleys, and along watercourses was thus concentrated on land suitable for wintering.

All grazing animals can cause damage to woodland if given access to it. Natural regeneration may be halted if seedlings, saplings, or coppice shoots are eaten or trampled, and mature trees may be damaged by gnawing or rubbing of bark and low branches. The most effective form of protection is enclosure, although the type employed depends on the nature of the woods to be protected. Young growth particularly needs enclosure; in the case of plantation it may be necessary only during the first few years, but permanent enclosure may be advisable for the protection of young growth in semi-natural woodland maintained by regular or intermittent natural regeneration. The pinewood of Rannoch in the barony of Slisgarrow belonged to this second category.

In coppice the whole stock is periodically returned to a vulnerable juvenile condition, and unless protection is provided for at least a few years immediately after every cutting, coppiced wood tends to deteriorate into persistent but valueless scrub. The hazards of grazing were fully realized in Scottish forestry: it was observed that young coppice was especially liable to injury, and that even a few hours of grazing

²⁵ D. N. McVean, 'Woodland and scrub', pp. 144-65, in J. H. Burnett (ed.), *The Vegetation of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1964.

²⁶ J. M. Lindsay, 'The use of woodland in Argyllshire and Perthshire between 1650 and 1850', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1974, pp. 392-434.

could cause lasting damage.²⁷ In Scotland most oak coppice was cut over at intervals ranging from nineteen to twenty-five years, and Robert Monteath, a practising forester experienced in coppice cutting, recommended enclosure for at least ten years after cutting.²⁸ Plantations required a short period of protection in relation to the lifetime of the timber crop, but if a coppice was cut every twenty years and enclosed for ten years after cutting, the availability of pasture in the wood was halved, and the protection of woodland dependent on natural regeneration from seed could require complete exclusion of grazing animals.

III

Forest management was not a traditional part of the Highland economy, and its adoption therefore required a positive decision on the landowner's part. By the end of the eighteenth century coppice management and other systems were being applied widely in the Highlands but not uniformly, and some landowners continued to exploit their woods.²⁹ Even in the southern Highlands adequate coppice management was not invariably applied. Attitudes there changed over time. In Dunbartonshire, for example, it was commonly introduced only when prices improved greatly towards 1800, and some landowners in Argyllshire still neglected their woods even then.³⁰

The irregular application of management, even where activity was most intense, plainly indicates that there was no consensus about its value. It is important to understand the criteria on which decisions about the adoption and nature of management were based, although

certain difficulties present themselves. Each decision depended on an assessment of the factors seen as relevant, but it cannot be assumed that landowners shared a common perception of the relative importance of different factors.³¹ Decisions must also be seen in context, and it is likely that they tended more towards uniformity as local norms developed. Economic factors were undoubtedly important, but it is possible that as local experience accumulated management was guided more by technical criteria than by the economic circumstances of specific cases.³² Some factors contributing to decision-making were non-economic in nature, and some were intangible; economic factors, as landowners understood them, were important, but a strictly economic approach to the problem is nevertheless inappropriate. The problem is perhaps best approached by the use of a broad cost-benefit framework.³³

The capital and labour costs of forestry were those most easily perceived. The capital cost of establishment was small or absent when semi-natural wood was brought under management, but enclosure was expensive, and a large enclosure scheme could cost several hundred pounds.³⁴ It was also necessary to consider the wages of foresters and others employed occasionally or permanently in the woods. A third major cost, land rent, was represented by the loss of revenue from other land uses and particularly wintering. The immediate danger in reducing wintering capacity was that tenants, unable to maintain stocks at the levels to which

²⁷ R. Monteath, *The Forester's Guide and Profitable Planter*, 2nd edn, Edinburgh, 1824, p. 144; A. Gilchrist, 'On the Treatment and Management of Oak Coppice in Scotland', *Trans. R. Highld. Agric. Soc. Scotl.*, 4th ser., vi, 1874, p. 126.

²⁸ M. L. Anderson, *A History of Scottish Forestry*, 1, Edinburgh, 1967, p. 467; Monteath, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

²⁹ J. Robertson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Inverness*, 1808, pp. 209-10.

³⁰ A. Whyte and D. Macfarlan, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Dunbarton*, Glasgow, 1811, p. 150; J. Smith, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Argyll*, 1805, pp. 138-9.

³¹ Some decisions, of course, were taken not by landowners but by their agents, factors, and other authorized persons; a governmental commission managed Struan and several other Highland estates between 1749 and 1784. Such decisions were, however, rarely taken by tenant farmers, to whom the nature of tenure and the Scottish law of landownership gave little opportunity or incentive to use woodland commercially on their own account.

³² Such a tendency has been held to be widespread in British private forestry. See D. R. Johnston, A. J. Grayson, and R. T. Bradley, *Forest Planning*, 1967, pp. 43-5.

³³ For a discussion of costs and benefits in forestry see *ibid.*, pp. 41-53.

³⁴ S.R.O. E.788/22/2; E. R. Cregeen (ed.), *Argyll estate instructions—Mull, Morvern, Tiree, 1770-1805*, Scottish History Society (hereafter S.H.S.), 4th ser., 1, Edinburgh, 1964, pp. 132-4.

their rents were related, would fall into arrears. Landowners could rectify or avoid this situation by lowering rent to compensate for the loss of pasture; this process was known in the Highlands as "giving abatement." Alternatively, the mean rent *per caput* could be maintained but the number of tenants reduced. Use of one or both solutions necessarily reduced revenue from agricultural rents; the second also entailed eviction or displacement, which were undesirable in an economy with few other sources of employment.

Abatement will be examined later. There is no evidence of extensive eviction or displacement associated with forestry, but holdings were sometimes modified, and it was not unknown for tenants to protest that enclosure would destroy their livelihood. Thus in 1758 the tenants of Craigrostan on Loch Lomond submitted a petition to their landowner, stating that tenancy would become impossible if woods which provided them with their sole source of pasture during most of the year were enclosed. Similarly the tenants of Camghouran in Slisgarrow claimed in 1780 that enclosure of the pinewood of Rannoch would deprive them of their best pasture and their only wintering. The cattle, it was said, could not survive without the wood pasture, and they themselves would be destitute without their cattle; complete enclosure would also block the paths leading to their hill pasture and supplies of peat.³⁵

In these cases woodland is known to have formed an unusually high proportion of the pasture, and in any case the claims may have been deliberately overstated. Nor were they invariably successful: thus the Camghouran tenants' petition for abatement for the wood pasture was dismissed, although a means of access to the hill land was found.³⁶ It is nevertheless apparent that the reduction of revenue from grazing might be accompanied by social disturbance. The principal costs of forestry could be assessed in terms of capital, labour, and land

rent; social costs were also perceptible even if they could not be quantified.

On the benefit side, woodland had a tangible value for landowners. Assessment of this value in general terms is far from easy. In the case of coppice, for example, bark prices were subject to temporal and regional variation, and the type of demand for timber changed frequently. Figure 2 shows the income obtained from the sale of approximately equal annual sections or "haggs" of oak coppice on one Perthshire estate. The account series on which it is based is unfortunately incomplete, but it is still apparent that the value of coppice to the estate rose very strikingly between about 1790 and 1815.³⁷ At the end of that period it was thought that in the Highlands as a whole coppice provided a higher income per acre than any land use, except, or even including, cultivation.³⁸

It is important to note that the value of woodland to a landowner and the benefits of management were not synonymous. Management was likely to provide a yield of produce higher than the potential yield of exploitation over a given period, and the major benefit of management was the value of this additional yield. Unlike exploitation, however, management entailed costs of the types outlined above, and only if the value of the additional yield exceeded these costs was it economically preferable to exploitation over a given period. It is unlikely that this benefit could be precisely calculated at the time. Only in controlled conditions would it be possible to establish what proportion of the yield of managed woodland might have been lost had exploitation been preferred.

The receipts of benefits was also delayed in most cases. Yield could be measured at a given time, and a value calculated accordingly in terms of prices at that time, but future yields and values could not reliably be predicted. Yield was affected by the way the wood was treated,

³⁵ S.R.O. Montrose Muniments, GD.220, Wood contracts box, 'Statement of the tenants of Craigrostan with regard to their barren timber, 1758'; S.R.O. E.783/60/253, 257 (1).

³⁶ S.R.O. E.783/60/300, E.783/76/11.

³⁷ Fig. 2 is based on estate accounts, S.R.O. GD.220/6 (46, 47, 49, 50, 56), wood contracts, and related documents. Contracts for periods of several years were in use in the eighteenth century, but price fluctuation encouraged the introduction of annual auctions before 1814.

³⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Whyte and Macfarlan, *op. cit.*, p. 156; Monteath, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

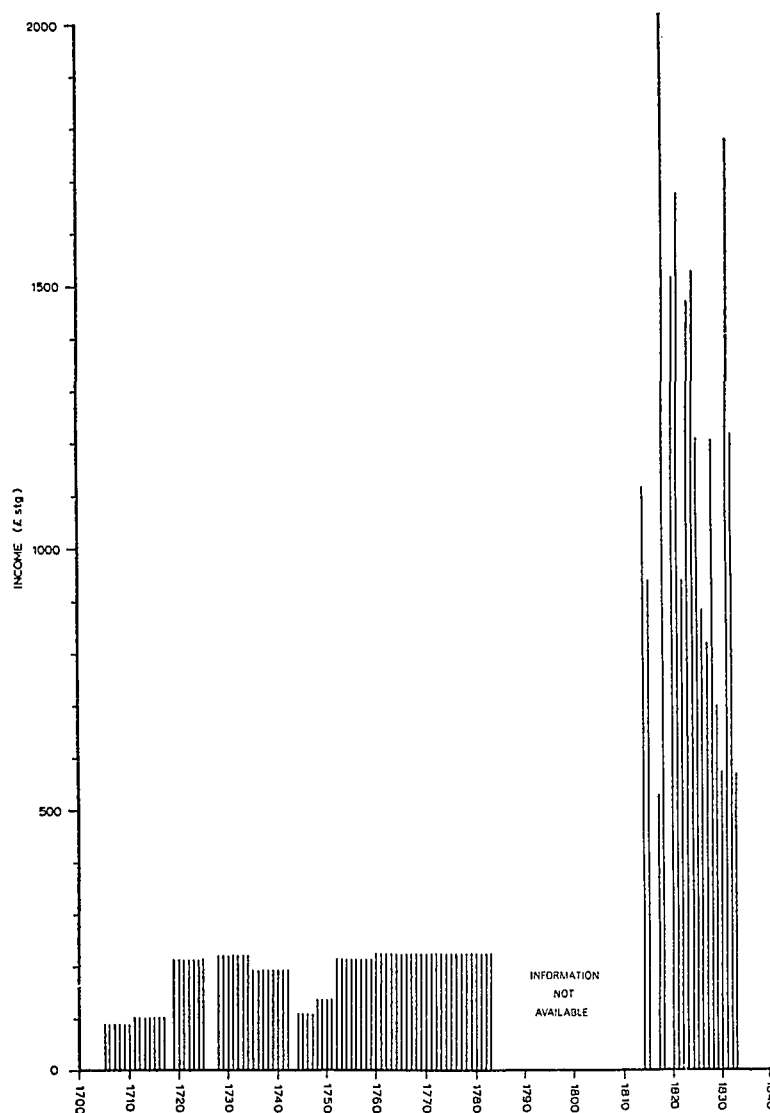


FIG. 2. Gross income from the coppice of Menteith, 1705-1833.

and value depended both on yield and on external market factors. In most forms of management, including the coppice cycle, the principal costs were incurred in the first few years, but the value could not be certain until the bulk of the produce was ready for sale after twenty or more years. Forestry was to this extent a speculative activity.

The less tangible benefits may have had effects; thus those who introduced management to their estates may have anticipated prestige as enlightened and efficient landowners. Even so, it may be suggested that landowners were un-

likely to manage rather than exploit their woods unless they believed that the yield at the cutting date would be at least sufficient, at the prices then available, to cover all costs. Management was likely to seem more attractive in circumstances which indicated that prices would rise or remain stable. Exploitation was likely to seem more attractive when trends were uncertain; if the yield and value of an area of woodland were lower after a period of exploitation this could be regarded as a loss of casual income rather than invested capital. Even in favourable conditions the costs of formal woodland man-

agement were more immediately evident than the benefits, and it could be argued that the expenditure was unnecessary. Thus in 1780 the tenants of Camghouran claimed that "... since the memory of man, the fir wood has been growing & thriving when expos'd to every form of cattle. . ."³⁹ Landowners who shared this sanguine view of the tenacity of Highland woodland are unlikely to have been enthusiastic about management. However, they may still have made some concessions to the needs of forestry, and it is necessary to examine the ways in which the interests of forestry and animal husbandry were reconciled.

IV

The existence of woodland management, even on a small scale, indicates modification of the form or scale of animal husbandry, but there is no reason to believe that those landowners who managed their woods invariably gave precedence to forestry when a conflict of interests became apparent: there is no evidence of the area of protected woodland being anywhere extended sufficiently to disrupt the local pastoral system. A compromise of some type seems to have been the means of resolving conflicts whenever management was undertaken.

Prevention or limitation of grazing in woodland was clearly a concession to the demands of forestry, and the granting of abatement was an acknowledgement that management could be carried on only at the expense of stock farming. The form taken by abatement can be seen in the case of the Duke of Argyll's coppices in Morvern. After the woods were enclosed in 1786 the Duke approved a plan in which it was estimated that enclosure with stone walls would cost about £470, with deduction or abatement of £56.⁴⁰ The outlay on enclosure was a fixed cost, but the cost of abatement recurred annually as long as the woods were protected; in this case the consequent loss of revenue would exceed the initial expense of enclosure within nine years. On some estates tenants had leases incor-

porating guarantees that abatement would be granted if land was taken for planting or other purposes.⁴¹ Although common, abatement was not universal; written leases were rare and tenants without such support could not be certain of abatement.⁴²

Another concession, perhaps less immediately obvious, was removal from grazing stocks of the animals thought most damaging to woodland: the principal victim of this policy was the goat. The relative importance of goats in the old Highland economy has already been noted, and some indication of the number kept is provided by the Scottish export of goatskins, which reached about 50,000 per annum towards the end of the seventeenth century.⁴³ Because of their agility and voraciousness goats have traditionally been regarded as especially harmful to trees, in Scotland as elsewhere. In north Perthshire, for example, concern about damage by goats was evident at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a report on grazing in the wood of Rannoch in 1779 noted that "... goats ought to be particularly prohibited & the prohibition strongly enforced."⁴⁴ There is also evidence that this concern had a basis in reality. Thus the author of proposals for the management of the Montrose estate woods on Loch Lomond stated in 1757 that "... particularly he would banish goats out of Craigrostan, where the ash, which was considerable at last cutting, is intirely distroyed by them."⁴⁵

By 1812, when Walker observed that coppice was safe from goats only if they were totally banished, many landowners had evidently reached similar conclusions. An early example was Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, who tried with limited success to protect woods by removing goats from his north Argyllshire

³⁹ S.R.O. E.783/85/4.

⁴² As in the case of the Camghouran tenants: see S.R.O. E.783/76/9.

⁴³ T. C. Smout, 'Goat-keeping in the old Highland Economy—4', *Scott. Studies*, ix, 1965, p. 187.

⁴⁴ Edinburgh University Library, Athole Papers, Dc.I.37 1/3, fol. 12; C. Innes (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth*, Edinburgh, 1855, p. 428; S.R.O. E.783/76/9.

⁴⁵ S.R.O. GD.220, wood contracts box, "Memorial and proposals for John Muirhead in relation to the woods of Buchanan, 1757."

³⁹ S.R.O. E.783/60/253.

⁴⁰ Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-4.

estate after 1723.⁴⁶ They were said still to be common in the Highlands about 1750, and in 1770 Bishop Forbes saw huge herds in north Argyllshire, but within a few decades a general and extensive reduction had taken place throughout the south and central Highlands.⁴⁷ Goats had almost disappeared from upland Perthshire and Angus. No more than 10,000 were thought to survive in Inverness-shire and mainland Argyllshire, and this number may be compared to the 60,000 sheep said to be present in the single parish of Ardgour in 1793.⁴⁸

Reduction of the goat population was attributed not only to protection of woodland but also to the requirements of sheep farming.⁴⁹ The presence of goats was not in itself harmful to sheep; a few goats were indeed thought to be useful additions to an upland sheep stock.⁵⁰ They were, however, most closely associated with small tenant farming, and were kept for domestic use rather than sale. It appears that reduction in the size of stocks held by small tenants made it advisable to concentrate on animals more valuable in terms of cash or rent in kind, particularly if sheep monopolized the upland pastures on which goats had formerly spent much of the year. In examining the decline of goat populations it is not possible to differentiate between the effects of forestry and sheep farming; some contemporary observers thought that the decline was initiated by fores-

try and completed by pressure from sheep farming, but the relative importance of the two factors is very likely to have varied both on regional and on local scales.⁵¹

Compromise also plainly involved modification of systems of woodland management. In this case concessions to animal husbandry related mainly to enclosure: the criteria on which the selection of areas for protection was based, the period during which protection was maintained, and the strictness with which the security of the enclosure was preserved during that time all tended to be unsatisfactory in relation to contemporary principles of management. Writers on forestry advocated the extension of the wooded area, not only by planting of new ground but also by the restocking of existing woodland, and by the application of protection and coppice management in order to restore deciduous scrub and poor coppiced woodland to a useful state.⁵² In practice, however, Highland landowners seem to have been concerned less with extension of the area of woodland, managed or otherwise, than with the selection of a small proportion which was to benefit from management. The demand for pasture made it practicable to confine attention to woodland of relatively high value; configuration, species composition, quality, and location all played some part in the process of selection.

Compact woodland can be enclosed more cheaply and easily than fragmented wood or scattered trees. An area of woodland consisting of two or more distinct sections tends to have a longer perimeter than one wood of equivalent area, and separate enclosure of these sections will usually be more expensive. The cost of protecting scattered trees individually is similarly greater than would be the case if an equal number were grouped as a wood. Enclosure costs may be reduced by erection of a single fence around several small woods or isolated trees, but in such cases unwooded ground is inevi-

⁴⁶ J. Walker, *Economical History of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland*, II, 1812, p. 169; B. R. S. Megaw, 'Goat-keeping in the old Highland Economy', *Scott. Studies*, VII, 1963, pp. 202-3.

⁴⁷ J. Campbell, *A Full and Particular Description of the Highlands of Scotland*, 1752, p. 7; J. B. Craven (ed.), *Journals of the Episcopal Visitations of the Rt. Rev. Robert Forbes . . . 1762 & 1770*, 1886, pp. 318-9.

⁴⁸ W. Marshall, *General View of the Agriculture of the Central Highlands of Scotland*, 1794, p. 43; J. Robertson, *General View of the Agriculture of the Southern Districts of the County of Perth*, 1794, p. 69; J. Headrick, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Angus or Forfarshire*, Edinburgh, 1813, pp. 449-50; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 282; Robertson, *Inverness*, pp. 260-1; Sir J. Sinclair (ed.), *A statistical account of Scotland*, VIII, Edinburgh, 1793, p. 424.

⁴⁹ Robertson, *S. Perthshire*, p. 69; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 282; Headrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 449-50.

⁵⁰ Anon. (ed.), *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, x (Perth), Edinburgh, 1845, p. 571 (hereafter N.S.A.S.); M. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵¹ Robertson, *S. Perthshire*, p. 69; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-7.

⁵² Monteath, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-30; R. Monteath, *Miscellaneous Reports on Woods and Plantations*, Dundee, 1827, pp. 50-1; J. Brown, *The Forester*, 3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1861, pp. 524-8; Gilchrist, *loc. cit.*, p. 126.

tably included and grazing rent is lost. This was evidently a principal reason for the decision to enclose only the compact central part of the pinewood of Rannoch in 1779, leaving about 30 per cent of the wood open. Similarly, when means of enclosing the wood of Tombea near Callander were considered in 1771, it was noted that scattered trees could not be included without also enclosing about 20 acres of pasture; it was thought that if protection was confined to the compact wood, enclosure would be cheaper and abatement unnecessary.⁵³ When the woods of Morvern were surveyed in 1786 similar problems emerged: in several cases it was thought inadvisable to protect open or scattered wood which might require expensive enclosure, heavy abatement, or both.⁵⁴

There was also a tendency to protect only woodland of the more valuable species. Thus when the pinewood of Rannoch was enclosed the possibility of including the adjacent woods of birch and alder was not considered. Coppice of the less valuable species was rarely enclosed, and the Morvern surveyors did not favour protection of "barren" woods without oak or ash.⁵⁵ In the early nineteenth century change in the law concerning construction of herring barrels permitted the use of native timber; one consequence, according to contemporary reports, was that large areas of birchwood not previously used commercially were cut and left unprotected.⁵⁶ At the middle of the century birchwood remained unmanaged even in parishes where oak coppice was carefully conserved.⁵⁷ Coppicing provided a means of reclaiming scrub, but attention was usually devoted to stands which were already in good condition. The Morvern surveyors recommended protection of "good" or "thriving" wood, and much

of the rest was left exposed. Even when coppice prices were highest large areas of scrub and brushwood were still in evidence in the Highlands.⁵⁸

Finally, all else being equal, management was more likely to be applied to the more accessible stands. This was the case in Morvern, and on the Montrose lands in south-west Perthshire the only oakwoods excluded from regular coppice rotation were those on the inaccessible shore of Loch Katrine.⁵⁹ In summary, management was usually confined to compact, healthy, and accessible areas of the more valuable species. In the case of coppice the difference between managed and untended woods was emphasized, particularly around 1800, by planting and restocking with oak at the expense of "barren" species.⁶⁰ A comparable distinction was made in other semi-natural woods; attempts to assist or improve regeneration in the pinewood of Rannoch were confined to the enclosed section.⁶¹ When plantations were established it was relatively easy to design them to meet the requirements outlined above.

The period of protection was usually short. Some foresters thought that hardwood plantations should be enclosed for about forty years, but Highland plantations were usually opened to grazing after twenty-five years or less.⁶² Coppice was seldom enclosed for as long as the ten years recommended by Monteath, and in the earlier part of the eighteenth century a period of four years or less was not uncommon.⁶³ By the beginning of the next century managed coppice was more often protected for six or seven years; some observers thought that this period was still too short to prevent dam-

⁵³ S.R.O. E.783/76/9; E.777/136/1(2).

⁵⁴ Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-32.

⁵⁵ See particularly reports of the period 1778-81, S.R.O. E.783/76/6, 7, 9, 13, E.788/22/2; Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

⁵⁶ Monteath, *Forester's Guide*, pp. 198-9; J. MacCulloch, *The Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland*, 1, 1824, p. 438; C. H. Herford (ed.), *Journal of a Tour in Scotland in 1819 by Robert Southey*, 1929, pp. 146-7.

⁵⁷ Thus N.S.A.S., vii (Argyll), p. 364.

⁵⁸ Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9, 131; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5; Walker, *op. cit.*, 11, pp. 276-80.

⁵⁹ Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30; Lindsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 505-7.

⁶⁰ Monteath, *Forester's Guide*, pp. 176-7.

⁶¹ S.R.O. E.783/16/1, E.783/76/9, 13, E.788/22/2.

⁶² Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-9; Headrick, *op. cit.*, p. 376; N.S.A.S., vii (Argyll), p. 150.

⁶³ S.R.O. GD.220, Wood contracts box, 'For master and byer of woods' (n.d., c. 1700), and 'Contract for the wood of Blarinross, 1744'; Whyte & Macfarlan, *op. cit.*, p. 150; Megaw, 'Goat-keeping', *Scott. Studies*, vii, 1963, p. 203.

age, but relatively few landowners enclosed coppice for longer periods.⁶⁴

Coppices could be cut in rotation; a wood cut at twenty-four-year intervals might thus be divided into twenty-four approximately equal sections cut in sequence. Each year one section was cut, a set number were at different stages of enclosure, and the rest were available as pasture; application of this system to the Montrose woods in the south-west Highlands, coupled with a six-year enclosure period, made about 70 per cent of the pasture available in each year of the rotation.⁶⁵ Smaller woods which could not reasonably be subdivided to the same degree were commonly cut on incomplete rotations or divided into a few relatively large blocks. Such systems were not invariably less efficient in providing pasture during the rotation as a whole, but they offered less regular annual quotas, and in some cases no wood pasture at all was available during part of the cycle.⁶⁶

Tenants were sometimes allowed to cut hay within enclosed woods. The Morvern surveyors suggested that abatement could be reduced in some cases if tenants were permitted to cut hay and also cultivate small areas within the enclosures. It was possible that seedlings and saplings might be destroyed by this, though in the early eighteenth century hay cutting was allowed in the enclosures of the wood of Kincardine in Perthshire, but only when inspection had shown that no young growth would be endangered. The quality of woodland pasture was low in any case, and the grass could not easily be dried in the woods; this was found on the Breadalbane estate in north Perthshire, where the grass of woodland and scrub was being cut for hay about 1770.⁶⁷

Extensive sheep farming provided higher rents than traditional stock farming, and largely in cash rather than in produce as before. After sheep farming was introduced the ability of forestry to compete with agriculture appears to have been reduced, even though the prices of woodland produce were also high during the decades when sheepwalks were established. Management was applied even more selectively than previously, and large tracts were evidently abandoned; by 1827, according to Monteath, the permanent sheep pasture of most Highland counties contained extensive former coppices of oak and other species.⁶⁸ In relation to that which was still managed, woodland excluded from management is likely to have deteriorated further under continued grazing pressure. Unprotected woodland was also liable to damage in the course of burning intended to improve heathland pasture. One enthusiastic supporter of the sheep movement complained in 1799 that certain landowners in Argyllshire refused to burn heath which carried scattered birch-wood.⁶⁹ Destruction of woodland by poorly controlled burning had already been recorded, however, and it is probable that burning was the main agent alluded to by another observer who stated a few years later than the woods of the Highlands were disappearing to make way for sheep.⁷⁰

The situation was not dissimilar around 1850. Selective management was still employed. It was said in Morvern parish that oak and ash coppice was still carefully preserved, although other species were being destroyed "... for the benefit of the much-indulged sheep."⁷¹ The period of protection remained short. In the neighbouring parish of Ardnamurchan, for ex-

⁶⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Robertson, *Inverness*, p. 210; Whyte & Macfarlan, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2; Robertson, *S. Perthshire*, p. 98.

⁶⁵ For a description see P. Graham, *General View of the Agriculture of Stirlingshire*, Edinburgh, 1812, pp. 213-18.

⁶⁶ W. Nicol, *The Practical Planter*, Edinburgh, 1799, p. 300; Monteath, *Forester's Guide*, pp. 114-15. The last form was common in Argyllshire: see Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-9, 141.

⁶⁷ Cregeen, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1; S.R.O. GD.220, Wood contracts box, 'contract of wood betwixt James Marquis

of Montrose and John Sheddan, 1725'; M. M. MacArthur (ed.), *Survey of Lochtayside, 1769*, S.H.S., 3rd ser., xxvii, Edinburgh, 1936, pp. 47, 169; Whyte & Macfarlan, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁶⁸ Monteath, *Reports*, pp. 53-6.

⁶⁹ D. Smith, 'On the Propriety of Burning Heath Grounds, for the Improvement of Pasture', *Trans. R. Highld. Agric. Soc. Scotl.*, 1, 1799, p. 237.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249n; W. Singers, 'On the introduction of Sheep-farming into the Highlands', *Trans. R. Highld. Agric. Soc. Scotl.*, III, 1807, p. 553.

⁷¹ N.S.A.S., VII (Argyll), p. 176.

ample, it was thought bad farm management to withhold wintering by prolonging the period of enclosure, and James Brown found that in Scotland as a whole it was commonly assumed that after a short period of enclosure the grazing rent of woodland was greater than any further increase in the value of timber likely under continued protection.⁷² The prices of native woodland produce continued to fall during the later nineteenth century; the substitution of imported materials for domestic oak bark in tanning was particularly significant. Forms of management based on semi-natural woodland were gradually abandoned, and although some woods were still coppiced in the 1890's formal coppicing seems to have become extinct in Scotland soon afterwards. Imported timber dominated the softwood market, and only after 1914 did conditions become favourable for extensive planting of the mid-altitude coniferous forest now typical of the region.⁷³

V

Both forms of land use were modified to some extent. The main concession made by animal husbandry was a temporary reduction in stocking capacity, cancelled sooner or later when woodland was once more opened to grazing; the decline of the goat may also be attributed in part to forestry. More significant concessions were made by forestry. The semi-natural woodland of the Highlands was a suitable base for management, and coppicing was a particularly appropriate treatment for poor woodland and scrub. However, management was applied to a relatively small part of the woodland of the Highlands, and the standard was generally low and the forms employed modified in ways which suggest a consistent wish to minimize the loss of pasture. Much of the remainder was subject to treatment which probably reduced its value for both commercial and local use. Large areas of semi-natural woodland were left exposed to grazing and casual or

commercial exploitation, and as management declined more was similarly treated. In view of the danger than woodland might deteriorate into scrub or fail to regenerate under such conditions, this cannot be regarded as a reversible process like the reduction of stocking capacity.

Landowners therefore gave animal husbandry general precedence. This cannot be attributed to concern for the welfare of the community: the readiness with which landowners accepted sheep farming on a scale incompatible with the operation of the old system does not indicate a uniformly high level of social concern. On the other hand, economic factors, as they were understood by landowners, were undoubtedly important: forest management was generally adopted only when the prices of produce rose markedly, and abandoned during their fall. However, as has been pointed out already, it was very difficult to evaluate the benefits of forestry in specific cases. In such circumstances it might be expected that economic and technical generalities would provide guidelines, but opinion was sharply divided, and in contemporary works on the subject such generalizations were presented in terms which evidently owed little to economic objectivity.

It may be suggested that the adoption or rejection of management was a matter of faith rather than the result of careful appraisal; economic and technical generalities were considered in relation to local resources, and the choice was conditioned by the social, educational, and individual character of the landowner. To those who did not believe that the benefits of management would outweigh the costs, the traditional exploitation of woodland for materials, pasture, and shelter was preferable to a land use which would encroach on valuable wintering ground. Those who for some time at least accepted that the expense of management was justified, and were willing to lose some grazing rent on this account, were compelled to recognize that only a limited amount of wintering ground could be appropriated without disrupting the whole pastoral system. In the absence of a radical change in the economic base of the

⁷² N.S.A.S., VII (Argyll), p. 150; Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷³ A. Schwappach, 'Report on a Visit to the Forests of Scotland in August 1896', *Trans. R. Scott. Arboric. Soc.*, xv, 1898, p. 15; Anderson, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 313-14.

Highlands forestry could be only a subsidiary use of land.

It should be pointed out, finally, that the common view of Highland forestry before 1850 as an exploitive and highly destructive form of land use cannot remain unchallenged. It has been shown that management, however far removed from the ideal form, was not uncommon in the Highlands. The charge of destructiveness cannot be examined here. However, it has been argued elsewhere that the iron-smelters, often cited as principal offenders,

caused little damage, and in at least one case brought about a localized increase in the wooded area.⁷⁴ It may be more appropriate to seek the major cause of deforestation in the less conspicuous but more sustained pressure to which stock-rearing communities subjected the woods during the long period before the advent of commercial use.

⁷⁴ J. M. Lindsay, 'Charcoal Iron Smelting and its Fuel Supply; the example of Lorn furnace, Argyllshire, 1753-1876', *J. Hist. Geog.* 1, 1975, pp. 283-98.

Notes and Comments

INCREASE IN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Members will have received the notice informing them of an increase in the subscription to the Society with effect from 1 February 1977. It would greatly assist the Treasurer if members who have not amended their banker's orders would do so as soon as possible.

UPLAND LANDSCAPES STUDY

The Countryside Commission has ordered a research study of upland farming areas of England and Wales with a view to formulating future policy for these areas. Members who have relevant information or who wish to draw attention to particular issues should write to Richard Westmacott, The Upland Landscapes Study, 3 St Martin's Road, London SW9 0SP.

CLEVELAND AND TEESSIDE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society continues to publish short articles dealing with the Cleveland and Teesside region, many of which are of interest to agricultural historians. Bulletin No. 31, Summer 1976, contains details of articles published in Bulletins 11 to 20, and may be obtained from the Secretary, Miss M. Barclay, 3 Penrith Close, Redcar.

CHARLES DARWIN

The American Council of Learned Societies is sponsoring the production of a comprehensive edition of the letters written by and to Charles Darwin. Per-

sons with special knowledge of Darwin's correspondence are asked to help by communicating with Dr Sydney Smith, St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

FARMING BOOKLETS FOR CHILDREN

Members may be interested to know of two illustrated booklets for children, entitled *The Farmer* and *Farming*, published by Dinosaur Publications, Beechcroft House, Over, Cambridge, CB4 5NE. *The Farmer* may be obtained from the publishers, price 75p, and *Farming* from National Trust, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1, price 40p.

RESEARCH IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

The Institute of British Geographers has published a *Register* of current research in Historical Geography. Many of the research topics listed in the *Register* will be of interest to agricultural historians, and members interested in obtaining copies of it should write to Mr Harold Fox, Department of English Local History, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH. The *Register* is priced at £1.25.

DOCUMENTATION NEWSLETTER

This is a new publication from the Department of Manuscripts and University Archives of the Cornell University Libraries. Archival processes, problems, and solutions are discussed, and also included are notices of recent accessions, and descriptions of selected collections. For information, or to be placed on the mailing list, write to the Department, 101 Olin Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853.

(continued on page 52)

The Development of Water Meadows in Dorset during the Seventeenth Century

By J. H. BETTEY

THE rapid development of water meadows along the chalkland valleys of Dorset is the most remarkable feature of the agricultural history of the county during the seventeenth century. The introduction and use of water meadows in the neighbouring county of Wiltshire during the same period has been described in detail by Dr Eric Kerridge,¹ and in the chalkland areas of both counties, as well as in Hampshire, the water meadows, by producing abundant grass feed for the sheep flocks during the hungry months of March and April, when the hay was spent and before the natural growth of grass occurred, made it possible to keep the very large numbers of sheep which so impressed contemporary observers.² The main purpose of the sheep flocks was for folding on the arable land, and the water meadows, by making it possible to keep larger flocks, were the essential basis of all the arable farming advances on the chalklands, since only by the intensive use of the sheepfold could the fertility of these thin soils be maintained.

The fast-flowing chalkland streams of Dorset were well suited for the creation of water meadows; the water came directly from the vast underground reservoirs of the chalk downs and, besides containing valuable sediment

which was deposited among the roots of the meadow grass, the water came from the hill-sides at a constant temperature, winter and summer alike, of about 54°–58°F. This water was ideal for keeping the frost from the meadows and for encouraging an early growth of grass, and the excellent drainage of the chalkland, together with the carefully arranged levels and channels, ensured that the water was kept moving over the surface of the meadow; it was important that the water should not be allowed to stagnate since this would kill the grass instead of encouraging it.³ It was a costly and laborious business to construct a water meadow, and it is curious that no documentary references have so far been found to any preliminary attempts at making water meadows in Dorset; nor is it clear how the necessary expertise was first obtained, or how the idea originated or was made known in the county. There is no indication that Dorset farmers were influenced by contemporary developments in Wiltshire, or that they were aware of the experiments of Rowland Vaughan in the Golden Valley of Herefordshire; indeed, as will be shown, the watering of meadows in Dorset seems to have begun before the publication of Vaughan's book in 1610.⁴

I

The first reference which has been found to anything like a fully developed system of watering in Dorset is at Affpuddle on the river Piddle during the early years of the seventeenth century. The lord of the manor was Sir Edward

¹ E. Kerridge, 'The Floating of the Wiltshire Water-meadows', *Wiltshire Arch. & Nat. Hist. Mag.*, 55, 1953, pp. 105–18; *idem.*, 'The Sheepfold in Wiltshire and the Floating of the Watermeadows', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., vi, 1954, pp. 282–9. The date when controlled watering of meadows began in Wiltshire is uncertain; John Aubrey stated that it was being introduced at Wylde and Chalke by 1635, but it is likely that experiments were being made for several years before this.

² Thomas Gerard, *Survey of Dorset*, c. 1630, first published in 1732 and attributed to J. Coker, p. 3; Robert Seymer, *Report to the Georgical Committee of the Royal Society*, 1665. Royal Society MSS., Classified Papers 1660–1740, 10/3/10; D. Defoe, *A Tour through England and Wales*, Everyman's edn, 1927, I, pp. 187–8, 230–11, 218, 284–5.

³ B. J. Whitehead, *The Management and Land-Use of Water Meadows in the Frome Valley*, Proceedings Dorset Nat. Hist. & Arch. Soc., 89, 1967–8, pp. 257–81. This gives a valuable description of the techniques and of the later use and eventual decline of the water meadows.

⁴ Rowland Vaughan, *Most Approved and Long Experienced Water-Workes*, 1610.

Lawrence, an active, energetic man, who was keenly interested in agricultural improvement, and encouraged the introduction of water meadows at Affpuddle and also on his neighbouring manors of Briantspiddle and Pallington. In the court book of Affpuddle there is a reference in 1605 to "fossas versus le Moore et Prat," and to the fact that "les hatches et Weare sunt in decay." At the manorial court in 1607 it was ordered that "Whereas the water course is used to be turned into the meads by the tenants thereof and kepte theare longer than it hath been accustomed, yt is therefore ordered that the tenants of the meads shall use the same in noe other sorte than in ancient tyme it hath been used."⁵ It is clear that some system of watering the meadows was already established there, and further evidence occurs in the court proceedings during 1608 when it was reported that "Tenentes per Indentur de Burkmeade contraversu cursu aqua ibidem extra antiquum cursu . . .", and more explicitly in 1610 that "Tenentes prat. orientali ordinant qd pratum irrigetur anglice shall be watered et qd Johes Hearne, Johes Roberts et Henricus Melwith provident aliquam peritum anglice a workman ad irrigedum pratum predictum et qd nullus tenetum obstruat fossas vel opus. . .". It was also ordered that the tenants should pay for the work in proportion to their holding of meadow land there.⁶

The reference to "Tenentes per Indentur" in 1608 is particularly interesting as illustrating the sort of tenants who were most actively concerned with the development of the new idea. The rapid spread of water meadows in the county owed much to a few freehold and leasehold tenants who, with the encouragement of their landlords, pressed forward and carried the copyholders with them; for the water meadows were essentially a communal undertaking, car-

ried out through the manorial courts. Evidently the meadows were successful at Affpuddle, for later entries in the court book show that they gradually spread along the valley, though not until some years later, and not without opposition from some tenants. In 1629 a more general scheme for watering all the meadows at Affpuddle was introduced in the manorial court, and the court book records that

At this Court upon petition of the homage it is ordered in these English words following, namely—Forasmuch as the homage desire that they may have one chosen to water the Common meadowes of this Manor namely the Northmeade, the Westmeade and the Eastmeade, it is thereupon ordered that John Rudle and Robert Scutt the middle one, shall make choice of some fitt and able man for that worke whoe by consent of the Lord and Homage is authorised to cutt and make Trenches in the same meadowes for the better conveyinge and carriage of the water for the watering of every tenant's meadowe. And the said John Rudle and Robert Scutt . . . to make a rate on every tenant having meadow there according to his or their quantitie of ground for the raising of the said Workman's wages, . . . And none to interrupt the said workman in his worke about the carriage of the said water . . .

There is no indication of where the workman came from or of the total cost of the work. Evidently not all the tenants supported the new arrangements for during the next year the court book records fines imposed on several tenants for hindering the work, including one who came armed with a pike and forbade the digging of any channels across his land. But none the less the work went ahead quickly, and by 1631 a full-time "waterman" was employed by the tenants to look after the Affpuddle meadows; he was to manage the watering, maintain all the hatches and weirs, and was to be paid proportionately by each tenant as well as having a plot of meadow land for his own use. Individual tenants were forbidden from interfering in the management of the meadows, and

⁵ Dorset R.O.: D29/M1 Court Book of Affpuddle 1589-1612; J. Brocklebank, *Affpuddle in the County of Dorset*, Bournemouth, 1968, pp. 22, 54-6. Sir Edward Lawrence was especially commended by the Privy Council in 1624 for the "watechful diligence and faithful care" with which he carried out his duties as a justice of the peace: Acts of the Privy Council, 13 April 1624.

⁶ Dorset R.O.: D29/M1.

the control of the water was to be left entirely to the waterman.⁷

The manorial records of Puddletown, three miles up the valley of the Piddle from Affpuddle, also contain numerous references to watering and improving the meadows from the early seventeenth century. The large manor of Puddletown occupied the area between the rivers Piddle and Frome, and from the number of complaints in the manorial court about damage caused to the roads by the watering of meadows, it appears that some of the tenants with meadow land at Broadmoor had begun watering at least as early as 1620. The valley at Broadmoor widens to form a flat plain, admirably suited for the construction of water meadows, and the area remains today an excellent example of the practice, with its channels intact and many of the weirs and hatches still in place, though it is no longer used as a water meadow. At Puddletown manorial court in October 1629 an agreement was made by the tenants to continue with the work, which had already been started, on turning the whole of Broadmoor into a water meadow. "The honorable Henrie Hastings esquire Lord of the same manor being present with the Tenants of the same and a greate debate beinge theare had and questions moved by some of the tenants about watering and Improvinge theire groundes and theare heard att large . . .", it was agreed that Mr Richard Russell and others should be allowed to continue with the work already started "for the watering and Improvinge of theire groundes in Broadmoor," and that they should be permitted to make a main trench or watercourse, and to construct the necessary bays, dams and sluices. It is significant that the lord of the manor, Henry Hastings, was himself present in court when this important decision was taken, although he did not live at Puddletown and the court was usually conducted by his steward.⁸

⁷ Dorset R.O.: D29/M4. The Court Book of Affpuddle for the years 1624-54 cannot now be found, but an apparently complete translation of the original was made during the nineteenth century. It is this which is quoted here.

⁸ Dorset R.O.: D39/H2, Court Book of the Hundred and Manor of Puddletown, 1624-38, fols. 5-7, 8-9v, 17-

It is also interesting that the lead was obviously taken by one of the leaseholders, Richard Russell, and that great pains were taken in the agreement to satisfy various conflicting interests involved in making the watercourses and changing the ancient practice in the meadow.

In this new and untried project success was not assured, and the agreement contained a provision that ". . . yf yt shall appeare after the maine watercourse shalbe made throughe the saide grounde thatt Improvement cannott be made upon some good parte of Mr Woolfries grounds out of the same watercourse, the order is by the agreement of the said tenants and parties Thatt then the said Mr Russell shall fill in the said watercourse againe at his owne costes all alonge in Mr Woolfries grounde. . ." Richard Russell was evidently prepared to accept the risk of failure of at least a part of the scheme. There is insufficient evidence in the court book to determine the amount of land held either by Russell or by Woolfries; nor is there any indication of the costs of the work or of how these were to be borne; but the work must have proved successful, for by 1635 the whole of Broadmoor was being watered, and similar improvements were being made in the other meadows in Puddletown.⁹ For example, in 1632 the meadows on the Frome between Tincleton and Woodsford, some three miles south of Puddletown, were being watered, and there are references in the hundred court book to damage to roads and footpaths "in pratis . . . per aquas super illas noviter jactatas," and to "aquas jactat. at tractat. super terr. ibm. anglice to water their grounds. . ."¹⁰ During the same period the idea of water meadows also spread along the valley of the Piddle to Tolpuddle and Turners Puddle, as well as along the Frome, where water meadows were constructed at West Stafford, Moreton, Winfrith Newburgh, Bovington, and Bindon, and possibly also at Fordington near Dorchester. In his Survey of Dorset of c. 1630 Thomas Gerard wrote of the

22v, 60-61v, 189; J. Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 1861-70 edn., III, p. 115. For a brief account of Henry Hastings see J. H. Bettey, *Dorset*, 1974, pp. 130-2.

⁹ Dorset R.O.: D39/H2, fols. 111, 120-120v.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 205v.

river Frome passing "amongst most pleasant Meadows (manie of which of late Yeares have been by Industrie soe made of barren Bogges). . .¹¹

II

This very rapid spread of water meadows along the valleys of the Frome and the Piddle meant that by the middle of the seventeenth century many meadows along both these rivers were covered by the elaborate system of hatches, channels, and drains, and that "watering" was already an established part of the agricultural technique of this part of Dorset.¹² When in 1659 a scheme for making a water meadow was proposed by some of the tenants at Charlton Marshall on the river Stour, it was from Tolpuddle that "two able and sufficient carpenters" were obtained for making the hatches, while Henry Phelps of Turners Puddle, "a known Antient Able and well Experienced waterman," was sent for to supervise the whole project, "soe ordering the water whereby that the said groundes might be well watered . . . as farr as the strength of the River would cover."¹³

There is very little documentary evidence for the spread of water meadows in most of the other chalkland valleys of Dorset during the seventeenth century, but the valleys of the Iwerne, Tarrant, Gussage, and other chalk streams are all suited to the creation of water meadows, and all were being watered by the early eighteenth century.¹⁴ The most convincing evidence comes from the report made by Robert Seymer of Hanford to the Georgical Committee of the Royal Society in 1665 on the husbandry of the north-east part of Dorset. This is just the area for which other documentary evidence is lacking, and it is significant that

Seymer wrote of watering the meadows in this part of the county as a matter of course and as an established practice. He reported on the usefulness of the water meadows, but gives no indication that there is anything novel in the idea, ". . . the greatest improvement they have for their ground is by winter watering it, if it lye convenient for a River or lesser streame to run over it."¹⁵ There are also isolated references to the watering of meadows at Tarrant Rushton, where in March 1646 the miller complained that his watercourse was obstructed, "obstruc-tat et divertit causam innundationi pratori"; and at Cranborne, where in 1636 a leaseholder was granted additional rights over 20 acres of land "to water and improve the grounds of the farm leased to him."¹⁶ A survey of Dewlish made in 1742 records that water meadows had already been in use for many years there on the little Dewlish brook.¹⁷ Both George Boswell and John Claridge, writing during the later eighteenth century, described the Dorset water meadows as having been very long established, and William Stevenson in 1812 stated that he was unable to give a precise figure for the cost of constructing water meadows because "the most part of the meadows are of very ancient construction."¹⁸ Certainly by the end of the eighteenth century the water meadows had spread all over the chalkland area of the county, and attempts had been made to introduce the system into the claylands. Stevenson in 1812 estimated that "about 6,000 acres of meadow land in the chalky and sandy districts are regularly irrigated"; and Claridge in 1793 stated that "the proportion of water meadows is no where so great or anywhere better managed;

¹⁵ Royal Society MSS., Classified Papers, 1660-1740, 10/3/10.

¹⁶ Salisbury MSS, Hatfield House, Court Rolls 9/3, Court Book of Tarrant Rushton, 26 March 1646; Dorset R.O.: D396/1.

¹⁷ Dorset R.O.: D263/L1.

¹⁸ J. Claridge, *General View of the Agriculture of Dorset*, 1793, pp. 34-7; W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agriculture of Dorset*, 1812, p. 370; G. Boswell, *Treatise on Watering Meadows*, 1779. Boswell lived in the Piddle valley at Puddletown. In an unpublished letter of 25 March 1787 he gave his opinion that the Dorset water meadows had been in existence "perhaps more than two hundred years": Dorset R.O.: Photocopy 415.

¹¹ Dorset R.O.: D10/E79, D10/E121, D10/M74, D10/E130, D10/M76, D29/E65, Mus. KG 1233. P.R.O.: LR2/207; E134/6 Jas I M18; E134/9 Jas I H15; Smedmore MSS. T24/1; Gerard, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 75.

¹² Dorset R.O.: D10/E103, D29/E65, D10/M97, D10/E130, D29/T9, D29/M4a.

¹³ P.R.O.: C5/58/15.

¹⁴ Dorset R.O.: D263/L1, D29/E65. Fuller information on the extent of water meadows in these areas must await the availability for study of the papers of the Bankes family of Kingston Lacy, and those of the Earl of Shaftesbury at Wimborne St Giles.

the early vegetation produced by flooding is of such consequence to the Dorsetshire farmer that without it their present system of managing sheep would be almost annihilated."¹⁹

The management of the Dorset water meadows was very similar to that followed in Wiltshire and Hampshire. The sheep flocks followed a regular calendar of grazing and folding throughout the year, carefully arranged in order to obtain the maximum use from the water meadows. The meadows were watered for varying periods from early October until Christmas or later, depending upon the weather, and on agreements with other manors in the same valley and with millers about the use of the water. For example, at Winfrith Newburgh the meadow on the banks of the Frome was flooded or "floated" from All Saints' Day until St Thomas's Day, and had the benefit of any silt or sediment brought down by floods during that period. Thereafter, by agreement, the hatches were drawn and the water was allowed to flow on to water the meadows at Moreton and Bovington, further down the valley. On some manors there were also complicated agreements with millers over the use of the water, as for example at Waddock in Affpuddle manor, where the meadow could be watered "from each and every Saturday night unto each and every Munday morning, and at all and every other Tyme and Tymes doing no prejudice unto the Mill there."²⁰ Robert Seymour in his report to the Royal Society described the practice of his area as "... the chiefest time they account for watering is to begin about All-hallows, and to continue till Candlemas and no longer, especially if the ground be naturally moyst; for they find by experience that if the water run any considerable time longer than this on their ground it breeds abundance of Rushes, but all the winter it destroys them."²¹

During the autumn and winter the wether flocks were pastured on the downland by day, and folded in common on the wheat or the land destined for spring corn by night. Their feed was supplemented when necessary with hay, straw, or vetches, and in severe weather they were allowed to seek shelter in copses or woodland. The ewe flock was accommodated on lower-lying pasture ground, and was generally not folded during this period, which was the lambing season. Lambing was a drawn-out affair for the Dorset sheep with their remarkable propensity for early lambing, since the older ewes which were generally the first to take the ram began to lamb in late September and October, while some of the younger ewes did not lamb until Christmas or even later.²² By Lady Day, or even earlier in mild winters, the meadows would have sufficient grass, and after a few days in which to dry out, they would be fit for the sheep to feed on for short periods each day. This was the period when the water meadows really proved their worth, at least a month before the natural growth of grass started. It was unwise to allow the sheep to feed in the water meadows after the beginning of May since they were then liable to contract liver rot from the damp pasture. The water meadows were therefore shut up for hay after a brief watering. During the later summer months they were used for cattle and dairy cows until Michaelmas, when they were again made ready for the winter flooding.²³

It was above all for their value in enabling more sheep to be kept, thus swelling the size of

¹⁹ Claridge, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Stevenson, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-5. There are examples of clayland water meadows at Bradford Abbas, Chetnole, Holnest, Folke, and several other places in north Dorset. There are also examples of "catch-work" or hillside water meadows on the chalkland at Martinstown and Wynford Eagle.

²⁰ Dorset R.O.: D10/E130, D29/E65, D29/T9.

²¹ Royal Society MSS. 10/3/10.

²² P.R.O.: E134/14-15 Eliz. H2, E134/10 Anne T9; B.M.: Add. MSS. 41,750. In a letter of 25 July 1793 George Boswell wrote "We have many lambs fall by 12 October and a great many by the beginning of November, and the principal stock of old Ewes have finished by about Old Xmas." See also a similar letter of 9 September 1787. Dorset R.O.: Photocopy 415.

²³ In most of its essentials the method of flock management in Dorset resembled closely that followed in Wiltshire, which has been described by Kerridge, in the works cited above, n. 1. Dorset R.O.: D10/M203, D10/E130, D29/E65, D39/H2; Salisbury MSS., Hatfield House, Cranborne General 1650-59, Court Rolls of Gussage St Michael, 20 March 1658; Winchester College MSS., Court Books of Sydling St Nicholas, Piddletrenthide and Minterne Magna; E. Lisle, *Observations in Husbandry*, 1757, II, pp. 157, 178-91.

the flock available to be folded on the arable land, that the water meadows were chiefly valued. There is ample evidence of the supreme importance which Dorset farmers attached to the sheepfold during the seventeenth century, and of the vital part played by the great sheep flocks in the husbandry of the chalklands. In a survey of the manor of Sydling St Nicholas in 1776 the surveyor noted that "the Sheep are kept mainly to produce Manure for the Arable Lands, which is the greatest profit gained by them . . ."; and the many disputes over the sheepfold, and over the respective rights of individual tenants to the benefits of the common fold, bear witness to the fact that his statement was equally true for the seventeenth century.²⁴ For example, the tenants at Sydling St Nicholas in 1630, protesting against the demesne farmer's proposal to keep his sheep separate from the copyholder's flock and to use them exclusively for folding on his own ground, stated their custom of folding "... to begin about Michaelmas upon their sowed wheatlands and to begin at Thannunciacon upon their sowed Barlie lands, and this foldage to continue from Tennant to Tennant till their corne bee greene. Likewise the tennants have the folding of the flocke at summer upon their lands then fallowed for wheat for the year following. . . All which helpes to ye Tennants . . . did tend to the mayntenance of Tillage, and did arise in profit not only to the Commonwealth in corne but to the lords of the manor by advancing their fynnes. . ."²⁵ One of the rights tenaciously insisted upon by the rector of Cheselborne in 1634 was that his 12 acres of arable land in the common fields were to be folded by the common sheep flock of the manorial tenants, "... to soile the said twelve acres with their flock of sheep yerely once as they doe their owne." Those who had no sheep or who were not en-

titled to the benefits of the common fold resorted to hiring a flock of sheep to dung their arable land.²⁶ Robert Seymer in 1665 reported that "... the chiefest helpe that the hill Country hath for their Corne ground is their great Flocks of sheep which they constantly fold upon their Land."²⁷

III

Little evidence survives from the seventeenth century on the costs of making a water meadow. Obviously, much depended upon the lie of the land, the extent of the scheme, and the amount of work involved in levelling and in digging the channels, though it is clear that at Puddletown, and no doubt elsewhere, much of this work was done by the tenants themselves. None the less, the expense of making and installing the hatches and sluices must have been high. At Charlton Marshall in 1659 the carpenters were paid £63 for making the hatches, and for this they provided the timber. The waterman received £37 for supervising the whole scheme, and sundry labourers were employed in digging trenches at a total cost of £21 9s. 2d., but there is no indication of the acreage of meadow involved. The money was raised by a levy on all the owners of rights in the meadow. In Wiltshire extremely elaborate schemes for constructing water meadows along the Avon between Alderbury and Downton in the later part of the seventeenth century varied in cost between £4 and £10 per acre, though this scheme involved very long main channels and a multitude of agreements with millers, farmers, and others, as well as the construction of several bridges. Even so, the steward felt it necessary to explain "the reasons why the Expense of the . . . worke cam to near duple the expense as was at first proposed."²⁸ George Boswell of Puddletown in his very practical *Treatise on Watering Meadows*, the first edition

²⁴ Winchester College MSS. 21429a, Survey of the manor of Sydling St Nicholas, 1776. For similar disputes over the sheepfold, see e.g. Digby MSS., Sherborne Castle, Presentments of the homage at North Wootton 23 April 1657; B.M.: Add. MS. 41,750, fol. 42; Dorset R.O.: P5/MA5, Court Book of Wyke Regis, 14 October 1605.

²⁵ Winchester College MSS. 18287, Court Book of Sydling St Nicholas, 14 April 1630.

²⁶ Salisbury Diocesan R.O.: Archdeaconry of Dorset MSS., Glebe Terrier of Cheselborne 1634; P.R.O.: C3/18/92, E134/31 Chas. II E6; Dorset R.O.: D16/M115; Lisle, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-6, 368.

²⁷ Royal Society MSS. 10/3/10.

²⁸ Wilts. R.O.: 490/891-904; P.R.O.: C5/58/15; Dorset R.O.: D10/M71, D10/M72.

of which appeared in 1779 ("not the effusion of a garreteer's brain, nor a Bookseller's job, but the result of several years experience"), as well as in his long correspondence with George Culley of Northumberland, estimated the average cost of a water meadow at £6 per acre; John Claridge in 1793 suggested £6-£7 per acre. William Stevenson in 1812 put the cost at £7-£8 per acre, but went on to suggest that the meadows would bring an annual profit of more than the cost of their construction. All agreed that, once laid out, the subsequent annual costs of maintenance were very low, no more at most than 10s. per acre.²⁹

The remains of many hundreds of acres of former water meadows which survive all along the valleys of the chalkland area of Dorset leave no doubt of their former profitability. By the eighteenth century the water meadows had become an indispensable feature of the agricultural life of much of the county, without which it would have been impossible to maintain the scale either of arable or of livestock farming.³⁰

²⁹ Boswell, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Dorset R.O.: Photocopy 415; Claridge, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Stevenson, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-72.

³⁰ Although the now disused water meadows are the

However, this subject and the later development in the construction, layout, and management of the meadows demand a detailed, separate treatment, and is outside the purpose of this article. The importance of the meadows continued until the early twentieth century, when the dramatic decline in the number of sheep kept in the county meant that watering became of much less consequence. Some of the meadows continued to be used for dairy cattle, but they were less suitable for this purpose in the spring and early summer when the cows damaged the soft ground and the water channels. Finally, the combined effect of the availability of cheap artificial fertilizers and feedstuffs, improved strains of grasses and fodder crops, the difficulty of obtaining the skilled labour necessary for the maintenance and management of the meadows, and the problems of using tractors and machinery in the soft meadow soil have led to the total abandonment of all but a few of the Dorset water meadows.

commonest and most characteristic relict feature of previous agricultural practice in the chalkland valleys of Dorset, they are completely ignored by all the R.C.H.M. surveys of the county which list other field systems with great detail and precision.

Annual List and Brief Review of Articles on Agrarian History, 1975¹

By RAINE MORGAN

THERE are a number of articles on the pre-historic period with more evidence to suggest that some ideas about early settlement may have to be revised. Tebbutt and Head (207, 99), for example, find that supposedly unattractive heavy soils were used for more than just hunting grounds. The nomadic character of mesolithic man is emphasized by Simmons and Noe-Nygaard (192, 151), who link seasonal migration to the movement of red deer and efforts to exploit them. The belief that climatic change alone was responsible for the emergence of blanket peat deposits is also challenged by the argument that neolithic forest clearance itself initiated important environmental changes (45, 148, 215). For the Bronze Age, Denford (52) reviews current knowledge on settlement and agriculture, and maintains that on Dartmoor, at least, permanent sites were evolved to include terrain allowing a variety of land uses. It is also suggested that an infield-outfield system may have existed, with food crops grown in temporary enclosures in the outfield supplementing those grown in the manured enclosures near the homestead. Applebaum (4) theorizes about the farming system at the Bignor Roman Villa, and speculates, controversially, about the possible stock and crop yields.

The influence of environment on the agrarian history of the medieval period is again a prominent theme. Parry (159) links climatic change to the abandonment of farm holdings on marginal land in south-east Scotland. In stressing the individuality of northern medieval farming, Miller (142) links the poverty and acidity of reclaimed land and the short growing season to the predominance of oats and the emergence of untidy shifting arable areas. The development of the three-field system, it is argued, arose from the need for pasture and concern to obtain common rights of grazing over the fallow. In a detailed analysis of the open-field system in general, Dodgshon (60) examines both the origins of the system and the processes by which the results of later colonization were absorbed. For Devon, Fox's useful regional study (83) clearly demonstrates the significance of both physical and social forces for

agrarian change. Low population growth, abundant land, and shortage of meadow in the south of the county are related to the emergence of large closes in a predominantly arable system. To the east, however, demographic pressure and an abundance of land suitable for grass is related to early thirteenth-century enclosure, small closes, and conversion to a pastoral economy. Price movements are still receiving attention. Finding the explanation for inflation in monetary rather than demographic factors, Mate (140) suggests that the large-scale leasing of demesne land would have occurred earlier than 1348 but for the steep price rises after 1300. Interestingly, it was the nature of the accounting system which gave the illusion of high manorial profits, tempting landlords to continue farming their land directly. Relative price movements in agriculture and industry are traced by Doughty (67) for the period 1401 to 1640, and a useful index is provided.

For the early modern period, Philpot (167) links the breakdown in the regulation of common pastures during and after the Civil Wars, and the resultant increase in animal disease, with the reduced rate of population growth. In particular, he interprets the notorious "ague" of the eighteenth century to be brucellosis, arguing that it was responsible for the widening interval between live births, hitherto construed as evidence of family limitation. Ippolito (112) returns to the "agricultural depression" of 1730 to 1750 to establish the implications of low food prices for the demand for industrial goods in England and concludes that the effect was "probably not of a substantial magnitude." Appleby (5) seeks to explain why the north-west of the country was poor and agriculturally backward compared with the south in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Isolated from markets, and influenced by the more severe technical restraints on land improvement, manorial lords found it more profitable to enclose and rent out pieces of waste to the landless rather than share in the costs and profits of an agricultural revolution, as was the case in southern England. Economic forces are also shown to have been the vital factor in the diffusion of the early threshing machine which was rapidly accepted in the north but met "massive suspicion" in the south, MacDonald (132) arguing that it was welcome "only where labour was scarce and costly."

Dodgshon (59) identifies and describes the indi-

¹ Date of publication is 1975 unless otherwise noted. The author would be pleased to receive details of articles omitted from this bibliography. References should be sent to the Bibliographical Unit, Institute of Agricultural History, University of Reading.

vidual features of the infield-outfield system of Roxburghshire and Berwickshire to reveal an unrecognized capacity for adjustment to changing needs. The emergence of the fallow break in the infield, restricted cropping, and increased importance of the outfield as a source of pasture are seen as possibly meriting the term "improvement" as much as the eventual breakdown of the system itself. Lindsay (125) examines how some Scottish landlords attempted to reconcile competing interests in their timber resources and explains the apparent absence of a timber famine. He also shows that iron smelting could often result in the careful management of coppice rather than lead to its destruction (123). The importance of Scottish expertise in woodland management for Welsh plantations is described by Linnard (127), while Harvey (96) has unearthed a fruitful source, nurserymen's catalogues, for tracing the history of different species of forest trees. On a different theme Whyte (229) dispels the myth of squalid uniformity in pre-eighteenth-century Scottish housing, and relates the availability of raw materials and the storage requirements of different regional economies to house-types and types of construction. Marshall's (138) detailed study of a country town reveals that striking transformations occurred in the early modern period. The rise of a textile industry and agriculturally based trades and commerce, and the resultant increases in wealth, show that such phenomena were not confined to towns traditionally associated with the industrial revolution.

For the modern period important work has been done on primary sources and methodology. Turner (218) returns to the subject of the viability of the land-tax returns as a source for the study of landownership changes, arguing that when used to study the history of personalities rather than of acres they allow the impact of enclosure to be usefully re-investigated. Findings suggest that many landowners were forced by pressure of costs to sell their land, and that, although the upheaval may have been responsible for a growing army of landless, there was apparently no concerted effort to dispossess the peasantry. Still on the subject of landownership change, Kain (116) compares information from the tithe surveys with the 1872-3 Return of Owners of Land, and describes how computer processing can be used to analyse large amounts of historical data, while Colyer (40, 41) demonstrates from some Welsh examples how estate home-farm accounts can be analysed to show trends in profits and land use.

With less emphasis on methodology, Perkins (163) questions the cause-effect relationship between long leases and agricultural progress, arguing that even where tenancy-at-will was traditional, the Lincolnshire custom, combined with confidence in

landlords, was enough to remove inhibitions about investing. Using evidence on cropping from farmers in lightland Yorkshire in the 1860's, Long (130) shows that the four-course was much less widely observed than agreements in leases suggest. Landlord behaviour is also analysed. Ó Gráda (153) finds explanation for the generally low level of Irish landlord investment in drainage after 1850 in the tenants' ability to pay high rents out of rising prices. More specifically, Donnelly's publication (66) of extracts from the journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh provide a clear illustration of the ruthless determination and entrepreneurship which allowed at least one progressive landlord to overcome obstacles to change in Ireland and radically raise the value of his estates there. In another article examining the process of innovation at grass-roots level Macdonald (133) argues that this was promoted by personal experience and communication between farmers, rather than by formal or institutional means. In an analysis of cattle production in the north of England, Blackman (16) links increased urban demand of the later eighteenth century to growth of specialization and emergence of regional lean-stock markets, while the changing fortunes of the sheep-farming economy of the Highlands during the second quarter of the nineteenth century are examined by Hunter (110). Still on the supply side, Perren (166) highlights the serious bottlenecks caused by problems of capacity in metropolitan livestock markets but concludes that the fundamental cause of price rises was the inability of producers to keep pace with rising demand.

The relief of poverty has received much attention. Baugh (10) uses statistical information for parishes in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex to measure the influence of the Speenhamland system on poor relief. Concluding that it was not the system itself but the "shape of the poverty problem" that caused variations in expenditure, the writer draws a distinction between the impact of high food prices before 1815 and thereafter the distress caused by unemployment. In her study of the workings of the New Poor Law, Digby (57) argues that many features of relief of the earlier period persisted, including the provision of outdoor allowances to the able-bodied. Also, the continued existence of settlement laws allowed guardians to identify themselves with farming interests and to manipulate the law to create a convenient local labour market at least cost to ratepayers.

Reopening the great debate on the history of the national loaf, Collins (39) concludes that in 1800 the majority of the population of Britain lived on the "lesser grains," barley, oats, pulse, and rye, and that a uniform national pattern of cereal eating based on the white wheaten loaf was established only in the late nineteenth century. He further speculates that the most significant feature of dietary change in the

early stages of industrialization was "less a switch from starch to protein foods, as is generally assumed, than of switches within the starches themselves."

For the less popular twentieth century Dewey (56) studies the impact of the First World War on the agricultural labour market, and suggests that the shrinkage (about 10 per cent) was much less than is generally supposed, due partly to the greater immunity of agricultural workers and partly to the rise of temporary workers. In an analysis of the accounts of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, Dunbabin (69) compares his findings with the economic fortunes of other corporate landlords. Beynon (15) surveys the post-1930 Devon dairy industry, and describes its growing contribution to national dairy production.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

(continued from page 36)

PROPOSED BRITISH AND IRISH DEVELOPMENT STUDIES ASSOCIATION

It is proposed to establish a Development Studies Association, whose main role will be to promote interdisciplinary development studies through meetings, conferences, circulation of information, and discussion of underlying theoretical and methodological issues. In addition, the Association may also be involved in the dissemination of research results and in discussion of course curricula and training facilities. Among the initial activities it is proposed to hold a one-day conference in London in late September 1977 on the theme 'Alternative Approaches to Development Studies', and to mount a residential conference in Scotland in 1978. The temporary steering committee, which represents nine institutions, proposes that founder members of the Association should pay £1, which would cover

their obligations up to the end of 1978. Persons interested in joining or obtaining further information should write to: Mr T. W. Gee (Assistant Secretary to the Steering Committee, BIDS), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RE.

TWENTY-FIFTH JUBILEE CONFERENCE

The twenty-fifth Jubilee Conference of the British Agricultural History Society will be held at St Anne's College, Oxford, on 4-6 April 1977. The programme includes papers by Dr F. V. Emery, Professor Glanville Jones, Mr Hugh Prince, Professor Axel Steensberg, and Professor F. M. L. Thompson. There will also be an excursion in Oxfordshire and a film on the changing agrarian structure of southern Italy. Details of the Conference, which is open to both members and non-members, may be obtained from Dr Joan Thirsk, St Hilda's College, Oxford, not later than 20 March 1977.

Book Reviews

RICHARD DUNCAN-JONES, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*. C.U.P., 1974. xvi + 396 pp. £7.60.

This book, portions of which consist of revised versions of work already published, examines in great detail, and, where this is at all possible, on a quantitative basis, some of the more important elements in the economic structure which underlay that vast political entity we call the Roman Empire. The economy of this remarkable political and military system was, despite its size, strikingly primitive in many respects, and certainly less developed than those of many an undeveloped country of the modern world. While the book is indispensable to the ancient historian, its prime interest for readers of this journal will inevitably be centred on those chapters which are directed to agricultural problems; your reviewer has therefore concentrated his attention on the following chapters: ch. 2, agricultural investment and profits; ch. 4, the section on subsistence costs; and ch. 7, on the alimentary institutions, together with the relevant appendices.

In a terse yet well-documented introduction, the author picks out the salient features of the economy, stressing in particular two contrasts: (a) that between the low general level of the technology and the outstanding achievements of builders and engineers; and (b) that between the low level of agricultural production and the remarkable capacity of the rulers to organize labour "in a way that produced results on a scale not usually associated with primitive European economies" (p. 2). He further emphasizes those aspects of the social system which "both permitted and encouraged extreme inequalities of private wealth." The largest part of the population in almost all areas was engaged in the tilling of the soil and the processing of its products; and land was the most important field for investment, whereas industry was rarely organized in large production units. The result was that the most substantial fortunes were those derived from the accumulated surpluses of many generations, which became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands as a result of significant reductions in the reproduction rate of the upper classes. At the other end of the economic spectrum were large numbers of peasants eking out a bare subsistence on the land, and a fairly large population of slaves "many of whom would retain little of what they produced beyond what was needed for bare subsistence" (p. 3).

This preponderance of landed wealth was reflected in the political as well as in the social structure. Access to all important offices from provincial town councillors to Roman magistrates was determined by property qualifications. The "spread" was

a wide one: a prospective senator needed to have twelve times as much "in the bank" as a would-be councillor. Using wheat (in metric tons) as his measuring unit, Duncan-Jones shows that the capital requirement for a senator of the early Empire stood very little below the largest individual fortune recorded for England in the mid-seventeenth century; with death duties as low as 5 per cent, and no progressive taxation of the rich, it is not surprising to find a phenomenal growth in private wealth.

Side by side with this goes an equally characteristic feature of the economy—the powerful role of the private sector in financing all kinds of public works and services, not only by means of loans (though these, as Duncan-Jones demonstrates, were common enough, and many ambitious local authorities got into serious financial difficulties through overspending), but in the form of outright benefactions. The aim here, as the author points out, was not primarily to do good to others, but to enhance the prestige of the donor. This feature incidentally provides, as the author's own researches have shown, a great deal of information about prices, which is all the more valuable since statistical information is non-existent. The tabulation of this material for the African provinces (ch. 3), and for Italy (ch. 4), while falling short of anything like a price-index, nevertheless provides the economic historian with a quantity of useful and carefully annotated data in a readily accessible form.

The main body of the work begins with an account of the finances of that remarkable public figure of the late first century, the Younger Pliny, who, though not in the top income bracket, possessed at least six houses, and perhaps as many as 1,000 slaves. His munificence was also very impressive, his native city of Como benefiting from the provision of a public library and a fund to maintain it, as well as a private charity which supported more than forty local boys and girls (pp. 23–7). From this opening the account moves naturally into the topic of investment and profits in agriculture, with a detailed study of the one area of production for which we have explicit evidence on profitability, namely wine-production. Vines were commonly regarded as highly profitable, and Columella's balance sheet seems to show a rate of profit of the order of 25 per cent. These figures are scrutinized in detail (pp. 39–54), and shown to be "palpably inaccurate", the result of a much too optimistic estimate of profits, and of several important omissions on the expenditure side. Scaled down to a modest 9–10 per cent, the rate would still be favourable against an agricultural dividend for Italy usually reckoned at 5–6

per cent, and viticulture is thus shown to have been "potentially more profitable than most other forms of cultivation" (p. 59).

The long lists of prices from Africa and Italy which form the core of this wide-ranging economic survey include almost everything except commodity prices, but normal levels of the all-important price of grain can be deduced from the maintenance charges set out in the alimentary inscriptions. On the reasonable assumption that only the bare minimum was provided in these primitive schemes of social welfare support for children, and that the main component was grain, Duncan-Jones attempts to arrive at some estimates of basic wheat costs (pp. 144-6), rounding off this section with some interesting, but tantalizingly brief, observations on subsistence diet and its calorific value. That chain-gang slaves got a bread allowance of 120-150 Roman pounds per month (equivalent to 3-3½ lb per diem), according to the time of year, is not surprising; like the working cattle, the agricultural slaves were well cared for, since they represented a heavy capital outlay which must not be allowed to lose its value through inattention to health. The figure of 3,000-3,500 calories per day suggested here compares favourably with modern dietetic requirements, but "the calorific value of Roman bread may have been less than that of modern bread" (p. 147 and n. 2). On the other hand, experiments in the controlled growing of emmer at the Butser Bronze Age farm apparently show better values than those of *triticum vulgare*. This is an area given over to unsupported generalizations and wild surmises, and there is a great need of solid research, based on close analysis of both archaeological and literary evidence.

On population and demographic policy the author provides a full discussion of the evidence for estate-sizes, demolishing in passing the common assumption that government alimentary loans were intended to favour the small landowner. Indeed it looks very much as if these loan schemes for funding "social welfare benefits" were introduced not in the interest of landowners but because "local banking facilities of the kind needed to guarantee an annual interest payment did not exist in the smaller centres" (p. 300). The discussion of the observed variations in loan rates on the two major schemes concludes: "the predominance of round totals shows a lack of arithmetical diligence. The commissioners seem to have been inclined to do as few exact division sums as possible." What a contrast to the fractional niceties of the ancient Egyptian land records!

The importance of these chapters to the student of agricultural history is obvious; but from a wider angle Dr Duncan-Jones has put all those concerned with the history of the Roman Empire in his debt by providing solid foundations for further research on the economic side. The book conforms in all re-

spects with the high standards of production associated with the Cambridge Press.

K. D. WHITE

J. R. RAVENSDALE, *Liable to Floods. Village Landscape on the Edge of the Fens, AD 450-1850*. C.U.P., 1974. xii + 206 pp. £5.50.

Mr Ravensdale has given us a book on the historical geography of three Cambridgeshire villages, Cottenham, Waterbeach, and Landbeach, which, as the flap suggests, "studies the evolution and destruction of part of the English landscape." The book is especially detailed on the interaction of human and physical changes in the environment of the southern fenlands, and Mr Ravensdale has not hesitated to deal with the economic and social problems caused by the alternation of inundation and dehydration which has characterized the region since the earliest period of human settlement. The story effectively begins with the English recolonization of lands forsaken by Romano-British farmers, and it ends, more or less, with the Parliamentary inclosure of Cottenham in 1847. In between, the ebb and flow of fenland reclamation, the impact of particular personalities, and the growth of the peculiarly close-knit sense of community found in the bigger fen villages are all examined in some detail and with skill and perception. The book is not organized chronologically, nor around themes which immediately illuminate the patterns of continuity and change. Hence, it is not an easy book for a stranger to the locality to use without taking some pains. This is partly because, although short, *Liable to Floods* is a dense book, and partly because Mr Ravensdale writes with an intimate topographical and historical knowledge of his subject matter which makes few concessions to the outsider.

Chapter I is a survey, entitled "The Setting", of the whole environment of the three villages from the sites upon which they were founded, through the drainage and communications upon which their success came to depend, down to the first impact of the railway upon the Cambridgeshire fens after 1845. Chapter II likewise deals with the impact of man upon his physical surroundings. We are given a description of the interrelationship of forest and fen in the region in medieval times, and a detailed account of the grasslands, their quality, extent, and maintenance throughout the era when pasture provided the principal livelihood of the population. Mr Ravensdale does not forget the contribution of fishing and fowling in the local economy. So far, the work depends upon a disparate account of often discrete elements, and the whole picture has not been made clear to us. The emphasis upon the medieval period gives a somewhat unbalanced view of the subjects dealt with, and the intricacies of local topography could well have been abridged in a book

with only 177 pages of text. Nevertheless, a number of interesting points emerge. In referring to the forgotten delicacy of Cottenham cheese, Mr Ravensdale quotes Albert Pell's encomium: "'Single Cottenham' with the flavour and consistency of Camembert." It was always a restricted delight, but important to the local economy in its heyday before 1840. The complex problems of common-grazing, agistment, and folding are perceptively discussed, especially as regards sheep, of which substantial peasant flocks contributed notably to the accumulation of wealth and status of many fenland families from medieval times onwards. Mr Ravensdale notes the significance of flock management for the formation of the post-medieval local gentry of the region.

Chapter III, on the open fields, is better organized. This is partly because the author has a yardstick, the thesis of Dr M. R. Postgate, by which to compare his own research. The analysis of structure and change in the open fields of the villages is satisfying at both a local and a general level, and deserves a place in the developing historiography of the subject. The last two chapters, "Village Patterns" and "Topography, Economy and Society", owe a good deal to modern preoccupations in local social history. The former discusses the nucleated villages and their buildings over a long span of time, but, inevitably, with special emphasis upon the periods of extensive rebuilding in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The last chapter is ambitious and in many ways unsatisfactory because it attempts to analyse the whole of rural social structure in two dozen pages—Leroy de Ladurie, as it were, in a gill pot. Mr Ravensdale has tackled social stratification, demography, and working conditions almost as an afterthought. What he has produced is a sketch with a few of the highlights touched in—interesting, illuminating, and up to date—but incomplete. Altogether, the hero of this book is the landscape of the southern fenlands, not the village and its inhabitants. But that in the fenland is not a bad priority for the local historian.

B. A. HOLDERNESS

V. H. GALBRAITH, *Domesday Book: its Place in Administrative History*. O.U.P., 1974. xxxv + 193 pp. Plate. £4.

This is an extraordinary book. The work of a distinguished medieval historian now over eighty, it is written with the trenchancy and authority which has characterized his work for the last half-century. What is Domesday Book all about, how was it compiled, and what importance did it have in the practice of Anglo-Norman government, as well as in the shaping of the medieval English monarchy? These are that bundle of related problems with which Professor Galbraith has been concerned since 1942. Then, in an article in the *English Historical Review*,

he first outlined what many found an alarmingly new interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the Domesday survey. This notion was fully articulated, argued and justified in his *The Making of Domesday Book*, published in 1961. Now, in this new book, he has fitted his own contribution into what he himself describes as "a survey of the progress of research upon Domesday Book since it was first printed in 1783."

What Professor Galbraith has done is to destroy the still generally accepted view of the nature and purpose of Domesday Book. This view, which has an unacknowledged but indubitable Tudor ancestry, was given its scholarly formulation by J. H. Round, and summed up by Maitland when he wrote "Our record [i.e. Domesday Book] is no register of title, it is no feodary, it is no custumal, it is no rent roll: it is a tax book, a geld book." As such it continues to be regarded by most historians as a great and fortuitously provided compilation of social and economic facts about the Conqueror's England, but as of virtually no importance in enlarging our still rudimentary understanding of Anglo-Norman government and of its development before the time of Edward I. This established attitude was epitomised only a dozen years ago by Mr Richardson and Professor Sayles, who described Domesday Book as "an inestimable boon to a learned posterity, but a vast administrative mistake." To Professor Galbraith such a view is not only erroneous, it is downright perverse; an outworn conclusion of nineteenth-century scholarship. Not a small part of this book is devoted to a conclusive demonstration of why this is so.

But Professor Galbraith has not busied himself in hacking at this jungle of scholarly error for the mere intellectual pleasure of the exercise. His purpose is to show Domesday Book for what it is, and not for what many have thought it ought to have been. His answer is simple and convincing. The survey was made for the King's use to summarize the total assets of the new feudal aristocracy headed by the monarch himself. So the fiscal resources of the Royal Demesne are carefully detailed, and then those of some hundreds of baronies held by the tenants-in-chief, lay and ecclesiastical. This had to be done county by county through the machinery of the village and the hundred simply because there was no other method available. A survey made for this purpose means that the full feudal order with all land ultimately held of the king through the system of contractual baronies was already in being. Thus, contrary to the general belief, such a system was not introduced piecemeal over a considerable period of time and painfully accommodated to the existing arrangements. Looked at from the standpoint of the Conqueror and his helpers, which is what matters, in Normandy lands were held of the

Duke, who in turn held of the King of France. It had to be the same in England for no other system was conceivable. So the conquerors simply arranged the English kingdom on these lines without feeling it necessary to consult anybody else or to fit what they wanted to do into what was already there. Viewed in this light Domesday Book was the essential instrument of that harsh fiscal and tenurial policy, itself the central feature of Anglo-Norman government as practised by the Conqueror and his two masterful successors.

GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

ELEANOR SEARLE, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu 1066-1538*. Studies and Texts 26, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1974. 479 pp. Maps. \$20.

This immense work is the fruit of many years' perusal of the archives of Battle Abbey in Sussex. The title of the work aptly describes the twin preoccupations of its writer and its six parts are titled accordingly. Part One deals with the Conqueror's foundation of his *eigenkloster* at Battle and its acquisition of suitable manors. There follows a description of the settlement of the Weald and the new town of Battle, a description of the town's population and the constitution of the new borough, and the way in which, in the twelfth century, patrons and their servants dominated the Abbey. Part Two deals with the assertion of lordship in 1235 to 1310. There is a discussion of the thirteenth-century land market, the nature of tenure in the borough of Battle, and the impact of the burgesses upon the land market. There is a substantial and revealing account of the Abbey's own use of the land market, its pattern of purchasing, its revenues and expenditures, and its relationships with the gentry. Then follows a description of the customary tenants in the mid- and late-thirteenth century, and as seen in the customal of 1310. The struggle between the Abbey and its tenants was very mild and ended in compromise. Part Three is purely judicial and deals with the origin and establishment of the liberty, the age of the eyres, and *Quo Warranto*. Part Six continues this theme with a discussion of the withering of lordship at the end of the Middle Ages. Part Five continues the account of the community between 1303 and 1538, the setting of the *leuga* farmlands to rent, and discusses the customary tenements of Telham as seen in the records of the hallmoot in 1430-57.

Readers of this *Review* will be most interested in the hundred pages of Part Four, which deal with the Abbey's estates in the fourteenth century and later. Of the four chapters in this part the most interesting concerns the manor of Marley in 1310-85. Students of the earlier periods will be disappointed to find that the Battle records cast little light upon the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but there is enough

to satisfy our curiosity about the fourteenth century. At Marley, between 1309 and 1385 the number of horses fell to almost half, the number of cattle to less than a half, and the number of swine to one-fifth. Marley was like the majority of manors in southern England, since in 1309 it relied more upon oxen than upon horses for ploughing and carting, but by 1321 there were more than twice as many horses as oxen, and horses continued to predominate until 1385. The decline of oxen is a major part of the decline in cattle, for the dairy herd, though smaller in 1385 than in 1309, was still considerable, and reached its greatest size in 1358. With the decline of Marley's herds went a decline in the estimated acreage in pasture by about one-third between 1310 and 1385. The greatest extent of pasture was in 1356. There was a similar decline in the demesne acreage sown to less than one-fifth of the area sown in 1309-10. Between 1321-2 and 1358-9 the area was fairly constant and the great cuts in sown land took place between 1309-10 and 1321-2, and between 1358-9 and 1384-5. Marley was an oats and wheat manor, with no barley, but lesser crops of rye, beans, peas, and vetches. The combined acreage of legumes was greater than that of rye in 1309-10, and between 1358-9 and 1384-5 became greater than that of wheat. Marley is yet one more example of the advance of legumes, but this took place much later than in Norfolk and Suffolk. In one respect the agriculture of Marley was progressive. This was in its use of convertible husbandry. Dr Searle's discussion of this is one of the best parts of this interesting chapter. Most useful too are her strictures upon the heaping of bushels and the payment of reapers from the heapings. The corrupt and wasteful nature of medieval demesne agriculture must make us pause whenever we discuss yield ratios or the quantities of crops grown. Lastly, the reader should notice her account of the tannery. "Sheep" and "wool" do not even appear in the index. It is time we had more books about parts of England where they were unimportant or did not exist.

By English standards this book is very large, and at 20 Canadian dollars is not cheap. It is good to see that somewhere somebody can give distinguished work the space it deserves. The reviewer must, however, be allowed a complaint. In all his years of reading books on medieval history he has never seen a book with more misprints. Since they were more than one a page, after the first score of pages he gave up the count, and is willing to admit that the last 100 pages or so are less bad, but there must be, all told, at least 500 printing errors. Whatever has happened to the publishing industry in Toronto? One presumes that this is the result of printing the book in Belgium, but surely better co-operation between printer and publisher could have been established.

This is the one flaw in an otherwise excellent book.

H. E. HALLAM

S. F. HOCKEY (ed.), *The Beaulieu Cartulary* (with an introduction by P. D. A. Harvey and S. F. Hockey). Southampton Records Series, xvii, 1974. lxx + 281 pp. Southampton U.P. 9 maps. £8.

This is an impeccable work, well illustrated with nine very clear maps. In the substantial introduction Dr P. D. A. Harvey and Dom Frederick Hockey have both shared. Dr Harvey describes in the first two chapters the manuscript, its history and compilation, and Dom Frederick Hockey continues with a description of the Abbey and its estates, the purpose of the cartulary, an analysis of its contents, a discussion of its financial aspects, and notes on the Faringdon cartulary and the Abbey's later acquisitions.

The site of Beaulieu Abbey was in the "angle" of the New Forest, between the Solent and Southampton Water. The cartulary is a record of purchases and acquisitions in six areas. Faringdon and surrounding places in the Upper Thames Valley in Berkshire and Oxfordshire were part of John's original endowment. Most of the new acquisitions were in Hampshire, in the Meon Valley, especially at Soberton, in the Avon Valley, at Ellingham, Blashford, and Burgate, and in the estuary of the Test at Eling, Exbury, and Lepe. Nine charters refer to Southampton, and thirty-one are for places in the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall.

The Hampshire charters refer to the meadows of the Avon valley, but the agrarian interest of the cartulary is otherwise disappointingly slight. Dairy-farms are mentioned in the Thames Valley and there are many mentions of dykes in marshy places. In 1270 the Abbey had assarted 3½ acres in Soberton, which is typical of the late assarting of Hampshire. At Ellingham in Hampshire Robert Tesson about 1248 renounced his right to take marl and cart it across a meadow. Of such small facts is early agrarian history made.

H. E. HALLAM

DOROTHY GALTON, *Survey of a Thousand Years of Beekeeping in Russia*. Bee Research Assn, 1971. Illus. 90 pp. £1.50.

This history of beekeeping in Russia and the Soviet Union, the first in English, will be appreciated not only by students of the Russian economy and agriculture but by anyone with a general interest in this often neglected aspect of agricultural production. The methods used by the medieval beemen to exploit their wild stocks in tree holes in the forests of eastern Europe differed greatly from the mainly skep and hive apiculture of western Europe, and the account offered here of the equipment and practices

of the peasant *bortniks* will thus be novel to those familiar with western methods. Although limited to works and documentary sources accessible in England, Miss Galton presents convincing evidence of the importance of tree beekeeping in the peasant society of the medieval Russian forests. Perhaps as many as 400,000 men gathered honeycomb from a million trees to produce the wax and honey products traded in the twelfth century through Novgorod, the centre of one of the most productive areas. The organization required for the payment of honey (and probably wax) dues to princely landlords seems to have provided a basis for the peasant social structure. Miss Galton's "speculative" suggestions which derive such words as *tysyatsky* (town leader), *verv* (settlement), and *sot* (group of people or geographical "hundred") from the beeman's vocabulary reflect her estimation of the importance of beekeeping in the early period. Several pages on the great medieval wax trade and the manufacture of honey and honey drinks support these opinions by putting beekeeping into its wider economic context.

Despite the great value of bee products, more efficient and productive apiary beekeeping was not adopted rapidly in Russia; the practice of using log hives close to home rather than widely scattered tree hives spread only slowly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the end of that period total production was nevertheless declining, the result apparently of the replacement of mead by vodka and beer and the razing of forests for corn culture. Not until the nineteenth century did the "rational beekeeping" movement encourage a revival by inventions, research, and popular education, a revival which survived vicissitudes in war and revolution. An outline of the operation of large collective apiaries in the Soviet Union completes the survey.

Miss Galton concludes with the hope that her short survey will inspire further research in journals and unprinted documents available in the Soviet Union; undoubtedly it should. Perhaps it will also inspire a historian of beekeeping in England to trace actual practice and production from local records in a survey to stand with H. M. Fraser's largely bibliographical account.

The book may be obtained from the Bee Research Assn, Hill House, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 0NR.

BARBARA TODD

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR, *Fieldwork in Medieval Archaeology*. Batsford, 1974. 176 pp., 62 plates and figs. £4 hardback; £2.50 limp edition.

The first of the two nouns that make up the discipline of Field Archaeology must put it well within the province of agrarian history and, indeed, following Eric Kerridge's useful distinction, within agricultural history also.

The first volume of the review *Medieval Archaeology* appeared in 1957, four years after the foundation of this REVIEW. The executive officers and contributors have been in general quite different sets of people but, although the two subject areas are not often synthesized, the two journals must have a considerable overlap of readership, especially among the increasing number of non-professionals active in the two sub-disciplines—"sub-" only to the unity of History herself, I hasten to add. High among these must rank the tutors and members of adult education classes. It is likely that a non-academic member of such a class will have a better idea of the state of settlement history and the landscape in the Middle Ages than most undergraduates taking courses in economic history; or, for a later period, than the readers of the *Agrarian History, 1500-1640*, where the only elements of the real historical landscape permitted illustration were barns and houses, and the only village map was put there for its houses. Yet William Hoskins had shown how a synthesis might be achieved, a worker without spade or trowel but a true field archaeologist in the spirit of Allcroft and Crawford.

The continuing county series of *Landscape* histories keeps his tradition alive, nowhere better than in the Dorset and Cambridgeshire volumes by Christopher Taylor, a scholar whose microstudy of Whiteparish (Wilts.) may prove to be at least as influential in the long run as Hoskins's Wigston Magna. It has been Mr Taylor's good fortune to work in the field on the county inventories of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, and those who have not seen the recent Dorset and Cambridgeshire volumes of the R.C.H.M. cannot realize how this series has been transformed by a new generation of field workers marrying the traditions of Hoskins and Crawford. Mr Taylor's work for his royal employer has been extensively drawn on for the volume under review here, with excellent plans, ground photographs, and air photographs, a number published for the first time. The text of any well-illustrated book has difficulties in living up to the choice of plates: but Mr Taylor has matched himself. It is rather like having a season ticket to a first-class extramural class—not quite as many slides, perhaps, but with photographs from the summer excursions thrown in.

He takes the reader from site to site, not underestimating difficulties and obscurities, raising hope but not over-confidence, and firmly based on two principles: relating observed objects to documents and maps; and progressing by marrying an observed and documented object with the many more that are observable but undocumented. Its enthusiasm and clarity are exactly those of a good tutor, and its range within only 140 pages of text is astonishing. The quality and quantity of illustrations are to the pub-

lisher's credit. There are full bibliographical references in footnotes, and an appended bibliography follows a useful arrangement: not by author but by fifty types of field object, ending with the encouraging and realistic examples of "unknown" earthworks. It is an enviable book.

M. W. BERESFORD

A. R. H. BAKER and J. B. HARLEY (eds.), *Man Made the Land: Essays in English Historical Geography*. Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1973. 208 pp. 263 illus. £5.25.

Attempts to define historical geography with precision are rarely successful and inevitably controversial. As a formal division of knowledge historical geography has been variously viewed as: the operation of the geographical factor in history; the evolution of the cultural landscape; the reconstruction of past geographies; the study of geographical change through time. It would be impossible to classify recent studies in historical geography under only one of these headings, for the concepts shade imperceptibly into each other. Prescribed boundaries have been so frequently transgressed that doctrinaire attitudes towards the nature and content of historical geography have been abandoned. The extent and variation in methods of organizing and presenting historical elements in geography are exemplified in this excellent volume. The editors, understandably, opt for emancipation from the restrictions of a methodological framework.

Each of the sixteen contributions appeared as an article in the *Geographical Magazine* between February 1970 and May 1971. The chapters are short and each possesses a valuable bibliography. The text is lucid. The book at once delights the eye with its abundant variety of illustrations. There are numerous maps, plans, and prints—many of them early—together with photographs, charts, and the occasional illuminated manuscript. The contributors, economic historians and a climatologist, as well as geographers, were obviously selected on the basis of their known published research in the specific areas discussed summarily in these essays.

A notable trend in historical geography since the Second World War has been the organized study of settlement, both urban and rural, and the study of field systems. Some ten years ago, C. T. Smith observed that the search for much more profound knowledge of the historical circumstances under which field systems and settlement patterns developed had already become "one of the growing points of geography," and "a mainstay of agrarian history." Some of the fruits of this quest are now made available *widely* for the first time. Each contribution is a brief, highly readable distillation of a subject already researched in depth.

The editors follow a chronological sequence

which traces "some important themes in the historical geography of England from the period of earliest settlement to Victorian times." A discussion of climatic fluctuations covers a long span of historical time. A chapter on early settlement is followed by five contributions which cover the Middle Ages: Domesday Survey; planned villages; field systems; marketing and mobility; town planning, and village desertion. Four topics are set in Early Modern times: dual-economies; early Tudor taxation lists; agricultural progress; town life. Three aspects of the eighteenth century as a whole are discussed: the interdependence of agrarian and industrial interests in regional economies; landscaping; geographical changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. The remaining two chapters are concerned with agricultural and urban changes in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most glaring omission is the Roman period which receives only scant attention in the discussion on early settlement. A chapter on Romano-British settlement and land-use would have been welcome. Then again, why stop in 1900? Is the twentieth century not worth a few pages?

A careful topical balance is apparent: a chapter on the agriculture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is paired with an examination of the role of towns in the period; in the nineteenth century, Victorian towns act as a counterpoise to changes in the rural economy.

Altogether, these essays present the latest thinking on a number of controversial and developing fields of study. Much of the material has relevance to the study of agrarian history. But the book also "provides points of entry into some of the many intriguing problems in the historical geography of England" and should therefore find a use in the upper forms of schools and in colleges of education—for instance, in environmental studies—as well as for first-year undergraduates.

D. A. BAKER

K. J. ALLISON (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of York, East Riding, Vol. II, Dickering Wapentake*. O.U.P. for Institute of Historical Research, 1974. xvi + 365 pp. Illus. Maps. £20.

This volume contains the history of thirty parishes in the north-eastern part of the East Riding. The area lies largely upon the chalk hills of the Yorkshire Wolds which meet the sea at Flamborough Head, but the wapentake also extended into the Vale of Pickering and the Plain of Holderness. There is much evidence of prehistoric activity, with numerous embankments and barrows and the famous Rudston monolith, and place-names and archaeological finds show that the district was extensively settled by Anglians and Scandinavians between the fifth and ninth centuries. Agriculture has always been the major industry, and most of the settlements

were small and nucleated. In modern times Bridlington and Filey have grown as seaside resorts.

Of particular interest to agricultural historians are the twelve depopulated sites and the many shrunken settlements, and the evidence of convertible husbandry and early enclosure. Before the later eighteenth century the typical farming arrangement was low-lying pastures, open-fields on the slopes, and sheepwalks on the wold summits; today the whole area is predominantly arable.

This volume maintains the high standards of the *V.C.H.*, and the recent emphasis upon buildings and topography is to be welcomed. But, as usual, the reader does not get any guidance on the major themes. He is presented instead with a work of reference under thirty different parishes, and is expected to obtain an overall view of the agricultural history of the region from the seven pages on the subject in *V.C.H. Yorkshire*, Vol. II, written in 1912. Thus, there is no discussion of the infield-outfield system, for which there is evidence in five parishes, no framework for an understanding of the nine references to ley-farming, and no analysis of crops and livestock, for probate inventories are neglected. To take another example, if one reads through all the parish histories and notes the grants of markets and fairs, the surprising fact emerges that nine of the thirty parishes had grants dated between 1200 and 1304. Furthermore, Flamborough's market is referred to in 1731, and one of the open-fields of Bempton in 1767 was called Market Dale. Many of these markets no doubt withered early, but they are an interesting and important phenomenon that is not discussed. The general volumes are so out of date as to be unusable. The contributors to the present volume are to be congratulated upon their scholarship; they ought to be given the opportunity to draw general conclusions from their work.

DAVID HEY

ERIC KERRIDGE, *The Farmers of Old England*. Allen and Unwin, 1973. 180 pp. 32 plates; 16 figures. £4.35.

This is a popular book which distils the information already presented in Dr Kerridge's *The Agricultural Revolution*. Like the larger work, it relates mainly to the period 1560–1760, but it gives a backward glance at the origins of agriculture and common field farming, and concludes with a new section on standards of material comfort, as illustrated in food, clothing, and housing. It is a relaxed piece of writing, proceeding at a gentle pace, tackling basic questions at a very simple level, and undoubtedly it will help readers who have little first-hand knowledge of the farming business. But they will be the least able to spot the quirkish opinions buried amid more generally acceptable assertions. There lies the snare.

Much of this book is a smooth account of special-

ized farming regions, interlocked and interdependent, and the innovations that promoted yet further specialization. But even the most trusting reader will perhaps see in the end that it is too simple and too smooth. Statements that are only a shade short of the truth leave highly distorted impressions. The realities of harvest failure and of food shortages are altogether screened from sight in a sentence like the following: "There were, of course, many corn-deficient countries, but this was less because they could not grow corn than because the farmers had made them corn-deficient on purpose, in order that they could have a surplus of something else to sell in exchange for corn and other commodities." In the description of enclosure and consequent depopulation, human suffering has been erased from the record, and we see only a rational redeployment of labour, "great economies made in ploughteams and cultivations," and "the turf-huts of the petty tenants profitably spread over the land as manure."

Kerridge's agricultural system works like clockwork, and always keeps perfect time; but it begins to sound like a history of agriculture with the people, or all but the notably successful people, left out. This is not quite just, because the concluding chapter considers not only "opulent farmers," but wage labourers also, but only to assure us that it was better to be a labourer than a miserable smallholder because agricultural labour was *always* in high demand and short supply. Unfortunately, only five books are recommended for further reading, two by the author himself and three others by scholars whose interests lie in industrial and commercial history. Small hope there of salvation for the innocent reader.

JOAN THIRSK

MERVYN JAMES, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society. A Study of Society, Politics and Mentality in the Durham Region 1500-1640*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1974. x + 233 pp. 11 plates; map. £5.

Readers of the journal *Past and Present* will already be acquainted with Mr James's work on the North-East in the sixteenth century. With his article on "The Concept of Order and the Northern Rising of 1569", which appeared in 1973, and his two previously published Borthwick Papers on Thomas First Lord Wharton and Henry Fifth Earl of Northumberland, he has established himself as a leading authority on provincial society and politics in the early modern period. His new book follows on from these earlier studies but is more extensive both in its chronological sweep and in the range of questions it considers. In some ways, it must be admitted, it is *too* ambitious: the coverage is patchy, conclusions frequently outstretch the evidence used to support them, and though short, the book is occasionally disjointed and repetitive. As an attempt to survey the totality of the structure, dynamics, experience,

and mentality of the Durham region in a crucial period of its development it is not entirely successful. None the less, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society* is an important and fascinating study which will repay a close reading by historians of agriculture and rural society.

The author has some interesting things to say about the different farming systems and social organization of the upland and lowland areas, and about the socio-economic conditions which appear to have been conducive to religious dissent. The great industry of this region, of course, was coal-mining, and Mr James presents some revealing information about the relationship with its agrarian setting. For agricultural producers the growth of the coal industry and trade meant an enlarged and increasingly commercialized market. Agricultural and industrial enterprise developed alongside each other, and intermarriage between industrial, mercantile, and gentry families strengthened the association. Lower down the social scale, however, the expansion of coal-mining involved a growing divorce between the industrial and agricultural labour force. "By the 1630's, with nearly 6000 workers dependent on the Tyne coal industry, of whom nearly half worked underground, the size of the colliery community made it difficult to reabsorb such a large labour force back into agriculture during the slack periods." For a minority, with cottages on the waste, small-scale husbandry remained a possibility if the need arose. But for most miners alternative agricultural employment was not available since increasingly they were housed in new-style, overcrowded colliery communities like Whickham, a village whose traditional manorial and agricultural outline had become savagely distorted by the time of the Parliamentary Survey in 1647. There, says Mr James, "the open fields of the traditional agrarian order were already pitted with mine shafts, the arable pasture and meadow criss-crossed with way-leaves from the pits to the river, and the crops spoilt by coal-dust, much to the detriment of the tenants' husbandry."

As the scale, profitability, and specialization of farming increased in this period much enclosure took place. Often the result of communal agreement, enclosure in the Durham region seems to have been largely a peaceful process. There were significant exceptions, however, and it is disappointing that Mr James's evidence did not permit him to analyse the enclosure riots of 1641. The author argues that "practices like engrossing and depopulation . . . were more likely to be found on small and medium sized than large estates. The big landlords were more in the limelight. . ." To Mr James such practices were symptomatic of the general tendency—increasingly common after the collapse of the Northern Rising of 1569 and the changed social

pattern to which this gave rise—to see the landlord-tenant relationship as contractual, a matter of profit. “There was a corresponding resistance on the part of tenants to increased rents, fines, and services, so that new conflicts and new forms of leadership emerged in the Durham countryside.”

Mr James sees changes in agrarian practice and organization as an aspect of what he tries to identify as a fundamental transformation in the region from a “lineage” society centred on great households where horizons were bounded by lordship, family honour, patronage, protection, fidelity, and obedience, to what he terms a “civil” society, a rapidly changing, increasingly competitive world of “possessive individualism,” nuclear families, and of men equal (more or less) in status before the law. The contrast was not an absolute one, and the specific interest of the Durham region in Mr James’s view is that its experience highlights the tensions between the old and the new.

It is a thought-provoking thesis, but agriculture does not rank high as a causal factor in the kind of social transformation which Mr James postulates. Political change after the abortive 1569 rising, the multiplier effects of the growth of the coal industry, the spread of puritanism, the influence of education were all more important in changing the traditional pattern of dominance, allegiance, and habits of thought. In Mr James’s estimate, at any rate, seventeenth-century agriculture in the North-East displayed rather than produced these changed social characteristics.

R. C. RICHARDSON

C. W. CHALKLIN and M. A. HAVINDEN (eds.), *Rural Change and Urban Growth 1500–1800. Essays in English Regional History in honour of W. G. Hoskins*. Longmans, 1974. xxvi + 360 pp. Maps and illustrations. £8.50.

There can hardly be any doubt that the serious study of local history in this country owes more to Professor Hoskins than to anyone else. English local history had far too long been the hunting ground of that ancient bird, the antiquarian. There he was, sniffing at genealogies, nibbling at manors, picking up flint implements, gobbling antique customs, and generally preying upon the past with disordered curiosity. Occasionally some scholar with a sharper eye and a wider vision would penetrate the reserve. But not for long. He tended to see little of promise in the parochial past; and the local antiquarian for his part rarely welcomed professional intruders from the outer world. With Hoskins’s work in the 1930’s and 1940’s, however, new methods and a new set of tools were brought into use: such records as hearth tax returns, subsidy rolls, probate inventories, and port books as well as the more traditional records of local life—manorial surveys or quarter session re-

cords—were subjected to systematic analysis, and made to answer sundry economic and social questions. Hoskins was not the sole ploughman in this field. He himself owed much to R. H. Tawney; and more than one inquiry into economic activities on a county basis was set in motion in pursuit of a Ph.D. by students of Tawney or of F. J. Fisher. But it was Hoskins who, more than any other historian of his generation, pursued and widened these local studies. He has given them academic popularity at one level; and, at another level, by his popularizing books and radio talks, stimulated amongst an interested public a fuller understanding of their town or countryside, the landscape which they themselves know. His interests have not been confined to the countryside; he is equally—well, not quite equally—at home in investigating the population and structure of towns. His limits are, however, clearly definable: not for him the industrialized world or the big city, not the interrelationship of economics and technology; the machine and all its works are out.

The book which Messrs Chalklin and Havinden have edited in Hoskins’s honour achieves a reflection of his range of interests by the division into rural and urban topics. Seven essays come in the first category, five in the second; at one end is an appreciation of the dedicatee, at the other a bibliography of his academic writings. The rural section has Robert Newton on the changing economic scene along the border in Tudor Northumberland; a vignette by Julian Cornwall of a far from rich or rising Lincolnshire squire, who died in 1528; an interesting study of the varying causes of mortality crises in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Staffordshire by David Palliser; an account of the spread of tobacco-growing in the West Country in the seventeenth century by Joan Thirsk; Michael Havinden examines the use of lime in raising agricultural productivity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Devonshire; Derek Portman documents from an examination of probate inventories the range and type of vernacular building in the area around Oxford between 1500 and 1700; and Alan Everitt provides a portrait of the family and personality of Edward Hasted, the eighteenth-century historian of Kent, as specimens of the class which he has christened “pseudo-gentry.” Roy Millward starts off the second part of the book with a consideration of the growth of towns in Cumbria, 1600–1800; this is followed by a more detailed examination, conducted by Christopher Chalklin, of four specific towns—Whitehaven, Deal, Tunbridge Wells, and Portsea, 1600–1720; Ron Neale’s chapter on the building of Bath, 1700–83, offers a fascinating mix of economic, social, and cultural inquiry; the speculative builder, Richard Paley, is put under the expert microscope of Maurice Beresford in a study of Leeds between 1771 and 1803; and, finally,

Hope Bagenal on "the rationale of traditional building" ranges widely over time and space in looking at various building styles in Britain.

The contributions are not all of equal standing: *Festschriften* rarely achieve that. Some are slight; some ramble; others are very professional pieces, at a high standard. Some have an austere neutrality; in others there breaks out an occasional Hoskinsesque horror at the modern world ("an intolerable crush of tourists" in Cumbria—ugh!). Professor Everitt makes it clear to the reader that he doesn't like lawyers ("like many lawyers, he was a thoroughly odious man"); and that he finds it hard to forgive Edward Hasted who, at the age of 53 and after thirty years of fruitful married life, ran away with a girl bearing the appropriate name of Town. All in all, this book—which is handsomely produced and copiously illustrated—both appropriately contributes to the study of English local history and appropriately commemorates one who has done so much to further its subject-matter.

D. C. COLEMAN

DAVID G. HEY, *An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors & Stuarts*. Leicester, Leicester U.P., 1974. 260 pp. 4 maps, 14 plates. £5.80.

Dr Hey has written a fine history of the parish of Myddle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the years before this traditional community underwent the destructive change of the agricultural revolution. Myddle was an unremarkable group of townships in north Shropshire, but was distinguished by producing, in 1634, Richard Gough the antiquary, and in being, between 1700 and 1706, the subject of his famous *Antiquities and Memoirs*. Gough's remarkable book, to Professor Hoskins an Aubrey on a lower social plane, inspired Dr Hey's history and forms one of its principal sources. The result is a penetrative account of a historically unfashionable and little-understood part of England.

Hey's work peers behind Gough, testing his guesses on buildings, on farms, and on tenures, and putting sturdy bones to Gough's fleshy family portraits. In so doing he advances our knowledge of the rural society of the west Midlands, and demonstrates clearly that the detailed study of broadly pastoral, dispersed-settlement regions can be as interesting as that of the more familiar nucleated arable village of the south and east. That Myddle failed to experience any fundamental changes in either its economic structure or its social organization in this period adds considerably to the strength of the book. Accident of personality has given the historian the opportunity to delve deeper into this traditional local community and to understand its workings.

This strength may also be the book's principal weakness. It is this dependence on, and inspiration

by, Gough that distinguishes this book from the new totalitarian social history which leaves no documentary stone unturned in its search for scientific answers. While Hey's work is wide-ranging and covers all the basic source materials, nevertheless it is dominated by the powerful figure of Gough and his still more potent material. At once Gough provides unique insights into parish life while denying Hey the freedom from prejudices desirable in the historical social scientist. Personalities are to the fore in this book. While it is delightful to find a Chaloner, through Gough, described as "an untowardly liver, very idle and extravagant, endeavouring to supply his necessities rather by stealing than by honest labour" (p. 149), Dr Hey's conclusions about crime in the community are less sure and less emphatic. Myddle therefore belongs nearer Wigston Magna than Chippenham on the shelf, being the more orthodox of the two community studies of recent years.

This is not to deny its excellence. This is a careful and interesting study of families, their farms, and their lives which will be essential reading for all students of English rural society. Although there are no methodological novelties here, Hey's expertise in the use of probate inventories is made very clear, and those who wish to make the most of this source must read him, even if they must look elsewhere for more critical assessment of their reliability. As a history of a rural society this is an excellent book, made all the more attractive by the quality of its production. As a total history of the community it is less complete, but perhaps goes as far as sources at present allow. It demands the attention of agrarian historians, and will reward all its readers.

J. A. CHARTRES

RONALD WEBBER, *Market Gardening. The History of Commercial Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Growing*. Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1972. 226 pp. £3.50.

This book does little more than skim the surface of the history of commercial horticulture, being too short to cover all that it purports to. Much is omitted; what is there is not very exciting.

An outline history of market gardening occupies fifty-two pages (including fifteen text illustrations), followed by a similarly scanty outline of nursery gardening in Britain to the present day. In general, the book concerns itself with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Mr Webber does not appear to know that there is much information, some of it in print, about horticulture before 1750. For example, the chapter entitled "The Spread of Knowledge" ignores all literature on gardening published in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

Mr Webber has researched predominantly in the

secondary material of his subject. On one occasion when he does use a primary source he completely misinterprets it: the Gardeners Company of London in 1633 was trying to incorporate the gardeners of Fulham, Chelsea, and Kensington, possibly to diminish competition from them, not to exclude them in order to maintain standards (p. 32).

One does not expect deep analysis from a work that sets out to be a narrative history, but the lists of facts which constitute the later chapters are not good narrative. 'Technical Development' (chapter 7) is a list of the new techniques in twentieth-century horticulture; the two 'Regional History' chapters chronicle which crops are grown where in Britain; and the final chapter, 'Recent Developments', does little more than outline the state of cultivation of the most common fruits, vegetables, and flowers, crop by crop. The majority of the text illustrations are, one suspects, an attempt by the publishers to make the book look longer than it is: the nine line drawings of varieties of apple and pear, and a full-page figure entitled "The modern cucumber" would disgrace the average seed catalogue.

Far from realizing the hope in the preface that the book will "encourage others to find out more" about market gardening, this "modest attempt to pull together the threads" may put many readers off for good.

MALCOLM THICK

J. C. L. BURNBY, *John Sherwen and Drug Cultivation in Enfield: a Re-examination*. Edmonton Historical Society, Occasional Paper New Series No. 23, 1973. 12 pp. 25p.

This short paper throws interesting light on Dr John Sherwen, "physician and archeologist" (1749-1826), the alleged introducer of rhubarb to Britain. It almost goes without saying that a shy is aimed at that old Aunt Sally of the historian, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which has John Sherwen on the East India Company's staff in 1769. Dr Burnby says there is no evidence for this in either the India Office's or the East India Company's records. Entry to the medical profession was as closely guarded then as now, and how Sherwen became M.D. is described, as is also his interest in Shakespeare and his belief in the authenticity of the Thomas Rowley poems.

As regards drug cultivation, the author of this paper thinks that Dr Sherwen was *not* the introducer of rhubarb to England, although he did have a few specimens of that then rare plant in his front garden at Enfield. The route this useful plant took from China, the dates of its journeyings, its establishment in Enfield, and the part played by the Royal Society of Arts are described and are most interesting. Opium was another drug cultivated in Enfield, where again, as far as is known, Sherwen played no

part. In 1798 Thomas Jones produced 21 lb. of opium from five acres of poppies.

A large amount of interesting and well-documented information is contained in this paper, but one caution is needed: it is really two papers. The title does not mean that John Sherwen had anything to do with the cultivation of drugs, as a first reading might suggest.

The work is preceded by a fine facsimile of one of Sherwen's letters from Bath, where he lived for some time. The letter (from the Boston, Mass., Public Library) acknowledges the receipt of a folio Shakespeare, and in it Sherwen says this revived his interest in the subject which he thought "had been nearly worn out." He need not have worried. Look how the Shakespeare industry flourishes to this day!

GEORGE ORDISH

PHILIP S. BAGWELL, *The Transport Revolution from 1770*. Batsford, 1974. 460 pp. 21 maps, 33 figs. £2. Although this is, first and foremost, a carefully compiled and well-written textbook, it is much more besides. Professor Bagwell has not only culled the secondary literature on transport with particular thoroughness; he has also worked through a considerable amount of primary source material, not merely the rich and rewarding published parliamentary evidence but also manuscript material at the House of Lords Record Office on railway and harbour bills (which contain much information about coastal and road transport), at the Public Record Office (particularly valuable on the eventful period just after the First World War), at the Post Office (on mail coach services), and, of course, among the British Transport Historical Records themselves. He also quotes from a wide range of newspaper and literary sources. The book is full of apt and revealing examples which bring alive and make more readily intelligible the fundamental economic arguments.

The chapter on coastal shipping, on which the author is an acknowledged authority, provides the best short account available anywhere of the coming of short-distance steam shipping, an important but long-neglected adjunct to inland transport which was responsible, even in the inter-war years, for half as much ton-mileage of freight as was carried by railway. Most of the tonnage brought into London consisted of coal, which has already gained the attention of historians; but second to coal came grain, which has not. And hay became an increasingly important item in this traffic later in the nineteenth century as the coastal grain trade declined. Professor Bagwell draws attention, too, to the traffic in live and dead meat, especially across the Irish Sea, and the later trade in eggs and butter. By securing access to more distant markets, improved rail and water transport brought more competition and

more opportunity to farming; and railways, in particular, provided landowners with attractive compensation for lost acres—and worthwhile directorships.

The time must surely be arriving when historians begin to investigate further, and begin to measure, traffic flows in agricultural produce. A start has already been made with studies of food supplies to growing towns, and Professor Everitt's work on country carriers indicates further lines of enquiry. In this next stage of research this book will serve as a useful background work and guide to sources.

T. C. BARKER

ALAN ARMSTRONG, *Stability and Change in an English County Town: A Study of York, 1801-1851*.

C.U.P., 1974. xii + 254 pp. £5.

This work, which makes detailed use of the census enumerators' books for 1841 and 1851 and relates the results to more familiar sources, including Rowntree's *Poverty*, has come to be acknowledged as one of the outstanding urban histories of recent years. It will certainly influence future writing in this field. Until the 1840's, York's prosperity depended upon the extent to which farming in the area flourished, for it was the market and source of supply for miles around (ninety-one places were linked with it by carrier by the mid-century). Dr Armstrong argues that good grain prices between 1795 and 1830 helped the city to grow; but there was a setback in the 1830's because of lower prices, and by the 1840's other factors, often associated with the coming of the railway, seem to have played a more important role in explaining renewed urban growth. Most of the migrants were still moving into York from the surrounding countryside. Despite rural population pressure, urban employment was in his opinion probably the main regulator of migration.

T. C. BARKER

S. G. and E. O. A. CHECKLAND (eds.), *The Poor Law*

Report of 1834. Penguin Books, 1974. 518 pp. £1.

The issue of a reasonably priced précis of this famous State document, with a long introduction by Sidney and Olive Checkland, is to be welcomed, since students cannot be expected to study the *Report* itself and its accompanying nine volumes of parochial returns. The latter, as Professor Blaug reminded us in the 1960's, had remained largely unused since the mid-1830's. The problem confronting the Commissioners was overwhelmingly one of rural poverty, so that this new edition is of prime interest to agricultural historians, even though 90 per cent of the parishes and townships failed to answer the Royal Commission's questionnaire (there was no compulsion). Even the hard-working Assistant Commissioners were unable to visit more than a fifth of the poor law authorities in their allot-

ted districts. The incompleteness of the survey suggests that many, possibly the majority, of the poor law officials and ratepayers were reasonably content with the state of affairs in 1832. In their introduction the Checklands perform a delicate balancing act between the leftist and sociologically minded historians ("the horrors of Speenhamland and rural war") on the one hand, and those economic historians who stress the beneficial effects of the wartime boom and the accelerating industrial changes, both in town and countryside. Similarly, they tend to stress the old Hammondite-Marxist errors and oversimplifications about the economic and social effects of the enclosure movement, without giving due weight to the new empirical school of thought (and research) led by the late Professor J. D. Chambers. They have a curious blind spot about the effects of the Law of Settlement and Removal of 1662 on labour mobility, ignoring Mrs M. D. George's revisionary article of the 1930's. In this they follow the misleading remarks of Adam Smith, whose knowledge of the inner workings of the English poor law can hardly have been extensive. There is an unjustified tendency to regard the English rural population of the deep south, c. 1815, as "still largely isolated and inward-looking" (p. 18), a statement not borne out by parish registers and such sources as, for example, Irvine Gray's edition of *Cheltenham Settlement Examinations, 1815-1826* (1969).

W. H. CHALONER

R. J. OLNEY, *Lincolnshire Politics, 1832-1885*.

O.U.P., 1973. xii + 284 pp. £4.

This must be the Oxford University Press's first essay in rendering history as blank verse, and let us pray it will be the last. The effect, presumably in an attempt to economize on printing costs while allowing paper costs to soar, is produced by printing the entire work "unjustified", so that the printed pages have no right-hand margins and have the appearance of rather casually typewritten pages. Such is the force of habit that it requires a constant and conscious effort not to regard the whole work as some form of preliminary draft. It is in fact a highly finished piece of work, even if its dense thesis prose scarcely qualifies it for the description of highly polished: his printers and publishers have not enhanced the quality and permanence of the author's contribution.

That contribution is a very thorough and precisely documented account of the way in which politics worked in the Lincolnshire county constituencies between the first and third Reform Acts: Gash and Hanham rolled together, as it were, minutely sectioned, and then magnified forty times. There are no surprises in the broad outlines of the resulting picture, though much to admire in the fine detail brought out by the enlargement. It is a picture of

traditional politics in a quintessentially agricultural and rural county (divided into two constituencies, 1832-68, and three, 1868-85), in which there were only five parliamentary boroughs, themselves of the traditional county-cathedral-market-town types enjoying close commercial and social links with their agricultural hinterlands. Among these boroughs only Lincoln itself and Grimsby experienced anything approaching vigorous industrial growth in this period—in flour milling, agricultural machinery and associated iron founding, and in fish—and reached the point of political independence of the landowner influence of the Sibthorps and Monsons in Lincoln, and the Yarboroughs and Heneages in Grimsby. Even so, the spillover of non-agricultural or suburban elements into the surrounding rural areas, which complicated or sullied the clarity of landed politics in so many other counties, was never more than minimal in Lincolnshire. Hence there is in this book the closest one can hope to get to a study of uncontaminated rural-agricultural politics pursuing their Trollopian course without being jostled by the urban-industrial crowd.

Much of what Olney describes is pure Trollope, with voting following estate boundaries, and election results—and, of equal significance, uncontested elections—following the alliances and rivalries of the county families. It was not pure unbridled aristocratic and gentry influence all the way, however. To start with, Lincolnshire was not well favoured by stately homes, and there were only a couple of the first rank, Brocklesby and Grimsthorpe, the first of these supporting an extremely strong, wealthy, and whig political interest. In Kesteven the greater gentry dominated—above all, in much of this period, Henry Chaplin, the squire of Blankney—while Holland, for all its fertility, was a country of smallish farms and smallish properties with few landed estates and even fewer resident gentry; its politics, the politics of freeholders and farmers without the usual superstructure of social leaders, are strangely underplayed in this account. More important than this, however, is the point which Olney is chiefly concerned to make: the landowners could not, and did not, simply dictate political behaviour to an obedient train of deferential and supine dependants and followers. The “dependants”, the tenantry, were many of them men of substance, prosperous, wealthy, respected, and enjoying a local social consequence which made them very nearly “independent.” In any case tenant farmers had intelligence, opinions, interests, and minds of their own: Olney’s main argument is that, as an electorate, they had to be considered, cultivated, and wooed. It was impossible for a politically minded landowner to take his tenants’ votes for granted, unless he took some pains to ascertain and reflect their views, or at least avoided exciting their hostility,

especially on the great agricultural issues of the day—protection, local taxation, and the malt tax.

Probably this was so; and the chapter and verse of every county election campaign, of the functions of the agricultural societies, of the role of the local press, and of the mode of nursing electoral interests are here to prove it. Nevertheless, there were still the nurses and the nursed. The nurses appear to have come from the landed classes, and not to have numbered a farmer amongst them. So, though the farmers were not sheep, mere booth-fodder, neither were they shepherds; for some reason they were not desirous, or not capable, of becoming leaders. Olney, at the end, is obliged to retreat into mysticism. “The broad but intangible truth is,” he concludes, “that the ‘heavy’ agriculturists of Lincolnshire, and particularly the arable farmers, suffered from Conservatism almost as an occupational disease. They seemed to inhale it from the very furrows that they ploughed.” This is a confession that his methods have failed to provide an explanation; it is the failure of political reason to account for political behaviour. The trouble is that all the facts about political acts are here, but the political acts of a man cannot be understood in isolation from all his other acts. Religion, it is true, has its rightful place in the book, and we see the Anglican Church as the Tory party at prayer. But if we really wish to know where the farmers imbibed their Conservatism we must know about their drinking partners as well as their praying partners; about the process which selected them in the first place and put them into the tenancies which gave command of village communities; about their kinship and friendship networks which gave specific direction to the impulse to conform in voting, as in other acts of social behaviour, with one’s friends; about their relationships with the freeholders and copyholders who, in terms of voting qualifications, were always a more important part of the electorate than the tenant farmers, but many of whom undoubtedly were also tenant farmers themselves. Above all, we need to know why the electorate—not just the farmers, but including them—was content to go on regarding politics as a game which the gentry played, a foible in which they should be humoured provided they did not hurt other people too much while they were playing. In short, Mr Olney has written a careful and meticulous study of the politics of the countryside as they appeared on the public surface; he has provoked questions about what really went on beneath that surface.

F. M. L. THOMPSON

J. P. D. DUNBABIN, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Faber and Faber, 1974. 320 pp. 1 graph, 2 maps. £6.50.

At first glance this is a very odd book. It consists of

twelve essays, flanked by an introduction and a conclusion, on various aspects of rural society in nineteenth-century Britain. With varying degrees of independence, they focus on discontent. Ten of the essays are by Mr Dunbabin, the remaining two are contributed by A. J. Peacock and Dr Pamela Horn.

Dunbabin's objective was to assess the meaning of discontent—from rick-burning and cattle-maiming to combinations and tithe protests—across a wide front. The book therefore touches on a number of regions, from Wales, Scotland, and the north-east to, through Peacock and Horn, East Anglia and Oxfordshire. This extensive approach has its problems, and the book is in consequence rather "bitty," but it does raise rather more profound questions than the conventional intensive study. Ideas about the nature of and influences upon rural discontent are the core of this book and, to approach the subject as a totality, and to abstract from widespread but incoherent movements, it is perhaps necessary to adopt this approach.

In order to appreciate this book to the full, one needs to read it backwards, since the analytical framework which links the separate studies appears in the later sections. But the case-studies are themselves of much interest. They discuss the growth of trade unionism, showing the achievements of collective action in influencing wage levels in the short run of upswings and the ease with which employer response dissipated the threat in downturns of agricultural cycles. Activity of this kind replaced the barely coherent threats to symbols of property which, Peacock suggests, influenced wage levels marginally in East Anglia before 1850. But the suggested spread of unionism and its political transformation into the "rural question" does not seem as yet a complete answer to the problem of the pacification of the English countryside in the later nineteenth century.

Rather stronger is the discussion of tenant right in relation to crofting in the Highlands, and the tithe question in Wales. Both issues invited the Irish analogy, and Dunbabin rightly introduces this dimension into his discussions. It is striking that such issues barely troubled central government. While the Welsh tithe question, doubly powered by religion and nationalism, raised the spectre of separatism, and led Salisbury's cabinet to mutterings which strike a curiously modern note, the Scottish crofters, as vociferous and disorderly, produced few reverberations in Whitehall. Both were subsumed into the "Land Question" by 1900. Neatly linking religion and discontent is the important chapter on farm servants, which with other sections on the hiring systems of Scotland and Northumberland represents a strong and very original theme in the book.

The major conclusions advanced by Dunbabin are that collective activity, politics, and trade union-

ism, with the spread of public order, transferred threats of labourers' revolt and peasant war into a peaceful political cause by 1900. The credo of the urban Liberal came to embrace the "Land Question" and this was a significant force in the development of late Victorian social order. The theme is both important and tempting, but will need testing more intensively. Other influences, particularly the development of other sectors of employment and the gradual structural change in the industry, may prove as important in the final analysis, but this remains a stimulating and original approach to the problem. This is a book of importance, which, if not altogether cohesive, presents in its case-studies and its broad thesis much to interest the agrarian historian and the general reader.

J. A. CHARTRES

JOHN BOOKER, *Essex and the Industrial Revolution*. Essex C.C., Chelmsford. Essex County Record Office Publications, No. 66, 1974. xii + 244 pp. 2 maps, 8 plates. £3.40.

This book is the outcome of a survey of industrial monuments in the county of Essex undertaken in 1970, the field work being administered by the County Record Office. All major industrial institutions founded before 1920 were surveyed and, clearly, a vast number of minor items as well. It was an admirable piece of initiative and has produced a useful book.

It is a book, however, not easy to categorize. Though it does not ignore past economic realities, it could hardly be called economic history; though there is a good deal about the distribution and nature of industrial sites, there are not detailed or elaborate surveys of particular monuments consistent with the more ambitious types of industrial archaeology, and few plans or photographs, and those not very exciting.

However, Mr Booker's work has other virtues. Essex could hardly enter the current competition for the title of "cradle of the industrial revolution," but Mr Booker is able to show that even a profoundly rural county (the areas effectively part of Greater London are, understandably, not fully assimilated into the study) was heavily influenced by the Industrial Revolution. He is very good on the remarkable creation of iron foundries to serve agricultural and small town needs in the first half of the nineteenth century, there is interesting material on agricultural machinery and particularly on the use of steam in nineteenth-century agriculture. The established industries of the countryside are looked at, and Essex has the attraction of being an important centre of the silk industry; brewing and milling are well covered and the material made available should have value comparatively for those who make subsequent studies of other counties.

Much of the data on roads and bridges will be primarily of use to the local historian; this reviewer has to confess that the transport antiquarianism of milestones and direction posts does not greatly excite him, and that he was happier with the chapter on water and rail transport which has, among other things, some useful pages on the acquisition of land for transport systems. The importance of the new technology of the Industrial Revolution in making possible a new range of public services in agricultural areas and small towns is well illustrated; there is even a careful treatment of that very epitome of historical parochialism—the parish pump! The last chapter, on the perspective of change, hardly lives up to its title, though it redresses the balance a little as far as the underexamined London end of the county is concerned.

The volume, then, is a little hard to define, and in some danger of falling between several stools. But there is a great amount of information to be gained, and the impression of the impact which industrial developments, largely initiated elsewhere, had at a great number of points in an overwhelmingly agricultural and rural county comes over most strongly, and with a measure of refreshing novelty.

J. R. HARRIS

W. A. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Letters of a Great Irish Landlord: A Selection from the Estate Correspondence of the Third Marquis of Downshire, 1809-1845*. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1974. 189 pp. 22 illus. £1.65.

Revisionism in Irish agrarian history is a recent development. It really began with Professor Barbara Lewis Solow: now, just a few years later, Irish economic historians are buttressing with new evidence, and going beyond, the hypotheses she bravely advanced in 1971. A weakness of her *Irish Land Question* is its over-reliance in parts on ambiguous source material. Solow often takes the antagonists' "own public accounts of their actions" at face value, but Dr Maguire and several others, notably Professor Donnelly and Drs Crawford and Vaughan, have sought to discover from estate records instead "what landowners actually did." The newly worked sources strongly suggest that the prototype landlord of Irish nationalist historiography is mostly caricature.

Thus, Dr Maguire's third Marquis of Downshire did not incessantly raise rents and evict tenants, nor was he an absentee: besides, he showed considerable interest in estate affairs and in landed improvement in general. On the other hand, he expected political loyalty and dumb respect, he was somewhat of a bigot, and he held sturdily anti-democratic views. Maguire's judiciously chosen selection of letters—somewhat less than a third of them from Downshire's own pen—not only provides evidence of this but also contains much on the institutional

and economic background of nineteenth-century Ireland.

Doubtless, further estate record research on landlords will add to the ongoing revision, which is long overdue. However, the stage of diminishing returns to such effort is probably not far off. This is just as well, since Irish preoccupation with the land question has hitherto delayed work on other important aspects of agricultural history: fundamental questions about regional specialization, the trend in output and productivity, and the adoption of new techniques remain uninvestigated.

In one important sense, the case against landlordism is strengthened by the discoveries of Maguire and others. The landlord, it emerges, was no monster, yet he was quite expendable. The social costs of his demise in terms of agricultural output and investment forgone were apparently rather small. In the eighteenth century he was a modernizing influence, but by the post-Famine period he had outlived his social usefulness, and could be replaced without undue disruption.

Dr Maguire's work will be extremely useful to a wide range of readers, including students and textbook writers. Both he and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland are to be commended on its publication.

CORMAC Ó GRÁDA

P. J. PERRY, *British Farming in the Great Depression, 1870-1914: An Historical Geography*. Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1974. 208 pp. £4.25.

If it should be true, as the publisher—or maybe it is the author—claims, that "this is the first extended study in English of this period," one is bound for the sake of the good name of historical scholarship to come away with the hope that it will not be the last, and that respect for basic standards will correct the curious graph (p. 41) which alleges that wheat prices were about 30s. per quarter in 1812 and about 6s. per quarter in 1894, and the strange statement (p. 45) that fat cattle fetched around 6s. per lb in the mid-1870's, falling to 4s. 3d. twenty years later, with fat sheep at 7s. to 5s. 6d. per lb at similar dates. The fatstock prices are, of course, a simple case of confusing stones with pounds, a pardonable error which careful proof-reading should have picked up. The error in wheat (and other grain) prices is a little more complicated, since the figures which are stated to be in shillings per quarter, taken from the *London Gazette*, are in fact in shillings per hundredweight taken from *A Century of Agricultural Statistics* or one of the other twentieth-century official publications of the Ministry of Agriculture in which the conversion from quarters to hundredweights has been carried out. Since the author then goes on to examine criticism of the *London Gazette* prices by contemporary farmers on the grounds that its

sources were misleading, it is a trifle unfortunate that he has muddled his own source. This scarcely matters to the specialist, who has plenty of other sources of information; but it is rather trying for the first-year student who may be sent to this work as an introductory textbook.

In the main this book is a competent summary of the causes of the late nineteenth-century depression in agriculture, its course, its effects on landowners, farmers, and labourers, and of the twists and turns of adaptations of farming techniques and practices to the changing market situation—well balanced, within the overall short length, between the topics covered, nicely illustrated with a combination of selections from *Punch* and *Akenfield*-type photographs, and remarkably conventional. It is useful to have so much potted Besse made available when Besse's original work, *La crise et l'évolution de l'agriculture en Angleterre de 1875 à nos jours* (Paris, 1910), is somewhat inaccessible, and agreeable to find appreciation of another early French writer on British farming in depression, Dulac (1903). The foundations of the book, however, are provided by old friends like Assistant Commissioners Hunter Pringle and R. H. Rew, and pilgrims A. D. Hall and Rider Haggard. The analysis by T. W. Fletcher is, naturally, noticed; but his lines of analytical thought, and likewise those of Bellerby or Ojala, are scarcely pursued. In short, this is in the main good old-fashioned descriptive agricultural history. It becomes a little difficult to understand why its 208 pages have a better claim to be the first extended study in English of the period than the 146 pages devoted to the same period by Christabel S. Orwin and Edith H. Whetnam in their *History of British Agriculture, 1846-1914*.

The clue, perhaps, lies in the author's commendable enthusiasm for the discipline of historical geography. There is much in this work which is historical, but little outside the first chapter which is obviously geographical save in the non-methodological sense that plenty of place-names are mentioned. It is, for example, good to see that the specialization of the West Riding in rhubarb-forcing is noticed; it is sad that its extreme localization is not brought out and specified, and that its use, legendary or mythical, as an export base stock for cheap French "champagne" is not examined. The neighbouring Pontefract liquorice industry, and its supporting field crop, is overlooked. As a contribution to historical geography it is by the first chapter, on the context of the depression, that the book must be judged. After sketching the pre-1870 high-farming background, this chapter attempts to deploy tools of spatial analysis in order to measure, map, and understand the farmers' experience of depression. A passing reference to the author's own earlier work with a "trend-surface depression model" of Dorset,

without explanation of its nature, is not encouraging for the beginner for whom the remainder of the book seems to be intended.

The meat, however, lies in six maps of agricultural failure, which in effect plot the county distributions of bankruptcies of farmers in 1871-3, 1881-3, and 1891-3 with various combinations of chronological comparisons between the three observations. The trouble here is that the nature and meaning of the data are never discussed. At the geographical level it may be that there was no practical alternative to taking the county as the mapping unit; but in view of the many objections to the relevance of the county as an agricultural unit, which elsewhere in the book the author seems to share, the question at least merits discussion. The absence of any discussion of the underlying data on bankruptcies is more serious, since without being told something about the nature of the information which has been used it is very difficult to know what meaning to attach to the statements which may be read off these maps: to take an example at random, agricultural failures in Northumberland in 1871-3 were between 0.04 and 0.08 per cent of its 1871 farming population, while in 1881-3 they were between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent of its 1881 farming population. The reader is left to his own devices to assume that "agricultural failure" means formal bankruptcy—though it might equally well signify business failure leading to a quitting; and that "farming population" means numbers of persons describing themselves as farmers in the Census—though it might equally well mean numbers of occupiers of agricultural holdings, or numbers of persons, including members of farmers' families, and agricultural workers, actually engaged in farming. Even with problems of definition out of the way, we need to know something about the circumstances in which farmers went formally bankrupt, and whether there is any reason to suppose that the differential between business failure-quitting and formal bankruptcy widened or narrowed over time, before we can be certain just what an increase in the bankruptcy rate is measuring. Nevertheless, the maps which portray movements in bankruptcy rates, rather than in the absolute levels of bankruptcy, are original and arresting: they suggest that the largest increases, of 1891-3 failures over 1871-3 failures, occurred in the north-west, Somerset, and mid-Wales, and that it was in those regions that the experience of depression was the greatest shock to farmers rather than in the classic cereal areas of the east and south-east which were the scenes of the highest absolute numbers of failures, the greatest falls in rentals, and the highest concentrations of abandoned farms and derelict land. This novel conclusion emerges because the "stricken" east and south-east were already accustomed to comparatively high failure rates in the "normal"

years, 1871-3. The paradoxical result, however, immediately raises the question whether it is fair to regard the years 1871-3 as years of normal prosperity, and hence of normal bankruptcy experience for English and Welsh farmers in general and for eastern and south-eastern mixed farmers in particular; for, as the author himself notes elsewhere in the book, some writers have held that the tide of prosperity especially for arable-livestock farmers had turned in 1862. In other words, it would have been helpful to be given some thoughts about the characteristics of the base period on which the author chooses to build his comparisons.

In summary, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that here is a book which has rather gone off at half-cock: the original part of the contribution is suggestive but too brief and too little documented; the descriptive sections are familiar, and sound, but not directly related to the spatial analysis. The bibliography is extensive.

F. M. L. THOMPSON

E. D. STEELE, *Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant-right and Nationality 1865-1870*. C.U.P., 1974. x + 367 pp. Map. £6.40.

A frequently urged, if rarely substantiated, objection to post-Famine Irish landlordism used to be that it hindered fixed investment in agriculture on the part of the tenant. This was a theoretical possibility, given the predominance of yearly tenancies and the low legal costs of eviction. Critics saw in Ulster tenant-right, the subject of Professor Steele's study, a remedy: this peculiar mechanism, the origins of which are still debated, permitted outgoing tenants to sell their interest in a tenancy, and thus realize the capital value of any improvements they had made. As such, tenant-right was an ingenious device.

However, as both tenant and landlord knew, and as Professor Steele explains, the Irish version of tenant-right was only in part—in small part—a means of safeguarding the farmers' investments. Much more important, it was the tenants' way of splitting the economic rent with the legal owner, and a recognition that the landlords' property right in the land was far from absolute. In Professor Steele's words, "tenant right was property." In practice, complained the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, a Northern magnate, in 1865 "the sums which were paid by the incoming tenant very often had no relation whatever to the real value of . . . improvements"; Steuart Trench, author of a clever book on landlord-tenant relations, similarly admitted that "it seems absurd to say that land is let at its fair value, when men are willing to pay £10 per acre for the good will, and no doubt the rent might be raised so high as to do away with any tenant-right interest whatever." But Trench then stated that "to break

through it roughly and suddenly without full previous notice given, would be both difficult and injudicious." In Ireland, landlords were sometimes shot for attempting less.

Gladstone's Land Act of 1870, which sought to regularize landlord-tenant relations in Ireland, gave legal sanction to the custom of tenant-right where it already existed. But for much of Ireland it was, as Professor Steele says, "a monumental irrelevance." The legislation meant nothing to tenants living in areas where, unlike Ulster, the land market was inactive, and where tenant-right had not developed. There the tenant interest demanded fixity of tenure and judicially controlled rents—demands which, in effect, amounted to a claim that dual ownership, already an economic reality, be given legal status. Yet the Act was seen in some quarters as the thin edge of the wedge, and Steele exhaustively chronicles the fears of the proprietors and much of the media, who regarded the measure as an act of outright confiscation.

Professor Steele's book is essentially a blow-by-blow account of the debate, both inside and outside the cabinet, which led to Gladstone's measure. For insight into cabinet procedure under Gladstone, and into the developing views of Stuart Mill, Bright, and *The Times*, the account is a useful one. However, the debate itself was rather tedious, and Professor Steele's rendering at times makes inevitably for difficult and turgid reading.

The book is motivated by the claim that the 1870 Act was a landmark in British legislative history, since it did away with "the notion that the individual's rights to property were indefeasible." This is an exaggeration: Gladstone's "Irish mouse" (Karl Marx's rather apt description) was largely a recognition of essentially customary rights. Nevertheless, the measure may be contrasted with earlier British legislation on enclosures, which usually rode roughshod over such rights. Politically and economically, subsequent Gladstonian concessions were infinitely more important. The Irish tenants, Lord Dufferin's "thriftless squatters," got what they demanded in the 1880's and 1890's. In the meantime Irish landed proprietors could still cherish the belief that they were economically indispensable, and something more than mere rent-chargers.

CORMAC Ó GRÁDA

PAMELA HORN (ed.), *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, 1872-81*. Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol. XLVIII, 1974. 144 pp. Map. £2.60 to non-members from the Treasurer, F. P. Redman, Esq., c/o Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Students of late nineteenth-century rural trade unions are already indebted to Pamela Horn for several articles and for an excellent biography of *Joseph Arch* (Kineton, 1971). She has now increased

their debt with her edition of the salient documents relating to agricultural trade unionism in Oxfordshire. This collection consists principally of the minute books of the Oxford District of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union (1872-9) and of the Horspath Branch of that district (1873-4), of whose importance it is sufficient to say that only one other (and less substantial) N.A.L.U. minute book appears to have survived at all. We are also given the Rules of the Oxfordshire and Adjoining Counties Association of Agriculturalists 1872, and the correspondence of George Wallis and Hugh Hamersley in connection with another attempt to organize local farmers against the N.A.L.U. in 1873-4 (which was, however, markedly less successful than the contemporary moves in eastern England). Lastly, Dr Horn prints extracts from incumbents' replies to the Bishop of Oxford's questionnaires of 1875, 1878, and 1881, which shed interesting sidelights on the religious after-effects of the labourers' agitation. All are indexed, and extensively annotated. Dr Horn precedes them with an introductory account of agricultural trade unionism in Oxfordshire, which is, however, briefer than her chapter of that name in J. P. D. Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1974). Ironically, my only reservation relates to the most notorious (though not inherently the most important) episode in the story, the 1873 Ascott-under-Wychwood strike. For though Dr Horn refers us to the Lord Chancellor's inquiries (*Parliamentary Papers*, 1873, LIX, pp. 27-31), she has not found room to reprint them. Accordingly, the fullest account is that given in M. K. Ashby, *The Changing English Village, 1066-1914* (Kineton, 1974), pp. 332-6.

J. P. D. DUNBABIN

WILHELM ABEL, *Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen im vorindustriellen Europa. Versuch einer Synopsis*. Hamburg and Berlin, Verlag Paul Parey, 1974. 427 pp. 74 figures, 8 tables. DM 85.

Professor W. Abel is well known for his distinguished history of German agriculture from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. His work called *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur im Mitteleuropa vom 13. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, appeared in 1935, second edition 1966. This volume on crisis in agriculture is brought up to date and extended by this study of mass poverty and famine in pre-industrial Europe, that is from the early sixteenth century up to 1850. It claims to provide a general view.

It is tightly packed, full of condensed detail, and illustrated by scores of graphs. These graphs are used to one end, namely to display the changes in food prices (basically of grains and animal products), current changes in wages, and often in the prices of other commodities. He selects a number of spells when food was short and, using a European

canvas, shows how the crisis developed over as wide an area as his figures command. He draws particularly on the Elsas Archives on prices at the University of Göttingen. In addition he provides a continuous narrative linking the crisis years.

In general he is able to be fairly precise about the months in which it became apparent at any one place that the harvest was insufficient and creating a local shortage. He shows how widely the shortage extended, and traces the price rise of the locally most popular grains. He then recounts the ramifications of trade between the Baltic east, the Mediterranean south, and the oceanic west. Delay was great and frustrating in a period of restrictions and of taxes on transit. Meanwhile the local authorities needed to take measures including the public buying of grain, the issuing of tokens for the poor to have bread, the organization of soup kitchens (at a late date serving the Rumford gruel), the forbidding of exports, the cancelling of import taxes, the release of food from military stores, and the combating of hoarding, speculation, and the black market. The same tale is repeated over a long period, being modified on occasions where peace or the improvement of trade facilities made possible a quicker alleviation of suffering. He thus establishes a shifting model of a famine. The admirable detail makes it possible to look into the book at various dates to abstract the facts required. A reader intent on an outline of the model would probably have preferred not a series of chapters in historical sequence but a much shorter statement of the conclusions, and possibly a juxtaposed tabulation of the phenomena of a number of crises. This would have established the facts more economically: but the loss of detail can hardly be forgone.

Abel observes over time the changes in the mode of crises. The early ones were caused by climate, pestilence, and disturbance and, in Abel's view, are just hiatuses in a state of affairs where ordinarily all had sufficient food in adequate variety. Despite the increased intervention of civic and state authorities in famine periods, by the nineteenth century the majority of the population were unable to buy sufficient food in ordinary years, and in times of shortage were unable to face inflated prices. Pauperism was the normal state. This new state of affairs appears to be related to industrialization, but it is here that Abel breaks off, shortly before the era of large-scale world trade in foods, but he reminds us that trade cycles, where food trade was only a fraction of the total trade, had come upon the scene. He is thus concerned with the old style in famine.

Abel demonstrates that, when, in a crisis, the price of grain went up, wages often remained as they were, and the price of animal foods also did not rise. Nevertheless, animal foods were too expensive to be bought by standard wages in sufficient quantities for their food value to be equal to that of grain

bought at inflated prices. Some must have benefited from famine and the high price of grain, and these benefits may have assisted peasants nearby, but more often grain merchants moving supplies from far, and especially estate owners who habitually sold a large surplus. They were thus able to increase the state in which they lived.

Perhaps the book's greatest merit is the width of information culled from most of the countries of Europe. During the whole period dealt with east and west Europe came to one another's aid, but usually when there was a shortage the east provided the west with food. The information focuses upon conditions in the German world, and this is quite proper. Thus information about the state of affairs in Britain are used basically to show interaction with German conditions. But with so wide a canvas it might have been worth while to discuss in some detail the meteorological conditions across Europe. Weather and climate are a continuum, and enough work has been done on the subject to show how, if not why, a pattern of weather, be it of rain, early winter, a spoiled harvest, frost, snow, or hail, will vary from place to place in an integrated way. It would be possible to classify each year of famine under one of a dozen weather patterns. In this way physical causes could have been employed more effectively to confront the human ones.

It is a very important book, very dense in detail, somewhat awkward in expression, requiring at least a passing acquaintance with the territorial geography of Europe or a good historical atlas. It is a deep well of inexhaustible facts. The constant repetition of a pattern ultimately and inexorably drives home that the same events elicit a common pattern of human reaction where famine is concerned.

Two small points: the index lists only authorities quoted and does not handle topics, and twelve long documents concerned with food problems are appended.

D. J. DAVIS

RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON (ed.), *People of the Plains and Mountains: Essays in the History of the West dedicated to Everett Dick*. Greenwood Press, 1973. xi + 227 pp. Plate. £6.90.

Everett Dick, whose long teaching career was devoted to Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, first made his name as a historian with his *Sod-House Frontier, 1854-1890* (1937), a social history of the settlement of the Northern Plains area where he has spent most of his life. Six other books, dealing with various regions and aspects of the frontier, were the subsequent fruits of his continued enthusiasm for his chosen field; and it is worth remarking that since Dick was never a member of a large institution with research assistance and other resources to draw on, his able contributions were very much the product of his own diligence.

Now, to honour Dick's seventy-fifth birthday, a group of distinguished western scholars, headed by Ray Allen Billington, have joined forces to produce this volume. The late John D. Hicks provides a brief biography of Dick himself, while Thomas D. Clark writes on social and cultural continuity on the frontier; Merrill J. Mattes reconsiders our knowledge of the Oregon trail, and W. Turrentine Jackson compares pioneer life on the plains and in the mines. W. Eugene Hollon takes another look at frontier violence, and Philip D. Jordan offers an interesting account of the policing of western towns; Francis Paul Prucha discusses the connections between Indian policy and American Protestantism, while Paul Wallace Gates, doyen of American agricultural historians, contributes a characteristically thorough account of corporation farming in California. James B. Rhoads rounds off the volume with a discussion of military archives as a source for social history.

Like all collections of this nature the essays vary in interest and importance, and in the main they provide discussions of new sources and recent literature rather than detailed major additions to knowledge. The book, nevertheless, offers some attractive and thought-provoking reading, and makes a worthwhile tribute to the valued work of one of the West's most ardent historians.

G. E. MINGAY

ENID GAULDIE, *Cruel Habitations: A History of Working-Class Housing 1780-1918*. Allen & Unwin, 1974. 363 pp. 11 plates, 10 plans and drawings. Hardback £5.75; paperback £3.

In the 1970's there has been a growing scholarly interest in nineteenth-century housing conditions. In her important contribution to our understanding of the subject Dr Gauldie maintains that attention has hitherto been focused on the urban slums, and that unsavoury conditions of rural housing have been largely overlooked. To redress the balance the four chapters of Part I of her book are devoted to housing in pre-industrial and rural Britain. It is her opinion that "it was as much the lack of accommodation in the village as the attractions of the city that brought many immigrants from rural Britain and Ireland into the overcrowded centres of the Metropolis, Liverpool, Glasgow and the other large towns."

The difference between the slums of the countryside and those of the towns, in Dr Gauldie's view, lay in the differing intentions of their owners. Country cottages were deliberately built without floors or ceilings, with unlined walls, and with inadequate foundations because their builders considered they were used for an "inferior class of being," not requiring the comforts normally required by their betters. By contrast, the slums of the cities had been originally "good middle-class or tradesmen's housing which had been brought into

a state of decay by overcrowding and misuse." However, in chapter seven, Dr Gauldie writes that in the new areas of the industrial towns "the back-to-back houses were shoddily built on insecure foundations of materials not even adequate for keeping out the rain." It would appear, then, that in the cities, as well as in the countryside, the housing requirements of wage-earners were not rated very highly.

This is no purely descriptive account of nineteenth-century housing. Throughout the book there is a sustained attempt to unravel the reasons for the failure of society to provide decent homes for the poor. Credit is given for the good intentions (and achievements) of reformers. The old cottages on the Duke of Bedford's estates were "among the best in Britain." In two chapters devoted to philanthropic housing associations, improvements in standards are noted even though it is recognized that only those workers who were fortunate enough to be in steady employment were able to afford rents—around 2s. a week—which had to be charged to afford some return to the investor.

The effects of changing demand for labour and the burden of the poor rate on rural housing policy are given thoughtful consideration. The rural landlord was often in a dilemma. Should he build a large supply of cottages to enhance his reputation as a philanthropist, increase his political influence, and ensure an abundant supply of labour for periods of peak demand at seed time and at harvest, or should he pull down cottages to escape payment of a burdensome poor rate when little labour was required? If the former policy was followed the village might well be inundated with potential paupers, if the latter, gross overcrowding was likely to occur. No wonder the problem of rural housing proved such an intractable one. Dr Gauldie has performed a valuable service in drawing attention to the multiplicity of economic, social, and political obstacles to housing improvement in both rural and urban areas in the nineteenth century.

PHILIP S. BAGWELL

Etudes Rurales, revue trimestrielle d'histoire, géographie, sociologie et économie des campagnes, No. 49-50, Janvier-Juin 1973. Mouton, Paris and The Hague. 368 pp.

This collection of studies deals with a problem which is central to all modern development: the consequences of the tentacular spread of urban influences into the countryside. It is a problem which has been all too familiar in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where it has gone on virtually unchecked for a long period with often disastrous consequences for the environment. In countries which until comparatively recently conserved a large agrarian sector and a numerous peasantry, there was more resist-

ance to the antagonistic influences of the town. Rapid industrialization in the past few decades, and the desire of both rural and urban people for higher material standards of living, have brought profound changes in the countryside of the developed world. Nowhere has this been more evident than in France, and it is not surprising that it should have evoked the interested concern of exponents of varied disciplines.

Although including contributions from foreign scholars and studies relating to Roumania, Soviet Georgia, and Japan, it is the changes in the French countryside, the "end of the peasantry," which hangs over this volume and has evidently inspired it. The result, it must be said, is a fascinating collection of essays which deserves to be read much more widely than by a few specialists. While the views and ideas expressed vary considerably, it would be invidious in a short review to pick out one or another contribution for special mention from the list of distinguished names and lesser-known scholars.

There is something here for those interested in history, political economy, sociology, geography, and environmental studies generally. Besides the attempts at a theoretical approach there are the detailed studies of problems and places. Whatever "urbanization of the countryside" may be, it covers a wide spectrum of social change, and involves the way of life of large masses of people. In some cases, as for example around Lacq, regions have been transformed by the opening up of natural resources or the implantation of new industries. In others, village life has been profoundly altered by what might also be called the typically French desire for a "secondary residence." In the Rhone valley some villages which might otherwise have disappeared from the map have been taken over by townspeople desiring a place in the country, a tendency which reaches the egregious in the case of the village of Eygalières, with 1,000 inhabitants and twenty private swimming pools.

By way of contrast, in Roumania and Soviet Georgia the state has attempted to diminish the contrasts between village and town by planned development of the rural areas. The studies of these cases are perhaps too slight to be conclusive about this method of dealing with a problem to be found in all modern social systems as opposed to that of the market economy. However, those authors who deal with specific areas in France do suggest the need for more control and more planning.

While warmly recommending this collection, the absence not only of British contributors but even more the lack of any comparative reference to the British case—where "urbanization of the countryside" began earliest and, for better or for worse, has gone farthest—is remarkable.

TOM KEMP

Shorter Notices

CARLO M. CIPOLLA (ed.), *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, Vol. III, *The Industrial Revolution*. 624 pp. £1.25; Vol. IV, pts 1 and 2, *The Emergence of Industrial Societies*. 368 + 845 pp. Collins/Fontana Books, 1973. 90p and £1 respectively.

Agricultural historians will be disappointed to discover that these three volumes contain only one general chapter of just over fifty pages on agriculture in Europe, by Paul Bairoch (vol. III, 'Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution'). In this the author summarizes and sharpens the arguments he put forward in his pioneering study, *Révolution Industrielle et Sous-Développement* (Paris, 1963), namely, the impossibility of industrial growth without prior, or at least concurrent, developments in agriculture. Professor Bairoch lists the causes of the rise of productivity in European and North American agriculture, beginning with the Low Countries and Britain. The two parts of vol. IV, except for Lennart Jösberg's treatment of Nordic agriculture (pp. 389-406), contain only brief, scattered, and in general inadequate references to the subject in other countries. French agriculture comes off worst: it receives only three page-references in the index, all of which are incorrect. Surely, with over 800 pages at his disposal, the editor could have seen that his contributors achieved a better balance than this?

W. H. CHALONER

ARVO M. SOININEN, *Old Traditional Agriculture in Finland in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Journal of the Scientific Agricultural Society of Finland*, Helsinki, 1974. XLVIII. 459 pp.

Research into agrarian and settlement history in Scandinavia has been pursued energetically during the last twenty years. Finland has had its own group of enthusiasts, central to which has been Eino Jutikkala. His studies of the Finnish *talonpoika* (perhaps best translated as yeoman farmer) and the *Atlas of Finnish Settlement in the 1560's* (Helsinki, 1973) are outstanding examples of scholarship. Among those who have been associated with him is Arvo Soininen, who is best known for his contributions to the colonization of the Finnish lakeland province of Savo in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Now he has published a substantial study of traditional agriculture which reviews crop, stock, and the structure of farming from a period when Finland (catastrophe apart) had a tolerable balance between consumption and production, through the eighteenth century when it was on the edge of overcropping both its cultivated land and burnt-over forest, to a mid-nineteenth century when (given the technology of the day) it was overcropping against a

background of overpopulation. It is a study which explores to the full the documentary material of its time, and which is very much in the spirit of the AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW. There is an extended summary in English, and all tables and diagrams have English captions.

W. R. MEAD

WALTER LARDEN, *Estancia Life: Agricultural, Economic, and Cultural Aspects of Argentine Farming*. Detroit, U.S.A., Blaine Ethridge Books, 1974. 320 pp. 48 plates. \$17.50. (First published as *Argentine Plains and Andine Glaciers* by T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1911.)

This is a delightful period-piece account of Walter Larden's two visits to his brother's Argentine estancia in 1888-9 and 1908-9. The estancia of Santa Isabel was situated on the flat pampa nearly 200 miles west of Buenos Aires. It had been founded in 1882 by an English land company called Drabble, from a piece of open grassland of about 60 square miles which they had obtained in 1857. Larden records the remarkable advance made by Argentine farming between 1888 and 1909, largely as a result of the settlement of north Italian farmers. The production of wheat, maize, and linseed had increased enormously, as had the exports of beef, mutton, and wool. Larden mourned the decline of the old independent gauchos, but recommended Argentina strongly to energetic young English settlers. One wonders how he would react today. The book is copiously illustrated by Larden's own photographs.

M. A. HAVINDEN

REX C. RUSSELL, *The Logic of Open Field Systems: Fifteen Maps of Groups of Common Fields on the Eve of Enclosure*. Published for the Standing Conference for Local History by the National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1, 1974. 19 pp. 90p.

In this booklet Mr Russell has brought together forty of the Lindsey parish maps which he has made of pre-enclosure field systems. By putting the maps of contiguous parishes side by side he shows how the common-field system was adapted to meet common geographical factors, while making it clear that the universal problem of achieving the best utilization of the land available could be solved in a variety of ways. The patterns of common fields, and particularly those of the old enclosures, also make it evident that while adjoining parishes might have similar field systems each parish was an independent agricultural unit, and the boundaries of a parish generally imposed hard and fast limitations to the land-use pattern which was adopted. The maps,

very clearly drawn and reproduced, are indeed interesting comments on the profound and lasting influence of geographical forces and administrative boundaries, and they merit close study by those interested in the old common-field system and the applied intelligence of those who shaped it and farmed under it.

N. L. LEYLAND and J. E. TROUGHTON, *Glovesmaking in West Oxfordshire: the Craft and its History*. Oxford City and County Museum, 1974. 41 pp. Illustrated. Paper 70p.

This attractively illustrated account of the growth of glovesmaking contains valuable details of the growth of the craft in the West Oxfordshire area, together with its connections with a number of other industries, particularly the tanning and dressing of leather. Some of the early firms in the industry were listed in nineteenth-century directories as "leather dressers, carriers and china dealers," and also as fellmongers, boot and shoe manufacturers, and butchers. There was a growth of large businesses in which the leather was prepared and cut out in a workshop or factory, and given out to handworkers, almost exclusively women and girls, who did the sewing and decoration. In the later nineteenth century the industry moved more positively into factories but outwork continued, and even now there are some female outworkers still employed. A substantial part of the text is concerned with the craft processes, and has many interesting details of the work involved, from the first selection of the skin to the completion of the gloves. The book throws valuable light on the changing nature of an important rural industry in the course of the nineteenth century.

CHARLOTTE ERICKSON, *Invisible Immigrants: the adaptation of English and Scottish immigrants in Nineteenth-century America*. Leicester U.P. for the London School of Economics, 1975. viii + 531 pp. Maps, 17 plates. £5.50.

The greater part of this substantial volume is taken up by the edited transcripts of series of letters written by English and Scottish immigrants in America to their relations and friends at home. In her valuable introduction Dr Erickson discusses the features of British immigration which appear from the correspondence to have been characteristic. It is shown that the immigrants were not always wise in their choice of land, had various problems in adjusting to their new economic and social environment, and were by no means immune from financial problems and hardship. For some time, at least, their living standards might be inferior in important respects to those which they had left behind. The book will be most valuable to those seeking firsthand evidence on the nature and difficulties of those

spirits bold enough to attempt the opening of a new continent, but it also has relevance for the study of contemporary rural society in the old country.

EDWARD L. SCHAPSMEIER and FREDERICK H. SCHAPSMEIER, *Ezra Taft Benson and the Politics of Agriculture: the Eisenhower Years, 1953-1961*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate, 1975. xviii + 374 pp. \$6.50. Paper.

The Schapsmeier brothers have now followed up their biography of Henry A. Wallace with this account of Ezra Taft Benson's eight years as Secretary of Agriculture in the Eisenhower administration. Though the agricultural labour force in the United States had shrunk in national terms to relatively small proportions, the winning of the farm vote, and hence farm policy itself, were still matters of great political significance. The book (which is printed in the format of a typescript) is concerned not only with Benson himself (a leader in the Mormon Church) and his honesty and integrity in office but also with the internal working of the Eisenhower administration. The President emerges as an astute politician who fought hard for his farm programme but who also knew when to compromise to achieve his ends.

C. F. KOLBERT and T. O'BRIEN, *Land Reform in Ireland: A Legal History of the Irish land problem and its settlement*. Univ. Cambridge Dept. of Land Economy, Occasional Paper No. 3, 1975. 76 pp. £1.20.

This brief survey of tenurial changes in Ireland, rapidly covering the centuries from ancient times to the Land Act of 1965, will be useful to those seeking a concise source for the land legislation, its main provisions, and its general effects. The main emphasis falls on the legal developments involved in the troubles of the nineteenth century, the measures taken prior to Independence, and particularly on the reforms achieved by the series of Irish Land Acts since 1923. There is also an account of recent measures to deal with the remaining problems of overpopulated areas, and of those adopted as a result of Ireland's joining the E.E.C. The interpretation of nineteenth-century developments does not take cognizance of the recent revisions of Irish history, especially those concerning the role of the landlord, and the brief bibliography must therefore be considered inadequate.

ORLANDO W. MILLER, *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony*. Yale U.P., 1975. xi + 329 pp. Map, plate. £7.50.

The frontier in Alaska persisted long after Turner had evaluated the historical role of the vanished frontier in the American West. This book considers the attempts made to colonize Alaska since 1900,

with special emphasis on the effort to establish an agricultural community in the Matanuska valley, north of Anchorage, as part of the public relief measures associated with the New Deal. Rural inhabitants of the depressed cutover region of the Great Lakes formed the original colonists, and the first residents of the tent cities of Matanuska arrived in the spring of 1935. Through years of severe vicissitudes, struggling against a hostile environment, the valley "eventually developed into the only approximation of an agricultural area in Alaska," though one always dependent on government support, and now in decline. In its early days this modern instance of frontier pioneering showed the typical features of optimism and community spirit. The tent city at Palmer rapidly produced a newspaper, community hall, department store, and hotel, and the American gift for enterprise produced advertisements such as the following: "Taxi for hire. John Howard . . . Tent no 17 opposite Hospital, Palmer. Any place . . . Any Time after working hours." This volume provides a detailed record of an interesting if misguided experiment.

P. J. PERRY, *A Geography of 19th Century Britain*. Batsford, 1975. xii + 187 pp. 28 plates; 38 figs. £6.50 hardcover; £2.95 limp.

This brief survey is specifically designed for students of both geography and history, but their mentors may well find some valuable material and references in the author's concise discussion of the growth of industrial Britain. One chapter is devoted to changes in agriculture, and another to the geography of population growth and settlement, including a section on rural depopulation. There is some interesting material, too, in the chapters dealing with the brewing, flour-milling, and leather industries. Some of the photographs are new and striking, although it is a pity that the maps are in general rather small for detailed study. The book will form a useful adjunct to introductory courses on nineteenth-century Britain.

REX C. RUSSELL, *Friendly Societies in the Caistor, Binbrook and Brigg Area in the Nineteenth Century*. W.E.A., Nettleton Branch, 1975. 17 pp.

So little detail is known of village friendly societies that this short study by the well-known Lincolnshire historian must receive a warm welcome. It is based mainly on newspaper notices of society activities, and shows the associations to be active in the area examined from at least the late 1830's. They were evidently bodies of some influence, and their anniversary celebrations, involving a procession with music, a church service, and a dinner, were occasions to be remembered. But, as Mr Russell says, there is much more to be found out about their character, objects, enrolments, and membership. It

would be especially interesting to have a more precise idea of their impact on the vicissitudes of working-class life in the age of the New Poor Law.

N. W. ALCOCK, *Stoneleigh Villagers, 1597-1650*. University of Warwick Open Studies, 1975. viii + 58 pp. Map, 6 plates. Available from Univ. Warwick. Extra Mural Office, Coventry, 70p (+ 20p postage).

This brief but attractively presented study has been composed from the work of students in extra-mural classes. The major part of the volume is taken up by accounts of individual villagers, with a description of their holdings, houses, and goods, taken from surveys, inventories, and wills, and supplemented by physical evidence from surviving buildings. The result is a valuable analysis of the social structure and wealth of a village which lay on the border of the Arden and Felden districts of Warwickshire, having part of its land in closes and part in open fields. The study will be of much interest to classes pursuing similar investigations, as well as to historians, local and national.

R. E. SANDELL, *Abstracts of Wiltshire Tithe Apportionments*. Devizes, Wiltshire Record Society Publ. Vol. xxx, 1975. viii + 164 pp. £5 to non-members (plus postage).

The major part of the volume consists of 290 abstracts from the instruments of tithe apportionment, almost all of which are deposited in the Wiltshire Record Office, Trowbridge. Separate appendices list the valuers, mapmakers, and commissioners who were involved. In his introduction Mr Sandell deals with the commutation of tithes both before the act of 1836 and subsequently. Information provided in the abstracts includes the date of the agreement, the amount of the rent-charge and to whom payable, the division of the acreage by type of cultivation, the names and acreages of owners and occupiers, and a reference to the tithe map.

R. J. OLNEY (ed.), *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: a Study of Binbrook in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Society for Lincs. History & Arch., 182 Grimsby Road, Humberston, Grimsby, 1975. 39 pp. Illus. 85p to non-members.

This attractively presented booklet is yet another result of the valuable work done by extra-mural classes in local history, in this instance by one held under the auspices of the University of Nottingham and the Lincolnshire Archives Office. The main object was to investigate the material in the enumerators' returns to the census of 1851 for an open parish in a rather remote part of the Lincolnshire wolds. In addition to interesting material on the occupational structure—it is clear that Binbrook served as centre for village crafts—there are dis-

cussions of migration, the fortunes of church and chapel, social conditions, and the reasons why the village possessed a magnetic attraction for vagrants and criminals. An open village located among a number of close parishes, Binbrook had a surplus of labour which was available for work in the surrounding area. In sum, an interesting and worthwhile little study.

ALFRED F. HAVIGHURST, *Modern England, 1901-1970*. C.U.P., 1976. x + 109 pp. £3.30.

A further contribution to the series of bibliographical handbooks prepared for the Conference on British Studies, this volume contains a selected 2,502 entries relating to published books and articles. However only 145 entries are listed under the title 'Agricultural History'. The handbook is more of value for general reference than for specialized study, and its most useful sections are the lists of bibliographies, catalogues, guides, and hand-

books which provide an avenue leading to a more comprehensive range of sources.

EDITH H. WHETHAM, *Beef Cattle and Sheep, 1910-1940*. Univ. Cambridge Dept. Land Economy, Occasional Paper No. 5, 1976. 56 pp. £1.50.

Miss Whetham's central theme in this brief study is the gradual decline in output of home-killed beef and lamb, and the growing importance in the market of imported meat. Though there were changes in the breeding and feeding of meat animals to meet the demand for leaner and smaller joints, technical limitations on output were not overcome before the 1950's. The author deals with marketing developments, and with the diversity of breeds, cross-breeds, and ages of the animals. Historians will find that her study includes some valuable statistical information on the numbers and prices of cattle and sheep, and the work makes an important contribution to our knowledge of the period.

Books Received

THOMAS F. DE VOE, *The Market Assistant: containing a brief description of every article of human food sold in the public markets of the cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn . . .* First published 1867, reprinted Detroit, Gale Research Co., 1975. 455 pp. \$28.50.

JOHS. EWENS, *Jordfællsskab og Udskiftring paa Færoerne Famién Bygd*. Copenhagen, C.A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S, 1975. 423 pp. Maps and tables in separate case.

JACQUELINE FEARN, *Thatch and Thatching*. Princes Risborough, Shire Publ., 1976. 32 pp. Illus. 45p.

GÜNTHER FRANZ, *Geschichte des Deutschen Bauernstandes vom fruhen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*. 2nd edn, Stuttgart, Verlag Eugen Ulmar, 1976. 301 pp.

JEAN GUILAINE, *Premiers Bergers et Paysans de l'Occident Méditerranéen*. Paris, Mouton, 1976. 286 pp. 130 Fr.

A. RUPERT HALL and NORMAN SMITH (eds.), *History of Technology: First Annual Volume 1976*. Mansell, 1976. vii + 186 pp. £9.75.

NIGEL HARVEY, *Fields, Hedges and Ditches*. Princes Risborough, Shire Publ., 1976. 32 pp. Illus. 45p.

ROBERT S. LOPEZ, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages 950-1350*. C.U.P., 1976. xi + 180 pp. Hardcover £4.90; paper £1.95.

ALAN MACFARLANE, *Resources and Population: A Study of the Gurungs of Nepal*. Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, 12. C.U.P., 1976. xviii + 364 pp. £12.50.

CHARLES TRICE MARTIN, *The Record Interpreter: A Collection of Abbreviations, Latin Words and Names used in English Historical Manuscripts and Records*. 2nd edn, 1910, reprinted Dorking, Kohler & Coombes, 1976. xv + 464 pp. £6.

KAREN MARIE OLSEN, *Sokkelund Herreds Tingboger 1636-37*. Copenhagen, Landbohøistorsk Selskab, 1976. 175 pp.

G. F. PETERKEN and R. C. WELCH (eds.), *Bedford Purlieus: its History, Ecology and Management*. Monks Wood Experimental Station Symposium No. 7. Abbots Repton, Huntingdon, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, 1975. 209 pp. Maps and diagrams. £1 (postage 42p).

OLIVER RACKHAM, *Hayley Wood: its History and Ecology*. Cambs. & Isle of Ely Naturalists' Trust, 1 Brookside, Cambridge, 1975. xv + 221 pp. 26 plates. £3.95 (postage 55p).

PETER J. REYNOLDS, *Farming in the Iron Age*. Cambridge Introduction to the History of Mankind Topic Book. C.U.P., 1976. 48 pp. Illus. 95p.

M. E. ROBINSON, *The New South Wales Wheat Frontier, 1851 to 1911*. A.N.U. Canberra Dept. of Human Geography, Research School of Pacific Studies, 1976. xiii + 247 pp. \$8.00 (Australian).

M. E. SEEBOHM, *The Evolution of the English Farm*. 2nd revised edn, reprinted East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorks., E.P. Publ. Ltd, 1976. 356 pp. £6.25.

JOHN VINCE, *Old British Livestock*. Princes Risborough, Shire Publ., 1976. 32 pp. Illus. 45p.

<i>The Transport Revolution from 1770</i> , by Philip S. Bagwell	T. C. BARKER	page 63
<i>Stability and Change in an English County Town: A Study of York, 1801-1851</i> , by Alan Armstrong	T. C. BARKER	64
<i>The Poor Law Report of 1834</i> , ed. S. G. and E. O. A. Checkland	W. H. CHALONER	64
<i>Lincolnshire Politics, 1832-1885</i> , by R. J. Olney	F. M. L. THOMPSON	64
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VOLUME 25 1977

PART II

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The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes
of Devonshire, c. 1800–c. 1926

DAVID CANNADINE

Harvest Customs and Labourers' Perquisites in Southern England, 1150–1350:
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THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW
SILVER JUBILEE PRIZE ESSAY

The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire, c. 1800–c. 1926

By DAVID CANNADINE

WHO were the wealthiest landowners between the Battle of Waterloo and the Battle of Britain? Many names were suggested by contemporaries. In 1819 the American Ambassador recorded that the “four greatest incomes in the kingdom” belonged to the Duke of Northumberland, Earl Grosvenor, the Marquess of Stafford, and the Earl of Bridgewater, each of whom was reputed to possess “one hundred thousand pounds, clear of everything.”¹ Forty years later, H. A. Taine visited the House of Lords where

The principal peers present were pointed out to me and named, with details of their enormous fortunes: the largest amount to £300,000 a year. The Duke of Bedford has £220,000 a year from land; the Duke of Richmond has 300,000 acres in a single holding. The Marquess of Westminster, landlord of a whole London quarter, will have an income of £1,000,000 a year when the present long leases run out.²

Shortly afterwards, A. C. Ewald added some new names:

¹ David Rush, *The Court of London from 1819 to 1825*, 1873, p. 9. In the light of recent research, Rush's figure of £100,000 seems an exaggeration. See G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 1963, p. 58; Eric Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth: The Sutherland Fortune in the Industrial Revolution*, 1973, p. 13; F. C. Mather, *After the Canal Duke: A Study of the Estates Administered by the Trustees of the Third Duke of Bridgewater in the Age of Railway Building, 1825–1872*, Oxford, 1970, pp. xviii, 71, 358–9; F. M. L. Thompson, *The Economic and Social Background of the English Landed Interest: 1840–70, with particular reference to the Estates of the Dukes of Northumberland*, Oxford D.Phil., 1956, Appendix VIII.

² H. A. Taine, *Notes on England, 1860–70*, translated E. Hyams, New Jersey, 1958, p. 181.

In point of wealth, the House of Lords exhibits a standard which cannot be equalled in any other country. Take the Dukes of Northumberland, Devonshire, Sutherland and Buccleuch, the Marquesses of Westminster and Bute, the Earls of Derby, Lonsdale, Dudley and Leicester, and Baron Overstone, and where (in the matter of wealth) will you find their equals collectively?³

And early in the new century, T. H. S. Escott recorded these comments made by a friend on the Dukes of Northumberland and Cleveland:

These . . . are the persons who make the fortunes of the great private West End banks; they take a pride in keeping a standing balance for which they never receive six pence; but whose interest would make a hole in the national debt.⁴

More precisely, all these peers—with the exceptions of Lords Leicester and Overstone⁵—possessed land in the early 1880's with a gross annual value in excess of £60,000 a year, according to Bateman. Indeed, altogether forty families came into this category.⁶ From this total should be extracted the Calthorpe, Haldon, Ramsden, and St Aubyn families, whose

³ A. C. Ewald, *The Crown and its Advisers*, 1870, p. 129.

⁴ T. H. S. Escott, *Society in the English Country House*, 1907, p. 50.

⁵ The figures for these two peers were:

	Acres	Gross annual value
Lord Leicester	44,090	£59,578
Lord Overstone	30,849	£58,098

Overstone claimed his entry was “so fearfully incorrect that it is impossible to correct it”: John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, 4th edn, 1883, ed. by David Spring, Leicester, 1971, pp. 263, 348.

⁶ See Appendix A, Table 1.

incomes were artificially inflated by crediting them with the entire rentals of their urban estates, when in fact they received only the ground rents.⁷ Of the remaining thirty-six, twenty-four also threw up individuals who left estates valued at above a million pounds between 1808 and 1949.⁸ These were the richest aristocrats, augmenting their wealth throughout the nineteenth century, maintaining it during the first half of the twentieth, and often surviving as major social and political influences until the Second World War and beyond.

There are three obvious omissions from Bateman's list: the Cadogans, the Portmans, and the Westminsters. The sixth Earl of Cadogan's estate was valued in 1933 at two million pounds. That left by the seventh Viscount Portman fifteen years later was just under four and a half millions.⁹ And the Westminsters surpassed them both. Described as early as 1865 as "the wealthiest family in Europe," the second Duke left an estate in excess of ten millions in 1953.¹⁰ But, because Bateman excluded London estates, none of these families appears in his book as very wealthy.¹¹ Nor are the Westminsters numbered among Rubenstein's millionaires: the first Duke, reputed to be worth fourteen millions in 1894, left a *personal* estate of only £947,000, and his successor died in the period beyond the scope of Rubenstein's inquiry.¹²

⁷ Lord Calthorpe's gross income from his Edgbaston building estate was only £37,000 in 1914. In 1893, his gross income from all sources was only £42,000. See David Cannadine, *The Aristocracy and the Towns in the Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of the Calthorpes and Birmingham, 1807-1910*, Oxford D.Phil., 1975, Appendices B to F.

⁸ Appendix A, Table II.

⁹ W. D. Rubenstein, 'British Millionaires, 1809-1949', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.*, XLVII, 1974, pp. 219, 222.

¹⁰ J. L. Sandford and M. Townsend, *The Great Governing Families of England*, 1865, I, p. 112; W. D. Rubenstein, 'Men of Property: Some Aspects of Occupation, Inheritance and Power among the Top British Wealthholders' in Philip Stanworth and Anthony Giddens (eds.), *Elites and Power in British Society*, Cambridge, 1974, p. 147.

¹¹ The Cadogan family does not appear at all. The figures for the other two are as follows:

	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Gross annual value</i>
Viscount Portman	33,891	£45,972
Duke of Westminster	19,749	£38,994

¹² Rubenstein, 'British Millionaires', p. 213, n. 2.

The relative position of these forty-odd families changed in two ways during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the one hand, as Bagehot noted as early as 1866, however much their wealth might still be growing, it was less Himalayan than before, as an increasing number of bankers and businessmen made fortunes of unprecedented size.¹³ But, while their grip on the *monopoly* of great wealth weakened, they actually *increased* their lead over their fellow, but relatively poorer, landowners. The accumulation of estates by advantageous marriage, inheritance, or purchase, and the burgeoning incomes which many drew from mineral royalties, docks, and urban estates, put them on a pedestal beyond the reach of the squire and middling aristocrat. As Professor Burn noted: "The Duke of Omnium and the small squire were half a world apart," and this was as true of their incomes as of their politics.¹⁴ And the subsequent agricultural depression served only to widen the gap, as the rich, already buttressed by alternative sources of revenue, became—in a relative sense—even richer.¹⁵

Accordingly, these "commercial potentates" were a distinct sub-group, both of all millionaires and of landowners in general.¹⁶ Sharing some of the characteristics of each, they cannot be completely classed with either. Unlike millionaire businessmen, who might buy their way into land, they could boast generations of inherited, landed wealth. And, compared with their poorer landowning cousins, the extent

¹³ Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, ed. by R. H. S. Crossman, 1968, p. 124; J. F. C. Harrison, *The Early Victorians, 1832-51*, 1971, pp. 98-9; Harold Perkin, *The Age of the Railway*, 1970, p. 196.

¹⁴ W. L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation*, 1968, p. 316.

¹⁵ G. M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age*, 2nd edn, 1960, p. 145; O. F. Christie, *The Transition to Democracy, 1867-1914*, 1934, pp. 148, 172; G. S. R. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England*, 1962, pp. 215-16, 251; F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 1963, pp. 256, 268, 317; Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880*, 1969, p. 435.

¹⁶ T. H. S. Escott, *England: Its People, Polity and Pursuits*, 1885, pp. 314-15.

and diversity of their incomes were on an unrivalled scale. The basis of their wealth and reasons for their survival might be listed as follows: exceptionally broad agricultural acres, either in England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland; the exploitation of non-agricultural resources on their estates; the increase, decrease, or maintenance of extensive—but not ruinous—debts; resilience to agricultural depression; and a capacity to restructure their finances on a more “rational” basis in the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth.¹⁷ Of course, few families possessed all these attributes: The Grosvenors’ acres, for instance, were relatively narrow, and the Northumberlands, Sutherlands, and Dudleys were only occasionally in debt.¹⁸ But, even allowing for individual differences, these characteristics do describe the group as a whole. The purpose of this essay is to examine the finances of one family of whom all these statements were true—yet not quite the whole story: the Dukes of Devonshire.¹⁹

I

On 21 May 1811, William Spencer Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington and heir to the fifth Duke of Devonshire, came of age, the event being celebrated with all the magnificence associated with the highest echelons of the aristocracy.²⁰ “The expense is not to be con-

sidered, even in hundreds of pounds,” noted the Chatsworth agent, and the ensuing festivities, at Chatsworth itself, Stavely, Shottle, Buxton, Hardwick, and Lismore, more than bore this out.²¹ Seven months later, celebration changed to mourning, as the Marquess succeeded his prematurely deceased father and became sixth Duke of Devonshire. “As the owner of everything that rank and fortune could give, he had always the world at his feet.”²² Indeed, the inheritance into which the sixth duke entered had been growing almost every generation since the days of Bess of Hardwick.²³ Thus he could boast four country houses: Chatsworth itself, nearby Hardwick Hall, Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire, and Lismore Castle in Ireland. In addition, there were three London palaces: Chiswick House, Burlington House, and Devonshire House. And all this was supported by land in Ireland and eight English counties, yielding a current income of £70,000 a year in 1813–15.²⁴ As his biographer later noted, the sixth Duke was: “An only son, of illustrious descent, and heir to an immense fortune: none could excell, and few could rival him, in position.”²⁵

But in two ways, this golden inheritance was tarnished. Firstly, the Duke inherited his estates heavily mortgaged. Indeed, as early as 1790 encumbrances had stood at £310,298, of which £170,000 had been spent on the purchase of land since 1773, and £63,000 had gone on

¹⁷ Appendix A, Table 1: David Spring, ‘English Landowners and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism’ in J. T. Ward and R. G. Wilson (eds.) *Land and Industry: The Landed Estate and the Industrial Revolution*, Newton Abbot, 1971; David Cannadine, ‘Aristocratic Indebtedness in Nineteenth-Century England: The Case Reopened’, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* forthcoming; Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 306–8, 320, 322, 329, 336–7.

¹⁸ Cannadine, *Aristocratic Indebtedness*, Table 1.

¹⁹ The two chief sources on which this study rests are the Devonshire Papers (hereafter Chatsworth MSS.), Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, and the papers of their solicitors, Currey & Co (hereafter Currey MSS.), 21 Buckingham Gate, London. I am most grateful to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, his archivist, and the Secretary to the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement for permission to consult these papers. Not all of the Chatsworth MSS., and none of the Currey MSS., have been catalogued, so that full references cannot always be given.

²⁰ Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 76–9.

²¹ Chatsworth MSS., fifth Duke’s ser.: 1997, John Heaton to Thomas Knowlton, 18 April 1811; 2005, Knowlton to Heaton, 23 May 1811; 2006, Knowlton to Marquess of Hartington, 27 May 1811; 2009, Knowlton to Hartington, 17 June 1811.

²² F. Leveson Gower, *Bygone Years*, 1905, p. 41.

²³ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 193–4; J. H. Plumb, *Men and Places*, Harmondsworth, 1966, pp. 113–21; F. Bickley, *The Cavendish Family*, 1911, p. 210.

²⁴ Chatsworth MSS., Accounts 1813–15. “Current Income,” the description used throughout this essay is the gross agricultural rent, less arrears, tithes, taxes, and cost of improvements. From 1858 onwards it also includes dividend income. The statistical evidence relating to both income and expenditure has been gathered together in graphs and tables at the end so as to avoid unnecessary interruptions in the text.

²⁵ Sir Augustus W. Cavendish, *A Sketch of the Life of the Sixth Duke of Devonshire*, 3rd edn, 1870, p. 5.

the construction of the crescent at Buxton.²⁶ The high living of the fifth Duke, his wife, and his mistresses, only increased such burdens. In 1804, for instance, Duchess Georgiana admitted to gambling debts of £36,000.²⁷ But, as her husband discovered on her death, she had not revealed all: in 1806 her total indebtedness came to £109,135.²⁸ Accordingly, by 1814 the aggregate sum secured on the Devonshire estates came to £593,000 which, with interest payments at 5 per cent, was absorbing over £29,000 or 41 per cent of the Duke's annual income. If to this figure is added annuities and jointures in excess of £15,000 annually, then some 60 per cent of the sixth Duke's income was not available for his own use.²⁹

Moreover, there was no legal constraint to prevent him from increasing his encumbrances. For, having succeeded so soon after he came of age, he and his late father had not had time to resettle the estates so as to bar the entail.³⁰ Accordingly, he held them—as his three successors were also to do—in fee simple. Whereas many families, like the Bedfords and the Grosvenors, deliberately kept some of the family estates out of settlement, the Devonshires were unusual in that, following this accident of family history, four successive generations of Dukes were allowed absolute possession

²⁶ Chatsworth MSS. L/60/20, Compendious Account of the Paternal Estates of the Duke of Devonshire, 1792. The spending of the fifth Duke on Buxton was in excess of £120,000. See R. G. Heape, *Buxton Under the Dukes of Devonshire*, 1948, pp. 28–30, 35.

²⁷ Chatsworth MSS. L/24/105, Statement of the Duchess of Devonshire's Debts, Dec. 1804.

²⁸ Chatsworth MSS. L/24/106, Report Respecting the Late Duchess of Devonshire's Debts, 26 July 1806. For a full account of Georgiana's career see Iris Leveson Gower, *The Face Without a Frown: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 1944, esp. pp. 30–1, 46, 85–7, 112–14, 128–30, 136–43, 151–3, 162–3, 225–7; the Earl of Bessborough (ed.), *Georgiana: Extracts From the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 1955, esp. chs. III, XIII, XV.

²⁹ Chatsworth MSS., Accounts 1812–15. For most years of the sixth Duke's tenure of the title, the only figure available for fixed charges is a combined total of interest payments and annuities, whereas, from 1858 onwards, the figure is for interest payments alone. Accordingly, the two series are not exactly comparable. But as indicators of general trends they should be reliable.

³⁰ L. Strachey and R. Fulford (eds.), *The Greville Memoirs, 1814–60*, 1938, VII, p. 333.

of all their estates.³¹ So, the only limits to increasing indebtedness were the amount which could actually be raised using the estates as security, and the restraint or irresponsibility of the freeholder.

The scope for borrowing was thus considerable, and the sixth Duke—who in this as in much else took after his mother Georgiana—reaped full advantage of it. He had little interest in figures, and even less sense of financial responsibility.³² Deaf and unmarried, he was a lonely man, and the two closest friendships of his life, with Joseph Paxton and Jeffry Wyatville, served only to encourage his extravagance. His love of building, travel, collecting, and display amounted almost to a mania.³³ Not surprisingly, historians have seen in him the quintessence of early nineteenth-century extravagance and financial irresponsibility, and the evidence to be presented here gives no cause for quarrelling with that interpretation.³⁴

From 1818, when he asked Jeffry Wyatville to design a new wing at Chatsworth, there was no end to the Duke's building. The ensuing work at Chatsworth lasted twenty years; there followed extensive alterations at Devonshire House and Bolton Abbey in the 1840's; and finally, from 1849 until 1858, the year of his death, large-scale rebuilding at Lismore Castle.³⁵ His love of building was matched by his relish for horticulture, encouraged by Paxton, who became head gardener at Chatsworth in 1826. He gradually increased his friendship with, and hold over, the Duke, so that by the 1840's he was as dominant a figure in managing

³¹ Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p. 68.

³² Cavendish, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.

³³ The best contemporary description is by Greville. See Strachey and Fulford, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 332.

³⁴ David Spring: 'The English Landed Estate in the Age of Coal and Iron, 1830–1880', *Journ. Econ. Hist.*, XI, 1, 1951, p. 14; *idem*, 'English Landownership in the Nineteenth Century: A Critical Note', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., IX, 3, 1957, p. 473; *idem*, 'Aristocracy, Social Structure and Religion in the Early Victorian Period', *Victorian Studies*, VI, 3, 1963, p. 271; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 107.

³⁵ Derek Linstrum, *Sir Jeffry Wyatville: Architect to the King*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 141–62; F. Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth*, 1949, pp. 102–3; Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, Oxford, 1971, p. 192.

the Duke's finances as was his auditor, Benjamin Currey. The results of this collaboration were to be seen in the arboretum, in the expeditions to Canada, Mexico, and India, in the rebuilding of Edensor village between 1838 and 1842, and in the construction of the Great Conservatory between 1836 and 1840.³⁶ If to this is added the embassy to Russia in 1826, and purchases of books designed to give Chatsworth "the first library in England," then it can be seen that the Duke did indeed live according to the pattern of his coming-of-age celebrations: "the expense is not to be considered."³⁷

All this activity made Chatsworth "the most splendid, and at the same time the most enjoyable place that one could imagine," and the festivities held there, culminating in the visit of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and the Duke of Wellington in 1843, exhausted the superlatives of contemporaries.³⁸ But such extravagance had to be paid for, and a current income of between £80,000 and £100,000—to which size the sixth Duke's had grown by the 1820's and 1830's—was quite inadequate. Interest payments and annuities were gobbling up over 50 per cent of it by the 1830's, and household payments at Chatsworth alone amounted to £36,000 a year. If there had been no extra spending it might have been possible to make ends meet. But as the sixth Duke got into his spending stride, such a prospect vanished. Between 1812, his first full year in possession, and 1815, he overspent on current account to the extent of £270,000, and between 1817 and 1829, the deficit averaged £16,400 a year. In the same period £54,753 was spent on furniture at Chatsworth and Devonshire House, and £147,681, on the new buildings at Chatsworth.

³⁶ The two best accounts of the Devonshire-Paxton partnership are in: Violet Markham, *Paxton and the Bachelor Duke*, and G. F. Chadwick, *The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton*, 1961.

³⁷ Chatsworth MSS. L/83/2, Heaton to Devonshire, 25 March 1812. See also Plumb, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

³⁸ Chatsworth MSS., sixth Duke's ser. 3889.1, Countess of Malmesbury to Devonshire, April 1838; Leveson Gower, *Bygone Years*, pp. 47–8; Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Strachey and Fulford, *op. cit.*, v, pp. 147–8; Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria R.I.*, 1966, p. 219.

Between 1830 and 1842 a further £38,075 was lavished on furniture, and £155,107 on Chatsworth, bringing the costs of rebuilding there to more than £300,000: To this should be added: alterations at Devonshire House and Bolton Abbey; £50,000 laid out on a collection of coins subsequently resold at Christies for a mere £7,057 in 1844; and £26,000 spent on the embassy to Russia.³⁹

Solicitors and advisers begged the Duke to stop. "All that you want," observed one in 1819, "is the power of self-restraint." But it was never discovered.⁴⁰ Encumbrances soared, topping £700,000 by 1830.⁴¹ But such extravagance could not be financed by borrowing alone: assets had to be liquidated. In 1813 the Nottingham estates were sold for £229,727; two years later Burlington House was disposed of to the Duke's uncle, Lord George Cavendish, subsequently Earl of Burlington, for £70,000; and in 1824 the Wetherby estate in Yorkshire was put under the hammer for £160,000.⁴² Indeed, by 1830, it was even suggested that the Irish estates might be sold. Well might Greville write in 1835 of

The Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire of the present day, who appear to have lost their senses, and to be ready to peril all their great possessions to gratify the passion of the moment.⁴³

The late 'thirties and early 'forties saw extravagance reach its peak, with the visit of

³⁹ Chatsworth MSS., Accounts: 1812–15, 1817–29.

⁴⁰ Chatsworth MSS. L/83/2, Heaton to Devonshire, 16 Feb. 1813; 6th Duke's ser. 344, J. Abercrombie to Devonshire, 9 Dec. 1819.

⁴¹ Chatsworth MSS., Accounts, 1817–29: Appendix D.

⁴² Chatsworth MSS. L/83/2, General Abstract of Sales at Nottingham (undated); sixth Duke's ser. 1069, Abercrombie to Devonshire, 21 Nov. 1824; R. W. Unwin 'A Nineteenth-Century Estate Sale: Wetherby, 1824', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, xxiii, 2 1975, p. 118; F. H. W. Sheppard (ed.), *The Survey of London*, vol. xxxii, *The Parish of St James Westminster*, pt II, *North of Piccadilly*, 1963, pp. 407, 412.

⁴³ Strachey and Fulford, *op. cit.*, III, p. 157. For the extent of the Duke of Bedford's indebtedness, and successful attempts at reduction, see David Spring, *The English Landed Estate in the Nineteenth Century: Its Administration*, Baltimore, 1963, pp. 21–40, 189–90; *idem*, 'English Landowners and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism', pp. 52, 62.

Queen Victoria, the last phase of extensions to Chatsworth, and the building of the Emperor Fountain and the Great Conservatory. So, by 1844 indebtedness was just short of a million pounds, with interest and annuity payments at £54,000 taking over 55 per cent of current income—a situation nearly as bad as that which the sixth Duke had inherited—and that despite the reduction of interest charges to 4 per cent over the years 1824–8.⁴⁴ Even Paxton, when he saw the Curreys' consolidated accounts, was taken aback. "I have been the cause of Your Grace spending a great deal of money," he wrote in concerned apology; "had I been at all aware of your real position, I certainly never should have done so." It was now realized that further assets must be sold. The Irish estates were again suggested. But ultimately the choice fell on lands at Londesborough and Baldersley in Yorkshire.⁴⁵ Between them they fetched £575,000, which was applied to the reduction of debt, and this, along with further falls in interest rates and a decline in annuity payments, reduced fixed outgoings to £28,000 by the early 'fifties, or 30 per cent of current income. Paxton was ecstatic at a deal which he thought had been triumphantly concluded.⁴⁶ But the Duke's heir, the second Earl of Burlington, viewed the whole affair in a more sceptical light:

Currey has been talking to me about the duke's plans for getting rid of his debt: on the whole I cannot disapprove of the large sales he proposes to make, though I cannot help regretting the extravagance which has rendered them necessary.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Chatsworth MSS., sixth Duke's ser.: 861, Abercrombie to Devonshire, 11 Nov. 1823; 896, Benjamin Currey to Pinder Simpson, 20 Jan. 1824.

⁴⁵ Earl Fitzwilliam urged strongly against the sale of the Irish estates, on the grounds that the Duke would "lose greatly in station." See: Chatsworth MSS., sixth Duke's ser.: 180.0, Fitzwilliam to Devonshire, 2 July 1845; 180.1, Devonshire to Fitzwilliam, 8 July 1845. Both quoted in Spring, 'English Landed Estates in the Age of Coal and Iron', p. 17.

⁴⁶ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 241; Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–61.

⁴⁷ Chatsworth MSS., seventh Duke's diary (hereafter cited as MS. Diary), 25 Sept. 1844.

Thereafter, the position improved, as the Duke's spending finally lessened. Wyattville died in 1840, and Paxton, too, was less active at Chatsworth in the 1850's, becoming increasingly preoccupied with the Great Exhibition and his duties as a Member of Parliament. The Duke suffered a stroke in 1854 which further diminished his zestful extravagance. Income, too, began to increase, in part from the revenue of the Grassington lead mines, which reached £20,000 a year net by 1854, in part from the Duke's investments in railway shares, turnpikes, and other securities totalling £56,000.⁴⁸ As a result, 1848 was the last year for which records exist of expenditure exceeding income (by £20,000) and of the inevitable plaintive cry from William Currey that "It is absolutely necessary that all extraordinary expenditures should be carefully avoided, and that ordinary expenditure should be of a fixed and certain amount."⁴⁹ By 1849 the long-hoped-for surplus at last materialized, and it continued throughout the early 'fifties, despite new building projects at Lismore. In 1854 it reached £12,000, enabling Currey to present a triumphant report, "more satisfactory than any account which I have previously submitted to you."⁵⁰ But it was, of course, all relative. A decade's belated economy was insufficient to eradicate the effects of thirty years' extravagance.

II

No previous successor to the title had found the family estates in such a condition of unexampled splendour and severe indebtedness as did William Cavendish, seventh Duke, in 1858. Nor was this his only inheritance. For since the death of his grandfather in 1834 he had already been second Earl of Burlington, possessed of extensive estates in Lancashire and Sussex, each with its own big house, Holker Hall and Comp-

⁴⁸ J. T. Ward, 'Landowners and Mining', in Ward and Wilson, *Land and Industry*, p. 88; Currey MSS., sixth Duke's executors account, 19 June 1860.

⁴⁹ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser. 25.70, William Currey to Devonshire, 28 Feb. 1849.

⁵⁰ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser. 25.90, Benjamin Currey to Devonshire, 4 Sept. 1855.

ton Place respectively. Moreover, since the 1840's, he had begun to interest himself in their development, investing in the Furness Railway at Barrow, and sea walls, roads, and speculative building at Eastbourne.⁵¹ These two estates had originally been settled on the seventh Duke's grandfather by the fourth Duke, but thanks to two accidents of family history whereby William inherited directly not only his grandfather's property but also the estates of the sixth Duke, they were now reunited with the main family holdings. But, as the acres were enlarged so the problems increased. For the Burlington estates had their own share of debt—some £250,000—as a result of the extensive purchases of land made by the seventh Duke's grandfather. Consequently, the total mortgage debt on the seventh Duke's consolidated estates was just under a million.⁵²

What type of man was the seventh Duke? Second Wrangler and First Smiths Prizeman at Trinity College, Cambridge, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science, sometime Chancellor of London and Cambridge Universities, President of the Royal Agricultural Society and of the Iron and Steel Institute, he was, by any yardstick, "one of the finest flowers of the Victorian nobility."⁵³ As the commentary to his *Vanity Fair* caricature put it in 1874: "Had he not been a duke, he would have been a rare professor of mathematics."⁵⁴ But he found the responsibilities of his great position burdensome, and for all his brilliance he was a lonely man, never recovering from the death of his wife in 1840. Thereafter, he lived as a recluse, steering as clear of the sixth Duke and Paxton as was possible without straining family links, and avoiding the frenetic whirl of high

society, even after he inherited the dukedom.⁵⁵

The contrast with his immediate predecessor could not have been more marked. Just as one epitomized the Regency world of self-indulgence, so the other was an archetypal mid-Victorian. And, understandably, it has been assumed that it was he who rescued the Devonshire estates from their embarrassed condition. "On entering into the possession of the ducal estates," observed one early authority, "he found them heavily encumbered, and devoted himself to relieving them of their burdens."⁵⁶ Others noted his "careful personal management," his "capable hands," his "wise and far-seeing" policies, and claimed that his estates "could hardly have been better managed."⁵⁷ Moreover, from the time of Professor Spring's article historians have consistently repeated this view, citing the seventh Duke as the classic instance of mid-Victorian recovery following earlier extravagance—thanks to careful management, reduction of debt, and imaginative exploitation of non-agricultural resources.⁵⁸ How far is this picture valid?

Certainly, the seventh Duke wasted no time in grasping the full extent of his problems. As he recorded in his diary:

The income is large, but by far the greater part of it is absorbed by the payment of interest, annuities, and the expense of Chatsworth, leaving but a comparatively insignificant surplus, and much of this will at present be required for legacy and succession duties. This is a worse condition of matters than I had expected, although from knowing

⁵¹ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–9; Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–18, 308–9.

⁵² *D.N.B.*, supplement, I, 1901, pp. 400–1.

⁵³ J. G. Crowther, *Statesmen of Science*, 1965, p. 217; Bickley, *The Cavendish Family*, p. 311; Leach, *op. cit.*, p. 26; *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, LI, 1892, obituary notices, p. xli.

⁵⁴ Spring, 'English Landed Estates in the Age of Coal and Iron', p. 19; *idem*, 'English Landowners and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism', 43–8; Sidney Pollard, 'Barrow-in-Furness and the Seventh Duke of Devonshire', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., VIII, 2, 1955, p. 221; Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 107; W. A. Maguire, *The Devonshire Estates in Ireland, 1801–1845*, Oxford, 1972, p. 84.

⁵¹ S. Pollard and J. D. Marshall, 'The Furness Railway and the Rise of Barrow', *Journal of Transport History*, I, 1953, pp. 115–18; J. C. Wright, *Bygone Eastbourne*, 1902, pp. 77–81.

⁵² Chatsworth MSS., sixth Duke's ser. 3326, Lord Burlington to Mrs William Cavendish, 20 May 1835; Curry MSS., seventh Duke's accounts, 1858–72.

⁵³ H. Leach, *The Duke of Devonshire: A Personal and Political Biography*, 1904, p. 23; Burn, *op. cit.*, pp. 310–11.

⁵⁴ *Vanity Fair*, 6 June 1874.

the duke's ignorance of business, I did not expect to find them very flourishing.⁵⁹

He reached one decision immediately: general economies had to be made, which meant that any remaining connection with Paxton had to be severed. "Reductions on an immense scale are obviously required," he noted, "and Paxton is not the man to undo much of what has been his own creation." Realizing that the writing was on the wall, Paxton gracefully withdrew, leaving the Duke to dismiss many unnecessary employees on the Chatsworth estate.⁶⁰

But while economies might stop new debt, they would make little inroad on his accumulated encumbrances. To reduce these drastically the only policy was to follow the sixth Duke's example and sell land. Indeed, in the 1840's when worried by the size of the Burlington debt, the future seventh Duke had thought of selling the Sussex estates to achieve a similar objective.⁶¹ So now he considered disposing of his Irish properties.⁶² Dissatisfied with his professional advisers who did not support this policy, he wrote to the Duke of Bedford and "mentioned to him my project of selling in Ireland."⁶³ Initially, he seemed "rather to approve" the scheme, but later wrote "dissuading extensive sales," partly on the grounds that such an act would diminish the social and political standing of the House of Cavendish, and partly because "a large estate, with such a rental as yours, is soon brought round to an improved condition, as I have found in my own case."

Still unconvinced, Devonshire replied by explaining his financial position more fully. He pointed out that while his gross revenue was in the region of £200,000 a year, he was left with

⁵⁹ MS. Diary: 26 Jan. 1858.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 Feb. 1858; Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser., 4.53; Devonshire to the Duke of Bedford, 17 May 1858; Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-13.

⁶¹ MS. Diary: 8 April 1840; 6 Aug. 1840; 10 Oct. 1840; 25 May 1842; 21 Aug. 1842.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 2 March 1858; 23 April 1858.

⁶³ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser., 4.52, Bedford to Devonshire, 15 May 1858; 4.53 Devonshire to Bedford, 17 May 1858; 4.54, Bedford to Devonshire, 21 May 1858; 4.55, Bedford to Devonshire, 22 May 1858. Much of this correspondence has already been published in Spring, 'English Landed Estate in the Age of Coal and Iron', p. 19. See also MS. Diary: 15 May 1858, 21 May 1858.

only £115,000 net, after the deduction of costs of estate administration and maintenance. And of that much-reduced amount some £60,000 a year went on interest payments, annuities, and other fixed charges, and a further £20,000 from his Grassington mines had to be regarded as uncertain. Thus his disposable income was at best only £55,000, and at worst a mere £40,000. While this was adequate for ordinary expenditure, it was insufficient for such extra items as the legacy and succession duties levied on the estate of the sixth Duke, or the "large election expenses" that "from time to time" he expected to incur in north Derbyshire, north Lancashire, and east Sussex. "My impression on the whole," he concluded, "is that my position is at present very insecure." But Bedford wrote again, stressing the relative insignificance of purely financial considerations when compared with the question of the family's social and political standing; and at the same time the Curreys bombarded the Duke with evidence to show how the Irish remittances could be increased. Accordingly, his resolve began to weaken, so that by June he had "nearly made up my mind not to sell the bulk of the property this year." Nor was he to consider doing so at any time thereafter.⁶⁴

With no land sales and a limited policy of retrenchment, little progress was made in the reduction of debt. By 1864 only £60,000 had been paid off. Yet, only five years later, Lord Granville described the seventh Duke's credit to Gladstone as "being very nearly as good as that of the state," a far cry from the days of Georgiana and the sixth Duke.⁶⁵ How had this sudden transformation been effected? In part it resulted from the Duke's own reputation as a prudent, sober, moderate man. But more important was the unprecedented rise in current income, which ballooned from £120,000 a year in the late 1850's to a peak of £310,000 in 1874. With total indebtedness relatively static until the late 'sixties, and the service charges on

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1858; Chatsworth MSS. L/83/28, F. E. Currey to Benjamin Currey, 2 Sept. 1844.

⁶⁵ Granville to Gladstone, 26 May 1869. Quoted in Agatha Ramm (ed.), *The Political Correspondence of Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1868-1876*, 1952, I, p. 23.

subsequent new mortgages increasing less rapidly than income, the actual amount of current income apportioned to servicing the debt fell from 40 per cent in 1861 to a mere 16 per cent by 1874, the lowest figure thus far recorded.

How had this spectacular financial recovery come about? The tables in Appendix B give some indication. Income from estate rentals had increased considerably, from £94,000 in 1863 to £141,000 eleven years later. But this was completely eclipsed by the prodigious increase in dividend income, from a mere £14,000 in 1863 to £169,000 by 1874—over half of the total current income. As will be seen from the details of the Devonshires' investment portfolio, it was not from the development of Eastbourne, the revival of Buxton, or the investment in Irish railways that his income was preponderantly derived. For the dividends from all these sources were completely dwarfed by those from Barrow-in-Furness. In 1873, over 80 per cent of all Devonshire investments were concentrated in that town, and some 90 per cent of dividend income came from that source. In that year he probably enjoyed the largest current income of any aristocratic millionaire.

The rise of Barrow, directed by Hannay, Schneider, Ramsden, and the Curreys, with the seventh Duke himself hovering in the background, has already been amply described.⁶⁶ The building of the Furness Railway in the late 1840's, and the discovery, in the 1850's, of the largest single accumulation of iron-ore in Britain to date at Park Vale, converted Barrow almost overnight from a small village of 150 inhabitants in 1846 to a bustling town of more than 40,000 by 1874.⁶⁷ The Furness Railway's

dividends were larger than those of any other major British railway company, and the Haematite Steel Co. regularly paid dividends in excess of 15 per cent. Confidence soared, and entries like "very prosperous" and "busy and prosperous" appeared with monotonous regularity in the Duke's diary.⁶⁸ "The affairs of the company are so flourishing that business only occupied a quarter of an hour," he recorded after the annual general meeting of the Haematite Co. in 1871.⁶⁹

What did the seventh Duke do with all this money? Clearly, it did not go on high living. The Duke himself lived the simplest of lives, and the two sums of £25,338 and £40,776, which he made over to Hartington in 1877 and 1881, were relatively trivial items. Nor did it go on house-building: only £38,000 was so spent, on the rebuilding of Holker Hall in 1873-9 after a fire.⁷⁰ Nor did much go on high politics: the largest expenditure in a single year was £16,000 in 1868, again a relatively small item. Nor was it swallowed up in agricultural improvements: for while the seventh Duke had a well-deserved reputation as an improving landlord, all such expenditure was financed out of current estate income. Nor was it spent on developing Buxton or Eastbourne: the first was too small an enterprise, and the second was deliberately designed to be self-financing. During the first ten years of the building lease, the lessee had the option of purchasing the freehold, and it was with the money thus acquired that expenditure on roads, sewers, and sea-walls was financed.⁷¹

As the tables in Appendix B show, the Duke's entire dividend income, and more besides, was ploughed back into Barrow as additional income by 1871, and Buxton a mere 6,021 ten years later. See Wright, *Eastbourne*, p. 66; Heape, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁶⁶ MS. Diary: 27 July 1863; 22 March 1870; 11 March 1871; 17 Feb. 1872; 3 April 1872; 12 Jan. 1873; 15 Feb. 1873; 17 Feb. 1873; 11 June 1873.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 March 1871.

⁷⁰ Girouard, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁷¹ For Buxton, see Heape, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-108; T. Marchington, *The Development of Buxton and Matlock since 1800*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London, 1961, pp. 97-130. For Eastbourne, see G. A. Wallis' evidence to the Select Committee on Town Holdings, P.P., xxii, 1888, QQ. 2,686, 2,720.

⁶⁶ As well as the articles by Pollard and Marshall, already cited, see J. Melville and J. L. Hobbs, 'Early Railway History in Furness,' *Cumb. & West. Antiq. & Arch. Soc.*, Tract Series, xiii, Kendal, 1951; J. D. Marshall, *Furness and the Industrial Revolution*, Barrow-in-Furness, 1958; Sidney Pollard, 'North-West Coast Railway Politics in the 1860's', *Trans. Cumb. & West. Arch. Soc.*, LII, 1952; *idem*, 'Town Planning in the Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Modern Barrow-in-Furness', *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.*, LXIII, 1952-3.

⁶⁷ By comparison, Eastbourne had reached only 10,342

vestment.⁷² But this was not enough to satisfy Barrow's insatiable demand for funds. Further debts were incurred in pursuit of additional funds to supplement these ploughed-back dividends.⁷³ Mortgages were obtained by the Duke from insurance companies such as the Scottish Widows, the Equitable, and the Union, or from relatives, friends, and clients of the Curreys.⁷⁴

By this means, the seventh Duke's indebtedness was pushed up to a new peak of £1,200,000 in 1874. But, since the income from dividends was expanding even more rapidly than were the charges on this increasing debt, it was not regarded with any undue alarm. Early in 1875, however, William Currey sounded a note of warning to his ducal employer:

I think the time has arrived when the question of meeting the further requirements of capital expenditure at Barrow must be considered. The requirements are becoming so large that it will be impossible for the companies to rely upon Your Grace as has been too much the case hitherto.⁷⁵

Accordingly, he proposed that the Furness Railway should be sold to a major company such as the Midland or the L.N.W.R., and that the money obtained should be used to finance the next round of investment in the Barrow companies, thus freeing the Duke from further responsibility. But the scheme did not materialize.

Currey's warning had been more perceptive than he knew, for in the very same year the whole Barrow venture began to turn sour. On the brink of diversification, but not safely

beyond, the town was badly hit by the fall in the demand for, and prices of, iron and steel which occurred in the mid-'seventies.⁷⁶ Dividends from the Furness Railway and the Steel Co. collapsed almost as spectacularly as they had risen, the latter's from £115,000 in 1874 to £1,298 ten years later.⁷⁷ And if the established companies faltered, the newly formed shipping, shipbuilding, and jute undertakings all struggled for existence. The buoyant and optimistic entries in the seventh Duke's diary were replaced by a cloud of gloom and despondency. "We are not doing at all well at Barrow," he noted in 1879, "and matters there are likely to give us a good deal of anxiety."⁷⁸ "The prospects of the steelworks do not improve," he wrote later in the same year, "and there is no probability of our having any dividend this year."⁷⁹ A local boom in the early 1880's brought some temporary relief, but thereafter, the graph of dividend income once more slopes ominously downhill. "The state of both companies," he noted after meetings of the shipbuilding and jute managers,

is as bad as usual . . . The state of things is becoming most anxious, and I fear a collapse cannot be much longer averted. In fact there seems a great risk of Barrow and all its works becoming an utter and complete failure.⁸⁰

And it was not just his reduced income which gave the seventh Duke cause for alarm. For, as the Barrow companies threatened to collapse, the only possible source of further capital was Devonshire himself. "It will clearly be necessary for me to find a great deal of money to prevent a smash," he noted in March 1877.⁸¹ In 1874-6, he poured no less than £300,000 into the ailing shipbuilding company, but to little purpose. In 1878 all the shares were written down in value from £25 to £10, and Devonshire was obliged to find another £270,000. In this manner the company staggered along until

⁷² For a more detailed breakdown of the Devonshires' precise holdings in individual companies, see the tables in Pollard's articles: 'The Beginnings of Modern Barrow', p. 102; 'Barrow-in-Furness and the Seventh Duke', pp. 216, 218.

⁷³ Between 1858 and 1884, £260,000 was also obtained for investment purposes from the more extensive sale than purchase of land: Chatsworth MSS. L/60/40, Summary of Accounts, 1858-84.

⁷⁴ Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, Banker's Memoranda, Feb. 1888.

⁷⁵ Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, William Currey to Devonshire, 5 April 1875.

⁷⁶ Pollard, 'Barrow-in-Furness and the Seventh Duke', pp. 216-17.

⁷⁷ Currey MSS., seventh Duke's accounts, 1873-88.

⁷⁸ MS. Diary: 1 Jan. 1879. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 June 1879.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9 March 1886; 25 July 1886.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 13 and 23 March 1877.

1887 when a new syndicate took it over, converted it from constructing merchant ships to men-of-war, and renamed it the Naval Construction and Armaments Co.⁸² The Flax and Jute Co., founded in 1874, fared no better. In 1876 Devonshire was obliged to contribute £150,000, to be followed by a further £87,000 in 1882.⁸³ By the mid-'eighties, therefore, the seventh Duke's investments in Barrow were over two million pounds. As Professor Pollard has noted: "there can be no doubt that in the fifteen years following 1874 the resources of the great estates of the house of Devonshire were diverted to shoring up Barrow's crumbling industrial enterprises."⁸⁴

With reduced dividend income to plough back, indebtedness necessarily increased, reaching nearly two millions by 1888. Once more, the Curreys begged the Duke "to adopt a policy whereby, by a realization of securities, Your Grace's indebtedness might be reduced."⁸⁵ The advice was not heeded, even though it was sound. In the 1880's the Duke's income was being squeezed on all sides. Dividends were reduced to £25,000 a year, and continued to fall, while the cost of servicing the huge debt had risen from £40,000 a year in the mid-'sixties to £80,000. And at the same time revenue from the estates declined from £140,000 to £106,000, with rent rebates of from 10 per cent to 30 per cent given throughout the Duke's estates. "Agricultural affairs have a very gloomy appearance," he noted in May 1885, one of a series of entries on that subject which rivalled those on Barrow in their despondency.⁸⁶ Far from cushioning the Devonshires against this depression, the collapse of Barrow only served to make matters

worse.⁸⁷ By the late 1880's, current income was only £20,000 greater than it had been in the late 1850's and early 1860's, whereas outgoings had risen by £40,000 a year. Thus may be explained the paradox, noted in 1887, of a surplus of only £12,067, "not large having regard to the magnitude of the total income."⁸⁸

On every side the seventh Duke thus saw little but gloom: falling land values, reduced rentals, shares written down, declining dividend income, and increased encumbrances. In 1890, the Scottish Widows Insurance Company, to whom he owed £80,000 secured on his Irish estates, took fright at having so much of its funds lent out on the dubious security of Irish land and required repayment at the rate of £10,000 a year.⁸⁹ "My private affairs," the Duke had noted five years before, on his seventy-seventh birthday, "seem drifting into a very unsatisfactory condition." And in the following year he was even more despondent: "I am beginning to think large reductions of estate expenditure will soon be necessary as my income is fast falling to a very unpleasant extent." Again in 1888 he recorded that "the position of my affairs" was "far from comfortable, owing to the general depression which has largely reduced my income in all its sources."⁹⁰ For a man supposed to have been the saviour of his family's finances his last years were curiously troubled, and the legacy which he bequeathed to his successor was particularly burdensome.

III

Unaware of these facts, most historians have assumed that the eighth Duke played a passive role in the Devonshires' financial history. Here, for instance, is Bickley's account of his stewardship:

⁸² Chatsworth MSS., Box 10: F. A. Currey to Devonshire, 15 Jan. 1887, 11 Jan. 1889.

⁸³ An unsuccessful attempt was made to sell it to the Barking Jute Co. in 1890: Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, F. A. Currey to Devonshire, 8 April 1890.

⁸⁴ Pollard, 'Barrow-in-Furness and the Seventh Duke', pp. 217-20.

⁸⁵ Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, F. A. Currey to Devonshire, 15 Jan. 1887.

⁸⁶ MS. Diary: 29 March 1879; 13 May 1879; 1 Oct. 1879; 1 May 1885; 1 Dec. 1885; 2 Nov. 1887; 2 Dec. 1887; Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, Sussex Estate: Statement of Rents, Nov. 1892.

⁸⁷ The income from the Grassington Mines also declined in the 1870's: Ward, *loc. cit.*, p. 88.

⁸⁸ Chatsworth MSS., Box 10, F. A. Currey to Devonshire, 15 Jan. 1887.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, F. A. Currey to Devonshire, 11 Nov. 1890; Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Annals of the Scottish Widows' Fund, 1815-1914*, Edinburgh, 1914, pp. 112-16.

⁹⁰ MS. Diary: 27 April 1885, 1886; 4 Feb. 1888; 27 March 1888.

He loved his lands, but the fact that his father's life overlapped with his by so many years relieved him, during the greater part of his career, of the responsibilities of the management of his broad acres. When at last his property came to him from the capable hands of the seventh duke, it was in a very different condition from that to which it had been reduced by the sixth duke's lavishness.⁹¹

Accordingly, the eighth duke was free to enjoy his estates. Moreover, this lack of energetic interest seemed consistent with the conventional interpretation of him as an idle and lethargic politician, and squared with what was known of his social life.⁹² He fraternized and shot with the Prince of Wales, both before and after he became king. Lord Rosebery described him as "the most magnificent of hosts"; Gladstone, less enthusiastically, felt he had "a worldly standard much affected by the Newmarket kind of life."⁹³ Just as the sixth Duke was a Regency figure in his time, and the seventh Duke an archetypal mid-Victorian, so the eighth Duke's temperament places him conveniently in the naughty 'nineties and the early Edwardian era.

But, just as recent research has undermined the view of the eighth Duke as an idle and slow-witted politician, so the argument advanced here forces a different interpretation on his performance as landlord.⁹⁴ It was he, rather than his illustrious predecessor, who successfully rehabilitated the family finances. His grasp of the situation he inherited, and the decisiveness with which he took steps to deal with it, mark him out as a major figure in his own right, under whose tenure of the title new

lines of policy were evolved, which remained operative, and were further developed, in the years until the Second World War.

On inheriting in 1891, he waited until his father's affairs had been sorted out before taking stock of the situation. When he did so, early in 1894, he was overwhelmed to discover so large a debt. "It vexed me to see you so worried and bothered about affairs," his sister wrote to him after a meeting at which the sale of Devonshire House had been discussed. Urging him to reconsider, she recommended the sale of lands in Derbyshire and Ireland.⁹⁵ But her suggestions brought him little comfort. "I am sorry to say," he wrote back, "that financial prospects do not improve on examination." He went on to explain why:

I do not think they were ever so bad, even in the time of the old duke . . . An immense amount of capital, in the shape of coal and iron royalties, has been used up and sunk in unproductive Barrow investments, and there is now no surplus income over the fixed charges except that from such dividends as remain, and are liable to still further reductions. I can't say that at present I see anything to be done except to shut up Chatsworth and Hardwick, and make large reductions there.⁹⁶

As he investigated the accounts more deeply, his anxiety only increased. "Money cannot be shorter anywhere than it is here," he noted—a not unreasonable comment, given that estate revenue had plummeted to £65,000 in 1892–3, that dividend income was sliding to a mere £15,000 in 1896, and that more than half his current income was going to service the debt.⁹⁷

And, ironically, the year in which the eighth Duke first came to terms with his troubles was also that in which Harcourt introduced his death duties. At the rate of 10 per cent on estates of over one million, they were hardly in themselves crippling. But, to a landowner

⁹¹ Bickley, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

⁹² Leach, *op. cit.*, pp. 300–7; Bernard Holland, *The Life of Spencer Compton, eighth Duke of Devonshire*, 1911, II, pp. 223–5, 239–41.

⁹³ *D.N.B.*, 2nd supplement, I, 1912, p. 238; Andrew Jones, *The Politics of Reform*, 1884, Cambridge, 1972, p. 253. See also: Henry Blyth, *Skittles, The Last Victorian Courtesan: The Life and Times of Catherine Walters*, 1970, pp. 73–95, 101–5.

⁹⁴ A. B. Cooke and John Vincent, *The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Great Britain, 1885–89*, Brighton, 1974, pp. 10, 15, 24, 88–9.

⁹⁵ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser., 340.2537A, Lady L. Egerton to Devonshire, 25 Jan. 1894.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 340.2551, Devonshire to Lady Egerton, 6 April 1894.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 340.2553, Devonshire to Lady Egerton, 23 April 1894.

as encumbered as the eighth Duke, they represented a severe burden; so much so that he wrote to Harcourt, pointing out the difficulties that his successor at Chatsworth would face with heavy mortgages and a depleted income in meeting such demands.⁹⁸ But Harcourt was unsympathetic.⁹⁹ How unsuspectingly apposite, under these circumstances, was the *Punch* cartoon on death duties, which pictured a worried and concerned Duke of Westminster saying to the Duke of Devonshire: "We may consider ourselves lucky if we can keep a tomb over our head."¹⁰⁰

The eighth Duke's immediate response was to blame his solicitors for mismanaging his father's affairs. "I begin to think that the Curreys are enough to ruin anybody," he told his sister.¹⁰¹ As the evidence shows, this was hardly just as regards their handling of Barrow matters. Assuredly, Benjamin Currey had prodded the reluctant Earl of Burlington in the late 1840's, but his successors had constantly urged the seventh Duke to pull out in the 1870's and 1880's.¹⁰² More plausibly, the eighth Duke suspected that the Eastbourne building estate had been mismanaged, so in 1894 he called in Price Waterhouse to check the accounts and an expert surveyor to give a critical appraisal of management policy. Their conclusions supported his suspicions, and provoked the Curreys to produce a hand-written report of 125 pages in which they defended their conduct and tried to refute the charges which had been levelled against them.¹⁰³ It is noteworthy,

however, that between 1895 and 1908 expenditure on that estate was a mere £7,000 a year, only half what it had been in the years 1880-94.¹⁰⁴

While the eighth Duke and his advisers disagreed on the Eastbourne estate, they were at one in wishing to extricate themselves from the Barrow enterprises. Control of the Steel Co. was surrendered to east coast interests; the jute works were sold in 1894-6 for £10,000; and in 1903 the Steamship Co. was wound up, Devonshire receiving £1,146, "His Grace's share of the assets divisible on the winding up of the company."¹⁰⁵ The Naval Construction and Armaments Co. continued to languish, so much so that it was decided "to go in for armour as a last throw in a gamble."¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, it was sold in 1896-7 to Vickers, the Duke himself receiving £125,000 for the freehold, and £300,000 worth of debenture shares in the new company.¹⁰⁷ In the eighth Duke's lifetime extensive holdings in the Steel Co. were maintained, amounting to some £370,000 in 1900, on which no dividend was paid.¹⁰⁸ But these, too, were gradually liquidated, so that by 1930 the ninth Duke possessed only a token holding of 180 ordinary and 67 preference shares. Only in the Furness Railway did the Devonshires retain overall control, and this vanished in 1923 when the company was absorbed by the L.M.S.¹⁰⁹

The second strand of the eighth Duke's

and Mr Henry Currey on H.G. the Duke of Devonshire's Sussex Estates.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Accounts, 1880-1908.

¹⁰⁵ Pollard and Marshall, 'Furness Railway and Growth of Barrow', p. 124; Currey MSS., eighth and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1900-25.

¹⁰⁶ Chatsworth MSS., W. F. Egerton to Hamilton, 12 April 1896.

¹⁰⁷ J. D. Scott, *Vickers: A History*, 1962, p. 44; Chatsworth MSS., Bryce to Hamilton, 24 Nov. 1896.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Price Waterhouse to Devonshire, 8 Aug. 1901.

¹⁰⁹ Pollard and Marshall, 'Furness Railway and the Growth of Barrow' p. 125. The eighth Duke also sold his Holdings in the Waterford, Dungavron and Lismore Railway, and in the Buxton Baths, and his successor tried —without success— to sell the Devonshire Parks and Baths Co. to Eastbourne Corporation in 1912-14. See Holland, *op. cit.*, II, p. 223; Heape, *op. cit.*, p. 123; H. W. Fovargue, *Municipal Eastbourne*, Eastbourne, 1956, pp. 76-8, 80.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 340.2556, Devonshire to Sir William Harcourt, 11 May 1894. See also Devonshire's speech at Buxton, 13 June 1894, in which he warned that he might be forced to close Chatsworth, Lismore, Hardwick, and Bolton: Heape, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁹⁹ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser., 340.2557, Harcourt to Devonshire, 15 May 1894.

¹⁰⁰ Christie, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹⁰¹ Chatsworth MSS., 2nd ser., 340.2553, Devonshire to Lady Egerton, 23 April 1894.

¹⁰² Pollard and Marshall, 'Furness Railway and the Growth of Barrow', pp. 112-13.

¹⁰³ Compton Estate Office (Eastbourne) Papers: Devonshire to F. A. Currey, 20 June 1894; Devonshire to Price Waterhouse, 29 June 1894; Price Waterhouse to R. E. Farrant, 12 Dec. 1894; Farrant to Devonshire, 30 Nov. 1894, 11 Jan. 1895; Devonshire's comments on Farrant's report, 15 Jan. 1895; Report by Mr C. H. Currey

policy was to reduce the debt. By 1899 it stood at approximately the level it had been at in 1858, having been consolidated in two large mortgages, one of £550,000 to the Equitable in 1894, the other to the Scottish Widows for £400,000 in 1897.¹¹⁰ By the time of his death in 1908 it had been reduced to less than half a million, with interest charges—a mere £20,000—taking only 15 per cent of current income, a lower portion than for any previous period in the nineteenth century. Between 1911 and 1916 the need to find some £540,000 to pay duties on the eighth Duke's estate increased it again by £200,000 to £600,000 in 1915.¹¹¹ But after the First World War reduction continued, so that by 1933 the last remnants of the two outstanding mortgages were paid off. With debts as with Barrow the eighth Duke's policy had been successfully completed by his successor.

How was this reduction accomplished? Clearly, there were no large profits from Barrow which could be used. Only by selling off land to an unprecedented extent could the eighth Duke and his successor have made so large a hole in the encumbrances. While paying off a million pounds' worth of debt up to 1899, the eighth Duke received £213,000 from life assurance companies in respect of the seventh Duke, and sold off land worth £790,000, most of it in Ireland and Derbyshire, those very places where his sister had recommended that sales should be made. By 1914, when a further half a million of debt had been paid off, land sales had realized another £660,000, again mainly in Ireland and Derbyshire.¹¹²

These sales, along with money obtained by selling out in those Barrow ventures where the shares were not worthless, gave the eighth Duke a surplus on capital account, the proceeds of which were reinvested in a wide range of British, colonial, and U.S. government bonds,

¹¹⁰ Currey MSS., Duke of Devonshire and Equitable Assurance Co., Mortgage, 7 Nov. 1894; Duke of Devonshire and Scottish Widows' Fund and Life Assurance Co., Mortgage, 30 Aug. 1897.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, eighth and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1900-25. Succession and estate duty for the seventh Duke had been a mere £40,000.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, eighth and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1892-9, 1900-25.

and railway shares overseas. These more diverse dividends contributed 30 per cent and upwards to the eighth and ninth Dukes' current income in the years before the First World War, increasing in 1901-2 and after 1914 as the dividends paid by Vickers—in which company the Devonshires had acquired extensive holdings on the sale of the Naval Construction and Armaments Co.—increased with enlarged military orders.¹¹³

In the immediate post-war years the Devonshires' involvement with the stock market increased still further. Whereas in 1915-18 they had sold off land to the value of £42,000, between 1919 and 1922 they joined the general scramble to sell, parting with estates worth £640,000, mostly in Somerset, Derbyshire, and Sussex. In addition they sold Devonshire House itself for £750,000 in 1919-20.¹¹⁴ Part of the proceeds were used to reduce the debt still further, but the majority was invested in a wider range of equities than had been bought in the years before the First World War. The graphs eloquently reveal the consequences of these actions. In this final phase of the Devonshires' financial history over two-thirds of their current income was drawn from dividends. By the mid-1920's they had ceased to obtain most of the revenue from agricultural rents. They had become rentiers, maintaining a style of life that was landed in its mode of *expenditure*, but increasingly plutocratic in its sources of *income*.

Of course the Devonshires had drawn over half of their current income from dividends before—in the 1870's, during the great Barrow boom, and the early 1880's, when the second and smaller Barrow upswing had coincided with falling agricultural revenue. But these were only brief episodes, and the income thus obtained arose from the long-standing aristocratic policy of exploiting non-agricultural estate resources. But in the 1920's the dividend income was, relatively speaking, much larger, and resulted from a fundamentally changed

¹¹³ Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

¹¹⁴ Currey MSS., eighth and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1900-25. For similar behaviour by other aristocrats, see Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 329-33, 335-7.

policy of selling land and investing the proceeds in a wide range of shares. This was a new world, the practices and presuppositions of which would have been alien to the seventh Duke's way of thinking. But its results were in many ways satisfactory, for it gave the ninth Duke a current income comparable to that enjoyed by his predecessors. At £110,000 a year in the early 1920's, it was as large as the eighth Duke had known, as great as the seventh Duke's before the Barrow venture was begun, and larger than the sixth Duke's. And even if there was now supertax to pay, interest payments on the debt had all but vanished.¹¹⁵

Thus, despite both this radically changed asset structure and the furore over death duties on the eighth Duke's estate (which had obliged his successor to sell off his stud farm and some Chatsworth heirlooms, and temporarily let Compton Place), the Devonshires managed to live out the 1920's and 1930's in a manner which belied both the changes and the challenges of the preceding half-century.¹¹⁶ The ninth Duke

¹¹⁵ Currey MSS., eighth and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1900-25.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, In 1926 the Devonshire estates and art collection were all transferred to the Chatsworth Estates Company. For a recent estimate of the Devonshires' landholdings in England, see *The Spectator*, 1 Jan. 1977, p. 16. For the activities of other aristocratic millionaires in the inter-war years, see Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p. 337.

was a cabinet minister and Governor General of Canada. His successor held minor ministerial office under Chamberlain and Churchill, and was offered the Viceroyalty of India in 1943.¹¹⁷ Just as King Edward VII accompanied the eighth Duke to Compton Place, so King George V convalesced there in 1936.¹¹⁸ The semi-feudal regime at Chatsworth continued largely intact, and the constant moves from one great house to another went on very much as before.¹¹⁹ In 1938 when the ninth Duke died his funeral was still decidedly traditional in character.¹²⁰ Only with the increased taxation of the Second World War, and since, and the unexpected deaths of the Marquess of Hartington in 1944 and the tenth Duke in 1950, did the battle for survival assume new proportions.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *'Chips': The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*, 1967, p. 346. For a diagrammatic representation of the Devonshires' continued political activity, see W. L. Guttsman, *The British Political Elite*, 1965, p. 224.

¹¹⁸ Harold Nicolson, *King George V: His Life and Reign*, 1967, p. 676.

¹¹⁹ Harold Macmillan, *Winds of Change, 1914-1939*, 1966, pp. 189-94; *Country Life*, 5 Sept. 1968, pp. 552-4.

¹²⁰ *Eastbourne Gazette*, 11 May 1938.

¹²¹ Nigel Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters, 1930-39*, 1966, p. 418; James, *op. cit.*, pp. 450, 475.

¹²² I am most grateful to Dr D. E. D. Beales, Mr M. W. Dupree, and Dr H. C. G. Matthew for help with three specific references.

APPENDIX A: *The Wealthiest Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*

TABLE I

LANDOWNERS LISTED IN BATEMAN POSSESSING LAND OF GROSS ANNUAL VALUE IN EXCESS OF
£60,000 PER ANNUM

<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Gross annual value (£)</i>	<i>Chief sources of stated revenue</i>
Marquess of Anglesea	29,737	110,598	Minerals
*Duke of Bedford	86,335	141,793	English land
Viscount Boyne	30,205	88,364	Minerals
*Earl Brownlow	58,335	86,426	English land
*Duke of Buccleuch	460,108	217,163	Scottish land
*Marquess of Bute	116,668	151,135	Minerals and Scottish land
Lord Calthorpe	6,470	122,628	Urban land
*Duke of Cleveland	104,194	97,398	English land
*Earl Cowper	37,869	60,392	English land
*Earl of Derby	68,942	163,273	Minerals and urban land
*Duke of Devonshire	198,572	180,750	English and Irish land
Marquess of Downshire	120,189	96,691	Irish land
*Earl of Dudley	25,554	123,176	Minerals
*Earl of Durham	30,471	71,671	Minerals
*Earl of Ellesmere	13,222	71,290	Minerals, canals and railways
*Earl of Fife	249,220	72,563	Scottish land
*Earl Fitzwilliam	115,743	138,801	Minerals and Irish land
Lord Haidon	10,109	109,275	Urban land
Duke of Hamilton	157,386	73,636	Scottish land
*Marquess of Lansdowne	142,916	62,025	Irish land
*Lord Leconfield	109,935	88,112	English and Irish land
*Marquess of Londonderry	50,323	100,118	Minerals and Irish land
Earl of Lonsdale	68,065	71,333	Minerals and English land
*Duke of Newcastle	35,547	74,547	Minerals
Duke of Norfolk	49,886	75,596	Urban land and English land
*Duke of Northumberland	186,397	176,048	Minerals and English land
Earl of Pembroke	44,806	77,720	Urban land and English land
*Lord Penrhyn	49,548	71,018	Welsh lands and minerals
*Duke of Portland	183,199	88,350	English and Scottish land
Sir John Ramsden	150,048	181,294	Urban land and Scottish land
Duke of Richmond	286,411	79,683	Scottish land
Duke of Rutland	70,137	97,486	English land
Sir John St. Aubyn	6,555	95,212	Urban land
Earl of Seafeld	305,930	78,227	Scottish land
*Duke of Sutherland	1,358,545	141,667	Scottish and English land
*Lord Tredegar	39,157	60,000	Welsh land [and minerals]
*Sir Richard Wallace	72,307	85,737	Irish land
Baroness Willoughby D'Eresby	132,220	74,006	English and Scottish land
*Lord Windsor	37,454	63,778	Welsh land
Earl of Yarborough	56,893	84,649	English land

Source: Bateman, op. cit., passim.

*Those landowners asterisked appear also in Table II.

Notes: These figures, both for acreage and as a guide to income, should be treated with extreme caution, since Bateman's data in general exclude mineral as well as metropolitan (i.e. London) values, though sometimes giving the former separately and sometimes including them while saying he does not. Four examples of misleadingly large valuations are given in the text. At the

other extreme, the income of the Dukes of Bedford is understated, because the revenue from their London estates is excluded (and is therefore not mentioned in the table). For earlier and more precise figures see Spring, *The English Landed Estate in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 191; Donald J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 1964, pp. 219-22.

TABLE II
FAMILIES IN TABLE I LEAVING ESTATES OF £1 MILLION OR MORE, 1809-1949

<i>Family</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Date of death</i>	<i>Size of estate</i>
Dukes of Bedford	11th Duke	1940	£4,651,000
Earls Brownlow	3rd Earl	1921	£1,644,000
	5th Earl	1927	£1,074,000
Dukes of Buccleuch	4th Duke of Queensberry	1810	"Upper value"
	6th Duke	1914	£1,159,000
	7th Duke	1935	£1,126,000
Marquess of Bute	3rd Marquess	1900	£1,142,000
Dukes of Cleveland	1st Duke	1842	£1,000,000
	4th Duke	1891	£1,449,000
Earls Cowper	7th Earl	1905	£1,327,000
Earls of Derby	15th Earl	1893	£1,936,000
	16th Earl	1908	£1,101,000
	Lord Edward Stanley	1938	£2,210,000
	17th Earl	1948	£3,218,000
Dukes of Devonshire	Henry Cavendish	1801	"Upper value"
	7th Duke	1891	£1,864,000
	8th Duke	1908	£1,165,000
Earls of Dudley	1st Earl	1885	£1,026,000
Earls of Durham	3rd Earl	1928	£1,559,000
	4th Earl	1929	£1,207,000
Earls of Ellesmere	4th Earl	1944	£1,243,000
Dukes of Fife	1st Duke	1912	£1,000,000
Earls Fitzwilliam	6th Earl	1902	£2,882,000
	7th Earl	1943	£1,320,000
Marquesses of Lansdowne	5th Marquess	1927	£1,278,000
	6th Marquess	1936	£1,684,000
	7th Marquess	1944	£1,023,000
Lords Leconfield	3rd Lord	1901	£1,861,000
Marquesses of Londonderry	7th Marquess	1949	£1,022,000
Dukes of Newcastle	7th Duke	1928	£1,407,000
Dukes of Northumberland	7th Duke	1918	£1,108,000
	8th Duke	1930	£2,510,000
	9th Duke	1940	£1,801,000
Lords Penrhyn	3rd Lord	1927	£1,112,000
Dukes of Portland	5th Duke	1879	£1,500,000
Dukes of Sutherland	1st Duke	1833	"Upper value"
	2nd Duke	1861	£1,000,000
	3rd Duke	1892	£1,378,000
	4th Duke	1913	£1,221,000
Lords Tredegar	2nd Viscount	1949	£1,719,000
Wallaces	Sir Richard	1890	£1,226,000
Lords Windsor	2nd Earl of Plymouth	1943	£1,204,000

Source: W. D. Rubenstein, 'British Millionaires, 1809-1949', pp. 206-23.

Notes: Family names are given as in Bateman. Where individual titles differ it is because of inheritance through the female line (4th Duke of Queensberry), the premature death of an heir (Lord Edward Stanley), or a further step in the peerage (2nd Earl of Plymouth). It should be stressed that this is not a list of *all* landowner millionaires any more than is Table I. As Rubenstein notes: "The valuations given in the case of millionaire landowners proved before 1898 refer to their personalty only, and thereafter until 1926 include only their un-

settled realty." Only from 1926 is the value of settled land included. If the list of top wealth holders from Bateman were extended to cover all with land of gross annual value in excess of £33,333 which, multiplied by the commonly held formula of thirty-three years' purchase, would be sufficient to give an estate of £1 million, then 161 landowners come in this category. Those appearing in Table I were therefore the very rich; those coming as well in Table II were the super rich.

APPENDIX B:

The Finances of the Seventh Duke of Devonshire

TABLE I
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ON CURRENT ACCOUNT

	<i>Income (£)</i>		
	<i>1863</i>	<i>1874</i>	<i>1888</i>
Net estate rental	94,456	141,716	106,888
Dividends	14,483	169,361	25,084
Miscellaneous	224	233	nil
Total	109,163	311,310	131,972
	<i>Expenditure (£)</i>		
Debt interest	38,390	50,102	81,353
Annuities	7,940	5,655	2,645
Insurance	6,791	7,223	7,168
Family allowances	3,900	4,710	6,300
Subscriptions	5,407	15,640	4,135
Legal and admin. fees	3,591	2,954	3,011
Elections	664	10,182	408
Holker rebuilding	nil	9,088	nil
Household	12,867	23,340	17,727
Miscellaneous	2,310	653	736
Surplus to capital a/c	27,303	181,763	8,489
Total	109,163	311,310	131,972

TABLE II
COMPOSITION OF INVESTMENTS

	<i>1858</i> (£)	<i>1873</i> (£)	<i>1885</i> (£)
Barrow	102,945 (67·9%)	948,896 (81·8%)	2,144,306 (83·9%)
Buxton	4,748 (3·1%)	23,229 (2·0%)	26,800 (1·0%)
Eastbourne	700 (0·4%)	41,589 (3·5%)	115,235 (4·5%)
Irish railways	nil (0·0%)	117,810 (10·1%)	202,343 (7·9%)
Other	43,135 (28·6%)	28,919 (2·6%)	67,659 (2·7%)
Total	151,528	1,160,443	2,556,343

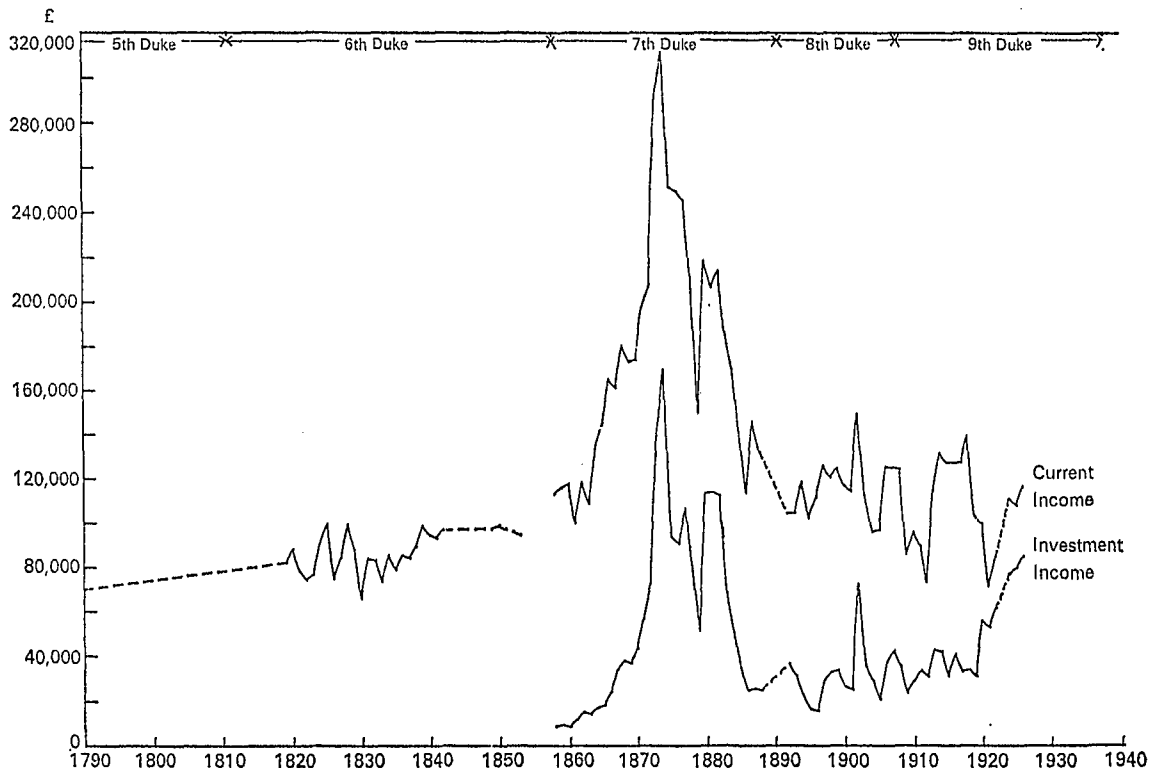
TABLE III
COMPOSITION OF DIVIDENDS

(1) Year	(2) Total dividend income (£)	(3) Barrow dividend income (£)	(3) as % of (2)
1858	8,987	6,470	71·9
1860	8,945	6,139	68·6
1862	14,991	7,795	51·9
1864	16,894	12,065	71·4
1866	24,016	19,996	83·2
1868	37,656	32,029	85·0
1870	43,202	38,298	88·6
1872	72,236	65,822	91·1
1874	169,361	151,820	89·6
1876	91,005	64,645	71·0
1878	80,113	62,206	77·6
1880	113,139	89,972	79·5
1882	112,541	91,090	80·9
1884	50,951	16,742	32·8
1886	24,974	7,623	30·5
1888	25,084	8,487	33·8

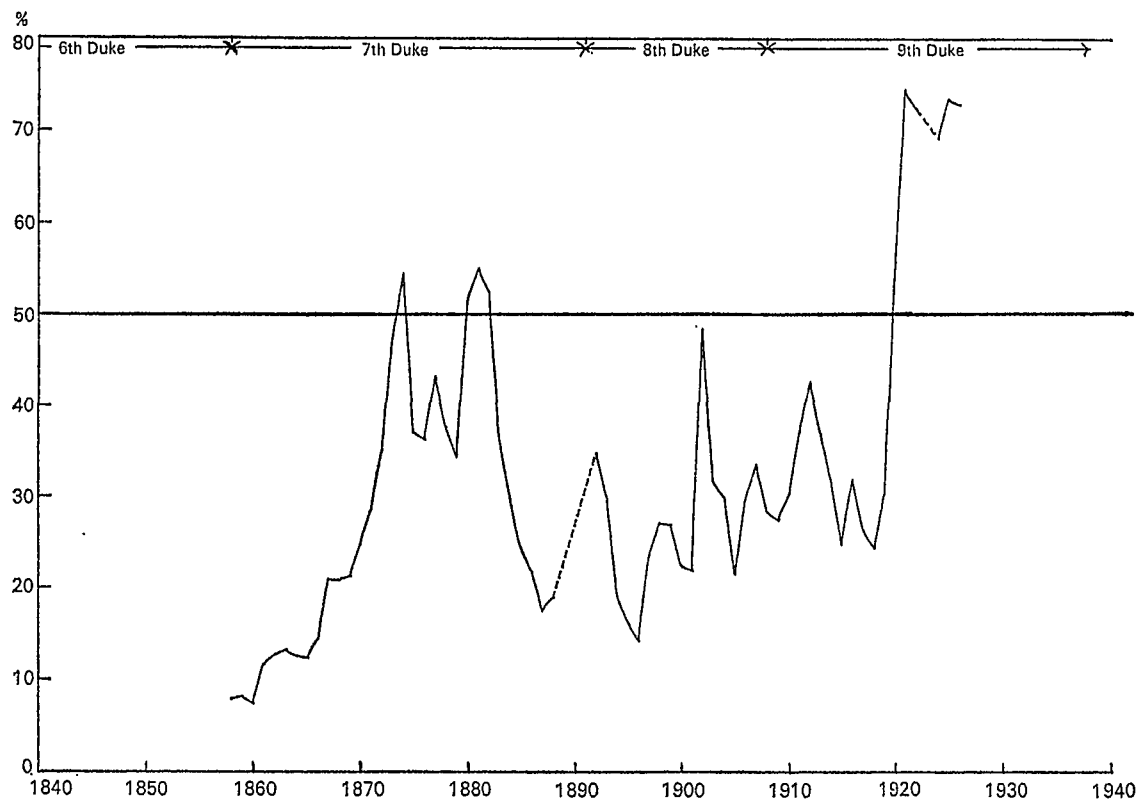
Source: Currey MS., Account Books, 1858-72, 1873-88.

Sources for Graphs 1-5: Chatsworth MS., Accounts 1790-1854; Currey MS., seventh, eighth, and ninth Dukes' accounts, 1858-1930.

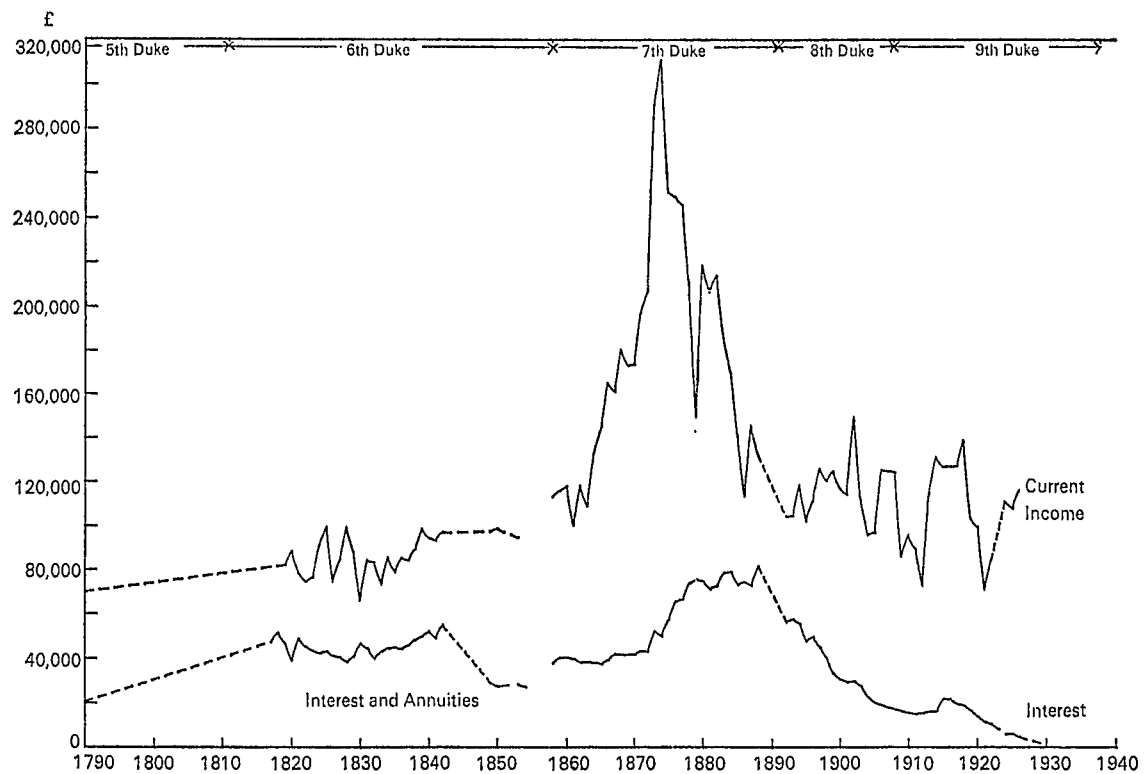
Note: Broken lines indicate a gap in the account series. There is a complete break in all accounts in 1858, since from then on, they also include the revenue derived from, and mortgages secured on, the Burlington Estates in Sussex and Lancashire.



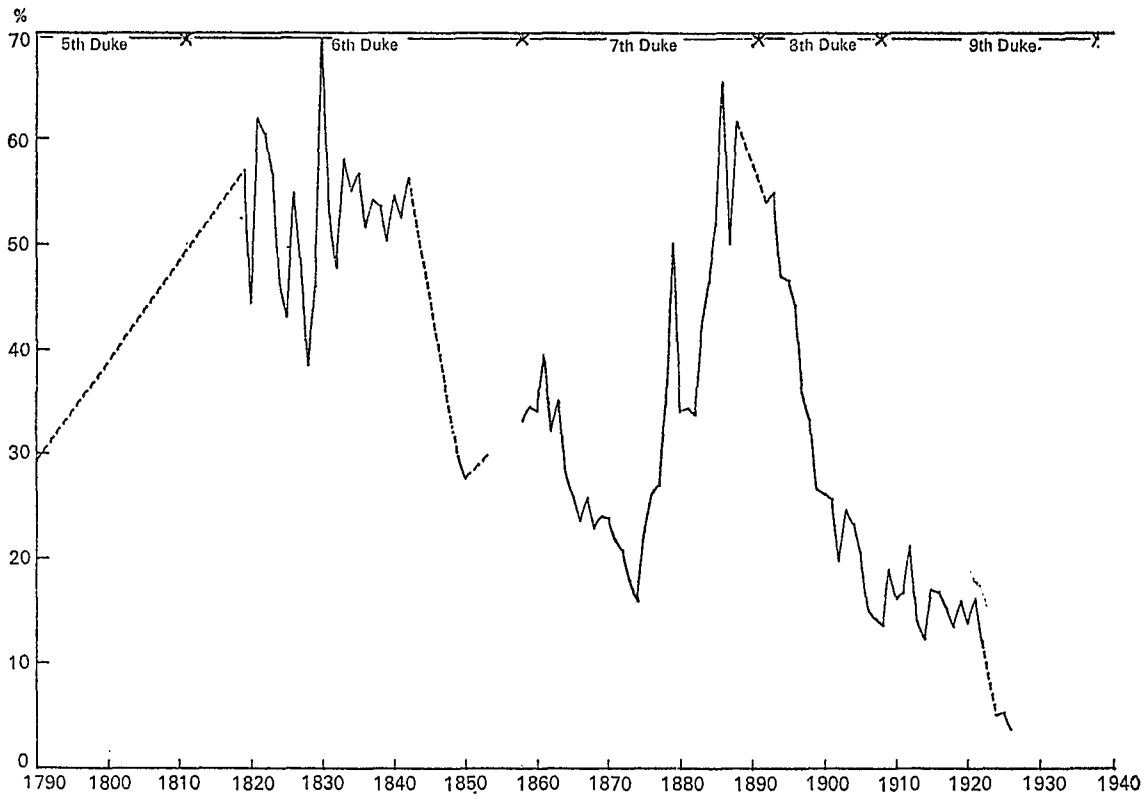
GRAPH 1. Size and composition of Devonshires' current income, 1790-1926.



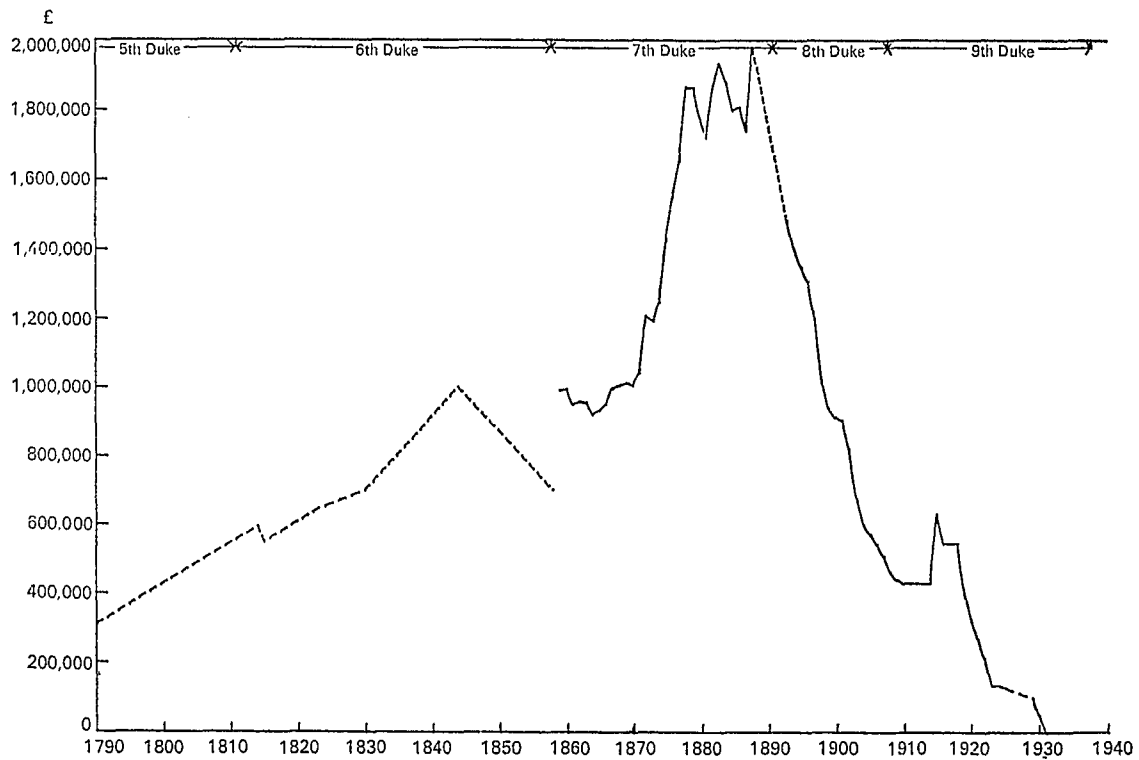
GRAPH 2. Dividend income as percentage of total current income, 1858-1926.



GRAPH 3. Devonshires' current income, and expenditure on interest and annuities (1790-1854) and interest (1858-1931).



GRAPH 4. Percentage of current income spent on interest and annuities (1790-1854) and interest (1858-1926).



GRAPH 5. Mortgage and bond debts secured on estates held, Dukes of Devonshire, 1790-1931.

Harvest Customs and Labourers' Perquisites in Southern England, 1150-1350: the Hay Harvest

By ANDREW JONES

IN an article which appeared in the last issue of the REVIEW, I drew attention to some of the customs of the corn harvest in southern England, and tried to show that, odd as some of the customs may appear to us now, some, if not many, were put into practice. In this article I shall take the examination of harvest customs a step further by drawing together material relating to customs during the hay harvest.¹ As with the customs and perquisites of the corn harvest, the main sources are the customals of large ecclesiastical estates, and the discussion is confined to those people whose conditions of tenure involved work on the demesne. We shall discuss the similarities between the perquisites of the hay and corn harvests, examine the "sporting chance" as applied to the sheep given to the haymakers, and, finally, draw together some conclusions about the body of harvest customs as a whole.²

I

The bundles of grass and hay which manorial tenants took home from the demesne meadows during the hay harvest have attracted more attention than sheaves in autumn. Coulton,³ who drew attention to the sources containing a conditional clause, called the circumstances surrounding the perquisite the "sporting chance." The tenant claimed his bundle when he lifted it clear of the ground without breaking the scythe-handle which he used as a lever. However, in southern England this custom was no more common than the provision of sheaves in autumn (which showed no signs of the "sporting chance"); and examples of the "sporting

chance" may be balanced by those which do not mention the tests of nerve and strength. While we cannot argue from silence, or particularly from a few short entries in the sources, it would be wrong to read into all hay-harvest customs one meaning, especially when other tasks were usually rewarded according to the amount of time and work involved.

In fact, there were many similarities between the perquisites of grass and hay and the sheaves of corn. The tenant claimed his bundle at the end of the day's labour, which was perhaps half an acre's mowing, or a certain number of swathes.⁴ The perquisite was given for the range of tasks on the demesne: mowing, spreading, turning, tedding, and carting. The reeve, bailiff, or hayward were on hand to supervise the customary tenants. Special provision might be made for manorial servants in recognition of their service rather than for any one harvest task. Like sheaves, bundles were measured in a number of ways, though there was a basic pattern. The scythe was usually used as a lever. Beyond this, a distinction was made between those who mowed and those who then made the hay. The former received larger perquisites than the latter. Mowing was commonly the responsibility of the main group of tenants, with the smallholders assisting in the haymaking. However, one man might equally well mow and make hay, and so qualify for different perquisites.

II

The custom whereby the mower was rewarded with a bundle of grass which he lifted on the

¹ A. Jones, 'Harvest Customs and Labourers' Perquisites in Southern England, 1150-1350: the corn harvest', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, xxv, 1, 1977, pp. 14-22.

² I have also added a short appendix on the use of the handful as an agricultural measure.

³ C. G. Coulton, *The Medieval Village*, Cambridge, 1925, pp. 46-7.

⁴ Mowing a certain number of swathes was recorded at Moreton (Berks., 1334), Whichford (Warwicks., 1279), and Stoke-under-Hamdon (Som., 1251, 1287): P.R.O., SC 11/83; P.R.O., E 164(i)/15, fol. 108r; H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, ed., *Two Registers formerly belonging to the family of Beauchamp of Hatch*, Som. Rec. Soc., xxxv, 1920, pp. 3-4, 16 (hereafter cited as *Two Registers*).

haft of his scythe can be found on many manors in many different parts of the country.⁵ In the West Country the bundle was called the *haveroc* or *averoc*.⁶ As the handle, or *sned*, was relatively long, lifting a bundle of grass may have been awkward.⁷ The customal of Wrantage (Som., c. 1314), a manor of Wells Cathedral, appears to have made allowances for this. Here, a mower's perquisite was as much grass as he could lift on his scythe so that the wind could blow between the bundle and the ground. Presumably the resulting gap was as small as possible.⁸ Elsewhere there were other, possibly more complicated procedures. At Borley (Essex, 1308) and at Speen (Berks., 1340), for example, the bundle was raised on the point of the scythe. At Amberley and Ferring, manors of the bishop of Chichester, the bundle had to be raised on to the shoulder; at Knowle (Dorset, 1317) it had to be raised above the shoulder; while at Shilton (Berks.) the mower could take as much grass as he could lift on to his back with his scythe, provided the handle did not break.⁹ The bundle of grass was usually bound round once,¹⁰

⁵ To the well-known examples in the Ramsey Cartulary (W. H. Hart and P. A. Lyons, eds., *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, Rolls Ser., 1884-93, I, pp. 289, 301, 324, 336, 399, 462, and II, p. 39 (hereafter cited as *C.M.R.*)), may be added an equally good series in the Glastonbury Abbey surveys of 1235-52: C. J. Elton, ed., *Rentalia et Custumaria . . . monasterii beate Marie Glastonie*, Som. Rec. Soc., V, 1891, pp. 9, 12, 53, 59, 61, 65, 85, 98, 150, 160 (hereafter cited as *Rentalia*).

⁶ In addition to the Glastonbury examples in n. 5, the *haveroc* is mentioned in the customals of the manors of Wells Cathedral (*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, H.M.C., 1907-14, I, pp. 337, 342, 347 (hereafter cited as *Wells*)), and at East Coker (Som., 1321): M. Nathan, *The Annals of West Coker*, ed. M. M. Postan, Cambridge, 1957, p. 470. The etymology of *haveroc* is obscure. *Rentalia*, p. 246, suggests a derivation "over-hook," but I have found no confirmation for this.

⁷ There is an illustration of a scythe and *sned*, about a man's height, in the Queen Mary Psalter: B.M.: Royal MS. 2. B. VII, fol. 76v.

⁸ Somerset R.O.: DD/CC/1319112/4/10, m. 1.

⁹ W. Cunningham, *The growth of English Industry and Commerce in the Early and Middle Ages*, 4th edn, 1905, p. 579 (Borley); P.R.O.: SC 11/67, m. 2 (Speen); W. D. Peckham, ed., *Thirteen Customals of the Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester*, Sussex Rec. Soc., xxxi, 1925, pp. 42, 72 (Amberley, Ferring); B.M.: Add. MS. 40886, fol. 16v (Knowle); Bodleian Library, MS. Barlow 49, fol. 66v (Shilton, a manor of Beaulieu Abbey).

¹⁰ E.g., *Two Registers*, pp. 3-4, 38-9; *Wells*, I, p. 342; *Rentalia*, p. 214; L. B. Larking, ed., *The Domesday Book of Kent*, 1869, appendix, p. 33.

sometimes twice,¹¹ and supervision by one of the manorial officers was meant, no doubt, to ensure fair play.¹² Some customals defined the mower's perquisite rather differently. At High Ham (Som.) the virgater took an *averoc* as large as he could hold in his arms and lift on to his back.¹³ At Wishford (Wilts., 1315) the mower could take away as much grass as he could grasp under one arm; while at Welton (Som., 1287) he took for the whole of his labour in the demesne meadows "three little trusses of grass such as he is able to lift with two hands without touching his body."¹⁴

For the most part the perquisites which did not involve the scythe fell to the haymakers for tasks which followed mowing. Many customals suggest that the bundles of hay given to the haymakers were smaller than those given to the mowers, and the fourteenth-century customal of Kingston Deverill (Wilts.) contains specific confirmation of this: "the mower ought to have two bundles and the tedders one, and two of the tedders' bundles are not to exceed the weight of one of the mowers'."¹⁵ This distinction was also observed on the estates of Glastonbury Abbey. At Sturminster Newton (Dorset), for example, the mower's *haveroc* was defined in the usual way, while the teddor's was called a *medkniche* ("knitch" = bundle), which was as much hay as the hayward could lift with his middle finger to his knee. The same double standard was used at East Pennard (Som.) and Marnhull (Dorset).¹⁶ At West Hatch (Som.) the *haveroc* for turning and lifting the hay was as much as the bailiff could lift with two fingers and one knee so that the wind could blow underneath; while at Alton Priors (Wilts.) each cottar received an unbound

¹¹ As at Longstock (Hants., 1340), a manor of Mottisfont Priory: Hants. R.O.: 13M63/3, fol. 28v.

¹² E.g., M. Chibnall, ed., *Select documents of the English lands of the Abbey of Bec*, Camden Soc., 3rd ser., LXI 1951, p. 54.

¹³ *Rentalia*, p. 160.

¹⁴ C. R. Straton, ed., *Survey of the lands of William first Earl of Pembroke*, Roxburghe Club, 1909, II, p. 548; *Two Registers*, p. 47.

¹⁵ "Et falcatores debent habere duos fasciculos et tedditores debent habere unum fasciculum ita ut duo fasciculi tedditorum non excedant pondus unius fasciculi quem habent falcatores": Wilts. R.O.: 492/30.

¹⁶ *Rentalia*, pp. 85, 98, 125.

armful of hay for tedding.¹⁷ Carting was rewarded with as much hay as a man could take in both arms; with a truss which the reeve could lift to his knees with two fingers; or with a truss as large as one man could lift with the aid of a companion.¹⁸ This last was an unusual custom for most perquisites had to be lifted unaided.¹⁹

The fork and rake, the tools used in haymaking, were sometimes used as levers in the same way that the mower used his scythe when lifting his perquisite. The implements served to emphasise the difference between the tasks and their rewards. At Bladon (Oxon.), for example, the mowers received their perquisite lifted on the scythe, whereas the cottars who teded the hay took as much as each could raise on a hay-rake (*rastella*).²⁰ The use of the scythe on the one hand, and the rake and fork on the other, can be traced in places as far apart as Suffolk and Somerset.²¹

III

As mowing and haymaking were very much group activities involving most, if not all, of the customary tenants, it was the custom on

some manors to reward the body of tenants as a whole. There were two ways in which this was done. On some manors the haymakers were given a haystack to divide between themselves; on others, they were allocated a small piece of meadow in common. Thus, at Halliford (Middx., 1214) the tenants received as an "ancient custom" one haystack (*mullonis*); and the customary gifts to the mowers at Bishops Cleeve (Worcs., 1299) and at Ham (near Hungerford, Wilts.) also included a haystack.²² Entries about gifts of haystacks and pieces of meadow occur in the thirteenth-century customal of Taunton, a multiple-manor of the bishop of Winchester. The tenants of Staple-grove shared a stack, while at Holway the main group of tenants responsible for mowing the demesne meadows received two stacks and an acre of meadow.²³ The gift to the mowers and haymakers in general, or to the mowers in particular, of a special piece of meadow was a common one, found, in addition to the Taunton example, in Warwickshire, the Fens, Essex, Dorset, Sussex, and Hampshire.²⁴

The customals of Eye Priory (Suffolk) provide us with a rare insight into the commutation of the customary perquisite. The mowers had been accustomed to receive the bundle of grass raised on the scythe, and those at Bedfield had received, in addition, a truss of hay on which they sat to eat their lunch—which conjures up a pleasant picture.²⁵ By the beginning of the fourteenth century, however, the old arrangements were passing away, for the register of the priory records that the *customarii* at

¹⁷ Wells, I, p. 342 (cf. the mower's perquisite at Wantage, above, n. 8); K. A. Hanna, ed., 'An edition with introduction of the Winchester Cathedral Customal', M.A. thesis, Univ. of London, II, p. 493 (hereafter cited as *W.C.C.*). I am grateful to Mrs Hanna for permission to use her thesis. The custom which used the finger to lift a truss was not confined solely to the West Country; at Glemsford (Suffolk, 1251) threshing was rewarded with "as much straw as they can lift with the little finger": B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 259r.

¹⁸ W. Illingworth, ed., *Rotuli Hundredorum*, Record Comm., 1812-18, II, p. 774 (Mongewell, Oxon.) (hereafter cited as *R.H.*); *Two Registers*, pp. 36, 48 (Welton, Dundon Som.).

¹⁹ At Stogursey (Som., 1301) the mower received as much grass as he could raise with one companion, while the perquisite for tedding was raised unaided: P.R.O.: E 142/8, m. 7. Some customals contain instructions that the perquisite was to be raised unaided, e.g. at Siston (Glos., 1301), Stoke-under Hamdon (Som., 1251), East Coker (Som., 1321), and Piddington (Oxon., c. 1363): P.R.O.: E 142/8, m. 1; *Two registers*, pp. 3-4; Nathan, *op. cit.*, p. 470; S. R. Wigram, ed., *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford*, II, Oxford Hist. Soc., xxxi, 1896, p. 113.

²⁰ *R.H.*, II, p. 851.

²¹ B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 271v (Rattlesden, Suffolk); *Two registers*, pp. 35, 40 (Dundon, Som.); Wells, I, p. 347 (Biddisham, Som.).

²² *Curia Regis Rolls*, VII, p. 246; M. Hollings, ed., *The Red Book of Worcester*, Worcs. Hist. Soc., 1934-50, IV, p. 344; *W.C.C.*, I, p. 342.

²³ T. J. Hunt, ed., *The medieval customs of the manors of Taunton and Bradford-on-Tone*, Som. Rec. Soc., LXVI, 1962, pp. 4, 23.

²⁴ P.R.O.: E 164(i)/15, fol. 95v (Tysoe, Warwicks., 1279); *R.H.*, II, pp. 461, 677 (Stanton, Cambs., and Fen Stanton, Hunts., 1279); B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 168r-v (Rettendon, Essex, 1251); P.R.O.: C 133/51/9, m. 3 (Upway, Dorset, c. 1288); M. Clough, ed., *Two estate surveys of the Fitzalan earls of Arundel*, Sussex Rec. Soc., LXVII, 1969, p. 8 (North Stoke, Sussex); P.R.O.: DL 43/8/23, m. 2 (Longstock, Hants., 1334).

²⁵ "Percipiet cum sociis suis j fessiculam herbe super quam sedebunt prandere": B.M.: Egerton MS. 3140, fol. 35r.

Eye, Stoke, and Bedfield had exchanged the perquisites they received daily when mowing—a bundle of grass for each man and 4d in common—for a lump sum of 7½d.²⁶ On the estates of Glastonbury Abbey, commutation of the customary perquisite had set in by the early fourteenth century. At Street (Som.), in 1323, the reeve accounted for 208 “*auerocis herbe emptis de custumariis*”, each valued at a farthing. At Baltonsborough (Som.), 182 *averocs* were accounted for in the same way. Commutation took a different form at High Ham (Som.), where the customary tenants received an allowance in their works in place of their perquisites.²⁷ Although the information recorded on account rolls is bound to be very limited, commutation was probably widespread by about 1350, if not long before.²⁸

IV

The hay harvest, like the corn harvest, was an occasion when manorial servants received rewards. These were granted in recognition of work put in throughout the year, and were attached to the office rather than to any one task. The perquisites in question are chiefly interesting for the ways in which they were measured. One allowance which the reeve or beadle received on a number of manors was defined in the custumal of Kings Ripton (Hunts.) as “the foot of a hayrick to the depth which he can penetrate with a stab of an iron fork.”²⁹ This was probably identical to the *stathel* which the reeve was allowed at Welton (Som.): this was a portion taken from a stack, as much as one man could lift to his knee.³⁰ The

stathel which the shepherd at Benham (Berks.) took was a load from the best stack, standing as high as a cart axle.³¹

In eastern England, on the manors of the bishop of Ely, the beadle was commonly rewarded with some oddments of grass and hay at the end of the harvest. These were called the *recstapeles*, and were defined as “as much as remained behind in the meadows after the hay had been collected up.”³² The same custom can be traced elsewhere. At Brightwell (Berks.) the hayward could lay claim to the remains of the haystacks in the meadows, the remains of the stooks of corn, and the remains of the stooks of stubble left in the fields.³³ The reeve at Bedfield (Suffolk) received the rakings of grass and the remains of the haystacks.³⁴ Occasionally the manorial servant was given a larger perquisite. The reeves of the tithings of Taunton, for example, were given a hayrick each as a part of their perquisites and privileges; at Sonning (Berks.) the hayward and swineherd each received a rick in the meadow; while further west, at Winterborne Monkton (Wilts.), the reeve was entitled to two cartloads of hay from a certain meadow, each load as much as one horse could pull.³⁵

V

At the end of the hay harvest it was customary for the lord of the manor to present the hay

²⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 21v–22r, 32r, 51r.

²⁷ Longleat House, MS. 10632, mm. 1d, 2d, 6d (“et custumarii habuerunt allocanciam in operibus eorum pro *auerocis suis hoc anno*”).

²⁸ At Minchinhampton (Glos.) by 1330 an allowance of 2s. was being made “pro herbagio de consuetudine falcatorem”: P.R.O.: SC 6/856/20.

²⁹ *C.M.R.*, I, p. 399. Similar amounts were provided for the beadle at Laughton and Willingdon (Sussex): A. E. Wilson, ed., *Custumals of the manors of Laughton, Willingdon, and Goring*, Sussex Rec. Soc., LX, 1961, pp. 20, 27.

³⁰ *Two registers*, p. 52; *stathel*=the bottom of a stack (*English Dialect Dictionary*).

³¹ “*Melioris mullonis feni in communi prato domini continentem altitudinem usque ad exam carecte*”: P.R.O.: SC 11/46, m. 2; at Sidling (Dorset, 1321) the *custos prati* was allowed to take a bundle of hay 7 feet long, 2 feet wide, and as high as his knees: B.M.: Add. MS. 40886, fol. 24r; at Buckland (Som.) the reeve took a stall of hay as high as a man’s loins: *Rentalia*, p. 106; while at Great Compton (Warwicks., 1279) the hayward’s *stathel* was undefined: P.R.O.: E 164(i)/15, fol. 115v.

³² B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fols. 130r, 138v, 141v, 249v, 254r, 261v, 267v, 274v, 283r, 299r. The word may be a form of “rickstaddle” (*Eng. Dial. Dict.*).

³³ B.M.: Egerton MS. 2418, fol. 38v.

³⁴ B.M.: Egerton MS. 3140, fol. 38r.

³⁵ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12, 15, 19, 23. It was, of course, quite common for the reeve to be granted small parcels of meadow as a part of his perquisites: H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English manor*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 176; Bodleian Library, MS. Univ. Coll. 166, fol. 3v (Sonning); *Rentalia*, p. 64.

makers with food and drink for a celebration.³⁶ The food took the form of bread, cheese, salt, and, more munificently, a sheep for roasting. On some manors the haymakers were also given fuel to cook their food.³⁷ The provision of a sheep from the manorial fold was widespread throughout southern England, and can be traced in some of the earliest sources (twelfth-century surveys), and in the earliest surviving manorial account rolls. The feast was often called the *madschep* (with many variations in spelling) after its main feature.³⁸ The occurrence of this name in manorial records is a reminder of the remarkable uniformity of the main body of manorial custom; and it raises interesting questions about the origins of rural customs, and the disseminating and regularizing forces behind them.

The *madschep* has been compared with the other customary perquisite of the hay harvest, for both involved the "sporting chance."³⁹ If the tenants failed to catch the sheep let loose in the meadow, they lost their claim to it just as they lost their bundle of grass if the handle of the scythe broke. This comparison requires closer examination than it has had hitherto, if only because of the reeve's accountability for the manorial stock. The gift of a sheep from the

lord's fold should have been, and often was, accounted for in the stock section of the manorial account. In the same way the reeve should have accounted for any grain, cheese, or cash presented to the tenants.

The sort of customal entry which led to the idea of the "sporting chance" is exemplified by the customal of Barton (Beds., c. 1255), a manor of Ramsey Abbey. On the day when the virgaters mowed the lord's meadow they received a sheep (or 6d. in its place): the sheep was placed in the meadow with the tenants looking on; if they caught it they kept it, if not, they had to wait until the next year for better luck.⁴⁰ On the basis of this example and others the "sporting chance" developed. Two things should be noted: firstly, the Barton tenants may have received a cash allowance in place of the sheep; indeed, by 1319, the perquisite had definitely been commuted for a fixed cash render;⁴¹ and secondly, the clause which stated that the tenants lost the sheep if they failed to catch it occurs only occasionally in other customals.⁴² In fact many customals recorded the gift as a definite reward for mowing and hay-making, and the impression left by the majority of customals is strengthened by the testimony of account rolls in which gifts to mowers can be traced over a number of years.⁴³ A further blow to the supposed ubiquity of the "sporting chance" is provided by the other customals in the Ramsey Cartulary. The Barton entry is the only one of its kind, and, as has been seen, was itself commutable. When the other customals are taken into account it becomes clear that the Barton example was an isolated survival. On the estate as a whole the gift to the haymakers had hardened into a yearly cash payment. The details for eleven Ramsey manors are set out in Table 1. Only at Girton was the association of a sheep with the feast kept alive,

³⁶ A similar feast was often provided at the end of the corn harvest. It was called *le ripgos* (with variations in spelling). Examples can be found in many parts of the country, e.g. the east Midlands and the Fenland counties, the south Midlands, and southern England: N. Neilson, *Economic conditions on the manors of Ramsey Abbey*, Philadelphia, 1899, appendix, pp. 8, 15, 29; F. M. Page, ed., *Wellingborough Manorial Accounts*, Northants. Rec. Soc., VIII, 1936, pp. 8, 17, 20, 25, 34-5; F. M. Page, *The estates of Crowland Abbey*, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 229, 258; P. D. A. Harvey, *A medieval Oxfordshire village*, Oxford, 1965, p. 89; Chibnall, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 168.

³⁷ B.M.: Harley MS. 3977, fol. 53v (Groton, Suffolk, a manor of Bury St Edmunds); B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 258v (Glemsford, Suffolk).

³⁸ The etymology may well be "meed-sheep", "meed" meaning a recompense or reward (O.E.D.); it might possibly be "math-sheep", "math" meaning mowing (*ibid.*); at Lechlade (Glos.) the *customarii* received 6s. 6d. *pro mathram*: P.R.O.: C 145/103/17, m. 2d; at Islip (Oxon.) the custom was called *mathshup*: B. F. Harvey, ed., *Customal and bye-laws of the manor of Islip*, Oxfordshire Rec. Soc., 1959, pp. 84-5.

³⁹ Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12; G. C. Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass., 1941, pp. 269-71.

⁴⁰ C.M.R., I, p. 476.

⁴¹ "In solucione falcatorum prat' . . . ex consuetudine vjd": P.R.O.: SC 6/740/1.

⁴² The other known examples are Atherstone (Warwicks.), South Newton (Wilts.), and Glemsford (Suffolk): Chibnall, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Straton, *op. cit.*, II, p. 539; B.M.: Cotton Tiberius B. II, fols. 198v-99r (1222) and Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 258v (1251).

⁴³ See below, p. 104.

TABLE I
GIFTS TO HAYMAKERS ON SOME MANORS OF THE ABBEY OF RAMSEY

Manor	Date	Gift
Abbots Ripton, Hunts.	1252	12d. <i>ex consuetudine</i>
Barnwell, Northants.	c. 1275	12d. <i>ad potandam cervisiam</i>
Barton, Beds.	c. 1255	6d. <i>pro multone</i> , or a sheep
Brington, Hunts.	c. 1230	6d. <i>ex consuetudine</i>
Broughton, Hunts.	1525	18d. <i>ex consuetudine</i>
Girton, Cambs.	1239	16½d. <i>que vocantur wetherhale</i>
Kings Ripton, Hunts.	c. 1250	8d. <i>ad sythale</i> ⁴⁴
Shillington, Beds.	1255	12d. <i>de consuetudine</i>
Stukeley, Hunts.	c. 1250	12d. <i>ad sythale</i>
Warboys, Hunts.	1251	6d. <i>pro sythalis</i>
Weston, Hunts.	c. 1230	6d. <i>ex consuetudine</i>

Source: C.M.R., I-II

and then only in the name of the customary payment.⁴⁵ There is nothing in the other customals, save Barton's, to suggest that a sheep was presented to the tenants. The Ramsey Cartulary may be compared with the two thirteenth-century surveys of the manors of the bishop of Ely. The latter, like the former, contain only one example of the "sporting chance" (at Glensford, Suffolk). Other entries show that the gift to the tenants was either a sheep or a sum of money; in the case of the former, the gift was not conditional upon the capture of the animal (with the one exception).⁴⁶ And this was so on many other estates where the customals recorded the gift of a sheep without the qualification of the "sporting chance."⁴⁷

VI

Within the general pattern of practice there was quite a lot of variation. Care was often taken to

specify the quality and quantity of the perquisite. On several manors the tenants chose the sheep themselves, provided their choice met the lord's requirements. At Badbury (Wilts.), for example, the virgaters received a ewe from the fold chosen by sight alone and not by touch.⁴⁸ Elsewhere the tenants were allowed the second-best sheep in the fold,⁴⁹ while at Kirby and Horlock (Essex) the *hidarii* took two of the best sheep save four, presumably the fifth and sixth best sheep in the fold.⁵⁰ At Wickham St Pauls (Essex) the tenants were given a "good" sheep (*multo bonus*), while on some manors they took the best (*melior*).⁵¹ Occasionally we come across manors where the tenants took two, even three sheep. Perhaps in these cases the amount of meadow was much greater than usual, the lord's generosity reflecting the work involved. On some manors, however, the perquisite was

⁴⁸ *Rentalia*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ E.g. Whepstead (Suffolk), Drayton (Middx.), Brightwell (Berks.), Newington (Oxon.), Brailles (Warwicks.): B.M.: Harley MS. 3977, fol. 90v; St Paul's Cathedral Library, WD 16, *Liber* 1, fol. 130v; B.M.: Egerton MS. 2418, fol. 58v; *R.H.*, II, p. 761; P.R.O.: E 164(i)/15, fol. 79v.

⁵⁰ *D.S.P.*, p. 47. This custom was recorded when the manor was surveyed a second time in 1297: St Paul's Cathedral Library, WD 16, *Liber* 1, fol. 93v.

⁵¹ *D.S.P.*, pp. 37-8; *Rentalia*, pp. 61-2; Wilts. R.O.: 492/30 (Kingston Deverill); W. D. Peckham, ed., *Thirteen Customals of Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester*, Sussex Rec. Soc., xxxi, 1925, pp. 23, 80 (Sidlesham, Preston).

⁴⁴ *Sythale* is discussed below, p. 105.

⁴⁵ *C.M.R.*, I, p. 493.

⁴⁶ Examples from sixteen manors, 1222 and 1251, in B.M.: Cotton Tiberius B. II, and Cotton Claudius C. XI. In each case the customals record the same perquisites on the one manor.

⁴⁷ E.g. St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester: W. H. Hart, ed., *Historia et cartularium monasterii sancti Petri Gloucestrie*, Rolls Ser., 1863-7, III, pp. 64-213; the abbey of Bec: Chibnall, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-94; and St Paul's Cathedral: W. H. Hale, ed., *The Domesday of St Paul's of the year MCCXXII*, Camden Soc., LXIX, 1858, pp. 37-103 (hereafter cited as *D.S.P.*).

rather less generous: half a sheep at Barston (Warwicks.), a sheep without a fleece at Tillingham (Essex).⁵² Then there were other local customs. At Glemsford (Suffolk), for example, the tenants had to give one of the shoulders of their sheep (if they caught it) to the bailiff.⁵³ In the early twelfth century at Compton Abbas (Dorset) the nuns of Shaftesbury and one of their tenants provided the sheep for the tenants in alternate years, the tenant's turn being a part of his rent. At Temple Cressing (Essex) in the thirteenth century the semi-virgaters mowed half the meadow for one work and mowed one rood extra every other year *ad madscap*.⁵⁴

VII

Although the customals show that the *madscap* was found throughout southern England, it is the account rolls which reveal the strength of the custom, for they show whether the perquisite was given from year to year, commuted for a cash payment, or, perhaps, abandoned. On the estate of the bishop of Winchester we get a comprehensive view of early practice from the two earliest surviving accounts, those of 1208-9 and 1210-11. The details of gifts on seventeen manors are summarized in Table II. The provision of cash and food in *consuetudine falcatorum*, in *consuetudine prati falcandi*, was common, as was the gift of a sheep to the tenants. The animal was sometimes described as "living" (*viva*).⁵⁵ In fact, the living tradition and commutation marched side by side. It appears, too, that custom might vary from year to year on the one manor, while remaining unaltered on another. Neither early account roll recorded the gift of a sheep to the bishop's tenants at

⁵² Two sheep: see above, n. 50, and S. R. Scargill-Bird, ed., *Customals of Battle Abbey*, Camden Soc., n.s., xli, 1887, p. 56; three sheep: B.M.: Egerton MS. 2418, fol. 32r (East Meon, Hants.); for Barston, B. A. Lees, ed., *Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century*, British Academy, Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, ix, 1935, pp. 36-7; for Tillingham, St Paul's Cathedral Library, WD 16, *Liber I*, fol. 87r.

⁵³ "Set ballivus manerii habebit unam de spaldis dicti multonis": B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 258v.

⁵⁴ B.M.: Harley MS. 61, fol. 50r; Lees, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁵⁵ Pipe roll, 1208-9, p. 76; Pipe roll, 1210-11, pp. 72, 77, 82, 87, 125 (full references given in Table 2).

TABLE II
GIFTS TO MOWERS ON THE ESTATE OF THE BISHOP
OF WINCHESTER

Manor	1208-9		1210-11	
	Sheep	Other *	Sheep	Other *
Adderbury (Oxon.)		x		x
Bishops Stoke (Hants.)		x		x
Brightwell (Berks.)	2†	x†	2	x
Cheriton (Hants.)				x†
Clere (Hants.)		x		x
Downton (Wilts.)		x		x
East Meon (Hants.)	3		3	
East Woodhay (Hants.)	2	x	3	
Farnham (Surrey)		x	1	
Harwell (Berks.)				x
Isle of Wight			1	
Knoyle (Wilts.)	1	x	1	x
Rimpton (Som.)		x	1	
Taunton (Som.)		x		x
Wargrave (Berks.)	3	x	3	x
Witney (Oxon.)		x†		x†
Wycombe (Bucks.)	2	x	2	x

* Cheese, corn, cash, not necessarily the same amount or in the same combination in 1210-11 as in 1208-9.

† A part or all in *consuetudine medsepe*.

Sources: H. Hall (ed.), *The pipe roll of the bishopric of Winchester . . . 1208-9*, 1903; N. R. Holt (ed.), *The pipe roll of the bishopric of Winchester, 1210-11*, Manchester, 1964.

Downton (Wilts.), yet in 1325 they were given a wether for their service.⁵⁶ However, at Kingston St Mary, a tithing of Taunton, in 1211 the mowers were given 8d. "in consuetudine prati falcandi loco multonis", the same payment was made in 1236, and the mid-thirteenth-century customal recorded the customary gift of 8d. *pro medeship*.⁵⁷ Similar variations in practice from manor to manor on the one estate occurred elsewhere. In 1282 on the Glastonbury estates cash payments to the mowers were recorded at Sturminster Newton (Dorset), and at Pilton, East Pennard, Butleigh, Street, Ashcot, Shapwick, and High Ham (Som.), while sheep were presented at Buckham (Som.) and

⁵⁶ J. Z. Titow, *English Rural Society 1200-1350*, 1969, p. 130.

⁵⁷ Pipe roll, 1210-11, p. 169; Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiii, 23.

Damerham (Wilts.).⁵⁸ In 1315 sheep were provided at Winterborne Monkton, Idmiston, and Damerham (Wilts.), whereas cash payments were made at Grittleton, Christian Malford, and Nettleton (Wilts.).⁵⁹ Once a particular custom was established it can often be traced over many years where the records have survived. At Gussage (Dorset), for example, a sheep was presented to the customary tenants throughout the period 1294-1377.⁶⁰ Occasionally we are fortunate enough to be able to pinpoint the date when custom changed: at Dovercourt (Essex), a regular entry in the account rolls between 1268-9 and 1293-4 recorded the gift of a sheep to the *nativi*; then, in 1295-6, the gift was commuted and the tenants received 12d. *pro j multone*.⁶¹

VIII

We have seen how it was customary on some manors of Ramsey Abbey to provide the mowers with a sum of money *ad sythale*.⁶² Similar payments were made to the customary tenants on other manors in the east Midlands and the Fens. The earliest surviving account rolls of Crowland Abbey (1256-8) recorded cash gifts *pro sigal* at Addington (Northants.), and Bowthorpe and Langtoft (Lincs.). At Wellingborough (Northants.) 12s. 3d. was spent in 1281 "in expensis autumpni cum sythale," and 2s. was spent on *sytheale* in the following year. Thereafter 2s. was dispensed each summer in customary payment for the ale bought for the bond tenants when they mowed the demesne meadows. At Oakington (Cambs.), another Crowland manor, 1 qu. 5 bu. of wheat was given to the homage in 1362 "pro eorum sithwether ex consuetudine"; this gift of wheat can be traced back to the earliest account rolls for Drayton and Cottenham as well as Oakington.⁶³ *Sythale* as a customary perquisite was also

recorded in the thirteenth-century surveys of Peterborough Abbey, particularly on those manors clustered around the monastery: Longthorpe, Eye, Castor, Walton, and Werrington. At Ailsworth, a hamlet of Castor, the virgaters received each year 2 acres of meadow called *sichacres*; while at Glinton the customary tenants (*tota communa villanorum*) were given 3s. *ad sichale*.⁶⁴ The *sythale* or *sythwether* was obviously akin to the *madschep*, a relationship which the customal of Connington (Hunts.) makes clear. Here, the *villani* mowed for one day *ad sichale*, receiving in return one sheep or 16d., bread, cheese, and 4d. for ale.⁶⁵ But it looks as if *sythale* may have been a distinctively regional name centred in the eastern counties.

IX

The customs discussed here and in the previous article had a long history. Many can be traced in the twelfth-century surveys, which themselves conformed to pre-Conquest precedent as set out in the *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*.⁶⁶ No doubt the author of the *Rectitudines* looked back still further. Many customals may have been drawn up for lords anxious to exploit their resources in an age of "high farming", yet much of their content represented ancient tradition. The author of the *Rectitudines* was careful to stress the variety of regional customs,⁶⁷ and the post-Conquest sources confirm his testimony in the seemingly endless variety of customs they recorded, from manor to manor, let alone from estate to estate. In particular we have seen how customs found in many parts of

ful to Dr P. D. A. Harvey for drawing my attention to these references).

⁶⁴ Society of Antiquaries, MS. 60, fols. 182v, 184v, 185v, 187r, 188v, 190v, 194v. I am grateful to the Society for access to its library.

⁶⁵ *R.H.*, II, p. 653.

⁶⁶ Lees, *op. cit.*, p. cxxxi. It is difficult to trace what happened after 1350; no doubt many customs died out, yet some later sources kept them alive, if only as quaint survivals: E. Kerridge, *The Farmers of Old England*, 1973, p. 45. At Salford (Beds.) it was the custom in Henry VII's reign for the hayward to receive a sheaf of wheat and a sheaf of barley from each tenant in autumn: Bodleian Library, MS. All Souls' Coll., c. 164, roll 361, m. 15.

⁶⁷ D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents*, II, 1042-1189, 1953, pp. 813-14.

⁵⁸ Longleat House, MS. 11273.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, MS. 10656.

⁶⁰ Bodleian Library: MSS. Queen's Coll., box 38, rolls 3-33.

⁶¹ P.R.O.: SC 6/840/1-8. ⁶² See Table 1.

⁶³ Page, *The estates of Crowland Abbey*, pp. 197, 204, 209; Page, *Wellingborough Manorial Accounts*, pp. 28, 32, 49-118; Page, *Estates*, pp. 175-256, 274 (I am very grate-

England appear to have received a peculiar elaboration in the West Country. But, interesting as this regional diversity may be, the most impressive feature of rural custom is its uniform framework: on widely scattered estates the same customs and the same perquisites were recorded. It seems inconceivable that local pressure produced everywhere the same response. The framework of custom and the way in which customary labour was organized bear the imprint of seignorial administration. Indeed, it has been suggested that some customs derived from *a priori* ideas of what was rightfully the lord's or the tenants'.⁶⁸ Once the basic framework of customary services and relationships had been established, individual customs no doubt became subject to the influence of the village community. Although the impact of folk tradition on the custom of the manor is largely a matter of speculation, it was probably responsible for some of the regional elaborations and variations. Perhaps this impact may be seen in the use of the handful as a measure of one particular perquisite;⁶⁹ and it would certainly seem to be behind those customs which sprang up around the reeve, hayward, and beadle. To these men were allocated the leftovers and rakings in much the same way that modern industry may tolerate a certain amount of wastage as "perks" of the job. In this connection it is interesting to note that the manorial ploughmen were on some manors allowed as a perquisite the refuse fodder (*orte*) which the oxen dropped in their stalls. This custom was usually limited to a specific period in winter and to a certain number of oxen; occasionally it was a perquisite given to the ploughmen after threshing.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the sheaves and grass which the ordinary tenants took were

more in the nature of a wage or a reciprocal. The perquisite was an incentive to perform labour extra to the normal demands of week-work, a reward for good work, and a recognition on the lord's part of the role played by customary labour alongside the hired, seasonal labour, a token of his dependence on the good will of his tenants.

APPENDIX

The handful as an agricultural measure in England in the Middle Ages.

This note draws attention to the use of the handful and fistful as a customary measure at harvest and at other times of the year in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although the handful has not attracted the same attention as sheaves of corn or bundles of grass, its use as a measure of perquisites is attested by the earliest sources.⁷¹ It is particularly interesting to see how the measure was used in a range of tasks on the desmesne, and not solely at harvest.

As a measure, the handful was used in the ordinary course of reaping, the reaper grasping a handful of stalks in order to cut them.⁷² There is a clear suggestion in the twelfth-century sources that the handful (*manipulus*) and the sheaf (*garba*) were synonymous.⁷³ At Lawshall (Suffolk), for example, each virgater reaped 13 acres of corn in autumn and bound this *in manipulos*; and when he threshed, he threshed 100 "handfuls" (*manipuli ad seminandum*).⁷⁴ When the monks of Wardon Abbey (Beds.) reached an agreement over tithe with the chaplain of Great Paxton (Hunts.), they agreed to pay him 5s. a year "in place of the handfuls which he had been accustomed to have by their labours."⁷⁵ On the estates of the Templars and of Glastonbury Abbey, reapers and stackers were allowed "handfuls" of corn from among those they cut or stacked.⁷⁶ And at Lacock (Wilts.) the thirteenth-century custumal recorded the tradition that the virgater who com-

⁷¹ Douglas and Greenaway, *op. cit.*, p. 815.

⁷² There is a clear illustration of this in the Luttrell Psalter: B.M.: Add. MS. 42130, fol. 172v.

⁷³ This would suggest a very small sheaf, but perhaps *manipulus* here should be taken to mean a sheaf in the accepted sense.

⁷⁴ *C.M.R.*, III, p. 282. The place was identified by R. V. Lennard, 'An unidentified twelfth-century Custumal of Lawshall (Suffolk)', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LI, 1936, pp. 104-7.

⁷⁵ "... in compensacione manipulorum quos de laboris eorum habere consueuerat": C. W. Foster, ed., *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the cathedral church of Lincoln*, III, Lincoln Rec. Soc., 29, 1935, p. 153, no. 803. I owe this reference to the kindness of Mr R. E. Latham.

⁷⁶ Lees, *op. cit.*, p. 22; J. E. Jackson, ed., *Liber Henrici de Soliaco*, Roxburghe Club, 1882, pp. 113-14.

⁶⁸ F. R. H. DuBoulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury*, 1966, p. 171.

⁶⁹ See appendix.

⁷⁰ Examples may be found in a number of counties: Bincombe, Dorset: *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, III, p. 382; Stoke-under-Hamdon, Som.: *Two registers*, p. 6; Bleadon, Som.: Homans, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Benham, Berks.: P.R.O.: SC 11/46, m. 2; Chippenham, Wilts.: P.R.O.: SC 12/16/52 dorse; Rattlesden and Hitcham, Suffolk: B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. XI, fols. 275r, 282v; Pulham, Norfolk: E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely*, Cambridge, 1951, p. 92, n. 3.

pleted a day's reaping on the demesne could take as much as he could lift in two gloved hands.⁷⁷

On some manors in the thirteenth century the fistful or handful (as opposed to the sheaf) was used as a measure of the amount a tenant could glean on the demesne. At Grittleton (Wilts.), for example, the tenant who reaped half an acre a day was followed by his wife, gleaning a fistful of ears (*una pugnata de spicis*).⁷⁸ A virgater at Longbridge Deverill (Wilts.) who reaped a similar amount could glean a fistful (*pugnata*) called a *lashanful*, after the sheaves had been gathered up.⁷⁹ At Chisenbury (Wilts.) the virgater took a handful of gleanings from those half-acres he reaped as a part of his normal week-work (*de consuetudine*).⁸⁰

On the demesne such tasks as sowing, ploughing, and collecting timber were also occasions when customary tenants could take "handfuls"—of seed or twigs—as perquisites. At Triplow (Cambs.), a manor of the bishop of Ely, the cottars responsible for the Lenten sowing received each evening of their work three fistfuls (*ponginate*) of the same seed as they sowed.⁸¹ At Bleadon (Som.) the man a virgate provided to plough in preparation for the sowing of beans (or to harrow and sow) was allowed as many beans as the reeve or hayward could take in his two hands three times, that is, three *yepsones*.⁸² On other manors handfuls of oats were provided after ploughing, the oats being intended for the plough horses brought by the customary tenants.⁸³ When men collected or carted timber, usually to make hurdles for the manorial sheepfold, they were sometimes allowed a handful of twigs (*virge*) for their pains,⁸⁴ or as much as they could grasp in both hands.⁸⁵

However, it was the task of harrowing which was most frequently rewarded with handfuls (of oats), the perquisite going to the horses as provender at

the end of the day.⁸⁶ This custom was observed throughout the southern half of the country, and traces of it can be found in the northern counties.⁸⁷ The practice was particularly well developed on the estates of Waltham Abbey in Essex. The manorial surveys (c. 1230) recorded little else in the way of customary perquisites. At Debden (in Loughton) the harrowers had a handful of oats each in the field which had to be fed to the horses there and then.⁸⁸ At Alderton (in Loughton) each horse was given a handful of oats plus a quantity of hay.⁸⁹ Sometimes the reeve was responsible for measuring the perquisite, as at Therfield (Herts.), a manor of Ramsey Abbey, where the tenant took on each day he harrowed "bis avenam quantum prepositus vel wardenarius bis continere in manibus suis."⁹⁰ On some manors, although no mention was made of handfuls, it is clear that the same custom operated. Thus we find a tenant received a ha'penny-worth of oats for his horse;⁹¹ or a group shared a peck of oats "ad prebendum affrorum suorum,"⁹² or a seedlip of oats *ad equos suos*.⁹³ Occasionally the custom can be traced in manorial account rolls, as at Gussage (Dorset), a manor of God's House, Southampton. Here, the reeve noted the allowance of some four bushels of oats to thirteen harrowers as a customary gift. Six men shared one bushel a day, and it would seem likely that the gift of handfuls lay behind this entry on the grange accounts.⁹⁴

⁸⁶ The horse was provided by the tenant: on an unidentified manor of Waltham Abbey the harrowers received their handfuls, all except Godfrey Kukku who harrowed "cum equo de curia": B.M.: Cotton Tiberius C. ix, fol. 212v.

⁸⁷ The custom can be found on the estates of Ramsey Abbey: C.M.R., I, p. 47; II, p. 38; the bishop of Ely: B.M.: Cotton Tiberius B. II, fol. 110r; St Paul's Cathedral: D.S.P., pp. 34, 86; Worcester Cathedral Priory: Hale, *Registrum . . . Wignoniensis*, p. 103b; the abbey of Bec: Chibnall, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Glastonbury Abbey: *Rentalia*, p. 165; Wells Cathedral: *Wells*, p. 349; and Winchester Cathedral Priory: W.C.C., II, pp. 460, 470; and at Pocklington, Yorks.: P.R.O.: SC 11/730, m. 8.

⁸⁸ "Debent habere in campo pugnatam auene quam si asportaverint erunt in misericordia domini": B.M.: Cotton Tiberius C. ix, fol. 205v. At Dunham (Cambs.) the oats were given to the horses in the field: B.M.: Cotton Claud. C. xi, fol. 36r.

⁸⁹ B.M.: Cotton Tiberius C. ix, fol. 203r.

⁹⁰ C.M.R., I, p. 47. At Lucknor (Oxon.) the tenant received "unam porcionem auene quantum potest comprehendere infra manus prepositi semel": R.H., II, p. 782. At Stogursey and Rodway (Som.) the tenant could take as much oats as he could lift in his outstretched hands twice: P.R.O.: E 142/8, mm. 7, 9.

⁹¹ As at Longstock (Hants.): see n. 85.

⁹² As at Ilmer (Bucks.): P.R.O.: SC 11/79.

⁹³ As at Dunham (Cambs.): see n. 88.

⁹⁴ "In consuetudine xiiij herciatorum herciendi per ij dies ad semen yemale iijj bus. j pek. et sic vi herciatores per diem j bus." Bodleian Library: MSS. Queen's Coll, box 38, rolls 5-16 (1297-8 to 1312-13).

⁷⁷ W. G. Clark-Maxwell, 'The Customs of Four Manors of the Abbey of Lacock', *Wilts. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 32, 1902, p. 331.

⁷⁸ *Rentalia*, p. 65.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁸⁰ Chibnall, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁸¹ B.M.: Cotton Tiberius B. II, fol. 220v.

⁸² E. Smirke, 'Notice of the custumal of Bleadon and of the agricultural tenures of the thirteenth century', *Memoirs . . . communicated to the . . . Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1851, p. 202. The *yepson* as the name of a handful also occurs in the custumal of Risby, Suffolk: B.M., Harley MS. 638, fol. 13r; and in that of Over Wichendon, Bucks.: Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

⁸³ E.g., Wolverley, Worcs., and Appledram, Sussex: W. H. Hale, ed., *Registrum . . . Prioratus Beate Marie Wigorniensis*, Camden Soc., xci, 1865, p. 95a; Scargill-Bird, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁸⁴ E.g., Monxton, Hants., Chisenbury, Wilts., and Bishopstone, Wilts.: Chibnall, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 54; B.M.: Egerton MS. fol. 65v.

⁸⁵ "... tantas virgas quantas cum manibus suis potest complectere": P.R.O.: DL 43/8/23, m. 2 (Longstock, Hants.).

Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Farmsteads: West Whelpington, Northumberland

By MICHAEL G. JARRETT and STUART WRATHMELL

WEST Whelpington (NY 974 837) is a deserted village in the parish of Whelpington, Northumberland (Fig. 1). It occupies a whinstone crag on the north bank of the river Wansbeck 2.4 km. west of the village of Kirkwhelpington, on the eastern fringe of extensive moorland. The site is gradually being destroyed by quarrying, and since 1958 it has been subject to excavation by one of the writers (Dr Jarrett) on behalf of the Department of the Environment, the Medieval Village Research group, and University College, Cardiff. Two reports on the excavations have been published.¹ Work will be completed by about 1980, and full publication of its results is anticipated within a further three years. Meanwhile, it seems desirable to summarize some of the evidence collected in recent years, in particular that concerning the decline and abandonment of the post-medieval village. The sources used are both documentary and archaeological.²

The documentation of the village is too fragmentary to record adequately the process of depopulation, but a recent study of more than 200 villages in southern Northumberland has provided a context into which the fragments seem to fit.³ In that part of the county at least, relatively few desertions can be assigned to the period between 1300 and 1600. There was however permanent shrinkage in the size of many

village settlements, and this led to the redistribution of lands amongst the surviving farmholds. Such reorganizations seem to be typical of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Further shrinkage, and most cases of desertion, occurred as part of the better documented reorganizations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In a county with few freeholders, landowners seem to have had little difficulty in making drastic changes in the management and use of land in order to obtain greater income. These changes included the enclosure of open fields and common pastures, and the abolition of customary tenements. Severalty holdings were created and let at greatly increased rents. Village settlements were abandoned, to be replaced by steadings (often with adjacent cottages) located within the new holdings. In many townships the transformation involved a reduction in the number of farming units. It seems likely that the dispossessed tenants became agricultural labourers, for it is not until the nineteenth century that township (as opposed to village) depopulation becomes apparent; it is presumably to be associated with increased mechanization and improved communications. The process of reorganization was well understood and defined by John Hodgson, the historian of Northumberland, a hundred and fifty years ago. As a general statement his account of the desertion of Bolam (NZ 092 827) could scarcely be bettered today:

From the date of the parish register, 1662, the population of the parish does not, however, seem to have decreased. The truth is, many villages in Northumberland have entirely gone down; but, as on this estate, farm-houses and cottages have risen up in their stead in more convenient situations, a mode

¹ M. G. Jarrett, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., 40, 1962, pp. 189-225; *A.A.*, 4th ser., 48, 1970, pp. 183-302.

² We are indebted to Miss Freda Berisford and to Messrs D. H. Evans and Peter Hill for reading, and suggesting improvements to, an early draft of this paper; to Mr S. Moorhouse for commenting on the finds; and to Mr Howard Mason for the plans.

³ S. Wrathmell, 'Deserted and shrunken villages in southern Northumberland', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 1975, pp. 154-6. [Unpublished: copies in the Library of University College, Cardiff, and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.]

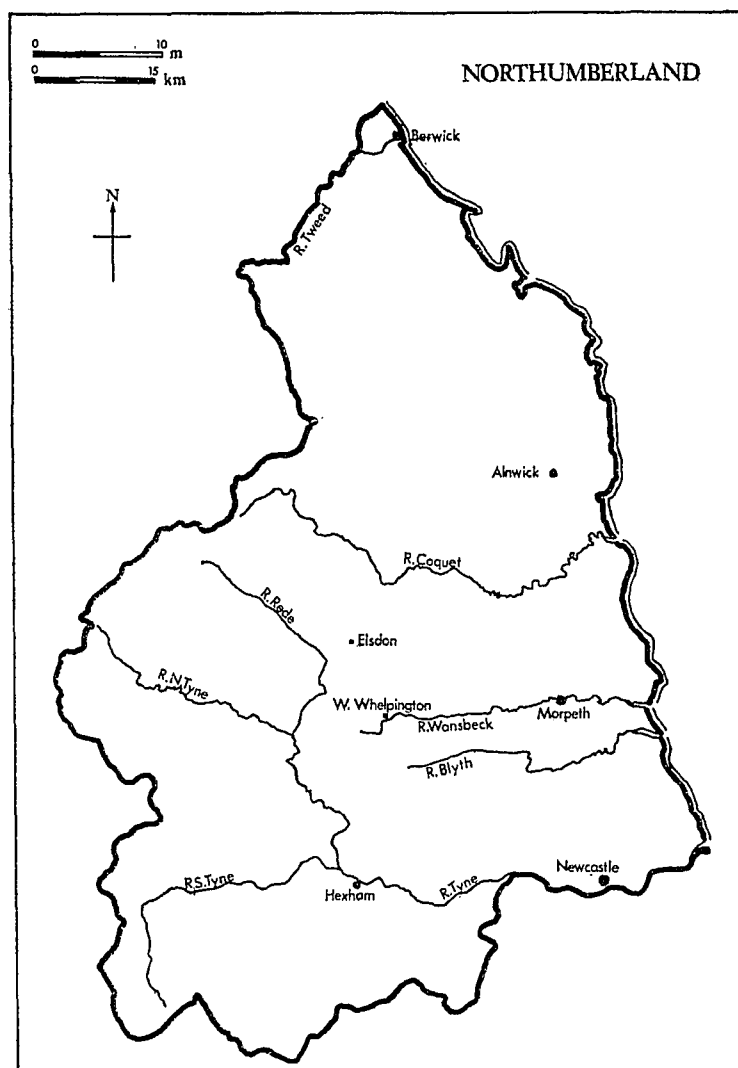


FIG. 1. Map of Northumberland.

better adapted to the growth of good principle and usefulness than the village system.⁴

At West Whelpington a similar transformation is probably reflected in the desertion of the village about 1720. It seems clear that before this there had already been a decline in the number of holdings in the township, as well as some dispersal of steadings. A deposition of 1847 records that the township was assessed for church-rate and poor-rate at nineteen "ancient

farms."⁵ There is good reason to suppose that the "farms" indicate the number of medieval husbandland tenements.⁶ At some stage the "farms" had ceased to represent particular holdings, and had become fixed units of assessment. In villages of south-east Northumberland fossilization seems to have occurred between the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that this dating

⁵ F. W. Dendy, 'The ancient farms of Northumberland', *A.A.*, 2nd ser., 16, 1892-3, p. 152.

⁶ Earl Percy, 'The ancient farms of Northumberland', *A.A.*, 2nd ser. 17, 1894-5, pp. 18-39.

⁷ *Northumberland County History*, VIII, 1907, p. 246.

⁴ J. Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, II, i, 1827, p. 337.

does not apply to the whole county. It is therefore reasonable to assume that at some date in the later Middle Ages West Whelpington contained nineteen husbandlands. In addition, it may have supported cottage tenements and leaseholds created from demesne lands, though there is no evidence for either.

By 1666 the number of holdings seems to have been reduced, if we may believe the Hearth Tax return for that year.⁸ It includes Ray with West Whelpington, and lists for the two villages together seven persons assessed for one hearth each, and another four non-solvents. Hodgson records that a man called Stott, "when he took the whole of it to rent 'put out 15 farmers' here, according to the phrase and account of a person who was his servant, and is still living at age of 86."⁹ It does not seem likely that there was an increase from less than eleven to fifteen tenements in the period 1666 to 1720, so that one source or the other is presumably inaccurate. The evidence from large-scale excavation of the village suggests that the higher figure is to be preferred, and that a number of people were not recorded in the Hearth Tax return, even as non-solvents.

Hodgson fails to give a date for the desertion, but the parish register can be used to produce the necessary information.¹⁰ The register begins in 1679, and West Whelpington occurs regularly until 24 August 1719, after which it is never mentioned. The frequency of its occurrence in earlier years suggests that the village ceased to be occupied between that date and 1722, and probably early in this period.

After 1719 isolated farmsteads within the township are often mentioned in the register under their own names. Two of these farmsteads, Hornscastle and Cornhills, existed before desertion: they first appear in the register in 1685 and 1689 respectively. They may then have been new foundations, but the register by itself does not demand this interpretation:

⁸ PRO: E 179/158/103, m. 14.

⁹ Hodgson, *op. cit.*, II, i, p. 198.

¹⁰ Kirkwhelpington Parish Register. Evidence on the Stott family derives from this source unless otherwise stated. The transcript of the Register in N(orthumberland) R(ecord) O(ffice) is not reliable.

entries for the first five years often omit township or farm names altogether. The earliest record of the extent of these holdings is the Tithe Map of 1844 (Fig. 2).¹¹ At that date Hornscastle occupied the entire eastern end of the township. Cornhills consisted of two large fields, the village site, and the much smaller South Field. The North and East Fields probably represent open fields of the village. There is no certainty that the composition of these two farmholds was unchanged between the late seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. Indeed it is unlikely that the village site was part of Cornhills before desertion, for it seems clear that it supported more than labourers' cottages during the last thirty years of its existence.

It is probably significant that the two earliest recorded steadings outside the village were located on the arable lands and the better pastures. The extensive moorland which comprises the western part of the township seems to have remained as unenclosed common until desertion. The parish register provides its earliest references to two more isolated farmsteads, Middle Rig and Ferneyrigg, in 1721/2 and 1725/6 respectively. Both are situated on the moorland to the west of Cornhills, and there can be little doubt that they were created at the time of desertion, and that they included from the start the whole of the rough grazing lands. By 1827 Middle Rig had been abandoned, and its lands were subsumed in Ferneyrigg farm.¹²

Such reorganization cannot be understood without reference to land ownership and tenancy. Once again the detailed record for West Whelpington is elusive, although the circumstantial evidence is clear. Whilst reorganization took place in some Northumberland townships as early as c. 1600, it was far more frequent after the Civil Wars. During the second half of the seventeenth century, a number of important landed families in the county were declining into bankruptcy. The causes of

¹¹ NRO: DT 498. For a discussion of the open fields see *A.A.*, 4th ser., 48, 1970, pp. 197-200.

¹² Hodgson, *op. cit.*, II, i, p. 197.

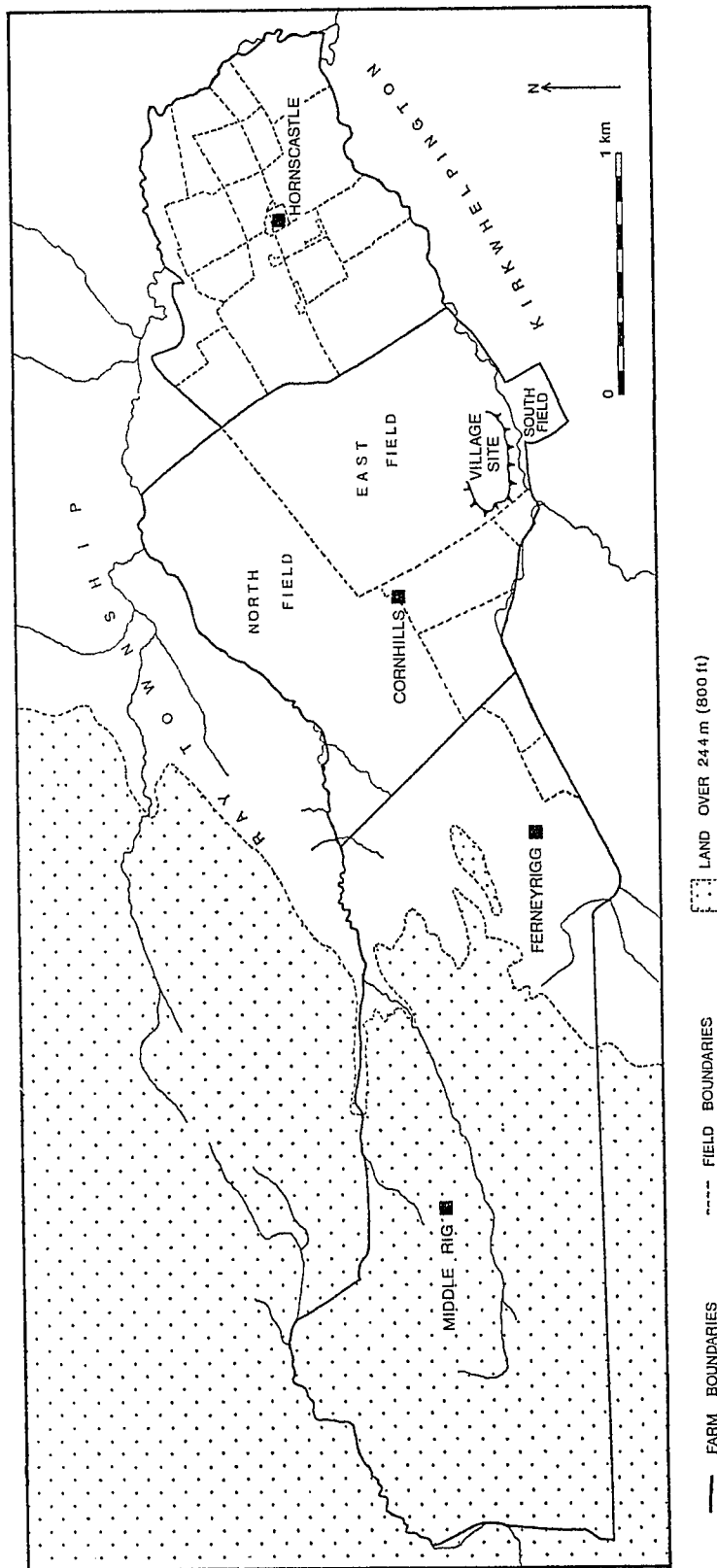


FIG. 2. West Whelpington township (after the Tithe Map of 1844).

their decline were various: financial penalties as Royalists or recusants, wilful dissipation, and sheer bad luck all played a part, and inflation had struck hard at those dependent on customary rents and lacking the capital or initiative to reorganize their estates. The result was the transfer of extensive holdings to their creditors, chiefly merchants and professional men from Tyneside who were able and willing to invest money in reorganizations which promised greatly increased rents.¹³ The Herons of Chipchase, owners of the manor of West Whelpington, were one of the families in difficulties. After 1660 their lands were heavily mortgaged, principally to Mark Milbank, a Newcastle merchant, and Robert Allgood, their own agent.¹⁴ Eventually Allgood acquired most of the Heron lands, whilst the Milbanks gained a number of peripheral manors, of which West Whelpington was one. It was conveyed to the Milbanks in 1675.¹⁵

In the absence of relevant estate papers it is difficult to estimate the effect of this transfer upon the agrarian organization of West Whelpington. No immediate changes are apparent, unless the foundation of Cornhills and Hornscastle was at the initiative of the new owners. By 1675 the Milbanks had established their seat at Halnaby in north Yorkshire, and they acquired soon afterwards other estates in that area. In these circumstances it is not surprising that we do not find at West Whelpington immediate and wholesale "improvement" of the kind undertaken by Allgood and other newly established landowners.

It has been noted that Hodgson's informant named a tenant, Stott, as the person responsible for depopulating the village. The presence of that family in the township is first attested in a parish register entry for 1696, and the same source indicates that they occupied Cornhills Farm soon after the depopulation. We cannot establish whether Cornhills was in their possession before 1720, or whether it was acquired

when they took the whole of the township (excluding Hornscastle) to farm. Whatever the case, this lease will have terminated any residual common rights which might have impeded the exploitation of Cornhills, and it will have provided them with two new and extensive farmholds. The Stotts may soon have relinquished Middle Rig, but their interest in Ferneyrigg, in addition to Cornhills, continued. The name of Thomas Stott appears alongside that of Mark Milbank on a boundary stone set up in 1736 on the southern march of Ferneyrigg.¹⁶ William Stott, farmer, held Ferneyrigg at his death in 1798.

The archaeological evidence does little to clarify the historical record. It could not be expected to do so. All too often it is assumed that it is the business of archaeologists to write history, and that the conclusions derived from historical and archaeological sources will coincide; even on a better documented site than West Whelpington such an assumption is dangerous and misleading. The two disciplines are concerned with different types of evidence, and only rarely will there be any overlap. It is exceptional for the documentary sources to record anything which the archaeologist might discover and recognize; but it is not always realized that the archaeologist can rarely produce the material from which precise history can be written. If he produces historical information, it will be of limited value and at great expense; his primary concern is to produce complementary evidence which is not available in the documents.

Archaeology can provide some picture of the physical setting and economic basis of peasant life at West Whelpington. The buildings of the village in the late seventeenth century were of stone, one story high, and probably thatched; they were grouped round an oval green and (probably) a pond fed by water draining down from the west end of the site. Parts of the green had recently been enclosed, perhaps as stockyards. Most families lived in a single room with

¹³ For examples see Wrathmell, thesis, pp. 187-190.

¹⁴ The decline of the family is traced in W. P. Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, II, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970, p. 58.

¹⁵ NRO: ZAL 23/2.

¹⁶ *A.A.*, 4th ser., 48, 1970, p. 193; the stone is one of a series set up by Sir Walter Blackett, of Wallington (1707-77), in the course of improving his estate.

a floor area of about 25 square metres; most houses had glazed windows and some had locks. Coal was in regular use as a fuel, and many people could afford to smoke tobacco. Beer would probably leave no clear evidence, but we can be fairly certain that wine was not drunk in quantity. The village boasted a forge, but there is no evidence of other industrial activity. There was some arable farming in open fields, but the grazing of cattle, sheep, and horses was probably more important economically. Archaeology also indicates a number of important changes in the layout and composition of tenements, which must reflect changes in the agrarian economy of the village and township. These changes cannot be precisely dated, so that no equation can be made with those suggested by the documentary evidence. Such an equation may be possible at a later date, if the dating of medieval and post-medieval pottery can be refined.

It is hoped that the following account of a group of interrelated holdings will show something of the value of examining village sites, and also illustrate some of the problems which arise from the interrelation of archaeological and documentary evidence. In the early days of excavation at West Whelpington it was the policy to dig only those buildings which were obvious as earthworks. By the end of the third season it was clear that the results obtained from such limited excavation were at best inadequate, and at worst misleading. When work was resumed in 1965 it was decided to dig a wide area round each building, and since 1970 we have sought to investigate as much as possible of the whole village. This has involved the stripping of substantial areas of the village green, and of the crofts behind the main building lines. This excavation method has dramatically increased the information available, and has greatly improved the reliability of interpretations. It is almost as a bonus that it has also enabled us to think with rather more confidence about the history of the village. It is only by extensive excavation that we have learnt anything of the Iron Age farmstead and of possible Anglo-Saxon occupation, and it has thrown

much light on the complexities of medieval and post-medieval tenements.

At present these complexities are most fully revealed, and are best understood, in a block of holdings on the north side of the village. The area in question consists of sites 6 to 10, with crofts E to I behind them and with areas of village green to the south (Fig. 3). The earthworks indicated that the crofts formed a discrete block, though they did not reveal the general character of sites 6 to 10. In this area of the village the earliest structures were of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; their remains were fragmentary, and they do not concern us here. The last two of the three basic chronological periods are of greater interest. There can be no doubt that Period III ended with the abandonment of the village, about 1720. The date is established from the documentary evidence, but nothing in the archaeological material suggests that it is incorrect. Period III walls and floors regularly sealed clay tobacco pipes and pottery of the seventeenth century; this stratified material suggests that Period III cannot have begun until well into the second half of the century, though we cannot establish a precise date from the archaeological evidence.

The dating of Period II is more problematical. There is no reason to suppose that it did not continue into the second half of the seventeenth century, to be followed at once by Period III. It probably lasted for at least a century, since Period III revealed substantial rebuilding of Period II walls, even though their line was not changed. The date at which Period II began remains uncertain, because most medieval pottery cannot be dated with any precision. Some of the pottery sealed by the walls and floors of Period II is of the late thirteenth century, and most of it need not be later, though two sherds are perhaps best assigned to the fifteenth century. There is a marked absence of clay pipes and of the pottery types which first appear in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unfortunately the sixteenth-century types are never common at West Whelpington, and it is possible that in this area the medieval ceramic tradition remained domi-

WEST WHELPINGTON

SURVEYED 1958, 1966-70

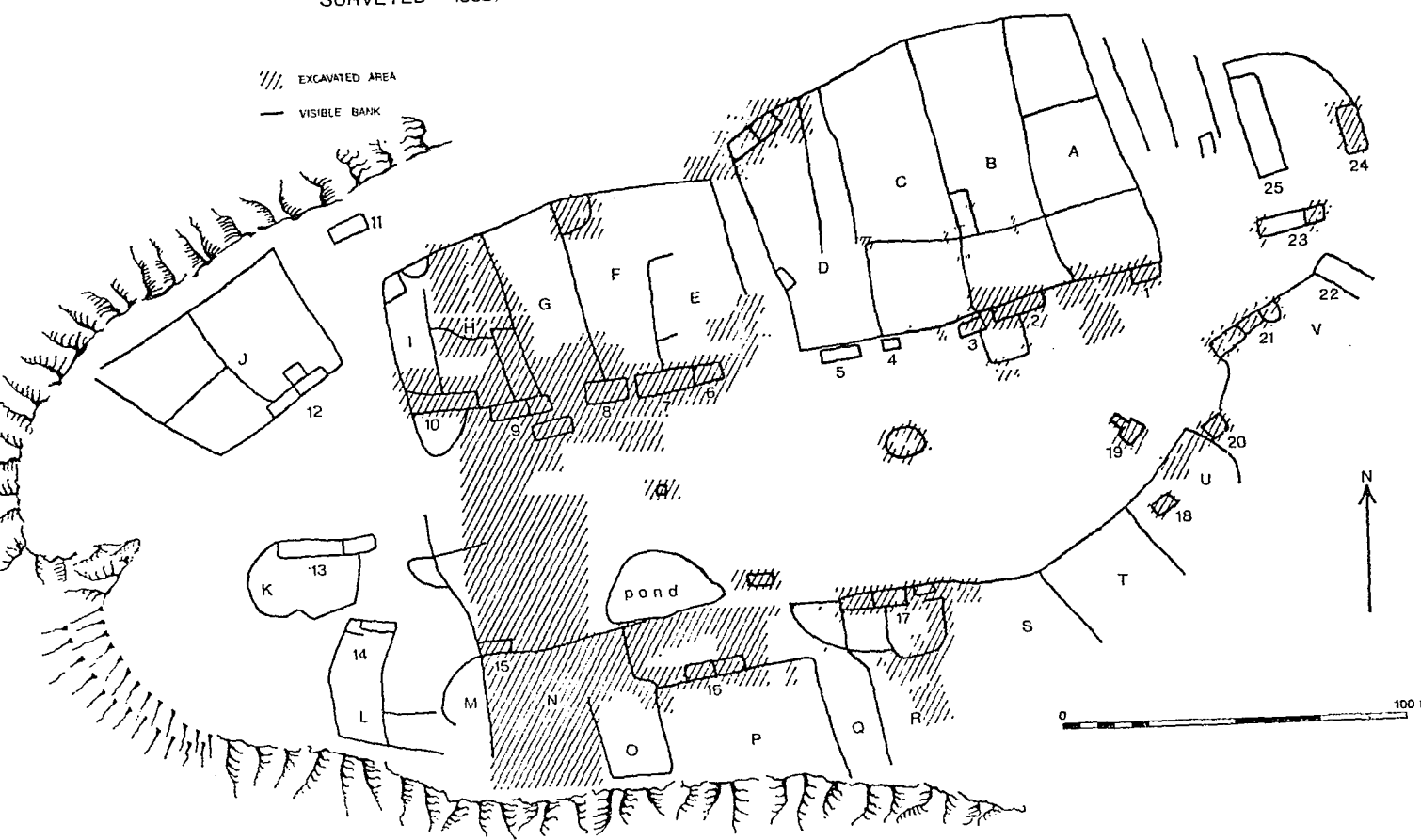


FIG. 3. The village site.

nant until 1550 or later. In the present uncertainty we can say only that Period II began at some date between 1300 and 1600, and that historical considerations point to the middle of this long period. As already noted, rural depopulation, the result of endemic disease and of persistent warfare and raiding across the Scottish border, was leading landowners elsewhere in Northumberland to reorganize tenancies on their estates after the late fourteenth century. It is likely that major changes at West Whelpington conform to this pattern, and are to be assigned to c. 1400–1550.

On excavation, sites 6 to 9 proved to consist of a terrace of five long-houses in Period II (Fig. 4).¹⁷ Site 10 was a barn or storage building behind this line; it had a complex history, but it could not be directly related to the five buildings represented by sites 6 to 9. As with the other outbuildings it provided little dating evidence, and there was no way of linking it with the main structural sequence. The five long-houses were remarkably similar to one another. In each case the living-room was at the west and the byre at the east. The byres were characterized by a paved floor with a longitudinal central drain (or sump, since in no case was an outflow provided); each living-room had a hearth, which usually indicated an open fire in the middle of the room. Byres and living-rooms were separated by a paved cross-passage with a door at each end, but in no house was there clear evidence for any internal partition. The terrace was 75 m. long and just over 6 m. wide. The five houses varied in internal length from over 16.5 m. (site 6/1) to 11.0 m. (site 9/1), though the internal width was consistently about 4.6 m. The variations in length were reflected in the size of both byres and living-rooms.

North of the terrace was a group of five crofts, E to I. A direct correlation between crofts and long-houses is not possible, since all junctions between croft walls and houses had

been destroyed by stone-robbing. Such dating evidence as there is for the croft walls indicates that they were not earlier than c. 1300; they could be considerably later. Croft I may be a later addition to the other four, but there is nothing to suggest that it was later than the beginning of Period II. Houses 6/1, 7, and 8/1 had north doors opening into crofts E, F, and G respectively; but sites 9/1 and 9/2 both had doors in croft H, and none of the long-houses had direct access to croft I. In croft E there seems to have been a small dwelling (site 6A), perhaps cottage accommodation for members of the family which tenanted this holding. In each of the next three crofts were buildings of indeterminate function and uncertain date which are best interpreted as barns or stores (sites 7B, 8B, 9B, and 10). South of site 9/1 lay a building with a stone platform at its west end (site 9A); it appeared to be contemporary with the Period II long-houses, to which it was linked by a small outbuilding. A drain ran from this outbuilding beneath the floor of 9A and opened on to the green. Site 9A gave no indication of its function, but some medieval houses (7A, 16B) at West Whelpington have similar platforms at one end which are interpreted as the bases of hayricks. The medieval buildings were apparently residential, but 9A revealed no evidence of a hearth, and is more likely to have been a barn. The apparent absence of any barn which might be associated with site 6/1 is probably not significant: croft E was not extensively excavated, and there were fragments of walling which might relate to such structures.

Period II, as interpreted, consisted of a block of five long-houses, of one build, each with a croft and at least one barn. The inadequate documentary evidence discloses no freeholders at West Whelpington, and none objected to Stott's takeover of the village lands about 1720. The erection of this group of more or less standardized farmsteads is therefore likely to have been initiated by the lord rather than a group of peasants. Sites 1 to 5, further east, were less thoroughly excavated, but the evidence is consistent with the suggestion that they formed a similar terrace. The overall length of that block

¹⁷ In this article the term "long-house" is reserved for those buildings which accommodated both people and animals under one roof, with a common access to both parts and without a partition wall between those parts.

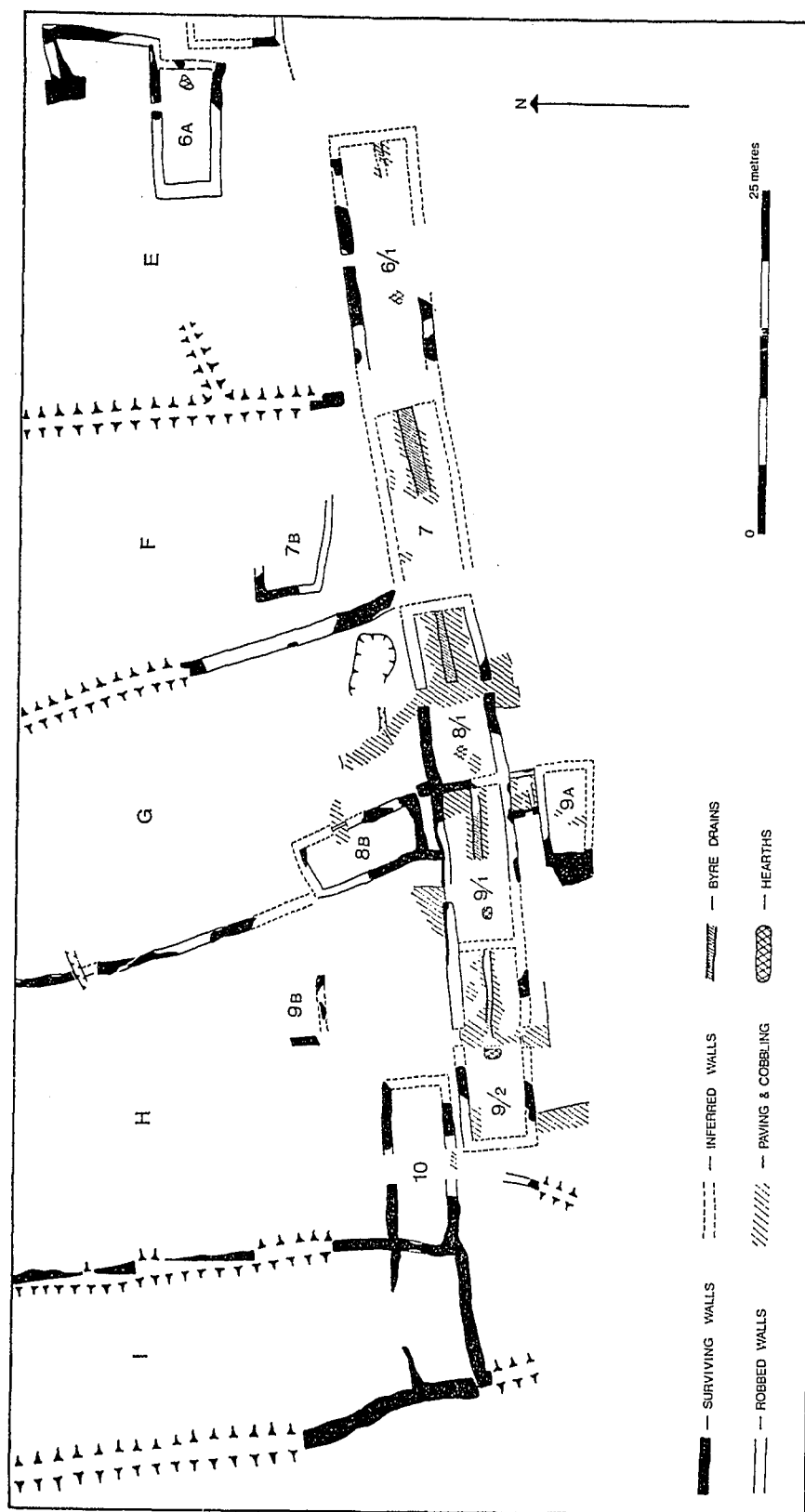


FIG. 4. Sites 6-10, Period II.

would be about 100 m., so that it might have contained six or even seven long-houses; but it seems impossible to detect more than five crofts in the group north of this terrace. However, crofts S and T on the south side of the green were not associated with any structures which would be detected by field survey (no excavation took place), and might possibly relate to farms situated elsewhere in the village, especially if the croft division was earlier than the re-planning exemplified by Period III in sites 6 to 9. A plan of Chatton (NU 056 284) in 1780 shows that the different elements in a farmstead might be scattered round the village green.¹⁸

In the second half of the seventeenth century there is evidence for a further wholesale reconstruction; there can be no doubt that it required the consent of the lord, and it was probably initiated by him. The croft divisions remained basically unchanged, but the row of farmsteads was reduced from five to three units (Fig. 5). The new farmsteads (6/2, 8/2, and 9/3) had longer byres and more comfortable living-quarters; in each the living-room was partitioned off from the byre and the hearth was moved to a position against the partition wall. Small paved outbuildings were added to 6/2 and 9/3; 6/2 and 8/2 were associated with enclosures on the village green. The east-west building lines were substantially unchanged, but much rebuilding of Period II walls was deemed necessary.

Site 6/2 extended both east and west of 6/1. At the east end was a small paved outbuilding of uncertain function, measuring 4.3 m by 3.2 m. internally; the only door which survived led north into croft E. West of this was the living-room, which overlay part of the byre and passage of 6/1. It had a south entrance only, and measured 6.8 m. by about 4 m. internally. The hearth was built against the west wall, which separated the living-room from the byre. The byre overlay the living-room of 6/1 and part of the byre of 7; its only entrance was on the south side. Its internal measurements were 8.7 m. by 4.5 m. Most of the remainder of site 7 was not

occupied by buildings in Period III, but seems to have been attached to 6/2. Walls in this area were very badly robbed, and we are uncertain about the arrangements implied; but it seems likely that a small yard lying mainly to the west of 6/2 was later replaced by a larger yard running south into the village green and containing at least one outbuilding.

Site 8/2 showed relatively minor modifications to 8/1. Here alone the common entrance passage for living-room and byre was retained; but its north door was blocked, and the living-room was now separated from the passage by a stone partition wall. A new hearth was built against this wall and an oven was placed next to it, but there was no other change to the living accommodation. Yet the effect must have been considerable. In 8/1 opposed entrances led directly into a large room with cattle at one end and living accommodation at the other. In 8/2 entry to the living-room was through a single door opening from one end of the byre. At the same time the byre was extended eastwards into the area of site 7, giving it a total length of 10.8 m. A fragment of walling running west from the yard south of site 7 suggests that 8/2, like 6/2, appropriated a part of the village green.

Sites 9/1 and 9/2 were, in effect, amalgamated, and the new farmstead (9/3) shows considerable changes. Already, during Period II, 9/2 had been modified by the erection of a wall dividing the living-room from the entrance passage. Now more dramatic changes took place. The east end of the byre of 9/1 was cut off, and a stone platform built in the northern part of this area; there is nothing to indicate whether this area was roofed or not, and its function is entirely unknown. The remainder of the byre of 9/1 and part of its living-room were covered by new living accommodation measuring 5.1 m. by 3.6 m. internally. It had an external door near the east end of its south wall and a well-built fireplace against the west wall. North of the fireplace a door (subsequently blocked) led into a western byre. This byre measured 9.9 m. by 4.0 m. internally, though the drain occupied only

¹⁸ NRO: ZAN Bell 61/8.

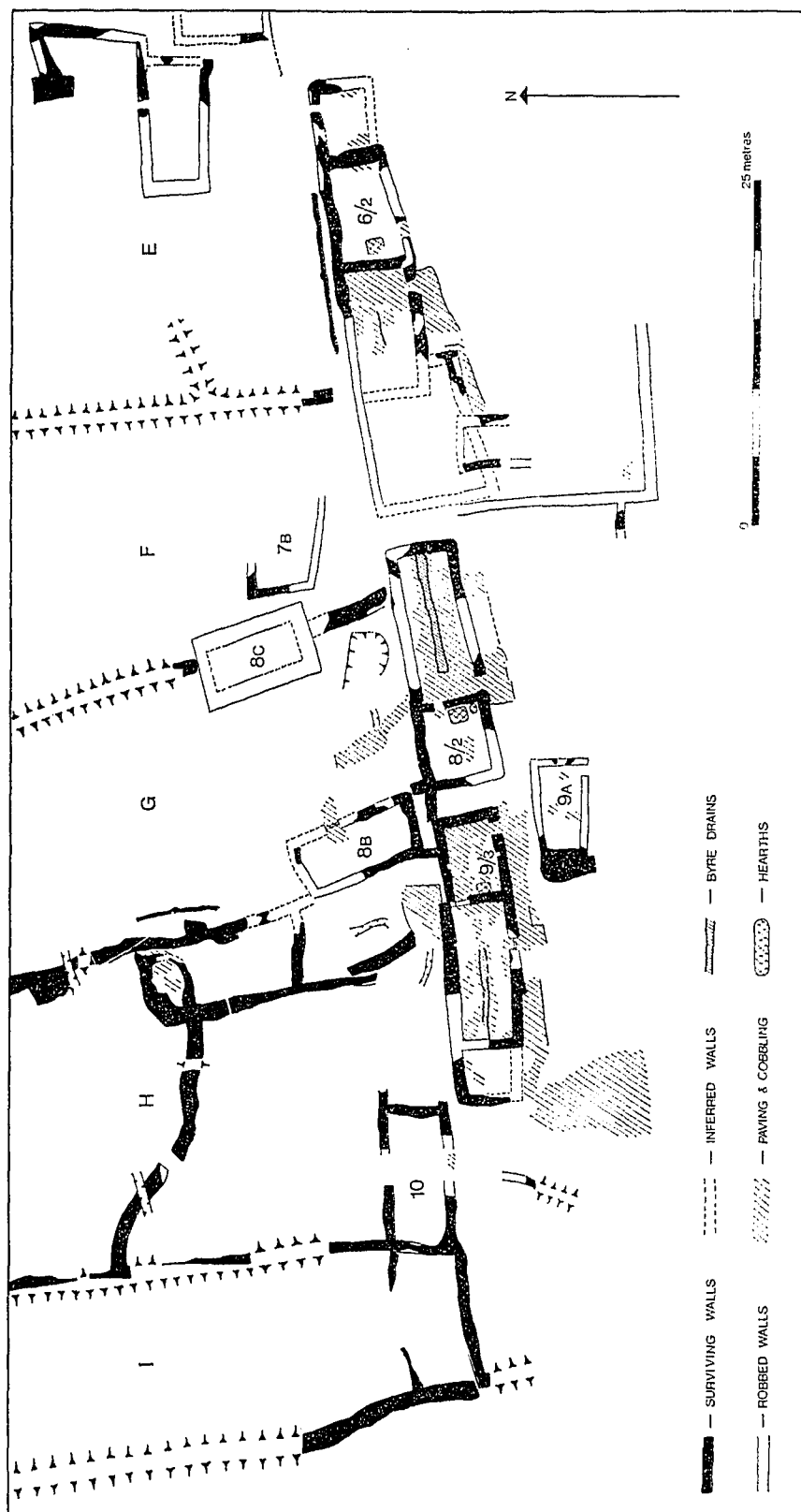


FIG. 5. Sites 6-10, Period III.

about two-thirds of its length. It covered the byre and entrance passage of 9/2, as well as the eastern part of the living-room of 9/1. Adjoining the west end of the byre was an outbuilding measuring 3.2 m. by 3.5 m. internally; its floor had been paved, and its entrance was presumably in the south wall. As with the similar structure at the east end of 6/2, nothing indicated its function. Site 9A continued in use in Period III with only minor modifications, and presumably formed part of farmstead 9/3. An area of paving south of the byre may indicate that this steading, like 6/2 and 8/2, had a yard in the area of the village green.

There is nothing to indicate the ownership of crofts E to I in this period. None of the new farmsteads had a door on its north side. Superficially it looks as though 6/2 may have used crofts E and F, 8/2 croft G, and 9/3 crofts H and I. But there are some secondary partitions in the crofts which may (or may not) be of this period; they could relate to modified divisions of the croft area. It is assumed, but cannot be proved, that the outbuildings in the crofts continued in use in Period III. A new building, 8c, was added across the boundary between crofts F and G. It measured about 7 m. by 3 m. internally. Its walls had been completely robbed, and no door was found to indicate the croft to which it should be assigned. The purpose of the enclosures on the village green is not certain. They can scarcely have been cultivated, for the soil is rarely more than about 150 mm. deep; most probably they should be seen as stock enclosures, encroaching on common land. Their presence may be associated with the absence of doors between houses and crofts in this period. In the more easterly block of farmsteads there was a similar enclosure south of site 2.

West Whelpington is not a well-documented village; in particular it lacks the manorial records which might have provided a great deal of information on the last centuries of its life. Nevertheless, with comparative evidence from other parts of the county, and with the documentary and archaeological evidence from

West Whelpington itself, a reasonable picture of the last years of the village can be presented.

In the later Middle Ages the village seems to have undergone a drastic reorganization, defined as Period II in the archaeological record of sites 6 to 10. With five farmsteads in the north-western sector of the village it seems likely that this phase should be equated with the nineteen "ancient farms" of the rating assessments. Late in the seventeenth century there was further reorganization which reduced the number of farmsteads in the village. This reorganization may have delayed the final collapse of West Whelpington for a few years. By 1720 the combination of an absentee landlord and an enterprising and wealthy tenant, both doubtless inspired by the example of others in Northumberland, led to the deliberate depopulation of the village. With this was associated a total change in the pattern of land tenure; the new pattern has remained substantially unmodified to the present day.

The excavation of these buildings has revealed changes in the accommodation of both man and beast between the fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries. Initially, humans and animals were separated only by a few paving stones. Later, partition walls divided them, and finally the internal access between living-room and byre was abolished. West Whelpington has so far produced no evidence for cattle being housed in separate ranges of outbuildings. This was a sophistication which perhaps came with the erection of new farmsteads elsewhere in the township after 1720.

Some attempt has been made to assign crofts, smaller enclosures, and outbuildings to these dwellings. Again it seems that the changes, though no doubt drastic in terms of the distribution of holdings, were constricted by the fabric of the village. The tentative encroachments upon the village green may be contrasted with the restructuring of the landscape which accompanied the fall of this and many other villages in Northumberland.

Enclosure Commissioners and Buckinghamshire Parliamentary Enclosure¹

By MICHAEL TURNER

I
BETWEEN 1738 and 1865 there were over 130 enclosure Acts in Buckinghamshire affecting the whole or parts of more than 130 parishes out of the approximately 220 in the county at the time. Over 166,000 acres, or 35 per cent of the county, was enclosed in a little over 120 years. In comparative terms such a density places the county ninth overall in ranking order of counties, the preceding eight being in the south and east midlands, with the exception of the East Riding of Yorkshire.² More important, however, is that parliamentary enclosure in Buckinghamshire was concentrated in the five northern hundreds, part of the Midland Plain, affecting 58 per cent of Cottesloe hundred, 48 per cent of Aylesbury hundred, 44 per cent of Newport Pagnell hundred, 41 per cent of Buckingham hundred, and 27 per cent of Ashendon hundred, compared with only 7 per cent and 9 per cent respectively for the Chiltern hundreds of Burnham and Desborough.³ The combined density of enclosure for the five northern hundreds was 44 per cent, placing them among the top six counties, a group which is centred upon Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, and includes Rutland, Huntingdon, Oxfordshire, and North Buckinghamshire.⁴

¹ My thanks are due to Mr E. J. Davis and his staff at the County Record Office, Aylesbury, for assistance in the completion of this research, and to Dr B. A. Holderness and Professor F. C. Spooner for helpful criticism of an earlier version of this article.

² From G. Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields*, 1907, pp. 140-2. See the revised figures in M. E. Turner, 'Parliamentary Enclosure and Population Change in England 1750-1830', *Explorations in Econ. Hist.*, XIII, 1976.

³ The last hundred in the county, Stoke, is situated in the Thames valley where 30 per cent of the land was enclosed by Act. This was mainly common and waste, enclosures symptomatic of the reclamation of marginal lands during the French Wars of 1793-1815.

⁴ The highest density of enclosure was in Northamptonshire, where over 50 per cent of the county was enclosed between 1727 and 1815.

Research has been published on such architects of the landscape as the surveyor and the landscape gardeners; why not also on the architects of the Georgian enclosures?⁵ After all: "Behind the features of the landscape . . . there are men, and it is men that history seeks to grasp." They include enclosure commissioners, surveyors, clerks and solicitors, bankers, an assortment of labourers, and, of course, the landowners and their tenants, but as determinants of landscape change the concentration must be on the commissioners and their surveyors. As architects of the cultural landscape they have left their indelible mark for all to witness.⁶

II

For the earlier period of enclosure, essentially before the mid-1770's, an enclosure commission might consist of five or more commissioners. Thereafter it was usual for only three to be appointed, and a more formal procedure was adopted at the same time. The enclosure Act usually stated that each commissioner was the specific representative of a particular landowning interest: one for the lord of the manor, one for the tithe owner, and one for the majority (by value) of the remaining landowners. This last was reckoned not as the numerical majority but rather in terms of the extent of land possessed. Thus, if one landowner possessed 51 per cent of the parish he would automatically be the "majority of landowners." Recourse was usu-

⁵ The full quotation can be found in M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, English translation, Manchester, 1954, p. 26.

⁶ For example, E. G. R. Taylor, 'The Surveyor', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 1st ser., XVII, 1947, pp. 121-33, and some of her other works, for which see *Trans. Inst. Br. Geog.*, XLV, 1968, pp. 181-6; H. C. Prince, *Parks in England*, Isle of Wight, 1967; B. E. Coates, 'The work of Richard Woods, landscape gardener, in the West Riding of Yorkshire', *Trans. Hunter Arch. Soc.*, VIII, 1963, pp. 297-306.

ally made to the annual land tax assessments in order to establish this fact. The whole procedure no doubt prompted the contemporary observation that the nomination of commissioners was: "a little system of patronage . . . the lord of the soil, the rector, and a few of the principal proprietors monopolise and distribute the appointments."⁷

As many as 143 different people were appointed as enclosure commissioners in Buckinghamshire, including those who acted as valuers for the Inclosure Commission set up by the General Act of Inclosure of 1845. Of these commissioners 83 served only once, 28 on two occasions, and the remainder as follows:

1 served 29 times	1 served 9 times
1 served 15 times	2 served 7 times
1 served 14 times	2 served 6 times
1 served 13 times	2 served 5 times
1 served 12 times	8 served 4 times
1 served 11 times	8 served 3 times
3 served 10 times	

They came from many walks of life. Of the ten members of the clergy to act, eight were active before 1780. The rest of the body of commissioners were often a mixed assortment. Edward Elliot, who acted once at Shipton in 1744-5, was a schoolmaster, and was joined on this enclosure by three "yeomen" and one "gentleman." Thomas Taylor from Swanbourne, a commissioner ten times in the county, lived and died as a carpenter.⁸ It was also usual for a commission to consist of local dignitaries and those with a direct association with the soil, such as graziers, husbandmen, and yeoman farmers. They conducted the allotting of the parish, and the latter group were also employed as surveyors, not as quantity surveyors (that is land surveyors), but as quality surveyors, assessing the rental value of the land, a job for which they had vast practical knowledge. One objection to eighteenth-century enclosures is that many proprietors came to have greatly diminished allot-

ments compared with their scattered property in the former open fields. They may not have received a proportionate quantity of land, but as compensation they almost certainly received a greater quality of land. This point was invariably omitted by the critics of enclosure, though the commissioners' oath did require them to have due regard to quantity *and* quality. Some of these commissioners were themselves in receipt of quite large properties. For example, Thomas Green of Whitchurch who acted on nine commissions, was in possession of 366 acres at the enclosure of his home parish in 1771-2;⁹ the widow of William Cripps (who acted twice) was allotted 106 acres at the enclosure of Newport Pagnell in 1794-5;¹⁰ Thomas Hooton (who acted once) was allotted 106 acres at the same enclosure;¹¹ Joseph Burnham, who acted three times as a commissioner, and several times as solicitor and/or clerk, was allotted 205 acres at the enclosure of Aylesbury in 1771-2,¹² and James, another active member of the Burnham family, was allotted 261 acres at Grandborough in 1796-7.¹³ Many other commissioners were styled yeoman or gentleman, and by residence or title clearly had very close associations with the soil, and were obviously very well endowed with the necessary credentials to adjudicate on and allocate land.

The practice of separating the quality survey from the quantity survey continued until the early 1790's, by which time a new breed of commissioner had developed, the land valuer-cum-surveyor, with skills both in quality and quantity. Earlier, specially appointed quality men were assisted by one or more of the commissioners. In time the latter undertook more and more of this quality assessment until special quality men were no longer required. Two of the more notable quality assessors were John Watts of Sulgrave in Northamptonshire, and Thomas Harrison of Stony Stratford in Buck-

⁷ J. Billingsley, *General View of the Agriculture of Somerset*, 1797, p. 59.

⁸ His will consisted of his carpentry tools and his stock of timber: Bucks. R.O. (hereafter B.R.O.), Wills D/A/WE/115/18.

⁹ B.R.O. *Inrolments* vol. 1, Whitchurch Enclosure Award.

¹⁰ B.R.O. IR 67(i), Newport Pagnell Enclosure Award.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² B.R.O. *Inrolments* vol. 1, Aylesbury Enclosure Award.

¹³ B.R.O. *Inrolments* vol. iv, Grandborough Enclosure Award.

inghamshire. They were also very active commissioners, the former six times in Buckinghamshire, seven times in Berkshire, and many times in Oxfordshire, the latter 10 times in Buckinghamshire in the very short space of eight years from 1767 to 1775.¹⁴ A number of other commissioners in the early period were also very busy men. Francis Burton of Aynho in Northamptonshire, styled as "Gentleman," acted 15 times in Buckinghamshire from 1762-1777, 28 times in Oxfordshire, once in Wiltshire, five times in Berkshire, once in Hertfordshire, and 14 times in Northamptonshire.¹⁵ In another capacity he was the land steward for the Cartwright family of Aynho,¹⁶ and no doubt had considerable claims to adjudicate on matters concerning the land and commodious methods of land subdivision.

Compared with the commissioners in the later enclosures, the earlier ones were remarkably expeditious in completing their task. Possibly the division of labour between quantity and quality was instrumental in this. The transition in the last quarter of the eighteenth century to a more professional type of commissioner was relatively slow, but that such men as Francis Burton and John Watts served so many times in the earlier period indicates the establishment of certain commissioners having professional reputations. Some of them were in office for many years, notably Thomas Green of Whitchurch, who served on the eighth Buckinghamshire enclosure at Winslow in 1766-7, and died in attendance in 1795 while serving on the forty-seventh, having served nine times altogether. Locally he was a much-sought-after

man, attending at Cublington in 1769-70, Hardwick in 1778-9, and Aston Abbots in 1795, all parishes contiguous to his home parish of Whitchurch. His other appointments were all in parishes within eight miles of Whitchurch. During his lifetime there were only six enclosures within that eight miles which escaped his attention. No doubt he was well acquainted with many of the local large landowners, so possibly his popularity was born out of patronage by his friends. John Lord was another commissioner who served locally, attending 10 enclosures within 10 miles of his home parish of Drayton Parslow; and Thomas Harrison from Stony Stratford, in serving 10 times in the county, only once worked more than 10 miles from home. In fact, of the 143 commissioners to work in the county, 30 acted in parishes adjacent to their home parish, and 14 acted in close proximity to home, within a distance of five miles. These people therefore possessed a close association with the land that was to be subdivided and a familiarity with the allottees, which was no doubt some influence on their original appointment.

The early origins of professionalism can be seen in the activities of Francis Burton. He served on at least 64 enclosures before he died in 1777, when still actively engaged on several commissions. No other commissioner has emerged from the printed sources for this earlier period who was as active as Burton, though perhaps this is not surprising in view of the findings of the Select Committee of 1800, which saw the adoption as commissioners of men "of peculiar qualifications as well as a reputation for experience and integrity," and so "confined the choice of them within no very large limits."¹⁷

By the mid-1790's commissions were increasingly dominated by land agents and surveyors, though this trend clearly had roots in the previous three decades. Some of the notable commissioners of the 1790's and 1800's had served a kind of apprenticeship earlier as quality men or surveyors. Robert Weston of Brackley in Northamptonshire served five times in Buck-

¹⁴ Berkshire information from Berkshire R.O., *Inclosure Catalogue*. For Oxfordshire see *A Handlist of Inclosure Acts and Awards relating to the county of Oxford*, Oxford C.C., Records Publications No. 2, 1963, *passim*; Harrison was later a witness to the House of Commons Select Committee of 1800 on Enclosure: *Reports*, IX, 1795-1800, pp. 231-2.

¹⁵ Refs. as in n. 14; see also R. E. Sandell, *Abstracts of Wiltshire Inclosure Awards and Agreements*, Wilts. Rec. Soc., xxv, Devizes, 1971, p. 96; for information on Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire I am obliged to Mr P. Walne, County Archivist, and Mr J. W. Anscomb of Daventry respectively.

¹⁶ I am obliged to Mr P. King, County Archivist, for this information.

¹⁷ *Reports*, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

inghamshire as a commissioner from 1776 to 1782, but he had earlier gained experience as a surveyor on *at least* 11 other enclosures.¹⁸ John Fellows of Foscott near Buckingham, who was the busiest commissioner in the county, was engaged 29 times between 1788 and 1825, but he had served a lengthy apprenticeship as a surveyor on 11 other enclosures between 1773 and 1781. Another active commissioner, William Collisson of Brackley in Northamptonshire, also served for a long time as a surveyor. Joseph Burnham, an Aylesbury solicitor, acted three times as a commissioner in the 1790's but had earlier gained experience as both solicitor and clerk to several commissions. Thomas Harrison stated that he had worked on more than 20 commissions, "sometimes as Solicitor; as Commissioner frequently, and often as Agent for the parties concerned."¹⁹

Such professionalism is demonstrated in the number of commissions a particular person undertook, and in the place of origin of the commissioners. Of those who were engaged on Buckinghamshire enclosures before 1790, 33 came from Buckinghamshire, 10 from Northamptonshire, 7 from Oxfordshire, 7 from Warwickshire, 3 from Berkshire, 2 from Bedfordshire, and 1 each from Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, London, Middlesex, and Staffordshire. With the exceptions of those from Lincolnshire and Staffordshire, all of them came from within 30 miles of the Buckinghamshire border, and with the exceptions of Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire they all came from counties contiguous to Buckinghamshire. Of those who were appointed between 1790 and 1819 the pattern is different and more diffuse: Buckinghamshire 11, Bedfordshire 8, Middlesex 7, Oxfordshire 6, Northamptonshire 4, 3 each from Lincolnshire, London, and Hertfordshire, 2 from Gloucestershire, and 1 each from Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, and Huntingdonshire.

¹⁸ The surveyor is not identifiable in every enclosure award, and for three Buckinghamshire enclosures the awards have not survived.

¹⁹ *Reports, op. cit.*, p. 230.

Earlier enclosures were therefore characterized by the appointment of relatively local men (one-half were from Buckinghamshire itself before 1790), but as a more professional body of men emerged so promoters were prepared, perhaps forced, to search farther afield—only one-fifth came from Buckinghamshire between 1790 and 1819. Recommendation may have been important, or certain commissioners may have worked for the same landowners in a number of different parishes. For example, the only time that John Hudson from Louth in Lincolnshire worked in Buckinghamshire was on the Hanslope enclosure of 1778–80. He represented the Corporation of Lincoln as lay impropiators of the tithe. There is therefore a possible connection in his appointment, and no doubt he represented the Corporation on other enclosures in Lincolnshire.²⁰

In the period between 1790 and 1819, the most active decades in Buckinghamshire enclosure history, a relatively small number of commissioners was employed; certain men appear repeatedly in the awards, and five, John Fellows, William Collisson, John Davis, Richard Davis, and Thomas Hopcraft, appear on 79 commissions, though a number of these occasions overlap. For example, Hopcraft and John Davis worked together four times, and Collisson and Fellows six times. Specific men were singled out, and the professional enclosure commissioner can be recognized.

One accusation that can be levelled against these men is that they undertook too many appointments at any one time. Consequently they were unable to devote sufficient time to each enclosure, and the business of allotting became very piecemeal and protracted. Table 1 shows the extent of absenteeism recorded by some of the commissioners. The long gaps between commissioners' meetings were one very material reason for the abnormal length of time taken to complete an enclosure after 1790, and for the

²⁰ B.R.O., IR/135, Hanslope Enclosure Award. Hudson was a surveyor for at least 25 Lincolnshire enclosures and a commissioner for at least 19: R. C. Russell, *The Enclosures of Market Rasen, 1779–81, and of Wrawby-cum-Brigg, 1800–05*, Workers Ed. Ass., Market Rasen Branch, 1969, p. 34.

TABLE I
ATTENDANCES OF COMMISSIONERS AT ENCLOSURE MEETINGS

<i>Parish and date of enclosure</i>	<i>Number of meetings</i>	<i>Number of days</i>	<i>Attendances of commissioners (in days)</i>
Hanslope (1778-9)	12	62	King 59, Mitchell 40, Hudson 55
Bierton (1779-80)	17	45	Green 31, Taylor 45, Pywell 25
Little Woolstone (1791-2)	9	25	No absenteeism recorded
Drayton Parslow (1797-8)	11	56	Chamberlain 52, Hopcraft 55, Fellows 37
Stoke Mandeville (1797-8)	16	73	Jos. Smith 73, Platt 72, Fellows 67
Weston Turville (1798-1800)	16	59	Bainbridge 36, Rd. Davis 56, Fellows 59
Olney (1803)	4	4	No absenteeism recorded
Moulsoe (1802)	8	32	Jn. Davis 16, Collisson 29, Fellows 32
Kimble (1803-5)	26	152	Rutt 143, Collisson 138, Fellows 147
Langley Marish (1809-13)	18	54	No absenteeism recorded
Bledlow (1809-12)	28	127	Trumper 90, Collisson 126, Rd. Davis 112
Stewkley (1811-14)	49	216	Jn. Davis 26, Bevan 133, Horwood 205, Fellows 206
Amersham (1815-16)	18	50	Wm. Davies 47, Collisson 47
Princes Risborough (1820-3)	35	141	Ch. Smith 131, Collisson 138, Horwood 139
Towersey (1822-4)*	28	77	No absenteeism recorded
Monks Risborough (1830-9)	79	236	Horwood 228, Ch. Smith 107 (out of 122), Dixon 152 (out of 176), Glenister 96 (out of 114), Allen 41 (out of 60)
Whaddon (1830-1)	17	64	Watford 63, John Davis 64
Great Horwood (1841-2)	21	33	Hart 33, John Davis 29
Buckland (1842-4)	29	41	Hart 39, John Davis 39

Sources: B.R.O., Minute Books.

* At the time of enclosure Towersey was in Buckinghamshire but it has since been transferred to Oxfordshire.

contemporary objections about commissioners.

In an attempt to ensure the speedy completion of enclosures special clauses were slowly introduced into acts. Such regulations appeared as early as the 1770's. At North Marston, enclosed in 1778-9, the surveyors took their oath of office on 16 April 1778. The quality men were ordered to value the fields before 1 June following, and the surveyor was ordered to complete his survey by 1 September.²¹ At Hanslope, enclosed in 1778-9, the quality men took their oath on 4 May 1778, and were ordered to complete the valuation of the open fields by 3 July, and of the old enclosures by 6 July.²² Later it became usual practice to define the working day accurately. It consisted of eight hours from 25 March to 29 September, and six

hours for the rest of the year. Any lesser time for which the commissioners were engaged on an enclosure would be automatically charged as half a day. It also became usual practice to penalize the enclosure administrators for delaying the completion of enclosures. At Whaddon, enclosed in 1830-1, the commissioners were paid four guineas a day, but if the enclosure had lasted for more than three years after the Act was passed the rate would have been halved.²³ Only four Buckinghamshire enclosures were contracted for a specific lump-sum fee rather than the usual daily rate, and by comparison with other contemporary enclosures the commissioners were remarkably expeditious in completing the awards.

²¹ B.R.O., IR/129, North Marston Enclosure Award.

²² B.R.O., IR/135, Hanslope Enclosure Award.

²³ B.R.O., IR/M/13, Draft Bill of Whaddon Enclosure, and Whaddon Enclosure Act, 11 Geo. IV, 1830, ch. 10, pp. 10-11.

If objections were made to claims or the siting of allotments and roads, then the commissioners would listen to such objections and adjudicate. Often they would alter earlier decisions in order to accommodate the proprietors. The minute books of commissioners' meetings are testimony of much discussion between the two parties, and if they are a fair testimony then most of the commissioners emerge with unstained characters. Records of enclosure meetings carry with them an overwhelming sense of fair play, and the proprietors took full advantage of the commissioners' powers to authorize exchanges of land, whether in open fields or old enclosures.

The professionalism of the commissioners is demonstrated in their varied abilities, for they had to perform many tasks. They figure prominently in the stage of soliciting the Bill. Those eventually named in the Act were often approached long before its passing, and were employed by the leading promoters to sound out opinion in the parish, and, since many of them were land surveyors and valuers, they might be asked to undertake preliminary surveys. William Collisson prepared a plan of Stoke Mandeville in 1793, four years before the enclosure Act was passed.²⁴ John Fellows prepared a survey of the rector's estate in Radclive in the year of the Tingewick-cum-Radclive Act, 1773, and James Collingridge produced one for the lordship of Tingewick. They were both subsequently appointed as surveyors to the enclosure.²⁵ In accounts the commissioners and surveyors often received substantial incomes for employment rendered before the Acts were passed.²⁶ Apart from administrative duties, they had to display a wide variety of skills and experience in assessing claims and in terms of quality and quantity, and in setting out the roads and allotments. Perhaps more important is that the economy of the village had to be con-

ducted by them; they became in a sense the court baron and select vestry, with responsibilities for administering the field rules of the village, ordering the ploughing of the old fallow, and regulating the intercommonage of the stubble. Their backgrounds as practical farmers, land agents, solicitors, and surveyors gave them due qualifications to act in these varied capacities. At the first two meetings of the Bierton enclosure of 1779-80 the commissioners suspended common rights, ordered all fallow fields to be sown with clover, and ended quit rents upon thirty-five years' purchase. After harvest, rack rents were suspended, and common rights opened again on all the open fields except those sown with clover. The following March, as the enclosure neared completion, they extinguished common rights, and allowed the proprietors to enter their newly staked-out allotments to fence and cultivate them as they wished.²⁷ As soon as possible after harvest the Bledlow commissioners began to direct the course of husbandry, and before the following season they had ordered the ploughing of the fallow.²⁸ The Towersey commissioners, on assuming control in the parish, ordered that the previous year's fallow, beans, vetches, peas, or seeds should be sown with wheat and no other white crop. Where there had been wheat, oats, or barley it was to become beans, peas, or vetches, and the remainder of the open fields were to stay as was the usual custom.²⁹

W. E. Tate has suggested that occasionally commissioners syndicated, offering their services *en bloc* to enclosure promoters. M. W. Beresford has made the same suggestion, and similar findings have been made in Bedfordshire and Yorkshire.³⁰ This was possibly so, although when one considers the number of en-

²⁴ B.R.O., IR/M/11, *A copy of the totals collected from a book of reference to a plan of Stoke Mandeville in the county of Buckinghamshire taken in 1793 by William Collisson of Brackley*.

²⁵ New College, Oxford, L.M. No. 1.

²⁶ See my 'The cost of parliamentary enclosure in Buckinghamshire', *Ag. Hist. Rev.*, xxi, 1973, pp. 35-46.

²⁷ B.R.O., AR/32/60, Bierton Minute Book.

²⁸ B.R.O., IR/M/2/3, Bledlow Minute Book.

²⁹ B.R.O., IR/M/19/1, Towersey Minute Book.

³⁰ W. E. Tate, 'Oxfordshire Enclosure Commissioners, 1737-1856', *Jour. Mod. Hist.*, xxiii, 1951, pp. 142-3; M. W. Beresford, 'The commissioners of enclosure', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 1st ser., xvi, 1946, p. 132; P. L. Hull, 'Some Bedfordshire surveyors of the eighteenth century', *Jour. Soc. Archivists*, 1, 1955, p. 33; W. S. Rodgers, 'West Riding commissioners of enclosure, 1729-1850', *Yorks. Arch. Jour.*, xl, 1962, p. 415.

closures a top commissioner undertook it is quite likely that some of them were engaged together on several enclosures quite by chance. Also, it should be remembered that they were nominated in the first place by particular land-owning groups. In the earlier period the busier commissioners gained considerable reputations, though mainly very local ones, and therefore it would have been quite usual for the same ones to be engaged together several times. In the later period there were fewer local commissioners of experience from which to choose, and in a sense "demand was simply greater than supply."³¹ It is understandable, therefore, that the names of William Collisson, John and Richard Davis, John Fellows, and Thomas Hopcraft (of whom only Fellows was a native of Buckinghamshire) should occur in enclosure after enclosure. Of the many examples of close association between commissioners and surveyors, the most outstanding example is the incidence of personalities who came from the small town of Brackley in Northamptonshire. On the first occasion on which William Collisson of Brackley acted as a commissioner in Buckinghamshire, he was assisted by William Russell and John Weston as his surveyors, both of whom also came from Brackley. For his next seven commissions his surveyor was Michael Russell, also of Brackley (son or brother of William Russell?). On subsequent commissions Collisson was accompanied by his own son. Is it coincidence that the Collissons and the Russells both came from Brackley? Collisson was certainly the head of a family firm of land surveyors and agents, and the Russells may have been in his employ. Collisson himself may have inherited or in some other way obtained his business from a certain Robert Weston, also of Brackley, who acted five times as a commissioner and 11 times as a surveyor in Buckinghamshire between 1762 and 1782. Brackley certainly produced a remarkable line of commissioners-cum-surveyors: there were the Westons, the Russells, the Collissons, and another surveyor named James Collingridge who acted five times in the county in the 1760's and 1770's.

³¹ Rodgers, *loc. cit.*, p. 407.

Finally, there was John Mitchell of Brackley who acted once as a surveyor. From 1760 to 1820, out of 88 commissions of enclosure in Buckinghamshire, a Brackley commissioner, surveyor, or both was engaged on *at least* 52 occasions.³² In addition, Brackley personalities had considerable employment in other counties.³³ Efforts to trace those eighteenth-century land agents and surveyors in twentieth-century Brackley have not been successful.

III

To place these figures in more meaningful perspective it is possible to calculate the degree of landscape change attributable to each personality. The most active commissioner in Buckinghamshire was John Fellows of Foscott near Buckingham. He served as a commissioner 29 times between 1788 and 1825, as a surveyor eight times, and as an umpire three times. In one way or another he was partly responsible for fashioning the field and road pattern, and subsequent farm pattern, of about 63,180 acres in the county. This amounts to about 13 per cent of the county area, or about 29 average-size parishes. More important, it amounted to 38 per cent of all the land enclosed by Act of Parliament in Buckinghamshire. In traditional open-field Buckinghamshire north and west of the Chilterns he was partly responsible for about 61,600 acres, or about 18 per cent of the land area. This was 44 per cent of all north Buckinghamshire enclosed by Act of Parliament. They were rightly his fields, his hedgerows, his roads and his bridleways, and in the majority of cases they still survive.³⁴

Fellows and his father, also John Fellows were both petty landowners and tenants in at least four Buckinghamshire parishes, though it is clear that they accumulated land to no great

³² The number may be greater because the surveyor is not identifiable in every enclosure award, and for three Buckinghamshire enclosures the awards have not survived.

³³ For example, see Oxford C.C., *op. cit.*, *passim*, William Collisson, Robert Weston.

³⁴ These and subsequent acreages are taken from M. E. Turner (ed.), W. E. Tate, *A Domesday of English Enclosure Acts and Awards*, Reading Univ. Press, Autumn 1977.

size. The main source of evidence is the land-tax schedules of 1782-1832. The family originally hailed from the hamlet of Westcott, formerly in the parish of Waddesdon. When the hamlet was enclosed in 1765-6, father and son received 21 and 159 acres respectively. The land tax for 1782 shows that the estate was almost equally divided between the two, and that they were the third and fourth largest contributors respectively. The father was an owner-occupier, but the son was an absentee-owner. This state of affairs continued until the father died in 1790. Thus the land tax for Westcott in 1791 shows Fellows in possession of all the land, a situation which continued until 1809, at which time a Joseph Marriot was contributing to the land tax for what was formerly Fellows's land. In addition, from 1782 to 1790 the father was a tenant of Earl Temple in nearby Ashendon, and an absentee-owner in North Marston.

John Fellows himself left the family village to become a tenant of the Marquis of Buckingham at Foscott, near the extensive Stowe estates. In most of the enclosure documents he is styled as a gentleman from Foscott. It seems very likely that he employed an under-tenant, because his enclosure activities from the 1770's onwards would surely have prevented his occupation of the farm. He was a surveyor four times in Bedfordshire between 1775 and 1800, and a commissioner in the same county on 15 enclosures between 1793 and 1817; in Oxfordshire he served once as a surveyor and once as a commissioner; in Northamptonshire he worked on seven commissions between 1797 and 1821, and on one each in Hertfordshire and Somerset.³⁵ The reason for his appearance so far from home in the last example appears to be through the landed interests of the Buckingham family.

It would be useful to discover how John Fellows became proficient as a land surveyor

³⁵ I am indebted for information to Mrs McGregor of the Bedfordshire R.O., and to Mr J. W. Anscomb of Daventry, and Mr P. Walne of the Hertfordshire R.O. for information relating to Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire respectively. For Oxfordshire see Oxford C.C., *op. cit.*; for Somerset see Tate MSS., University of Reading, MS. 1093/6/2/16, correspondence relating to Bucks., letter of 11 May 1964, Henry Huntington Library, California, to W. E. Tate.

since his "yeoman origins" would have indicated a more direct association with the soil. From 1807 onwards the documents describe him as a gentleman from Buckingham, and since this almost coincides with his disappearance from the land tax it may be that he set himself up as a professional land agent-cum-surveyor in that town. That both father and son emerged from the yeomanry and began to ascend the agricultural and social ladder is undeniable.³⁶ In addition to becoming a very active enclosure administrator, Fellows followed his father in acting as a land-tax assessor, first for the hundred of Ashendon, and later for the hundred of Buckingham.

Even more impressive is the activity of John Davis of Bloxham near Banbury in Oxfordshire. He worked in many counties in southern England from the 1790's to the 1820's.³⁷ In Buckinghamshire he was partly responsible for enclosing 19,580 acres during 13 commissions, in Berkshire for 52,900 acres (32 times a commissioner and three times an umpire), in Oxfordshire for 51,600 acres (34 times a commissioner), in Gloucestershire for 22,370 acres (six times a commissioner), in Wiltshire 13,090 acres (four times a commissioner and three times an umpire), in Northamptonshire for 11,480 acres (seven times a commissioner), in Bedfordshire for 8,920 acres (four times a commissioner), in Leicestershire for an estimated 7,345 acres (five times a commissioner), and in Hampshire for 2,380 acres (twice a commissioner).³⁸ This makes a grand total of about 180,750 acres and

³⁶ See B.R.O., Wills D/A/WE/115/11, D/A/WE/101/58, D/A/WE/68/146; if it is at all significant, Fellows's great-grandfather and his grandfather were both styled "yeoman," while his father and Fellows himself both bore the title "gentleman."

³⁷ There were four commissioners bearing this name, they were all related, and all came from Bloxham. The one itemized here is, however, the most important. See my 'John Davis of Bloxham, Enclosure Commissioner', *Cake and Cockhorse, Journal of the Banbury Historical Society*, IV, Spring 1971, pp. 175-7.

³⁸ Sources of information as already noted and, in addition, Hampshire R.O., Appleshaw Award, No. 19, and South Stoneham Award, Q.E.2; H. G. Hunt, *The Parliamentary Enclosure Movement in Leicestershire 1730-1850*, unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, 1956; I am indebted to Mr Adrian Randall of the University of Birmingham for information on Gloucestershire.

113 commissions of enclosure—an average greater than *all* the land enclosed by Act of Parliament in Buckinghamshire alone, and over a very much shorter period of time. He was most certainly a very important agent of landscape change, and appears to have been the busiest commissioner yet investigated, quite eclipsing the infamous John Burcham of Coningsby in Lincolnshire, who served on at least 70 enclosures.³⁹ From other sources it can be established that Davis never served on enclosures in Middlesex, East and West Yorkshire, Sussex, Cumberland, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, and Cambridgeshire.⁴⁰ His known area of work was from Leicestershire in the north to Southampton in the south, from Bedford and Maidenhead in the east to Tewkesbury and within five miles of Bath in the west.

Arthur Young in visiting Bloxham was particularly impressed by two farmers, Messrs Warrenner and Davis. The latter he described as an excellent practical farmer who had a great deal of experience as an enclosure commissioner, "having been employed upon twenty six at the same time." Indeed, in compiling his *General View* of the county Young paid close attention to the opinions given by Davis on the question of enclosure. Davis believed that enclosure had greatly increased arable production, and that rents would improve. He offered one very material way of lessening the expense of enclosure, that was, by not using post and rail fencing to support the young quickset hedges; all that was required was a shepherd

to restrain the sheep. Needless to say, Davis did not use posts and rails on his farm.⁴¹

It should not be surprising that a commissioner like Davis would undertake so many enclosures, even twenty-six at one time. With a fee of up to four guineas a day, plus certain expenses, it could prove a very rewarding profession. On the other hand, it must have been impossible to undertake effectively as many commissions as Davis did. Indeed, the surviving minute books are testimony of considerable absenteeism by commissioners, and the minute books for Stewkley and Moulsoe in Buckinghamshire reveal that Davis was one of the worst offenders of all. At Moulsoe in 1802 he attended only half the recorded meetings, and for the seven years of the Stewkley enclosure of 1811-17 he attended only those meetings which dealt with the draft award: of 49 meetings, lasting 216 days, he attended only 5, that is 26 days, thus prompting the observation by Young: "Mr. Davis's bill on all his enclosures has not amounted to above 100 pounds per enclosure *though not attending as much as some*."⁴²

It may have been that he attended only those meetings which concerned his sponsors. In the case of Stewkley he contented himself with attending those which settled the tithe commutation for the Bishop of Oxford; on most other occasions he was the representative of the "majority of landowners," and perhaps paid greater attention to the meetings. Nevertheless, his activities in southern England in times of relatively crude communications were extremely arduous and remarkably widespread (see Table 1 above, ref. Moulsoe and Stewkley).

Enclosure produced a number of outstanding individuals and a number of professions which are taken for granted today. It was particularly instrumental in furthering the surveying and land agents' professions. One might answer in the negative the statement by the poet William Cowper who said in 1783 that "God made the

³⁹ R. C. Russell, *The Enclosures of Searby, 1763-5, Nettleton, 1791-5, Caistor, 1796-8 and Caistor Moor, 1811-14*, Nettleton Workers Ed. Ass., 1968, p. 9.

⁴⁰ From the index of enclosure records in Middlesex R.O.; Vanessa Neave, *Handlist of East Riding Enclosure Awards*, Beverley, 1971; W. S. Rodgers, 'The Distribution of Enclosure in the West Riding', unpubl. M.Comm. thesis, Univ. of Leeds, 1953; Catalogue of enclosure maps and awards, supplied by East Sussex and West Sussex R.O.s; *Cumberland Enclosure Awards*, Joint Archives Committee for the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland and the City of Carlisle, 1968; W. E. Tate, *Parliamentary land enclosures in the county of Nottingham*. Thoroton Society Record Series, v, Nottingham, 1935; University of Reading, Tate MSS., Catalogues of enclosure awards in the Staffordshire and Cambridgeshire R.O.s MS. 1093/10/2/10, MS. 1093/10/1/50.

⁴¹ A. Young, *General View of the Agriculture of Oxfordshire*, 1813, pp. 93-5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 93; B.R.O., Moulsoe enclosure commissioners minute book, Carrington MSS., Box 8a Moulsoe settled estates bundle 11, Stewkley enclosure commissioners minute book, IR/M/10/2.

country, man made the town."⁴³ It may be unwise to tear lines rudely from their text, but as an observation this is very disappointing. In 1783 Cowper was living in the north Bucking-

⁴³ From *Poems by William Cowper Esquire*, 1814, II, p. 40, 'The Task'. My interest in those lines and the poet were first aroused by Professor H. C. Darby; see his 'On the relation of geography and history', *Trans. Inst. Br. Geog.*, XIX, 1953, p. 6, "The landscape of Olney, like the English countryside in general, is as artificial as any urban scene."

hamshire village of Olney, where fifteen years earlier he had witnessed the transformation of the landscape by commissioners. He must have seen the former open fields transformed into numerous hedgerows, and he must have travelled frequently along the newly formed roads. The self-same change occurred in many other parishes in the locality: if it was not already, then it was rapidly becoming a man-made landscape.

Notes and Comments

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM, 1977

The 25th Jubilee conference of the Society was held at St Anne's College Oxford on 4-6 April 1977. The conference papers were by Professor Axel Steensberg, 'Contemporary agriculture in New Guinea compared with the European neolithic'; Mr Frank Emery, 'The history of the Oxfordshire landscape'; Mr Hugh Prince, 'An agricultural geography of the mid-nineteenth century from the tithe surveys'; Professor Glanville Jones, 'The heritage of early territorial organization in England and Wales'; and Professor F. M. L. Thompson, 'What did English farmers have to grumble about in the first half of the nineteenth century?' The President, Mr John Higgs, proposed a toast to the Society at the opening dinner, and also showed a film, *Man in the Mezzogiorno*, of which he had spoken the commentary. Mr Emery led an excursion to Oxfordshire villages, and the President kindly invited the party to tea at Litchfield Farm, Enstone. There was a record attendance of seventy-five at the Jubilee conference.

The Society's 25th AGM was held on 5 April 1977. Miss Edith Whetham was elected President, and Mr C. A. Jewell and Mr M. A. Havinden were re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively. The three vacancies on the Executive Committee were filled by the re-election of Dr D. A. Baker, Dr J. A. Chartres, and Mr A. D. M. Phillips.

In her Chairman's report Dr Thirsk announced that membership had risen from 792 to 818 despite the regrettable necessity to raise the subscription from £3.50 to £5.00 on 1 February 1977. It was hoped that a German foundation would assist with the publication of the English edition of Professor Abel's book on agrarian crises and fluctuations in Europe, and that a successful outcome to this long-standing project would be found. The 1978 Spring Conference is to be held at Swansea on 3-5 April 1978. Finally, she thanked the retiring President,

Mr John Higgs, for his sterling work for the Society over many years.

The Treasurer reported that the Society's finances were healthy at present with a reserve of £5,688 in hand, but that printing costs were continuing to rise. They had reached £4,213 in 1977, and constantly threatened to exceed the Society's income.

The Editor reported that he had received eighteen articles of which he had accepted seven and was still considering another three. There had been an encouraging rise in quality. The meeting thanked the retiring Chairman of the Executive Committee for her devoted work and passed a vote of thanks to Mr Peter Large for organizing the conference so capably.

SILVER JUBILEE PRIZE ESSAY

Sixteen entries were received for the Prize Essay Competition. A special committee read the entries and awarded the prize to the essay by Mr David Cannadine, entitled 'The Landowner as Millionaire: the Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire, c. 1800-1926', which is published in this issue.

WINTER CONFERENCE 1977

The Winter Conference will be held on Saturday, 3 December 1977, jointly with the Historical Geography section of the Institute of British Geographers. It will be held at the Polytechnic of Central London, 38 Marylebone Rd, London, NW1, and the theme will be 'The agricultural consequences of population change'. All enquiries should be addressed to Dr Dennis Baker, The Polytechnic of Central London, 309 Regent Street, London, W1R 8AL.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Dr David Hey has kindly agreed to compile a new list

(continued on page 140)

List of Books and Pamphlets on Agrarian History

1976¹

Compiled by SARAH CARTER

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

(continued from page 129)

of Work in Progress for publication in the *Review*. Readers are asked to write to him at the Department of Extramural Studies, University of Sheffield, Broomspring House, 85 Wilkinson Street, Sheffield, S10 2GJ, giving brief details of the research projects on which they are currently engaged. A sheet with a tear-off reply slip is enclosed in this issue for the convenience of readers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENCLOSURES AND OPEN FIELDS

Readers are reminded that copies of the Bibliography of books and articles relating to Enclosures and the Open Fields, first published by the Society in 1972, are still available from the Treasurer, price 59p post-free.

SOURCES FOR AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

The Agricultural History Center, University of California, Davis, California, has a number of bibliographies and lists of references in connection

with various aspects of American Agricultural History. Readers wishing to have further details should write to the Center.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE GROUP WINTER CONFERENCE

The History of Farm Buildings will be the theme of the 1977 Winter Conference of the Vernacular Architecture Group and members of the Agricultural History Society are cordially invited to attend and participate. The Conference will take place at Canterbury Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London, W1, on Saturday afternoon 17 December and Sunday morning and afternoon 18 December. Coffee, lunch, and tea will be provided and for those who wish it overnight accommodation at a reasonable charge is available at Canterbury Hall. Members of the Agricultural History Society who are interested may obtain details of the programme and arrangements and a registration form by sending a stamped addressed envelope to W. S. Phillips, Esq., Evergreen House, Jaspers Green, Panfield, Braintree, Essex.

Book Reviews

S. BÖKÖNYI, *History of Domestic Mammals in Central and Eastern Europe*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974. 597 pp. £12.20.

This is an important book for a number of reasons. First, it is the only book on the subject in English, and as such brings together for the first time a great deal of work from the area published in the last thirty years, virtually none of which is in English.

Second, the region covered was one of the first outside the initial area of domestication in the Near East, as well as being on the main route followed by domestic animals entering Europe. In addition, as pointed out by the author, the wild ancestors of cattle and pigs lived in central and eastern Europe, which therefore themselves had important centres of domestication.

Bökönyi uses as his basis the animal remains he has himself studied from nearly 400 archaeological sites in Hungary, but the entire area he covers is bounded by Schleswig-Holstein in the north, the Rhine in the west, and the Alps in the south. The treatment is of particular value to the agricultural historian, since although starting chronologically with the Neolithic period it continues to the end of the Middle Ages, and so a sequence is provided from the initial domestication almost up to the commencement of scientific animal breeding.

The author rightly draws a distinction between bones from settlements that were food remains, and so frequently broken, and those from burials, which often yielded intact skulls, and even complete skeletons, which may, however, not have been typical. He starts with an account of the historical development of animal keeping in Hungary, period by period, and then enlarges this to include the rest of central and eastern Europe.

There then follows a discussion of the factors influencing the development of the domestic fauna, in which such factors as geography, climate, human race, the use of the animals, settlement types, husbandry techniques, and religion are considered. Bökönyi then gives a detailed account of each animal species: cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, the camel, horses, the ass, cat, dog, and rabbit.

There is a particularly valuable 100-page register of sites and the number of each species found, together with location maps and an indication of the present whereabouts of the bones. Following this there is an even longer section of tables giving skeletal measurements from the sites listed. From these it is clear that the conclusions of the book are based on the sound statistical treatment of metrical data, in contrast to Zeuner, who little more than a decade ago gave us a world-wide account based on animal illustrations, with barely a single bone

measurement. Bökönyi does, however, make judicious use of ancient illustrations, as well as frequent use of bone photographs, which add considerably to the value of the text.

The book has a twenty-two-page bibliography and a twelve-page list of further references to papers that were mainly published while the book was going through the press. This illustrates how rapidly this subject is advancing, and provides a sobering thought for the agricultural historian who might be tempted to imagine that a long gestation period will give him the last word.

The reviewer would have welcomed a little more on the skin and coat of livestock, and there is an unfortunate lack of an index, but this is difficult to prepare even in one's own language, and we must be grateful to Dr Bökönyi for providing what is on the whole an excellent and readable account of topics that are little known outside the area concerned.

M. L. RYDER

J. R. MADDICOTT, *The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown, 1294-1341*. Past and Present Supplement 1, 1975. 73 pp.

This most important study is the first of a new series intended for works of between 18,000 and 45,000 words. Mr Maddicott introduces a new dimension into the debate about the tendencies in the agrarian economy of England and Wales between 1280 and 1350. His aim is to show that between 1294 and 1341 the king's need to finance war caused his taxation to bite so deeply into the peasant's resources that he was unable to withstand the other difficulties of the period.

The peasant was subject to three main forms of taxation—the levy on movables, purveyance, and the costs of military service. In addition, from time to time he felt the weight of other impositions, such as the maltolts on wool. The author first considers these three taxes down to the mid-1330's, and deals separately with taxation in the last period.

The levy on movables could be a heavy imposition, but much depended upon the honesty of the sub-taxers, the attitudes of the chief taxers, and upon whether extortion balanced under-assessment. The most widespread resistance to the levies was during the famine years of 1315-17. The incidence of the imposition was uncertain but some peasants were ruined by it.

Purveyance was geographically more restricted than the levy on movables. None the less, the nobility and gentry feared that the levying of prises would deprive them of their rents and provoke revolt. It worked in an arbitrary and unjust way, gave abundant opportunities for corruption and extor-

tion, was levied without warning, without assessment, and without regard for the means of the inhabitants, and was often taken again and again from the same part of the country in the space of a few years. The hundred bailiff acquired new scope for profiteering, and the rich often escaped the tax altogether. Though less general than the levy on movables, it did more to make the crown unpopular between 1290 and 1340 than any other single factor.

The system of array could not by itself disable the peasantry. It affected the whole village, but those selected suffered most. Service in the army led to greater familiarity with politics and encouraged the people to play a part in the great events between 1322 and 1327.

Between 1336 and 1341 these exactions reached a new peak of oppressiveness which Mr Maddicott describes fully. He uses literary evidence, such as the 'Song of the Husbandman', c. 1300, and the 'Song against the King's Taxes', to show that new reasons for complaint brought new abilities to articulate complaints. He feels that revolt was imminent, particularly when tax-collectors and purveyors received new power to imprison the recalcitrant. The compromises with popular opinion which Edward III made in 1340-1 forestalled a popular rising and gave some relief from the intolerable burdens of the previous six years.

To measure the scale and extent of the difficulties which heavy taxation brought, and to tell how different sorts of peasants could bear it, the author finds difficult. None the less, he feels that a combination of several exactions, as in 1294-7, 1315-16, and 1336-41, put the peasant's livelihood at risk and made him sell his seed-corn, lose his plough-oxen, or even flee from his holding. These burdens came to an economy in which the colonization movement had ebbed, in which grain yields were possibly declining, and which could offer no new techniques of husbandry. Mr Maddicott reserves judgement on some issues, such as the decline in population and the fall in rents after 1300, and rightly so, but he does point out that dearth and heavy taxation frequently coincided between 1294 and 1341, so that taxation tended to exaggerate economic conditions which were already harsh.

The essay is in many ways a tract for the times in which we live. Too often historians have separated economic, particularly agrarian, history from political history, and the author deserves our warmest thanks for bringing them together again. Viewed from the angle of the political historian, the essay testifies once more to the great ability of Edward III. Bad weather and Malthusian checks did not do most to determine the future of the English peasantry. The environment takes its true, not its false, place in human affairs, and man appears himself the only

agent. Our masters taught us that history has no lessons or power to predict, but we are sorely tempted to read its lessons and speak its prophecies. Edward III was the wise king who lightened the people's burden when they could bear it no longer; Richard II was the foolish king who thrust them further into the mire, so that they turned and bit both him and his advisers. Which sort of king does England have today, I wonder?

H. E. HALLAM

DENNIS CLARKE and ANTHONY STOYEL, *Otford in Kent: A History*. Otford and District Historical Society, 1975. xiv + 297 pp. 19 maps and line drawings. 27 photographs. £5.

The following observation from the pen of a reviewer to *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1774 concerning the state of Kentish local history would possess equal validity today, for "as a laudable thirst for topographical knowledge seems at present to prevail, glad are we to see as laudable a desire of gratifying it no less prevalent especially in the county of Kent." *Otford in Kent: A History* is one of several scholarly local histories of the county, towns, and villages of Kent to appear during the 1970's. Advertised as "the first full-length history of Otford in Kent from pre-historic times to the twentieth century," and dedicated "To all Lovers of Otford Past and Present and To Come," its authors, both of whom have chosen to live in Otford, conclude on an optimistic note by suggesting that

The long and varied history of Otford has enkindled the imagination of many of its sons and daughters in the past. That history may serve to stimulate their resolution confidently to preserve its evidences, continue its traditions and face its problems in the future (pp. 260-1).

This work is a living testimony to the fact that local history societies are not necessarily inactive and moribund. *Otford in Kent* was published in 1975 by the Otford and District Historical Society in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. Compiled by two of its members, its progress has been furthered by the assistance of others; by several grants, donations, and loans, and by the financial support of 960 subscribers, including this reviewer.

The authors invite judgement on the fact that "in writing this history we have tried to adhere strictly to the evidence of our sources." Expert historical advice has been forthcoming from Professor F. R. H. Du Boulay, Professor G. E. Mingay, Dr F. Hull, and Miss E. Melling, among others. Chapter references indicate that a wide range of primary historical sources has been consulted including a constant access to church and parish council

records, to national and county archives, not forgetting the reminiscences of events from the late nineteenth century onwards as "provided by Otfordians past and present," whose "contributions have often supplied vivid personal details lacking from contemporary documents."

Otford in Kent contains masses of local detail, for which any local historians must be grateful, but also there is much in this work which is of value to the general historian. Because the approach is chronological, so inevitably within each chapter the argument proceeds from one topic or aspect to another. However, several major themes are explored over several centuries, including population movements, settlement, and methods and types of building; agriculture and land tenure; the church, both as a building and as a place of worship; the manor house and later palace of Otford; the village economy as it appeared at different points of time; parish administration; and living standards and poverty. The text is well supported by nineteen maps and line drawings and twenty-seven photographs, including various views of Otford High Street, and a copy of a handbill circulated during Otford's water-supply dispute of the 1880-90's bearing the caption 'The Midnight Billsticker'.

The authors readily admit to certain notable omissions, so that "the history of crime and punishment is hardly touched upon," while "comparisons with other village communities could have been extended had space and time allowed." Despite several references to the farming of the locality, extending from the Domesday Book entry for the manor of Otford (pp. 43-7) through to the interwar years and beyond (pp. 250-1), still "there is a need for the documentation and study of Otford's farms in as much detail as has been given, for example, to ecclesiastical affairs."

By 1085-6 Otford was a complex manor, held by the archbishop as a tenant-in-chief of the king, a vast ecclesiastical estate comprising the settlements of Otford, Dunton, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Weald, Halstead, Chevening, Woodlands and Penshurst" (p. 43). In those early days the Darent valley together with the Medway and Great Stour basins, when permanent grasslands were not plentiful, constituted "a region in which . . . riverside hayfields presented an attractive and unusual picture to contemporary eyes" (p. 45). An early instance of the cultivation of legumes occurs in 1273-4 when two gardens were dug and planted with beans (p. 55). The discovery of two jew's-harps of medieval date confirms the recommendation that the ploughman should "sing to their oxen to obtain the best results" (p. 58). "Otford was not untroubled in the turbulent June of 1381 when the Peasants' Revolt broke out" (p. 81); nor did Otford escape the agricultural disturbances of 1830 (p. 191).

General impressions of Otford farming are also provided for the later seventeenth century (pp. 160-2), and for the twentieth century (pp. 242, 250-1).

Considerably more attention is devoted to land-ownership and tenure through the centuries. "As far as can be judged, the men of Otford manor were in 1086 more prosperous and less servile in status than most Englishmen" (p. 44). Although gavelkind operated in theory, it did not "in the long run result in the splitting up of peasant holdings into excessively small parcels" (p. 62). The Polhills (see Appendix D, p. 266) by amassing land in Otford became the dominant landowners of the seventeenth century. During the eighteenth century, when "there were certainly farming opportunities, . . . land frequently changed hands over the years, new men bringing new blood into the community as they took over the old lands," so that "most Otford families did not keep their stake in the village for very long" (p. 178). In 1828 almost 2,000 of Otford's 2,771 acres were in the occupation of seven farmers, who were the tenants of some half-dozen absentee landlords (p. 192), while "in 1844 seven landlords owned about nine-tenths or approximately 2,500 acres of the whole area, which were leased principally to nine farmers" (p. 199).

The first two chapters, 'Prehistoric and Roman' and 'Anglo-Saxon', tell an incomplete and patchy story. Even for the Anglo-Saxon period much later "the period is a dark age for the locality in the sense of one of which we are relatively ignorant and likely to remain so" (p. 41). The long-established tradition whereby local historians feel obliged to tell a complete story from the beginning lives on, despite the very practical advice from Professor W. G. Hoskins that "there is no necessity for local historians to start their studies of places at the beginning."

The four most valuable chapters of *Otford in Kent: A History* describes the economic and social life, achievements, and problems of Otford from Georgian times onwards (chs 8-11, pp. 168-263). Churchwardens' and overseas accounts provide "a lively picture of poor-law administration at parish level." By 1790 pauperism had assumed alarming proportions, while between 1758 and 1801 the population of Otford almost doubled and there developed within the village a housing problem, because "new building in the second half of the eighteenth century was probably quite inadequate to meet the housing shortage in Otford" (pp. 185-7). It is a pity, however, that a gap in the records from 1805 to 1818 means that "it is largely impossible to estimate the local situation in any detail during and immediately after the Napoleonic War" (p. 189). Despite varying industrial activity in the village from time to time, the general picture of the late 1820's "is of a parish in which three out of every four adult males were

poor labourers, many on the brink of destitution" (p. 193).

Otford was almost exclusively an agricultural community through to the First World War, "a traditional community, of which the characteristic personages were farm labourers and craftsmen, farmers and publicans" (p. 215). The authors of this work experienced some hesitation in extending its scope to the years 1973-4, but twentieth-century local history is too often neglected and any attempt to remedy this defect is most praiseworthy. It is the recent years which have seen the greatest population growth within Otford, from 857 inhabitants in 1921 to 3,179 by 1961 (p. 247). Otford has become a commuter village since the 1920's and 1930's, when new housing was encouraged by the introduction of mains water, gas, and electricity during the 1920's, and much accelerated by railway electrification in 1934 (p. 245). While "the chief fault of the uncontrolled inter-war building was the sprawl it gave to the village" (p. 247), there have been compensations in other respects for "although the new inhabitants were by and large townfolk they revitalized the social institutions of the village or introduced new ones" (p. 247).

There is much else that the reviewer would like to mention from this fascinating and well-researched account of Otford's long and varied history. The work exhibits few faults. It is puzzling why the topographer William Henry Ireland is quoted in 1830 as dismissing the parish in its "low damp situation" as being "far from pleasant" and having "a gloomy appearance" (p. 189), when the great Hanoverian county historian of Kent, Edward Hasted, penned the same sentiments in 1797. Hasted indeed provides an excellent summary of the history of Otford in one sentence:

It lies for the greatest part of it in a low damp situation, which makes it far from being pleasant, and gives it a lonely and gloomy appearance, and in all probability it would have been but little known had it not been for the residence of the archbishops at it for such a length of time.

Twenty years ago Dr F. Hull pointed out that Ireland was a "dilettante incapable of producing more than a pastiche of the work of his predecessors," in the sense that "what is of value comes from Hasted, but there is no attempt to enlarge or expand the earlier work and no real evidence either of knowledge of Kent or of original research" (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXX, 1956).

JOHN WHYMAN

S. J. WATTS with SUSAN J. WATTS, *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586-1625*. Leicester U.P., 1975. 288 pp. 3 maps. £8.

The north-east, frequently ignored or misunder-

stood by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century governments and neglected by later historians concentrating on national events, has now begun to receive considerable and long-overdue scholarly attention. Howell's book on *Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution* appeared in 1967, and more recently, in 1975, Robert Newton's essay on 'Tudor Northumberland in Transition' was published in the Hoskins *Festschrift*, *Rural Change and Urban Growth*. Dr Watts's book also follows hard on the heels of Mervyn James's study of the Durham region in the early modern period. This new book on Northumberland is less total in its scope and more old-fashioned in approach than Mr James's Braudel-like treatment of society, politics, and mentality in the adjacent county. The main emphasis in *From Border to Middle Shire* tends to be political, and its author offers a heavily detailed account of the structure and operation of Northumberland politics, the factions involved in it, and of the ways in which local and national affairs interacted before and after the union of the crowns in 1603 and James I's attempt to transform the county into a peaceful, tax-paying "middle shire". In this connection Dr Watts has some interesting things to say about the central government's perception of the northernmost English county, and of the origins of the external "myth" of Northumberland as totally bleak and barbarous. As the author points out (p. 28) "it was often in the interests of courtiers and aggressive Protestant gentlemen in Northumberland to exaggerate the extent of lawlessness in the county."

Although, as its title implies, politics receive most attention in this book, Dr Watts is careful to establish the social and economic context in which this activity took place. So we find here, for example, a careful discussion of the tradition of hostility between the lowland and highland zones of the county, the consequences of Scottish border raiding, and of the existence of border law and other distinctive customs and institutions peculiar to Northumberland. Dr Watts has some interesting and tightly packed pages illustrating his point that "in the absence of a resident aristocracy, men of gentry status were of necessity the leaders of local society." Even the gentry class, however, was small—approximately 1 in 900 of the population compared with about 1 in 400 in Yorkshire. Dr Watts looks at their wealth, their marriage alliances, demographic history, religion, education, and their social ties (which could overcome religious differences—see p. 84). He has some observations on their work as J.P.s, and on their reactions to external political intervention and interference in county affairs.

Agricultural historians will be interested in Dr Watts's discussion of Northumberland land tenures (pp. 69-73, and ch. 8 *passim*)—leasehold gradually replaced customary tenures—and in what he has to

say about landed income, field systems, and enclosures. Agriculturally, the changed political situation after 1603 had fewer results than often supposed. With or without the raids of Scottish terrorists it was unlikely that the marginal physical resources of the uplands could be made to yield greater profits. Further south, although it was a help that landlords were freed from the burdens of providing local defence, there was no subsequent headlong rush into enclosure; other local conditions and questions of land use determined its feasibility. Dr Watts finds that twenty-four of his villages still retained their common fields in 1625; depopulation was rare.

Beautifully produced by Leicester University Press (which is becoming famous for its high standards of publishing), this admittedly is a useful and informative rather than a stimulating book. Disappointingly, Dr Watts has relatively little to say about the great mass of the population below the ranks of the gentry, but this is largely because the economic and social history in the book has been limited by its preoccupation with county politics; this is history "from above". But it would be wrong to belittle the book's achievements. Dr Watts has put late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Northumberland firmly on the map, and historians will be grateful for that valuable service.

R. C. RICHARDSON

K. T. ROWLAND, *Eighteenth Century Inventions*. Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1974. 166 pp. £4.95.

There can be little doubt that, whether in terms of immediately useful new methods of exploiting or measuring the material world, or whether in terms of ideas which were to have a great future technological impact, even if not immediately exploitable, the eighteenth century was more fruitful than any of its predecessors. However, between the forbidding massiveness of the major histories of technology and the high degree of specialization of the many monographs and their often necessarily blinkered views, it is often difficult for the general reader or the student to get a view of the general progress of invention at this period. It is also difficult, without exploring rather unwieldy encyclopaedic works, to obtain the illustrations which will show the ordinary reader what the original device or equipment looked like, or was expected to look like by its inventor, even when it was not in fact operated. Mr Rowland's book will be a very useful introduction to the subject, ranging as it does very widely, and producing an illustration for each invention. The astonishing fertility of men's minds at this era emerges clearly as we range from micrometers to spinning-mills, from pile-driving to the hydrogen balloon. The economic historian is particularly liable to forget the intensiveness of the historical inventivity of the period as

he concentrates on the immediately adoptable technology, to ignore that, contemporaneously with the development of the puddling furnace or the power loom, men were developing electrical equipment which served to advance knowledge towards the triumphs of the next century without producing anything that was presently useful—apart from the lightning-conductor. Though giving instances of unpatented inventions, Mr Rowland's book gives rise to the reflection that the patent was heavily resorted to for the more significant inventions of the eighteenth century, and can, for Britain, be used as a fair guide to most kinds of technological inventiveness. Not to all, of course; agriculture naturally comes badly out of this kind of survey, not only is the newness of practices difficult to establish, however original they may have been to the mind of the particular practitioner, but methods of stock breeding, for instance, are hardly susceptible to patent. Mr Rowlands has done what he could, however, and made good use of Fussell's *The Farmers' Tools*.

No selection of the kind will please everybody. One would rightly expect from previous work that Mr Rowland would give us a good section on marine development, though copper sheathing is forgotten. The iron and steel section omits the blowing cylinder and curiously puts puddling and rolling under iron *smelting* while referring the reader to no later specialist work than Ashton's, though Gale's marvellously lucid book is advertised on his own book's dust-wrapper. There are a number of foreign inventions included, mainly French, and this is welcome. But the suggestion that the main cause of the failure of the intellectual genius of that nation to give rise to implemented technology was the "machinations and procrastinations of the petite bureaucratie" is simplistic in the extreme. Mining does not even find a place in the index; though difficult to deal with, it tends here as so often to get lost under the heading of steam power, obscuring the fact that in both pumping and winding the employment of steam power is overwhelmingly a part of the techniques of mining for the century being considered. Finally it might have been better to have searched more sources for illustrations rather than rely so very heavily on Rees's *Cyclopaedia* of the early nineteenth century, valuable though it is. Nevertheless, Mr Rowland's book with its careful text, good illustrations, and wide range will be a source of interest and stimulus to many, and lead them on to more specialized books.

J. R. HARRIS

R. A. C. PARKER, *Coke of Norfolk: A Financial and Agricultural Study, 1707-1842*. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1975. xiii + 222 pp. Plate. 5 maps. £7.50.

It is through a detailed study of surviving estate

records that the generalizations made by historians of English agriculture and the myths created by contemporary writers and landlords can be tested. Thomas William Coke of Holkham, "Coke of Norfolk," the largest landowner in the county, was the most famous of the improving landlords, and one of the greatest propagandists for agricultural change in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England. Dr Parker has done a great service to financial and agricultural history by his excellent analysis of the Coke estate, based upon surviving records, accounts, and correspondence preserved at Holkham.

During the 135 years of this study the estates were under the control of the guardians of Thomas Coke for eleven years, and were then in his hands from 1718 to 1759. His widow Margaret managed them from 1759 to 1775, and their ownership then passed to Thomas William Coke, who held them for sixty-six years, 1776-1842. During this period a general estate policy developed: the welfare of the Norfolk estate must be paramount, it should be enlarged and consolidated, and no financial stringency should lead to skimping on its improvement. Without this policy and the careful management by devoted and able stewards, especially Ralph Cauldwell and Francis Blaikie, the debts amassed by Thomas Coke from South Sea Bubble losses, the costs of building Holkham Hall, and the vast debts of the nineteenth century could not have been paid. The family was fortunate in having, after 1730, the revenue from the crown lease on Dungeness Lighthouse, which produced by the 1760's about £2,000, and by the 1820's about £6,500 per annum.

Except for two chapters dealing with the general financial condition of the estate, Dr Parker keeps his focus clearly on agriculture and closely related matters. However, the financial situation of the estate was frequently perilous, and money flowed constantly into it through sales of outlying portions and through borrowing. In 1776 the debt was £97,000 but by 1822 it was £230,000. Least satisfactory is the explanation of where the money went, but the sources evidently do not permit more than careful speculation: grand life style and personal expenses, great political expenditures in Norfolk, portions, interest payments, the purchase of Norfolk lands, and improvements. Yet by economy, great land sales, and very careful management, particularly by Blaikie following the crisis for the estate in 1822, the debt was reduced to £8,000 at Coke's death in 1842.

Parker demonstrates that all the factors were present in the county in the early eighteenth century which would make up the Norfolk system: marling, turnips, clover, and artificial grasses. These with wheat and barley made possible the famous four-

course rotation. Yet a six-course was normal in the late eighteenth century, and the four-course was not common on Coke's estates until the early nineteenth century, the beliefs of Arthur Young and Lord Ernle notwithstanding. Coke did not intervene in the tenanted portions of his estate but encouraged good husbandry by example: Park Farm and the famous sheep-shearings, twenty-one-year leases carefully covenanted, and economically reasonable rents. A prosperous and happy tenant was the best security for the landlord's interests. Coke's own Park Farm of 2,000 acres at Holkham was actually an uneconomic agricultural unit but the fame of its practices and policies had great social and political, as well as agricultural, compensation for its owner.

The careful study of this estate leads to some valuable conclusions. First, it confirms that the heroic interpretation of the English agricultural revolution as a rapid development encouraged by the example of a few great men is unsound. Next, Coke's impact was less important than claimed, and the pace of agricultural change was slow and far from revolutionary. Finally, Coke failed to grasp the possible significance for future income of industrial, mining, or urban developments, perhaps because of his single-minded focus on agriculture. Appendices containing valuable information on national and Norfolk grain prices, on household expenditures, and on the management of the Dungeness Lighthouse complete this excellent study.

RAY A. KELCH

G. E. MINGAY (ed.), *Arthur Young and his Times*. Macmillan, 1975. 265 pp. 3 maps. £10.

With this book Professor Mingay gives yet another immense service to students of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English agricultural history. It provides double benefits: an epitome of Young's life and works together with lucid and concise statements of Mingay's views on topics raised by Young. Selections from Young's writings are drawn from thirteen of his books together with numerous extracts from the *Annals of Agriculture*. The extracts cover nearly the whole of Young's half-century of writing, but they are arranged by themes—the primary purpose is to illuminate agricultural history, rather than to rewrite the life of Young. Although the editor provides a succinct and revealing introductory study of Young as a man, a writer, and a farmer, he makes no attempt to rival Gazley's painstaking and lengthy biography.

The topical headings are grouped under 'Farming Issues', 'The Agricultural Revolution', 'Enclosure and Rural Poverty', 'Industry and Transport', and 'Abroad', each with various sub-headings for the extracts from Young and comments by the editor. The result is about thirty-five small studies from Mingay, of the highest quality, accompanying lively

extracts from Young. The combination is excellent. The cheerful, dogmatic, and occasionally irresponsible rhetoric of Arthur Young is made safe for the reader by the sober, judicious, and profound scholarship of Gordon Mingay. The editing is sympathetic. Young and Mingay, indeed, share the view that the rational pursuit of self-interest tends to promote the general good. This view is associated in both with confidence in the social beneficence of great English landowners. Mingay is even more confident than Young, and, for example, unlike the latter sees no advantage for tenants in farm leases as against tenancies at will. The editor raises the problem of the extent of Young's influence but does not solve it. Young himself complained in 1791 that the regular sale of the *Annals* was only 350. Probably his influence worked down from the top, through the effect of great landlords on their tenants, and through them in turn on farming regions. This was another cause for Young's approval of the English structure of landownership.

The editor writes with secure authority on English themes. On 'Abroad' he is more tentative. The extracts from the *Travels*, where Young is at his most entertaining, are subjected to little criticism. The book is completed by a useful list of Young's writings. To English agricultural history in the period of the 'Agricultural Revolution' this book provides an excellent introduction. The book is attractively produced and is a good bargain for agricultural historians even at its rather high price.

R. A. C. PARKER

E. L. JONES, *Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution*, with a foreword by R. M. Hartwell. Oxford, Blackwell, 1974. xiii + 233 pp. £5.50.

Though the publisher's blurbs on the dust-wrapper nowhere make it clear, this book consists of reprints of articles from a range of learned journals. The title, no doubt chosen with a view to imparting a kind of over-all homogeneity and purpose to the collection, is over-ambitious and, on that account, a little misleading. The time-span covered by the articles—1660–1873—far exceeds the limits of the Industrial Revolution, and only three of the ten essays reproduced here are explicitly devoted to the links between agricultural change and economic growth (though another illustrates the agricultural exploits of an industrialist, and some of the others refer obliquely to economic linkages). The essays were first published over the period 1960–8 and so take no effective account of work over the last seven or eight years. This may not matter seriously much of the time, but it does matter considerably in respect of one recent major work—Eric Kerridge's *The Agricultural Revolution* of 1967.

Though Professor Jones's contributions to the interpretation of English agricultural history are

well known and by now well integrated into current teaching and textbook writing, this volume provides a welcome opportunity for a reconsideration of them. Some of his most valuable contributions are to be found in the "research" articles in this collection that are most exclusively agricultural in content and least concerned with economic growth—local studies of farming in Hampshire and Herefordshire, and surveys of the agricultural labour market in the century up to 1872, of wheat yields between 1815 and 1873, and of the farming trends of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Since some of these articles are in journals less easily accessible to historians, it is useful to have them reprinted here.

But Professor Jones himself probably considers his essays analysing the links between agricultural developments and economic growth in the period 1660–1815 to be more interesting and important, a belief confirmed by his choice of title and the emphasis in his introduction. In this area he pursues two main themes. First, his belief that the modernization of English agriculture—signified by innovations in cropping, particularly fodder cropping, the practice of "floating" meadows, and the creation of a grain surplus—may be dated fairly precisely from the mid-seventeenth century; and, second, his view that these gains in agricultural productivity made an important, if not a key, contribution to the initiation of the subsequent growth in the industrial sector that we call the Industrial Revolution.

It is in respect of the first of these arguments that Professor Jones is most injured by his failure, or inability, to take account of Dr Kerridge's views. Whatever view one takes of Dr Kerridge's controversial work, it cannot be ignored; and by reprinting here unchanged work written mainly between ten and fifteen years ago, Professor Jones weakens his own case by failing to make some acknowledgement of the changed circumstances of the post-Kerridge world. The whole drift of Dr Kerridge's massively documented study is to push back almost a century the beginnings of many of the developments that are central to Professor Jones's thesis. It matters little that Dr Kerridge was weakest where it was most important for him to be strong—on the need to show how general was the adoption of the various new techniques—or that he put an unnecessarily gratuitous gloss on his interpretation by appropriating the misleading title "agricultural revolution" to his earlier period: what does matter is that in the mid-1970's it is no longer possible to insist that everything that mattered to the modernization of farming started in 1660. It is surely possible to reconcile the interpretations of both Professor Jones and Dr Kerridge, and, given the passage of time, it seems a pity that Professor Jones has not attempted this here: neither his introduction nor Dr Hartwell's

foreword, the only new writing in this volume, makes any reference to Dr Kerridge's work.

Without doubt, one of Professor Jones's major contributions to English economic history has been his analysis of the interaction between agricultural developments and economic growth in the century leading up to the Industrial Revolution. Here his emphasis has been on agricultural productivity and prices, on the labour supply, and, most interestingly, on the impact of the rising productivity of the light-soil areas on farming trends and labour demand in the heavy-soil areas. That he succeeds in demonstrating some causal linkage between these developments and growth in other sectors of the economy is undoubted. What he does not perhaps emphasize sufficiently is that many of these linkages were merely permissive: the Industrial Revolution, to cite a single example, needed a more positive stimulus than simply a supply of cheap labour released by productivity gains in agriculture. We need some assessment of the relative importance of this and other agricultural stimuli to economic growth. The question of agricultural price trends is a rather more vexed one. A rereading of Professor Jones's analysis still fails to remove the feeling that the evidence will not stand the weight of the superstructure imposed on it. Professor Jones remains uncertain as to whether the period 1660-1760 was one of generally *falling* grain prices, or of generally *low* prices, or whether low prices were a feature merely of the 1730's and 1740's. The evidence is, of course, much stronger for the last of these, though what still needs to be determined here is whether the trough was sufficiently low to sustain the consequences attributed to it. There is a danger, which Professor Jones does not entirely avoid, of making a mountain out of a molehill here.

Professor Jones, however, loves to throw out ideas, and these essays make stimulating reading because they are so obviously the product of a lively mind. We are too short of historians willing to attempt the answers to the bigger questions in agricultural and economic history to cavil at the occasional over-confident generalization. Though Professor Jones's essays do not add up to a rigorous analysis of the role of agriculture in the Industrial Revolution, they do nevertheless constitute a very substantial and important contribution to English agricultural history.

M. W. FLINN

SIR FRANCIS HILL, *Victorian Lincoln*. C.U.P., 1974.
x + 341 pp. 8 plates. 4 maps. £9.50.

This book is the successor to *Medieval Lincoln*, *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln*, and *Georgian Lincoln*, and completes Sir Francis Hill's history of his native city. Readers anticipating the same qualities of elegance, perception, and urbanity will not be dis-

appointed, and though traditional in approach, his latest volume is a welcome addition to the literature on nineteenth-century towns. His story is one of the partial metamorphosis of a classic county town whose sevenfold increase in population between 1801 and 1911 exceeded by a very large margin those of Shrewsbury, Exeter, and Chester, and which moved from a well-recognized dependence on local agriculture (on which the author, unlike some urban historians, is very well informed) to reliance on world-wide markets for engineering products such as steam and oil engines, boilers and threshing machines, road rollers, wagons, and trailers. However, most emphasis is given to the evolution of local politics and administration which account directly for four chapters, whilst others, such as those on transport developments, education, and public health, are written from a similar standpoint. An important subsidiary theme, very ably handled, is church life and the activities of the denizens of "uphill" Lincoln, the capital of the county and diocese, to which three chapters and a lengthy statistical appendix on church attendance are devoted. Sir Francis makes excellent use of diverse local sources, especially of manuscript diaries from the Lincoln Archives Office, and as a consequence his pages are thronged with individual figures, from Sibthorpe and Chaplin to clerics both worldly and saintly, and gritty, dissenting manufacturers. Abundant colour is given by evocative passages referring, for example, to peg-tops and whipcord, marble-playing and hoop-trundling, and old Mrs Mimmack the Post Office messenger whose skirts were "so short as to scarcely reach her ankles."

On the other hand, it would seem that limitations of opportunity or interest have inhibited the author from fully exploiting the sources available outside Lincoln, or from making comparisons with cities of a like character in such a way as to distinguish what was unique about Lincoln from what was characteristic of the type. This is not to say that the book is written without reference to national trends, but nevertheless it is significant that no reference is made to, for instance, the *Victoria County History: City of York* (1961), R. Newton's *Victorian Exeter* (1968), or R. Church's *Victorian Nottingham* (1966). In consequence Sir Francis accepts (or at least, allows to pass without critical comment) various questionable contemporary assertions such as that Lincoln was not a county centre like York (p. 79), that no town of its size had such a high proportion of owner-occupiers (p. 276), or that in 1900 school attendance was worse than in any town of equal size (p. 276). Reference to the M.O.H. series of Poor Law Records might have enabled him to test whether in fact, as he assumes on p. 130, the numbers of poor were increasing proportionately, which does not accord with another impression (p. 290)

that Lincoln had gained from not being much affected by "the first uncontrolled movement of population in the industrial age and was therefore better off than towns in the south, west and north of the country." The Registrar-General's reports could have clarified a confusing picture of the level and trend of death-rates (pp. 159, 166, 232, 234) which arises out of relying in preference on such secondary sources as Precentor Venables and Dr Garnham's press-cutting book, along with other assertions made by those anxious to make a case for or against sanitary reform. The analysis of population growth does not distinguish between growth by natural increase and by immigration, nor is any reference made to long-run fertility trends, and whilst it is indeed striking that 69 per cent of the adult population of 1851 were born outside Lincoln, this was by no means uncommon at that period. Similarly, if dissenting congregations exceeded those of the Established Church in Lincoln in 1851, the same was true at York, Colchester, Norwich, and King's Lynn.

On the whole, the approach taken here is not much influenced by the recent preoccupations of social historians, and may be said to fall into the Trevelyan mould, which means that Victorian Lincoln is far from being an exhausted subject. For all that, it must be emphasized that few aspects of urban and social history fall outside the purview of this very readable and attractive book, and it goes without saying that although the author's professed intention is mainly to give interest and pleasure to his fellow-citizens, like its predecessors *Victorian Lincoln* is of very considerable value to scholars concerned with similar or wider themes.

W. A. ARMSTRONG

JOAN VARLEY, *The Parts of Kesteven: Studies in Law and Local Government*. Kesteven County Council, 1974. viii + 156 pp. £1.50.

Lacking as it does a university town, the great area of Lincolnshire, stretching from the Humber to the Wash, has perhaps received less attention from scholars than more favourably situated counties. Research too has concentrated largely on the landed estates of the shire, on the voluminous diocesan archives of Lincoln Cathedral, and, geographically, on the fenland parts of the county.

The Parts of Kesteven is a testimony to Kesteven County Council by whom it was published on the eve of the county's amalgamation with Holland and Lindsey. While she makes much use of diocesan and estate papers, Mrs Varley, by drawing on her many years of experience as archivist to the Lincolnshire Archives Committee, has been able to make a study of Kesteven which has tapped much hitherto little-used material. Such sources as the Hundred Rolls, the records of the Kesteven Quarter Sessions, and

the Minutes of Kesteven County Council have been studied to advantage.

This slim volume, attractively printed and priced, does not pretend to be a history of Kesteven. However, by concentrating on aspects of law and local government from Domesday to reorganization in 1974, Mrs Varley has compiled a concise study showing the relationships through history of parish, wapentake or hundred, and county. Of particular interest is the continued reference to the part played at the county level by leading local families. The varied geography of Kesteven, with its fen, heath, and wold land, allows the author to discuss questions, such as land drainage, which are common to Lincolnshire as a whole. This book, then, will prove to be essential background reading for all those interested in local history in Kesteven. It has a wider appeal for those interested in Lincolnshire or local government in general.

DAVID I. A. STEEL

FRANÇOIS SIGAUT, *L'Agriculture et le Feu: rôle et place du feu dans les techniques de préparation du champ de l'ancienne agriculture Européenne*. Paris, 1975. 320 pp. 38 Fr.

Since the choice of agricultural practices is so much influenced by social and environmental forces there is ample justification for the broad geographical study of a single technique. Such a study must be based on a firm understanding of the practical details of the technique itself and its adaptation to various situations. It is in this respect that M. Sigaut's survey of the historical role of fire in tillage is so helpful. While providing detailed descriptions of the different ways in which fire has been used to prepare ground for cultivation, he raises many interesting questions for further study, including the relation of slash and burn to the evolution of the plough and harrow, and the processes whereby techniques were introduced and transmitted between separate areas.

The author initially attempts to dispel the myths surrounding technical terms including *essartage* (slash and burn), *écobuage* (paring and burning, burn-beating, etc.), and *déchaumage* (stubble-burning). He does so by enlisting the aid of medieval and early modern texts together with archaeological evidence and museum collections to describe individual procedures as well as the tools and implements which were brought into play. The history of the different techniques and their geographical location at different periods are outlined, although the dearth of firm evidence from neolithic to medieval times means that developments of this era remain obscure.

Relative efficiencies in terms of production per man-hour of the different techniques are also examined in individual case-studies, which suggest

high returns to effort of slash and burn, particularly in nineteenth-century North America, and the relative inefficiency of paring and burning turf in eighteenth-century Europe. Turf is, indeed, by its very nature, a more serious barrier to cultivation than forest cover, and it required the arrival of iron before the exploitation of grassland became feasible. The slash and burn technique, meanwhile, had arrived in Europe, and spread rapidly by 4500 B.C.; and even when the margins of the forests had receded the early agriculturists preferred pastoral farming to the removal of natural grass cover for cereal culture. In general, however, very real advantages are claimed for burning vegetation. It not only enhances soil fertility by raising the pH factor and increasing the supply of potash but also improves soil structure and aids pest control. Interestingly, earlier agriculturalists, even without recourse to soil scientists, were aware that burning would have pernicious effects on sands where it encouraged leaching of scarce nutrients, and the technique was confined in the main to acid or heavy mediums. The resurgence of turf-burning in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe in association with the move on to marginal land for corn production is also seen as a factor influencing cropping patterns. The growth in the cultivation of turnips and oil-seed rape, for example, is directly linked to the increased use of fire in agriculture.

This wide-ranging and detailed investigation of techniques involving fire is an important contribution to an understanding not only of the techniques, but more important, perhaps, of how they were related to the particular problems, posed by different environments. Notwithstanding the omission of any reference to Alan Gailey and Alexander Fenton's collection of articles on *The Spade in Northern and Atlantic Europe* (Belfast, 1970), it will be basic text for those wishing to carry the study further.

RAINE MORGAN

P. A. JEWELL, C. MILNER, and J. MORTON BOYD (eds.), *Island Survivors: The Ecology of the Soay Sheep of St Kilda*. Athlone Press, 1974. xii + 386 pp. Illus. £8.

This book is an account of the environment and the biology of a relic population of the European domestic sheep. The Soay sheep are thought to have come to St Kilda and the neighbouring island of Soay (in the Atlantic, both about 80 km west of the Outer Hebrides) about A.D. 300–400. These sheep are interesting, not only because they represent a link between the modern breeds of domesticated sheep and their wild ancestors, but also because they survive in a relatively harsh environment which is limited both in area and in terms of available nutrients, and because since 1930, when the human

population was evacuated at its own request from St Kilda, they survive without competition from humans.

The book's fourteen chapters and an appendix cover a range of topics including the climate, soils, and vegetation of St Kilda and the surrounding islands, the colour, conformation, fleece, blood groups, social organization, diseases and parasites, skeletal and dental condition, behaviour, and reproduction of the Soay sheep. I found the most interesting chapter to be one which tries to relate in quantitative terms the availability of nutrients to the nutritional requirements of the sheep throughout the year. The appendix, which is unnecessarily brief, contains a description of a computer model which is being developed to study the dynamics of the Soay sheep population.

The St Kilda islands are now a national nature reserve which contain not only the Soay sheep but also important sea-bird colonies and plant communities. One synthesizing chapter, at the end of the book, points out that the studies on St Kilda are a valuable set of observations on which constructive decisions about the conservation of the Soay sheep can be made. However, it is disappointing that there is so little description of the type of decisions and conclusions about nature-reserve management which have been made as a result of the studies. The important and ever-recurring question about the degree of human interference required in nature-reserve management in order to conserve all important fauna and flora in the reserve is barely discussed.

The book is written by a combination of sixteen authors, three of whom have acted as editors. It is not surprising that this method of preparation has resulted in considerable unevenness of style and presentation. The material could have been reduced in length with considerable gain in clarity. In particular, the presentation of data in both table and histogram form, and the inclusion of longish sections of incomplete review material on various aspects of sheep biology, could have been avoided. The introduction is largely a repetition of material in the early pages of the following chapter, and it is disconcerting at the beginning of a book to find discrepancies between authors on some of the essential facts: for instance, the introduction states that St Kilda (Hirta) extends to 637 ha, rises to 419 m, and has a rainfall over 2,000 mm p.a., whilst chapter 2 states that it extends to 638 ha, rises to 426 m, and has a precipitation of 1,143–1,270 mm. The figure (Fig. 1.1) in the introduction which relates the number of sheep on the island to the year is also curious in that the linear regression (the legend under the figure states regression "curve") appears to have been calculated by coding the years (1932 = 0 and 1972 = 40), a fact that is not mentioned in the text.

Apart from these criticisms, this is a most useful book, well presented and illustrated (with map, photographs, and diagrams), containing a wealth of information presented in a logical sequence. The difficulties of collecting the information from such an inhospitable environment can be appreciated from the text. There are many questions to be answered about these sheep, and it will be interesting to see in future years whether and when the increasing number of sheep which survive on the island reaches an asymptote, and what happens to the rest of the environment in consequence. I look forward to the book's sequel.

J. C. ROWMAN

J. S. DONNELLY, Jr, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork: The Rural Economy and the Land Question* (Studies in Irish History, second series, ix). Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. xiv + 440 pp. Maps. £9.95.

In *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork* Dr Donnelly has attempted something new—an examination of the two central subjects of Irish social and economic history in the last century as they affected one county—and has succeeded brilliantly. Cork is the largest of the thirty-two counties of Ireland: it covers almost one-tenth of the country's total area, and in 1841 had slightly more than one-tenth of the population. According to the census of that year, over 70 per cent of Cork families were employed in agriculture, which makes the county a good choice for a study of the rural economy and the land question. Within its boundaries the differences between east and west Cork, and the presence of Cork city with its great agricultural mart (the butter market was famous) and its two newspapers (whose files the author has used extensively and to good effect), provide a variety of evidence for the historian. One may doubt the usefulness of claiming any one county as "a microcosm of the entire country," however. The decision to confine the treatment of the subject to one county is in most respects an arbitrary one, and is less easily justified in the later sections of the book, where nationally directed campaigns of agitation have to be considered. Local manifestations of national movements are interesting in themselves, of course, and on the whole the territorial limitations the author has imposed on himself do not hamper his analysis.

The outstanding feature of Dr Donnelly's book, however, is the extent to which he has discovered and made use of estate records, "after exhaustive searches in public and private archives in England and Ireland as well as in attics, cellars, stables, and barns throughout County Cork. . ." Until recently very little use was made by historians of this mine of information, partly because it was not so easily accessible as the mound of official records, partly

because even when accessible it often proved to be fragmentary and difficult to use. Despite the neglect and destruction they have suffered, estate papers have survived in remarkable quantity, and some of them—especially those which include correspondence—are of crucial importance in illuminating what actually happened. Throughout this book Dr Donnelly supports and illustrates his argument by detailed reference to particular estates, as well as to official records and local newspapers. The range and thoroughness of the research, the lucid analysis, and the impartial tone of the writing make his work a model of its kind.

The first chapter, on the rural economy between 1815 and 1845, stresses the importance of middlemen in Cork before the Famine, as a factor encouraging subdivision and subletting (and thus assisting the growth of population), and inhibiting improvement by either head-landlords above them or under-tenants below. Clearly the existence of large numbers of long leases gave landowners little chance to influence the course of events during the 1820's and 1830's, but as leases expired the administration of many estates became more active and efficient. Wherever possible the middlemen were eliminated, holdings were consolidated, and improvements were undertaken (an Act of 1837, not mentioned here, gave tenants-for-life powers to charge the inheritance with moneys spent in this way). Elsewhere in the country middlemen were less important (as early as 1730 the Hill family was getting rid of them in County Down) or more tenacious (Trinity College never undertook the direct management of its property); while the financially desperate Lord Donegall in the 1820's actually sold perpetually renewable leases of nearly 150,000 acres of his property in Antrim and Donegal. The first chapter also contains a useful analysis of the plight of the agricultural labours, the worst victims of population increase and hard times, whose position deteriorated even while agricultural production increased. Far from being a period of unrelieved approach to disaster, these years saw the introduction of far-reaching improvements in farming practices and in breeds of livestock. In sheep-farming the Leicester cross, it seems, "affected a minor revolution, for it reduced the time required to bring sheep to maturity from often nearly four years at the beginning of the century to only two years by the early 1830's."

The second chapter traces in some detail the effects of the Famine—"in many ways a watershed in the economic and social history of Cork. . ."—and "the real beginning of a fundamental change in the class structure of the population." The observation that under the legislation to facilitate the sale of encumbered estates the place of bankrupt landowners was taken most often by others of gentry stock

tallies with the findings of recent research into the identity of buyers in other areas, contrary to long-accepted notions.

The next three chapters—on agriculture 1851–91, the land question and estate management 1850–80, and living standards 1951–91—lay the groundwork for Dr Donnelly's main thesis that the land-war of the 1880's was "a product not merely of agriculture crisis, but also of a revolution of rising expectations." Up to 1876, and especially during the years 1865–76 when Irish dairy products were increasingly in demand in Britain and fetched high prices, Cork farmers benefited enormously. Their real living standards, and also those of the agricultural labourers who worked for them (and who were scarcer than before the Famine), rose considerably because on the whole the landlords did not raise rents in proportion to the higher agricultural prices. This last argument is not entirely new—Barbara Solow, in her *The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870–1903* (1971), adduced impressive evidence from income-tax assessments in support of it, as Dr Donnelly acknowledges—but here it is supported by new evidence from estate papers (and very recent research into relations between landlords and tenants on estates elsewhere in Ireland has reached the same conclusion).

The chapter on estate management is of interest for its pages on the business of land agency and the increasing professionalism of Irish land agents, who were generally from a much higher social class than their English counterparts. (Conversely, the job might confer higher social status on its holder: in Somerville and Ross's novel *The Real*

Charlotte it is remarked of Roderick Lambert, "The Dysart agency had always been considered to confer brevet rank as a country gentleman upon its owner, apart even from the intimacy with the Dysarts which it implied . . ."; and having the agency of an estate with a rental of £6,000 or more was one way of qualifying for appointment as a magistrate.)

The agricultural crisis of the late 1870's, by its exceptionally severe and prolonged nature, transformed the whole situation. "The larger farmers joined the agrarian agitation," writes Dr Donnelly, "in an attempt to preserve their accreted gains at a time when their incomes were reduced and when landlords were slow to make adjustments in their rents." Small farmers and cottiers, who had benefited less from the years of prosperity, joined the Land League from fear of eviction. Townsfolk dependent for their increased prosperity on the continued prosperity of the farmers also supported the League and provided much of its local leadership and organization. In his last two, very substantial chapters (125 pages) Dr Donnelly charts the course of the land-war in County Cork from 1879 to 1892 (when the plan of campaign collapsed) with great assurance and a wealth of detailed illustration. His handling of this complicated and difficult theme is a fitting climax to an exceptionally important contribution to Irish historical writing.

The book is expensive but well produced, with a very full bibliography and a good index. The editors of the series are to be congratulated on adding this volume to their list.

W. A. MAGUIRE

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

David Cannadine, author of the Silver Jubilee Prize Essay, is from October 1977 a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. His current research interests are in the English aristocracy from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, with special reference to urban estate development.

Dr Michael G. Jarrett is currently Reader and Acting Head of the Department of Archaeology at University College, Cardiff. Among his research interests are Roman administration, especially the Roman army, Romano-British history and archaeology, medieval pottery, and deserted villages.

Dr Andrew Jones is an Assistant Archivist in the

Derbyshire Record Office. With Dr C. H. Harrison he is editing the letters and papers of Thomas, third Lord Paget, for publication in the Camden series.

Dr Michael Turner is currently engaged in the study of pre-1914 business history at Ealing Technical College. His edition of W. E. Tate, *A Domesday of English Enclosure Acts and Awards*, is shortly to be published by the Reading University Press.

Dr Stuart Wrathmell is Lecturer in Medieval Archaeology at University College, Cardiff. He is working on settlement patterns as reflected in deserted and shrunken villages, moated sites, and vernacular architecture.

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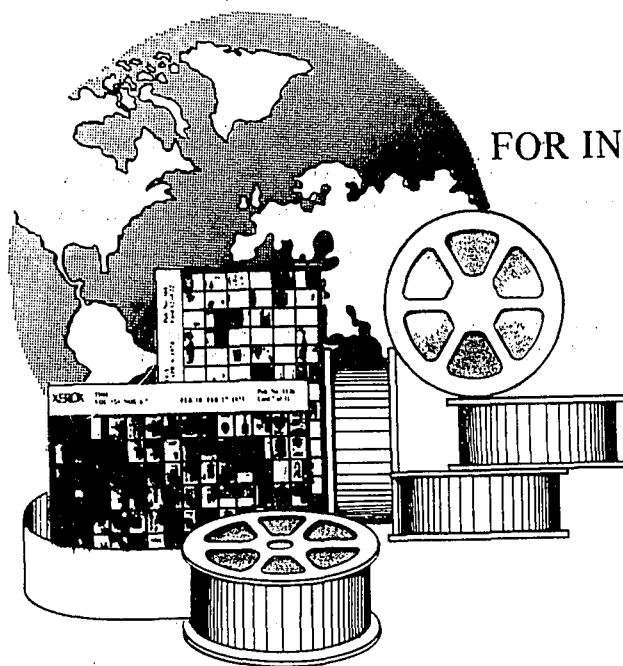
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