

The AGRICULTURAL HISTORY REVIEW



VOLUME 31 1983
PART I

*

Glamorgan Custom and Tenant Right
A W JONES

Landowners and English Tenant Right, 1845-1852
J R FISHER

Farmers' Organizations and Agricultural Depression in Lancashire, 1890-1900
ALISTAIR MUTCH

Irish horse breeding and the Irish Draught Horse, 1917-1978
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Annual List and Brief Review of Articles on Agrarian History, 1981
RAINE MORGAN

PUBLISHED BY
THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BUDAPEST 1982**

**GRAND DOMAINE ET PETITES EXPLOITATIONS
EN EUROPE
AU MOYEN AGE ET AUX TEMPS MODERNES
RAPPORTS NATIONAUX**

**LARGE ESTATES AND SMALL HOLDINGS
IN EUROPE
IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND MODERN TIMES
NATIONAL REPORTS**

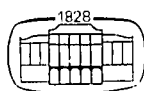
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Glamorgan Custom and Tenant Right*

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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It is now five years since Dr. David Hey compiled the last Work in Progress and the Executive Committee of the Society has decided that another survey should now be made. As in the past surveys, this summary of work in progress will appear in the Agricultural History Review, we hope in volume 31, part II.

Members will be aware how valuable these lists have proved to scholars and you are asked to send in details of current research work on agricultural or agrarian history. In the past, these lists have proved valuable to scholars in many countries, and you are asked to make this survey as comprehensive as possible by including details of work in which colleagues, research students, and others are engaged. Please enter details below, and return this form to:

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Research Topics

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Glamorgan Custom and Tenant Right*

By A W JONES

I

THE problem of tenant right pierces the core of one of the most fundamental characteristics of nineteenth-century rural society, that of land tenure and the nature of agricultural tenancy. It was a vital link in the transformation of the countryside into the realm of commercial agriculture where capital is the final measure of success or failure in the farming community. The study of local customs of tenant right, or of tenant right as an issue of agrarian social and economic reform, serves to elucidate the mechanics of this process but tends to emphasize local peculiarity or the philosophy of contemporary rural politics. Glamorgan Custom cannot be discussed as a local form of rural utopia. Comparison with the widely publicized tenant right custom of Lincolnshire illustrates the association between capitalism, tenurial change, and developments in the agricultural economy. The maturation and consolidation of local custom, its operation within the legal system, and the structural capacity to adapt to movements of agricultural fashion must receive primary consideration.

The essence of tenant right, according to either the dictates of custom or statutory law, is that the agricultural tenant upon the termination of his tenancy is entitled to compensation for labour and capital expended on the farm for which he did not receive the full benefit during his term of tenure. Unexhausted improvements which would profit the incoming tenant, or if the

farm was taken in hand, the landlord, constitute the *raison d'être* of tenant right. Compensation for such additions to the capital value and productive capacity of the farm involves the payment of a capital sum by either the incoming tenant or the landlord to the outgoing tenant based on an established scale according to the type of improvement as well as a systematic mode of judicious assessment. The scale was set to calculate capital payment in terms of the period of time over which the improvement was deemed to be beneficial, taking into account the general appearance and condition of the farm. Thus, if an input was considered to benefit the farm for three years and the tenant quit the holding one year after the initial investment had been enacted, he was to be compensated for two years' value of this investment which had not been realized. This closely resembled a type of insurance policy for personally invested capital and labour. The process of evaluation and assessment of the total state of the farm was a recognition of the farmer's effort and ability.

Tenant right epitomizes the idealistic view of landlord-tenant relations in the nineteenth century. It gave form and substance to the Cairdian model of landlord and tenant being actively involved in the process of agricultural production, in which the landlord provided the fixed capital in terms of the farm and appurtenant buildings and fixtures, and the tenant was granted protection for his labour and working capital, regardless of his term of tenure. According to Caird, the farmers were not to be considered mere husbandmen but small capitalists in their own right: 'But the tenant-farmers are

* I owe thanks to Dr David Howell, University College of Swansea, for reading this paper in manuscript, and for his helpful comments.

entitled also to be reckoned as part owners of agricultural property, for, in the crops and live and dead stock, they own equal to one-third of the capital value of the land.'¹ Caird's model implied that production in an increasingly competitive market economy was a cost-sharing venture, marked by mutual responsibilities and obligations between landlord and tenant. Commercial, capital-intensive agriculture in expanding economic regions like Glamorgan, combined with the active response of the local rural community to supply and demand factors demanded tenants of capital and enterprise, skill and initiative. The fickle nature of a competitive market placed the farmer in a tenuous position with respect to his invested capital. Currents of uncertainty prevented the complete surrender to new and improved modes of husbandry, all of which required liquid funds to initiate and risk to continue in operation. The landlord appeared as an inviolate entity while the farmer, along with the less deified capital which he had invested, was at the mercy of the market and the goodwill of the landlord.

The question of tenant right emerged as a major issue in the agitation of nineteenth-century reform advocates. It has been justly concluded that tenant right was one of the most prickly thorns in the verbal battle between agrarian reformers and the landed aristocracy during the Victorian era: 'Of all the issues . . . tenant right proved to be the most durable and significant.'² The demand for tenant right legislation became the focus of politically active reformers and their parliamentary supporters. Of supreme importance for the future of rural society was that tenant right provided a concrete object for landlord-tenant discontent. It was proof of the gradual erosion of traditional deferential relationships. The entire issue ' . . . transcended the ordinary channels of agrarian dispute to facilitate and to advertise the

disintegration of the long-honored connection between landed proprietors and their farmers'.³

Many counties and localities possessed the rudimentary elements of custom relating to the date and conditions of taking or leaving a farm, but comprehensive systems of compensation to the outgoing tenant, specifically with regard to the capital value of unexhausted improvements were quite exceptional. Lincolnshire Custom appears to have become the terminus of historical investigation and praise while that of Glamorgan, unique in Wales, has been ignored. Lincolnshire Custom holds the exalted position as the 'earliest example on a broad scale', and the sole progenitor of tenant right legislation.⁴ Other customs deserve a far more equitable share of attention. George Shaw Lefevre, a nineteenth-century reform advocate and critic of tenant right legislation, stated that only in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and Glamorgan were customs of tenant right 'sufficient and satisfactory' to provide adequate compensation following the Act of 1875.⁵ The fact that Lincolnshire Custom was the blueprint for subsequent legislation does not necessarily reflect the superiority of that custom. In 1881 Daniel Owen, a Glamorgan farmer and spokesman for local agrarian rights, contended that Lincolnshire Custom was 'inadequate and cumbersome' when compared with that of Glamorgan.⁶ It may also be argued that the comprehensive scope of Glamorgan Custom rendered it unsuitable for the basis of acts of parliament, an unpalatable pill for the majority of landed proprietors to consume with statutory gulps.

II

The tenets of Glamorgan Custom were geared to the orderly termination of tenancy

¹James Caird, *The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food*, Intro. by G E Mingay, 5th edn, 1967, p 43.

²Julian R McQuiston, 'Tenant Right: Farmer Against Landlord in Victorian England, 1847-1883', *Ag Hist*, XLVII, 1973, p 95.

³*Ibid*, p 112.

⁴*Ibid*, p 95.

⁵George Shaw Lefevre, 'The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883', *Nineteenth Century*, XIV, No LXXX, 1883, p 676.

⁶Daniel Owen, *Tenant Right*, Cardiff, 1881, p 17.

following a notice to quit by either the landlord or the sitting tenant. A comprehensive scope of compensation for unexhausted improvements did not, however, suddenly emerge as an established custom without some pre-existing base, a tradition of accepted norms which governed the departure from an agricultural holding. Many of these basic customary elements were deep-seated long before the maturation of Glamorgan Custom as a sophisticated system of tenant right towards the middle of the century. For example, the tenant was entitled to either give or receive six months' notice to quit the holding prior to the traditional final date of occupancy, the second day of February. The outgoing tenant was free to retain, without charge, the farm house and the pasture field nearest the homestead until the end of his tenancy to the first day of May.⁷ In 1828 Grainger and Kennedy described a rather simplified version of Glamorgan Custom, apparently before it had developed into a fully-fledged system of tenant right. A tenant could usually remove hay and straw from the premises and either convey them elsewhere or be paid for their manorial value upon quitting the farm. In 'some few cases' the tenant was compelled to feed the hay and straw upon the land, leaving the manure for the future tenant. It was customary for the outgoing tenant to sow the wheat crop, and be paid for the same by the incoming tenant following a valuation by two or three neighbouring farmers. He was also compensated for the sowing of clover or grass seeds, according to a similar valuation based upon the cost of seeds and labour. The incoming tenant had the option to plough for his own fallows and spring crop, but he could not enter for that purpose before Ladyday (the time of his official and undisputed possession of the farm) without permission from the outgoing tenant.⁸

⁷Lascelles Carr, 'Convey, the Wise it Call', *Red Dragon*, I, 1882, p. 69.

⁸T B Grainger and L Kennedy, *The Present State of the Tenancy of Land in Great Britain*, 1828, p. 212.

Glamorgan Custom, in its most advanced and sophisticated form, was essentially a Vale phenomenon, colloquially entitled the custom of east and central Glamorgan, or that of south and east Glamorgan. The custom was limited to those sectors of the county east of the river Afan and dedicated to arable husbandry, especially the cultivation of wheat. Towards the western borders of the Vale of Glamorgan only the barest elements were visible and the scope, in addition to the scale of compensation, gradually contracted. For example, lime, the traditional manure of Welsh agriculture, was the basis of compensation in the western Vale. Compensation for lime was paid in full only the first year of application, and one-half the initial value for the second year.⁹ The *Report of the Welsh Land Commission* of 1896 stated that tenant right in the west related solely to lime, various other manures, seeds, and labour connected with these operations.¹⁰

There can be little doubt that Glamorgan Custom was sufficiently flexible to adapt to the peculiarities of each locality under its accepted sphere of jurisdiction and to accommodate changes in agricultural fashion. Deeper penetration into the Vale proper and the large arable farms customarily associated with the 'garden of Wales' reveals that the personality of tenant right assumes an increasing degree of complexity. Legal advice given to an estate agent relating to tenant right for a large arable farm near the most favoured area of the western Vale shows that the outgoing tenant was to receive payment for a wide variety of farm inputs: lime in full; ploughing, harrowing, dragging, rolling, and couching at a stipulated amount per acre; dung, but only if paid for by the outgoing tenant at his initial occupation of the farm; a rent allowance for land in fallow; an allowance for a lime kiln 'if lately built, and now in good repair'; carrying dung to the fallows, and

⁹Owen, *op cit*, pp. 19-20, 26.

¹⁰BPP 1896, XXXIV, p. 483.

spreading.¹¹ In another letter of legal advice relating to the same sector of the Vale, the outgoing tenant was to be compensated for the following: '... work and labour tillage corn and grass seeds and Lime & other manures done performed sown used and expended upon the said premises. ...'¹² However, the idea of compensation for unexhausted improvements, albeit in a highly simplified form, appears to have permeated far beyond the favoured climes of the Vale of Glamorgan. In the region of Pontypridd drainage improvements and dry stone walls fell within the realm of tenant right. The dry stone walls had to be at least five feet in height, but were not to exceed six feet. Both walling and drainage were eligible for compensation for a period of fourteen years.¹³ It is interesting to note that the dry stone wall was perhaps one of the most ancient improvements associated with Welsh agriculture; it had been employed for boundary fences and the keeping of mountain stock for centuries. This represents the geographical limit to which the Custom of Glamorgan could reasonably diffuse, touching the most elementary innovations in the highland region just to the north of the Vale. In fact, in many northern districts of the country, these were the only improvements which could be readily executed.

Towards the end of the century Glamorgan Custom had developed into a comprehensive system of tenant right, taking into account every aspect of county farming. The payment of compensation had extended far beyond the restricted confines described by Grainger and Kennedy in 1828. Time-lapse and set rates of compensation illustrate the important difference between the more simple customs of taking and leaving an agricultural holding and the more advanced concept of protection for invested labour and capital.

The evolution of the farmer as an entrepreneur increasingly reflected the ultimate domination of the farm unit by considerations of costs and prices. Glamorgan Custom mirrored this process. As the century drew to a close, rents, tithes, and taxes came to assume a far greater role in moulding the character of local custom. The outgoing tenant received a proportion of these capital payments with respect to fallows, as his successor would enjoy the benefit of tax exemption as well as that of the recuperated land.¹⁴ The same was also received for stubble from the autumn ploughing to the second day of February, and for land on which young seeds were growing that had not been fed off after the corn had been cut.¹⁵

The amount of compensation paid depended heavily upon the state of the farm at the time of valuation. This could reach a full two-years' rent for a well-kept mixed Vale farm of arable and pasture. As much as £5 to £6 per acre would be paid for turnips, but only £2 to £3 if they were to be sold off the farm. Farmyard manure was compensated for a period of three years: 2s 6d to 3s 6d for the first year, declining by two-thirds for the second year, and warranting only one-third the initial value for the final year. If the outgoing tenant should lay or trim hedges, compensation was permitted for up to one year for trimming, but was extended to three years for labour and the value of planting; the scale was one-third of the total value per annum for the latter.¹⁶

Glamorgan Custom appears to have been fundamentally supported by the twin props of wheat and turnips. The dominant mode of intensive agriculture during the mid-century was the Norfolk System, but this can only be considered a general guide as the Norfolk System was almost never found in its pure state. A wide variety of local mutations was characteristic of the county. Tenant right

¹¹ NLW (National Library of Wales), Penrice Margam, 9290.

¹² NLW, Penrice Margam, 9313.

¹³ BPP 1896, XXXIV, p 484.

¹⁴ Carr, *op cit*, p 69.

¹⁵ Owen, *op cit*, p 28.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp 27-8.

compensation was therefore geared towards facilitating a system of mixed husbandry. Drainage represented a fairly long-term investment, but a necessary pre-requisite to improve the impermeable clay soils of much of the Vale and put them in good heart for corn production. Manuring, fallowing, seeding, and crops were short-term investments according to any measure, but of absolute necessity in the prevailing trend of local agricultural production. Corn was the common denominator of the entire framework. In fact, farm valuation to assess the capital value of tenant right was based upon wheat, a crop which seems to have held an almost mystical fascination for contemporaries. Each party, whether it be the outgoing tenant, the incoming tenant, or, if the farm was taken in hand, the landlord, had the right to select an independent valuer of his own choice. The valuation was made according to the value of the wheat crop upon the land. In the event of a dispute, an umpire was selected to enact a judgement, a decision which was deemed to be final and binding for the parties concerned. The method of valuation and recourse to an umpire was perhaps the most superb example of what contemporary critics viewed as the ideal partnership of landlord and tenant. It made tenant right a viable, realistic mechanism when legislation was non-existent. Without this mode of judgement and arbitration, Glamorgan Custom would have sunk to the status of a flouted law, an absurdity popularly evaded and often scorned.

The bill for tenant right could be fairly extensive, and often ranged from 20s to as high as 60s per acre. Scale rates were flexible enough to accommodate various states of farm quality. For turnips £5 to £6 per acre could be paid if two-thirds of the crop was consumed and tillage done and manure laid; £2 to £3 if turnips and swedes were sold off the land but the manorial value retained through artificial or other fertilizers; £2 to £3 if the turnips were retained upon the land; 10s

to £1 per acre if the turnips were carried away, plus the price for seeds sown and labour done for sowing, harrowing, and rolling. Farm manure applied to grassland warranted compensation for the full value during the first year according to the cart load, taking into consideration the quality of manure and distance of haulage. On arable land manure was compensated for a three-year lapse period. If two straw crops were taken from a manured field no compensation was paid. Nothing at all was paid for the construction, enlargement, or repair of farm buildings. No machinery could be removed from the farm, whatever the circumstance. The laying down of arable land to grass, considered by many to be the most valuable improvement towards the end of the century, did not fall within the scope of Glamorgan Custom and nothing was granted for its execution.¹⁷ Arable agriculture was definitely the environment in which the Custom matured and flourished.

Lincolnshire Custom was in many respects similar to that of Glamorgan, but there were fundamental contrasts which reflected variations in local modes of agriculture, and a different pattern of development. Basic structural characteristics such as the farm valuation, appeal to an umpire in the event of a dispute, the sliding scale and a period of time to denote the productive capacity of the improvement in question, and local peculiarities within county borders, were common features of both customs. Lincolnshire Custom was largely based on underdraining, feeds such as oilcake, and fertilizers in the nature of guano, bones, lime, and claying.¹⁸ One basic difference was that in Lincolnshire permanent additions to the farm like farm buildings warranted compensation for a period of up to twenty years if constructed by the tenant's labour and capital. In Glamorgan, as in the rest of Wales,

¹⁷ BPP 1896, XXXIV, pp 483-4; David Grigg, *The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire*, Cambridge, 1966, p 134.

¹⁸ McQuiston, *op cit*, p 95; R J Olney, *Lincolnshire Politics, 1832-1885*, 1973, pp 41, 224.

it was standard practice for landlords to supply the material and skilled labour for the construction of farm buildings, and the tenant the haulage and unskilled labour. The tenant, however, was almost universally bound by contract to execute all repairs on buildings to the satisfaction of both the landlord and the incoming tenant. In this instance it was the landlord's capital expenditure which was receiving the benefit of protection, while the tenant's contribution of haulage and labour was more in the nature of a service, a burden without compensation or return.

Lincolnshire Custom appears to have been primarily suited to high farming. For example, storage of cattle feed was paid up to a maximum of two years. In the 1840s allowances were beginning to be made for oilcake fed to cattle in the yard. It was not until 1879–80, however, that compensation was adopted for liming, marling, and claying on the principle of a seven-year maximum period of exhaustion. Allowances for underdraining ran from seven to fourteen years. In light of these improvements it is justifiable to state that Lincolnshire Custom matured in the 1840s when high farming was reaching a state of entrenchment: '... its origin was connected with the spread of high farming'. But long-term investment of a more enduring nature was also evident, tending towards the promotion of land reclamation by individual farmers. A tenant who took an upland farm in a barren state would pay a very low rent for the first few years of his tenancy. Rent was increased when the land was in good heart, and began to yield substantial crops.¹⁹ It may be contended that there was an almost natural thirst for agricultural improvement, a drive to review a state of affairs and seek a remedial course of action. Perhaps in both the 'garden of Wales' and Lincolnshire the tradition of adaptation to natural problems of soils and climate instilled a psychological freedom to experiment, a catalyst for change

and innovation. What is certain is that the desire to improve, the challenge of market demands, and the existence of at least significant amounts of capital were necessary pre-requisites for the establishment of tenant right as a local custom.

III

The acceptance of a custom of tenant right is parallel to changes in the prevailing matrix of land tenure, as well as the availability of technology and developments in agricultural acumen. It has been quite accurately stated that tenant right '... developed of its own accord out of the circumstances created by the year-to-year tenancy'. Compensation was therefore a substitute for security of tenure, a welcome alternative, for 'It did not hang the weight of a long lease about the neck of the tenant. . . .' Lincolnshire Custom, in fact, became embedded in that county when agricultural profits had diminished and farm expenditures were reduced by landlords and tenants alike following the disaster of the post-Napoleonic War period. The emergence of yearly tenancy not merely gave the landlord a greater degree of control over his own property, but provided the tenant with a short-term escape from distress when markets and prices crashed about him. Depression and prosperity set the parameters within which tenant right could function. In Lincolnshire, custom was employed as a guideline during periods of depression, testing the tenant's ability to retain his holding, and helping to make the landlord's decision as to whether or not the financially troubled tenant would be permitted to hold the farm in future.²⁰ Around Loughborough in Leicestershire farms were generally let on twenty-one-year leases, but tenant right clauses were generally included in the lease to provide additional security for the farmer's capital. A contemporary advo-

¹⁹ Olney, *op cit*, p 41.

²⁰ Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming*, 1967, p 266; J A Perkins, 'Tenure, Tenant Right and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, 1780–1850', *Ag Hist Rev*, 23, 1, 1975, p 315.

cate of tenant right, Charles Stokes, believed that on small farms which did not require a great deal of capital, tenant right was vastly superior to long leases. But on the Bute estate in Glamorgan tenants of small capital disliked the payment of tenant right anterior to entry, a bill which was invariably less than a full two years' rent. In 1829 the second Marquis of Bute compensated the outgoing tenant of Rhydpennau on the basis of an understanding that the new tenant would make no claim upon his departure.²¹

Glamorgan Custom followed the general pattern of tenurial development. The drive towards corn production during the war period, often characterized by the breaking up of valuable pastures, the growing of successive crops of corn which exhausted the soil, and the uncontrolled lust to grasp higher prices, left much of the 'garden of Wales' in a desolate state. An 1816 survey of the Dinas Powis estate, located in a favoured sector of the eastern Vale of Glamorgan, serves to elucidate the extent of this dilapidation. Much of the land was 'Poor and wet Starved by the Stagnated water no discharge for the same'. Meadow grass had deteriorated, and what little manure was applied was almost useless owing to the lack of proper drainage facilities:

... there is not an acre of it properly Cultivated and treated the Ditches and watercourses full of mud ... the fences out of repair together with all the Buildings not a Gate or Bars on the Estate. In short every thing Seems in ruin.²²

Contemporaries insisted that long leases, encouraging a farmer to exhaust the soil for the term of his tenure, receiving the highest level of profit with little or no input costs, were the ultimate cause of farm deterioration. A concerted policy to let leases fall in was widely adopted by county proprietors. Yearly agreements, many of them verbal, became the dominant mode of tenure in lowland Glamorgan by the middle of the

century. Indeed, long-term investment in underdraining may have been conducive to the granting of long leases when both farmers and capital were equally scarce. On the other hand, allowances for short-term investments like seeding and manuring, especially in order to attain substantial turnip and wheat crops, alleviated the air of uncertainty associated with yearly tenancy. Farmers were striving for greater levels of production, receiving lower prices in spite of expensive inputs, but maintaining a profit margin by increased sales of produce. Only a high and constant demand could justify this measure. Tenant right was virtually a necessity in this fragile economic milieu.

IV

Real property law and the actual operation and legality of tenant right as a local custom before the era of statutory legislation are fundamental problems which have not been fully investigated. It is essential to advance a definition of custom and define its true legal status. Without a strong legal basis customs of tenant right would not have been the darlings of agricultural commentators and reformers. It is clearly absurd to consider security for capital when undisputed security of custom has not been established.

The concept of tenant right was not merely a heady idea of land reform advocates or the mysterious consequence of ancient practice. It had legal precedent and a solid base upon which to theoretically expand into more general usage. Within the confines of the common law a tenant was guaranteed certain compensatory rights, under specific conditions entitled emblements. If a tenancy was unexpectedly ended owing to some totally unforeseen circumstance, during a period in which the occupier's crops were growing, the tenant possessed the right to enter on the land and harvest the crops, irrespective of the termination of his tenancy.²³ The law concerning emblements

²¹ Charles Stokes, 'On Securing to the Outgoing Tenant a claim to Unexhausted Improvements', *JRASE*, 6, 1845, p 47; David W Howell, *Land and People in Nineteenth-Century Wales*, 1977, p 88.

²² NLW, Dinas Powis, 412.

²³ Gibson's *Conveyancing*, 5th edn, 1938, p 398.

was particularly relevant to those tenants who held an interest in the land which was terminated by the whims of fortune, and not in the normal course of contractual release. It did not apply to non-agricultural tenancies. If a tenancy ended prior to the actual harvest the tenant was entitled to enter and reap the growing crops when they had ripened. This right only extended to 'artificial' crops annually produced by the labour of the tenant. Crops like wheat (*blé* being corn, the French or law-French origin of the word *emblemment*) and turnips were therefore protected, but perennial crops like fruit were not afforded the benefits of the right to enter and reap.²⁴

The law of *emblemments* closely followed the pattern of land law legislation during the course of the nineteenth century. According to the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1851 a tenant for years at a rack rent, whose lease had expired owing to the failure of the lessor's estate could, in lieu of *emblemments*, remain in occupation until the end of the current year of tenancy.²⁵ The common law with respect to *emblemments* and agricultural tenancies at a fixed rent was superseded by later acts pertaining to tenant right. Tenants for life, however, farming what was in reality their own land, were not covered by the provisions of tenant right legislation, and continue to enjoy, in equity, a right to *emblemments*.²⁶

The example of *emblemments* provided a legal as well as an intellectual justification for nineteenth-century land reform advocates of enforced tenant right. In 1883 George Shaw Lefevre employed the precedent of *emblemments* to depict the ultimate logic of compensation for agricultural tenants. He gloried in the fact that neither party could contract out of the tenets of the common law. Lefevre emphasized that this doctrine should be extended to improvements in addition to

growing crops, a modification which he believed would illustrate the real nature of cost-sharing in agricultural production between landlord and tenant.²⁷ Ironically, the common law itself was more ancient than custom with regard to tenant right on a wide scale.

The actual legality of custom *qua* custom may at first sight appear to taint the validity of tenant right with a hue of uncertainty, relegating it to the status of an extra-legal, non-legislative phenomenon with no solid foundation or effectual means of enforcement. On the other hand, it must be realized that until the revolutionary legislation of the 1920s customary law did have a tremendous bearing on the entire edifice of the law of real property. Of Lincolnshire Custom it has been stated that agreements with respect of tenant right were sometimes included in the lease agreement, but tenants strongly preferred the actual custom '... which grew to have almost the force of law'.²⁸ The concept of acceptance rather than legality remains the standard interpretation concerning Lincolnshire Custom: 'By the 1840s the custom was well established, although it had no legal basis and remained simply an accepted understanding between landlords and tenants throughout the century.'²⁹ This is precisely what had happened in Glamorgan, at least in terms of general acceptance and, adherence to the principles of tenant right. But whether mere custom or not, what was according to the custom of the country was also the law of the land where that custom prevailed. Suits at common law over the interpretation or even implementation of Glamorgan Custom were not unknown. In fact, it was clearly stated in the *Report* of the Welsh Land Commission of 1896 that if documents prepared by the valuers went unheeded by either the landlord or the incoming tenant, the outgoing tenant had the right of recourse to a suit at common

²⁴ G C Cheshire, *The Modern Law of Real Property*, 5th edn, 1944, p 166.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p 166.

²⁶ G R Y Radcliffe, *Real Property Law*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 1938, pp 31-2.

²⁷ Lefevre, *op cit*, p 682.

²⁸ Olney, *op cit*, p 41.

²⁹ Grigg, *op cit*, p 134.

law.³⁰ Obviously, the apparent laxity of custom as a term of reference mattered little with regard to legal validity.

The strict legal definition of custom is of particular importance to the present analysis of tenant right: 'Custom is an unwritten rule of law which has applied from time immemorial in a particular locality and which displaces the common law in so far as that particular locality is concerned.'³¹ The displacement of the common law is what gives any custom its peculiar local flavour, and distinguishes it from a mode of behaviour; at that point it becomes an institution enforced by the hand of authority. But laws and institutions by their very nature must be formal and specific. A custom must possess five essential criteria before it bears legal weight: it must be certain, reasonable, have existed from time immemorial, have continued without interruption, and be applicable to a particular locality. Restriction to a specific locality and the existence from time immemorial must be satisfied before the remaining criteria formalize the custom. The problem of immemorial time may be satisfied by either unopposed acceptance or the recognition of a modern phenomenon which has become established owing to a prior, but recent grant, from some undefined source: the mists of the past, perhaps excused on the basis of the doctrine of emblements or the existence of customs of taking and leaving an agricultural holding, would provide adequate proof. Custom is not, however, to be confused with prescription, a right vested in an individual, an estate, or a title. In order for a person to fall under the jurisdiction of custom, an attachment of the right to a specific locality must first be ascertained, followed by a proven connection with that locality of the individual concerned.³²

An epidemic of legal action concerning Glamorgan Custom on the Margam estate

during the 1840s serves to illustrate the ultimate legality of custom. Both custom and lease agreement appear to have been carefully weighed in the legal technicalities following a dispute. For example, in one instance landlord and tenant were both held responsible for reciprocal compensation, the landlord according to the custom of the country, and the tenant by contractual agreement.³³ Very often, it appears, compromises were made in order to evade the expense and inconvenience of legal procedure. An attorney's letter elucidates this form of tactful evasion:

... he has laid out considerable sums for improving these farms — amounting to £156 - 14 - 0 ½ ... I believe he is willing to accede to every thing that is just and according to the Custom of the Country ... P.S. I think if you allow him the half years Rent due 25th. inst. and pay him the balance of £125. 19. - 0 ½ ...³⁴

In one case of dispute it was ruled by the court that further procedure be deferred to arbitration based on the value of the wheat crop. The court made custom itself the basis of justice, providing that the outgoing and the incoming tenants, suitors in the dispute, made written submissions to the assessors and the umpire.³⁵

It is quite clear that Glamorgan Custom was intended to promote the compensation of conscientious farmers genuinely interested in improvement, not slovenly men oblivious to committing acts of waste to the farm and eager to receive payment for dilapidation and poor husbandry. This idea extended to farming techniques in addition to general appearance. For example, in Lincolnshire a tenant was not permitted to break up grass land without permission, or to sell any hay, straw or manure off the farm. The tenant was also to keep fences, ditches and buildings in good repair.³⁶ There were similar safeguards in Glamorgan, and these

³⁰ BPP 1896, XXXIV, p 483.

³¹ Cheshire, *op cit*, p 291.

³² *Ibid*, pp 292-4.

³³ NLW, Penrice Margam, 9290.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ NLW, Penrice Margam, 9319.

³⁶ G M Williams, 'On the Tenants Right to unexhausted Improvements according to the Custom of North Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, 6, 1845, pp 44-6.

were widely accepted as part of the initial contract between landlord and tenant. In one instance a tenant was given notice to quit by his landlord for non-payment of rent, obviously following a period of severe disagreement over a variety of matters. The landlord chose to ignore tenant right while the tenant apparently wished to remove the farm from the very face of the earth on his departure. Compensation was owing to the tenant for any improvement made by the employment of his own labour and capital, but the court was also bound to honour the terms of agreement with his landlord in addition to local practices of good husbandry. The tenant was compelled to leave all dung on the farm, not less than twenty tons of good straw, all other hay or fodder belonging to the farm, and 120 acres in either naked fallow or root crops. All fences, buildings, and other farm structures were to be left in good repair, and the outgoing tenant was not to sublet the cottage, grass or turnips during the final year of his tenancy. Both landlord and tenant were ruled to share the cost of court proceedings. The cash settlement was based on the arrears of rent owing by the tenant. An abatement of £510, however, was made by the landlord out of an investment in buildings begun by the tenant but not completed. The remaining arrears were to be remitted, and only the abatement was raised for any additional improvement.³⁷ In effect, the formal contractual agreement and Glamorgan Custom were part of the same package of legal protection.

In Lincolnshire there were a few cases where landlords refused to pay the outgoing tenant compensation for certain improvements. A 'Special Jury' ruled in one instance that the tenant was entitled to compensation for rent and taxes only on summer fallowed land, and 'for fold-yard fences and buildings five or six inches only in the ground'; other claims were rejected. In another case the court refused to grant a tenant compensation

for bone manure and marl laid upon the land the year prior to his quitting the farm. The court ruled that the landlord was not liable as tenant right was a matter to be settled between the outgoing and the incoming tenant.³⁸ This does not imply that tenant right was not considered legally binding but that both custom and the law agreed in that the matter was solely related to tenants, and not to the owners of the soil. In Glamorgan it appears that although at least one landlord was attempting to establish his independence from liability, custom was more comprehensive and deeply rooted.

V

The Agricultural Holdings Acts of 1875 and 1883 provided an acid test for Glamorgan Custom. Although the statute of 1875 contained the essence of the idea of tenant right, it bound neither landlord nor tenant. The private contract remained supreme, so much so that the landed proprietors unfavourable to the granting of compensatory allowances simply contracted out of the Act. The legislation of 1883 was more universal in scope, and represented what may be truly dubbed a revolutionary stage in the development of the law of real property. Contract was placed in a subservient position with respect to parliamentary legislation governing the termination of agricultural tenancies. By the provisions of the Act it was made impossible to waive tenant right by contractual agreement. Compensation for unexhausted improvements according to their capital value became the letter of the law.

The Glamorgan response to the Act of 1875 was quite simple: '... negative replies were given for the whole of Glamorgan-shire. . . .'³⁹ If tenant right was to be enshrined as a legal institution by the Act of 1883, the legislators also realized that local customs were not inferior to statutory reform. This Act was based on the much-

³⁸ Perkins, *op cit*, pp 20-2.

³⁹ BPP 1896, XXXIV, pp 496-7.

³⁷ NLW, Penrice Margam, 8661.

vaunted Lincolnshire Custom, but the statute declared that where local custom was preferred by the inhabitants, landlords and tenants could reach an agreement of their own accord before the Act came into effect. Customary tenant right regulations then came to possess the force of a statute pertaining to that locality.⁴⁰ Statutory legislation, undoubtedly a boon to the farmers of less fortunate climes, was not enthusiastically received by the farmers of Glamorgan and Lincolnshire. Compensation for liming, boning and feeding stuffs could have little effect where traditional modes of tenant right had been long rooted in the fabric of agricultural production. The Lincolnshire Chamber of Agriculture proposed that local custom should remain the foundation of payments with respect to temporary improvements rather than the procedure set forth by the Act. Both the Chamber and the local valuers were to reach an agreement regarding the exact clauses of Lincolnshire Custom.⁴¹ In Glamorgan, however, 'landlords and tenants alike' strongly preferred the letter of local custom, and a general lack of interest appears to have been the rule: '... over the greater part of the county of Glamorgan... this Act is confessedly a dead letter. Nobody attempts to contract out of it; for the plain fact is that nobody takes the slightest notice of it.'⁴²

Evidence given before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1882, bears out the fact that local farmers had little interest in tenant right legislation. Out of nineteen testimonies presented by Glamorgan farmers, only one stated that Glamorgan Custom did not apply to his farm: all others made specific mention of tenant right being the norm, in one instance being rather proudly referred to as 'our country custom'. One farmer considered Glamorgan Custom 'if not abused' to be 'far superior to the Agricultural Holdings Act'. Another tes-

tified that, although he held his farm by agreement, he was still covered by the custom of the country. There were absolutely no criticisms of Glamorgan Custom. General satisfaction was the dominant chord.⁴³ Local farmers however, did react more strongly to the legislation of 1883. Glamorgan farmers essentially scoffed at the Act. They were repelled by the appeal to a court of law, if necessary, when the award exceeded £100 to the outgoing tenant. The choice of local valuers and arbitrators, as well as the binding decision of the umpire in the event of a dispute, were universally preferred.

The Act of 1875 was irrelevant to those areas of Glamorgan governed by customary tenant right. In those regions of the county where custom was either severely diluted or non-existent, the Act had the effect of prompting landlords to grant contractual agreements which were not only superior to the Act itself, but as definitive as the custom then prevailing in the Vale. A lease of 1877 from the Aberpergwm estate, situated in the Vale of Neath, a locality where it had long been known that Glamorgan Custom had no validity, serves to prove this hypothesis. The agreement clearly stated that both custom and parliamentary legislation were in no way related to the contract: 'Neither the AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (ENGLAND) ACT, 1875, nor any custom of the Country, shall apply to these presents, or the tenancy hereby created.'⁴⁴ The agreement then outlined a contracted form of tenant right. Drainage was considered to be of paramount importance. If the landlord supplied the tiles and the tenant the labour, the labour was compensated on a declining scale of four years, but if the tenant supplied both material costs and labour the compensation was extended to eight years. All drainage operations had to be executed according to a plan agreed upon by the landlord and his agent. Manure also warranted compensation. If

⁴⁰ Lefevre, *op cit*, pp 682-3.

⁴¹ Olney, *op cit*, p 225.

⁴² J E Vincent, *The Land Question in South Wales*, 1897, p 87.

⁴³ BPP 1882, XV, p 23.

⁴⁴ NLW, Aberpergwm, 2216.

only one crop had been taken following the use of artificial manure and the land was clean, the tenant was to be paid one-half the original cost, proof of the quantity employed in addition to the initial cost being presented. The cost of dilapidation and any evidence of sloth in the repair of farm structures was laid solely upon the tenant. Arbitration measures were also included as part of the agreement. One referee was to be chosen by the landlord and another by the tenant, but an umpire, regardless of whether or not a dispute was in the offing, was to be chosen by the valuers 'before they begin to act'.⁴⁵ It appears that this lease tended towards a far stricter definition of Glamorgan Custom, limiting the scope of compensation, but stressing the mutual involvement of landlord and tenant in the preservation of farm quality and the propensities for increased agricultural production. This was not really contracting out of the Act of 1875; the lease more closely resembles a contracting into a modified version of Glamorgan Custom. From the landlord's point of view, this measure was designed to reiterate and emphasize the almost celestial aura of contract, whereas the tenant reaped the benefit of land reform agitation without the trouble of actual involvement. It was a skilful compromise, but advertised the fact that the landlord was in control of estate affairs. On the larger estates coffers were overflowing with the royalties and rents accruing from coal and mineral operations, and the proprietors could easily afford to subsidize needy tenants during periods of economic distress. On those estates where landed incomes were entirely dependent upon agricultural rents, especially during this age of difficulty, such help was not forthcoming.⁴⁶

Glamorgan Custom, especially near the twilight of the nineteenth century, was not without its critics, despite the commonly-held belief that '... everything good in the

farming of this division of the county (Vale of Glamorgan) owes its position' to the protection offered by tenant right. Complaints were frequently made concerning heavier than usual bills being presented to incoming tenants 'in the hands of unscrupulous men'. The incoming tenant was compelled to expend a substantial sum at the beginning of his tenancy, an amount which would remain frozen, and could be regained only by his departure from the holding. Thus, a temptation was provided for those 'unscrupulous men' to realize a little hidden interest on their original investment by raising the tenant right bill, or even to make a racket out of frequent taking and leaving farm holdings.⁴⁷ Complaints were often voiced pertaining to the allowable periods of time under which compensation for drainage improvements were made. Many witnesses testifying before the Welsh Land Commission of 1896 believed that the usual fourteen years should extend to twenty, or even as high as thirty years, especially if drains were constructed of stone instead of the less durable tiles. The amount of time for which dry stone walls were compensated met with the same criticism.⁴⁸ Glamorgan farmers were even exhibiting a tendency to prefer one aspect of legislated tenant right contained in the Act of 1883, that related to compensation for the laying down of arable land to grass.⁴⁹ This spelled the first complete rift in the local faith in Glamorgan Custom as the saviour of farmers and the prime mover of agricultural improvement. With the decline in arable agriculture owing to the 'Great Depression' the laying down of arable land to pasture was the major weapon in the battle to maintain the vitality of the local farm economy.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See A W Jones, *Agriculture and the Rural Community of Glamorgan, circa 1830-1896*, Swansea, unpubl. PhD thesis, 1980, ch IV and VI.

⁴⁷ W Little, 'The Agriculture of Glamorganshire', *JRASE*, 2nd ser., XXI, 1885, p 181.

⁴⁸ BPP 1896, XXXIV, pp 714, 720.

⁴⁹ Little, *op cit*, pp 181-2.

VI

The origin of tenant right is marked by a distinctive air of uncertainty, even mystery. Many contemporaries believed that Glamorgan Custom had emerged at an extremely early date, shrouded in the mists of Norman times. It was put forth by the Welsh Land Commissioners of 1896 that Glamorgan Custom had emerged only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and had reached its age of maturity towards the early 1840s. They held, quite logically, that the emphasis on drainage and the cultivation of turnips in order to increase corn yields provided sufficient proof that Glamorgan Custom could have come into being only when agriculture had reached a fairly advanced state, and not before.⁵⁰ But this assertion relates most strongly to tenant right, and not the real essence of custom *per se*. It is perhaps most reasonable to assume that the drive towards highly advanced styles of husbandry effected a revolution in the more traditional customs associated with the orderly taking and leaving of a holding. The local importance of the corn crop and the large-scale drainage operations necessary to initiate modes of intensive agriculture clothed the bare bones of ancient custom with the more tangible garb of tenant right. Shortage of capital and the unwillingness of entrepreneurs to invest in agriculture, despite the brisk demand for foodstuffs engendered by the demographic explosion of the South Wales Coalfield, was a serious hindrance to the implementation of innovative farming techniques. Intensive agriculture, if a viable means of maintaining a profit margin by increased production and sales of produce during an era of low returns, necessitated a vehicle for the guarantee of capital investment in an economic milieu so prone to price fluctuations and the vagaries of nature. This is precisely why tenant right emerged when it did, greatly expanding the parameters of local pre-existing customs into a comprehensive mechanism to promote investment

from the only source of willing entrepreneurs, the tenant farmers.

In 1882, Lascelles Carr, a local spokesman for the landed proprietors, stated that the custom of the country was '... gradually built up by the mutual good sense of landlord and tenants recognising in a spirit of equity the necessities of the case'.⁵¹ If Lincolnshire Custom had emerged with the diffusion of high farming, then it was the domination of the county's agriculture by various mutations of the Norfolk System in the period following the Napoleonic Wars, and the subsequent attention given to high feeding, which established the economic basis of Glamorgan Custom.⁵²

Towards the end of the century, and with the 'Great Depression', Glamorgan Custom was failing to hold its reputation as the saving factor for local tenant farmers. It became a constituent issue in what has been termed the 'Land Question'. The depression, much like the previous turmoil in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, provided the opposite end of the spectrum; it brought the question of tenant right into the limelight. Shortage of capital within the agricultural community, the failure of some farmers, and the difficulty of finding fresh tenants financially capable or even willing to take a farm, changed Glamorgan Custom into a matter between landlord and tenant rather than an amicable settlement between the outgoing and the incoming tenant. The role of cushion was replaced by a bed of thorns in the side of landlord-tenant relations.

John Howells, a local tenant farmer who wrote in 1882 to defend his beleaguered class, presented an incisive analysis of Glamorgan Custom with respect to its origin and subsequent development:

Until about 1840 it was an unwritten custom, handed down for generations from father to son, constantly advancing and adapting itself to the necessities and growth of the agriculture of the district, and an

⁵⁰ BPP 1896, XXXIV, p 489.

⁵¹ Carr, *op cit*, p 69.

⁵² Jones, *op cit*, ch III.

excellent incentive to the adoption of every new method and improvement in farming.⁵³

The chain of natural adaptation to changing circumstances was broken at a time when Glamorgan Custom had reached its age of maturity, and had encompassed most of the improvements associated with intensive arable agriculture. Farmers would not willingly sink funds to convert to permanent grass in this tenuous economic era without a sound guarantee that it was not a bottomless pit of no return.

Glamorgan Custom, just when it had reached an advanced stage of maturity, suffered the straight-jacket of stringent definition. About the year 1840 the principal landlords and tenant farmers of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire held a series of meetings in Cardiff, and '... with the best possible intentions, formulated it into a system'.⁵⁴ At these meetings the tenets of custom were established, and the parameters set forth in which it would operate and function. Scales were set, and improvements stilted in the prevailing tendency towards intensive agriculture. No doubt the landlords were anxious to check and define a phenomenon which would give the tenants an advantage in adverse economic circumstances, especially if farms were to be taken in hand and the owners were faced with heavy bills for tenant right. The tenants, however, appear to have been willing or at least acquiescent partners in this definition of local custom. They saw their prized 'custom of the country' sanctified as an accepted institution and their capital freed from uncertainty. But this act was contrary to the very idea of custom. It was as if a group of men, unaware of future developments in the agricultural economy, and short-sighted enough to believe that the prevailing agricultural fashion would survive into eternity, were meeting to plan when, where, and how a custom was to occur. At first sight, this

agreement might appear as laying the legal basis of custom in Glamorgan, but the progress, or even regress of agriculture, would of itself force occasional modification. Consensus served to codify a system of widely accepted norms and values, eliminating the aura of freedom, and replacing it with that of conformity and coercion.

A form of bureaucracy was introduced into the mechanical workings of Lincolnshire Custom, but it was intended to permit periodic revision. From 1873 the Tenant Right Valuer's Association met annually to adopt a flexible scale of compensation designed to alter with changes in farming practices.⁵⁵ In Glamorgan, however, further development appears to have been effectively discouraged, and measures to alleviate agricultural distress towards the end of the century by the conversion of arable land to grass, could not be accommodated except by statutory enactment. Glamorgan Custom could not function as Glamorgan System, but had become stunted, rooted in momentary consensus. Such inflexible systems are not as beneficial in a changing economic environment, and lack the capacity of custom to bend and weave according to the whims of agricultural fashion:

This act of theirs, which assumed the custom to be full grown, had quite unintentionally the effect of checking its natural development; and it has become quite doubtful whether at the present, taking into consideration the changes and progress in agriculture which have recently grown so rapidly, whether the custom has kept pace with the advance in farming or even advanced at all.⁵⁶

The conformity and systemization of Glamorgan Custom had stripped it of the 'necessary amount of elasticity and powers of adaptation' and the inherent ability to change according to the personality of the market or the advance of technology.⁵⁷ A custom it was, and a custom it should have remained.

⁵³ John Howells, 'The Land Question from a Tenant Farmer's Point of View', *Red Dragon*, II, 1882, p 81.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p 81.

⁵⁵ Olney, *op cit.*, p 224.

⁵⁶ Howells, *op cit.*, pp 81-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 81-2.

Landowners and English Tenant Right, 1845-1852

By J R FISHER

A COMMON theme found in the literature on nineteenth-century rural history is that of the economic and social damage perpetrated by a landowning class intent on preserving its political power base. Failure to gain statutory protection for tenant-farmer investment until the late nineteenth century has been adduced as one example of this theme. Briefly, it is argued that tenant right, in the form of compensation payments to outgoing tenants for the unexhausted value of their improvements, was a necessary prerequisite to the growth of investment and therefore productivity in English agriculture. Many landowners recognized the justice of this case and, indeed, that it could prove economically beneficial to themselves. However, as a class they opposed statutory recognition of the principle because of the adverse implications for their predominant role in tenurial relationships.

The thesis can be found in the work of D C Moore¹ and, most completely and dogmatically, in that of O R McGregor. 'As the history of the game laws demonstrates only too brutally, landlords never hesitated to coerce their tenantry to accept practices which increased the amenities of their estates; among these, good farming did not figure importantly.'² Mr McGregor's stress on a 'conflict . . . between the good producing and political functions of the land' is the implicit basis of J R McQuiston's survey of the campaign for statutory tenant right in England, the only account which deals with

the latter in any detail.³ Agricultural historians have been less sure, certainly as to the impact on agricultural progress. Most would agree that 'lack of security did not make for good farming, nor did it encourage a farmer to adventure his own capital in improvements'.⁴ However, as is emphasized in the standard account of 'The Agricultural Revolution', 'many other factors also influenced the tenants' investments',⁵ while F M L Thompson has demonstrated that legal insecurity and an increase in the utilization of off-farm inputs were certainly not incompatible.⁶ Finally, in the most important study of English tenant right which has appeared up to the present, J A Perkins has outlined the positive role of landowners in the development of the Lincolnshire Custom.⁷

The Lincolnshire Custom of tenant right evolved in close association with market agricultural progress in parts of the county from the late eighteenth century. Older established county customs made varied provision for tenant changeover although the essential provision was that the outgoer should be allowed 'to reap where he had sown'. Under the Lincolnshire Custom he

¹ J R McQuiston, 'Tenant-Right: Farmer against Landlord in Victorian England 1847-1883', *Agricultural History*, 47, 1973, pp 95-113.

² C S Orwin and E H Whetham, *History of British Agriculture 1846-1914*, 1964, p 177.

³ J D Chambers and G E Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880*, 1966, p 165. See also G E Mingay's review of McGregor's Introduction in *Agricultural History Review*, X, 1962, pp 58-61.

⁴ F M L Thompson, 'The Second Agricultural Revolution 1815-1880', *Economic History Review* 2nd Ser, XXI, April, 1968, pp 62-77.

⁵ J A Perkins, 'Tenure, Tenant-Right and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, 1780-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, XXIII, 1975, pp 1-22. This supersedes earlier accounts such as D Grigg, *The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire*, Cambridge, 1966, pp 132-6.

¹ D C Moore, *The Politics of Deference*, 1976, pp 346-8, 361-2.

² O R McGregor, introduction to sixth edition of Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, 1961, p cxxxi.

was also entitled to compensation for specified improvements made in the course of cultivation and which remained unexhausted. Arbitration was a necessary feature of all such customs; in itself this casts some doubt on D C Moore's assertion that landowners were unwilling to allow any third party intervention in tenurial arrangements.⁸ Certainly, however, when legislation essentially based on the Lincolnshire Custom was proposed, as both J A Perkins and J R McQuiston note,⁹ local landowners were to the fore in opposition. The obvious explanation, provided by McQuiston, was the fear of the (possibly long term) implications of statutory interference. The present study is designed to demonstrate that much more was involved.

The context for this is provided by the campaign for statutory tenant right between 1845 and 1852. In view of the inaccuracies and misunderstandings which limit the usefulness of McQuiston's account, the causes and nature are examined more fully than might otherwise be thought necessary. The focus, however, is on the nature of opposition to a tenant right measure. While an element of distaste for legislative interference was not absent, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that stereotypes of a landed class intent on preserving political privilege at any cost hardly provide a sufficient explanation of such opposition.

I

It was the 1840s which saw the beginning of a movement for tenant right. The background, in possibly the most momentous decade of nineteenth-century agricultural history, is not too difficult to trace. Within an overall context of the contemporary preoccupation with the potential of domestic

agriculture to feed the rapidly growing population of Britain, two major elements were involved. The first was the perception of momentous change in the prevailing practice and structure of agriculture. The second lay in the discovery of the Lincolnshire Custom.

'It is evident that we have entered upon a new era in the history of agriculture.'¹⁰ Whatever the precise timing of the beginning of the 'Second Agricultural Revolution', the perception of a radical transformation was first generally voiced in the decade after 1836, parallel with the foundation of numerous agricultural societies, including the Royal Agricultural Society in 1838. Attention focused on two major features: the utilization of off-farm inputs of feeding stuffs and fertilizers, and the potential of drainage, especially with the mass production of cheap pipes, for increasing productivity on heavy soils. Of these it was the new off-farm inputs, with rapidly rising imports of guano catching the agricultural imagination most dramatically,¹¹ which had the most immediate implications for change in tenurial arrangements. In the 1840s their introduction imparted a new urgency to the existing concern over the implications of the prevailing lack of security for tenant investment.

The provision of the new inputs was obviously a function of the farmer and, equally obviously, required an increase in his working capital. Unlike the application of traditional off-farm inputs such as marl and lime, which were relative infrequent operations clearly distinguishable from normal cultivation practice, the use of the new fertilizers and feeding-stuffs were part and parcel of the latter. Artificial cake was fed to cattle and sheep as much if not more for its

⁸D C Moore, *op cit*, p 348. While arbitration under custom was normally concerned with the arrangements made between outgoing and incoming tenants, the owner was directly involved when resuming a holding and, indirectly at least, it necessarily had implications for the rental contract.

⁹McQuiston, *loc cit*, p 101; Perkins, *loc cit*, p 13.

¹⁰*Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 29 July 1844. The Select Committee on Agricultural Distress of 1836 appears to have played a major role in enlightening a wider audience as to the use of artificial feeding-stuffs and fertilizers; see the comments of William Shaw in the *Mark Lane Express*, 11 and 18 April 1836.

¹¹See, for example, *Agricultural Gazette*, 3 January 1846; *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, XVIII 1841-51, pp 418-26.

impact on manorial values as for its contribution to directly marketable animal produce. It was thus more difficult to adapt rental contracts (the traditional practice for permanent improvements not made by the owner) to cater for such investment in temporary improvements, although they also became incorporated in the soil and were liable to be appropriated at the end of a tenancy. In any case, in so far as the new inputs were regarded as the key to raising productivity on a national scale, agricultural improvers felt that some kind of universally applicable guarantee for the security of tenant capital was required. In this context even the old panacea of leases was evidently inadequate, their introduction likely to be gradual, dependent as this was on private initiative.

A new approach to the problem was necessary. It came with quite dramatic suddenness. In 1843 when Lord Portman introduced a Bill into the Lords which incorporated the principle of compensation for unexhausted improvements it received virtually no attention from the agricultural community.¹² The real catalyst for a campaign over the same principle was the discovery of the Lincolnshire Custom, until then apparently virtually unknown outside of the county. In 1843 Philip Pusey could pay a glowing tribute to the high level of cultivation to be found in North Lincolnshire without mentioning the Custom.¹³ A year later, he wrote: 'I can see no means so likely to supply this old defect (the absence of capital from land), and to bring England generally into the condition of Lincolnshire, as the adoption of Lincolnshire covenants. The subject of unexhausted improvements seems to me the most important of all agricultural subjects for landlords at present.'

Pusey's comment was a footnote to Barugh Almack's essay on Norfolk agriculture, where the latter had the temerity to suggest that the Custom was superior even to the famous leases of the Holkham estate as a foundation for improvement.¹⁴ Appearing in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, the latter, with Pusey as editor, was one vehicle for introducing the Custom to an agricultural audience. At the same time it was the favoured subject of a widely reported investigation by members of the Loughborough Agricultural Association into methods of securing tenant investment.¹⁵ William Shaw, the editor of the *Mark Lane Express* and, like Pusey, an enthusiast for improved farming,¹⁶ was impressed with a system 'by which the tenant was secured his proper regard without leases'.¹⁷ With the two most influential publicists in the agricultural world both (and largely independently) taking up the question of tenant right on the lines operated in Lincolnshire it was certain to become a topic of significance. In December 1845 Shaw expounded his views to a crowded meeting of the recently formed Farmers' Club and, early in the next year, Pusey announced his intention of introducing a measure into Parliament which would give the outgoing tenants a legal right to their improvements, the Lincolnshire Custom to be its basis.

In retrospect it is less difficult to see why the merits of the Lincolnshire Custom were so enthusiastically hailed in the mid-1840s than why they were so long unappreciated.

¹² *Hansard*, LXX 25 July 1843, c. 1324. On its reintroduction in 1844, William Shaw noted that, if passed 'the necessity of a lease for the protection of a tenant would in a great measure be removed': *Mark Lane Express*, 1 April 1844.

¹³ P. Pusey, 'On the Agricultural Improvements of Lincolnshire', *JRASE*, IV 1843, pp. 297-9.

¹⁴ Barugh Almack, 'On the Agriculture of Norfolk', *ibid.*, V 1844, pp. 341-9.

¹⁵ *MLE*, 21 October 1844, 3 February 1845; *BWM*, 14 October 1844, 27 January 1845; *AG*, 19 July and 16 August 1845; *Farmers' Magazine*, 2nd Ser., 10, December 1844, pp. 511-16, 12 August 1845, pp. 138-41; and, in response to a request from Pusey, *JRASE*, VI, 1845, pp. 46-8.

¹⁶ The historical attention paid to Pusey matches the high regard he was held in by contemporary agriculturists; besides a number of essays there is an unpublished PhD thesis by R. W. Linker: *Philip Pusey, Esq: Country Gentleman, 1799-1855*, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1961. William Shaw (1797-1853), has not received the attention he deserves. Sir Ernest Clarke outlined the bare details of his career in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, XVII, p. 1386-7.

¹⁷ *MLE*, 28 October 1844.

A possible factor was a natural confusion with other county customs, some of which had acquired a degree of ill-repute. The Surrey Custom especially was frequently denounced. William Cobbett described it as 'a good custom, because it ensures good tillage to the landlord', in so far as it was intended to compensate the outgoer 'for whatever he leaves behind him, which if he had staid, would have been of value to him'.¹⁸ To this extent there was little difference in principle between the Customs. What was objected to was, in particular, the nature of valuation. This had become a set procedure which gave ample scope for fraud and saddled the incoming tenant with payments for operations which were often of little value.¹⁹ In consequence the tenant right payment in Surrey had become so high as to be a drain on the working capital of the incomer; even a defender of the system reckoned it at £20 per acre.²⁰ Tenant right payments in Lincolnshire could also be substantial,²¹ but methods of valuation were relatively clearcut and, seemingly, more equitable.

Under the Lincolnshire Custom, valuation was on the basis of a schedule whereby the value of specific items was discounted over a number of years. Although it included traditional payments for labour and cultivation operations immediately before the tenancy change, manorial items were separately specified. The valuation of these was based on original cost, the outgoing tenant being required to provide evidence of his expenditure. It was discounted, not over the number of years during which the input retained its effect, but over the time calculated to provide a reasonable return to the

outgoing tenant. Compensation was assessed by two valuers, one each appointed by the outgoing and incoming tenants; an umpire adjudicated where these two could not agree. The amount finally fixed was paid by the incoming tenant who negotiated his rental contract completely separately. Finally, in stark contrast to other customs, that in Lincolnshire was perfectly acceptable to all parties concerned and was flexible in its operation. New inputs, particularly those feeding-stuffs probably used extensively in North Lincolnshire at an earlier date than in any other English region, were easily accommodated within the Custom. This reflected the relative freedom with which the valuers could operate, introducing new items in specific cases which then became precedents for wider application.²²

It was these latter features which made the Custom so attractive to Pusey and Shaw. The audience of the latter at the Farmers' Club was also enthusiastic. As one speaker remarked: 'In Lincolnshire, good and liberal rights were allowed to the tenantry, and the consequence was that the land was in fine condition. He was quite satisfied that the adoption of such a principle throughout the country would do more for the introduction of good farming than anything else.'²³ The response, from the members at least, seemed to augur well for a campaign on tenant right. Pusey at least was determined to pursue the issue as far as possible; a year later he told the Smithfield Club that 'tenant right was the life or death of practical agriculture'.²⁴ Early in 1847 he introduced the first English Landlord and Tenant Bill into Parliament.

Shaw thought him premature. Much more preparation was necessary, if only to remedy the ignorance of landowners as to what tenant right entailed. Otherwise the Bill would stand little chance in a body dominated by that class.²⁵ The fate of the Bill confirmed his misgivings. Pusey withdrew

¹⁸ William Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, 1912 ed 1, pp 156-7.

¹⁹ L Kennedy and T B Grainger, *The Present State of the Tenancy of Land*, 1828, pp 16, 250; J R McCulloch, *A Statistical Account of the British Empire*, Vol 1, 1838, pp 459-60; PP VII, 1847-48, SC on *Agricultural Customs*, Evidence, Qs 7843-79; J Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850 and 1851*, 1852, pp 119-20.

²⁰ FM, 19 January 1849, p 32.

²¹ An example of payments covering 10 farms totalling 5000 acres in 1874 gave an average of just under £2 per acre. It is interesting to note that only about a quarter of this was for feeds and fertilizers; *Transactions of the Surveyors' Institution*, 7, 1874-75, p 127.

²² This brief description is based on Perkins, loc cit, pp 11-17.

²³ FM, 13 January 1846, p 58.

²⁴ Ibid, 15 January 1847, p 58.

²⁵ MLE, 8 and 15 February 1847.

it at Peel's request; it was then considered by a Select Committee which made extensive alterations. Pusey did not consider the amended version worth re-introduction. In 1848 he chaired the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs which, while recognizing the validity of the principle of compensation for unexhausted improvements, did not feel that legislation, even of the permissive variety advocated by Pusey, was necessary. In succeeding years Pusey introduced further Bills bearing the same title but designed only to allow entailed owners the right to enter into contracts which made provision for compensation and which would be valid after their death. These passed the Commons twice but were thrown out by the Lords. The episode appears to provide confirmation of the thesis that landlord power was used to maintain and to frustrate even minor infringement of their privileged position in the face of the evident economic benefits of tenurial change.

It was, however, not quite as simple as this. In the various debates on Pusey's Bills there was no challenge to the basic principle of compensation for unexhausted improvements. The only explicit opposition to the idea of legislation as such came from Colonel Sibthorp, a name synonymous with obscurantism, who objected to any interference at all with the relations of landlord and tenant.²⁶ Otherwise, objections concerned the specific provisions of the Bills, in particular the manner in which compensation for the unexhausted value of the new inputs would be assessed. The objections could of course have been a cover for more selfish reservations but two points, by way of commentary, can be made, the second of which requires expanding in some detail. Firstly, one Landlord and Tenant Bill was passed at the time. Introduced in 1851 (not by Pusey), it reversed the existing common law presumption on agricultural fixtures,²⁷ as the

1848 Select Committee had agreed in recommending. This was a definite intrusion on tenurial relations but, apart from the obligatory comment from Sibthorp, it passed with little comment and no opposition from either House. Secondly, the practical objections were real. They were also expressed from quarters where, if tenant right had been as crucial to progress as was often maintained, it would have been expected to have been accorded a rather more sympathetic consideration.

II

One such group, already alluded to, consisted of the landowners of North Lincolnshire. Although Pusey's 1847 Bill was based explicitly on the principle and machinery of the Custom whose operation they favoured on their own estates, they strenuously opposed its legislative implementation. R A Christopher, MP for North Lincolnshire, was a persistent critic in the Commons, and a petition from 144 owners and occupiers in the county set out their objections. The central thesis was that legislative tenant right would involve the landlord, to his detriment, more explicitly in tenancy changes and the provision of compensation. Thus they objected to the onus of compensation payments falling on the landlord rather than the tenant and, more important, to the inflexibility of the Bill's schedules for valuation. Many of their points seemed specious and tendentious but they amounted to a fear that legislative tenant right could prove an open-ended commitment in a process which would 'produce much uncertainty, litigation and dispute'.²⁸ Lincolnshire agents and owners were later to stress to the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs that their Custom worked because it treated both outgoer and incomer equitably. A legislative system would preclude the operation of the sort of informal mechanisms which gave effective protection against

²⁶ *Hansard*, XC, 22 February 1847, c 384; CIII, 14 March 1849, cc 688-9; CX, 1 May 1850, c 1061-2.

²⁷ *Ibid*, CXVI, 14 May 1851, c 947.

²⁸ *MLE*, 19 April 1847.

excessive payments by incoming tenants and landlords.²⁹

This raised another fear which must have occurred to owners, although not raised explicitly in the petition. This was that heavy compensation payments would have an adverse impact on both land values and rents. J A Perkins has noted that the operation of the Lincolnshire Custom restricted the supply of potential tenants to those with adequate capital, and argues that this was one cause of a relatively low level of market rents.³⁰ But compensation payments had another effect. Prospective tenants calculated on a certain level of profits over and above the interest on their invested capital and the rent. Given the appropriate level of competition and knowledge, the amount of rent they were willing to pay would not be higher than would allow them a perceived fair return for their enterprise, interest on the capitalized value of their own live and dead stock plus that on the compensation they had paid to the outgoing tenant. High compensation payments could thus mean lower rents. This had happened, it was argued, in Nottinghamshire where the practice was to discount the value of inputs over the time they were supposed to have effect.³¹

The implications of either uncertainty or lower rents for landlord investment were obvious. It was this theme which led many of the most ardent adherents of 'high farming' to view tenant right with hostility — particularly those who equated advanced with Scottish (or East Lothian) agriculture. Scottish writers, including Caird, were inclined to dismiss tenant right as an inferior substitute for leases,³² and this may also have been a factor in the attitude of the *Agricultural*

Gazette, accepted from its foundation in 1844 as the English advocate of progressive farming on the Scottish model. Its leading authorities, John Chalmers Morton and Chandos Wren Hoskyns, felt tenant right was an encroachment on 'the *commercial principle*' of freedom of contract, the true basis of all economic progress. It also had overtones of a concept of 'rights' anathema to all supporters of *laissez-faire*. 'No rights can exist but those founded on the understanding of landlord and tenant at the commencement of their relationship, which was either implicit in the "custom of the county" or explicit in a written contract.'³³ Their suspicions of the implications of statutory tenant right were finally given concrete focus in 1848 by a report from a committee of the Law Amendment Society.

The findings of the committee, reflecting its composition but not impugning the validity of its case, tended to vindicate the traditional legal approach to the vexed question of the clear delineation and demarcation of property rights in land. Although readily upholding the justice of the principle of compensation for unexhausted improvements, the committee was confronted with grave problems in dealing with 'improvements which are so embodied with the land as to be incapable of separation from it'. In fact it had to concede that 'no way has yet been devised of valuing improvements for compensation ensuring justice to both parties'. Its great contribution to the debate on tenant-right, before coming to the lame, if logical, conclusion that it would be in the interest of all parties if no legislative change was attempted at present, was to state explicitly the practical difficulties facing any attempt to specify the nature and extent of compensation.

The committee found two grave problems to be involved. In the first place, there were the deficiencies associated with compensation and valuation on the basis of prime

²⁹ SC on *Agricultural Customs*, Evidence, Qs 6976, 7187-97, 7251-5, 7357-62, 7736-40.

³⁰ J A Perkins, 'The Prosperity of Farming on the Lindsey Uplands, 1813-37', *Ag Hist Rev*, 24, 1976, pp 138-40.

³¹ See the Rev C Neville, *The Justice and Expediency of Tenant-Right Legislation, Considered in a Letter to Philip Pusey Esquire*, 1847, and also his remarks to the SC on *Agricultural Customs*, Evidence Qs 7249-76.

³² Review of Shaw's and Corbett's *Digest of Agricultural Customs*, 1851, in *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, XVIII, 1849-51, pp 384-91; J Caird, op cit, pp 503-08.

³³ AG, 25 April, 28 November, 26 December 1846, 2 and 9 January, 10 April 1847.

cost; this did not necessarily bear any relationship to the future value of improvements and could represent a grave injustice to the landowner and incoming tenant. Secondly, they pointed out the impossibility of establishing the precise value of temporary inputs over any length of time in the context of a wide variety of physical conditions and types of farm practice. As Hoskyns had already argued, it was impossible to lay down any 'cut and dried scale of compensation' to fit all exigencies of agricultural tenancies; the committee emphasized how widespread these could be, and, further, how they could change over time. Tentatively, it proposed that the problems might be met by setting limits on compensation payments and by establishing a public body to review existing customs and bring them into line with modern conditions.³⁴ However, it also recognized that such solutions were a potential source of litigation and uncertainty; it was probably best to leave things as they were.³⁵

That the committee had performed a valuable service in clarifying the problems involved in establishing a system of tenant right was recognized both proponents and adversaries, by Shaw at the *Mark Lane Express* as much as Morton at the *Gazette*. The benefit, however, was mainly to adversaries, as was demonstrated in the course of the evidence given to the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs in 1848. On its establishment, Pusey asked the Farmers' Club to supply a list of names of those willing to come forward as witnesses. A number of prominent agriculturalists who favoured tenant right were accordingly called upon to give evidence and Shaw was optimistic as to the outcome. They were questioned sympathetically by Pusey but received a rough handling from other Committee members. Pressed closely on such issues as the principle

of compensation, the nature of valuation, and the consequences for permanent investment by landowners, most were forced to take refuge in vague generalizations on the justice of the claim and the stimulus it would give to improvement. Some even argued that all that was needed was a specific clause or statement on principle conceding a legal right of compensation to tenants. None were able to explain how this would overcome the practical difficulties which would arise.³⁶

In these circumstances the most sustained and coherent defence of the case for a legislative measure came from William Shaw. In a series of papers to the Farmers' Club he sought to demonstrate that tenant right would benefit landowners, that it was not to be confused with the traditional county customs, and that the technical problems involved in its statutory implementation could be solved. Aware, as all farmers' spokesmen were, of the importance of landlord investment, Shaw stressed the 'primary rule, that the general improvement of the farm belongs to the landlord: that compensation to the tenant for unexhausted improvements should never be measured by a reference to the rental paid as compared with the value of the farm to let when the tenant is quitting'.³⁷ However he also conceded, implicitly, that there was a connection when arguing against arbitrary limits on compensation payments: 'the lower the rent the greater would be the sum required to be expended' by the tenant. Ultimately, farmers would have to depend as much on the practice of valuation as on any set of general principles.

His views on valuation were set out at length in a paper to the Farmers' Club in 1850. Stressing the general acceptance of the Lincolnshire Custom, he argued that compensation should be limited to specific items

³⁴ Pusey's Resolutions, as Chairman of the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs, contained a similar recommendation (*Report*, p vii). It was not adopted.

³⁵ A full account of the Report and Recommendations of the committee appeared in *MLE*, 15, 22, 29 November 1847.

³⁶ *SC on Agricultural Customs*, 1848, Evidence, Qs 536-9, 705, 1809-19, 2035-41, 2739-41, 3425-35, 4605-19, 4313 and 5454-9.

³⁷ William Shaw, 'The Principles which should regulate the valuation between the landlord and the in-coming and out-going tenant under an equitable system of Tenant-right', paper to the Farmers' Club, in *FM*, 21 May 1850, p 397.

and assessed on its principle. However, valuation schemes would have reflected the admitted diversity of regional practice. In each area, these would specify items and the mode of discounting value over time, providing the valuer with 'the least possible amount of discretion' in dealing with the concrete evidence of each case. He would, however, still have to use his discretion. 'The arbitrators should not be wholly governed by the outlay, insomuch as by an injudicious mode of expenditure an unnecessary cost may have been incurred.' But this should cause no real problems. 'The cream of the agricultural class, men who stand high in their class, are generally selected to fill the office of valuers; and if I had to rely solely on the integrity and character of the men whom I find constituting the class of valuers, I should feel considerably at ease as to misconduct on their part.'³⁸

In hindsight it is clear that Shaw's faith, whether in the equity of the principle of evaluation, or in the possibility of acceptable schedules, or even, possibly, in the credibility of valuers, was misplaced. The principle of valuation was suitable only in certain circumstances, the authority and expertise of valuers was questionable, and, most important of all, there was no possible satisfactory method of calculating the value of manurial residuals. The latter was the crucial difficulty; from it, directly and indirectly, stemmed the other difficulties.

The valuation of manurial residuals is a complex question, even given the fullest knowledge of the agricultural and chemical principles involved. Variation in soil, climate and even farm condition must be taken into account while, in the mid-nineteenth century, given the wide prevalence of adulteration (and the varying nature of such inputs as guano), there were also problems in deciding on the original composition of artificial manures. Further, developments in agricultural chemistry during the course of the tenant right campaign, were a setback to

any hopes that science could provide a simple practical guide to the use of manures and their valuation. By 1850, the excitement which had followed the publication of Leibig's *Organic Chemistry and its application to Agriculture and Physiology*, had evaporated with the collapse of his mineral theory. In that year, Pusey's emphasis on how little the agricultural chemists had done to assist practical farmers³⁹ led to considerable acrimony; Leibig was to have his faithful adherents for many years.⁴⁰ However, his ideas hardly accorded with practical experience, and it is possibly significant that Pusey's enthusiasm for a major legislative measure of tenant right seemed to fade at precisely the time he realized the uselessness of the mineral theory.

As J B Lawes wrote in one of the articles describing experiments which led to the challenge to Leibig: 'the great problem to be solved with regard to manures', that is, 'what substances is it necessary to supply to the soil in order to maintain a remunerative fertility, . . . can only be entirely overcome by a long series of careful and costly experiments'.⁴¹ The implications for valuation were obvious to Lawes. Although the Rothamsted experiments had a much wider scientific and agricultural purpose, he never lost sight of those aspects bearing on the valuation of unexhausted improvements. From the 1860s onwards he published a series of tables which were intended to provide a guide to valuers.⁴² However, these were so often, as he admitted, at variance with practical experience as to be little used. It was not until the early twentieth century that the scientific calculation of the value of manurial residuals was sufficiently well advanced to

³⁹ P Pusey, 'On the Progress of Agricultural Knowledge during the last Eight Years', *JRASE*, XI, 1850, pp 381-92.

⁴⁰ Notably J J Mechi; see his *Profitable Farming*, 1872, pp 130-6.

⁴¹ J B Lawes, 'On Agricultural Chemistry — especially in relation to the Mineral Theory of Baron Liebig', *JRASE*, 8, 1847, p 226.

⁴² For example J B Lawes, 'Exhaustion of Soil in relation to Landlord Covenants and the Valuation of Unexhausted Improvements', *FM*, XXXVII, June 1879, pp 422-32, and 'On the Valuation of Unexhausted Manures', *JRASE*, 2nd Ser XII, 1875, pp 1-37.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p 398.

provide a guide to determining compensation payments. Even then, in a tradition which has continued, the authors placed great emphasis on the need for discretion in particular cases and circumstances.⁴³

The lack of any objective basis to the assessment of unexhausted improvements made it difficult for valuers to adopt the more equitable principle that compensation should be on the basis of their value to an incoming tenant (or the landlord if taking a farm in hand). Even when in 1883 the latter principle was given legislative force, valuers still calculated payments by discounting on prime cost; it has been claimed that some were doing this as late as the 1930s.⁴⁴ That this could be grossly unfair to the incomer was most apparent in periods when agricultural margins were squeezed. Thus J A Perkins notes that the Lincolnshire Custom ran into problems in the 1830s: 'the most difficult years of upland farming between the late 1790s and the late 1840s . . . (when) many landlords themselves faced a very real possibility of having to take farms in hand and reimburse the outgoing tenants for unexhausted improvements . . . initiated in a more prosperous period'.⁴⁵ Similar problems also occurred in the late nineteenth century in Lincolnshire (although the Custom was generally preferred to the 1883 Agricultural Holdings Act),⁴⁶ and there was friction elsewhere.

It seems clear that the Custom worked so well in Lincolnshire, despite its principle and the rough and ready form of valuation, because the return on improvement was so high as to allow all parties to be easily satisfied. When the returns were good the outgoing tenant got reasonable compensation, the incomer value for money and the

landlord saw rents and land values rise steadily over time. The same circumstances also provided the appropriate context for valuers to introduce new items, as they arose, without serious opposition. This flexibility was one of the key points in favour of the Custom, but there were dangers of such freedom. Certainly there were witnesses to the 1848 Select Committee who thought it was abused. Their greatest complaint concerned the 'ambiguity with which the valuations are got up'. All that was publicly announced was the sum due with no specification of items or their individual valuation. There was a suspicion that compensation was assessed very liberally on traditional items while new ones were introduced in a manner injurious to the incoming tenant. John Parkinson had often had occasion to open up valuation awards: never 'but I found more or less of very significant mistakes'. William Smith thought most valuers 'incompetent to form any general rule; you will have as many different opinions as different districts'. Even worse, it was usually well-known that some valuers acted very differently when they were representing either outgoing or incoming tenants; accordingly the latter selected 'the valuer who will give him the most'.⁴⁷

Such practices hardly accorded with Shaw's enthusiastic recommendation of valuers as a group. Indeed they were probably only true of a minority, while some of the acerbity of the comments may have reflected the interests of those giving evidence. Valuers generally acquired their position through informal mechanisms; they were farmers who acquired confidence and respect from local communities through their own successful practice. However, and it was immaterial as to whether they were employed under the Lincolnshire, Surrey or any other custom, there was a disturbing side to their operations, especially given the

⁴³ See J A Voelcker and A D Hall, 'Compensation for the unexhausted manorial values of feeding-stuffs and fertilizers', *ibid.* 74, 1913, pp 104-18.

⁴⁴ D R Denman, *Tenant-Right Valuation in History and Modern Practice*, Cambridge, 1942, pp 60-2.

⁴⁵ Perkins, 'Tenure . . . in Lindsey', p 20.

⁴⁶ J H Brown, 'Agriculture in Lincolnshire during the Great Depression 1873-1896', Unpub PhD thesis, Manchester, 1978, pp 239-42, 247-50; R J Olney, *Lincolnshire Politics 1832-1885*, Oxford, 1973, pp 223-6.

⁴⁷ *SC on Agricultural Customs*, 1848, Evidence Qs 7401, 7535, 7538 and 7927-36.

crucial importance of their role. *The Economist* accused valuers of not being 'capable of judging of improvements; they can only judge and decide concerning old practices, and they affix a value on them more according to custom than to the utility of their worth in the market of their produce'.⁴⁸ Even sympathetic commentators could focus on faults. Henry Corbet complained that 'so long as those who employ land-valuers shall be content to be informed only of results, and to have processes concealed from them, no progress will be made in reducing the art of valuation to something like a system'.⁴⁹ His call for a professional body, for training and registration of practitioners, applied equally to tenant right valuers. So too did his references to the ignorance and sense of inadequacy which lay behind the 'mystification' employed by valuers. As an agricultural economist, E P Weller, was to complain, some eighty years later when a professional body of sorts had been established, its ranks 'include men who, while doubtless well versed in local farming, have neither the opportunity nor the mentality to grasp the wider aspects of their subject'.⁵⁰ Such reservations had been expressed for as long as valuers had had the scope to determine substantial payments; they were fundamental to the near universal condemnation of the Surrey system and experience was to show that no system of tenant right, until well into the age of scientific evaluation, could avoid giving rise to them.

It is not surprising, then, that landowners (and others) hardly favoured legislation which could only give the traditional powers of valuers in some areas a new and more universal degree of authority. The problem lay both in their personal shortcomings and in the impossibility of their task. Further, any attempt to counter such weaknesses in a

legislative measure would also constrain the more acceptable aspect of the Lincolnshire Custom: its flexibility. Although the explicit specification of items and their valuation might have eliminated the worst of dubious practices it would also have limited the scope for innovation, as the later Acts were indeed to demonstrate.⁵¹

The technical case, then, against a statutory measure of tenant right was almost overwhelming. If the absence of legal provision for compensation to outgoing tenants for their unexhausted improvements might have adverse implications for investment, so too could its arbitrary provision on the basis of unsound principles. The potential for increasing uncertainty and costs for incoming tenants and landowners was evident.

In any case, uncertainty over the legal security of capital tied up in improvements was probably but a subordinate aspect of the uncertainty attendant on all agricultural investment in an age of technical change and fluctuating market circumstances. Indeed the technical problems which made valuation such an uncertain art were in themselves probably more important constraints on investment. As Lawes put it, farmers 'will not freely embark their money on the improvement of their farms for want of that knowledge which would enable them to calculate their returns with any degree of certainty'.

That statutory tenant right was essentially irrelevant to agricultural progress is not to deny that the opposition of landowners was based on more than technical factors. Nor does it mean that the campaign led by Pusey and Shaw was totally without significance. It is perhaps best seen as a symbol of the beginnings of the radical shift in tenurial relations which the 'Second Agricultural Revolution' entailed. The rising importance

⁴⁸ *The Economist*, 3 February 1852.

⁴⁹ *MLE*, 18 July 1853.

⁵⁰ E P Weller, 'The connection between tenant-right valuation and farming efficiency', *Journal of the proceedings of the Agricultural Economics Society*, 3, 1934, p 54.

⁵¹ For the deficiencies of the 1883 Act, see J R Fisher, 'The Farmers' Alliance: an Agricultural Protest Movement of the 1880s', *Ag Hist Rev*, 26, 1978, pp 24-5.

of off-farm inputs was part of a capital-deepening process which entailed the increased importance of tenant investment relative to that of the owner. The progress of legislation establishing English tenant right from the mid-nineteenth century is best approached as a response to, or a result of, this change, rather than as a prerequisite. Indeed, the earlier legal framework probably provided a more appropriate basis for investment in the existing circumstances.

It was the common law ruling of 1803, in *Elwes v. Maw*, which firmly established the precept, 'quicquid solo plantatur, solo cedit' (whatever is put into the soil, passes into the soil). A theoretical injustice at first sight, it was an attempt to deal with the problem, at law, of property rights which were not discrete. The form of judgement took at least accorded, however crudely, with the accepted division of responsibility for agricultural capital investment and with the need to maintain continuity of production over time. In attempting to specify the nature of

property rights it possessed the great virtue of providing a clear basis for the negotiation of contracts between landlord and tenant. Further, it did not preclude any deviation in such contracts where the parties saw fit to make explicit alternative arrangements.

By implication then, despite their theoretical deficiencies, the common law precepts which governed English tenurial arrangements provided a more appropriate basis for agricultural investment than either custom or legislation. The crucial advantage was flexibility in the face of change over time and spatial contrasts in farm systems. The further implication would be that it is in these factors, changes in agricultural technology, market circumstances, and differential resource endowment, that the explanation of rates of agricultural progress and the regional differences which occurred must be found. This has the advantage of according substantially with the traditional historiography of English agriculture in the nineteenth century.

Notes on Contributors

Dr J R Fisher is a Senior Lecturer in the Economics Department, University of Newcastle, New South Wales. Apart from a continuing interest in English tenurial relations, his present research is in animal disease control policies in Britain and Australia.

Dr Colin Lewis is Statutory Lecturer in Geography at University College, Dublin. His books include *Hunting in Ireland: an historical and geographical analysis* (J A Allen, 1975), and *Horse breeding in Ireland*

and the role of the Royal Dublin Society, 1886-1903 (J A Allen, 1980). He is also interested in geomorphology.

Dr Alistair Mutch was awarded his doctorate by Manchester University in December 1980 for his thesis on *Rural Society in Lancashire 1840-1914*. He is pursuing research on south-west Lancashire, and is currently engaged on a study of deference and class on the Speke estate.

Farmers' Organizations and Agricultural Depression in Lancashire, 1890-1900*

By ALISTAIR MUTCH

THIS article attempts to trace the links between economic change and social movements by an examination of the growth and development of farmers' associations in Lancashire in the final decade of the nineteenth century. Any such attempt has to face squarely the work of T W Fletcher.¹ His challenge to orthodox accounts of agricultural depression in the period concerned forced a re-assessment of the depth and distribution of economic distress. Yet a reading of the contemporary press shows a very widespread belief in the existence of depression amongst Lancashire farmers which is not reflected in his work. This mismatch, it will be argued, was a result of a too narrow focus on purely economic considerations. Such a narrow focus cannot come to terms with the dimension of farmers' perceptions of their situation. They had not the benefit of hindsight bestowed on historians. Their views and actions were coloured by short-term movements in prices and by the fitting of their immediate experience into the wider framework of events at a national level. 'Depression', as defined by movements in prices, may well have been short lived or non-existent, but the beliefs of contemporaries as to what was happening were in many ways as important as what actually happened. Merely to show that Lancashire farmers escaped the worst of what afflicted their corn-growing brothers is inadequate; we have also to look at their

actions in the light of their perception of their situation. This article does not seek to challenge the broad theme of Fletcher's argument, but rather to build on his evidence to create a more rounded picture of the effect of economic change on the social structure of rural Lancashire.

I

Fletcher's work, published in the early 1960s, sought to challenge the orthodox account of agricultural depression in the late nineteenth century as encapsulated in the conclusions of Ernle: 'Since 1862 the tide of agricultural prosperity had ceased to flow; after 1874 it turned, and rapidly ebbed. A period of depression began which, with some fluctuations in severity, continued throughout the rest of the reign of Queen Victoria and beyond.'² Fletcher argued that this view gave too much weight to the experience of the corn-growing areas of south and east England, and too little to the pastoral, stock-rearing regions of the north and west. In particular, he demonstrated that the two Royal Commissions appointed to investigate the causes of depression were biased towards the corn growers. This was especially true of the 1882 Richmond Commission. Its members were dominated by landowners, 'all with large properties in the south and Midlands'. Of the 35 witnesses called, only one farmed under 100 acres, with 26 coming from the corn-growing counties.³ This association of the 'agricultural interest' with corn, Fletcher argued, had distorted our understanding of what was

* I should like to thank Ian Carter for his comments on an earlier draft of this article.

¹ T W Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture, 1873-1896', *Econ Hist Rev* (Second Series), XIII, 1960; 'Lancashire Livestock Farming during the Great Depression', *Ag Hist Rev*, IX, 1961, both reprinted in P. J. Perry (ed), *British Agriculture 1875-1914*, 1973.

² Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, 6th edn, 1961, p 374.

³ Fletcher, 'Great Depression', pp 43-5.

really happening to English agriculture at the end of the nineteenth century. The key to such an understanding lay in the distinction between the experience of the livestock and the arable farmer. To the stock farmer, every fall in grain prices was a gain as 'it meant a reduction in the prices of their most important input — feed. Further, every fall in the price of bread to the consumer, other things being equal, stimulated the demand for livestock products'.⁴ Fletcher then turned to look in some detail at one particular region, the livestock area of Lancashire. His conclusion was

that no great depression of agriculture existed in Lancashire during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, the evidence indicates substantial prosperity until 1884 and the mitigation of any subsequent adverse impact from declining output prices by a relatively steeper fall in feed costs and by an expansion of output.⁵

The problem with this conclusion is that it is limited by its one-sided approach. Put simply, Fletcher attempted to demonstrate, through the collection and presentation of data on prices, that depression was slight or non-existent. Having reached this conclusion, it followed that complaints about depression were mistaken or irrelevant, and that it was not necessary to assess evidence of such complaints. If, as he argued, farmers in reality had little to complain about, then their organizations could be written off as those of a 'vociferous minority . . . well publicized by local newspapers whose editors tended to look at agriculture through eyes conditioned by the national press, which in turn reflected the view of the corn-growing interest'.⁶ It is symptomatic of this view that he referred to the Lancashire Tenant Farmers' Association as the major body in the county, with no mention of the Lancashire Federation of Farmers' Associations, a body with twice the membership. There was no attempt to explain the differences of policy between these bodies, and the main source quoted was

an article in the *Preston Guardian* for 10 December 1892, before many of the most important developments in the organization of Lancashire farmers.⁷ In slipping easily over the question of the organization of farmers Fletcher missed out what was possibly the most important development of the 1890s: the formation of farmers' organizations on a class basis, prompted by a perception that the prosperity which had been enjoyed up to that date was not certain to last. It is the relationship between these bodies and economic movements that is central to the discussion that follows. Prior to that discussion, however, an examination will be made of the economic situation in the arable south-west of the county. Fletcher excluded the area from his article, arguing that, 'As an example of pure arable farming that weathered the depression unchanged it merits separate treatment'.⁸

II

The agrarian economy of the south-west Lancashire plain rested on the fertility of its reclaimed moss land and the almost insatiable urban markets that surrounded it.⁹ Farms were generally small, and produced oats, hay, and potatoes for sale, keeping very little stock. On the large farms on the outskirts of Liverpool wheat was of importance, and its growers were hit by falling prices as much as were those in the south. One agrieved Speke farmer pointed out in 1886: 'the great fall in prices which vary from 25 to 33 per cent during *even* the last six years. If we begin with wheat which some few years ago was the *sheet anchor* of the Speke farmer, we find it has dropped 25 per cent'.¹⁰

⁷Ibid, note to p 99. Further inadequacies in Fletcher's selection and handling of evidence are discussed in A Mutch, *Rural Society in Lancashire 1840-1914*, unpubl PhD thesis, Univ of Manchester, 1980.

⁸Ibid, p 78.

⁹For descriptions of the area's farming see T W Fletcher, 'The Agrarian Revolution in Arable Lancashire', *Trans Lancashire and Cheshire Antiq Soc*, 72, 1962; A D Hall, *A Pilgrimage of British Farming 1910-1912*, 1913.

¹⁰Liverpool RO: 920SPE, Speke Papers, 18/12, D H Atherton to Miss Watt, 2 February 1886. (Emphasis in original.)

⁴Ibid, pp 40-1.

⁵Fletcher, 'Lancashire Livestock Farming', p 101.

⁶Ibid, pp 99-100.

This drop in prices was reflected in a fall in the acreage under wheat, from 12.82 per cent of the total area under cultivation in 1870 to 8.14 per cent by 1890.¹¹

Most farmers, however, grew little wheat, and indeed many were in reality market gardeners who concentrated on the intensive cultivation of vegetables with the help of family labour. The fall in price of hay and straw affected principally the middling farmers. For these farmers hay was the most important single crop, much of it being sold direct on contract to urban stables and dairies.¹² It averaged over £5 a ton at Manchester in the years 1870–79, but only topped this figure twice in the next 18 years.¹³ An important factor in this decline was the emergence of foreign competition after 1893. Prior to that date little foreign hay had entered the market, but the high prices ruling in 1893 (over £6 a ton) encouraged foreign suppliers. In 1892 imports of hay were 61,237 tons, the greatest supplier, of 19,403 tons, being Holland. The high prices saw a dramatic increase to 263,050 tons, of which over half came from Canada and the USA. By the end of May the following year 168,531 tons had already entered the country, with over 100,000 tons coming from the USA alone. In the 12 months to that date, total imports had reached 337,860 tons, or about 10 per cent of the total domestic hay crop.¹⁴ Much of this hay entered England through Liverpool, with John Patterson and Sons of Brunswick Street being established by 1895 as 'importers of foreign hay'.¹⁵ Of this foreign hay it was admitted, albeit grudgingly, that 'it smells well, although it looks rough, and that horses and cattle eat it readily, so it is a very formidable competitor in the market, especially when the hay is

shipped at a very cheap rate, and, of course, tends to keep down the price of the hay crop'.¹⁶ Foreign hay sold at between 50s and 70s a ton, and caused a fall in 1894 of about 50s a ton for home produced hay.¹⁷ This price cutting effect continued, with farmers complaining in 1899 that with Canadian hay selling at 50s, they could not grow it.¹⁸

There was a similar slump in the price of straw from the end of the 1870s. The late 1870s saw a boom in the demand for straw for paper-making as 'even our farm labourers and the working classes generally, who, in days gone by, usually took their pocket handkerchief for their purchases, now demand or expect their goods packed in neat brown paper parcels'. The resultant demand for straw would mean, predicted a speaker at the Liverpool Farmers' Club, that it would, 'in all probability . . . never be low in price'.¹⁹ Unfortunately, his optimism was ill-founded. The high price of straw sent paper manufacturers on the hunt for alternatives and the switch was made to wood pulp, so that by 1895 'the papermakers have, to a great extent, ceased to be customers for straw'.²⁰ Reflecting this, the price of straw fell from an average of over £4 a ton in the decade 1870–79 to £3 10s in 1880–89, and to just over £2 10s by the 1890s.²¹

An examination of the prices of hay and straw against their levels in 1870–74 shows that hay reached its lowest level in 1896, wheat and oat straw in 1895. The 1890s in general, apart from exceptionally high prices for hay in 1893 and for wheat straw in 1894, were years of depressed prices.²² In the late 1870s foreign competition had also begun to threaten growers of early potatoes. One dealer pointed out that Manchester 'can be supplied with new potatoes from Cheshire,

¹¹ Calculated from PRO MAF 68/247 and 68/1273, parish agricultural returns for Sefton and West Lancashire Rural District Councils, 1870 and 1890.

¹² S D Sheriff, 'Report on the Liverpool Prize Farm Competition', *JRASE*, 15, 1877, p 486; J Grundy, 'Allwood House Farm, Astley', in W G Hoskins (ed), *History from the Farm*, 1974, p 132.

¹³ See Table I.

¹⁴ W Fream, 'Our Imports of Hay', *JRASE*, 32, 1894, pp 397–401.

¹⁵ *Gore's Liverpool Directory*, 1895, p 1619.

¹⁶ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 26 July 1894.

¹⁷ RC Agricultural Depression, *Evidence*, PP 1894, (c 7400), XVI, QQ 27261, 27316–8.

¹⁸ *Preston Herald*, 17 June 1899.

¹⁹ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 21 February 1878.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 28 Feb 1895. Cf *Preston Herald*, 18 March 1899.

²¹ See tables II and III.

²² See tables I, II and III.

Cornwall, Jersey, etc, much cheaper than from our own district, while the quality is little inferior to our own'.²³ As potatoes began to appear from other countries such as Malta and Portugal, Ormskirk potatoes ceased to be quoted at the Manchester produce market. New markets were found in the towns of East Lancashire, and in supplying seed to overseas growers, but yet again the old certainties had been challenged and farmers had been forced to change their crops and marketing.²⁴

The impact of lower prices was softened by the fact that farmers did not depend on a single crop, but were able to market a wide range of produce in a number of readily accessible markets. Coupled with this was the widespread adoption of machinery to cut labour costs. Explaining the continued ability of farmers between Burscough and Southport to make money in 1895,

One man said that this was because of the large amount of labour saving machinery which had been introduced of late, and which had greatly reduced the expenditure on wages. He himself had recently purchased a corn sower, and for two or three years had had a self binder.²⁵

The 1890s also saw a widespread interest in the development of the potato digger, a machine which had been available to farmers in a technically efficient form since the late 1870s but which had been largely ignored by them.²⁶ By the turn of the century the newspapers were welcoming the end of 'depression', one sign of which was the increasing proportion of land being returned to wheat.²⁷

It is not argued here that the low prices of the 1890s constituted a 'great depression' in south-west Lancashire, but rather that they represented a sudden check to agricultural prosperity, which jolted farmers out of their

complacency, forced them to adopt new machinery, and replace their confidence with a fear that the drop in prices might prove permanent. A similar lack of confidence was to be found in the dairying region of East Lancashire, of which Fletcher observed that, 'some factor of factors in the years 1891-94 adversely affected farmers' expectations of profit' — the factors in this case being a drop in demand without a similar fall in costs.²⁸ It was the contrast with former years, and the uncertain future, that made Lancashire farmers feel that their industry was in the grip of depression.

This feeling was reinforced by information about the situation in the rest of the country, particularly that relayed back by Lancashire men who had taken advantage of the low rents offered by southern landowners, desperate to fill farms left vacant by bankrupt tenants. One such farmer was James Middlehurst who, after being evicted from his farm in Scarisbrick for his advocacy of tenant farmers' organization, moved to Great Chesterford in north Essex, which he found to be

a grand home for the sensible, the industrious, and the thrifty . . . No nobleman in the kingdom has a more beautiful home than I have, and in addition to this I challenge comparison for promise of a bumper crop with the best farm in Lancashire.²⁹

Lancashire farmers knew that such good fortune was the result of the bankruptcy of previous tenants, and they were determined not to suffer the same fate. From the experience of southern farmers they drew the lesson that immediate remedies were essential if their capital was not to be exhausted. As one Furness farmer argued, 'what was the use of working as they were doing and letting the landlords have all the money they had earned in former years when times were better in order to pay rent?'³⁰

²³ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 24 July 1879. Cf RC Agriculture, Evidence, Q 27259.

²⁴ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 23 Sept 1909.

²⁵ *Preston Guardian*, 20 April 1895.

²⁶ See A Mutch, 'The Mechanisation of the Harvest in South West Lancashire 1840-1914', *Ag Hist Rev*, 29, 2, 1981.

²⁷ *Ormskirk Advertiser* 4 June 1900 and *Barrow Herald* 5 Feb 1898; *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 6 May 1909.

²⁸ T W Fletcher, 'The Economic Development of Agriculture in East Lancashire 1870-1939', unpubl MSc thesis, Univ of Leeds, 1953, p 141.

²⁹ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 2 Nov 1893. See also E Lorrain Smith, *Go East for a Farm; a study in Rural Migration*, Oxford, 1932, pp 20-1.

³⁰ *Ulverston News*, 3 Dec 1893. Cf *Agricultural Gazette*, 12 Dec 1893, p 543.

What was widespread in Lancashire in the early 1890s was a lack of confidence caused by a run of low prices. The fact that these low prices came after the widely reported experiences of farmers in the rest of the country put a sharper edge on the reaction of the county's farmers. The organizational forms which that reaction took have to be seen in the light of these factors.

III

There had been attempts to establish farmers' organizations before the 1890s, but the only body which met with any success was the Liverpool and District Farmers' Club, founded in 1872, and largely concerned with disputes with Liverpool Council over the running of the city's markets.³¹ For the rest of the county's farmers there were only the agricultural societies which, in the words of one critic, 'reflected only the honour and the glory side of farming, the swagger and show of it'.³² Their concern was limited to the annual show, and to the physical improvement of crops, land and stock. They were led by the county's landlords, who were anxious to 'avoid anything that had a tendency towards political discussion'.³³ As Lancashire farmers were staunch Free Traders they sought an immediate remedy in the reduction of rents, a strategy which would inevitably bring them into conflict with landowners.³⁴ Clearly the pursuit of such an aim required the establishment of new organizations independent of the landowners. The first attempt to found such an organization came at a meeting in Preston in 1892, at which was formed the Lancashire Federation of Farmers Associations (LFFA), claiming a membership of 600 drawn from Ormskirk, Bury, Clitheroe, Rossendale, the Fylde and Blackburn.³⁵ One of the first acts

of this new body was to call upon the Central Chamber of Agriculture to organize a national conference to discuss the depressed state of agriculture and possible remedies. However, the conference when held proved an enormous disappointment to the Lancashire delegates. Instead of discussing questions such as land tenure and rent deductions it was a carefully stage managed display of support for Protection and class harmony. As Mr Barlow of Haslingden complained, 'those who took some leading part in getting up this Conference had been somewhat deceived in the use made of it to promote the cry of protection'.³⁶

It was from this point that differences in the ranks of Lancashire farmers became clear. The LFFA remained wedded to a conciliatory approach towards landlords. They opposed the idea of a Land Court as this would 'alienate the sympathy any good landlord has for his tenant, and call forth any vindictive feeling which a bad landlord has for his tenant'.³⁷ They asserted 'an identity between the interests of the landowner, the agent and the tenant', and their appeals for rent reductions were couched in an appropriately apologetic style. The Blackburn Association, for example, did 'not conceive it as part of our duty to suggest what form, or to dictate to you as to such concessions as it may be in your power to make'. They would be grateful for 'such consideration as they deserve'. The circular ended with the veiled threat that others would not be so self-effacing: 'There is just the fear that unwise counsels may be allowed to prevail on some of our farmers' associations.' The answer would be 'a spontaneous, voluntary, and generous concession' which, they hastened to add, 'will not prejudice either the rights or interests of the landowner, nor will it diminish his security'.³⁸ Besides rent remissions or reductions, the specific solution that was pressed for was reform of the Agricultu-

³¹ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 16 Feb 1872.

³² *Preston Guardian*, 11 Feb 1893.

³³ Lord Derby, *ibid.*, 3 Feb 1894.

³⁴ Fletcher, 'Lancashire Livestock Farming', p 99.

³⁵ *Agricultural Gazette*, 28 March 1892, p 305; RC Agriculture, Evidence, QQ 13952-3.

³⁶ *Agricultural Gazette*, 12 Dec 1892, p 543.

³⁷ RC Agriculture, Evidence, Q 13965.

³⁸ *Agricultural Gazette*, 3 Oct 1892, p 259.

ral Holdings Act, widely regarded as being inoperative in Lancashire due to the expense, the uncertain nature of its conditions, and the enormous counter-claims that landlords put in as soon as tenants claimed under the Act.

These demands, and the manner in which they were put, were far too limited and moderate for many farmers who were looking for political solutions. These farmers were attracted to the Lancashire Tenant Farmers Association and the other Lancashire branches of the National Federation of Tenant Farmers Clubs. This body was founded at the instigation of William Smith, Liberal MP for north Lancashire, at a conference in Chester in January 1893.³⁹ Despite its ambitious name, this body was in reality confined to the north-west of England, with the bulk of its membership being in Lancashire. Its distinguishing features were a stress on the need for tenant farmers to be organized in their own clubs, and the demand for judicially fixed rents.

The first point was made forcibly by a delegate at Chester who declared that it would be 'an insane thing to admit landlords to their counsels. They might as well ask colliery proprietors and agents to come into the ranks of their men'.⁴⁰ From this position of a conflict of interests between landlord and tenant flowed the Federation's demands for land tenure reform, expressed at their clearest in the Land Tenure (England) Bill which Smith introduced in 1892.⁴¹ The essential principle of this measure was absolute fixity of tenure, to be enforced by a Land Court. In popular terms the Federation demanded the '3 F's' — fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale of improvements — to which was sometimes added the fourth 'F' — freedom of cultivation, although in practice this last was already enjoyed by most Lancashire farmers. The relationship between landlord and tenant was to become a

purely commercial one, 'just like taking a shop', as one witness questioned by the 1894 Royal Commission put it.⁴² Further, it was argued that it was the farmer who added value to the land, and that he should benefit from the increased value. The ultimate aim was the creation of a class of owner farmers, and to this end the Federation demanded

the abolition of every law or custom which permits land to be left and protected from sale, and from being subdivided. That keeps it confined at all costs and hazards to one and the same family, when otherwise, by the conduct of the owner — his incapacity, or profligacy, or bankruptcy, or by the claims of family — it would be sold and divided, and become the property of farmers, who would henceforth have a stake in the country, and an incentive to patriotism, to husbandry, and high class farming.⁴³

Such were the formal policies of the farmers' organizations of Lancashire. However, it may be doubted as to how far the membership shared the exact opinions of their leaders, or held an intellectually coherent view of their problems. What they wanted were reductions in rent and improved security of tenure; and Wilson Fox noted in the course of his enquiries that in practice 'the views of the LTFA are not very different from those of the LFFA . . . namely that they desire greater security for capital invested in the land, more than any legislation tending to fix them upon the soil'.⁴⁴

It is difficult to assess the formal membership of farmers' organizations. In 1894 the LFFA claimed over 700 members, and the National Federation of Tenant Farmers Clubs a Lancashire membership of 1650 out of a total of 3310. Not included were bodies whose connections with either of these organizations were tenuous, such as the club at Ormskirk. These figures also did not include the club at Chorley, with 115 members, or a similar body at Leyland.⁴⁵ No figures were given for the membership of the

³⁹Ibid, 10 Jan 1893, p 58.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹The bill is reproduced in RC Agriculture, *Evidence*, Appendix A, XXVI, pp 440-3.

⁴²Ibid, Q 12615.

⁴³*Agricultural Gazette*, 30 Oct 1893, p 393.

⁴⁴RC Agriculture, *Report of the Assistant Commissioner, Mr Wilson-Fox, on Garstang*, PP 1894 (c 7334) XVI, pp 26-7.

⁴⁵Ibid, *Evidence*, QQ 1395, 9914, *Barrow News* 20 Jan 1894; *Preston Guardian*, 11 Feb 1893.

Liverpool and District Farmers Club, but it seems to have included most of those farming on the outskirts of Liverpool. On these figures, at least 15 per cent of the county's 15,926 farmers were members of an organization, and the true figure was probably well over 20 per cent.

The farmers' organizations appealed to a particular level of the county's farmers, and faced hostility on two fronts. On the one hand there were the large farmers, that 'small yet powerful minority of Lancashire farmers whose past accumulations had put them in such a position that they were practically independent of their farms'.⁴⁶ On the other hand, certain demands were bound to alienate small farmers, and in particular the demand for the abolition of distraint. One of the reasons for depression, it was argued, was the forcing up of rents by excessive competition, which was caused by landlords' willingness to let farms to men with too little capital, knowing that, as under the law of distraint they had preference over other creditors, their rent was secure. Abolition of this law would lessen competition for farms and so reduce rents, but it would also reduce the possibility of men with little capital taking farms.⁴⁷ In addition, many large and small farmers had the opportunity to take alternative courses to avoid the impact of depression so that, while there were representatives of both levels of farmer in the organizations, their demands reflected the fears and aspirations of the middling farmers, anxious not only to preserve their capital, but also to win status in rural society.

These demands have in turn to be related to broader movements in rural society, and in particular to attempts by farmers to enforce greater social separation. The concrete manifestation of this desire was the eviction over the course of the century of farm servants from the farmhouse in the

south-west of the county. One cause of this trend was that farmers wished to sell all their produce in the market, forcing labourers to buy their own food, a strategy which was made all the more attractive because 'those who board with the farmer live in a better style'.⁴⁸ The motive, however, was not purely financial. Masters were 'increasing the distance between themselves and their servants', a tendency which was found 'principally in the higher class of farmers'. By 1850, this commentator, himself a farmer, argued that 'the great body of farmers seem to care little about their servants, except to extract the greatest amount of labour from them'.⁴⁹ The result was that by 1871 the balance of the agricultural workforce in the south-west had swung irreversibly in favour of the day labourers. This move was accompanied by a withdrawal of farmers from those customs which involved obligations to their workers, such as the duty to supply eggs on 'Braggot Sunday'.⁵⁰ Even in those areas where farm servants remained an important part of the workforce a similar retreat from customary practices was being made by farmers. In Furness the practice of cottagers planting their potatoes in the farmer's field free of charge was ended in the late 1840s.⁵¹ Similarly, farmers' sons were withdrawn from the village school and sent to boarding school, to enter careers other than farming.⁵² The desire for greater social distance between themselves and their workers also led farmers to want their role in rural society to be regarded as important. It was they, many argued, who had transformed the face of the county while landlords consumed the increased value created by their improvements.

The growth of farmers' organizations in the 1890s was on one level a direct response to

⁴⁶ *Preston Guardian*, 2 May 1896.

⁴⁷ *Agricultural Gazette*, 2 Oct 1893, p 299; RC Agriculture, *Evidence*, QQ 14051-2, Report, p 27.

⁴⁸ William Rothwell, *Report of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster*, Warrington, 1850, p 51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 125-6.

⁵⁰ W Warburton, *Notes on Altcar Parish*, Liverpool, 1896, p 44.

⁵¹ *Preston Guardian*, 27 March 1897.

⁵² *Agricultural Gazette*, 24 Dec 1877.

immediate economic circumstances. Farmers located the drop in prices in the context of national events. Their demand was for relief in the form of rent reductions, a demand which necessitated the building of organizations independent of the traditional leadership of the landowners. On another level, however, the associations were an organizational crystallization of farmers' desire to share in the leadership of rural society, the culmination of deeper shifts in that society.

IV

The hostility of landlords to any organization of farmers indicated how seriously they took this threat to their authority. That authority was based on the creation of local communities, revolving round the country house, in which all had their place and attendant rights and duties. This local community was bound together by charity, which emphasized both the benevolence of the giver and the dependence of the recipient. Farmers' organizations threatened this system in two ways. They unified farmers across estate boundaries and so threatened to break down that local authority which landlords fostered. Thus Col. Wyatt, agent to the Earl of Sefton, refused to meet a delegation from the Liverpool and District Farmers Club to discuss possible rent reductions, but instead summoned one farmer from each township on the estate to a meeting at which he offered a 10 per cent return or a permanent reduction of 5 per cent.⁵³ If farmers were to be bargained with at all, it was to be within the confines of the estate. Organizations also threatened to replace the vertical links between landlord and farmer with horizontal links between farmers. As Wyatt complained, 'agitators and talkers in the ranks of agriculture seek to set tenants against landlords, and labourers against both, and draw a hard and fast line between them, whereas their interests are

identical, and mutual confidence is their greatest security'. His suggested remedy was 'to endeavour to interest the Government to suppress agitators, clubs, and talking assemblies'.⁵⁴ Many landlords opposed not only the clubs, but even local organizations. Lord Salisbury's agent was of the opinion that

it would be unwise to heat the subject of rents on any estate in a broad sense, but to deal (if & when necessary) with such individual cases as they come before you on its own merits, and therefore he does not intend to take any notice of any appeal from any club or body of tenants, even if a deputation approached him composed of Lord Salisbury's tenants.⁵⁵

A similar approach was adopted on the Speke estate. After the poor harvest of 1888 the agent proposed to the owner, Miss Watt, that she should inform the tenants that she intended 'meeting them at the next June rent, by this means you will prevent them from taking any steps to agitate the matter'.⁵⁶ This response was to a fear that tenants on the estate might act jointly; a more broadly based farmers' club was to be resisted even more. The pressures on the estate grew during the 1890s with the agent reporting gloomily in 1896 that 'the kindly feeling that used to exist between landlord and tenant is now a thing of the past, perhaps never to return'.⁵⁷ The estate's problems were compounded by the fact that it had two farms in hand, for which it was difficult to find tenants. Keeping these farms in hand proved expensive, but the estate preferred to incur this expense for longer than it need have done in order not to give in to what it saw as a 'conspiracy' on the part of members of farmers' clubs.⁵⁸ Even when it eventually reduced rents to let these farms, and so in turn was forced to reduce rents on the rest of the estate, the opportunity to attack the farmers' club was not to be passed up: 'it would do no harm', wrote Miss

⁵⁴ RC Agriculture, *Report*, pp 17, 46.

⁵⁵ Speke papers, 10/7, 29 Nov 1895, Graves to Watt.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 10/4, 24 Nov 1888, Graves to Watt.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 10/7, 24 May 1895, Graves to Watt.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 10/7, 14 May 1896, Graves to G Swift, 18 May 1896, Graves to Watt.

⁵³ *Ormskirk Advertiser*, 22 May 1890.

Watt, 'to let them know the action of the Farmers' Club had prevented our making a reduction about a year ago'.⁵⁹

The desire to maintain traditional relationships between landlord and tenant without the intervention of a class organization of farmers, however mild in policy, over-rode economic considerations on the Speke estate. To discourage such organization the estate was prepared to sustain possible loss and certain inconvenience by keeping farms in hand rather than giving in to the demands of 'outsiders'. The eventual concession of farmers' demands was made in such a way as to make the impact of farmers' organizations appear as minimal as possible. Thus, in the Ormskirk area, it was alleged, 'some landlords had reduced the rents and not demanded the tithes, but they did not like this to be known. On the rent day they had given a full receipt and then returned part of the money'.⁶⁰

Landowners were hostile to farmers organizing themselves because it broke with the traditional pattern in which they provided the leadership and solutions were based on their largesse. In the extreme they resorted to evictions or threats of eviction. The more subtle response was to bargain with farmers on terms set by the estate, and to attempt to prevent cross-estate organization, which threatened the desire of landlords to promote a localized focus for their tenants, a close community in which their authority was dominant. In these attempts economic considerations played a secondary role, as landlords were willing to sacrifice short-term economic gain for the preservation of the authority upon which depended their continuing to benefit from a situation of inequality. Their bargaining power, however, was seriously weakened by a shortage of applicants for farms and, as in the case of Speke, were ultimately forced to make concessions.

The seriousness with which landlords treated the claims of farmers' organizations indicated their importance. They were more than a mere reflex to economic conditions. Their existence was the crystallization of farmers' growing consciousness of constituting a class with interests different from those of their landlords. This awareness was sharpened by economic difficulties and given organizational form partly because of the desire of Liberals to wean farmers away from their allegiance to Conservatism. Whilst, however, most of the leading protagonists in the farmers' cause were Liberals, the extent to which they did more than give form to farmers' aspirations may be doubted. 'We do not seek the shifting ends of mere political parties', declared the LTFA. 'Our politics are the politics of the farm, and bear only on the permanent well-being of the tiller of the soil and the securing of a contented peasantry'.⁶¹ The organizations claimed members from all parties,⁶² and the LTFA took no part in the election of 1892 in order to ensure the unity of all farmers.⁶³ The Protectionist Liverpool and District Farmers Club, which had stood aloof from the wider movement, had come by 1895 to the same conclusion, i.e. that farmers needed to organize in their own interest, and it had accordingly sent questionnaires to all candidates asking their position on land tenure and other agricultural questions.⁶⁴ This convergence of farming opinion to stand firmly for organization as farmers was a mark of the bodies which survived into the twentieth century. Landlords were members of these organizations, but as *farmers*, not as patrons. In this way the Lancashire farmers' organizations of the 1890s prefigured the founding of the National Farmers Union in 1908, a body to which the Liverpool and District Farmers Club affiliated in 1910.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Ibid, 13/10, 29 Nov 1896, Watt to Graves.

⁶⁰ *Preston Guardian*, 3 March 1894.

⁶¹ *Agricultural Gazette*, 12 Sept 1892, p 244.

⁶² RC Agriculture, *Evidence*, Q 10250, *Barrow News*, 18 May 1895.

⁶³ *Preston Guardian*, 10 Aug 1895.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 1 Feb 1896.

⁶⁵ Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, NFU/1. General Council minutes, National Farmers Union, 6 December 1910.

V

The development of farmers' associations in Lancashire at the close of the nineteenth century was in part a response to economic factors. A drop in prices following years of prosperity led to fears about an uncertain future. These fears were reinforced by their location in the context of national developments. Because low prices came to Lancashire after the experience of farmers in others parts of the country the reaction of the county's farmers was sharpened. Of course, in reality farmers' fears were much exaggerated. The wide spread of produce and easy access to markets cushioned the impact of low prices as did the frequent adoption of machinery to cut wage costs. However, this does not mean that such fears should therefore be written off. As Perry argues, 'many farmers and landowners from all over Britain believed they were experiencing hard times whatever the objective reality of their position'.⁶⁶ It was such beliefs that shaped the course of farmers' reactions. From the livestock rearing area of Furness to the dairies of East Lancashire and the south-west arable plain, Lancashire farmers believed that their industry was in the grip of depression, and that immediate remedies were essential if they were not to be bankrupted like their southern counterparts. The only practical course open to them was to seek reductions in rent. Such a demand automatically brought them into conflict with the traditional leadership of the landed gentry and necessitated the building of new forms of organization.

This article has tried to argue however that Lancashire farmers' organizations were much more than a mere reflex to economic factors. They were rather the culmination of a particular phase in the development of Lancashire agriculture. The 'vociferous minority' in fact reflected wider shifts in rural society. Agricultural depression reinforced

TABLE I

Hay prices, Manchester, 1870-99
100: £4 16s 4d (1870-74)

1870	104	1880	100	1890	69
1871	90	1881	108	1891	68
1872	97	1882	105	1892	86
1873	92	1883	80	1893	129
1874	117	1884	85	1894	93
1875	168	1885	88	1895	68
1876	131	1886	82	1896	66
1877	123	1887	91	1897	76
1878	95	1888	112	1898	73
1879	109	1889	69	1899	66

TABLE 2

Wheat straw prices, Manchester, 1870-99
100: £3 18s 4d (1870-74)

1870	73	1880	86	1890	62
1871	117	1881	106	1891	67
1872	95	1882	112	1892	77
1873	103	1883	77	1893	74
1874	113	1884	81	1894	110
1875	129	1885	95	1895	49
1876	119	1886	69	1896	60
1877	153	1887	94	1897	81
1878	113	1888	115	1898	53
1879	104	1889	63	1899	36

TABLE 3

Oat straw prices, Manchester, 1870-99
100: £3 14s 2d (1870-74)

1870	118	1880	102	1890	62
1871	97	1881	102	1891	65
1872	100	1882	108	1892	79
1873	107	1883	76	1893	80
1874	131	1884	79	1894	97
1875	123	1885	91	1895	47
1876	153	1886	72	1896	56
1877	98	1887	92	1897	81
1878	95	1888	113	1898	58
1879	81	1889	63	1899	40

⁶⁶ P J Perry, *British Farming in the Great Depression*, Newton Abbot, 1974, p 183.

Figures taken from Wednesday and Friday reports of prices at Manchester Hay and Straw Market in the *Manchester Evening News* for July, August and September of each year.

the declining influence of the landed aristocracy in both national and local government.⁶⁷ Part of this decline was due to the assertion by farmers of their interests as a class as opposed to those of their landlords. The fragmentization of rural society in

Lancashire was to be carried still further by the strike of farm workers in the south-west of the county in 1913.⁶⁸ Seen in this context the low prices of the 1890s, and the widespread belief that these represented serious depression, hastened wider and deeper trends in rural society.

⁶⁷ F M L Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 1963, pp 276-91.

⁶⁸ A F Mutch, *Lancashire Rural Society*, op cit.

Notes and Comments

WINTER CONFERENCE, 1982

The Winter Conference, on the theme 'Capitalism in the Countryside', was held jointly with the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers on Saturday 4 December 1982 in the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, London. The meeting was attended by 65 members, and heard papers presented by Dr Patricia Croot (Institute of Historical Research), 'The commercial attitudes of small farmers in Somerset in the seventeenth century'; Dr B A Holderness (University of East Anglia), 'Farm buildings: investment and depreciation, 1750-1870'; Mr T Reynolds (University of Loughborough), 'Marketing in nineteenth-century Lincolnshire'; and Dr K Tribe (University of Keele), 'Max Weber on Prussian agriculture'. The Society thanks Drs Baker and Phillips for organizing another very successful conference, and expresses its gratitude to the Director and staff of the Institute of Historical Research for providing accommodation for the conference.

SPRING CONFERENCE, 1983

The Society's Spring Conference will be held at Christ Church College, Canterbury, 11-13 April 1983. Dr D A Baker at Christ Church College will be acting as local conference secretary. Speakers will include Mr Jan Bieleman (Rijksarchief in de provincie Drenthe), Professor Donald McCloskey (University of Iowa), Sir John Habakkuk (Jesus College, Oxford), Dr John Beckett (University of Nottingham), Dr Peter Roebuck (New University of Ulster), and Mr John Bowers (University of Leeds). The programme and booking forms are inserted into this issue of the *Review*. Any enquiries about the Conference should be addressed to the Secretary.

ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE, 1983

Members are reminded that the Society is presenting a session to the Economic History Society Confer-

ence in Canterbury, on the morning of 9 April 1983. The programme consists of two discussions of pre-circulated papers on the themes of 'Agricultural Revolution', by Dr Mark Overton (University of Newcastle upon Tyne) and Dr Ted Collins (University of Reading), and 'Open Fields and Parliamentary Enclosures', by Dr Michael Turner (University of Hull) and Professor Donald McCloskey (University of Iowa). Members wishing to attend this Conference should write to Dr John Whyman, Economic History Society Conference Secretary, Rutherford College, The University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1983

The 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at 9.15 am on Tuesday 12 April 1983 at Christ Church College, Canterbury. Nomination forms for officers and members of the Executive Committee are inserted into this issue of the *Review*, and nominations should reach the Secretary *no later than* Tuesday 5 April 1983.

ASPECTS OF THE MEDIEVAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

A conference on 'Aspects of the Medieval Economy and Society' organized by the Historical Geography Research Group is to be held in Exeter, 1-3 July 1983. Speakers include Professor J A Raftis, Dr Martin Stephenson, Dr Kathy Biddick, Dr Harold Fox, Dr Bruce Campbell, Dr Larry Poos, Dr Richard Britnell, and Dr Maryanne Kowaleski. Members attending the conference are to be housed in the White Hart Hotel in Exeter, and enquiries about the conference should be addressed to Mr M C Cleary, Department of Geography, University of Exeter, Exeter, Devon EX4 4RJ.

Irish horse breeding and the Irish Draught Horse, 1917-1978*

By COLIN A LEWIS

I

Introduction

DURING the last quarter of the nineteenth century strenuous efforts were made to collect and publish the pedigrees of many different types of horses in the British Isles. The inland transport system depended on railways, canals, and on horses. Some were used for heavy haulage, some as vanners, some for riding, many for agricultural and pack purposes. The first volume of the *General Stud Book*, which listed the pedigrees of many racehorses, was published in 1808, although the first part of the volume appeared in 1791. It had proved of immense value to the racing industry, and it was widely appreciated that similar stud books for other types of horses would also be of use. Furthermore, some people believed that the statement of a standard for different types of horses, combined with inspection of potential entrants to the stud book to ensure that they conformed to the standard, would lead to widespread improvements in the quality of horses. It was also appreciated that the interbreeding of horses of similar characteristics over a number of generations would result in the formation of a fixed type, or 'breed'.

In 1877 the Suffolk Stud Book Association, as well as that for the Clydesdale Horse, was established. These were the first stud book associations for heavy horses to be formed in the British Isles. They were followed in 1878 by the English Cart Horse Society of Great Britain and Ireland, which

was later named the Shire Horse Society. The first volume of the Clydesdale stud book¹ was published in 1878, to be followed in 1880 by the first volumes for Suffolk, and, in 1884 for Shire Horses. The Select Clydesdale Society of Scotland, a splinter group founded in 1883 that soon came to an end, also published a stud book in 1884.

The Hackney Stud Book Society² was formed in 1883 for '... the publication of a Stud Book for Hackneys, Roadsters, Cobs and Ponies'. The Cleveland Bay Horse Society was also founded that year, and both societies published the first volumes of their stud books in 1884. The next year The Hunters' Improvement and National Light Horse Breeding Society was 'Established to improve the Breed and promote the Breeding of Hunters and other Horses used for Riding or Driving, and for Military purposes'. The Society later published its *Hunter Stud Book* that, like most of the stud books already listed, included entries from Ireland. Before a stallion could be entered in the *Hunter Stud Book*³ it had to be '... inspected and passed by a member of the Society nominated and approved by the Editing Committee', and it had to pass a veterinary examination. Mares were entered on different terms, although for many years one method of entry was by inspection, and that did not necessitate any knowledge of the pedigree of the mare.

Although The Hunters' Improvement Society required inspection of stallions before entry to the *Hunter Stud Book*, not all societies were so rigorous. The Shire Horse

* The author thanks An Bord na gCapall for allowing him free access to their records, Mr Stuart G Daultrey for aid with trend surface analyses, Mr E. Buckmaster for drawing the final maps, and the referees for their constructive advice.

¹K Chivers, *The Shire Horse*, 1976, pp 131 ff.

²T Ryder, *The High Stepper*, 1979, p 62.

³*Hunter Stud Book*, VI, p 1.

Society '... decided otherwise and the breed was developed almost solely by the system of gradually tightening the rules for pedigree'.⁴ Other societies established Foundation Stock registers, as did the Welsh Pony and Cob Society in 1927. This enabled the pedigree of animals of non-Welsh parentage to be recorded.⁵ By serving foundation stock mares and their progeny for three generations with registered Welsh sires, the offspring were progressively upgraded and finally qualified for entry in the *Stud Book*.

Although many stud book societies were formed in Britain during the later nineteenth century, none originated in Ireland. Instead, at the inaugural meeting of the Council of Agriculture, held on 29 May 1900 in Dublin, the chairman stated that the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland, was contemplating the formation of '... a Committee or a permanent Commission to deal with this important question of horse breeding'.⁶ Later in the meeting Mr J J Molloy stressed that efforts should be made to improve the breeding of horses in Ireland. Five years later the Department '... offered to owners of stallions of the old Irish Draught type ... a premium of £50 for selected stallions',⁷ and in 1911 the Department's annual *Register of Stallions* accorded Irish Draught Horses '... formal recognition by the listing of stallions under that designation'. In the same year the Department inspected 5040 mares at sixty different exhibitions and '... 264 were selected as eligible for prizes and for registration as Irish Draughts'.⁸ Thus, unlike the breed and stud book societies founded in Britain, the book for Irish Draught Horses was established by the Government through the action of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

⁴Chivers, op cit, p 172.

⁵W Davies, *Welsh Ponies and Cobs*, 1980, p 24.

⁶C A Lewis, *Horse breeding in Ireland*, 1980, p 150.

⁷Ibid, p 165.

⁸Ibid, p 165.

II

The Irish Draught Horse

By the end of the nineteenth century there were at least two well developed types of horses in Ireland that were not assignable to any of the breeds already recognized and possessing stud book societies in Britain. These were the ponies of Connemara and the Irish Draught. The ponies⁹ were the subject of an officially sponsored enquiry by Professor Ewart of Edinburgh University that eventually resulted in the foundation of the Connemara Pony Breeders Society in 1923. The first volume of the *Connemara Pony Stud Book* was issued in 1926.

The Irish Draught Horse was described by R G Carden in 1907 as

... a long, low build of animal, rarely exceeding 15.3 or 16 hands high, with strong, short, clean legs, plenty of bone and substance, short backs, strong loins and quarters ... slightly upright shoulders, strong necks and a smallish head. They had a good, straight, level action, without its being extravagant, could trot, canter and gallop. They were also excellent jumpers. ... No authentic information in regard to their breeding is now available, though, no doubt, many breeders carefully preserved the strain in their breeding studs for many years, but it may generally be taken that the original breeding of the 'Irish draught horse' was the result of the cross of the imported thoroughbred sires on the stronger of the well-bred mares of the country, which latter must have had an infusion of Spanish or Arabian blood in their veins.¹⁰

Whether horses of this type were confined to Ireland is debatable. In 1912 A W Anstruther in presenting a report of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in Britain,¹¹ referred to '... the old breed of Welsh Light Cart Horses', which provided '... light-legged mares suitable for Hunter breeding'. The Board had initiated a scheme '... to preserve the native hardy breed and ensure its reproduction', but unfortunately the scheme, apparently, did not succeed.

⁹C A Lewis 'The Connemara Pony', *Irish Equestrian News*, 1980, p 30.

¹⁰R G Carden in Sir H de Trafford (ed) *The horses of the British Empire*, 1907, p 231.

¹¹*Hunter Stud Book*, op cit, p 222.

III

The Irish Draught Horse Book

In 1911, 1917-18 and 1919 the Department of Agriculture sent official inspectors throughout Ireland to examine mares submitted for registration as Irish Draughts. The Department believed that 'A lesson may be learned from the manner in which the various English breeds of live stock have been improved within recent times through the establishment of stud books and the formation of breed societies',¹² and had decided to found a stud book for Irish Draughts. During the four years over 7000 mares were inspected and 952 were passed as eligible for registration. Unfortunately, when the first volume of the *Irish Draught Horse Book* was published in 1918 it did not include details of any of the 264 mares passed in 1911 (out of a total horse population of 616,331) although it did list some of the 44 stallions registered in the year.

The Inspectors' Report for 1917 indicates the criteria that guided the choice of mares for registration.

In making our selections of mares, we adopted a good average standard of merit, and were particularly careful to exclude mares showing coarseness or signs of imported cart-horse blood. No well made mare that could be regarded as a good, useful farm animal of the clean-legged draught type was passed over without careful consideration.

Taken as a whole, the mares which we have recommended for entry in the Book are a good lot of animals, which can be regarded as an excellent foundation stock for establishing a breed of clean-legged draught horses really suitable to the requirements of the average Irish farmer.¹³

In view of the large number of mares inspected it seems reasonable to assume that the location of those accepted and registered as Irish Draughts fairly reflected the distribution of animals of Irish Draught type throughout Ireland. The first three volumes of the *Irish Draught Horse Book* record certain details of 678 of the 688 mares that the

Department's inspectors accepted for registration in their tours of 1917-19. Why no records exist of the remaining 10 mares is unknown. The *Books* usually record the name and official registration number of the mare, the name and address of its owner and, occasionally, of its breeder, the mare's colour, distinguishing marks, height, year of birth and, in most cases, limited information as to its pedigree. In a very few cases the foals produced by the mare, with the names of their sires, are listed. By assuming that the mares were located at, or adjacent to, their owners' addresses, it becomes possible to map the distribution and certain physical characteristics of Irish Draught mares in the 1917-19 period.

Although Volume Four of the stud book was apparently published, no copies are known to exist. Subsequent to the publication of that volume, no further publication was undertaken, although annual inspections of mares submitted for registration were made outside Northern Ireland by inspectors of the (Dublin) Department of Agriculture until 1974. Manuscript records were kept by the Department. Since 1975 inspection of mares has been undertaken by officials of Bord na gCapall (the Irish Horse Board).

Under the Horse Breeding Schemes of the Department of Agriculture records were kept by the Department of mares that obtained official subsidies for breeding purposes in the Republic of Ireland. Since 1975 the award of subsidies and the maintenance of records has been carried out by Bord na gCapall. In 1979, in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland, Bord na gCapall undertook registration of Irish Draughts as in the Republic. As a result the Bord listed Registered Irish Draught mares that visited a stallion registered under the horse breeding schemes for 1978, that is, mares that, if fertile, would foal in 1979. The Bord recorded the name and registered number of each mare, its owner's name and address, and limited information

¹²*Irish Draught Horse Book*, II, 1919, p 7.

¹³*Ibid*, p 8.

about the mare which usually included its height. It is thus possible to map the distribution and height characteristics of Registered Irish Draught mares used for breeding in 1978 and, by assuming that they fairly reflect the total Irish Draught mare population, to compare this information with that for Registered Irish Draught mares in 1917-19.

IV

Methodology

Addresses of mare owners were located and given co-ordinates that referred to a map of Ireland divided into a grid of 400-sq-mile units. It was assumed that mares were located at their owners' addresses, and 666 of the 678 mares registered in 1917-19 were thereby located as well as 1234 of the 1269 mares that visited a stallion in 1978. Unfortunately, partly due to incomplete information, it was not possible to locate all the mares. The number of mares per unit area was plotted and this provided distribution and density maps for the two time periods under consideration.

In order to establish the geographical pattern of the height of mares the height of all mares in each square for each time period was totalled and divided by the number of mares in each square to give an average height in hands. An arbitrary decision was made to utilize averages for squares containing eight or more mares, but not for squares with less than eight mares. The average heights for squares with eight or more mares were then plotted to provide comparable information for 1917-19 and 1978. They were also subjected to trend surface analyses, using the DUTSA (D Unwin Trend Surface Analyses) programmes, in order to establish whether or not the heights indicated a discernible trend across the country.

V

The distribution of Registered Irish Draught mares

Figure 1 shows that the greatest numbers of mares registered in the 1917-19 period were located in Counties Roscommon, Kilkenny, Meath-Westmeath, and Cork. All four areas had been important centres of the horse breeding industry in the late nineteenth century as is indicated by statistics relating to horse breeding schemes instituted by the Royal Dublin Society in 1887. In 1888 the Society stood a thoroughbred stallion at Dunmanway in Co Cork for the service of tenant farmers' half-bred mares. As many as 143 mares competed for the fifty nominations available to the sire, indicating the importance of horse breeding in the area. The highest number of applicants that year, incidentally, was at Portadown in Co Armagh, where 258 mares were inspected. In 1889, 1890 and 1891 the highest number of applications for service by a Society-approved stallion was in Meath-Westmeath and in Cork.¹⁴

The paucity of Registered Irish Draught mares in most of the Province of Ulster probably reflects the long-standing cultural connections of that area with Scotland, as well as the nature of agriculture in the eastern part of the Province. The urban areas of Belfast and Londonderry provided a market for heavy draught horses, which were needed for haulage. Furthermore, the Lagan of Donegal, the fertile coastlands of Co Londonderry, the fertile lands of the Lower Bann valley and the Ballymena area, north-east Down (especially around Newtownards), and the clay lands of Co Louth, were all major tillage areas with a marked specialization in potato production. The soils of these areas were, by and large, derived from glacial clays and tended to be heavy to work. As a result, farmers in Ulster preferred heavy horses to the lighter Irish Draughts, and it was only natural that they should favour

¹⁴Lewis, *Horse Breeding in Ireland*, p 26 ff.

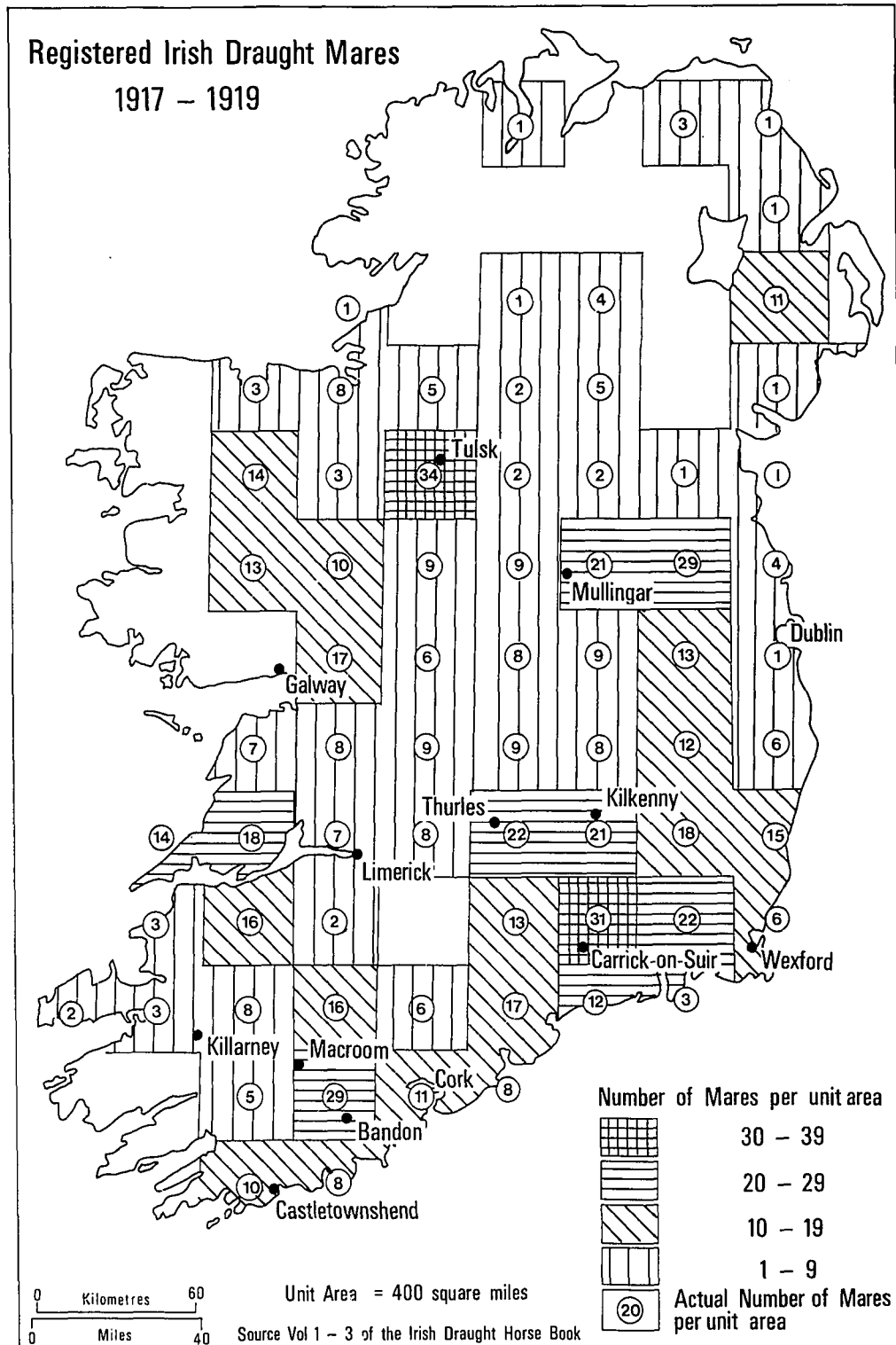


FIGURE I

The distribution of Irish Draught mares registered in the *Irish Draught Horse Book* in the 1917-19 period.

Clydesdales, a breed with its homeland in adjacent Scotland, than Shires (with an English homeland), or Percherons or other European mainland horses.

Although Clydesdale mares tended to be retained on the farms for work and breeding purposes, surplus geldings were sold. Many were bought for work in urban areas and considerable numbers were exported to Britain. Nevertheless the majority of horses in Ireland were used for agricultural work, and in 1897 it was stated that 88 per cent of horses in Ulster, 74 per cent in Leinster, 85 per cent in Munster, and 89 per cent in Connaught '... appear to be used for agricultural purposes'.¹⁵

Further south, in Co Dublin, intensive tillage required heavy draught horses, and Dublin itself provided a demand for thousands of heavy horses for haulage purposes. Although some city firms, such as Guinness, used massive Shire horses, most favoured Clydesdales, which were thought to be more active horses, capable of working at a faster pace than the Shires. Farmers in Co Dublin, like their more northerly counterparts, used Clydesdales extensively for farm work, selling the surplus animals for urban work.

The needs of Cork city for heavy draught animals were met by the production of Shire and Shire-type horses on farms surrounding the city. The use of this predominantly English breed probably reflects cultural and trading connections between Cork and England. Links between Cork and the home of the Clydesdale, in Scotland, were far more tenuous. Of course, it could be argued that Dublin also had strong connections with England, but Cork was far more isolated from the northern centres of diffusion of Clydesdales in Ireland than was the capital city. Because of the restricted size of Cork the market for heavy horses in that city was much smaller than that for Dublin, and was met mainly by the breeding of Shires on

farms north of Cork, particularly between the city and Watergrasshill.¹⁶

The importation of heavy draught horses into Ireland had been fostered by the Irish Government from as long ago as at least 1748. In 1730 Parliament passed an Act for the Encouragement of Tillage. Commissioners were appointed in order to implement the Act, and in 1748 they offered premiums for the importation of Black Horses into Ireland. Black Horses were the foundation stock from which Shire Horses and, to a lesser extent, Clydesdales, were to be bred.¹⁷ The unprecedented growth of the human population of Ireland in the next hundred years tended to restrict the spread of heavy horses, since much work that might otherwise have been done on the land by horses, was done by humans. Thus, for example, teams of spadesmen dug many fields that might otherwise have been ploughed. The effects of the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and the famine of 1847-50, and the consequent decline in agriculture, also militated against the widespread use of heavy horses. The annual proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society for the 1850s, for example, record fields being left to reseed themselves naturally, and some land even went out of production. In 1879 a major agricultural depression led to a further decline in the tilled area and, consequently, to a reduction in the need for heavy horses on the land.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century agricultural production began to revive in Ireland and, partly as a result, there was considerable importation of heavy horses from Britain. By 1904 this was causing official concern, and in that year the Department of Agriculture decided '... that no new sires of the Clydesdale and Shire breeds should be registered except for the province of Ulster, the counties of Dublin and Louth, and the district comprised within a radius of ten miles of the city of Cork. The

¹⁵Ibid, p 121.

¹⁶Ibid, p 173.

¹⁷Ibid, p 18.

object . . . was to check the great impetus that had been given to the importation of Clydesdales and Shires; for most authorities agree that such sires, if too freely imported, will impair the reputation of Irish horses'.¹⁸

Although the decision of the Department of Agriculture not to register new Clydesdales and Shires for service under the Department's horse breeding schemes outside the stipulated areas did have some effect, the Department had no control over people who were prepared to keep such sires, without financial support from the Department, elsewhere in Ireland. Important tillage areas, like north Wexford and the vicinity of Carlow, needed heavy horses, and these were amply supplied by totally private enterprise. In 1920, when all but thoroughbred stallions used for racing or for the service exclusively of thoroughbred mares, had to be licensed, there were 2105 applications for stallions to be licensed. As a result, 1718 licences were granted, although only 471 stallions were registered that year for service under the Department's horse breeding schemes.¹⁹ There were therefore many more heavy draught sires in Ireland than the Department's *Register of Stallions* might suggest, although by no means all of the stallions licensed were draught animals. Unfortunately, the records of stallion licences for the two years preceding the political partition of Ireland are not accessible, and might well no longer exist, so there is little reliable evidence for the location of heavy draught stallions other than those registered by the Department. By 1921 the Department had relaxed its rules slightly, and included in its *Register* Clydesdales that were located in the Carnew-Arklow area, Kildare, Laois, Offaly, north Kilkenny, three in Meath and three in Westmeath, as well as one in south Roscommon.²⁰

Connemara, with its rocky topography and extensive peat bogs, and to a lesser extent

the bog-lands of Iveragh in Kerry provide country not suited to draught horses. Much of the tillage in these areas of marginal agriculture and stony fields was undertaken by hand at the turn of the twentieth century, and there was little need for plough horses. Furthermore, the roads of Connemara left much to be desired, although a regular coach service²¹ was run from Galway to Clifden until at least 1906. There was limited demand, therefore, for draught horses and the needs of the inhabitants were catered for by the local ponies. In the 1920s those of Connemara, of which at least five types existed in 1900, were developed into the Connemara Pony, with its own society and stud book. Incidentally, the paternal and maternal grandsire of the first stallion to be registered in the *Connemara Pony Stud Book* was Prince Llewellyn. This was a Welsh Cob introduced to the region by the Congested Districts Board in the 1890s in order to improve the qualities of the local ponies.²²

Western Mayo, particularly Erris, Belmullet and Achill, was also largely pony country. There were few roads in the area that were viable for wheeled traffic even towards the end of the nineteenth century, and pack ponies were used extensively into the present century. In 1897 Thomas Meleady, a Dublin horse dealer, described to the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the horse breeding industry in Ireland, the buying of ponies in that area. 'They used to call them Achill ponies.' The previous year Mrs Pattison had described '... endless strings of ponies, laden', in Achill.²³

The southern coastlands of Cork, west of the Harbour, had been well provided with thoroughbred stallions of quality under the horse breeding schemes of the Royal Dublin Society in the 1890s. So had the area adjacent to the city, as well as eastern and northern parts of the county. There was, however, a

¹⁸Ibid, p 164.

¹⁹Ibid, p 174.

²⁰Ibid, p 173.

²¹*Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways*, 1906, map.

²²B O'Sullivan in B Vesey Fitzgerald (ed) *The book of the horse*, 1946, pp 669-78.

²³Lewis, op cit, p 118.

large area inland and to the west of Bandon in which there were no sires registered under the Society's scheme nor located there by the Congested Districts Board.²⁴ Thus, whilst many half-breds were produced in coastal, eastern and northern areas of the county, little official effort was made to ensure their production in the Bandon-Macroon region. It is not surprising, therefore, that Irish Draught rather than lighter half-bred, hunter-type, horses, existed in the Bandon-Macroon region, especially since the region was isolated from Clydesdale (and, to a lesser extent, Shire) influence.

The limestone lowlands of Co Limerick, south and south-west of the city, were important areas of thoroughbred and half-bred production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the first year of the Royal Dublin Society's horse breeding schemes, the 1888 stud season, 172 half-bred mares belonging to tenant farmers vied for the 50 nominations to the Society stallion posted to the county.²⁵ By 1896 16 thoroughbred stallions registered by the Society stood in the county.²⁶ Some belonged to major landlords, including the Earl of Dunraven, others to professional stallionmen. None of the stallions was located in the carboniferous shales plateau and escarpment country in the west and south-west of the county. The same locational pattern remained until the end of the Society's schemes, in 1903. When the Department of Agriculture's Inspectors sought mares of Irish Draught type in the Limerick-north Kerry region in the second decade of the twentieth century it was not surprising that they found them among the smaller and less fertile farms of the shale region of west Limerick, rather than on the limestone lowlands, where breeders specialized in the production of racehorses, carriage horses and hunters.

North Kerry, like lowland Limerick, had also been a region of thoroughbred influence under the Royal Dublin Society's schemes, and it is noticeable that few Irish Draughts were registered in that area in 1917-19. Of course, there was a major contrast between the farming types of the limestone lowlands and on the shale escarpment and boggy plateau. Whereas the lowlands, especially in Limerick, were mainly areas of pastoralism, the uplands were zones of mixed farming, where farmers tried to be self-sufficient and grow their own vegetables and save their own turf from the blanket bogs. Multi-purpose horses, such as the Irish Draught, were therefore essential in this region.

The midlands of Ireland are a more diverse area than is usually recognized. Whereas immediately south of Athlone there are extensive raised bogs and a desolate landscape, further south around Birr and in north Tipperary there are fertile farmlands. By comparison, much of the north midlands is ice-moulded depositional terrain. By the 1890s the area around Lorrha and Borrisokane in north Tipperary had developed a specialization in quality half-bred production. In 1898, for example, three thoroughbred stallions registered by the Royal Dublin Society stood in that restricted area,²⁷ and in 1921 two thoroughbreds and three half-bred sires registered by the Department of Agriculture travelled in that region.²⁸ Further north, towards Athlone, there appears to have been little specialization in production, although the area had been invaded from the east by the Clydesdale and other feathery type horses, often of coarse appearance. The Inspectors therefore found few Irish Draught type mares in the area, although the situation changed further north in Roscommon.

Youatt²⁹ drew attention to the quality of Roscommon-bred horses as long ago as

²⁴Ibid, pp 100 ff.

²⁵Ibid, p 26.

²⁶Ibid, p 101.

²⁷Ibid, p 128.

²⁸Ibid, pp 168-9.

²⁹W Youatt, *The horse*, 1831, p 61.

1831. He also made the relevant comment that: 'There are very few horses in the agricultural districts of Ireland exclusively devoted to draught. The minute division of the farms renders it impossible for them to be kept. The occupier even of a good Irish farm wants a horse that shall carry him to market, and draw his small car, and perform every kind of drudgery — a horse of all work; therefore the thoroughbred draught horse . . . is rarely found.'³⁰

Like central and eastern Galway and Mayo, Roscommon formed part of a mixed farming area in the early twentieth century, in which up to 15 per cent of farmland was under arable cultivation,³¹ necessitating draught horses. Nevertheless, few farms were large enough to provide sufficient acreage of arable to justify keeping heavy draught horses, and Irish Draughts were adequate to till the essentially light soils and suitable for more active roles.

The concentration of Irish Draughts in west Meath and around Mullingar is similarly explicable. While eastern and central Meath was largely a grassland area, devoted to cattle fattening, the west of the county contained many small farms and patches of tillage, where a multi-purpose horse was needed. For over a century thoroughbred sires had stood in the region, and it is likely that their influence was reflected in at least some of the Irish Draught type horses in the area. Both Meath and Westmeath were noted hunting countries, and the Secretary of the Westmeath Foxhounds reported to *Baily's Hunting Directory* that, for his country, 'A short, compact horse is the best'. In 1895, when 10 thoroughbred stallions were registered by the Royal Dublin Society in Westmeath, they were all between 15.3 and 16.05 hands high, similar to the heights of most Irish Draughts. Irish Draught mares are admirable for hunter production when put to thoroughbred sires, and the strong

market for hunters in the region may have influenced farmers to keep such mares.

The widespread distribution of Irish Draughts in south-eastern Ireland was also due to the demand for multi-purpose horses and to the strong market for hunters in that sporting region. The areas of broken topography, such as the Ahenny basin, north of Carrick-on-Suir, and the uplands east of Mullinavat, were areas of limited tillage and steep slopes. Horses that could trot to market under a cart, to such centres as Carrick, New Ross and Mullinavat, and that could also do other farm work, were prized. As a result Irish Draughts were favoured in these areas.

Unlike the uplands around Ahenny and Mullinavat, central Kilkenny and the Barrow and Nore valleys were mainly areas of half-bred production, although Irish Draughts, which usually had some thoroughbred blood in them, were also important. During the 1890s the greatest concentration of travelling thoroughbred stallions registered under the Royal Dublin Society's schemes was in this part of Ireland.³² The more dissected areas of Kilkenny, west of the city, lay outside the main half-bred zone, and as Figure 1 shows, many Irish Draughts, which were suited to the needs of the farmer-miners of the Slieve Ardagh Hills, existed in that area.

County Clare has been noted for horse production since at least the seventeenth century,³³ and many thoroughbred sires stood for service in the south of the county under the Royal Dublin Society's horse breeding schemes of the 1880s and 1890s. The average farm size in that area is only about forty acres³⁴ so that few farms were large enough to warrant keeping heavy horses, yet most needed a horse of all work. The Irish Draught, with its modicum of thoroughbred blood, met that need.

By 1978, as Figure 2 shows, the distribution of Irish Draught mares had changed

³⁰W Youatt, *The horse*, 1847, p 105.

³¹T W Freeman, *Ireland*, 1965, p 394.

³²Lewis, *op cit*, p 17.

³³C A Lewis, *Hunting in Ireland*, 1975, p 41.

³⁴Freeman, *op cit*, p 386.

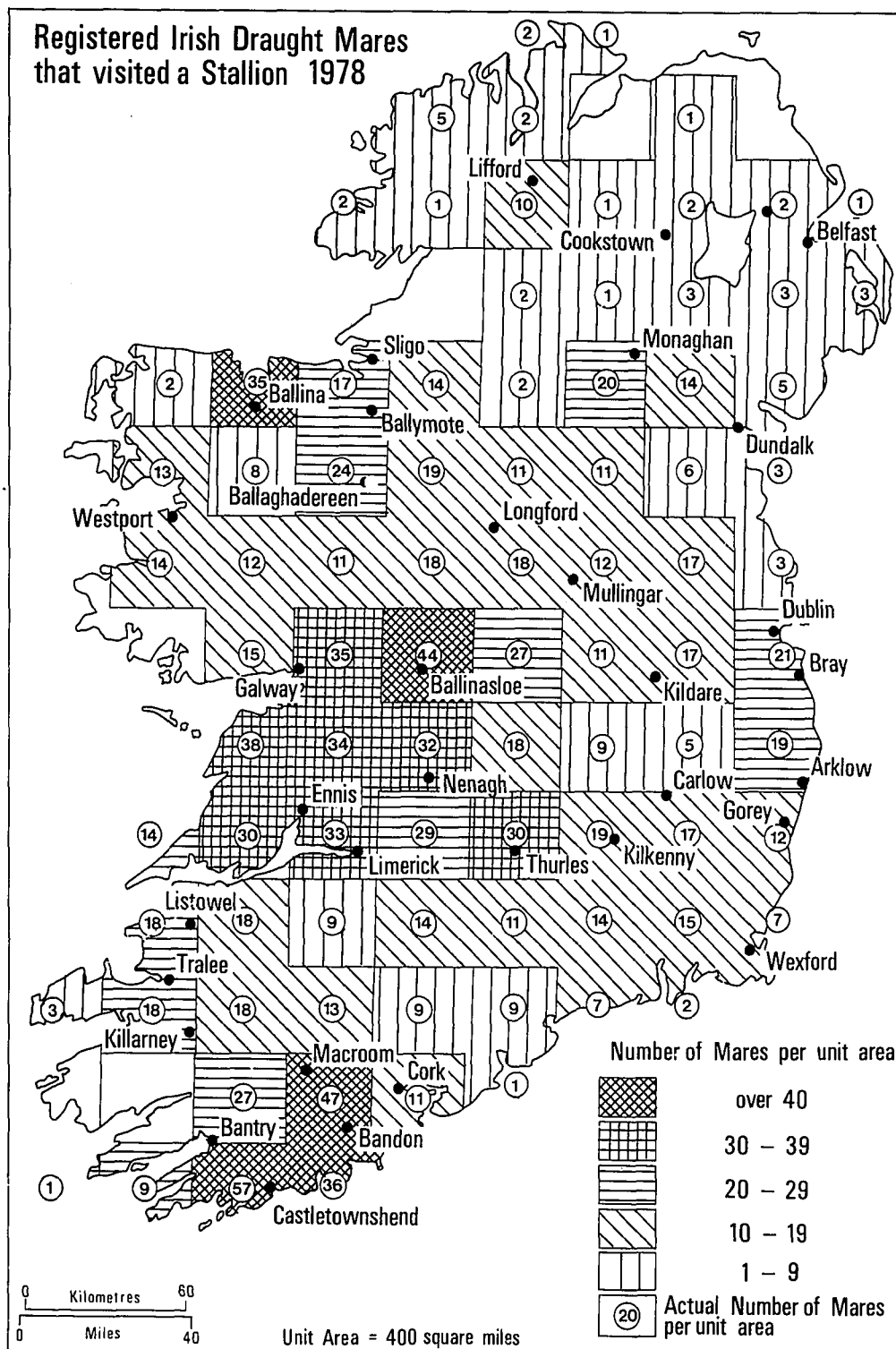


FIGURE 2

The distribution of Registered Irish Draught mares that visited a stallion under the official horse breeding schemes in 1978. (Source: breeding records of An Bord na gCapall.)

remarkably from that of 1917-19. The greatest densities were in that coastal zone in Cork in which half-bred production had been important earlier in the century. The Castletownshend area, in particular, now possessed the greatest number of Irish Draught mares in Ireland. The second greatest concentration was around Ballinasloe in Co Galway and in a zone that extended south to Thurles and Limerick and south westwards to include virtually the whole of Clare. The third concentration lay around Ballina in Co Mayo and in south Sligo. There were also important concentrations south of Monaghan and in the coastal zone between Dublin and Arklow.

The concentration in south central Cork probably reflects the continued but rapidly declining use of Irish Draughts for agricultural purposes; the strong hunting traditions of the area; the holiday caravan trade; the availability of suitable sires; and the foundation work of the Royal Dublin Society's schemes of the nineteenth century. There are more packs of hounds followed on horseback in Co Cork (twenty-one)³⁵ than in any other area of Ireland, which ensures an interest in the breeding of hunters. There is also a market for horses for the horse-drawn holiday caravan trade in the coastal areas, especially between Kinsale and Skibbereen. In 1979 six Irish Draught sires stood at stud in west Cork, as well as three half-breds and at least twenty-three thoroughbreds, giving breeders plenty of choice of sires within short distances of the breeder's home.³⁶ Finally, although farms in the region are among the most mechanized in the Republic,³⁷ some are managed by men to whom horsemanship is still a way of life and by elderly men who are not prepared to acquire the skills needed to handle tractors.

During the late nineteenth century many quality thoroughbred stallions were located in the coastal area of this part of Cork, and at

Bandon, under the Royal Dublin Society's schemes. It is likely that some of their descendants have subsequently been registered as Irish Draughts. As the market for working horses decreases, so it is likely that fewer Irish Draughts will be bred in the region in spite of the value of mares for brood purposes.

The great increase in Registered Irish Draughts in east Galway, Clare, and adjacent areas, may reflect an inefficient initial examination system, an actual change in the local type of draught horses, or the possibility that different criteria are now used to decide which animals to register. The annual horse fair at Ballinasloe each October provides a ready market, and attracts buyers from the whole of Ireland and from further afield. The predominance of small farms, restricted farm incomes and productivity (which has retarded the introduction of mechanization),³⁸ the elderly age of many farmers³⁹ and the undoubted prestige value of horse ownership, have all combined to ensure that this remains a major breeding area.

The fertile lowlands around Ballina and Killala have been a noted horse breeding area for at least two centuries. At present a number of families specialize in producing young horses for sale as hunters and showjumpers and some of the local veterinary surgeons are renowned local horsemen. There is thus an interest in horses in the region, plus a market for young horses. There are also at least five registered sires standing in the area, unlike the area immediately further south, in which there was only one registered stallion in 1979. Many farmers are also elderly, although this is also the case in much of the remainder of Mayo. The number of mares that visited a stallion in the Ballina area therefore probably reflects local cultural factors as much as any others. Nevertheless, the better quality of land in the

³⁵Lewis, *op cit*, p 77.

³⁶Register of approved stallions, *An Bord na gCapall*, 1979.

³⁷D A Gillmor, *Agriculture in the Republic of Ireland*, 1977, p 73.

³⁸*Ibid*, p 74.

³⁹J Scully, 'The development of western Ireland', *Ir Geogr*, 6, 1969, pp 1-13.

region as compared to the bog-lands of Erris to the west or the drumlin lands to the south, is important. So is the partly resultant history of colonization, in which Ballina and Killala were both foci for plantations in the past — for landlord families such as the Knox-Gores, who owned 22,000 acres in Mayo in the 1870s, spread an appreciation of quality horse production in the area.⁴⁰

The decline of importance of the Ahenny and Mullinavat areas is probably a reflection of the increase in mechanization in those areas, combined with the realization that half-breds, which are better suited to hunting and showjumping, generally command higher prices than Irish Draughts. Many farmers are prepared to combine business and pleasure and produce showjumpers, quality hunters and point-to-pointers, all of which are more refined horses than the Irish Draughts. Bord na gCapall (the Irish Horse Board) has established horse sales at Gowran, north of the area but adjacent to it, and the sales attract international buyers. The local breeders are therefore well aware of the higher prices that half-breds command, and breed accordingly. Similar reasons, by and large, explain the decline in the numbers of Irish Draughts in the Mullingar-Meath area.

Agriculture in Northern Ireland is far more mechanized than in most of the remainder of Ireland, as is shown by the number of tractors per farmed area.⁴¹ The necessity for work horses has therefore been greatly reduced, and although a number of farmers still breed Clydesdales mainly for show and other competitive purposes, few still bother with Irish Draughts. In 1917–19 a surprising number of Irish Draughts was registered in the Lurgan area. Mechanization has now ousted such animals and the only appreciable concentration of Irish Draught breeding mares in 1978 was in the broken country south of Lifford and partly in the Republic.

The concentration of mares south of Monaghan largely reflects the poor agriculture of that difficult drumlin area of small farms and, all too often, elderly farmers. Horses are still used on a few farms for work purposes, but they are being replaced by mechanization. By comparison, the relatively high number of Irish Draughts between Dublin and Arklow largely reflects affluence. They are mostly kept by people who earn the major part of their living outside farming, or who are well-established farmers. The number of Irish Draughts, like that of other 'pleasure horses', will probably increase in this area in the future.

VI

The height of Registered Irish Draught mares

The smallest mares to be registered as Irish Draughts in 1917–19 were 15 hands high. The largest were 16.2. In 1978 the smallest registered mare to visit a stallion was stated as 14.0 hands, the next smallest as 14.2 (although listed as 15.0 in the manuscript *Irish Draught Horse Book*). The largest mares were 17.0 hands. Yet, whilst individual heights varied considerably in both time periods, the average height of registered mares increased from 15.3 to 16.0 hands.

In 1917–19 the tallest mares, based on average heights for squares containing eight or more mares, were in south-east Ireland, around Mallow-Kanturk and immediately south of Belfast. They averaged 15.35 to 16.0 hands. The tallest individual mares existed in the vicinity of New Ross and in the lowlands of Wexford to the east. Towards the west and north-west, and in the Meath-Westmeath belt, heights declined so that the smallest mares, on average, were located in the vicinity of Castlebar in Co Mayo, where they were only 15.2 hands. Trend surface analyses, using DUTSA programmes, confirms that there was a definite gradient of

⁴⁰J Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1883, p 88.

⁴¹*Atlas of Ireland*, 1980, p 59.

heights in 1917-19 from highest in the Wexford area to lowest in Mayo.⁴²

By 1978 the overall height of Registered Irish Draught mares had increased to almost 16.0 hands, and there was surprising uniformity of average heights throughout almost the whole of Ireland in which densities of eight or more mares per 400-square-mile unit occurred. Trend surface analyses no longer showed any appreciable gradient in heights across the country. This suggests that there is little environmental control of the size of mares. The variation in heights in 1917-19 probably reflected nutritional conditions and the breeding policies of farmers in Ireland as they produced animals for work in local circumstances. Now that the role of the Irish Draught is changing, breeders appear to be adjusting the size of mares to meet new market conditions. Instead of reflecting biogeographic controls, the 1978 mare population apparently reflected controlled breeding and probably improved management and nutrition aimed at existing market conditions.

⁴²C A Lewis 'Height characteristics of Irish Draught mares', *Irish Draught Horse Yearbook* 1980, pp 16-22.

VII

Conclusion

The distribution of Registered Irish Draught mares has changed radically from a concentration in Roscommon and south of a line from Limerick to Kilkenny in 1917-19, to south central Cork, the area between Galway, Ballinasloe, Limerick and Thurles (including the whole of Clare), and that around Ballina, in 1978. Mares, on average, have increased in height by one inch and no discernible trend in heights exists across the country as it did in the earlier period. Instead of breeding Irish Draughts to suit local working conditions, which resulted in adjustment of heights to local environmental conditions in the 1917-19 period, by 1978 mares appeared to be increasingly bred to suit national and international market conditions. They are used as foundation stock for the production of hacking, hunting, and competitive horses, especially showjumpers. In 1917 Irish Draughts were still utilitarian working animals; by 1978 they were being adjusted to meet the demands of the leisure-horse market.

Annual List and Brief Review of Articles on Agrarian History, 1981*

By RAINE MORGAN

THE important issue of relationships between economic development and activities in the countryside is a dominant theme in this year's collection of articles. Earle and Hoffman (65) for example, offer a comparative analysis of labour in rural England and in the grain and cotton economies of the United States in an attempt to explain different processes of industrialization. They argue that relative labour costs either side of the Atlantic were precisely the reverse of those postulated by Habakkuk; and they further maintain that the nature of agrarian systems was crucial in the transition to industry through its influence on the labour supply. Thus, whereas in America cheap unskilled labour from rural 'staple' economies could be profitably exploited in conjunction with machine technology, intensified farming in England after 1800 raised wages of the unskilled and removed a critical incentive to invest in factory machines. The importance of the putting-out system as a vehicle for the development of manufacturing and emergence of wage labour is stressed by Millward (142). However, in a study of rural textile production in the West Riding, Hudson (114) raises doubts about the validity of proto-industrialization as a concept and suggests that rural industries were not necessarily a stage in the transition to factory production. Rather they should be viewed in an agrarian context, reflecting the differential decline of manorialism and the enclosure and consolidation of land. With a more traditional approach Frost (78) investigates relationships between rural industry and agrarian economy in the Black Country while charting the gradual separation of farm and forge after 1560. Findings confirm the picture postulated by Thirsk of domestic crafts flourishing in an upland economy specializing in stock where open wastes attracted families requiring subsidiary employment. But a much less straightforward conclusion emerges from Rogers' inquiry (171) into why the framework knitting industry of south Nottinghamshire came to be located in some villages and not others during the period after 1670. Pressure on land was apparently not linked to industrialization

here. Instead villages with weak manorial control, a compact social structure, and the freedom to exploit resources were those where knitting usually became established. The relevance of wage rates to living standards in the pre-industrial economy of England is discussed by Woodward (225), who shows that self-employment combined with farming protected building craftsmen against the sixteenth-century price inflation. Instead it was the unskilled landless labourer without by-employment whose worsening circumstances are most accurately mirrored in the Brown-Hopkins index.

There are two articles on the study of the birth of agriculture. Fussell (80) traces ideas on the origin of farming from the eighteenth century into mid-Victorian times when the Bible and classical writers provided virtually the only terms of reference. In the other, Harris (96) offers a wide ranging historiographical survey in which he welcomes the rejection by prehistorians of that sharp distinction between hunter-gatherer and farmer. But while the gradual modification of natural ecosystems by man is the more fruitful approach, he warns that the plethora of new models of origins will fail to enlighten unless there is a much more precise questioning of new data with which to test them, specifically on the time-scale of change and its intermediate stages. A new classificatory framework for studying prehistoric economies is offered by Bailey (10), who distinguishes between indirect, opportunistic and controlled exploitation of resources. Archaeologists have also supplied important new data. Wendorf and Schild (214) report dramatic evidence from the Nile valley which pushes back the domestication of plants 8000 years earlier than previously supposed. There is however no sign of population pressure, environmental stress or change in size or structure of population groups — phenomena that have become associated with the transition to cereal growing. Instead settlements remained small and hunting and gathering continued as the basic subsistence activities. At home Andresen *et al* (3) have applied a new analytical approach to the study of material from Star Carr. After investigating the processes that have resulted in the accumulation and differential destruction of material they argue that the site was a hunting and butchering station occupied for only short periods throughout most of the year. The importance of

* Publications are dated 1981 unless otherwise noted. References to articles or off-prints should be sent to the Bibliographical Unit, Institute of Agricultural History, University of Reading.

leaves and fodder in early economies is stressed in a number of articles. Garbett (81) has evidence from pollen analysis indicating that gathering involved elm, oak and lime trees, and he argues that the initiating of elm decline can be linked directly to over-exploitation. Also, investigation of a Mesolithic site in Dorset by Palmer and Dimbleby (150) has furnished evidence that ivy was imported by man, doubtless for winter feeding, and thus indicating first tentative attempts at domestication. According to Spray (190), holly provided another vital winter resource, and as late as the eighteenth century was a common browse for sheep in the Pennine foothills. Neolithic longhouses in Europe are the subject of a paper by Marshall (137). In the light of ethnographic parallels from the New Guinea highlands he maintains that both types represent adaptation to adverse weather conditions and that wind direction is the major influence on orientation of structures. Since European examples differ markedly from present day wind directions, significant climatic change since the Neolithic is implied.

For the medieval period Whyte (217) considers rural settlement studies in Scotland and suggests that there has been no clear framework and much oversimplification. His paper stresses the potential use of untapped documentary sources and also the need for an integrated multi-disciplinary approach. Much discussion recently has centred upon the pattern of Anglo-Saxon settlement in England, and Arnold and Wardle (6) explore the major shift from poor upland to valley areas. They re-emphasize the importance of the seventh and eighth centuries, and raise questions about the cause of that shift and its implications. Using tax documents to assess rank-size distribution of settlements in Nottinghamshire, Unwin (205) has found that contrary to expectations smallest units were not the most common despite high mobility in settlement size and different methodological approaches. Improvements to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon farming over the past four decades are summarized by Fowler (76) in a review of changing sources and research methods. The origin of the Lincolnshire hundred is examined by Roffe (170), who notes that it was a Danish institution which arose out of a basically non-manorialized society and was constituted with local government and tax raising purposes in mind. Consequently it bore little relationship to estate and settlement structures as was the case with the hundred of hidated England. The records of 14 Wiltshire manors have been studied by Hare (93) to establish who took over the demesnes when they were eventually leased in the fifteenth century. He finds that most went intact to substantial local tenants while a minority of lessees were wealthy industrialists and merchants from outside. Importantly the transfer created the prototype 'gentle-

man farmer' who in later centuries took a leading part in agricultural change. Field systems are closely researched in two articles by Campbell (32, 34), who questions both the importance of population pressure in their systematization and the theory of ethnic origins. The vital element, he believes, was strong manorial control, and where this was lacking (as in Norfolk) peasants used their freedom from common rules to intensify their farming as population grew. Evidence from east Norfolk is also used to show how demographic pressures, which promoted extreme fragmentation and an intensified land use in medieval times, also underlay engrossment, consolidation and gradual dissolution of common fields after 1500. The conventional link of the narrow-rig with open field agriculture is denied by Drury (63), who prefers to view it as resulting from the use of fixed mouldboard ploughs where neither land tenure nor drainage needs demanded the broad high curving features typical of much medieval cultivation. In another article on Wiltshire Hare (92) contrasts the stability of chalkland farming after 1350 with the advance of pastoralism and enclosure of land in the clay vales. Postles (157) has collected further data on medieval fleece weights and demonstrates their extreme lightness at this time. Although a slightly higher weight is detected in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, the average even here still did not exceed 2½ lb. There are a number of important articles on agrarian society. Hatcher (100) examines the condition of serfdom from the perspective of the unfree, and demonstrates that the balance of advantages and disadvantages could alter dramatically over time. Further, these changes were rarely the product of market forces alone. Thus when thirteenth-century inflation threatened villeins, custom restrained lords from realizing the increased value of land and made them a protected and even privileged group. But earlier, when labour scarcity and land surplus should have favoured the unfree, lordly rights to restrict movement seriously inhibited attempts to escape servitude. Emmison (67) offers a brief guide to *Fines* — an important set of documents which often detail property acreages not available in deeds. The imaginative use of court rolls continues to enlighten and enliven the study of peasant communities. In his study of a Warwickshire manor, Razi (162) denies contentions of the Toronto School that bonds between family and land were severed or weakened after the Black Death with the growth of individualism. Blaming over-reliance on surnames in family reconstitution for this view, Razi has amassed evidence showing the strength of kinship ties in land transfers and greater economic interdependence in the post-plague era. The contents of a fifteenth-century barrel-latrine from Worcester have been analysed by Greig (88), who maintains that such

unlikely data sources can provide valuable insight into diet, living conditions and rubbish disposal in the past. There has been a tendency for historians to dismiss medieval industrial development in Wales, but a survey of cloth making spanning three centuries convinces Jack (118) that it formed a varied and vital element of the economy which did not merely pass half-made goods to English craftsmen for finishing.

For the early modern period two major data sources have been re-examined to gain a clearer picture of population changes. According to Campbell's revised estimates from the 1522 muster returns and 1524-25 subsidies (33), England's population amounted to a mere 1.8 million in the early sixteenth century. This argues an even steeper demographic fall in the late medieval period than previously thought and probably only small recovery thereafter. Despite their importance neither the contours nor causes of Ireland's pre-famine population growth have been definitely settled by historians, due to lack of reliable data. But Daultry *et al* (52) have re-appraised Hearth tax series to ascertain trends regionally. They find significant provincial differences but conclude that over all, despite insecure growth before 1750, advance was quite dramatic by European standards so that demographically at least Ireland remains an outlier. The Civil War has largely been the concern of political historians focusing on *élites* and party faction but now broader issues are attracting attention. Underdown (204) plots the geographical distribution of allegiance among the lower orders in the west country and relates it to settlement patterns, culture and the nature of rural economies. Strong regional differences are also highlighted in Dias's study (58) of popular allegiance in Derbyshire. Reasons for withdrawal of active state intervention in seventeenth-century grain markets are considered by Outhwaite (148), who denies those traditional explanations emphasizing the role of London institutions and of less serious dearths. Instead, he pinpoints adverse reaction to provision for food shortages which subsequently proved unnecessary, and those agricultural interests in Parliament unwilling to curb high prices. Contributory factors were better local poor law provision, and certain excise changes which discouraged government from restricting industrial uses of grain. On landownership Habakkuk (90) tries to estimate broad changes in the size-distribution of estates before 1640 compared with the eighteenth century, while Clay (42) considers why the great owners into whose hands land tended to accumulate after 1660 were also largely responsible for fuelling an extremely active land market. He argues that strict settlement was an ineffective device for keeping properties intact, and that while over-spending due to extravagance or

heavy financial provision for the family often caused sales, frequently they resulted from a desire to consolidate lands following the inheritance of distant properties. In another paper Clay (41) focuses on tenure systems and their implications for land management. He shows that lifeleasehold typical of western England required much less supervision of husbandry practices than rack-rented estates, and were also less likely to result in bad farming than previously supposed. The usefulness of rental records is demonstrated by Wordie (226), who sets information from some West Midland estates beside comparative evidence from the country at large. Findings suggest that tenants were under no great financial pressure before the Napoleonic Wars, but thereafter more efficient estate management, decline of the long lease, and a new attitude towards tenants rendered their situation a much less comfortable one. In his survey of debates on enclosure Blum (24) concludes that the pessimistic view of effects upon small owners has not been disproved and charges historians with minimizing or even denying high social and economic costs. However, Turner's study of how costs were defrayed (200) does emphasize the distress of small owners whose financial burdens were disproportionately high. Non-Parliamentary methods of enclosure have attracted little attention in the past. But in six East Midland counties surveyed by Reed (164) they accounted for over half of the total area, and he urges greater enquiry into their extent, chronology, motives, costs and consequences. The links between farm size and efficiency are explored by Phillips (155) in his study of the Leveson-Gower estate. Here, greater efficiency was not an immediate or automatic consequence of farm enlargement between 1714 and 1779. Rather it was consolidation and the alteration of farm layout after 1780 which had the major impact. On production and marketing, Edwards (66) surveys the Shropshire cattle trade during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, highlighting greater market orientation of producers and emergence of specialist middlemen. Woodlands have often provided a significant proportion of landed income, and Barton (13) describes their management and economy on a large Hertfordshire estate during the 1670s and 1680s. Improvement is the theme of several articles. It has been believed that in Scotland it was the great landlords who alone initiated change in the eighteenth century. However, Whyte (218) describes the systematic planting and encouragement to tenants by a small proprietor and suggests there was considerable exchange of ideas at all levels of estate ownership. The importance of husbandry covenants in leases is emphasized by Stanes (191) in a study of Devon examples, and he argues that through them landowners imposed high standards on farming

from an early date. Grove (89) has analysed the advanced ideas of Cressey Dymock. In 1651 this little known innovator proposed a reasoned model of zoned land-use aimed at maximizing the economy of labour on newly drained fenland, in which many of Von Thunen's concepts were anticipated. A variety of approaches are evident in articles on agrarian society. Rollison (172) focuses upon the curious ceremony held to mock a local tenant farmer in an obscure Cotswold village in 1716, and uncovers a complex web of conflict, factionalism and intrigue. The ceremony, which expressed deep resentment towards established society, also reflected the huge gulf between gentry and plebeian cultures. With the need for an alternative to Gregory King's questionable social table, Horn (109) outlines a method employing a variety of local sources for the study of wealth and occupation, illustrated with evidence from the Gloucester Vale. The value of local study is also confirmed by Pickles' search for causes of out-migration from a rural area in Yorkshire between the 1660s and 1740 (156). She finds no golden age for labourers here as farming activity declined and wealth fell. A series of useful drawings of farm buildings found with the Ulster Plantation surveys are described by Blades (22). They reflect seventeenth-century approaches to design materials and construction more clearly than modified structures of today. The development of farmyard types in Ireland in relation to farm economy and terrain is traced by Ó Danachair (147), while Tyson (203) documents the planned rebuilding of two tenanted Cumbrian farmsteads during the eighteenth century. Greedy landlords have been a common target in explanations of agrarian violence in Ireland. Nonetheless, Maguire's investigation (136) of unrest after rent increases and renewal of fines on the Donegall estate demonstrates that here at least the cause was not so simple. For although the scale and suddenness of changes in the 1770s were likely to antagonize tenants, rent increases were modest. More to blame was the complex structure of sub-letting which allowed heaviest burdens to fall upon insecure, hardpressed occupiers whom the Earl of Donegall neither created nor controlled.

Questions of land ownership feature prominently in articles dealing with the modern period. Soltow (189) has analysed the British land tax of 1798 to disclose the distribution of property values and the level of owner occupation at that time. The stress on continuity within the British peerage between 1750 and 1830 is questioned by McCahall (134), who argues that land ceased to be the pre-eminent qualification for ennoblement, particularly after 1800. This partly reflected a fear of denuding the Lower House of propertied men but was also linked to a broader policy of rewarding services to the Crown. From a

different viewpoint, Rubinstein (174) argues that there was a near cessation of land purchase by *élites* in business and the professions after 1800 because it was less possible, less profitable and socially less advantageous than before to enter landed society. Early nineteenth-century census returns from an Irish barony are analysed by Soltow (188) to determine how landholding varied with age and change in occupational status. In a study of landownership trends in Scotland after 1870, Clark (40) finds that although areas with the largest properties suffered the sharpest decline in mean size, this was not true of all counties, and he urges detailed investigation of individual estates and the growth of state-owned land. In an important article on crop productivity in Europe Chorley (38) looks closely at the question of nutrient supply, and in particular at the crucial role of legumes, in boosting yields by raising the nitrogen content of soils and farmyard manure. Another source of raised output has been improved varieties of grain, and Austen *et al* are among those (8, 166, 182, 183) who provide a measure of their contribution over the past century. Turner (199) uses the 1801 crop returns to determine the distribution of major crops in England and Wales, and to provide an estimate of total arable acreage. His figure of between 7 m and 8 m acres compares favourably with contemporary ones. The implications of tithe commutation are assessed by Vamplew (208), who argues that most importantly it allowed farmers who raised their earnings by greater livestock production to reduce tithe payments as a proportion of their total income. The study of high farming in Victorian Britain is reviewed by Perry (152), while Dodd (60) dissects the 1854 crop returns for south-western Scotland to show the healthy state of farming there. In an article on post-famine agricultural adjustment in Ireland, Hazelkorn (101) questions why Marx's prognostications were not realized. Mainly this reflected his ignorance of tenant ambitions, land fever and the nature of agrarian capitalism in that country, which inhibited the emergence of large farms and pools of landless labourers. The impact of the late nineteenth-century depression is of growing interest. Colyer (44) charts the political and economic decline of the Cardiganshire squirearchy after 1870, and links it to mounting debts, growth of taxation and shrinking rental incomes. By contrast, Blackwell's study (21) of papers from Sussex country houses finds no evidence of deterioration in either life style or social status between 1880 and 1914. Land use changes in the Evesham Vale over the same period are traced by Robinson (168) employing multi-variate analysis of the agricultural returns. He detects vigorous expansion in horticulture, reflecting transport improvement, the smallholder movement and changes in market demand. The position of

labourers, particularly women, in the agrarian economy has also been the focus of much detailed research. Snell (187) has gathered data from settlement examinations, and argues there was a real fall in the earning capacity of women in southern counties after 1760 due to reduced field work and a shift from summer to lower-paid spring tasks. In the pastoral west, however, income rose with the maintenance of more even year-round employment. In an attempt to assess the effect of real wage levels on participation rates of women and children in farming, Saito (180) concludes that in the 1790s they were obliged to work if income of the breadwinner fell below 10s, but when earnings exceeded it leisure was preferred. Kussmaul (130) uses statistics from the Lincolnshire archives to explain social, spatial and temporal mobility of farm servants in the late eighteenth century, while in another pessimistic view of labour Armstrong (5) argues that demographic rather than institutional factors played a dominant role in the deterioration of living standards after 1815. It is D C Moore's view that deference to traditional *élites* conditioned voting behaviour of farmers, but Fisher (72, 73) is critical of this view, and in a study of a mid-nineteenth-century election detects vigorous self-assertion by tenants and defiance of landlord influence when interests no longer coincided. The adoption of farm equipment is explored in a number of articles. Wilkes (219) relates the early diffusion of the seed drill and horse hoe to problems of labour supply and advances in engineering but he also believes that pioneers had a decisive influence. Tillage equipment of south-western counties is described by Jewell (120), who shows how implements evolved to meet special requirements of ley farming in difficult terrain. The comparatively late spread of the scythe for harvesting in Ireland is explained by Bell (15) as largely the result of persistence in sowing grain on ridges. Only when drainage was improved and ridges flattened could the tool be effectively used. Farm sale notices are collected by Mutch (145) to chart the adoption of harvesting machinery in Lancashire up to 1914. He links high wages and uncertain supplies of casual labour to surges in adoption after 1860, while in another article Miller (140) shows how high costs of operation and lack of demand at this time doomed the first contract steam plough company to an early failure. The histories of agricultural education and science deserve more attention than they have received in the past, and Colyer (47) highlights this neglect in his study of developments in Wales since early in this century.

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Book Reviews

MARTIN BELL, *Excavations at Bishopstone. Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 115, 1977. xii + 299 pp.

Excavation of the site of Rookery Hill, overlooking Bishopstone, has demonstrated a remarkable sequence of human settlement and agriculture over 3500 years, from a Neolithic farm to a fifth-century Saxon village. The publication has already acquired a reputation as a model excavation report, and this is not only because it is a meticulous, detailed and lucid presentation of evidence thoroughly recorded in the field and carefully interpreted. Over the past two decades an increasing range of specialist techniques has been applied to the analysis of archaeological evidence, notably those relating to the study of past environments and landscapes. These, in turn, have encouraged excavators to look for, and naturally therefore to discover, types of evidence which were always there but were previously neglected. In that respect the report has fulfilled parental expectations, as a child of its time.

Early in the third millennium BC a Neolithic farming settlement was established on the hill-top. Study of the land molluscs found in associated layers showed that this was still partially wooded, though the lower slopes were fully cleared. These creatures are very particular about their habitat, and they also showed that a field lynchet, presumably the result of earlier cultivation (attested on the site by carbonized seeds of 6-row barley, emmer wheat and common weeds of arable land) had become turfed over by the end of the Neolithic period. Few such Neolithic settlements have been excavated; this site helps us to understand a pattern of settlement which otherwise is mainly to be inferred from surface scatters of flint and pottery.

After an apparent hiatus in the Bronze Age, there was an Iron Age enclosure containing granaries and associated with a field system. One of the field lynchets produced evidence for cross-ploughing, a practice asserted more often than attested for this period. Cultivation, predominantly of spelt, appears to have been virtually uninterrupted; there were also abundant bones of most domesticated animals, as well as fowl, hunted animals and marine molluscs. A 'complex and integrated' economy is thus suggested.

The Roman picture is much the same, but the Saxon village shows a surprising discontinuity from that pattern within a short space of time. The part excavated includes six halls, austere called 'large rectangular buildings', and eighteen other structures, laid out in an orderly way over both earlier

enclosures and their adjoining fields. Archaeologically speaking, pagan Saxons died more ostentatiously than they lived: their known cemeteries are numerous, but excavated examples of their villages are rare. At Bishopstone there are both, a conjunction rarer still: the cemetery, downhill, was excavated previously and separately, but the evidence from it is summarized here. The fields near the village appear at this time to have been given over to pasture, but the environmental evidence is less abundant and so less conclusive. How far the abandonment of the site was connected with the establishment of the present village of Bishopstone is also obscure, since the archaeological and documentary sources do not overlap; but Rookery Hill became grazing land, and so remained until this century.

The site reflects changing patterns of agricultural practice and land use over a very long period of time. The report documents this process in as full and clear manner as present archaeological techniques can achieve.

T F C BLAGG

ROGER MERCER (ed), *Farming Practice in British Prehistory*. Edinburgh UP, 1981. 245 pp. Illus, maps, plans. £9.50.

In 1946 E Cecil Curwen published a handsome little book on *Plough and Pasture*, probably inspired by a book of his friend, Gudmund Hatt (*Landbrug i Danmarks Oldtid*, 1937), and in 1953 they produced a joint publication of this name with the subtitle: *The Early History of Farming* (H Schuman, New York) which covered the whole world. None of the two books last mentioned, however, treated animal husbandry in the same way as the technique of agriculture.

Since then much has happened to archaeology, and it is not too soon for an overall discussion to appear. In the introduction Dr Mercer presents a brief review of evidence for changing farming practice in the British Isles over four millennia, intended to produce a backcloth against which the more specific interdisciplinary contributions can be seen. To this is added a table of radiocarbon dates. His text is clear and full of new information without being too much influenced by speculations in the New Archaeology fashion. It is followed by a very short bird's eye view of British farming today by M J Nash.

'Part One: The Land and Crops', is opened by Peter Fowler with a special introduction called 'Wildscape to Landscape', in which he treats field

structures and boundaries as well as enclosures, illustrated with sketch maps and air photographs. Hardly any other country has been so extensively photographed from the air in order to reveal the ancient landscapes. But the reviewer would have liked to see detailed mappings and investigations on the ground with at least 5 m contours. And instead of a black line indicating the courses and configuration of balks and lynchets one would like to see how these features reflect the landscape in detail. This cannot be developed in a scale of 1:10,000 as in Fig 4, showing a system of Celtic Fields along the river Piddle in Dorset. G Hatt and I measured in a scale of 1:1000, Viggo Nielson made vertical photographs of each 2 m square of the excavated area drawn in a scale of 1:10 (*Tools and Tillage*, vol 1, 1970, pp 151-65), and the strips of Borup, Zealand, were measured in a scale of 1:250. The pioneering work was done in England, but the Dutch and German surveyors did not improve on it, so as a result of M Müller-Wille, in comparing British-Dutch-German evidence with the Danish, reduced the Danish maps into the same scale, transforming the variably hatched configurations of balks into dull black lines.

This means that the map materials available for Peter Fowler's conclusions are less sensitive than was desirable. His comparison between the enclosures of recent times and apparently enclosed areas of prehistoric age should therefore not be taken too seriously. But his infield-outfield hypothesis seems to be a sound starting point, as well as his suggestion that stores of grain needed protection and therefore reflected trends in the social system.

S P Halliday, P J Hill and J B Stevenson have written a short chapter on the 'Early Agriculture of Scotland', broadly on the same lines. As usual Sian Rees is cautious not to limit the use of an agricultural tool to one separate function, and she stresses the urgent need for more experiments. The chapter written by Peter Rowley-Convey on slashing and burning in the temperate European Neolithics argues against concepts which are no longer held by the specialists. Dr J Iversen's interpretation of distinct layers of charcoal in bogs as a proof of initial clearings of woods before the first 'Landnam' was inspired by earlier authors (the Finnish A W Liljenstrand, the Swedish E O Arenander), expanded into a general explanation by G Hatt. But based on his pioneering excavations in the Swiss bog at Weyer, J Troels-Smith considers that agriculture started in the late Mesolithic as a very intensive cultivation of small plots manured by cattle-dung from the sheds where domestic animals were foddered with twigs and leaves, etc. The present reviewer has suggested that women were the first agriculturalists, while the men continued to hunt, fish and trap species of the wild fauna. Already the

Draved experiment proved that people of the Neolithic would take one or two harvests after the clearing of virgin woods; the reason for the extensive clearings demonstrated by Iversen was rather to provide open grazing areas for herds of browsing cattle than for perpetual cultivation of those areas. We agree with Dr Rowley-Convey in his arguments against a general practice of slash-and-burn agriculture in the Scandinavian fashion in the British Isles, and in his paper of 1955 in *Kuml* the reviewer did not generalize the use of fire in such a restricted way. But fire is the best manner of getting rid of the debris after the trees have been felled, and this explains its general use.

The figures of crop yields produced by Peter Reynolds on the Butser experiment farm are most surprising. Over an eight-year period the seed/yield ratio for spelt wheat was between 1:12 and 1:40, and for emmer wheat between 1:7 and 1:59, produced without any periods of fallow and without any form of added nutrient of any kind. The average yield was 1.85 tonnes per hectare. However, it must be taken into consideration that the pH reaction of the soil was as high as 7.2, and Dr Reynolds himself would like these figures to be compared with others from experiments on poorer soils. But he has proved that experiments carried out in an extremely controlled scientific way can prepare a reasonably firm ground for calculations of population numbers under different conditions, such as Dr Mercer demonstrates in his Appendix.

Experimental archaeology is in fashion and should be supported in Britain where a most prominent scholar is in charge of it, and it will be interesting to compare the results produced here with those of similar experiments which have long been in process near Cologne and in the Aisne valley in France. A group of scholars concerned with experimenting in this way met in Paris in March 1982, and will meet again in Cologne in 1983. They will probably form an organization for more regular discussions and future planning. The embryonic work started by the present reviewer in the late 1930s is now ready to bear fruit. But comparisons with modern ard-types like the Spanish 'el cambelo' must be taken with reservations, and the interrupted nature of fossil ard-marks is often due to investigations made on too small a scale.

Gordon Hillmann's chapter on 'Reconstructing Crop Husbandry Practices from Charred Remains of Crops' is a masterpiece of analysis, based upon an ethnographic model from Eastern Turkey where emmer wheat and einkorn are endemic. Two other important papers are presented in Part Two by A J Legge on 'Aspects of Cattle Husbandry', and M J Ryder on 'Livestock Products: Skins and Fleeces'. Legge's idea that cattle was not domesticated in order

to produce meat but for milk production is consistent with Troels-Smith's findings from Weyer in Switzerland. For their use as draught-animals there are earlier documentations in south-eastern Europe than in the Middle East. Michael Ryder is a paramount expert on sheep and its domestication, and his chapter should be read together with his article in *Antiquity*, March 1982: 'Sheep — Hilzheimer 45 years on'.

The last chapter by Dr Alexander Fenton treats different early manuring techniques, presenting a great variety of ways of producing and augmenting the necessary amount of manure, mostly based on his own studies in Scotland. One might comment on his suggestion that byre-drains were not common until medieval times, that drains built of coppled stones were usual in early Iron Age houses at Esbjerg in West Jutland, and some drains built of wooden planks were found at Elizenhof farther south near Tønning, and that composting, in fact, has been mentioned by Roman authors.

Farming Practice in British Prehistory is an important book, packed with new information and discussions as well as speculation about what living reality the facts might indicate in prehistoric times. It is a useful challenge to prehistorians as well as to agricultural historians, paleobotanists, zoologists and to all scholars with an open eye for matters outside their own speciality.

AXEL STEENSBERG

G E M DE STE CROIX, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*. Duckworth, 1981. xi + 732 pp. £38. I learned more about the ancient world from this book than from any single work that I have read since A H M Jones published his *Later Roman Empire* in 1964. De Ste Croix means by the 'Ancient Greek World' the whole area where Greek was spoken from about 700 BC to the expansion of the Arabs in the seventh-century AD. Thus, he begins with the Aegean world but in the later centuries deals with the whole of the eastern half of the Roman Empire: indeed much of what he says applies to the Roman Empire as a whole. It is an astonishing range. His knowledge of the sources and of the modern literature for this vast period of history is extraordinary. He writes as a Marxist, a somewhat individual Marxist, who does not shrink from criticizing other Marxist scholars, including even Marx himself. This gives him in many ways a new, stimulating, challenging way of looking at the ancient world. He raises questions which are often not raised in the conventional histories. Here is one example: the

Greeks worked out some most remarkable systems of political democracy, which often protected the poor against the exploitation and oppression of the rich. What became of the democracy? Why did it not last indefinitely? The author gives a far better answer than you will find elsewhere of the long and shameful history of how the Roman governing class, which always hated democracy, in alliance with the native Greek property-owners, managed to wipe out the last remnants of the democracy of Pericles and other great Greeks. But it was not easy to achieve, and it was not until the third-century AD that the task was complete.

Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in the land, the great source of wealth, the only source of great wealth, in the ancient world. In the period of the late Roman Empire (say AD 300 onwards) some of the western senators owned estates measuring several thousand square miles. They were now perhaps five times richer on average than the senators of the first century. These landowners exploited the mass of the people to a degree that ultimately caused their own society to disintegrate. The argument, very briefly, is that soon after the beginning of the Christian era the great wars of expansion and the abundant supply of cheap slaves (war-prisoners, etc) came to an end. Slaves had to be induced to breed in large quantities. But this lowers the rate at which they can be exploited, for at any rate the females will have part of their time diverted from their normal work. The inevitable result is that the landowners, if they are to prevent their standard of living from falling, must intensify the exploitation of the poorer free population, who now have no democracy to help them. The government admitted many scores of thousands of barbarians into the Empire. These provided both recruits for the army and an adult workforce, the cost of producing which had not fallen on the Greco-Roman economy. But they were only a short-term and local remedy, and caused the army to be 'barbarized'. There followed defection of oppressed Romans to the barbarians, peasant revolts, indifference to barbarian successes, and so on. It is against this background that the author produces by far the best explanation of the decline and fall of the ancient world.

The book is packed with stimulating discussions, e.g. why did Christianity so signally fail to produce any important change for the better in Greco-Roman society?

A criticism: the book is written for (among others) 'the general reader'. Many general readers who would be glad to know its contents will find it hard going. I hope that author and publisher will lose no time in producing a somewhat shorter and simpler version.

E A THOMPSON

R A DODGSHON and R A BUTLIN (eds), *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*. Academic Press, 1978. xx + 450 pp. 53 figures. £14.50 hardback; £6.80 paperback.

Writing the historical geography of any substantial area poses a basic problem of organization. Should the material be arranged spatially, with a chapter on each major region; historically, period by period, or topic by topic, charting changes in agriculture, industry, population and so on? Each method has been used; each has its advantages and its weaknesses. The decision which to use becomes of even greater significance when, as in this case, the study is the work of several different hands.

An Historical Geography of England and Wales adopts a compromise approach. The first six chapters follow a chronological organization up to 1500. B K Roberts covers 'Perspectives on Prehistory', focusing on the evidence available for this period, and the problems of dating and interpretation. I Hodder examines 'The Human Geography of Roman Britain', applying some of geography's more recent quantitative and theoretical ideas, such as Thiessen polygons and network analysis. G R J Jones looks at the various movements and interactions of 'Celts, Saxons and Scandinavians', from the end of the Roman period to the Norman invasion. As may be expected, place-name evidence is widely used, and there is a good deal of emphasis on social organization. The period of 'The Early Middle Ages, 1066-1350', is dealt with by R A Dodgshon, while the other co-editor, R A Butlin, takes on 'The Late Middle Ages, c 1350-1500'. These two chapters follow similar and fairly traditional lines, looking at population change, rural economies, agricultural development, towns, trade and industry.

The next part of the book deals with the period 1500-1730, but subdivides it into three major topics. J A Yelling considers 'Agriculture', emphasizing enclosure and production; J Langton 'Industry and Towns', especially those key industries, textiles and coal; and R M Smith 'Population and its Geography in England', examining the use of aggregate analysis of parish registers.

In the last, and largest, section of the book, the period 1730-1900 is divided into six chapters, again on a topical basis. 'Agriculture' in this section is undertaken by J R Walton: a study of the Agricultural Revolution. Industry is considered important enough to warrant two chapters: E Pawson looks at 'The Framework of Industrial Change', what was happening during the Industrial Revolution and what was causing it, in terms of the traditional concerns of demand and supply, while D Gregory presents 'The Process of Industrial Change'; an examination of the broader issues of innovation, labour-management relations, competition, and the

class struggle. R Lawton writes on 'Population and Society', using the much fuller demographic data of this period to analyse national trends and spatial changes, including the great growth of urban centres. This last is further developed by H Carter in 'Towns and Urban Systems', looking first at systems of cities, then at urban form. Finally, A Moyes discusses 'Transport', the eras of turnpike, canal and rail and the effect of each on the national space-economy.

Overall, this organization of material works well enough. The topical arrangement of the later chapters can obscure important interactions — as in the artificial separation of industry, transport, and urban growth — but at least it allows each author to develop his theme without too narrow a time-constraint, as well as permitting topical specialists (more common in historical geography than period specialists) to concentrate on their own principal areas of research. There can always be arguments about the dividing dates used between periods, but those used here seem logical and, in any case, are not allowed to become straitjackets. The exclusion of Scotland is understandable for the earlier periods, but becomes increasingly hard to justify as industry and transport develop on a national scale in the nineteenth century. The inclusion of Wales is rather erratic; some authors virtually ignore it.

However, the value of any book lies in more than just its organization. Do the individual contributors do a good job? Does the book achieve its aim, whatever it is? What is the market for the book?

The various individual chapters show a considerable variation in both approach and content. This is deliberate: the editors explain that they 'have not tried to impose a formal structure or format' (p vii). Thus Roberts concentrates very heavily on the evidence, with no attempt to build up any kind of picture of the prehistorical period, while Jones is at more pains to present an overall view, with much less consideration of problems of interpretation and theory. Thus Langton provides a clear and well-illustrated survey of industry from 1500 to 1730, while one does not have to be sceptical about Marxist interpretations of history to find Gregory's chapter on later industrial processes hard to hack one's way through. In fact, this book is not a balanced survey of English historical geography, but a collection of 14 essays, the only apparent editorial control being the selection and allocation of periods and topics. The editors talk (pp vii-viii) of a shift in the seventies to a 'more interpretative approach to the past', and of 'the urgent need for a textbook which takes stock of what has been achieved so far'. Contributors were asked to 'highlight the areas . . . which have responded most to the challenge of the "new" geography'. Some, like Hodder, have taken up this assignment enthusiastically.

cally; others have been rather more descriptive in approach. The emphasis on current innovative research also explains why nearly half the book is concerned with the period from 1730 onwards.

It follows that anyone looking for a comprehensive account of what is known of past geographies would be better off with the (much more expensive) Darby volume, *A New Historical Geography of England*. Darby is much longer, chronologically organized, better-illustrated, and more concerned with the current state of knowledge than with the latest experiments in research. (Irritatingly, neither book has a bibliography: Darby relies on footnotes, Dodgshon and Butlin on chapter-end notes.) Those who want theories rather than facts, to be stimulated more than informed, will prefer this book. It is more exciting to read, likely to provoke more argument, and much more likely to spark interest in historical geographical research. The use of nineteenth-century local newspaper advertisements to plot adoption curves for sheep and farm machinery, the mapping of cropmarks from aerial photographs, are for many more interesting than the usual maps of agricultural production or of two- and three-field systems. Dodgshon and Butlin should be thought of as a collection of research essays arranged to cover the main periods of English history. Some essays will delight, some will bore, but in all it is a book worth having.

ROBERT S DILLEY

J A RAFTIS (ed), *Pathways to Medieval Peasants*. Papers in Medieval Studies, 2; Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1981. 358 pp. Maps, plans. \$21.

This is a collection of thirteen papers ranging in subject-matter from ecology to parish folklore. There is also a considerable variation in quality. The group of three essays on the parish is particularly thin, and a presentation of a fictional peasant at the fair of St Ives is hardly better. There is, however, a group of interesting and solidly based articles which draw on substantial research.

J Muendel's study of the distribution of mills in the fifteenth-century Florentine countryside is the least satisfactory of this better group. It is, nevertheless, an interesting survey, based mainly on a register of the collection of a mill tax. By the middle of the century there were 711 grain mills (45 combined with a fulling mill) and 15 separate fulling mills distributed over the *contado*. The facts are interesting, though the analysis is minimal. The author says the figures show a picture of economic and social life hitherto unperceived, but fails to elaborate.

Judith M Bennett bases a paper on marriage on the Ramsey Abbey *Liber Gersumarum* (1398–1458). She

insists, successfully, that many women were paying their own merchets — 33 per cent of the total — and suggests that they may have been wage-earners in their twenties. Other facts about this group of merchet payments support the original contention: they tended to be lower in value and required pledges. There are many other points of interest concerning other merchet payers (future husbands, fathers) and their status (insiders, outsiders, free, or villen). Some payers were not even the woman's relatives. The author does not make the suggestion — may they have been moneylenders?

A paper on debt litigation, by Elaine Clark, is also valuable factually and analytically. It is based on the court rolls of Writtle, Essex, between 1382 and 1490. Unlike most manorial court records, full details of debt or detinue are given, arising from deferred payment for goods, credit advanced by buyers, hire of labour and equipment, land leases, and so on. Some 85 per cent of nearly 900 cases could be followed through to their conclusion. But this is not merely an apparently highly monetized economy. Lending and borrowing expressed a complicated network of inter-household relationships, where debtors were also borrowers and vice versa, though on the whole the credit balance was in favour of the bigger cultivators. Also, as one would expect in Essex, a high proportion of people involved in these credit transactions were craftsmen.

This is a useful collection. Even some of the less well-thought-out contributions have something in them. One might mention a critique of Le Roy Ladurie's use of sources for *Montaillou* and of his penchant for Cathars (the author is a Dominican); or a rambling collection of data by J Mundy on town and country in the thirteenth-century Toulousain. And J G Hurst contributes a useful article summarizing archaeological research on English deserted medieval villages.

R H HILTON

JOHN WELLER, *History of the Farmstead*. Faber and Faber, 1982. 248 pp. illus. £5.95; EURWYN WILLIAM, *Traditional Farm Buildings in North-East Wales 1550–1900*. National Museum of Wales, Welsh Folk Museum, 1982. 334 pp. illus. No price stated.

These two very different volumes are the latest in the steady flow of recent published material on the once neglected subject of farm buildings. No doubt many more are still to come as further awareness and appreciation continue to throw light upon new areas worthy of study. Indeed, Fenton and Walker's *The Rural Architecture of Scotland* (John Donald, 1981) was a detailed introduction, based both on documentary as well as field-work sources, with the explicit

objective of stimulating others to take up the work of recording now while the buildings still survive to be studied. Not a little of the renewed interest in farm buildings has sprung from a growing realization of the extent of what has already been lost.

History of the Farmstead bears the subsidiary heading, *The Development of Energy Sources* to signal Mr Weller's intention of illustrating a direct relationship between available power and the consequent form and layout of buildings. In fact, the two principal chapters that treat of this theme are sandwiched between sections on layout and construction materials. If not directly on the point, these do at least suggest the breadth of other influences that have affected the character of farm buildings over the centuries.

The analysis of energy application distinguishes between natural, muscular and indirect sources of power. So, in terms of buildings, a hot house is an example of the first, a threshing floor of the second, and a broiler house, heated by butane gas, of the third. In essence the scheme does work but the historical perception, running from the beginnings of civilization, is so condensed that there is nothing here that has not already been said in other generally available works. The text is agreeably and fully amplified by illustrations but, nevertheless, by skating through history at such speed, conditions are ripe for the breathtaking phrase: 'In Agriculture, the wheel certainly provoked a fundamental change. The introduction of the plough was probably of equal importance and Jethro Tull's seed drill of 1701 marked another vital change in agricultural practice.'

The real value of this work is the way in which twentieth-century farm practice, up to present-day computerization, is slotted into the overall historical view. Here Mr Weller uses his expertise as agricultural architect and author to demonstrate the effects of widespread electrification of steadings in the 1950s, the progression towards high technology and the prospects for the further development of intermediate technologies on the farm. By placing linear layouts, silos, prefabricated structures and other contemporary aspects into the widest evolutionary context, *History of the Farmstead* is nothing if not refreshing.

In complete contrast, *Traditional Farm Buildings in North East Wales 1550-1900* is a work composed not of broad sweeping strokes but of precise and densely packed detail supplemented when necessary by informed speculation. It represents in published form the fruits of a research project undertaken by Dr Wiliam, Keeper of Buildings at the Welsh Folk Museum, over a period of five years from the mid-1970s and subsequently offered as a doctoral thesis.

Associated as it is with the Manchester University

School of Architecture, it thereby follows the pattern of regional study established by Dr J E C Peters and his important *The Development of Farm Buildings in Western Lowland Staffordshire up to 1880* (1969). References to the work of Peters appear frequently in the text, often using his research findings as a basis for contrasting the Welsh results. There is a deliberate impression, therefore, that these are comparison studies to which more could be added in the future to provide further comparisons with other regions of the country.

North-eastern Wales is a topographically diverse area encompassing separate agricultural regions with their own distinct characteristics in farm building. Seven geographical areas were identified by Dr Wiliam within the region and form the base framework into which the statistical data is set. A 10 per cent sample of surviving farms built before 1900 was studied and a clear explanation is given of how that sample, although random, yet included a compensatory element to allow for variations in the pattern of distribution. The 363 selected farms were then visited and their features converted into a numerical format for recording on cards of the Peters and Brunskill type.

Dr Wiliam does not say how long was spent at each farm or how many, if any, were visited more than once. From his own account, however, it would appear that during the course of 7 field sessions up to 10 farms were visited every day. For the purpose of making a full record of each farm, both on paper and on film, this from experience seems a meagre allocation. Rather, the method is for the accumulation of data to be subjected to statistical analysis later so that the identification of common characteristics leading to regional and sub-regional trends becomes possible. The individual farm, with its own unique history and development as a unit, is of less importance compared to its score on a checklist of structural features.

The results of the survey are presented in tabulated form and distributed throughout the sections. Siting, layout and materials of construction are followed by chapters on the buildings themselves grouped in order of function, with barns, stables and cattle accommodation receiving the most attention. Dwelling houses were not included in the project 'influenced as they were by different factors altogether'. An exposition of the documentary evidence introduces each section and extensive chapter notes supplement a useful bibliography at the back of the book. The 18 pages of drawings, however, suffer from being divorced from the main text and the photographs, while useful, should surely be more numerous in a work of this depth.

As a research report this is a valuable work of reference. Nevertheless it must be said that the sheer

mass of detail, both exhaustive and exhausting, makes this a very difficult book to absorb. The extent to which it is read will suffer accordingly. A re-working of the thesis into a less dense, and more digestible form for publication with more expansive use of illustrations would have widened its influence. Perhaps this will yet occur.

ROY BRIGDEN

MARGARET H B SANDERSON, *Scottish Rural Society in the Sixteenth Century*. Edinburgh, John Donald, 1982. 6 Maps. ix + 286 pp. £15.

Much of Scotland's agrarian history, at least of the periods before the eighteenth century, has been based on second-hand opinions, derived mainly from the improvers of that century, men who had very much a case to prove. But of recent years the picture has been slowly filled in by patient work with contemporary documents and the old excuse of lack of sources is beginning to look thin. In particular, we have had Ian Whyte's book on the seventeenth century and now comes another, in this case on the sixteenth century, by Margaret H B Sanderson. The result is the illumination of one aspect of rural life in that century, although the light is not as widely spread as the title of the work implies.

The aspect that is fully examined is that of the tenure of land by the working farmers. This topic, as much as any, has been at the mercy of the retrospective judgement of eighteenth-century writers. Most independent farmers in Scotland were, so it was thought, tenants, generally on very insecure, year-to-year, tenures. Dr Sanderson challenges this view, at least as applied to the sixteenth century. Firstly, leases were more common than had been thought; secondly, the feuing movement is decisively shown to have given many small men the protection of firm tenure; and thirdly, and most unexpectedly, she argues that there did exist in Scotland forms of copyhold tenure which could be defended in the courts. All this is persuasively argued from the detailed and patient scrutiny of estate records, particularly of ecclesiastical origin. Even this gives a sufficiently wide view of the Scottish rural scene to make a cogent case for some revision of accepted views on an important topic.

Other aspects of rural society are approached much more tentatively and with less certainty of touch. There is mention of those below the tenant level, the cottars and servants, but estate documents seldom give much indication of how such people lived and it is perhaps to be expected that no full picture of the agrarian structure can be drawn. Dr Sanderson makes a good deal of the inheritance of holdings and wealth from father to son, or at least within families, but little can be proved about the

possibilities of the landless rising into the tenant class or perhaps of existing tenants losing place within it. It might have been expected, however, particularly if we remember Ian Whyte's work, that more might have been gathered from the estate records about agricultural methods, about field arrangements, and about crops, than is shown in this work. But again it may be the failure of sources that is responsible for the gap. The chapter on social life does suggest some of the dynamic forces affecting development when it picks up the theme of inheritance to show how accumulation from generation to generation could affect social grouping. For the rest, however, social life is viewed through the rather desultory listing of household details.

This is an important work, then, which has not quite the width implied in the title.

MALCOLM GRAY

PETER CLARK (ed), *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England*. Leicester UP, 1981. xiii + 258 pp. £14.

During the past ten years English towns in the early modern period have attracted much attention from historians. Worcester, York, Coventry and Manchester have been studied in monographs; many articles dealing with individual towns or with urban themes have appeared in volumes of essays and in learned journals. Peter Clark has edited two collections of essays and (with Paul Slack) written a survey of English urban history between 1500 and 1700. In this volume he takes his entrepreneurial work a stage further by editing four studies derived from doctoral theses of middle-rank provincial towns at various periods between 1580 and 1800.

In his introduction Clark contributes an able survey of the social and economic development of county towns between 1500 and 1800. He contrasts the harsh and recurrent economic and social difficulties faced by many towns before 1640 with the more prosperous era enjoyed by numerous towns between the Restoration and 1800. He draws together skilfully much recent published and unpublished research, including his own on Kentish towns and on Gloucester.

The case study of Warwick 1580-90 shows the seriousness of the problem of urban poverty towards the end of the sixteenth century by using census data and poor rate material for the 1580s. The population had been growing rapidly earlier in the century and the local economy had developed only sluggishly. Beier shows how charity such as funeral doles and poor relief tried to cope with the problem. In his essay on seventeenth-century Ipswich Michael Reed discusses the occupational structure and distribution of wealth by analysing the numerous surviving probate inventories. The corporation is shown to

have provided a framework for some aspects of the town's economy, but the effectiveness of its regulations was declining. The article on Winchester by Adrienne Rosen deals with most aspects of the society, economy and politics of the town between 1580 and 1700, in part contrasting the weakening effect of the decline of the cloth industry in the early seventeenth century with the growth of the town as a service centre for Hampshire between 1660 and 1700. While in many ways the characteristics and pattern of development of these three medium-sized towns were to be found in other urban centres, Bath (the subject of the fourth study) was exceptional: in the words of Sylvia McIntyre, 'the small borough of the 1660s blossomed into the pleasure capital of Georgian England, rivalling London in its attractions for the well-born and the wealthy: the population increased over tenfold by 1801, while the old city was cased in a shell of new development'. The work of the Corporation in this property development receives particular attention in the essay.

Readers of this journal might wish for more discussion of the links between these towns and their rural hinterland, but all those interested in urban history will find the essays wide-ranging in scope and of a high standard.

C W CHALKLIN

ALICE CLARK, *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*. xlii + 328 pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. £4.50.

A notable feature of academic research during the past decade has been the quite dramatic surge of interest in the history of women. Partly this can be linked to the development of social history which extended the field of historical enquiry beyond those narrow confines of (male dominated) activities, including law, government, diplomacy and trade. But it was also related to the rise of feminism in the 1970s. Historians quite rightly questioned the almost total neglect of women in explanations of the past, and a plethora of articles and monographs subsequently appeared attempting to fill the void. Despite its apparent novelty, however, the desire to understand women's place in history is not unprecedented, and this reprint of Alice Clark's classic work is a salutary reminder of that fact. Published in 1919, *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* was to a large degree inspired by strands of then current feminist thinking. This focused upon the economic subordination of women and sought to explain it in historical terms. Feminists such as Olive Shreiner, for example, contrasted the fuller, more productive role of women in pre-industrial times with their narrow, blunted lives later, and indeed this is the theme which provides the overall conceptual

framework of Clark's work. Her conviction, expressed repeatedly, is that the cause of the tragic decline of women's productive capacity and self esteem was in large measure due to capitalism and the advance of industrialization. For these robbed her of former domestic functions including the preparation of food, beverages and cloth, the provision of instruction and health care, and that of being an equal partner in the running of her husband's business.

The value of Alice Clark's book however, does not merely lie in its interest as a milestone in the study of women. It is also a richly documented account of what women from the whole range of social classes actually did. Sources include diaries, letters, household and workhouse accounts, contemporary printed literature, quarter session records and records of court leets. In her chapter on 'Capitalists' she describes the remarkably efficient management of estates in the early seventeenth century by upper-class women when husbands were absent, and she provides examples of women of various backgrounds who ran such businesses as textiles, trade, coal mining or insurance single-handed. But from the Restoration the assumption of responsibility by upper class women was in decline as the capitalistic organization of industry, and greater wealth, encouraged the adoption of passive, decorative roles. Similarly in her chapter on 'Agriculture', Alice Clark contrasts in a graphic way the huge variety of tasks routinely performed by vigorous and resourceful farmers' wives in and around the home with the degradation of those women forced to seek an inadequate and uncertain wage outside. Much attention is paid to the misery suffered by women due to undernourishment and the difficulty of finding housing of any kind at a time when parochial regulations conspired to maintain their dependency. Other chapters explore in similar vein the changing roles of women in textiles, crafts and trades, and the professions.

Alice Clark's study is very much in the tradition of other early twentieth-century writers who, like the Hammonds, were struck by inequality and suffering around them and expressed their outrage through an impassioned historical interpretation. These can appear emotional and unbalanced to present-day historians who are more used to the detailed clinical approach based upon theoretical models and statistical jugglings. Certainly Alice Clark's largely descriptive account does lack a coherent explanatory analysis of female oppression, and there is some ambiguity and inconsistency in it. The portrayal of pre-industrial working life is idealized, and some might quibble with her choice of the seventeenth century as the critical watershed. But her energy and conviction have given this work qualities which make it lively, provocative reading. The book's

value is also greatly enhanced by the lucid, critical introduction by Mirander Chayter and Jane Lewis, who set the whole work beautifully in context and offer their own view of its strengths and weaknesses.

RAINE MORGAN

J V BECKETT, *Coal and Tobacco: The Lowthers and the Economic Development of West Cumberland 1660-1760*. Cambridge, CUP, 1981. xiii + 279 pp. £19.50.

Sir John Lowther between 1663 and 1706, and his bachelor son Sir James between 1706 and 1755, dominated West Cumberland as improving land-owners and successively they sat almost continuously as MPs for a period of over eighty years. Yet their activities in agriculture were of no great importance, despite the fact that they had stewards who carried great responsibility very successfully.

The fact was that their great landed asset was in the coal they owned in their existing estates near Whitehaven and in others they progressively acquired. Essentially connected to the expansion of mining was the development of the port of Whitehaven, which rose under their promoting efforts from an inconsiderable place to one which had a period when it was fairly significant in general trade. Its main importance throughout was of course as an exporter of coal, for Whitehaven's existence depended on its sale of coal to Ireland, principally Dublin, where population rose from 60,000 to 200,000 over the eighteenth century.

Apart from the acquisition of collieries Sir James Lowther encouraged the improvement of technology and communications. Specially built cartways were improved to become wagonways like those of the North-east, Sir James was one of the first to make highly successful use of the Newcomen engine, and the Spedding family, who were his stewards, were good technologists as well as businessmen; this was important when Lowther spent much of the year in London, even though his energies there were largely devoted to the promotion of the coal trades. Carlisle Spedding was killed in an explosion in 1755, a sad irony because he had devoted much time to improved ventilation and had invented the 'flint and steel' mill to supply light while reducing danger. Under his direction a large colliery was built which mined far out under the sea bed.

The shipping aspect of the coal trade is well dealt

with, and there is an account of the development of the tobacco trade, which particularly through re-exports to France and Holland seemed to be making a major trading port of Whitehaven in the 1730s and '40s. Despite the title, however, tobacco occupies only a short section of the book and Whitehaven's strong decline in favour of Glasgow is not fully accounted for.

Sir James Lowther and others tried to make Whitehaven and the neighbourhood a centre of coal consumption by local industry, and Beckett's account of these episodes and their only limited success is very good, and his quite sparing use of contemporary quotations is telling. The importance of the American trade because of its ability to take a wide range of common manufactures is well brought out, and there is some most interesting detail on attempts to mount iron manufactures which must modify current thinking about the industry. The salt industry fluctuated, but after decline in the 1720s picked up modestly in the 1730s; attempts to introduce copper smelting met with no serious result and ambitious attempts to make glass in the 1730s died out early in the 1740s. Modest success was achieved with rope making and sugar boiling, and much more substantial progress with ship building.

Sir James Lowther's intervention in the complexities of local politics in order to develop the port of Whitehaven are well dealt with as are his failure to control the emergence of Workington and Maryport to an equal extent. In the case of Whitehaven the Lowthers exercised on the whole a favourable patriarchal influence, and this led to its growth in an unusually well planned and orderly fashion. Apart from his considerable investments in Cumberland, Lowther was deeply involved in the London money market, and just before his death his income was around £25,000 a year, of which rents yielded about £4000, collieries £9000, and mainly financial investments £12,500.

Dr Beckett has added notably to the number of good regional studies of economic development, and of landowner entrepreneurship, and he has tapped a major source of documents to great effect, making important discoveries and modifying old views. What emerges most powerfully is the difficulty of replacing a regional coal exporting economy by a regional coal consuming industrial economy without the right opportunities to expand hinterland population and particularly communications, especially inland navigation. Sir James Lowther was not able to do for West Cumberland what John Mackay with more precarious finance was able to do for St Helens, and Beckett's book and Langton's on the South-west Lancashire coalfield give rise to unusually fruitful comparisons.

J R HARRIS

J M GOLDSTROM and L A CLARKSON (eds), *Irish Population, Economy, and Society. Essays in Honour of the late K H Connell*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981. x + 322 pp. £17.50.

From the point of view of the demographic historian it has always been a tragedy that Irish population history is so poorly documented: the Irish experience has been extremely instructive in the European context, but, even with the aid of the recent methodological advances, it has scarcely been possible to answer confidently any of the demographer's basic questions. Yet, more than thirty years ago, Kenneth Connell put the Irish case in the forefront of demographic historiography in a major book that immediately became a classic. He followed up this achievement with a group of highly original studies in related aspects of Irish social history. His premature death in 1973 robbed Irish history of one of its acutest and most original minds.

In other countries the recent advances in demographic history have been based almost entirely on the data derived from parish registers and it has been the virtual complete absence of this class of document that has prevented Irish historians from delineating the course of their country's demographic development with any precision. Connell's interpretation of 1950, of considerable influence upon demographic historiography in the 1950s well beyond the shores of Ireland, began to be challenged in the 1960s but it is a testimony to the thoroughness of his argument that 31 years after the publication of *The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845* his hypotheses are still being scrutinized in this memorial symposium with the utmost respect and care. The first of the four sections into which this collection is divided is appropriately devoted entirely to Irish demography and diet, the latter aspect being, of course, central to Connell's view of Irish demographic history. The essays by Clarkson, Lee and Cullen all have a direct bearing on his work, but, while they offer suggestions for the modification of some of his original estimates of population totals at various dates, they differ quite widely between themselves as to the extent of these corrections. Thus, while Lee proposes some quite substantial upward revisions of the totals of population derived from the censuses of 1821, 1831 and 1841, the tendency of which must be to accelerate the rate of growth before 1821, Clarkson, presumably writing simultaneously and without the advantage of a preview of this persuasive work, implies slower growth rates for this period. Similarly, Cullen, who had earlier committed himself to a rate of growth in the seventeenth century, remarkably fast in the context of contemporary European rates, sets a total of population for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries substantially higher than does Clarkson, who focuses,

accordingly, on faster growth throughout most of the eighteenth century. These quite significant differences of opinion reflect both the paucity of reliable source material and the consequent difficulty of advancing materially beyond Connell's starting point of 1750. The demographic section is completed by the essays of Eversley, comparing the demography of Irish Quakers of the period 1650 to 1850 as revealed by reconstitution studies with that of a larger sample of English Quakers; and an informative investigation by Margaret Crawford of the role of maize in Irish diet, which leads to some important revisions of generalizations popularized by Cecil Woodham-Smith's account of the Famine.

Connell's later broadening of interest to wider areas of Irish social history is reflected in the remaining sections of this memorial volume. The three essays in the section on 'rural economy and society' are all important and will be of interest to readers of this *Review*. Roebuck reveals a chronic history of landlord indebtedness in studies of the estates of the Earls and Marquesses of Donnegall and others in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Goldstrom emphasizes the continuity of Irish agricultural development in the immediate pre- and post-Famine periods, seeing the Famine as 'an accelerator rather than an initiator of change'. Finally, in a study which juxtaposes developments rather than demonstrates beyond doubt the causal links between them, Kennedy assesses the role of the railways in the increasing regional specialization of Irish agriculture in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Lack of space forbids detailed reference to each of the remaining six essays in this volume. Suffice it to say that, unusually for a symposium of this nature, all are important and make a significant contribution to Irish social and economic history. Of particular interest are Brenda Collins's study of the agricultural and domestic industrial background of Irish emigrants to Dundee and Paisley in Scotland in the early mid-nineteenth century, and Ehrlich's re-appraisal of Sir Horace Plunket's contribution to the co-operative movement among Irish dairy farmers in the period before 1920.

Kenneth Connell is much honoured by this volume. Its consistently high level of scholarship is a real tribute to the standards he inspired in Irish social historiography in general, and in the Department of Economic and Social History at the Queen's University of Belfast in particular.

M W FLINN

ERIC RICHARDS, *A History of the Highland Clearances, Agrarian Transformation and the Eviction 1746-1886*, Croom Helm, 1982. 532 pp. £12.95.

The place of the Highland clearances in the popular historical consciousness of Scotland is central: the amount of serious academic scholarship devoted to their study by professional historians has hitherto been remarkably little. That is not to deny that there have been excellent books on Highland economic and social history of the period, but in each of them the clearances have either been enacted mainly offstage (as in Malcolm Gray's and James Hunter's classic studies), or examined in depth but as local phenomena (as in the books by Phillip Gaskell and Robin Adam, and in Richards' earlier volume on the Sutherland fortune). With this splendid study Professor Richards fully redresses the balance in a comprehensive and masterly work that must surely stand as the authoritative book on the clearances for all time. The one major criticism must be of the publisher, who has chosen a typeface indistinguishable from that of an ordinary single-space typewriter photographed down; in a very short book this cost-saving device can perhaps be tolerated, as it can in a circulated conference paper, but in a book of over 500 pages the strain on the reader becomes awful.

Richards' approach to the problem is in three parts. First, he considers the clearances as one among many examples in economic history of abrupt agrarian transformations, analogous to the various waves of enclosure in England and to the shifts into and out of sheep farming in Spain. Next, he outlines the crisis in the Highland economy of the late eighteenth century and shows how, whether or not sheep had come to save landowners from bankruptcy, the peasant economy in its existing form was certainly doomed. His analysis here gives no support to Hunter's implicit position that virtually the entire Highland problem was caused by the selfish interference of the lairds in a natural economy, attributing, rather, proper weight to the inexorable growth of population and the pressure of external forces on a fragile society. He also demonstrates the element of wishful thinking in those who believed that the new sheep farming could somehow have been undertaken by the crofters, perhaps in a form of co-operatives: the initial capital costs alone were enormous — the two farmers who pioneered sheep farming in Sutherland spent £20,000 on stock to inhabit their new leases, a sum vastly beyond any local capacities.

In the third part (half the book) he narrows the focus to a close and extremely comprehensive study of the incidences of clearance. It is this which has the greatest originality, though the other sections provide a context without which the evictions would

appear meaningless. In brief, his message is that no power on earth could have prevented, in the nineteenth century, a crisis of poverty, famine and emigration: but, equally, the landowners as a class (and with some exceptions) behaved in a way that can only be described as appallingly inhumane. Some, like the Sutherlands, were well-meaning in intention towards estate reorganization but dreadfully ham-fisted in execution, spending over £200,000 on the estate between 1802 and 1817, much of it on such things as harbours, roads and inns, but still failing utterly to provide a viable economy for more than a tiny proportion of the evicted. Others, like the Macdonnells, were not even well meaning, being satisfied with simple callous eviction. *Arrivistes* were no worse than long-established chiefs. The most lurid tales in folk tradition — of eviction by firing the cottage, emigrants carried hand-cuffed to the ships, deaths of the elderly evicted from hypothermia — almost all on close inspection turn out to be at least partially verified in the contemporary record.

If there is any heroic element in the story, it must be the press, whose reportage in the middle decades of the nineteenth century appears to have been the main element in shaming the landlords into better behaviour. Just why the Highland landowners should have behaved so badly is a difficult problem. A Scottish land law which gave no protection to the tenant is part of the answer, especially when combined with a tradition of absolutism among the old chiefs in determining the fortunes of their dependents. The vast cultural gulf between the crofter and the laird, so infinitely greater by 1800 than that between, say, a Norfolk or a Lothian farmer and his landlord, is another factor. An aspect of this which Professor Richards perhaps does not sufficiently acknowledge is the quite exceptional (and to the outside world inexplicable) determination of the Highlander to stay in the Highlands. Whereas most peoples subjected to half this pressure would have pulled up their roots of their own accord and made for the New World or the towns, the crofters dug their heels in to stay even in the face of outright starvation, so that often only the most extreme and brutal pressure could dislodge them. Given the remoteness of the Highlands, and the fact that sometimes factors held multiple office such as being also inspectors of the poor and sheriffs' officers, it was easy to be brutal.

The virtues of this book cannot readily be sung in a short review, but it is remarkable for its fairmindedness, its scrupulous sifting of the evidence, its sympathy both for the sufferings of the evicted and for the real dilemmas of their social superiors. It beats no partisan drum and pulls no punches. Professor Richards promises a second volume, 'concerned with the contemporary and

historical efforts to understand the clearances, and an analysis of the varied consequences of the great agrarian transformation of the region'. It will be most welcome.

(The works referred to are M Gray, *The Highland Economy 1750-1850*, Edinburgh, 1957; J Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community*, Edinburgh, 1976; P Gaskell, *Morvern Transformed*, Cambridge, 1968; R J Adam (ed), *Papers on the Sutherland Estate Management*, Scottish History Society, 2 vols, Edinburgh, 1972; E Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth*, London, 1973.)

T C SMOUT

E J T COLLINS, *A History of the Orsett Estate, 1743-1914*. Thurrock Museums Department Publication No 2, 1978. 98 pp. 24 illus. £1.60.

This unpretentious little paper-backed volume presents us with a delightful cameo of a corner of south Essex, taking in the Ockendon and Thurrock regions as well as the original Orsett estate, situated just north of Tilbury. The author was himself raised in this region where his father once 'worked on a farm at Socketts Heath, walking three miles each day from his home at Grays, starting at six o'clock in the morning and working till dusk, all for six shillings a week' (p 5). But Dr Collins' sentimental attachment to the area surveyed here has in no way impaired his usual high standards of scholarship.

Because of its close proximity to London, south Essex was a region in which the land market was kept active throughout the eighteenth century by purchases (and sales) of land made by London merchants and professional men. The average size of their estates was small, however. 'Of the various lawyers and merchants who settled in Thurrock between 1680 and 1740, only four appear to have owned estates of more than 1000 acres, or subsequently to have created them' (p 9). This pattern of landownership indeed typified the whole of Essex until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1883 there was only one estate of over 10,000 acres within the county. Another interesting feature of eighteenth-century landownership was the way in which London merchants and lawyers remained active in trade or the professions, keeping their small landed estates secondary to their business interests, especially before 1750. Indeed many voluntarily dropped out of the landed classes and opted for a more or less complete return to trade or the professions, even after 1750 when the incentives to set up as a country gentleman became more compelling. 'Many owners of between 500 and 1,000 acres, who arrived after 1680, disappeared between 1770 and 1782' (p 11).

The next section of the book deals with the rise of the Orsett estate to the position of fourth largest in Essex by 1873, when it covered 8500 acres. The lands passed from the Baker to the Wingfield family in 1827, and from them to the Whitmores in 1884. By this time the estate was heavily encumbered with debt, due mainly to the extravagance of Digby Wingfield, who died in that year. Thanks to the heroic efforts of Francis Whitmore, however, retrenchment was achieved and the estate survived into the twentieth century, although reduced in size.

The final section of the book deals with local farming practices from 1750 to 1914, but the patterns of change here were typical of the whole of Essex, and Dr Collins is at his best in his analysis and explanation of these changes. A full supporting bibliography and 24 well chosen photographs complete the book.

ROSS WORDIE

CHRIS FISHER, *Custom, Work and Market Capitalism: The Forest of Dean Colliers, 1788-1888*, Croom Helm, 1981. 203 pp. £12.95.

The Forest of Dean has long been regarded as something of a world apart, and while Mr Fisher's book confirms much of this distinctiveness, it also focuses on the involvement of the Forest in larger processes of change, notably the expansion of market capitalism. Social relations in the eighteenth-century Forest are rather patchily documented, but what evidence there is suggests a minimal presence of established authority and a high degree of plebeian independence. The Forest was laxly administered by royal officials, and the Crown's rights were not rigorously enforced. Customary rights, in contrast — the rights of those living in or on the verges of the Forest to use the land's resources for diverse productive purposes (digging coal, pasturing, various lesser perquisites) — were deeply rooted, widely supported, and, in the absence of serious claims to the contrary, assumed by the forest-dwellers to be their inalienable heritage. From the end of the eighteenth century, however, these customary rights and practices were increasingly being challenged — challenged by a royal authority that was determined to impose much more exclusive notions of private property on the Forest as a whole, with the intention of achieving a more effective commercial exploitation of the Forest's resources. These objectives were pursued, intermittently, throughout the nineteenth century, and much of the book chronicles the strategy and tactics of crown

officials, and of a handful of large local propertied interests (especially colliery proprietors), to alter the laws and the social relations of the Forest in a manner conducive to unconstrained capitalist development.

Perhaps the most interesting material in this study concerns the collective resistance of the Forest's labouring people and native inhabitants to changes imposed from outside. Before Victoria's reign popular action centred on the defence of custom and customary freedoms, by free miners and commoners, and their opposition to private and marketable rights to property. (As in most other places, this smallholders' culture was actively in retreat, and, with the expansion of the Forest's mining industry, conventional capitalist social relations, including the creation of a large class of wage-dependent labourers, many of whom were 'foreigners', increasingly became the norm.) These smallholders' protests centred on a re-assertion of traditional rights, a defence of parochial interests, and a commitment to retain some degree of independent control over the conditions of their own productive labour. By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, this attachment to custom was largely submerged by new structural realities. The Forest had become a minor centre of intensive coal and iron extraction, and with the rapid growth of its industrial population (the total population of the Forest grew from 4073 in 1811 to 20,555 in 1871), the history of the inhabitants can be increasingly situated within the mainstream of Victorian capitalism: the national fluctuations in the coal trade, the rise of trade unionism, the peculiarities and social implications of the butty system (which Fisher well describes), and the competing, and often contradictory, ideals and outlooks within later nineteenth-century working class culture (such as class collaboration versus class hostility). There is much detail here that can be incorporated into a more general labour history, as the forest-dwellers' experiences lost much of their distinctiveness. But not all peculiarities were extinguished. Struggles between Crown officials and some of the foresters were renewed during the two decades from the late 1860s, and disputes over common rights and access to forest land were pursued with vigour. The Forest of Dean continued to be a place where a certain old-fashioned language of liberty — a different sort of liberty from that of the marketplace — was often heard. As one of the spokesmen for the labouring people insisted, as late as 1883, 'I believe in the sacred principle, that God gave the earth to the human race for an eternal inheritance, not to be taken away by man-made laws'; and he appealed, in the name of a higher justice, and in the tradition of a popular assertiveness which stretched back for centuries, against those 'men who would attempt to rob us of our God-given

natural rights'. Even at this late date, then, the ancient moral economy was not quite dead.

ROBERT W MALCOLMSON

ELEANOR and REX C RUSSELL, *Landscape Changes in South Humberside: the Enclosures of Thirty-seven Parishes*. Humberside Leisure Services, Central Library, Hull, 1982. 159 pp. £6.

Rex Russell's enormous contribution to enclosure studies has popularly taken the form of intimate dissections of individual enclosures. These have usually appeared as pamphlets, often the results of a WEA or comparable adult education class or project. They were compiled by adult education for adult education, as exercises in historical process and methodology as well as the histories of particular enclosures. Some of us have wished for a number of these studies to be brought together in one volume. This wish has been granted in this collaborative work with Eleanor Russell. The enclosures of 37 parishes, some previously published, are brought together in this volume on North Humberside. Some of the detail of the earlier pamphlets is lost, but there is still enough in terms of landownership and the cost of enclosure, and the immaculate maps which we have come to expect from Rex Russell, to please academic and amateur historian alike, and in today's market at a reasonable price as well. The sponsors of the book, Humberside Leisure Services, indicate as the intended market, the local historian, the WEA and evening class, and perhaps the school project as well, and it is in this light that the book must be reviewed.

The 37 parish studies are prefaced by a series of chapters on: the variety of open-field villages; the broadest changes brought about by enclosure; the commissioners and their surveyors; and the cost of enclosure. It must be said however, and without carping academic criticism, that some of these early chapters are inadequate, even for the most elementary evening class. They are brief in the extreme, the commissioners occupying less than a page and a half, and with a desperately thin bibliography. It is one thing to simplify the reading but those who have taught in adult education will testify that no group worth its salt is without inquiring minds, a need to root out further literature, and a desire to see some of the important academic debates set out on paper. Where the individual enclosures are described in some detail some of these issues are raised. In particular there is a lengthy chapter devoted to the proceedings of the Ulceby enclosure of 1824-33. It was one of the costliest enclosures for which local details survive, and at £4.31 per acre was considerably more costly than many contemporary enclosures nationwide.

The bulk of the book is taken up by recounting the enclosures of 37 parishes. Each parish study is a distillation of the parish before enclosure; a résumé of the provisions of the Act and Award; summary of the lands allotted; and the costs where the documentation survives. Most of the studies are illustrated by two maps each, the first showing the open-fields and the second the replanned parish in enclosures with the superimposition of allotment sizes and allottees' names. One of the fascinations of this section is the variety of field numbers in the open-fields belying the notion of orderliness of two- and three-field systems prevalent in many textbooks. Here in a small area of North Lincolnshire was a landscape of great variety in field numbers and names, and in pre-enclosure incursions into the open-fields. The charm of the open-fields was their variety and this book certainly brings this out.

The book is completed by two appendices. The first summarizes the number of allottees at each of 29 of the enclosures, separating those allotted less than five acres from those allotted more than 100 acres. It is left as a summary table, and it is therefore up to the reader to make of it what he will. The enclosures ranged from 1766 (earliest Act) to 1840 (latest Award), and with the aid of a pocket calculator show that 37.4 per cent of all allottees were allotted less than five acres and 12.4 per cent more than 100 acres. Such was the inequitable distribution of land in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the 37.4 per cent received a combined *maximum* of 2175 acres while the 12.4 per cent received a combined *minimum* of 14,400 acres. The more inquiring reader will look back over the parish summaries and construct more diverse landownership distributions. The second appendix is a summary for 23 parishes of the transfer of land in lieu of great tithes. For example, Lord Yarborough was in receipt of 1559 acres from four enclosures, which was 18.3 per cent of all the land allotted to great tithes.

Locked up in the parish studies there is a great deal of detail, some of it economic in character but most of it social. The opportunity is there for the more inquiring reader to investigate some of the more important social issues concerned with parliamentary enclosure. We must thank the Russells for this gift, distilling as it does so many otherwise lengthy documents.

MICHAEL TURNER

HUGH ROBERTS, *Downhearth to Bar Grate*. Wiltshire Folk Life Soc, 1981. Illus. 88 pp.

Before the twentieth century the kitchen fireplace occupied a central role in the lives of most people. It provided the principal means for cooking, and for the half of the year when night is longer than day the

fire was sometimes the only source of light. Surprisingly though, little has been written on the uses of the hearth, and the changes which occurred over time. A vital factor affecting fireplaces was the type of fuel used; wood was burned on the open hearth but the adoption of coal saw the fire enclosed by a grate to improve its combustion. This transition, from downhearth to grate, provides both the title and main theme to Mr Robert's book.

Concentrating mainly on the period up to 1800, Mr Roberts covers the whole range of hearth equipment, and shows how the change to coal not only caused the introduction of grates but changed the nature of many of the cooking utensils. As the author says, 'many ingenious methods were developed to overcome the restrictions of having to cook on an open fire at hearth level'. With the advent of the grate, however, the cooking was raised to the top of the grate. The skillet, for example, which stood in the embers of a downhearth fire, lost its legs and became a saucepan, sitting on the hob or trivet attached to the grate. Skillets, trivets, kettles and pans, and all the paraphernalia associated with hearth cooking are described in this book and featured in ninety illustrations. The range covered is comprehensive, and for the collector, primarily concerned with the identification of hearth equipment, this book will be of undoubted value.

For the serious student however, Mr Roberts has little new to say. The text lacks weight. Much of the information is apparently derivative and according to the bibliography is largely drawn from antique collecting books, many of which are poorly researched. The result is that their errors are perpetuated while none of the new evidence which has come to light as a result of probate inventory analysis has been included. Extracts from a number of inventories, and an eighteenth-century recipe are added in an appendix, but otherwise primary evidence such as this is notably lacking from the main text.

Had there been greater recourse to contemporary evidence some of the worst factual errors might have been avoided. Many of the dates Mr Roberts hazards for the introduction and adoption of various pieces of equipment are misleading. A typical example is the date given for the introduction of reflector ovens. The author puts this at the late eighteenth century, whereas inventories and patent specifications clearly show they were in common use much earlier. Another inaccuracy, which has more bearing on the book as a whole, is the naive distinction made between 'bar grates' and 'kitchen ranges', and the claim that the latter were 'said to have been invented in 1780'. This arbitrary break is used by the author as the close to his history, allowing him to avoid what he describes as the 'multitudinous, complex and ingenious kitchen accessories which were to flood

the Victorian market'. It would have been more fruitful to have recognized the kitchen range as an inevitable and gradual development of the eighteenth-century grate. Mr Roberts could then have usefully concluded with the development of nineteenth-century cooking equipment instead of finishing with an irrelevant section on accessoreis which includes a wooden mouse trap.

It is commendable that the proceeds of this book are being devoted to the Wiltshire Folk Life Society to assist in their work at the Great Barn, Avebury, but the serious reader would be better directed to the *Kitchen Catalogue* by Peter Brears which appears in the bibliography.

DAVID J EVELEIGH

W A SEYMOUR (ed), *A History of The Ordnance Survey*.

Dawson, 1980. xvi + 394 pp. 27 plates. £35.

This is not, at first glance, a very appealing book. It is large (295 × 210 mm) with a sober cover; the few illustrations are gathered at the end of the book. The preface is discouraging: one reads of three successive editors, of major last-minute changes in presentation, even of a change of publishers as neither HMSO nor the OS itself felt capable of taking it on. At that point there is some temptation to send the book back, and let some other reviewer suffer — which would have been a mistake. Behind that forbidding exterior lurks a fascinating story: *A History of the Ordnance Survey* would have earned the cliché 'a book I couldn't put down', except that it is too heavy to hold up.

The content is too detailed — a quarter of a million words, with twelve principal contributors — to summarize at any length. Several themes run through the book. Often dominant is the uneasy relationship between the military background of the Survey and its civilian responsibilities, reflected in the problems of fitting second officers and permanent civilian employees into its staff. Another recurrent theme is the character of each successive Superintendent (later Director), whose power over the nature and direction of the Survey was considerable. One senior officer, apparently unjustly passed over as Superintendent in 1847, came into conflict with the man appointed and is last heard of in Enniskillen, 'the remotest survey office in the British Isles'.

Scattered throughout the book are discussions of the more technical aspects of the Survey: the geodetic work, especially triangulation; the topographical survey; and the design and printing of maps. Some of the most interesting material is in these sections, including the long struggle to measure a baseline to the desired degree of accuracy: starting with wooden boards (which expanded when wet), through steel

chains (whose links wore) to invar tape and modern geodimeters and tellurometers. These last have greatly speeded up distance measurement, without making it more accurate: comparison of the invar-measured OS baselines with the light-operated geodimeter led to a reassessment; not of the baseline, but of the speed of light. (This was after the failure of the first British experiment with the geodimeter, in Caithness. Apparently no-one realized that in northern Scotland in June it never gets dark enough for a flash of light to be seen.)

Other themes recur from time to time: the marketing of the maps (sales to the public were actually banned in 1811–16, presumably from fear of giving vital information to the French); the role of the Survey in war; and the problems of place-name orthography (greatest in Wales, Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland; though it was in England that one zealous surveyor, gathering farm names, 'caused great alarm and he was pursued by some special constables to a public house').

This is a fine and fascinating book. It is purely a record: no attempt is made to anticipate future developments, in policy or in technology (there is nothing on satellite imagery, and little on computer mapping). It reads well: not at all like the compilation of many hands, much juggled around. This suggests first-class editing. One major complaint: there are far too few illustrations. So much depends on appreciating changes in map style and design, yet there are only 16 plates of maps and plans. Moreover, since much is made of personalities, portraits of the various Superintendents and Directors would have helped. Surely more use could have been made of in-text, lower-quality, illustrations; saving the expensive plates for coloured maps. Mention of expense raises a final complaint: the price of the book is incomprehensibly high. Presumably the publishers have written off the private buyer. That is a pity: anyone with a feeling for maps is strongly urged to go to the nearest library and read this book.

ROBERT S DILLEY

W M MATHEW, *The House of Gibbs and the Peruvian Guano Monopoly*. Royal Historical Society Studies in History Series, No 25, 1981. xiii + 281 pp. £18.25.

The English firm of Antony Gibbs & Sons held a monopoly of the trade in Peruvian guano for two decades from 1842 until 1861. Guano — the dried dung from seabirds collected from the Lobos islands off the coast of Peru — was one of the earliest purchased inputs used in nineteenth-century agriculture. Gibbs obtained this profitable monopoly

through contracts with the Peruvian government, which allowed them to supply the British market and a large part of Continental Europe for much of this time. The majority of their sales were made in Britain, and between 1849 and 1856 they sold 931,898 tons in Britain and 362,080 tons in their European territory. The predominance of the British market is accounted for by the fact that guano, along with other purchased inputs, was associated with intensive agriculture. The firm found the majority of their European sales were in northern Europe where intensive farming also predominated. In 1859 the vast expanse to the east of the Rhine took less than 50,000 tons.

The author is concerned with all aspects of the firm's trade and considers the question of trading monopolies, the sometimes difficult relations between the firm and government of Peru, as well as the problems of marketing. Although guano was only one item in a range of purchased agricultural inputs, it is important because it was the first imported one to make a serious impression on the hitherto largely closed system in Britain. In the 1840s and 1850s contemporaries believed it would have a permanent and important place in British agriculture. Farmers' anxiety over its unacceptably high price at times encouraged experiments to find the cheaper substitutes which were eventually adopted. Indeed, this anxiety over cost was so great that in 1851-52 the agricultural lobby urged the government to seize the Lobos islands to secure cheap supplies for ever. Fortunately these pleas were ignored.

This is a well-researched and interesting monograph that makes full use of the firm's archives in addition to British and South American sources. Not all of what it contains will be of direct interest to agricultural historians, although its strength is that it sets one aspect of nineteenth-century farming within a wider political and international context. The book also gives some discussion to the whole matter of purchased inputs against the general background of contemporary British agriculture.

RICHARD PERREN

JEAN STOVIN (ed), *Journals of a Methodist Farmer 1871-1875*, Croom Helm, 1982. Foreword + 251 pp. £12.95.

Cornelius Stovin (1830-1921), the writer of the journals, was a substantial tenant-farmer cultivating almost 600 acres of land, devoted to mixed farming, in the Lincolnshire wolds. He was an enthusiastic advocate of modern agricultural methods, particularly regarding the adoption of new machinery, but the

real interest of his life was his religious faith. He was an active Methodist local preacher, and there are many entries in his diary similar to that for 27 July 1872: 'I preach as a rule fortnightly. I have experienced some glorious times in the pulpit.' He also spent a good deal of money in helping to build and support nearby chapels, often to the irritation of his wife when the family's own economic circumstances began to deteriorate in the later 1870s. Sometimes the twin preoccupations with Methodism and farming lead to rather incongruous entries in the journal, with lofty religious sentiments immediately followed by prosaic comments on the daily round.

Nevertheless, once one has grown accustomed to this mixture of the religious and the profane, the journals provide many interesting insights into the attitudes, agricultural preoccupations, and marketing arrangements of one substantial mid-Victorian farmer. Like many of his fellows, Stovin did not take kindly to his workers' support for trade unionism in the early 1870s. Where possible he sought to substitute machines for men, noting on 16 March 1875: 'The strike sharpened my wits to invent some method of sowing with less labour and now one man performs the work of three.' He also shared the dislike of many tenants for the game preserving interests of his landlord, sourly commenting: 'If our wold farms are to be over-run with game, we may put up our shutters and emigrate. The advance of labour . . . and rents, and a more extravagant [*sic*] expenditure on our family and household life will not admit of an increase of game.'

The journals end before the true onset of agricultural depression, but by 1875 Stovin was already becoming apprehensive about his financial position. At the same time, the journal entries give credence to the complaints of contemporaries about the growing pretentiousness of farmers, for not only did he persuade his landlord to enlarge and improve his house (for which he agreed to pay a higher rent), but there are entries concerning the additional furnishings and fittings he purchased, such as the 'Italian marble vase and fountain' and the 'old painting' upon which he expended three sovereigns. Like many large farmers in the 'affluent' mid-Victorian years he devoted a good deal of time to attending markets and fairs, assessing prices and comparing yields. The work of running the farm was delegated to his foreman — unwisely as it turned out. There are also many references to the state of his own health and that of his family; he seems to have been something of a hypochondriac.

With his strong religious beliefs and his general interest in literary matters, Stovin does not conform to the conventional picture of a Victorian farmer. One would have liked further details in the

Introduction (written by his granddaughter, Jean Stovin) on how his neighbours and his landlord saw him, and how he performed as a member of the Louth Union Board of Guardians. The minute books of the Board or the columns of the local newspaper might have thrown light on this. Similarly, we are told that he played a part in opposing the agricultural labourers' trade union movement during the 1874 Eastern Counties Lockout, but few details are given. Here, too, the local newspapers might have helped.

But these are minor criticisms, and overall the Stovin journals provide a fascinating account of farming life on the eve of the 'great depression'. Miss Stovin has done agricultural historians a considerable service in making them available to a wide audience.

PAMELA HORN

JOHN HEATH (ed), *Diaries of Henry Hill of Slackfields Farm 1872-1896*. University of Nottingham, Centre for Local History, Record series 4, 1982. Illus, maps. £3.75.

John Heath has rendered a service by his faithful transcription of these diaries. Their author, Henry Hill, farmed in a part of the country — mid-Derbyshire — that has enjoyed little historical attention and one which over a period we associate with depression and agrarian change. So often diaries are a distracting mishmash of information, but here we have a single-minded devotion to farming matters, a terse but factual record of daily events. Sadly, only eight of the twenty or so annual diaries which only recently came to light have been included, the editor selecting one at two- or three-yearly intervals. But the information they contain is consistent and wide-ranging, and often of a type not contained in other primary sources. A weather summary usually precedes the daily list of farm tasks; precise payments for fertilizers and feedstuffs are regularly recorded, and more occasionally we are told of new equipment acquired, yields of various crops, and payments for labour.

Perhaps the most vivid impression conveyed by the diaries is of the unremitting toil of transporting manure — from town or colliery to yard, and from yard to field; a quite extraordinary tonnage was carted, stored, mixed, carted again, heaped, spread,

and ploughed in. The symbiotic relationship between agriculture and industry is another aspect that comes across strongly in daily entries. As well as milk and vegetables supplied to urban markets, Hill's men cart hay to colliery ponies and return with manure, gas lime and basic slag for the fields, coals for the threshing machine, engine ashes for yard, roadways and footpaths, and brewers' grains for stock. We are also reminded of the mixture of old and new in farming: a 'badging' hook and reaper, the dibble and seed drill, the threshing machine and flail are all used concurrently. And there is some borrowing of new equipment which, if common elsewhere, must imply higher levels of innovation among farmers than has been interpreted from farm sale notices alone. Difficulties in finding labour are clearly evidenced in trips to hirings as far afield as Bedford, Nottingham, Loughborough, and Chesterfield. But of the 'depression' there is little sign from a preliminary reading. Production of vegetables and crucially important liquid milk seems to have protected this farm, as others in the area (see Report of the Judges on the Derby prize farm competition, *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 2nd ser, v 17 (1881) p 457), from the worst effects of imported food supplies.

Although these diaries contain more information than most there are still large gaps. We have details of expenditure but no precise evidence on income except in so far as can be estimated from tax returns of 1878. Crop production is the focus of many entries, but of the livestock side we are told little, apart from the heavy outlay on feedstuffs, and there is no indication of the total labour force. It is unfortunate that the editor did not include acreages with his scale map from the tithe award of farm and fields. Once this information has been obtained, however, it should be possible to calculate seeding rates, manuring rates and some yields from Hill's harvest notes. There also appears to be sufficient detail for the trend in inputs, such as purchased fertilizers and feedstuffs to be estimated. Certainly the diaries are worthy of a close scrutiny. Apart from giving fascinating insight into the laborious routine of late nineteenth-century farming they could also provide a useful supplementary source for any regional study of mid-Derbyshire agriculture.

RAINE MORGAN

Shorter Notices

J MCDONNELL, *Inland Fisheries in Medieval Yorkshire 1066-1300*. University of York, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, Borthwick Papers No 60, 1981, 42 pp. £1.

Mr McDonnell has produced a worthwhile account of what, at first sight, seems to be unpromising and fragmentary material. It is always good to see neglected corners examined, their contents inspected, and misconceptions put right. Perhaps Mr McDonnell will be encouraged to proceed farther and tell us something more of the technology involved and the personalities he has unearthed — William, the king's fisherman, sounds far too interesting a character to be confined within a couple of pages. We may suspect, too, that Mr McDonnell is well placed to produce a study of diet in general; it would be a worthy flowering of this short introduction.

ANDREW JONES

W L HARRIS, *Filton, Gloucestershire*. Published by the author, 42 Gloucester Road North, Filton Park, Bristol, 1981. 310 pp, 63 illustrations, £8.50 + £1.10 p & p.

Filton is a small parish four miles north of Bristol on the main road to Gloucester, and is now part of the new county of Avon. Until the end of the nineteenth century the population barely exceeded 300, but since then Filton has been transformed into a leading centre of aircraft production and engineering. The British Colonial Aeroplane Company's works were founded at Filton as early as 1910, and among the many aircraft produced there have been the 'Blenheim', 'Beaufort', 'Britannia', 'Brabazon' and 'Concorde'. The local history is an example of individual research and publishing initiative by the author who was for many years headmaster of a local school, and his work is naturally intended mainly for a local readership. The main interest for other readers is in the use which has been made of the hitherto unpublished papers of the Quaker family of Gayner, especially the farming diaries and account books of William Gayner (1754-1830). William Gayner was a working farmer who rented a farm of about 100 acres from 1787 and another of 59 acres from 1792. His very full diaries and other papers give a good picture of his mixed farming economy as well as of his own life and personality. He was clearly a man of wide interests and friendships among the Quaker community of the area. He was concerned about education, and involved in the founding of a Quaker school; his numerous purchases of books included anti-slavery tracts, Paine's *Rights of Man*, and

religious works, and he regularly bought newspapers and almanacs. He made occasional visits to London and to Quaker friends and relatives in other parts of the country. His farming was naturally much influenced by the proximity of Bristol, and his carts went almost daily to Bristol with farm produce, butter and cheese, cider, hay, straw, corn, beans, potatoes, cabbages and turnips, returning laden with dung and refuse from the town stables and slaughter houses. Cattle, sheep and pigs were fattened for the Bristol market; sheep were purchased from Herefordshire, Wiltshire and the Cotswolds, and the breeds included Rylands, Mendips, Cotswolds and Dorsets. Oxen were used for cultivating the heavy clay soil on the farm, and the accounts show the daily work done and payments made to carters, labourers, servants, dairymaids and others. William Gayner, like many of his Quaker friends in the Bristol region, had an astute business sense and ran a very profitable enterprise, although it is not possible from the figures given to calculate his income or expenditure, nor to see how his profits were affected after 1815; clearly he was an unusual and dynamic farmer and it would be interesting to know more about his career.

J H BETTEY

DAVID RHIND and RAY HUDSON, *Land Use*. Methuen, 1980. xv + 272 pp. Maps, diagrams and tables. £4.95.

Rhind and Hudson take a very non-traditional look at land use. There is little on the usual concerns of agricultural typology and field identification of crops. Rather, the authors take the lines (a) that in today's (developed) world, urban land use is at least as important as rural; (b) that remote sensing and computer analysis are the tools of the future; and (c) that more concern needs to be shown for explanatory and predictive models, in place of simple description. The emphasis on the modern world (especially the urban world), and on the gathering of up-to-the-minute data, means that the book is of limited appeal to agricultural historians (though Domesday Book is mentioned). However, those with wider interests will find *Land Use* well written, copiously illustrated, and containing a number of intriguing techniques and challenging concepts.

ROBERT S DILLEY

R DOUGLAS HURT, *American Farm Tools from Hand Power to Steam Power*. Sunflower University Press, 1531 Yuma (Box 1009), Manhattan, Kansas 66502, USA. 120 pp. \$9.95 paper, hardback \$20 post paid.

In England as elsewhere in Europe the development of farm machinery was a slow process accumulating during centuries. In the USA it was a concentrated development because the settlement of the farm lands there was brief and speedy lasting only a few centuries, at least so far as the white-skinned farmers were concerned. There were many other very simple types of farming worked out and not very rapidly developed, from that of the Mandan indians of the Missouri to the Arapahoes of Texas and their prehistoric ancestors of the mountain caves: but the white man came and with him his different kind of approach. The European possessed an inventive mind, and the results are amply and fully described in Douglas Hurt's book.

In Europe development took place throughout the slow passage of the centuries: in America it went on more rapidly during what was no more than the speedy turnover of decades. It is with the rapid changes in the tools, implements and finally machines that were made in so brief a space of time that Dr Hurt deals with in this remarkably precise description of so extensive a subject. The plan of the book is well conceived, and deals with the cultivation of crops that were not then, and indeed are not

even today generally cultivated in Europe (with the exception of maize). R Douglas Hurt has studied and described the fundamental development of food production in all its mechanical elements from ox plough to steam cultivation. This is a book that adds to knowledge, and is so profusely illustrated that a knowledge of reading to cope with the letterpress is hardly necessary.

G E FUSSELL

GÁBOR ERÖDY (ed), *Demographie, Bevölkerungs- und Agrarstatistik*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1982. 129 pp. \$12.

This volume contains six lectures given at the first meeting of the Hungarian-Austrian Commission of Historians, held at Budapest, September 1978. Two of these deal with recent agricultural history. Roman Sandgruber, from the Austrian group, spoke of the difficulties of Austrian agriculture from the eighteenth century till 1920, *vis-à-vis* Hungarian agriculture, and the resultant tensions and adjustments within the Austro-Hungarian economy. Julianna Puskás deals with the trends and increase in Hungarian agriculture (1869-1913), and provides abundant graphs and statistics. Much of the increase in production came from productive tiny farms rather than from great estates.

D J DAVIS

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As announced in the 'Notes and Comments' column of the last issue, the Society is also happy to consider proposals for publication in a Supplement Series pieces of research work falling between the long article and the book in length. Work of around 30,000 words is envisaged. Enquiries about possible supplements or firm proposals should be addressed in the first instance to the Secretary, Dr J A Chartres, School of Economic Studies, The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

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VOLUME 31 1983
PART II

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Agricultural Improvement and the Neglected Labourer
STUART MACDONALD

Planned Field Systems in Eastern Yorkshire: Some Thoughts on Their Origin
MARY HARVEY

Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England
JOHN BROAD

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THE POWER IN THE LAND

It does not matter where you look or what examples you select, you will see that every form of enterprise, every step in material progress, is only undertaken after the land monopolist has skimmed the cream off for himself, and everywhere today the man or the public body who wishes to put land to its highest use is forced to pay a preliminary fine in land values to the man who is putting it to an inferior use, and in some cases to no use at all. All comes back to the land value, and its owner for the time being is able to levy his toll upon all other forms of wealth and upon every form of industry. A portion, in some cases the whole, of every benefit which is laboriously acquired by the community is represented in the land value, and finds its way automatically into the landlord's pocket. If there is a rise in wages, rents are able to move forward, because the workers can afford to pay a little more. If the opening of a new railway or a new tramway or the institution of an improved service of workmen's trains or a lowering of fares or a new invention of any other public convenience affords a benefit to the workers in any particular district, it becomes easier for them to live, and therefore the landlord and the ground landlord, one on top of the other, are able to charge them more for the privilege of living there.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

An Inquiry into Unemployment,
the Profits Crisis and Land Speculation

by

FRED HARRISON

The pressure on governments to take vigorous action to halt the deepening global recession and lengthening dole queues is mounting, but policy-makers face a dilemma. Every prescription has its negative: monetarism – unemployment; Keynesianism – inflation; the planned economy – a loss of freedom and incentive.

In this context *The Power in the Land* represents some lateral thinking. Fred Harrison has re-examined the history and tenets of industrial society and concludes that the present *impasse* is the result of a distortion in our understanding of how the economy works, a distortion he traces back to Adam Smith.

Adam Smith provided the captains of industry and politicians with a theoretical framework and moral justification for the new mode of production which sprang up with the Industrial Revolution. He thought he was prescribing the conditions for a free market system, but failed to see that in allowing landowners to break the rules and exert a monopoly influence, a self-defeating element was incorporated into his model which operates to this day.

Marx attempted a critique of the malfunctioning economy. Yet, while he acknowledged that the power of the owners of capital was contingent upon the landowners' monopoly, he chose to blame the ills of 19th century industrial exploitation on the capitalist. In setting labour against capital, he further obscured the underlying cause of the malfunctioning of Adam Smith's market model.

After tracing the distortion in our understanding back to its source, Fred Harrison goes on to explain how the control of land causes the boom-slump cycle and impinges on almost every aspect of the modern economy: declining profits in industry, mass unemployment, inner city decay, urban sprawl, the high cost of public transport and other public amenities, and the tax system. Four economies – the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and Australia – are singled out as case studies, but evidence is drawn from countries as diverse as Taiwan, South Africa, Jamaica, Israel, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Poland, the U.S.S.R. and mainland China to illustrate the effects in these very different economies.

The means by which the market model can be made to operate efficiently are fiscal. The present multiplicity of taxes falling on incomes, employment, sales and production, would be replaced by a tax on the rental value of land. This would remove the monopoly influence of land and give a powerful boost to the economy through private sector investment, thus

reducing unemployment. The competition for the use of land under the new conditions would ensure increased rental revenue for government while the bureaucratic cost of collecting taxes would be greatly reduced.

These proposals have been partially tested in various parts of the world, as Fred Harrison points out, but their macro-economic effects have been neglected. However, in recent years influential voices have been raised in favour of the main theoretical principle of this book:

'There is a sense in which all taxes are antagonistic to free enterprise – yet we need taxes... so the question is, which are the least bad taxes? In my opinion, the least bad tax is the property tax on the unimproved value of land ...' *Prof. Milton Friedman.*

'One of the reasons that economists have long been interested in the tax on pure rental income is that it is a tax without excess burden. Because the owners of land cannot alter the supply of land, the tax induces no distortions and therefore no welfare loss.' *Prof. Martin Feldstein, Chief Economic Advisor to President Reagan.*

'Specialisation in response to price incentives may, however, further widen income inequalities in rural areas that have increased in recent years. And while income disparities owing to differences in effort are considered desirable, such disparities also result from differences in the quality of land ... To eliminate this source of inequality, and simultaneously provide incentives to increase output, it would be desirable to place increased reliance on land taxes while raising agricultural prices.' *Prof. Bela Balassa, Consultant to World Bank, commenting on China's current programme of economic reform.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Fred Harrison read Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford and received his M.Sc. from the University of London. He is currently working for a Ph.D. and is chief reporter on one of Fleet Street's Sundays. Research for this book has extended over ten years and has taken the author right round the world to study at first hand the operations of the land market in the widest variety of geopolitical conditions.

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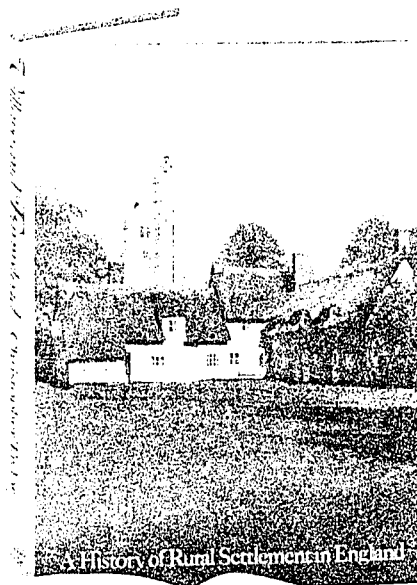
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(P.T.O.)



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This book is concerned with every kind of settlement in the countryside—villages, hamlets and farmsteads, both those that are lived in now and those that have been abandoned. In some counties the remains of farmsteads, founded in medieval times, but long since deserted, exist in their hundreds. Throughout the book, the focus is on the development of man's habitats from the historical and the locational point of view; how and why settlements came into being, what form they took and for what reason and how and why they changed through time.

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Agricultural Improvement and the Neglected Labourer*

By STUART MACDONALD

TECHNOLOGICAL change — in agriculture or in anything else — is simply what seems to be a better way of doing things: technological innovation is the introduction of what seems to be a better way of doing things. Such a view of technology goes well beyond the machine itself to include the way the machine is used.¹ Nowadays it would include computer software with computer hardware: in nineteenth-century agriculture it would embrace new crop rotations and the use to which new machinery was put, as well as the machinery itself. While information is readily available about the way things are already being done, that is not the case with novel technology. Yet information about new technology must come from somewhere and much effort has been expended determining whence came the information inherent in the new agricultural technology so prominent from the late eighteenth century.

1 *The Landlord and the Linear Model of Technological Change*

Not so very many years ago the common wisdom was that technological information emanated entirely from a few leading landlords.² Thus Coke of Norfolk, for example, could be portrayed as a revolutionary leading the way to a new agricultural

order by example and persuasion.³ Though such a portrayal conflicts with both Coke's own accounts and common sense,⁴ it is understandable why it should have been tolerated for so long. The simplicity of the heroic interpretation is always attractive and especially in agricultural history, where so much activity is anonymous. Moreover, the profusion of information on the activities of landlords is matched by only sparse and scattered sources for other participants in the agricultural industry.⁵ As it happens, information on the activities of improving landlords has been sufficient to fuel what is known as the linear model of technological change, the notion that science leads to technology, that invention produces innovation, and that basic research yields to applied research and then to development.⁶ The linear model places almost total emphasis on invention and makes the tacit assumption that the rest of the innovation process flows on inevitably and consequentially. In the real world, of course, it does not; there innovation may produce invention, development may inspire basic research, and technology seems much more likely to spring from other technology than from science.⁷ The linear model is acceptable to a

¹ Earl Spencer, 'On the Improvements which Have Taken Place in West Norfolk', *Jnl Royal Agric Soc*, 3, 1842, p 9; A M W Stirling, *Coke of Norfolk and his Friends*, 1912, p 190.

² See R A C Parker, 'Coke of Norfolk and the Agricultural Revolution', *Ec Hist Rev*, 2nd series, 8, 1955, pp 156-66; idem, *Coke of Norfolk: A Financial and Agricultural Study*, Oxford, 1975, p 199.

³ See E L Jones and E J T Collins, 'The Collection and Analysis of Farm Record Books', *Jnl Soc Archivists*, 3, 1963, pp 86-9.

⁴ M Gibbons and R Johnston, 'The Roles of Science in Technological Innovation', *Research Policy*, 3, 1974, pp 220-4.

⁵ See Sol Enkel, 'Science, Discovery and Innovation: an Australian Case History', *Internat Soc Sci Jnl*, 22, 1, 1970, pp 42-53; K Gannicott, 'Simple Economics and Difficult Policies: the Case of Public Money for Research and Development', paper presented to ANZAAS Congress, Adelaide, 1980.

* The original version of this paper was prepared for the Eighth International Economic History Congress in Budapest, August 1982. I am grateful to the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester for providing facilities during 1981 for the research on which this paper is based.

¹ See D Lamberton, S Macdonald and T Mandeville, 'Productivity and Technological Change: Towards an Alternative to the Myers Hypothesis', *Canberra Bull Pub Admin*, IX, 2, 1982, pp 23-30.

² See particularly Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, 4th edn 1932, p 207.

country like Australia because it helps justify a preponderance of government-performed basic research, and it has been readily welcomed by those anxious to believe that following the initial spark of landlord inspiration the rest of the process of agricultural improvement is automatic.

While many landlords found agricultural improvement an amusing and patriotic pursuit,⁸ their enthusiasm was not necessarily shared by farmers more interested in best practice than in best theory.⁹ A letter from one such farmer to another in 1793 presents the situation as succinctly as it is possible to do.

I've just had a letter from Sir John Sinclair acquainting me with the establishment of a Board of Agriculture, and with Desiring me to attend it in London as they wished to try an experiment of watering Hyde Park and Saint James Park. I have not yet answered it—He is quite ignorant of my situation in Life—it will not suit my inclinations nor pocket to go two hundred miles as my expense to gratify the idle curiosity of every person that chuse to ask it—I have had one or two of these excursions already—*pro bono publico*, won't always do. I very much doubt of the utility of these things in the hands of Lords and Dukes. Plain Country Farmers are not *at home* when they are with such sort of Folks. My hand, heart and Table such as it is are allways at the command of my Friends and nothing give me greater pleasure than to exchange mutual knowledge; but to dance attendance upon great Folk, and to answer such Questions as they may deign to ask you and then with an ungracious Nod be told you are done with—will not suit the stomach of your sincere Friend.¹⁰

According to Caird, landlords were the least trained of all the agricultural classes,¹¹ though it took a brave man to say so. One imprudent small farmer wrote to his local newspaper to complain of

... such men as Lord Brougham, who, at the different meetings, makes a boast of his ignorance, and who, in

his dotage, pours out such ravings as would not be allowed for a moment from any poor farmer.¹²

The editor dissociated himself completely from the comment, asserting that the farmer must have written 'in the sourest and most cynical of moods',¹³ yet the editor of the *Farmer's Magazine* had earlier been more forthright in private correspondence.

I am under the Necessity sometimes of inserting Communications that are not altogether to my Mind, merely because that better cannot be got and also from a desire to keep well with people, who though imperfectly qualified to write are yet good friends to the Magazine.¹⁴

II Information, Innovation and the Entrepreneur

If farmers were not totally convinced of the usefulness of technological information emanating from dilettante landlords, whence came their information? Some effort has been spent in recent years exploring the impact on agricultural improvement of experimental farms, agricultural societies, and of the agricultural press.¹⁵ While all these certainly provided information about new methods, they did little to prove a connection between new methods and increased profits for those who used them.¹⁶ It is a basic tenet of innovation theory that the talent required for commercial exploitation of the novel is very different from that needed to devise the change in the first place.¹⁷ The

¹² *Westmorland Gazette*, 20 Oct 1849, quoted in Elizabeth Edwards, *The Agricultural Societies of the Upper Eden Valley, 1840-1900* (MA thesis, Leicester Univ, 1974), facing p 45.

¹³ *Westmorland Gazette*, op cit.

¹⁴ Editor of *Farmer's Magazine* to George Culley, 17 March 1803, NCRO/ZCU/25.

¹⁵ Eg H S A Fox, 'Local Farmers' Associations and the Circulation of Agricultural Information in Nineteenth-century England' in H S A Fox and R A Butlin (eds), *Change in the Countryside*, IBG, 1979, pp 43-63; Nicholas Goddard, 'Agricultural Societies' in G E Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, 1981, I, pp 245-59; idem, 'The Development and Influence of Agricultural Periodicals and Newspapers, 1780-1880', *Ag Hist Rev*, 32, 1, 1983.

¹⁶ See, for example, Jonathon Binns, *Notes on the Agriculture of Lancashire with Suggestions for its Improvement*, Preston, 1851, pp 90-1; Stuart Macdonald, 'Model Farms' in G E Mingay (ed), op cit, I, pp 214-26.

¹⁷ Joseph Schumpeter, *Business Cycles*, New York, 1939, I, pp 84-6.

⁸ J R Walton, 'Agriculture 1730-1900' in R A Dodgshon and R A Butlin, *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*, 1978, p 244.

⁹ See *Farmer's Magazine*, 21, 1820, p 480.

¹⁰ George Boswell to George Culley, 1793, Northumberland County Record Office (NCRO)/ZCU/18. See also Stuart Macdonald, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers, 1780-1815', *Ag Hist Rev*, 27, 1, 1979, pp 30-9.

¹¹ James Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51*, 1852, p 493.

entrepreneur was as necessary for innovation in nineteenth-century agriculture as he is for innovation in twentieth-century electronics.¹⁸ There has been some work in recent years which suggests that leading farmers fulfilled the function of entrepreneurs in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century agricultural improvement. Sometimes they actually sold their innovations to neighbours — as George Culley, the Northumberland farmer, did with his breeding stock — but more commonly it was their acumen in using new methods for their own commercial gain that attracted the attention and emulation of their neighbours.¹⁹ While the original source of information is still relevant to this entrepreneurial process, it is clearly less seminal than in the heroic model of landlord-inspired improvement. It may be that leading farmers did receive inspiration from landlords, experimental farms, agricultural societies and shows, and the agricultural press, but it seems much more likely that their information sources were nearer the use being made of the information: a case, in a sense, of the medium being the message.²⁰ Thus, leading farmers made pilgrimages to the farms of other prominent farmers, they conducted an active agricultural correspondence with such practitioners, and they turned their farms into training camps for the sons of ambitious farmers from other districts.²¹

carried out by geographers, which is regrettable in that they have been preoccupied with spatial diffusion.²² This is particularly unfortunate because those who adhere to the linear model follow technological change from invention to innovation — by which they mean first commercial use — and no further. Those with a disposition for putting dots on maps can trace adoption over space and time and draw the appropriate curves, but that is seen as a development quite distinct from the process which produced the technological innovation.²³ Of course, it is not: the whole is one innovative process from invention to development and innovation, to production and marketing, with all parts interdependent, with no part more important than the others and with far too much irregularity for the process to be described as linear. In modern studies of the innovative process the notion of horizontal innovation is now being mooted, suggesting that change actually derives from users of new technology and that the horizontal information linkages among these innovative users are much more important than any vertical linkages to an inventive core.²⁴ Such a model is attractive not just for its bold iconoclasm, but because it poses a question that agricultural historians have generally avoided: just what was the role of the real user — the agricultural labourer — in the process of agricultural improvement?

III *The Innovative Process*

Much historical research on the role of farmers in the innovative process has been

IV *The Agricultural Simpleton*

Much conventional and contemporary opinion of the agricultural labourer reinforces the

¹⁸ Stuart Macdonald, 'The Need to Succeed', *Jnl Gen Man*, 4, 3, 1979, pp 74–83; idem, 'The Role of George Culley of Fenton in the Development of Northumberland Agriculture', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 5th ser, III, 1975, pp 131–41.

¹⁹ Stuart Macdonald, 'The Role of the Individual in Agricultural Change: the Example of George Culley of Fenton, Northumberland', in H S A Fox and R A Butlin, op cit, pp 5–21.

²⁰ See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1964, pp 15–30.

²¹ Léonce de Lavergne, *The Rural Economy of England, Scotland and Ireland*, Edinburgh, 1855, pp 112, 285; June Hall, *Let Agriculture Flourish* (MA thesis, Leicester Univ, 1979), p 82; Stuart Macdonald, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers, 1780–1815', op cit, *Farmer's Magazine*, 7, 1806, pp 153–6.

²² Eg J R Walton, op cit, pp 239–65; idem, 'Variations in the Adoption of Agricultural Machinery in Nineteenth Century Oxfordshire', paper given to Annual Conference of Institute of British Geographers, Birmingham, January 1973.

²³ See Herbert Lionberger, *The Adoption of New Ideas and Practices*, Iowa State UP, 1964; E Rogers and F Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations*, New York, 1971. For an exhaustive list of such works see E Rogers, *Bibliography on the Diffusion of Innovations*, Diffusion of Innovations Research Report No 6, Department of Communication, Michigan State Univ, 1967.

²⁴ D Leonard-Barton and E Rogers, *Horizontal Diffusion of Innovations: An Alternative Paradigm to the Classical Diffusion Model*, Working Paper 1214, Alfred P Sloan School of Management, MIT, 1981.

landlord-centred, heroic view of agricultural improvement. An illiterate country bumpkin was unlikely to have been a dynamic force in the innovative process. Even by the mid-nineteenth century, an American traveller could portray farm labourers in the West Country as beings little better than animals.

The laborers in this part of England (Hereford, Monmouth, Gloucester, and Wiltshire) were the most degraded, poor, stupid, brutal, and licentious that we saw in the kingdom . . . I did not see in Ireland, or in Germany or in France, nor did I ever see among our negroes or Indians, or among the Chinese or Malays, men whose tastes were such mere instincts, or whose purpose of life and whose mode of life was so low, so like that of domestic animals altogether, as these farm-laborers.²⁵

Far from playing an active role in innovation, labourers were often seen as that part of the agricultural industry itself most in need of improvement,²⁶ and there is a large established literature on the plight of oppressed agricultural labourers.²⁷ Their ignorance and cupidity seemed to be barriers to innovation, except in those cases where labour relations were so poor that innovation was required to circumvent labourers' incompetence and dishonesty. Thus one reason for the adoption of the threshing machine was said to be that it avoided pilfering of corn by labourers and other vermin.²⁸ According to Jethro Tull, who loathed agricultural labourers with all the strength his ailing health allowed, the perfidy of his employees was a major inspiration for his horse-hoeing husbandry.

. . . the Thing that is most detrimental to perpetual Crops of Wheat, is the Deceit and Idleness of the Weeders . . . their Tongues are much nimbler than their Hands; and unless the Owner, or some Person who faithfully represents him, (and is hard to be found) works constantly amongst them, they'll get their

Heads together half a Dozen in a Cluster, regarding their Prattle more than the Weeds; great part of their Time they spend in Play, except a few of them who bring their own Work with them, some their Sewing, some their Knitting, and these must be paid for doing their own Work upon my Land: This Wrong I have seen done both to myself and my Neighbours; and it has put me upon endeavouring to find a Way of disappointing the Weeders . . .²⁹

While the image of the labourer as a helpless, ignorant wretch squared well with the charitable intentions of those dedicated to bettering his lot and saving his soul, it is not the impression given by those at the work-face of agricultural improvement. Farmers' sons spending their educational year on progressive farms were advised to leave their horses behind and to mix with the labourers as much as possible as this was the only way to learn how the best methods were used.³⁰ The diary of one such apprentice from the south of England spending his year on a Northumberland farm records with amazement the absence of juvenile labour because all the boys were at school.³¹ Indeed, literacy seems to have been almost universal among labourers in Scotland and the North of England.³²

The education in Northumberland is very good; the people are intelligent and acute, alive to the advantages of knowledge, and eager to acquire it; it is a rare thing to find a grown-up labourer who cannot read and write, and who is not capable of keeping his own accounts.³³

It is said there are very few servants or labourers in the agricultural districts of Scotland, who are not able, from their education, to take a bailiff's place! To the superior education of the Scotch may, in part, be attributed their successful agriculture; for it cannot be expected that the land will be properly cultivated by an ignorant peasantry.³⁴

It is probably no coincidence that it is the North of England and Scotland which

²⁵ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*, Ann Arbor, 1967, pp 238-9.

²⁶ See Pamela Horn, 'An Eighteenth-century Land Agent: the Career of Nathaniel Kent (1737-1810)', *Ag Hist Rev*, 30, 1, 1982, pp 1-16.

²⁷ Eg W Hasbach, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, 1908; J L and B Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, new edn, 1978.

²⁸ Sir John Sinclair, *The Husbandry of Scotland*, 1812, p 83.

²⁹ Jethro Tull, *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry*, 1733, Notes, p 226.

³⁰ William Hutt, op cit, p 40.

³¹ NCRO/NRO/851, 1842; cf Russell M Garnier, *Annals of the British Peasantry*, 1895, p 378.

³² See William Hutt, op cit, p 53.

³³ Evidence of F H Doyle in *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, HMSO, 1843, Vol 12, p 300. See also 'Report on the Exhibition of Implements at the York Meeting, 1848', *JRASE*, 9, 1848, pp 381-2.

³⁴ Jonathon Binns, op cit, p 95.

provide examples of labourers risen to become farmers,³⁵ and which supplied the rest of the country with enlightened foremen, bailiffs and tenants.³⁶ Even the 'half crazy, half cunning, Scotchman, Gourlay' who crossed swords with Cobbett in Winchester had, according to Cobbett, come 'to teach the moon-rakers "hoo to farm, mon"'.³⁷

The agricultural labourer in the South was not well educated, but neither was he quite the low-paid rustic drudge, the ignorant simpleton good for stock jokes in *Punch* as seen by late nineteenth-century contemporaries.³⁸ According to Jesse Collings,

... he had a shrewd common sense, while his knowledge and powers of observation with regard to crops, weather, seasons, and all other things that came within the narrow range of his hard and dismal life, were marked and hereditary.³⁹

Indeed, the same point had been made long before by Adam Smith.⁴⁰ The Southern labourer lived on the brink of poverty and was more concerned with survival than education.⁴¹ His station in life determined his education — gangs of the poorest children, for example, were sometimes apprenticed to farmers to learn basic agricultural tasks⁴² — and if he chanced to become educated above his station, he was not slow to leave it for an urban existence.⁴³ It is salutary to reflect that Victorian high farming demanded increased input from all but this most fundamental of agricultural resources. The South neglected its manpower; as one observer reported in 1882,

... from my intercourse with the labourers in country villages for the last forty years I can say it confidently, that many keen intellects have been wasted from want of cultivation; many more than those who class all rustics as bumpkins, chawbacons, louts, have any idea of.⁴⁴

The work of the agricultural labourer had the potential to be skilled and specialized;⁴⁵ whether it became so was determined by the aptitude of the labourer and by the incentives he perceived.⁴⁶ As Caird noted, 'The labourer must perfect himself by years of patient application in the peculiar department of work in which he hopes to excel',⁴⁷ though there must have seemed little point if such application was to go unrecognized and unrewarded.⁴⁸ Under these circumstances, the only benefit labourers might receive from their skills was self-satisfaction.

V The Labourer in the Innovative Process

It is necessary to re-emphasize that the innovative process continues well beyond the innovation stage, that change occurs in the way new methods are applied, in the way hardware is employed, and even in the hardware itself long after the stage of first acceptance. The early threshing machine provides a simple example of the importance of what happens after innovation. The machine first appeared in northern Britain and was introduced on a grand scale as a custom-made power unit for a variety of barn tasks. In the South, the advantages of the machine were less obvious, and cheap, miniature versions too weak to do anything properly were generally improvised by local

³⁵ Eg *ibid.*, pp 35–6; *Farmer's Magazine*, 23, 1822, p 512.

³⁶ G E Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 1976, pp 70–1; G E Fussell, 'The "Foreign" Invasion of Essex', *Essex Farmers Jnl*, 30, 5, 1951, pp 41–3; Léonce de Lavergne, *op cit*, p 286; Cuthbert Headlam, *The Three Northern Counties of England*, 1939, p 129.

³⁷ William Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, 1958, pp 328–9.

³⁸ G E Mingay *Rural Life in Victorian England*, *op cit*, p 106.

³⁹ Jesse Collings, *Land Reform*, 1906, p 24.

⁴⁰ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 1950 edn, I, pp 141–2.

⁴¹ Rowland Prothero, *The Pioneers and Progress of English Farming*, 1888, p 224.

⁴² Caird, *op cit*, p 232; William Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, 1796, pp 110–13 in G E Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution. Change in Agriculture 1650–1880*, 1977, pp 200–1.

⁴³ Rowland Prothero, *op cit*, p 231; Jesse Collings, *op cit*, p 23; William Coles Finch, *Life in Rural England*, 1928, p 114.

⁴⁴ Treasurer Hawker, 'The Devonshire Farm-labourer Now and Eighty Years ago', *Reports and Trans Devonshire Assoc*, 14, 1882, p 332.

⁴⁵ See Alun Hawkins, 'In the Sweat of thy Face: the Labourer and Work' in G E Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, *op cit*, II, pp 506–20.

⁴⁶ See E H Hunt, 'Labour Productivity in English Agriculture, 1850–1914', *Econ Hist Rev*, 2nd ser, XX, 2, 1967, pp 280–92.

⁴⁷ Caird, *op cit*, p 492.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 515–16; George Ewart Evans, *The Horse in the Furrow*, 1960, p 141.

blacksmiths and travelling builders.⁴⁹ It was in the post-innovation stage that the threshing machine failed in the South, and farmers often joined with labourers in the Swing Riots of 1831 in the destruction of worthless hardware.⁵⁰

There was frequently a tendency to blame the labourer when new implements 'failed to answer'. As one frustrated farmer complained,

I am sure that any one who has had anything to do with the introduction of a new implement will bear me out, that we have the greatest difficulty in getting our men to use even common judgement in its use. They hate — with a dreadful hatred — any innovation . . .⁵¹

According to Young, drill ploughs light enough for the horses were never sufficiently robust for the labourers.

All the drill ploughs I have seen are so weak that I am confident they would not live a week in constant use to take the chance of the servants' and labourers' roughness like the other machines of a farm. Common ploughs and harrows the fellows tumble about in so violent a manner that, if they were not strength itself, they would be perpetually dropping in pieces. In drawing such instruments into the field the men generally mount their horses and drag the things after them. In passing gateways they seldom think of what is behind them, which twenty to one but they draw against the gate-post. It is, however, of little consequence, for the implements are strong enough to bear such usage: but suppose a drill plough treated in the same manner!⁵²

Labourers, it would seem, were often reluctant to oblige their masters in the trial of new implements; Andrew Grey referred to

. . . the unwillingness (by no means unnatural) of the labouring servants, to take the trouble, by a fair trial, of

⁴⁹ See E J T Collins, 'The Diffusion of the Threshing Machine in Britain, 1790-1880', *Tools and Tillage*, III, 1, 1972, pp 16-33; Stuart Macdonald, 'The Progress of the Early Threshing Machine', *Ag Hist Rev*, 23, 1, 1975, pp 63-77; idem, 'John Raistrick, Civil Engineer of Morpeth', *Durham Univ Jnl*, LXIV, 1, 1976, pp 67-75; idem, 'The Early Threshing Machine in Northumberland', *Tools and Tillage*, II, 3, 1978, pp 168-84; idem, 'Further Progress with the Early Threshing Machine: a Rejoinder', *Ag Hist Rev*, 26, 1, 1978, pp 29-32.

⁵⁰ E J Hobsbawm and G Rudé, *Captain Swing*, 1969, pp 231-6. See also William Stevenson, *Agriculture of Surrey*, 1809, pp 134-5.

⁵¹ R M Weeks, 'On Grubbers, Cultivators and Autumn Cleaning', paper read to Newcastle Farmers' Club, 1 July 1854, Newcastle Lit and Phil Soc, Bolbec N630.6/3.

⁵² Quoted in G E Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution. Changes in Agriculture 1650-1880*, op cit, pp 124-5.

acquiring the same facility in managing the improved instruments, as that which they had attained in managing those to which they had been so long accustomed.⁵³

When Sir John Delaval was seized with a desire in 1783 to improve his northern estates, he sent from London a succession of implements for evaluation. His steward reported on the first to arrive:

The two ploughs was received some time ago and has been tried. Matthew [the ploughman] says they will nether of them answer well for this strong Land — they can't get the smaller one to answer at all, he imagines the Beam has been made of Green wood, or otherwise has been twisted since it was made and stands quite from the Land. The larger one goes much better and I do not hear of any fault only its not effectually turning the furrows.⁵⁴

A double plough arrived next, which did 'not meet with Matthew's approbation',⁵⁵ followed by a drill rake which Lady Delaval had ordered constructed from directions in Harte's *Essays on Husbandry*. That was sabotaged by use of a particularly untrained horse and a dozen women and children who followed the machine and obliterated the drills.⁵⁶ A scythe sent later that year was evaluated on the stoniest of fields, selected by a labourer skilled in use of the sickle: the scythe was found to be wanting.⁵⁷

These are not just cases of the intransigence of the working class in the face of progress, of instinctive resistance to change by a stubborn agricultural labour force,⁵⁸ but rather they are the reasoned reaction of those aware of the personal value of their own resources. Just as the transistor was resented by those with decades of experience in valve technology,⁵⁹ so labourers who had taken

⁵³ Andrew Grey, *The Plough-Wright's Assistant*, 1808, p xi.

⁵⁴ John Bryers to Sir John Delaval, 14 February 1783, NCRO/2DE/4/20/35.

⁵⁵ Joseph Oxley to Sir John Delaval, 22 February 1783, NCRO/2DE/4/15/3.

⁵⁶ John Bryers to Sir John Delaval, 14 March, 4 April 1783, NCRO/2DE/4/20/39, 42.

⁵⁷ John Bryers to Sir John Delaval, 28 Sept 1783, NCRO/2DE/4/20/66.

⁵⁸ Cf G E Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, op cit, pp 63-4.

⁵⁹ Stuart Macdonald and Ernest Braun, 'The Transistor and Attitude to Change', *American Jnl of Physics*, 45, 11, 1977, pp 1061-5.

years to acquire skills were reluctant to learn new ones which, as William Lester put it, 'will set them back in life, even on a par with the youth that is just entering on business, without his incitements to persevere'.⁶⁰ Late nineteenth-century labourers refused to work with the Oliver Digger not because the machine made work harder or reduced wages, but because it left no straight furrow — the hallmark of a skilled ploughman.⁶¹ Northern labourers were said to be,

... obstinate to maintain their rights, and will spend twenty shillings in moving miles away to a new place, for a difference of ten shillings in the year's wages.⁶²

Neither is Stephen's advice on how to treat ploughmen compatible with the notion of mindless manual labour.

When one displays more skill than the rest, he is sufficiently honoured by being intrusted to execute the most difficult kinds of work, such as drilling; and such a preference gives no umbrage to the others, because they are as conscious of his superiority in work as the farmer himself.⁶³

Psychic return may be no substitute for material reward, but it is important.⁶⁴ More important, though, is the indication that the labourer was also aware of the significance of his role in the innovative process — not, of course, because his role enhanced the glory of British agriculture, but because it affected his own welfare.

VI Technological Information and Labour Mobility

Just occasionally an example emerges of a labourer actually initiating technological change. The first Chevallier barley was apparently grown by a labourer and later cultivated by his landlord.⁶⁵ According to Marshall, the practice of dibbling wheat originated with a labourer and spread to

farmers in Norfolk.⁶⁶ The labourer's main role, though, was in the later part of the innovative process. It was the successful implementation of new technology that was dependent on the labourer's skills.

Where there is evidence of labourers mastering a technology in one area and then being used to transfer that technology to other areas, it may be assumed that the labourers possessed information that was not conveniently embodied in machinery or as readily available from landlords, diagrams, newspapers, societies, experimental farms or the voluminous agricultural literature. In coming to terms with innovation, labourers made adaptations to suit their own requirements; they made user modifications which determined the ultimate success of the technology. It was George Boswell, the farmer, who provided the drill for his Dorset farm in 1789, but it was his labourers who determined how thickly the seed was to be sown.⁶⁷ William Dawson, newly returned to Scotland from an agricultural apprenticeship in England, supposedly introduced drill husbandry to the Borders, but it was from his labourer, James MacDougal, that the region learned the associated skill of ploughing with two horses abreast.⁶⁸ When labourers took technological change with them from one region to another, they carried not just the information they themselves had received, but also that which they had added to make the innovation successful. Thus Berwickshire reapers in 1790 refused to exchange their sickles for scythe hooks provided by farmers, but rapidly accepted the new implement when imported labourers demonstrated just how it could be used to obtain superior performance.⁶⁹ Perkins has noted how much more information was required to use the scythe than was

⁶⁰ William Lester, *A History of British Implements and Machinery Applicable to Agriculture*, 1811, pp 205–6.

⁶¹ Fred Kitchen, *Brother to the Ox*, 1943, pp 46, 79, 86.

⁶² Walter White, *Northumberland and the Border*, 1859, p 202.

⁶³ Henry Stephens, *Book of the Farm*, 3rd ed, 1877, I, p 7.

⁶⁴ See Howard Newby, *The Deferential Worker*, 1977, pp 32–4.

⁶⁵ George Ewart Evans, *op cit*, p 105.

⁶⁶ William Marshall, *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, 1795, II, pp 36–7.

⁶⁷ George Boswell to George Culley, 6 April 1789, NCRO/ZCU/14.

⁶⁸ *Farmer's Magazine*, 4, 1803, pp 316–17.

⁶⁹ *Farmer's Magazine*, 23, 1822, pp 235–6.

contained in the scythe itself,⁷⁰ as did the Rev Benjamin Newton on his visit to Cumberland when he discovered, to his embarrassment, that using the straight scythe was a very different art from using the curved scythe.

My man who mows as they do in the South without ever quitting the stooping attitude could not make near such good work but had to mend it every time as the strait scythe left a piece of grass standing almost every stroke he took.⁷¹

It is perhaps understandable that the labourer has received so little attention in what is generally seen as a hardware-oriented process of change, crystallizing in innovation, and followed by a separate process in the diffusion of ready-formed technological crystals. Yet a novel agricultural implement without someone familiar with how it worked would have been no more useful than a modern computer without its programme or programmer. Changes in hand-tool technology have been much neglected by historians in favour of changes associated with agricultural engineering, yet the former were probably both responsible for greater productivity growth,⁷² and were also dependent on the knowledge of labourers. Gardeners, for example, were in great demand in the eighteenth century, as labourers sufficiently skilled to hoe field crops of turnips.⁷³ In many cases change involved the application of new technology with no associated hardware; and with no hardware at all to embody technological information, its transfer was entirely dependent on other means. No doubt formal channels, such as the agricultural literature, did carry some of this information, but it is

much more likely that informal channels were rather more important. Apparently the only way to learn anything useful from a visit to the ill-mannered Bakewell's farm was to bribe or hire one of his labourers.⁷⁴ After all, even with all our modern sophisticated means of transferring technological information, informal, personal contact is probably the main means by which technological information travels.⁷⁵ The modern semiconductor industry maintains its breathless pace of technological change by means of personal contact among the industry's highly mobile experts.⁷⁶ In that industry's parlance, information comes 'on the hoof', an appropriately agricultural phrase which would seem to be at least as applicable to technological change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agriculture.

Advice from agricultural pundits abounds that there was not much point in introducing a new implement without also acquiring a labourer familiar with how the implement worked.⁷⁷ Marshall observed that information from drawings of implements was quite inadequate.

I have found even patterns insufficient guides to workmen: so much depends on minutiae in the construction of the more complex implements of agriculture. Nay, the very implement which gives rise to these observations [the Norfolk plough], constructed in Norfolk in the most complete manner, and furnished with every necessary appendage, has lain useless upon a soil it suited, until a Norfolk plowman was sent to hold it. . . . I will beg leave to observe, here, in general terms, that whoever wishes to introduce an implement which is in use in some distant District, would do well to have it not only constructed, but set to work, in the

⁷⁰ J A Perkins, 'Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Lincolnshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire 1750-1850', *Tools and Tillage*, III, 1, 1976, pp 47-58.

⁷¹ C P Fendall and E A Crutchley (eds), *The Diary of Benjamin Newton*, CUP, 1933, pp 187-8.

⁷² E J T Collins, 'Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Britain, 1790-1870', *Econ Hist Rev*, 2nd ser, XXII, 3, 1969, pp 453-73.

⁷³ Raine Morgan, *The Root Crop in English Agriculture* (PhD thesis, Univ Reading, 1978), pp 515-19.

⁷⁴ George Culley to Matthew Culley, Nov 1784, NCRO/ZCU/9.

⁷⁵ Stuart Macdonald, 'Personal Communication in Research and Development' in W Callebaut et al (eds), *Theory of Knowledge and Science Policy*, Univ Ghent, Belgium, 1980, pp 255-71, Stuart Macdonald and Thomas Mandeville, 'Sources of Technological Information in Australia', paper to ANZAAS Congress, Sydney, 1982.

⁷⁶ Ernest Braun and Stuart Macdonald, *Revolution in Miniature. The History and Impact of Semiconductor Electronics*, Cambridge, 2nd ed, 1982.

⁷⁷ Eg Matthew Peters, *The Rational Farmer*, 1771, p 94; Basil Quayle, *General View of the Agriculture of the Isle of Man*, 1794, p 15.

country where it is in use; and I will venture to add, that success cannot be insured unless a person accustomed to the working of it accompanies it, and sets it to work in the District into which it is intended to be introduced.⁷⁸

So, the Duke of Northumberland's interest in more wire fencing in 1852 required the attendance from Scotland of one Charles Duff, the 'first rate labourer' who had assisted in the Duke's first fencing venture.⁷⁹ When George Culley sought to introduce the water meadow system to Northumberland, he was advised by Bakewell to import a labourer from George Boswell, a master of the art in Dorset.⁸⁰ Boswell was uneasy with this strategy and wrote to Culley that such a man,

... by his self consequence, and *acquired* importance ... might withhold much useful instruction. The method I shall submit to you is; to fix upon a healthy, robust Man, who has been *used to labour* ... it is absolutely necessary for him *to be a Labourer* and to be both willing and able to go through the manual part of the work in all weather, as the Watermen do here.⁸¹

That was precisely what happened; Culley's labourer spent three months in Dorset and returned to construct the first water meadows in Northumberland. Culley himself was constantly pestered by correspondents from all over the country wishing to be sent skilled labourers for a year or so until their skills had been learned by local workers:

If it happens that you know of a sturdy good Ploughman unmarried, and who has been accustomed to work oxen ...;⁸²

... if any steady young Man who has merely been accustomed to go with Draughts etc is willing to come to this Country ...;⁸³

⁷⁸ William Marshall, *op cit*, Vol I, pp 54-5.

⁷⁹ (unknown) to Mr Burnett, 1852, NCRO/ZHE/34/9.

⁸⁰ Robert Bakewell to George Culley, 8 February 1787, in H C Pawson, *Robert Bakewell*, Crosby Lockwood and Son, 1957, p 107.

⁸¹ George Boswell to George Culley, 25 March 1787, NCRO/ZCU/12.

⁸² Martin Dalrymple to George Culley, 16 October 1806, NCRO/ZCU/28.

⁸³ George Laing to George Culley, 19 April 1803, NCRO/ZCU/25.

Lord K wishes much to have a good Plowman from you — and one that will be steady and not led foolishly away by the men of the Country.⁸⁴

Tull, too, although he never obliged anyone by sending labourers familiar with his practices, was concerned that skilled men would be so wayward that they would refuse to demonstrate their skills.⁸⁵ This is quite fascinating because it suggests, of course, that labourers were well aware that new skills increased their personal value,⁸⁶ which is totally at odds with the caricature of the rustic simpleton instinctively resisting change. To gain new skills, the labourer was advised to travel.

... let him pass from the service of a master under whom he has seen the practice of husbandry, common in one part of the country, into that of one who pursues on his fields, the practice of a different country.⁸⁷

There was considerable mobility among labourers in the North,⁸⁸ and among farm servants at least in the South.⁸⁹ Northern newspapers often carried advertisements from those requiring specific new skills in the South — a knowledge of drill management or the ability to mow with an Aberdeen Corn Scythe, for example.⁹⁰ Frequently the labourer was spoken of as the embodiment of the skills of a district:

Wanted immediately, as a Steward and Hind, to take the Management of a Farm in Berkshire, which will be entered on the 29th of this Month, — an experienced Husbandman, who is well acquainted with the modern Improvements in Agriculture, particularly those practiced in Northumberland ...⁹¹

A labourer sent south from Northumberland in 1789 was assumed to be able to

⁸⁴ William Mure to George Culley, 31 March 1793, NCRO/ZCU/18.

⁸⁵ Jethro Tull, *op cit*, Preface, p vi; Notes, p 250.

⁸⁶ See Jennifer Tann, 'Marketing Methods in the International Steam Engine Market: the Case of Boulton and Watt', *Jnl Econ Hist*, 38, 2, pp 363-91.

⁸⁷ *Commercial and Agricultural Magazine*, 2 1800, p 97.

⁸⁸ Stuart Macdonald, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers, 1780-1815', *op cit*.

⁸⁹ A S Kussmaul, 'The Ambiguous Mobility of Farm Servants', *Econ Hist Rev*, 2nd ser, 34, 2, 1981, pp 222-35.

⁹⁰ *Newcastle Courant*, 5 March 1808, 5 September 1845.

⁹¹ *Newcastle Courant*, 8 September 1804.

ridge for turnips 'as he belonged to this Country'.⁹² Another labourer sent south in 1801 because he was 'said to understand a Mill well' involved the farmer in buying all the household goods the labourer could not sell to neighbours, guaranteeing a good house, paying £1 to cover possible break-ages, a further £5 for conveyance, and protracted negotiations with the wife, described as a 'whinging, peevish, fretful body'.⁹³ For that sort of sacrifice, there must have been an anticipated return. Of course, there is no means now by which that particular return can be calculated, or

the value of the labourers' contribution to agricultural progress estimated. This paper has suggested only that the contribution should not be neglected. The use of new technology is an integral part of the innovative process, and those responsible for that use and consequent modification and adaptation would seem to deserve at least as much scholarly attention as have the propagandists of agricultural improvement. The motto 'Speed and Plough' no doubt expressed hope of divine guidance in agricultural improvement, but new sorts of ploughs were required and their more immediate guidance was in the hands of agricultural labourers.

⁹² George Culley to John Welch, November 1789, NCRO/ZCU/6.

⁹³ Matthew Culley to John Welch, 26 March 1801, NCRO/ZCU/6.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

DR ALAN R H BAKER is a University Lecturer in Geography and Senior Tutor of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He co-edited with R A Butlin *Studies of field systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973). His current research is on the development of spread of agricultural syndicates and other rural associations in the middle Loire valley of France during the nineteenth century.

FRED BATEMAN is Professor of Business Economics & Public Policy and Chairman of the Department at Indiana University. His major project at present is an economic analysis of agriculture in the northern United States during the mid-nineteenth century, which will be published as a monograph jointly with Professor Jeremy Attack. He recently also completed work on crop yields, labour productivity and rural wealth distribution for the northern states. A longer-run interest of his involves the relationship between agriculture and manufacturing in the development process in the nineteenth-century US.

DR JOHN BROAD is Principal Lecturer in History at the Polytechnic of North London, and at present he is working on a regional history of the south Midlands and the Thames Valley.

PROFESSOR ALAN EVERITT of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester

has written on farm-labourers, agricultural marketing, market towns, inns as trading centres, and regional origins in England; he has recently completed *Continuity and Colonization: the Evolution of Kentish Settlement*, probably to be published in 1984.

NICHOLAS GODDARD is Senior Lecturer in Geography at the Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology. He recently completed a PhD thesis on the Royal Agricultural Society of England and agricultural progress in the nineteenth century, and currently he is preparing a history of the RASE for its 150th anniversary and is engaged on research on Victorian agriculturists and 'high-farming'.

DR MARY HARVEY is Senior Lecturer in Geography at Goldsmiths College. Her research interests focus upon the origin and development of open-field systems, and she has recently begun a study of the open fields and settlement patterns in Bedfordshire.

STUART MACDONALD is a Senior Lecturer in the Information Research Unit, Department of Economics, University of Queensland. His research is concerned with the process of technological change, and particularly with the role of information in the innovative process. He writes that his work 'strays from engineering and electronics to patents and science policy, and to telecommunications and agricultural history as the occasion warrants'.

Planned Field Systems in Eastern Yorkshire: Some Thoughts on Their Origin

By MARY HARVEY

IN a number of recent articles, the author has drawn attention to a distinctive open field system which was found in the Holderness and Wolds districts of eastern Yorkshire.¹ The arable land was laid out in long lands which often extended for one thousand yards or more across the length of a field.² Frequent changes in the orientation of the lands were absent, and for the most part they lay parallel throughout a field. Sub-units or furlongs were large and few in number. Within any one township, their structure was usually very similar. They all contained a similar number of lands, and had the same number of broad and narrow lands, lying in the same relative positions within the furlongs.³

The tenurial units or oxgangs, which formed the basis of land ownership in the open fields, were also laid out in an ordered manner, which related closely to the furlong structure.⁴ Each single or double oxgang holding was made up of a narrow or broad land respectively in every furlong, the position of this land being the same in every furlong. The landholders who occupied the oxgangs always, as a consequence, held lands in the same relative positions in each

furlong, so that the sequence of landownership was the same in all furlongs.

Evidence suggests that these features were present in eastern Yorkshire by the mid-thirteenth century at the latest (Fig 1). By that time documentation becomes available in sufficient quantity and quality to permit some topographical interpretation, and there is nothing in this material to suggest that markedly different arrangements then prevailed. This means that the form must have originated at a time when documentation is unlikely to reveal it, and any discussion on either the dating of the layout or the circumstances of its origin must be a matter for speculation. The distinctiveness of the form, however, justifies some consideration of its development, and this will be the principal aim of this paper. Reliance has to be placed almost entirely upon indirect sources, with archaeology, place name studies and Domesday Book proving to be the most valuable. The field form itself can also be used as evidence of its own evolution.

I

The small township of Southburn, located on the east-facing dip slope of the Wolds, provides a typical example of an east Yorkshire open field system. An eighteenth-century map shows the arable land to be divided into long, parallel lands, whose orientation, with one small exception, was north to south (Fig 2).⁵ Almost every furlong contained twenty-five lands, these being arranged, from the point of view of occupancy, in the same order in each furlong.

¹M Harvey, *The morphological and tenurial structure of a Yorkshire township: Preston in Holderness 1066-1750*, Queen Mary College Occasional Papers in Geography, 13, 1978; M Harvey, 'Regular field and tenurial arrangements in Holderness, Yorkshire', *Jour Hist Geog*, 6 (1), 1980, pp 3-16; M Harvey, 'Regular open field systems in the Yorkshire Wolds' (forthcoming).

²'Lands' is the term used in northern England for the ridges in the open fields which were formed by ploughing.

³Broad lands were twice as wide as narrow lands in the same furlong.

⁴'Oxgang' is the term used in northern England for the tenurial units which formed the basis of landownership. Within any one township, the oxgangs were of similar size, and they were made up of lands scattered through the open fields. They also had rights in meadow and pasture land.

⁵North Humberside County Record Office, DDBV 43/1.

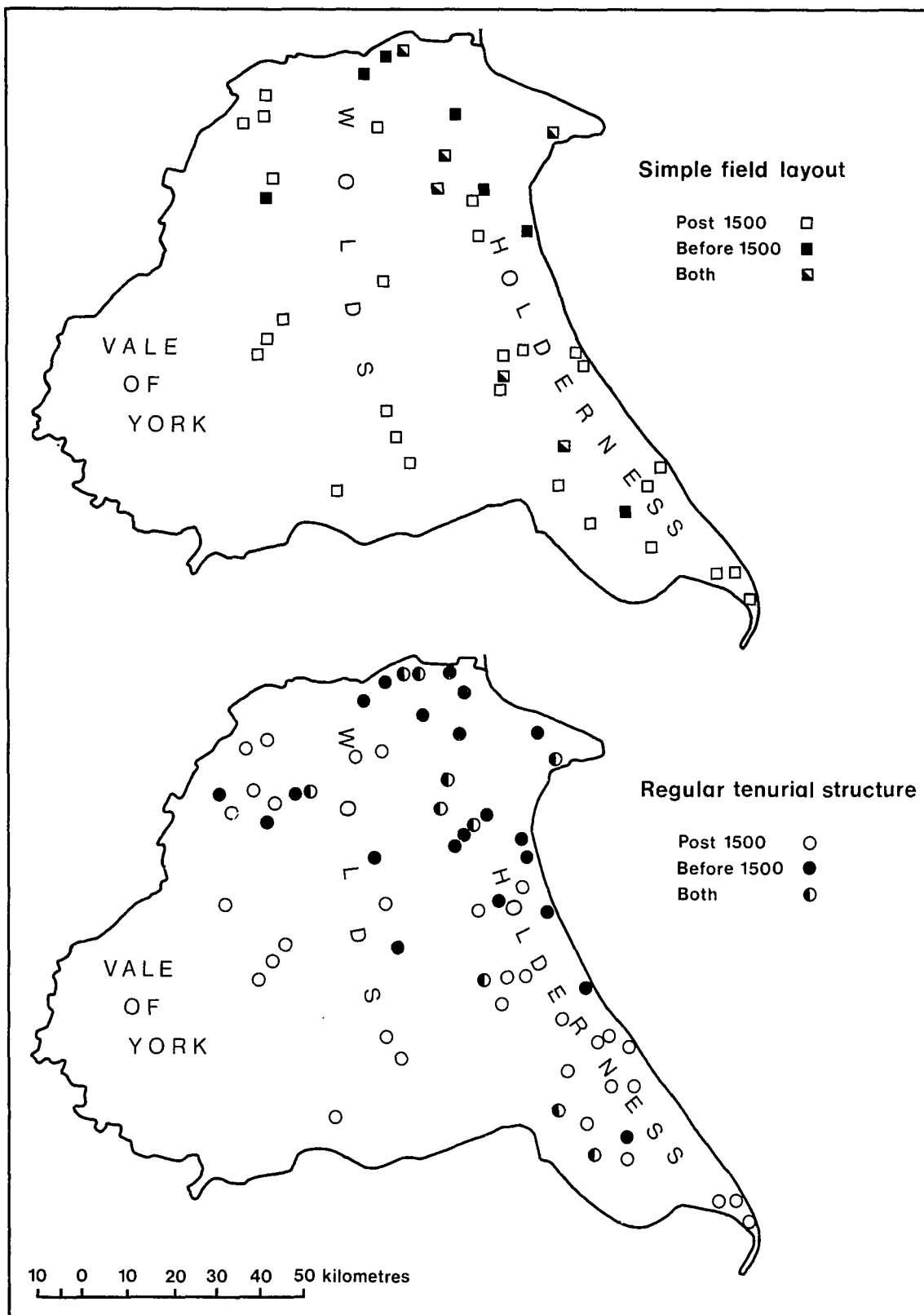


FIGURE I
Aspects of field system regularity in Holderness and the Yorkshire Wolds

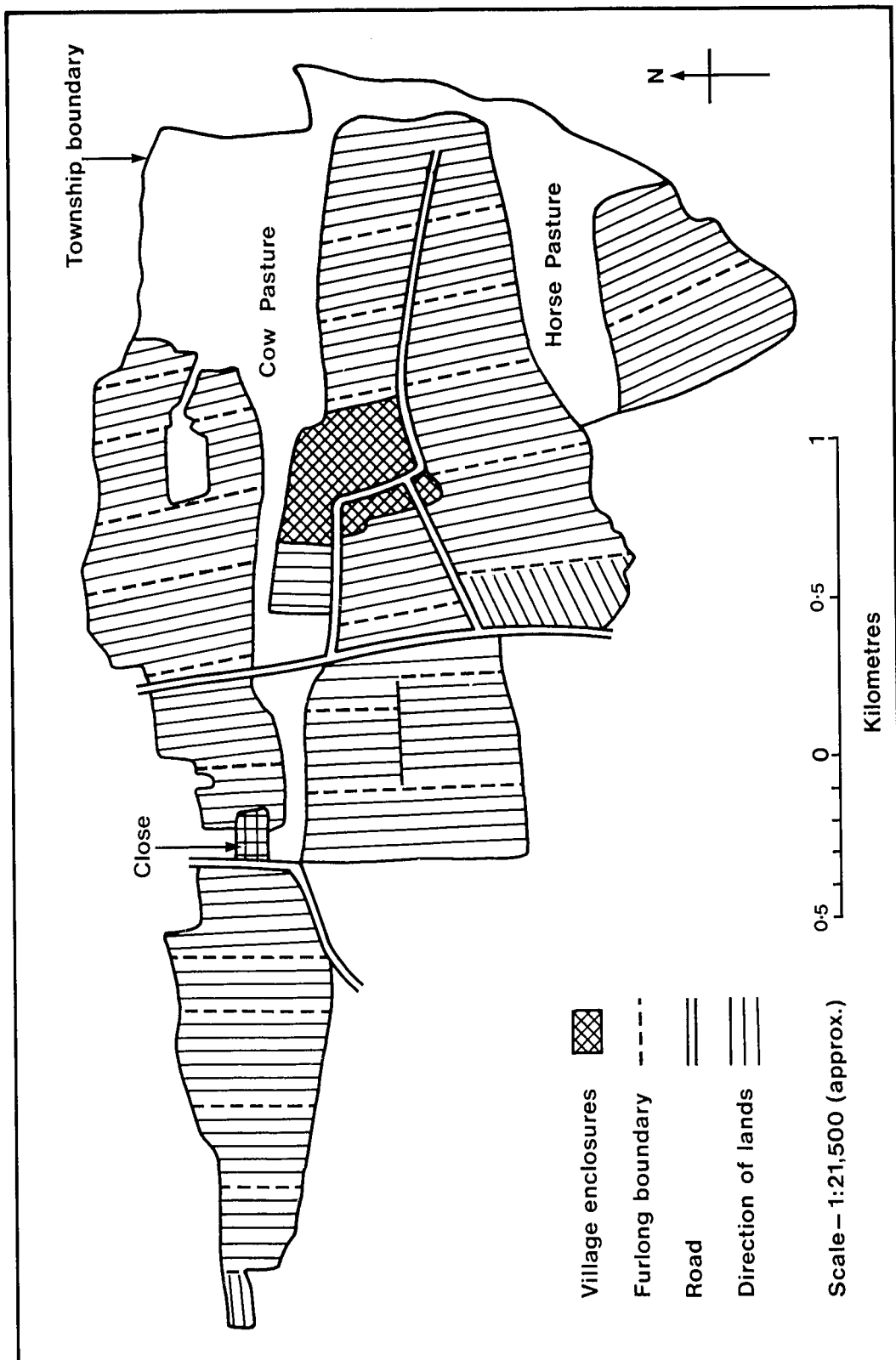


FIGURE 2

The layout of the open fields of Southburn in the eighteenth century (based upon a map in the North Humberside County Record Office, DDBV 43/1)

Apart from the village closes, there were no enclosures within the township, and except in the east, the fields extended to the township boundaries.

Everything about this layout suggests that it was established at one point in time, a consequence of a massive laying out of the landscape according to a predetermined plan. There is no evidence here of the haphazard accretion of furlongs as the community increased in size, no evidence of assarting, or the piecemeal nibbling away at the waste on the edge of a township. Instead, the field system appears to have been laid out in a complete form, with township boundaries which had become fixed by the time of the internal division.

The standard number of lands within the furlongs, and the regular ordering of ownership of lands, also can be most readily explained as the imposition on the fields of some underlying plan of land division. This need not necessarily have occurred simultaneously with the laying out of the fields into long lands — later redivisions of the furlongs cannot be discounted — but it is significant that both must have involved a consideration of the total area of arable land, and that both are suggestive of order and planning.

Similar conclusions have almost always been drawn in studies of other instances of regularity in the landscapes of both England and the Continent. Recent investigation of regular village forms in northern England by Sheppard and Roberts,⁶ and in eastern Sweden by Göransson,⁷ argue strongly for their planned origin, whilst research into simple field forms in a number of areas of

Germany also concludes that these were deliberately imposed upon the landscape.⁸ In all these examples, planning seems to have been instigated from above, by the state, church or an overlord, rather than arising from the action of individual communities. It seems, moreover, to have occurred in a variety of different circumstances, ranging from the organized colonization and settlement of previously unexploited areas, to estate reorganization and even changes in taxation.

In eastern Yorkshire also, regular field layouts can best be interpreted as the consequence of decisions operating above the level of individual communities. Although scholars have often pointed out that similarity of form does not necessarily mean similarity of origin, it is hardly likely that so distinctive an arrangement would have occurred uniformly throughout the townships of the area but for the activities of some superior authority operating at approximately the same point in time. The role of lordship in the area must therefore be carefully investigated. Furthermore, it seems quite likely that such activity would be associated with a period when lordship control was strong, rather than when it was weak or divided.

It can further be argued that planned layouts in this area must have related to a fully exploited landscape, and that therefore they must have been established at a time when population levels were fairly high. It is quite common for the simple field form to extend to township boundaries in both the Wolds and Holderness, so it must be assumed that population was large enough at the time of laying out to warrant maximum cultivation of the land belonging to each community.

The system is also almost invariably

⁶J A Sheppard, 'Metrological analysis of regular village plans in Yorkshire', *Agric Hist Rev*, 22, 1974, pp 118-35; J A Sheppard, 'Medieval village planning in Northern England: some evidence from Yorkshire', *Jour Hist Geog*, 2 (1), 1976, pp 3-20; B K Roberts, 'Village plans in County Durham: a preliminary statement', *Medieval Archaeology*, 16, 1972, pp 33-56; B K Roberts, *The Green Villages of County Durham*, Durham County Library, Local History Publication no 12, 1977.

⁷S Göransson, 'Field and Village on the Island of Öland', *Geografiska Annaler*, 40B, 1958, pp 101-58; S Göransson, 'Morphogenetic aspects of the agrarian landscape of Öland', *Oikos Supplementum*, 12, 1969, pp 67-78.

⁸Hanse-Jugen Nitz, 'Regelmässige Langstreifenfluren und Fränkische Staatskolonisation', *Geographische Rundschau*, 13Jg H9, 1971, pp 350-65; W Filipp, 'Frühformen und Entwicklungsphasen südwest deutscher Altsiedellandschaften unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Rieses und Lechfelds', *Forschungen zur deutschen Landeskunde*, 202, 1972.

associated with nucleated settlements, so that evidence of settlement patterns may be an aid in dating the form. It is worth noting at this point, however, that village forms in Holderness were rather different from those found in the Wolds. A majority of settlements in Holderness were linear, comprising ribbons of irregularly-shaped enclosures which were often of considerable length. Within the ribbons there were sometimes one or more denser clusters of enclosures, giving the villages a distinctive composite structure.⁹ Wolds villages, in contrast, usually had more simple layouts. Houses were either nucleated around an open space or a road junction, or else arranged in two rows facing each other across a street. In a few villages, the associated enclosures had a standard shape and size, but in the majority they had a more irregular plan.

Finally, it should be remembered that an essential aspect of the post-1250 arrangements was their association with tenurial units known as oxgangs. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the system in the form in which we know it could have originated before such units became the normal basis for landholding.

Study of the field layout itself therefore highlights certain factors which could have been important in its origin, namely lordship, land exploitation, settlement pattern, and tenurial structure. The evidence for each of these will now be examined for the period before 1300. It is hoped thereby to draw attention to one or more periods when at least some of the circumstances thought to be necessary for the imposition of the layout could have been present, and from this to suggest the possible circumstances in which planning might have arisen.

II

Before discussing the evidence of landownership, it is useful to speculate upon the most

likely circumstances in which an overlord would be successful in altering existing arrangements. Two possibilities can be suggested. Firstly, at the regional level, the imposition of a standard field layout upon all the townships could be most easily explained if only one or two overlords controlled the whole area. The presence of a large number of estates would be less likely to result in the uniformity which exists in eastern Yorkshire. Secondly, at the level of the individual township, a lord's influence might be greatly increased if he alone held all the land, rather than if it were divided between several estates. Hence, it can be argued that periods when unified overlordship existed in the Wolds and Holderness offer greatest opportunities for the establishment of planned layouts.

Fairly detailed documentary evidence concerning landholding is available for most places between the mid-eleventh century and 1300. Domesday Book provides information for both the immediate pre-Conquest period and for 1086,¹⁰ whilst Kirkby's Inquest of 1284-85, and several early fourteenth-century surveys of knights fees also give a regional coverage of data.¹¹ Intervening changes of lordship on individual estates can be examined from inquisitions post mortem which survive from the reign of Henry III onwards. In this analysis, greatest attention will be focused upon Domesday Book, partly because the Norman Conquest laid the foundation for medieval landholding, and partly because it constituted a marked break with earlier patterns.

The immediate effect of the Conquest was an almost complete transformation of landholding structure. Not only were Saxon thegns replaced as landowners by Frenchmen, but also their estates were regrouped and their lands redistributed. The new Norman estates or honours often included

⁹M Harvey, 'Irregular villages in Holderness, Yorkshire: some thoughts on their origin', *Yorks Arch Jour*, 53, 1982 (forthcoming).

¹⁰W Farrer 'Translation of the Yorkshire Domesday', *VCH Yorkshire*, 2, London, 1912, pp 191-327.

¹¹All printed in *Surtees Society Publication*, LIX, pt 1, 1866.

the lands previously held by many different thegns, so that the direct result was to bring together under one overlord lands which had previously been part of different estates. This circumstance in itself might have resulted in internal changes within settlements, especially since, as Kapelle has recently argued, the new aristocracy in the North made basic changes in the management and organization of their estates.¹² These changes revolved around the increasing manorialization of some villages and the redevelopment of many others, but whether they extended to fundamental remodelling of the arable land has yet to be proved. Indeed, the evidence of Domesday Book seems to indicate that as far as landownership is concerned, circumstances were not especially favourable at that time for the imposition of uniform field layouts.

In the first place, no one lord dominated the landownership structure in the area in 1086. Although the changes following the Conquest did reduce substantially the number of overlords holding land directly from the king, considerable complexity still remained. Fourteen lords held land in the Wolds, the largest of these being the king himself. The Count of Mortain, the king's brother-in-law, also had a sizeable estate there, as did the Archbishop of York. The remaining estates were quite small, and usually geographically localized. None of the lords held land exclusively in this area, all of them having estates elsewhere in the country.

Examination of the distribution of the estates of different lords in the Wolds also shows that no man had influence throughout the whole region. The king was the major landowner in the north Wolds, but he was under-represented further south. In contrast, the Archbishop's land was concentrated in the south, as was that of the Bishop of Durham. Only the Count of Mortain's estate was fairly evenly distributed, but in no area was he the dominant landholder.

¹² W E Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North*, 1979, pp 158-90.

Perhaps of greater significance for field planning, however, was the structure of lordship within individual townships. Divided lordship might well have had an inhibiting effect on reorganization, whilst in contrast, unitary lordship would be more likely to lead to change. Significantly, however, only 48 per cent of places in the Wolds were held by one overlord in 1086, the majority of these having been unitary estates in 1066 also. Thirty-eight per cent of places had two lords, 9 per cent had three lords, and 5 per cent had more than three. Unitary places and divided townships were distributed fairly evenly throughout the Wolds.

In contrast to this picture of complexity in 1086 was Holderness. Unlike the Wolds, the entire region, apart from land held by the Archbishop, was granted after the Conquest to one man, Drogo de Bevrere. This meant that many places which had previously been divided between more than one estate became part of the same honour. In this area, therefore, the landownership structure after 1066 might indeed have presented opportunities for reorganization. On the other hand, the administrative differences between the Wolds and Holderness at this time would seem to preclude such a straightforward explanation for the introduction of a planned layout which was common to both regions.

Any opportunities which the Conquest might have afforded for reorganization could not have lasted very long, however. Almost from the time of its creation, subinfeudation rapidly reduced the number of places linked directly to the honour of Holderness, and landholding became more complex as a result. In the Wolds also, there would seem to have been little occasion after 1086 when the state of lordship might have been conducive to reorganization. The granting by tenants-in-chief of parts of their honours to lesser barons, who in turn often granted individual holdings to knightly families, meant that it would have been increasingly difficult to supervise and enforce a major change in the structure of the

arable land. At Kilham, for instance, the four estates there in the mid-eleventh century were never at any time united under one lord in subsequent centuries. In 1284–85, there were still four estates, the largest being held by the Archbishop of Rouen, and the three smaller estates held by three different families. Many other townships were divided in a similar fashion, and it is difficult to see what circumstances would have caused so many different lords to agree on a common policy of land reorganization.

The structure of lordship after 1066 does not seem, therefore, to have been particularly favourable for large-scale planning in eastern Yorkshire. The same could also be said of the immediate pre-Conquest period. Landownership patterns were as complex then as in 1086, with many lords holding land within the region, and many places being divided between more than one estate. Earlier administrative structures can only be guessed at, however, there being no detailed documentation available. Quite possibly it was even more fragmented a century or so before the Conquest, since one of the features of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries seems to have been the accumulation of estates by a small number of powerful lords.¹³

If a unified lordship did exist before this time, the most likely period when it might have developed was following the Scandinavian invasions of the late ninth century. The impact of this settlement is still a focus for much debate, but there seems to be sufficient circumstantial evidence to suggest not only that Danish society included a substantial class of noblemen, known as 'holds', but also that they could have had considerable territorial power.¹⁴ The very name 'Holder-ness' suggests that this region was once the landed estate of such a noble, and there seems no reason to suppose that the Wolds also was not part of a large compact estate or estates. Whether the 'holds' had the means or the

desire to alter agrarian arrangements in lands they acquired is a question for later discussion, but it should be pointed out that of all the periods before 1300, this seems to be the only one when unified lordship might have existed throughout east Yorkshire. If this factor is important in explaining the uniformity of planned layouts in the area, therefore, it appears that the period of the late ninth and early tenth centuries might well be of great importance.

III

Almost all our knowledge of land exploitation before the thirteenth century must be derived either from archaeological investigation, place name studies or documentary sources such as Domesday Book. Specific documents relating to townships before 1300 are usually too general to be of very great value, although occasionally they can throw some light onto an individual situation. For the most part, however, very little is known of conditions in individual townships between 1300 and 1066.

It is inevitable, therefore, that considerable weight must again be placed upon the evidence of Domesday Book, especially since the Inquest gives information relating to land exploitation for nearly every place in the region. Many problems still surround the handling and interpretation of this data, but two types of entry are thought to be especially valuable for the purposes of this study, namely, the tax assessment of each holding and the identification of waste holdings.

The taxation units used in Domesday Book, carucates and bovates, were the Norman-Latin terms for units known locally as ploughlands and oxgangs. Scholars have frequently drawn attention to the artificiality of the tax units recorded in 1086, but there are strong grounds for believing that in Yorkshire, at least, they related more closely to agrarian reality. It has been argued that the assessment in this area was of quite recent origin, the result of a reassessment

¹³ F M Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edition, Oxford, 1971, p 490.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 509.

made in the early-eleventh century, so that it probably reflected real conditions more accurately than elsewhere.¹⁵ In view of the plough connotations in the names of these fiscal units, it seems reasonable to suppose that this reality related primarily to the arable land. A map of carucate density might thus be a relatively good guide to levels of land exploitation in the mid-eleventh century.

Sheppard's analysis to this end indicates that the Wolds, along with the western part of the Vale of York, was the most intensively exploited region in Yorkshire in the early eleventh century, with Holderness only a little less developed.¹⁶ East Yorkshire must therefore have compared favourably with the most densely peopled and agriculturally productive areas in England at this time, and in many townships, there would be little land left uncultivated. Maximum land exploitation could thus have been reached already by the early eleventh century, the consequence, probably, of a period of population growth and economic prosperity in the tenth century.¹⁷

The other Domesday entry of relevance, that of the incidence of waste, appears at first sight to present a contradictory picture. In Yorkshire as a whole, 44 per cent of holdings were recorded as waste in 1086, and many others were apparently without population.¹⁸ The distribution of waste was uneven, however, and within eastern Yorkshire some areas, such as Holderness and the south Wolds, were hardly affected by it. The north Wolds and much of the Vale, in contrast, had a far higher incidence of waste, with whole blocks of territory being depopulated or only very lightly settled.

This situation was almost certainly a temporary one, the direct consequence of political discontent in the north following

the Conquest. In an unprecedented act of reprisal, William I led his army into Yorkshire in the winter of 1069–70 and deliberately laid waste large tracts of countryside. Although recovery was probably partly under way by 1086, the effects of the harrying were still all too obvious in the wasted holdings and fallen land values. Clearly, devastation on this scale must have had important consequences for population, settlement and cultivation, and therefore could have a bearing on the discussion on planned field layouts.

Considerable debate has surrounded both the interpretation of the waste entries in Domesday Book and the means by which economic recovery was effected. On the one hand, Bishop has argued that the waste entries in 1086 did not directly reflect the results of the 1069 harrying, but rather was a consequence of adjustments made between that date and 1086.¹⁹ These adjustments involved the movement of population from less profitable upland holdings such as those in the north Wolds, which Bishop considered would have escaped the full force of destruction, to lowland estates in the Vale which were directly affected by wastage, but which were too profitable to be left unexploited for long.

On the other hand, Darby and Maxwell, and more recently Kapelle, have raised several objections to Bishop's theory.²⁰ Kapelle especially has argued that the Domesday distribution of waste was probably a fairly true reflection of the course of destruction in 1069, and that the Norman lords by 1086 were still in no position to redevelop their estates on a large scale.²¹ Instead, their attention was focused upon those areas which apparently escaped the full force of destruction and where population and economic life had survived. One such area seems to have been the south Wolds.

¹⁵ F M Stenton, *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw*, Oxford, 1910, p 90; P H Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*, 2nd edition, 1971, p 172.

¹⁶ J A Sheppard, 'Pre-Conquest Yorkshire: Fiscal carucates as an index of land exploitation', *Trans IBC*, 65, 1975, pp 67–79.

¹⁷ P H Sawyer, 'The two Viking Ages of Britain. A Discussion', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2, 1969, pp 163–209.

¹⁸ A C Darby and I S Maxwell (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Northern England*, Cambridge, 1962, pp 61, 139, 212.

¹⁹ T A M Bishop, 'The Norman Settlement of Yorkshire', pp 1–14 of R W Hunt, W A Pantin and F W Southern (eds), *Studies in medieval history presented to F W Powicke*, Oxford, 1948.

²⁰ H C Darby and I S Maxwell (eds), *op cit*, pp 67–71, 145–50, 217–21, 450–4; W E Kapelle, *op cit*, pp 158–90.

²¹ Kapelle, *ibid*.

Kapelle suggests that in such areas, the lords were intent upon increasing agricultural production by the expressed means of expanding or creating demesne land for their own benefit. They were able to do this in the 1070s because they had all the advantages over a depressed, food-seeking peasantry. After that time, however, the balance shifted towards the peasantry, and the lords concentrated upon redeveloping their remaining waste estates by attracting peasants by offering them easy terms. Settlements in this category often, as a result, lacked demesne land.

These theories have been discussed at some length because of the importance of waste in certain parts of eastern Yorkshire, and because of its potential significance for the redevelopment of the area. There seems little doubt that the harrying did create an economic and demographic hiatus in the development of Yorkshire, and it might well, therefore, have offered the opportunity for imposing a new pattern on communities. The purposeful redevelopment of estates by some lords was almost certainly the cause of the numerous regular, planned villages of central Yorkshire, and it would be tempting to explain planned fields in a similar way.²²

The evidence, however, does not justify any such explanation. In the first place, redevelopment was probably unnecessary in several areas, including the south Wolds and Holderness, so that it is difficult to explain regularity observed in such areas in these terms alone. Even if Kapelle is correct about the development of manorialization in these areas, there is no reason to suppose that this involved a radical change in farming structure. Indeed, in respect of village forms, it is in precisely those townships where demesne land occurred that regular village forms are not found, and where, therefore, planning did not take place.

A more crucial factor, however, involves the nature of any proposed estate redevelop-

ment. In the Vale of York much has been made of the role played by small groups of colonists in the progressive clearance and expansion of the arable land through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As population grew so new clearances for arable were made and the fields gradually became larger.²³ There is no hint here of fully developed field systems being imposed onto the landscape almost overnight. Yet, if the Wolds also witnessed a redevelopment, and if the planned fields were part of such a redevelopment, it is necessary to envisage recolonization on a quite massive scale in order to account for the laying out of the entire arable area of a township at one point in time. Any such population movement must have been far greater than that suggested for the Vale, which was supposedly the more attractive area for farming. The likelihood of such a recolonization having occurred seems remote. It should also be noted that there are very few regular villages in the Wolds, which again suggests that the development of the Vale was different from that which occurred further east.²⁴

Here again, therefore, the evidence seems to be inconsistent with an eleventh-century origin of the field planning, and once again we are drawn to the possibility of an earlier dating for the system. It has been suggested that maximum exploitation could already have been reached in some townships by the early eleventh century, if not before, so there is no reason, on these grounds, to reject an earlier origin. Indeed, archaeological investigation of several areas on the Wolds indicates that fully exploited landscapes probably existed there from at least the

²³ T A M Bishop, 'Assarting and the growth of the open fields', *Economic History Review*, 1st series, 6 (1), 1935, pp 13-29; J A Sheppard, 'Pre-enclosure field and settlement patterns in an English township: Wheldrake, near York', *Geografiska Annaler*, 48B, 1966, pp 59-77.

²⁴ W E Wightman's suggestion in 'The significance of "waste" in the Yorkshire Domesday', *Northern History*, 10, 1975, pp 55-71, that waste entries may be a reflection of changes in estate organization than of uncultivated land, likewise fails to explain why field planning should have been imposed so uniformly over the region.

²² Sheppard, 1976, *op cit*.

Roman period,²⁵ whilst place-name studies show that in both Holderness and the Wolds there was a fairly intensive pattern of settlement by the Anglian period.²⁶ Some internal colonization may have followed the Viking invasions of the ninth century, but even here there is a suggestion that many Scandinavian place names, often interpreted as evidence of such colonization, could simply represent a reorganization of existing estates under new lords.²⁷ On the basis of the evidence of land exploitation, therefore, the planned field layouts could be very early indeed.

IV

The early exploited landscape of the Wolds was not, however, associated with either nucleated settlements or a land division based upon long lands. The most detailed archaeological investigation to date, that of the parish of Wharram Percy in the north-west Wolds, shows that the Roman settlement pattern was one of scattered farms and small nucleations, associated with a landscape of small enclosed fields.²⁸ Such arrangements seem to have been quite typical of the Wolds generally, but less is known of the pattern of Holderness.

Despite a probable fall in population at the beginning of the Anglian period, part of a national decrease which Fowler suggests could have involved a loss of up to three million people,²⁹ there is nothing to indicate any break in continuity between the Roman and early Anglian landscapes on the Wolds. At Wharram a number of the Roman sites show evidence of early Anglian pottery, and it appears that the main pattern of settlement

at this time remained one of small scattered hamlets and dispersed farms. Pottery of the Middle Saxon period has also been found on several of these sites.

The process by which this dispersed settlement pattern was abandoned in favour of one of nucleation is a crucial one, because it is clear that the regular open fields which were associated with the medieval village of Wharram Percy could never have related to this early settlement pattern. Indeed, these fields overlie the scattered nucleations and enclosed fields, and bear no relationship to them. It is obviously not possible to link directly the abandonment of the former pattern with the planned fields and nucleated settlement superimposed over it, but it must nevertheless be true that, unless the area was totally depopulated and abandoned, any change in settlement pattern and agrarian organization must have involved an element of reorganization.

Rather less can be said about the early landscape of Holderness, because very little archaeological work has been undertaken in the area. The composite form of many of the later settlements, however, does suggest that they could have developed from smaller units, possibly through the linkage of once separate nuclei to form a larger, linear form.³⁰ If such a course of development did occur, then this would mean not only that the earlier pattern was more dispersed in character, but also that any linkage would probably have necessitated some reorganization of the arable land associated with the nuclei.

V

Before examining the evidence of tenurial structure in eastern Yorkshire, it is helpful to look more closely at the relationship which existed between land tenure and field structure. It is clear from detailed study of planned fields in both Holderness and the Wolds that both the number of lands in the furlongs, and their widths, were determined by the number and size of the tenurial units or

²⁵ M W Beresford and J G Hurst, 'Wharram Percy: a case study in Microtopography', pp 52-85, in P H Sawyer (ed), *English Medieval Settlement*, 1979; K A Allison, *The East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape*, 1976, pp 38-41, 43-63.

²⁶ G Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in Yorkshire*, Copenhagen, 1972.

²⁷ P H Sawyer, 'Baldersby, Borup and Bruges: the Rise of Northern Europe', *Univ of Leeds Review*, 16, 1973, pp 75-96.

²⁸ Beresford and Hurst, *op cit*.

²⁹ P J Fowler, 'Lowland landscapes: culture, time and personality', in S Limbrey and J G Evans (eds), *The effects of man on the landscape: the Lowland Zone*, CBA Research Report, 21, 1978, pp 5-7.

³⁰ Harvey, 1982, *op cit*.

oxgangs within the township concerned. For example, in 1563 Thorpe Bassett contained 64 oxgangs, 60 of these forming 32 oxgang units, and 4 being single oxgang holdings.³¹ Each of the one and two oxgangs was made up of one land in every furlong, the two oxgangs having lands which were twice as wide as those belonging to the single oxgangs. The furlongs thus contained approximately half the number of lands as the township had oxgangs: to be precise 30 broad lands and 4 narrow lands. Almost every township in the area where detailed reconstructions are possible showed this same relationship between tenurial units and field layout.

Any discussion on the origins of this aspect of the regular field system must consider therefore not only the general question of oxgangs as units of land tenure, but also the number of such units present within individual townships. The earliest date for the establishment of the layout as described would presumably be the point when the number of oxgangs in the township was the same as the number in the field layout. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the field planning originated at such a date. If maximum exploitation had been reached by that time, and no new holdings were created, oxgang numbers might remain stable for a long period, and the fields could have resulted from a relatively late reorganization. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the possibility that periodic redivisions of the land occurred, in which case the principle of regular division could be rather earlier than the date at which the number of holdings coincides with the number in the fields.

Information concerning the number of tenurial units present in a township at any date is not usually readily available, largely because villages were often divided between estates, and surviving evidence may give only a partial picture. Occasionally, as at Preston in Holderness, where the oxgangs were named, it has been possible to use other

evidence as a dating aid, and it can be suggested that the ordered system of oxgangs there dates from the mid-thirteenth century at the latest.³² For the majority of places, however, analysis of this kind is not possible, and it is usually the case that Domesday Book provides one of the few sources of evidence for early holdings, in the form of the tax assessment.

The problem with using Domesday Book, however, is one of the relationship between fiscal oxgangs and real oxgangs. If the fiscal geld units were a purely artificial measure, then they are of little value for this discussion. On the other hand, if, as has been suggested, they represent a recent and more realistic assessment of the situation in individual estates, then they can be used with some measure of confidence.

The discussion on land exploitation has already argued that in some townships at least, maximum cultivation levels had probably been reached by the early eleventh century. It would seem reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the number of tenurial units in the townships would be stabilizing by this time, there being little land remaining from which to create new holdings. Herein may lie the explanation for the instances where the number of Domesday fiscal bovates in a township is very similar to the number of tenurial oxgangs incorporated into the later field layout. At Butterwick, for instance, there were 101 oxgangs in the open fields in 1563, whilst the Domesday Book assessment was 96 bovates. At Kilham, the correlation was even closer. This very large township was assessed at 384 bovates in the eleventh century. In 1729, it also contained 384 oxgangs. In these and other instances, therefore, there is no reason why the field layouts observable in later centuries could not have been established by the eleventh century.

There is a further aspect to the problem, however, and that concerns the possibility that the tax assessment itself could have been

³¹ Castle Howard MS, Survey of Estates, 1953, F4/14/3.

³² Harvey, 1978, *op cit*.

used when the fields were laid out. In south and east Sweden, field planning in the medieval period was almost certainly undertaken using the fiscal assessment as the basis for the division,³³ whilst in northern England, Sheppard has demonstrated the existence of a link between regular planned villages and the Domesday carucate assessment.³⁴ These villages appear to have been laid out in such a way that the length of toft rows was proportional to the fiscal totals. If, therefore, the planned fields of eastern Yorkshire were laid out as a conscious attempt at estate redevelopment in the eleventh or early twelfth centuries, it is quite possible that the tax assessment would have been used in the division. The observed relationship between the number of holdings in the fields and the Domesday assessment would then be explainable in terms of the method used in laying out the fields.

It should always be remembered, however, that the geld assessments did not originate with the Norman Conquest. The first known reference to such an assessment in eastern Yorkshire occurs in an Anglo-Saxon charter for Newbald, on the western edge of the Wolds, dated AD 963.³⁵ At that date, the Archbishop of York's estate there was assessed at thirty carucates. Despite the reassessment of the early eleventh century, this estate was still valued at thirty carucates in 1086. Presumably, the arable land in Newbald had already reached its maximum extent by the mid-tenth century, so that no revision was necessary. Unfortunately, only one other pre-Conquest charter is known to exist for this area, so that it is impossible to say whether the situation at Newbald was typical. If it was, however, field planning could have occurred as much as a century before the Conquest, and still show a link with the Domesday assessment figures.

The traditional units of land tenure, the

oxgangs, also did not derive from the eleventh century. They were almost certainly a product of the Danish influence in eastern England from the late ninth century onwards. The new settlers appear to have introduced a new approach to land division which had as its essence an emphasis upon equal shares.³⁶ No-one has yet suggested how this equality might have been achieved in practice, but there seems little doubt that if it was introduced into pre-existing agrarian communities, it would have involved some reorganization. If this occurred within communities which were already quite large, and in landscapes which were already extensively cleared and cultivated, then the simplest way of redividing the land might well have been a massive and simple subdivision into lands which were as long as the unit being divided. Equal shares could then have been allotted by allocating one land to each holding in a regular sequence, so that each received a fair share both in quality and quantity.

The main question mark surrounding a possible early origin for the land division concerns the stability which is implicit in such an argument. Could it survive major upheavals such as the harrying, changes in landownership and demographic fluctuations? Many would reject such an idea, but it is remarkable how, within the period covered by documentation, the integrity of the basic tenurial units was preserved over hundreds of years. Ownership could change, the number of landholders could change, but they did so against the background of a tenurial system which remained remarkably stable. When population increased, tenants could hold half oxgangs, and even odd parcels of oxgangs, but the oxgangs themselves did not disintegrate. When, from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onwards, farmers began to increase the size of their farms, they did so by

³³ Göransson, 1958 and 1969, *op cit.*

³⁴ Sheppard, 1974, *op cit.*

³⁵ W Farrer (ed), *Early Yorkshire Charters*, 1, Edinburgh, 1914, pp 15-18.

³⁶ H P R Finberg, 'Anglo-Saxon England to 1042', pp 491-3 in H P R Finberg (ed), *The Agrarian history of England and Wales AD 43-1042*, Cambridge, 1972.

increasing the number of oxgangs which they held. Such stability, it might be argued, could survive even the harrying. Even though settlements might have been destroyed, it is quite likely that the basic field layout would have survived more or less intact. Oxgangs may well have gone out of cultivation for a while, but this need not mean that their constituent lands became obliterated.

VI

In this discussion, it has been possible to identify two periods in which circumstances might have been favourable for the creation of planned field systems in the Wolds and Holderness, namely the late eleventh century and the late ninth century onwards. The former stands out because in so many respects it was a watershed in the development of the area. Fundamental changes in landownership and estate structure, combined with demographic and economic traumas, could well have created an environment which was conducive to radical changes in field layout. On the other hand, the evidence of wasting detracts from such a possibility, since, recolonization on a scale far greater than that envisaged for the Vale of York would have had to take place in order to account for the arrangements found in eastern Yorkshire. This seems unlikely, but it cannot be discounted completely.

Evidence to support a late ninth- or early tenth-century origin for the planned layouts is far more circumstantial, but again, the general association of strong and possibly unitary lordship, population growth and changes in tenurial structure at this time could be significant. But this raises the question of why other parts of eastern England were not affected in a similar way, since Scandinavian influence was not confined to eastern Yorkshire. Until recently, this factor alone might have ruled out a ninth-century origin, despite the apparently favourable circumstances which then prevailed. Now, however, work by David Hall

is indicating that massively laid out field systems may not be unique to Yorkshire.

Using both archaeological and documentary evidence, Hall has suggested that long lands were an early feature of even those townships which in later centuries had the classic patchwork-like open field structure of multiple furlongs and short lands.³⁷ Although Hall argues for a Middle Saxon origin for this land division, it may be significant that the area in which he worked, Northamptonshire, was also heavily settled by the Scandinavians, and was thus just as likely as Yorkshire to have witnessed fundamental changes in lordship and land tenure. Unlike the examples in Northamptonshire, however, the long lands in eastern Yorkshire were never subdivided to create shorter lands and more furlongs. Perhaps, in this, we see the true role of the eleventh century.

Hall believes that the subdivision of long lands had occurred in some Northamptonshire townships at least by the twelfth century. The pressures which cause it are not yet fully understood, but it is quite likely that factors such as population growth would have been important. Could it be that in Yorkshire, the effects of the years immediately following the Conquest were such as to reduce the pressures which might have caused subdivision here, thereby allowing the original layout to survive? The significance of the Holderness and Wolds field system would then be that it enables us to study in detail a method of land division which was once far more common in England. Perhaps Finberg was closer to the truth than he realized when he tentatively commented that the effects of the Viking settlement were 'far reaching enough to bring about a reorganisation of the arable fields in many villages of older settlement'.³⁸ In the light of the Yorkshire evidence, this seems to be a very real possibility.

³⁷ D A Hall, 'The origins of open field agriculture — the archaeological fieldwork evidence', pp 22–38 in T Rowley (ed), *The origins of open field agriculture*, 1981.

³⁸ Finberg, *op cit*, p 492.

Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England

By JOHN BROAD

THE social and economic impact of those recurrent human disasters of pre-industrial society — plague, famine and war — have received considerable attention in recent years. Animal diseases have had much less coverage since they were rarely systematically reported in the past. However, cattle plague, or distemper of the horned cattle as it was commonly known, was the subject of considerable government action in the eighteenth century. As a result we know much more about it than about most earlier outbreaks. More important, the English government pursued unique and eventually successful policies which eradicated the disease. Farmers were compensated for slaughtering infected animals, and attempts were made to regulate the livestock trade on an enormous scale. These measures were considerable in advance of practice in other European countries at that date. Indeed they were probably better than the measures introduced in 1865–66, and not very different from modern methods of dealing with similar diseases. They represent a successful episode in what E L Jones has recently described as ‘disaster management’.¹

Rinderpest, the modern name for cattle plague, is an acute and highly contagious virus disease of cattle. An infected animal suffers from high fever and other unpleasant symptoms for several days, and has a high

risk of dying within 6 to 12 days of onset. English outbreaks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had mortality rates as high as 90 per cent since the disease was not endemic. The disease is passed on when cattle are in close contact and mainly in their breath. It normally takes 6 to 9 days to incubate, but can take as few as 3 and as many as 15 days. The virus cannot survive on premises or land for more than a few days, but may survive much longer in buried carcasses and undried hides.²

Cattle plagues have recurred throughout history. Veterinary scientists have regarded them as ‘the inevitable sequel to every military campaign in Europe’ since the fourth century AD.³ Plenty of references can be found at intervals in medieval and early modern Europe, but eighteenth-century writers treat it as a disease with a history that begins in about 1710. It was rarely absent from eighteenth-century Europe, with three long pandemics covering the years 1709–20, 1742–60 and 1768–86. England was affected by all three, and the infection was almost certainly brought in by imported cattle. In 1714 an outbreak probably began in July, and after dying down in October flared up in November and December before coming to an end during January 1715. The outbreak centred on the large London dairies and was

¹ E L Jones, ‘Disaster Management and Resource Saving in Europe 1400–1800’, *Proceedings of the 7th International Economic History Conference*, Edinburgh, 1978, pp 21–8, esp p 23; the only modern account of these cattle plagues, C F Mullett, ‘The Cattle Distemper in mid-eighteenth century England’, *Agricultural History*, XX, 1946, pp 144–65 deals mainly with veterinary practices, and only with the 1745–58 and 1714 outbreaks. An earlier version of this article was read at the Agricultural History Society’s conference at Aberystwyth in April 1980.

² For modern scientific views see W Plowright, ‘Rinderpest Virus’, *Virology Monographs*, III, 1968, pp 25–110, esp pp 53–9, 69–71, 73–6, and G R Scott, ‘Rinderpest’, *Advances in Veterinary Science*, IX, 1964, pp 113–224, esp pp 119, 147, 162, 164, 179, 191. The average mortality in farmers’ returns in 1866 was 90 per cent, see BPP 1866 [3653] LIX, p 323 ff. Where herds of wild animals carry the infection more or less permanently, as in India and Africa, resistance among domestic animals is higher. The disease can infect pigs, sheep, goats, and deer, but in eighteenth-century England seems to have been confined to cattle. I wish to thank Dr Plowright for his advice on the scientific side.

³ W R Scott, *op cit.*, p 114.

confined to Middlesex, Essex and Surrey. The French agent d'Iberville reported rumours of cases in Lancashire, East Anglia and the west country, but later admitted it spread no more than 20–25 miles from London.⁴ The second, and by far the most serious outbreak occurred between 1745 and 1758. Its peak probably came in 1747–48 to judge by the compensation payments, but there was a serious recurrence in 1750–51.⁵ It almost certainly began in the coastal marshes of Rochfort hundred in Essex in February 1745, and was probably brought to London by the well-established Essex trade in veal calves.⁶ It was a serious problem in the metropolis by the autumn of 1745 and spread outwards from there to cover most of the country. Orders in Council suggest it was confined south of the Humber-Trent line and east of the Severn and Dee until June 1747, but by October 1747 it had all but reached the Mersey.⁷ Local sources provide further evidence: Cheshire and Lancashire reported no cases until 1749, Northumberland until 1750, and Somerset until 1752. Most of the country was affected by the initial surge of the disease and there followed numerous local outbreaks in the 1750s. In England only Devon and Cornwall escaped the infection, but much of central and west Wales remained free, as did Scotland.⁸ After 1768 England suffered only minor local

outbreaks. There was one in Hampshire in 1769, another in Suffolk in 1774, and a third in the Isle of Thanet in 1781. In each case the initial outbreak was very close to the coast.⁹

I

During all three pandemics the English government followed basically similar policies. In the first and last they were outstandingly successful. In the second, almost certainly because of the simultaneous outbreak of the 1745 rebellion, government oversight of the disease was allowed to lapse for a crucial 6 months. Cattle plague became solidly established, spread far beyond its original source, and took 13 years to eradicate. The comparison of the successful and unsuccessful use of similar measures makes it possible to estimate in some part what rapid government action saved on four occasions.

Policies towards eighteenth-century cattle plague are an excellent example of central government bureaucracy taking charge of regulation in the belief that natural disaster was best alleviated by co-ordinated co-operative action. Throughout the century the Privy Council enunciated policy through Orders in Council. When necessary it called in advisers, particularly noted physicians and the Middlesex JPs who in both 1714 and 1745–58 had most experience in dealing with outbreaks. Parliament played a minor and subsidiary role, although briefly in 1746 the Privy Council deferred to its collective wisdom. After the Commons had spent a month in fruitless discussions, a simple enabling bill passed responsibility back to the Privy Council. Later legislation rarely did more than provide statutory authority for existing Orders in Council. Thus the legislature played second fiddle to the executive in cattle plague policy. Equally, although central government constantly received reports from the counties, and was receptive to local pleas about the practical implications of

⁴The best account of the 1714 outbreak is by T Bates, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, XXX, 1718, pp 872–3; d'Iberville's reports are in Paris, Archives Nationaux, G⁷ 1667, fols 106–27; I wish to thank Hugh Collingham for tracking these down and providing photocopies. Other corroborative evidence is found in Middlesex Record Office MJSP 1715/Jan/39, and Herts CRO D/EP/F125. The latter appears to be Bates' original autopsy report to Lord Cowper on 24 Sep 1714. John Milner's account is in British Library Add MS 32704, fols 149, 153.

⁵PRO AO 1/379/2 gives full details of these payments which do not always tally on a year to year basis with the figures in the declared account, BPP 1868–9, [366] XXXV, pp 105ff.

⁶B L Add Ms 32704, fols 149, 167–9. I wish to thank Negley Harte for setting me on the track of these references.

⁷PRO PC2/100, pp 95, 300, 420.

⁸Cheshire CRO QJB 20a, order of 28 Jan 1748/9; Lancs CRO QSOc2/1742–52, order of 11 July 1749; R D Steward, 'Northumberland and the Cattle Plague, 1749–54', *Tyne and Tweed*, 1978; I am grateful to Mr Steward for allowing me to see a typescript copy of this; Devon CRO QS Order Books confirm that the disease did not reach the south-west peninsula. David Howell and Richard Colyer have confirmed the position in Wales from their local knowledge.

⁹PRO PC2/114, 118, 123, 126, 128.

specific policy details, local initiative played only a small part in the development of policy. Finally, cattle plague was not always a side-issue for governments: outbreaks were important enough in the government's collective mind to vie with the '45 rebellion in Privy Council discussions in the autumn and winter of 1745-46, and to provide the opening item for the King's speech to Parliament in January 1770.¹⁰

II

The essence of the policy pursued by eighteenth-century governments was contained in the ideas of Dr Thomas Bates which were applied during the 1714 outbreak. Bates was a royal surgeon who dealt with the outbreak from its outset, dissected infected animals and consulted cow leeches. Bates' ideas may have been derived from the work of an Italian, Lancisi, who used them successfully at Rome. However, Lancisi's book did not appear until 1715 so Bates' ideas may have been separately conceived.

Bates' policy was to slaughter all infected animals and to quarantine all their contacts, animal and human. In order to persuade farmers to co-operate, the government offered to compensate them if they slaughtered infected animals as soon as the symptoms appeared. Half the value of a fully grown animal was paid provided its value was not more than £4. Calves received proportionately less compensation.

These policies were effectively enforced and the outbreak stamped out in six months. According to Bates' own account the Middlesex JPs administered the policy ruthlessly. They

appointed several Butchers to watch near their [the cowkeepers'] grounds, and count their Numbers every morning, with Orders to follow such as they sent to any Market, and prevent them being sold, by telling the people what they were.¹¹

The level of compensation for cowkeepers was linked to their readiness to comply with the regulations, and the justices slaughtered contacts even when these were not ill. However, the success of the policy may have been a close-run thing according to Milner. For a time the outbreak was contained within Islington and Haggerston, but then the justices' powers lapsed for five weeks and this together with popularity of a spurious Dutch remedy, allowed the outbreak to spread. Only when the justices' powers were reintroduced was the disease quelled. In addition, the farmers' compensation, which came from the Privy purse, was stopped in December 1714 because 'it had not produced the effects hoped for from it'. Instead the farmers were allowed a brief to collect charitable contributions.¹²

The success of interventionist policies in 1714 must have stiffened the government's resolve during the protracted outbreak of 1745-58. In the face of a snowballing epidemic, the ever-increasing complexity of control measures, an increasingly cynical public response, and political pressures, the government stuck to the original formula. It was informed of the outbreak at its onset in eastern Essex by John Milner, who sent one of his tenants on a special journey to inform the Duke of Newcastle on the 9 April 1745. The latter acted quickly, for on the 15 April the Essex justices met at Rayleigh and took evidence from seven farmers who had lost 138 cattle between them. They sent a confident and calm report that since farms four miles apart with no communication between them had been infected, the disease could not be contagious, and that only one calf had been taken to market since the disease arrived.¹³ Perhaps Newcastle was convinced that the report of cattle plague was

¹⁰ PRO PC1/1989, order of 1 Dec 1714.

¹¹ C.J. XXV, 1745-50, esp pp 30-1, 33-4, 36-7, 40, 55, 58-9; LJ XXVIII, 1753-1756, pp 221, 244, 251.

¹² T Bates, op cit, pp 872-3.

¹³ B.L. Add MS 32704 fols 149, 169; G.R. Scott, op cit, p 162; this evidence suggests not so much a non-contagious disease as a common source, perhaps at a market. The farmers may have thought there was no common source, since modern research shows that animals can pass rinderpest for two to three days before they produce symptoms.

false, for there is no further evidence of enquiries or action in his papers. More important, the Jacobite rebellion distracted attention from the disease for the vital six months during which it established a hold in the metropolis. By December it had spread to the south coast.¹⁴

When the government eventually took action in November 1745 it revived the 1714 regulations almost word for word. They applied only to Middlesex, but during 1746 they were extended nationwide and elaborated to detail such things as the method and timing of burial, length of quarantine, and measures to prevent the sale of infected animal products. The government realized the importance of having full information about an outbreak. Farmers were ordered to inform parish constables, and the justices to organize themselves so that between them they covered the whole county. The compensation payments were intended to promote the disclosure of new cases. All these measures were directed to deal with the problem at the farm gate. However, by the end of 1746 the rapid spread of the disease led the government to extend its activities and to enter a dangerous mire by regulating the cattle trade. It was an admission that livestock farmers and traders no longer had confidence in the effectiveness of existing policies.

From December the whole trade in store cattle was fiercely regulated until the following spring. The orders affected not only farmers and counties suffering from cattle plague, but any one in the country wanting to move lean cattle. Henceforth they had to carry a certificate signed by a justice to say that their area had not been infected for at least six weeks. Certificates were one element in what became a fast multiplying plague bureaucracy. Counties appointed inspectors to travel around checking farms and confirming outbreaks. In the north and west large numbers of people were paid to watch county borders, river crossings and

turnpike gates to prevent illegal movements. In June 1747 the justices were given powers to close fairs and markets, and in September the lean cattle trade was again restricted. Despite all these measures the cattle plague remained unchecked. By the spring of 1748 there is evidence of strong pressure on the Privy Council to make a U-turn. Oblique references suggest that the cost and efficacy of the slaughter policy were under attack. The importance of the debate is witnessed by numerous large Privy Council meetings. The ban on lean cattle movements was extended for short periods on no less than five occasions in the space of seven weeks. The physicians were called in to give advice. However, the new orders which emerged on the 22 March 1748 marked a victory for the original policy and a tightening of the regulations. If what the Privy Council then ordered had been put into practice, the major beneficiary would have been the paper industry. Every parish was to provide the clerk of the peace with a weekly report on the state of the disease, and lists of afflicted places were to be posted at every market and on every highway. A night curfew on cattle was imposed.¹⁵

The regulations of March 1748 represent a consolidated code of practice and were the form in which later renewals were cast. One last draconian measure was attempted in December 1749 when the Privy Council banned all long distance movements of cattle, fat or lean, for three months. The certification system was suspended and only the unaffected areas of Wales and the west country were exempt. The measure caused immediate uproar. Even before it came into effect a Privy Council meeting attended by the Middlesex justices repealed it on account of 'the great inconveniences likely to happen from the said Prohibition, to the Cities of London and Westminster, and many other parts of the Kingdom'.¹⁶ The epidemic

¹⁵ The sequence of events is documented in PRO PC2/99, pp 254, 261-2, 373-4, 383; PC2/100, pp 60, 95, 175, 204, 300, 373, 420, 483, 563, 573, 577, 595-9.

¹⁶ PRO PC2/101, pp 405, 417, 420.

¹⁴ PRO PC1/1989, J Collier to the Duke of Newcastle, 21 Dec 1745.

continued sporadically for another decade. Despite widespread evasion, the principles enunciated by Bates, particularly slaughter and compensation, were retained, perhaps more in hope than in expectation of success.

Bates' principles were vindicated during the later eighteenth-century outbreaks of cattle plague, which were all brief and never spread beyond their original localities. The government enforced regulations closely similar to those of 1748, but there were two minor shifts in policy. One is quite important and may date back to an episode in the earlier outbreak. In 1752 cattle plague reached Somerset for the first time, and the county authorities immediately went further than government legislation and caused

all the affected bullocks in the parish of West Chinnock . . . to be shot dead . . . then bought the remainder of the cattle that had been herded with them, and caused them to be killed and buried in the like manner.

A policy of slaughtering all contacts as well as infected cattle was adopted on both occasions after 1758 when an outbreak threatened to spread — in 1769 in Hampshire, and 1774 in Suffolk. In Hampshire the search for contacts led to a chase for 7 Alderney cows across several counties. When they were apprehended their secondary contacts were also slaughtered. This policy was like twentieth-century methods of dealing with infectious cattle diseases, as was the 'full value' compensation paid on all animals.¹⁷ The other policy difference is that later eighteenth-century outbreaks were kept very secret, the Privy Council dealing with the county Lord Lieutenant and one or two justices only, and often sending Orders in Council specifically to them rather than to the bench as a whole.

III

The importance of swift and decisive action to stamp out cattle plague is amply demon-

strated by the problems of evasion that ensued once the mid-century epidemic had clearly got out of control in 1747. At this point government measures lost credibility in the eyes of significant numbers of farmers and country people, including gentry. Farmers, dealers and drovers sought to save their own livelihoods as best they could, and devised institutionalized systems of evasion that nullified the government's strategy. Many farmers would rather gamble on their animals' recovery than shoot them within 24 hours of diagnosis as the law intended. Although compensation was only payable when animals were immediately slaughtered, magistrates and inspectors widely connived at the false dating of papers to give an afflicted farmer some compensation. Another technique was to drive any suspicious animals straight to market and sell them before they became valueless. This inevitably aggravated the spread of the disease. Thereupon dealers developed a system of conditional contracts, withholding part of the purchase price for an agreed period.

Government regulation of the cattle trade after 1747 was also attempting something that Westerfield argued had never previously been complied with. It was always difficult to differentiate between cattle in trade and not so. Cattle were often moved to pastures across parish boundaries, and were also used as plough and draught animals. Yet the devastating way in which the cattle trade could spread the disease is illustrated by an instance in 1748. A Derbyshire man had some uninfected cattle but added to them three others from a diseased herd before driving them to a Staffordshire fair. Here they were sold, and a certificate was signed by a local Land Tax commissioner on the oath of the farmer. They were then driven to Warwick with other beasts, where they all fell ill and also infected many animals in an area that had previously been disease free. Perhaps the only policy that might have halted the disease was a complete ban on long

¹⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXII, 1752, pp 196, 237; PRO PC2/114, pp 161, 169, 184-7, 189-94; Guildford Muniment Room 85/2/4/1/75, PRO, PC2/118, pp 56, 85-7, 93.

distance trade but the outcry in December 1749 shows that such a policy was unacceptable.¹⁸ Certainly there is plenty of evidence that the certificate system was subject to evasion, forgery and abuse.

The size and complexity of the mid-eighteenth-century cattle trade is also illustrated by the effects of the sudden government ban on lean cattle movements in September 1747. Welsh and Scots drovers were left stranded. In Surrey the clerk of the peace spent a day and a half examining owners and drovers, making orders, putting up notices and preparing newspaper advertisements. Over 8000 stranded cattle were scattered in droves mainly in the south east and midlands. A year later eight Welsh drovers were quarantined in Kent with herds ranging in size from 24 to 162 head.¹⁹

The compensation system was also fraught with difficulties. Its dual purpose was to alleviate farmers' losses and to encourage the rapid reporting of the disease and approved counter-measures. Apart from the widely recognized flexibility of the 24-hour time limit, there were accusations of infirm, but uninfected, cattle being slaughtered for the premium, and of cattle being over-valued. There is little evidence of the latter. Indeed surviving valuations from compensation certificates show a wide variety of valuations. The large numbers of Cheshire certificates are remarkably detailed, giving not only age and type of beast, but often colour, distinctive markings and names.²⁰

Once a farmer had obtained a compensation certificate, he still had to turn it into cash. Farmers who lived near London were expected to collect the money from an office there. In 1747 the officials ran short of cash, bringing numerous complaining letters. In

Buckinghamshire Richard Grenville used his willingness to pay cash compensation in the county as an election gimmick. In some parts of the country, on the other hand, justices tried to charge for issuing certificates, and this was expressly forbidden in October 1747. In Shropshire and Cheshire the county authorities agreed to pay farmers locally and reimburse the county stock from London.²¹

Some questioned whether the compensation was more of a hindrance than a help once the epidemic was out of control. It was argued that with slack administration an infected animal was always worth almost £2 while alive and 10s dead (for its hide — a measure intended to prevent a trade in diseased hides). In such a case 'Distempered herds are thus distributed over a whole County by Persons buying Cattle out of such Herds for a less value than the Premium, who afterwards when they fall sick get the full Premium'.²² On a different tack, if even one in three cattle in a herd recovered, the compensation for the hides, plus the value of the survivors, was more than the compensation for slaughtering the herd whenever the full grown cattle were worth more than £5 5s. In practice mortality rates were much higher. At even one in six or one in seven survival rates (83–86 per cent mortality) cattle values would have to exceed an unrealistic £10 a head to make waiting worthwhile. Such a balance sheet does, however, highlight regional differences. Cattle valuations in the north-west were noticeably lower than near London. In Cheshire few animals were valued at more than £4 10s and in Lancashire none at over £4. Buckinghamshire prices however varied from £5 to £8 15s and Hertfordshire ones from £5 to £8. The northern breeders and dairy farmers therefore received a relatively

¹⁸ R B Westerfield, *Middlemen in English History*, 1913, p 185; PRO, PC2/100, pp 444, 477; PC2/101, pp 111, 129, 133.

¹⁹ PRO PC2/100, pp 373, 400–3, 414–20, 483; Surrey CRO, QS Bundles Easter 1749/39, entry in Clerk of Peace's accounts dated 30 Oct 1747; D Baker, 'Agriculture in Kent, 1660–1760', unpub PhD thesis, University of Kent, 1975, ch VIII. I would like to thank Dennis Baker for his help.

²⁰ Cheshire CRO, QJF 178.

²¹ *Northampton Mercury* 10 Oct 1746; Cheshire CRO, QJB 20a, order of 28 Feb 1748/9, immediately after the outbreak reached the county; Shropshire CRO, QSO4, order of 4 April 1749.

²² *Observations of the Regulations which have been made for Preventing the spreading of the Distemper among the Cattle*, 1750, p 4.

higher compensation than their counterparts in the south.²³

In 1750 the critics of government policy advocated an end to all regulations. In 1753, on the other hand, there was pressure for full value compensation. The author of 'A probable scheme for putting a final stop to the Distemper' argued that 'be the cattle of more or less value a sum that would ruin a great many farmers would not be felt by the Nation'. He proposed a small rise in land tax or a poll tax to pay for it. A parliamentary bill which would have paid full compensation for the first three animals passed the Commons in 1753.²⁴

IV

It is interesting to compare the English treatment of cattle plague with that in other European countries, and with the treatment of other epidemic diseases. Holland suffered major outbreaks between 1713-15, 1744-48 and in 1769, but the disease was endemic for much longer periods. J A Faber sees the lack of a strong central government as preventing a slaughter policy being adopted. Tax reductions were granted to afflicted farmers and provide some indications of the high mortality. In Brandenburg in the earlier eighteenth century the government instituted tight quarantine regulations which were administered by the public executioner. French policy is more complex. In 1714-15 quarantine regulations were instituted and fairs and markets in affected areas closed. In one area (the Dauphiné) the intendant, on his own initiative began a full compensation and slaughter policy, but it was denounced by the government as too costly and likely to offend the peasantry. In 1742-43 the government emphasized the segregation of sick animals and disinfection of premises, and also used troops to form a

cordon sanitaire around infected areas. This idea was probably borrowed from the measures against bubonic plague used at Marseilles in 1720. It was also widely used in 1775-76 when Paris wits jested that the army was being sent to fight sick cows. In this later outbreak the experiment of slaughtering animals in immediate contact with sick cattle was occasionally tried, and eventually Turgot agreed to a limited slaughter and compensation policy. It was assessed at one-third of value, but there is evidence of local and Church agencies supplementing the sum. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century the idea of slaughter and compensation policies seems to have won wider acceptance. It was introduced into the Austrian Netherlands in 1771.²⁵

Another interesting feature of the eighteenth-century epidemics is the extent of European-wide intelligence about outbreaks. In 1714 the French government received some 20 reports on English cattle plague from its London agents. McCloy believes that the Dauphiné experiment may have been based on the English rather than the Italian example, even though the French reports from London do not mention the scheme. A good deal of foreign intelligence is evident in England in the 1740s, while the State Papers and Privy Council records for the '70s and '80s contain a sustained barrage of reports on both cattle and bubonic plague, especially from central and eastern Europe. Human and bubonic plague also produced many similar policies in England, both in terms of policing mechanisms and quarantine regulations. Both involved regular meetings of local officials reporting to the Privy Council, and the listing of cases. For both searchers and watchers were appointed,

²³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, XX, 1750, pp 105-7.

²⁴ *A Probable Scheme for putting a Final Stop to the Distemper among the Horned Cattle and preventing the Ruin of Farmers while it continues* . . . , 1753, pp 11-12, 20-2; LJ XXVIII, 1753-56, pp 221, 244, 251.

²⁵ J A Faber, 'Cattle Plague in the Netherlands during the 18th Century', *Mededelingen van de Landbouwhogeschool te Wageningen*, LXII (11), 1962, pp 1-7; R A Dorwatt, 'Cattle Disease (Rinderpest?), Prevention and cure in Brandenburg, 1665-1732', *Agricultural History*, XXXII, 1959, 79-85; Shelby T McCloy, *Government Assistance in 18th Century France*, Durham NC, 1956, ch VI, 'Relief for Epizootics', pp 106-34; A number of documents covering French measures during the period 1714-1815 exist in PRO, PC1/1983.

bridges were guarded, the sick were isolated, markets and fairs were closed, and trade disrupted. In both the Privy Council remained in regular consultation with leading physicians. A common feature of public reactions was a belief that dogs carried the infection and they were frequently restricted and even shot. One eighteenth-century commentator even linked the two diseases by advocating a pest house for infected cattle.²⁶

In the sixteenth century English measures to counteract bubonic plague generally lagged behind best European practice. In contrast England led the Continent in dealing with eighteenth-century cattle plague. Despite their failure in 1745–58, slaughter and compensation policies were persisted with and were gradually accepted elsewhere. It is also interesting that when cattle plague returned in 1865 not only did it take eight months to produce a coherent government policy, but compensation was provided only locally. Modern policies against such diseases as foot and mouth are substantially the same as those of the later eighteenth century.²⁷

V

The local impact of cattle plague on eighteenth-century England has been analysed with reference to 13 English counties.²⁸ The survival of records is naturally patchy and does not necessarily reflect the efficiency of administration. Local practice varied

considerably and some differences are worth noting. The records of the north-western counties show a real sense of commitment and thoroughness — one might say county community — about their border watches and inspections that is not always apparent elsewhere. This partly reflects the different problems of north and south. The counties near London all had large numbers of cattle passing through on their way to markets and fattening grounds. The interests of breeders and dairymen conflicted sharply with those of fatteners. For the latter the free movement of livestock was essential. In the north-west the breeders and dairy farmers were much more concerned to reduce livestock movements around the county as far as possible. In May 1748 the Cheshire authorities actually petitioned for stricter movement orders and called for a ban on all cattle movements from infected counties.²⁹

Most counties appointed large numbers of inspectors, and their reports indicate busy lives checking farms and markets. Remuneration varied enormously, from the 1s 6d a week paid initially in Bedfordshire, to the frequent figure of from 7s to 10s weekly. Middlesex paid 5s a day, and the City of London 10s. Leicestershire preferred payment by results, paying 2s 6d for every beast correctly slaughtered and buried, and proportionately less for supervising lesser matters. In Cheshire the intensity of border watches must have been considerable, since the county spent £711 on them in 1748 before the disease arrived. Both Lancashire and Cheshire had to raise additional county rates to pay for their administrative activities. In Cheshire the Clerk of the Peace was awarded £100 for his services. Clerks and magistrates elsewhere also received payments and sometimes tried to extract commission on money paid out or for the certificates they signed. Their claims were sometimes extravagant: in 1756 the widow of the Bedfordshire Clerk of the Peace claimed £511 6s for cattle plague work done by her husband since

²⁶ On bubonic plague see P A Slack, 'Some aspects of Epidemics in England 1485–1640', unpub DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1972, especially chs VII and VIII; also J Biraben, *Les Hommes et la Peste*, Paris, 1975–76, and C F Mullett, *Bubonic Plague and England*, Lexington Ky, 1956. *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXI, 1751, p 72.

²⁷ *Animal Health — a Centenary*, 1965, pp 7–23, 125–34 give a coherent account of measures during the 1865 outbreak; p 257 states the modern position on compensation: 'Animals slaughtered on account of a disease which has a low mortality rate, or as healthy animals in contact with afflicted ones are dealt with on a different scale from those affected with a fatal disease.'

²⁸ The county records of London, Middlesex, Surrey, Herts, Bucks, Beds, Oxon, Leics, Lincs, Lancs, Cheshire, Shropshire, and Devon have been examined. Other counties with full records include Kent, Northumberland, and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. I would like to thank the archivists of these and other counties for their helpful responses to my enquiries.

²⁹ PRO PC2/101, p 29.

1745. The bench was sceptical but granted her £175 because her husband had been a vigilant officer.³⁰

County authorities spent considerable sums printing large numbers of orders and certificates. Movement certificates in particular were ordered by the thousand. Market closures were also widely advertised in local newspapers to prevent drovers arriving in ignorance of the ban. Some counties, particularly Shropshire, went further than stopping trade. Cock fights, stage plays, puppet shows, public dances and meetings were all forbidden over wide areas. Horse and foot races were banned elsewhere during the 1745–58 outbreak. By contrast later eighteenth-century outbreaks were treated in upmost secrecy, a sensible policy while the disease remained highly localized.³¹

The numbers of indictments and convictions for offences against cattle regulations ought to be a good indicator of local administrative efficiency, yet in all the counties surveyed few people were brought to court. Convictions were far fewer than indictments, and several were reversed on appeal. I suspect that the law was seldom strictly applied because of the extent of evasion from 1745 to 1758. Justices were unwilling to indict farmers who had already been severely punished by the loss of their herds, and did not like to be accused of picking on individuals when so many escaped scot-free.

Even the best regulated counties had their moments of laxity and areas of non-compliance. The gentry around Northwich in Cheshire consistently opposed government policy and the justices there ignored their duties, some claiming that 'it is lawful and reasonable for every person to do what he will with his own'. The farmers there were also discontented and threatened riot

and direct action against inspectors in November 1749. The traditional spectre of arbitrary government was raised at a time when the wide powers of search and regulation given to justices, Land Tax commissioners and Excise men to counter cattle plague coincided with the troop movements of the '45 rebellion, and the suspension of *habeas corpus*.³² In Hertfordshire the Privy Council issued a special order banning Barnet fair in 1751 to prevent cattle plague spreading back to Middlesex. William Sharpe, the Privy Council secretary, passed there by chance just before the fair and discovered that the local justice had not been told of the ban. Sharpe was naturally furious, for although Barnet was at the extreme edge of Hertfordshire, it was hardly remote. Remote and inaccessible areas, and county boundaries were a common problem for those who enforced the law. In 1748 the Bedfordshire justice's complained that drovers and cattle men organized their own sales on Wavendon Heath, just across the Buckinghamshire border, to avoid supervision and checks on certification, even when Leighton Buzzard market was open. In the 1774 Suffolk outbreak the nearest justice lived eight miles away and complained that he was still expected to send daily reports to London.³³

Local authorities were mainly the executive arm of central government, but they and informal agencies also had a positive contribution to the development of cattle plague policy. The 1752 Somerset decision to purchase and slaughter contacts, in advance of later government policy, has already been noted. From 1749 Shropshire Quarter Sessions ordered 'that over and above the sum for speedy slaughter allowed by his Majesty, the Treasurer of the County

³⁰ Cheshire CRO QJB 20a, 21a, *passim*, esp order dated 16 April 1751; Beds CRO QSM vol XIII, pp 119–22.

³¹ Beds. CRO QSM vols IX–XIII gives good examples of publicizing orders in the press; Shropshire CRO QSO4 order dated 4 April 1751; Cheshire CRO QJB 20a 4 April 1749.

³² *An Essay occasioned by the Cattle Distemper . . .*, 1748, p 18; R E E Warburton, *Documents and letters relating to the Cattle Plague in the years 1747–9*, Manchester, 1866, pp 33–4, 37.

³³ R E E Warburton, *op cit*, pp 28–9, Cheshire CRO QJF 178/2 fol 116; Herts. CRO QS Misc. 2741D, William Sharpe to Herts. Justices, 10, 20 Aug. 1751; Beds. CRO, Butcher papers 1/190b, Joseph Stevenson to Butcher 20 March 1747/8; PRO, PC1/10/17, J Scrivener to Lord Rochford, 9 May 1774.

to pay half as is allowed by his Majesty'. Cheshire and Shropshire were already using their county funds to pay afflicted farmers directly.³⁴

More informal schemes included village insurance co-operatives and the reimbursement of tenant losses by their landlords. The Ardley Hall papers in Cheshire include details of a subscription scheme for the tenants and villagers of Great Budworth in 1749. A schedule of all cattle in the parish was to be drawn up and a subscription taken based on cattle ownership. Any farmer suffering an outbreak and following government policy would receive an addition of half the government compensation. The local gentry apparently organized the scheme and promised their own tenants an equal allowance, which amounted to full compensation for losses. Similar schemes were noted in five or more Cheshire parishes and also in Nottinghamshire, while in Yorkshire and Durham landowners banded together to add to the government premium. The strength of opposition to government policies at this time is indicated by the Cheshire proposal that the scheme should be offered to farmers one by one:

it having been found by experience that proposing such expedients at publick meetings hath been a means of raising difficulties and objections. If some of ye better end of ye farmers come readily into it, I think the rest will follow by degrees.³⁵

The most obvious way in which landlords could help their tenants was to give them some relief. On the Tyrwhitt-Drake estates, again in Cheshire, estate officials compiled a full account of tenants' herd sizes, numbers lost and value, compensation paid and rent arrears. Drake paid his tenants about one-third of their net losses but discriminated against those who had sublet their land or rented part of their holdings from another landlord. His agents' correspondence indi-

cates that most Cheshire landlords gave tenants some help. There is evidence of similar compensation on the Chatsworth estate and on the Kingston estates in Buckinghamshire and Lincolnshire.³⁶

VI

Any concluding assessment of the economic effects of eighteenth-century cattle plague, and of the economic benefits of the slaughter and compensation policy, must be tentative in view of the lack of quantitative data. The amount spent by government in compensation was £6774 in 1714, £220,000 in 1745-58, £796 in 1770, and £1684 in 1774-75. As an item of government expenditure it was small. In the peak year, 1748, the Treasury paid out £95,500, which was less than 10 per cent of civil government costs, and only 0.8 per cent of total expenditure. The £220,000 spent on cattle plague in the period 1745-58 compares with £1.5m paid in corn bounties in the decade 1741-50.³⁷

No accurate figures for cattle losses can be derived from the compensation sums, and I have uncovered only one set of accounts detailed enough to use. Estimates of valuations and losses on the Tyrwhitt-Drake estates in Cheshire in 1750 can be extrapolated on a national scale, but they represent the particular structure of dairy herds. I would suggest however that the estimate they give is conservative, since Cheshire was well regulated and claimed high compensation. Drake's 22 farmers lost 286 cattle, valued at £843 18s. Of these, 216 received government compensation valued at £118 2s 6d. On this basis the average value of a beast was £2 19s, and the average compensation per compensated beast was 10s 11¼d. If this last figure is speculatively used as a national norm, then 384,000 cattle

³⁴ See note 17 above; Shropshire CRO, QSO4 order dated 4 April 1749.

³⁵ R E E Warburton, *op cit*, pp 12-31; E L Jones, *op cit*, p 24 notes landowners' schemes in Yorkshire and Durham.

³⁶ Cheshire CRO, DTD 9/6, 9/12, 9/26-31; Derbyshire CRO D 267Z/C79; G E Mingay, 'The Agricultural Depression 1730-50', *Econ Hist Rev*, 2nd ser, VIII, 1956, pp 323-38, esp p 334.

³⁷ Government expenditure figures from BPP 1868-9 [366], XXXV, pp 105ff. Mingay, *op cit*, p 334.

were compensated. Again using the basis of the Drake herds, the ratio of compensated to uncompensated cattle losses is 1:1.32, giving a total loss of 507,000 for the period 1745-58. For the two years 1747-48, when the greatest amount of compensation was paid out, the losses amount to about 321,000 head of cattle. There is no estimate of the national herd size for the mid-eighteenth century, but if for want of any alternative, Gregory King's guesses as to the annual consumption of cattle half a century earlier are linked to these estimates, the losses in the two worst years are unlikely to have exceeded 20 per cent of annual consumption, and were probably much less.³⁸

The effect of these losses on prices appears extremely limited. There is no marked rise in prices in the worst years of mid-century cattle plague, when prices remained well below those caused by the severe weather of 1740. Smithfield sales totals show cattle numbers falling from a peak in 1735-40 before cattle plague arrived, although they were at their lowest in the worst year, 1748, and failed to make a clear recovery before 1755. Sheep totals on the other hand show a compensatory rise of 21 per cent over the 1740-44 average from 1745 to 1750, dropping significantly only after 1756.³⁹

Much more difficult to evaluate are the indirect economic costs of the outbreak. The effects of cattle plague on upland cattle rearers in Wales and the northern hills must have been severe. Market closures made it extremely difficult to sell stock, and this was disastrous especially where enterprises were small and sales were partly geared to the availability of winter fodder.⁴⁰ It may be suggested that cattle plague caused little switching into arable farming, partly because on specialized pastures landlords were loth to have their land spoilt by ploughing, but also because the 1740s were the

centrepiece of Professor Mingay's agricultural depression. On the other hand it may have resulted in a short-term switch from cattle to sheep as suggested by the Smithfield figures.⁴¹ The effects of market disruption are impossible to quantify, as are the linkages to allied industries such as leather. Equally, the scale of farm bankruptcies and rising rent arrears is unknown.

However marginal the effect of cattle plague on the English economy from 1745 to 1758, the impact of the disease on any afflicted farmer was disastrous. The virulence of the disease, and its high mortality, meant that once an infected beast was discovered in a herd there was a low chance of many remaining animals surviving. In the course of a few weeks a specialist cattle farmer saw the virtual disappearance of his major capital asset. The government compensation would allow him to restock at most half his farm economically. Landlord's allowances could appear generous. Drake's 22 farmers received twice as much from him as they did from the government. However, most landlords, including Drake, simply set these allowances against rent arrears that were bound to rise during restocking. Drake's agent was well aware of the inadequacy of this and wrote:

if you allow arrears of rent only and make no remittance of ready money it will be of no service especially to those who make their rent as it were from hand to mouth, for their cheese lies ready for the Factor, yet when he buys it he will expect 6 months credit.

In this respect government compensation was more valuable, because it came in the form of ready cash.⁴²

To take the low cost and minimal bureaucratic endeavours needed to suppress

³⁸ These figures are based on the detailed information in Cheshire CRO, DTD 9/26 and 9/32.

³⁹ Smithfield figures in 'Report of the Select Committee on Waste Lands', *H of C Reports*, IX, 1795, pp 202-3.

⁴⁰ R E E Warburton, *op cit*, pp 5-6; Lancs CRO, DDX/3/41.

⁴¹ R E E Warburton, *op cit*, pp 6-7; Cheshire CRO, DTD 9/27; G Elliott in A R H Baker and R A Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, Cambridge, 1973, pp 80, 83, argues that the cattle plague left untenanted lands in Cumberland and Westmorland which encouraged tillage there as grain prices rose locally in the early 1750s and stock prices fell. I would like to thank Pat Gregory for pointing out that a short-term switch into sheep has been a frequent response to modern outbreaks of foot and mouth.

⁴² Cheshire CRO, DTD 9/26, 27, 32.

the outbreaks of 1714, 1769, 1774, and 1781, and compare them with the scale of losses experienced between 1745 and 1758 when there was no effective control, is the simplest way of highlighting the benefits of rapidly enforced slaughter and compensation policies. What is difficult to assess is the efficacy of government policy in the final elimination of the 1745–58 epidemic. Clearly they failed up to 1752. The question remains as to how far the epidemic petered out naturally, or whether government measures took a grip as the scale of the problem diminished. The records here are no help. In general, unlike brucellosis and foot-and-mouth, cattle plague was not an endemic disease in Britain, nurtured as in Africa and India in the wildlife stock and exacting a cull of yearling animals.

Eradication was therefore not a matter of long-term and expensive programmes, but of rapid action. The failure to act quickly in 1745 showed the limitations of such methods once an outbreak got out of control. Public confidence was lost and government measures became insufficient and may even have encouraged evasion and abuse. Co-operative national measures in disaster management were accepted in the eighteenth century only when they were seen to work. If they faltered individual self-interest came to the fore, as the Cheshire justices were only too well aware when they wrote: 'there is no hazzard the common people will not run for the lucre of present gain, even be the advantage ever so small'.⁴³

⁴³ R E E Warburton, *op cit*, p 4.

The Development and Influence of Agricultural Periodicals and Newspapers, 1780–1880¹

By NICHOLAS GODDARD

'Agriculture was not royal then — there was no "Society's Journal", . . . no dear little weekly *bonne bouche* of a *Gazette*.'

— Chandos Wren Hoskyns, 1847²

I

HOSKYNs, who was acknowledged by his contemporaries as one of the few nineteenth-century writers able to redeem farming literature from the 'dryness'³ with which it was usually associated was not alone in contrasting the variety of periodicals and newspapers produced specifically for the Victorian farmer with their relative paucity earlier in the century and in associating this with an increased rate of agricultural change; a number of commentators identified the emergence of the agricultural press as a significant factor in hastening farming advances in the 1840s and 1850s, together with such stimuli as the loss of protection, rising demand, the improvement in communications, and the development of agricultural science.⁴

Such contemporary comment invites some assessment of the influence of agricultural periodicals and newspapers in the

late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially in the context of the current interest in the means by which farmers of the period acquired and evaluated agricultural information and which has directed our attention to the intelligent working farmer as an important 'change-agent' in the late eighteenth century and to an impressive number of local farming associations in the nineteenth.⁵ Apart from G E Fussell's review of eighteenth-century farming journals and Scott Watson and Hobbs's interesting but incomplete survey of 'The Press and the Pilgrims', English agricultural newspapers and periodicals have been given scant attention by agricultural historians in contrast to the much fuller treatment which has been accorded to the early North American agricultural press.⁶ The present article is an attempt to fill this lacuna and its purpose is threefold: to examine the nature and development of the agricultural periodical and newspaper between 1780 and 1880; to make

¹A version of this paper was read to the British Agricultural History Society and Historical Geography Research Group Joint Winter Conference on 6 December 1980. I am grateful to Dr P G Hoare for his valuable comments.

²*Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* (hereafter AG) 6 February 1847. This was the first of a series of articles by Hoskyns published as *Talpa, or the Chronicles of a Clay Farm: An Agricultural Fragment*, 1852.

³A tribute from *Livestock Journal and Fancier's Gazette*, 8 December 1876.

⁴Examples of such comment include C W Hoskyns, 'The Progress of English Agriculture during the last fifteen Years', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, IV, 1855–56, pp 280–1; 'A Manufacturer', *The Manufacture of Agricultural Machinery considered as a Branch of National Industry*, 1857, p 7; William Day, *Mechanical Science and the Prize System in Relation to Agriculture*, London, 1857, p 17; R Smith, 'Agricultural Progress', paper given to London Farmer's Club, 4 April 1859, and reported in *Farmer's Magazine*, 3rd ser, XV, 1859, p 391.

⁵Stuart Macdonald, 'The Role of the Individual in Agricultural Change: the Example of George Culley of Fenton, Northumberland', in H S A Fox and R A Butlin, eds, *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England 1500–1900*, IBG Special Publication no 10, 1979, pp 1–22; H S A Fox, 'Local Farmers' Associations and the Circulation of Agricultural Information in Nineteenth Century England', *ibid*, pp 43–64.

⁶G E Fussell, 'Early Farming Journals', *Econ Hist Rev*, III, 1932, pp 417–22; J A Scott Watson and M E Hobbs, *Great Farmers*, 1937, pp 246–62. On the North American press see particularly A L Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press 1819–1860*, New York, 1941; Paul W Gates's survey of 'Agricultural Periodicals and Journals' in *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture 1815–1860*, New York, 1960, pp 338–57; Richard T Farrell, 'Advice to Farmers: the Content of Agricultural Newspaper, 1860–1910', *Ag Hist*, 51, 1977, pp 209–17; Donald B Marti 'Agricultural Journalism and the Diffusion of Knowledge — the first Half-Century in America', *ibid*, 54, 1980, pp 28–37.

an assessment of the readership of the varied titles; and to suggest some of the ways in which they influenced the course of agricultural development.

II

Figure 1 lists some of the most important titles in circulation during the period in chronological sequence together with their duration of publication; it is based upon Buttress's invaluable 1950 survey.⁷ The two most important titles that have been added are the *Veterinarian*, because its first editor, William Youatt, had close links with the agricultural community, and *Johnson and Shaw's Farmer's Almanac*, which had a particularly wide circulation. Some of Buttress's titles have been omitted because they were local rather than national in character or had agriculture as only a small part of their total content, and the titles are often difficult to categorize. The construction of a definitive list therefore presents problems, but only a small proportion of the total had importance and these are readily identifiable.

The list given here indicates three main phases of interest in agricultural periodicals and newspapers by the establishment of new titles: the period between 1780 and 1815, the 1830s and 1840s, and the 1870s. The first of these is associated with the general interest in agricultural 'improvement' during the late eighteenth century; the second is a reflection of a wave of interest in what may be loosely termed 'scientific' farming and also of the increasingly strong 'political' aspect of agricultural matters; the third is characterized by the growth of specialist publications to cater for particular aspects of farming activity such as dairying, stock-breeding, poultry, and agricultural machinery. Notes on the most important titles are given in an Appendix to the present article. From this, and Fig 1, it can be seen that the periodicals fall into two main

groups according to whether they were associated with an institution or were independent publications. The early development of the newspapers was hindered by problems that were common to all of the newspaper press, such as printing difficulties, post office restrictions, the hostile attitude of government, and heavy taxation.⁸ Though a later development than the periodicals, they came to reach far more readers as they carried market and general news as well as specifically farming material. The newspapers frequently abstracted some of the technical information available in periodicals such as the Royal Agricultural Society's *Journal*, providing an important 'relay' function. They were generators of information through their publication of readers' letters and comments which created a two-way flow of information, while the extensive agricultural advertising that they contained is also worthy of note. The newspapers also published agricultural almanacs which appear to have had a particularly large sale by the standards of the time.

III

We may now turn to the question of readership. A basic theme throughout the period was the reluctance of farmers to consult printed matter. Lord Somerville, President of the 'old' Board of Agriculture between 1798 and 1800, complained that farmers were 'not a reading class', while it was admitted that the Board's *Communications* had had but very limited circulation. The third Earl Spencer lamented that the *Farmer's Series* of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was little taken by the ordinary farmer for whom it was especially intended, while a reviewer of the second edition of Stephens's *Book of the Farm* complained that there was less demand for works on agriculture than for any other class

⁷F A Buttress, *Agricultural Periodicals of the British Isles 1661-1900 and their Location*, Cambridge, 1950.

⁸A Aspinall, 'The Circulation of Newspapers in the early Nineteenth Century', *Review of English Studies*, XXII, 1946, p 29.

TITLE	DURATION OF PUBLICATION
Memoirs of Agriculture	1768
Farmer's Magazine	1776
J Bath and West ¹	1780
Annals of Agriculture	1784
Bell's Weekly Messenger ²	1796
Comms Board of Agriculture	1797
Recreations in Agriculture	1799
Agricultural Magazine ³	1799
Trans Highland & Ag Soc	1799
Farmer's Magazine (Edinburgh)	1800
Farmers' Journal ⁴	1807
Fleming's Weekly Express ⁵	1823
Corn Trade Circular	1825
British Farmer's Magazine ⁶	1826
Quar J Agriculture ⁷	1828
Veterinarian	1828
Mark Lane Express	1832
Farmer's Magazine	1832
New Farmer's Journal	1833
Farmer's Magazine	1834
Ag & Industrial Mag	1835
Baxter's Ag Annual	1836
Agriculturist	1836
Trans York Ag Soc	1838
Farmer's Journal	1839
J Royal Ag Soc England	1840
Johnson & Shaw's Almanac	1841
Agricultural Advocate	1842
Farmer's Herald (Chester)	1843
London Corn Circular	1843
Ann Reg Ag Implements	1843
Scientific & Practical Ag ⁸ list	1844
British Cultivator & Ag Rev	1844
Agricultural Gazette ⁸	1844
Agricultural Magazine	1845
Farmer's Chronicle	1845
Agricultural Statist	1846
Agricultural Advertiser	1846
Farmer's Gazette	1846
Gardeners' and Farmers' J	1847
Rothamsted Memoirs	1847
Farmer's Friend	1847
Agriculturist	1848
Crosskill's Supplement Newspaper	1848
Poultry	1850
Field	1853
Poultry Chronicle	1854
Farmers' Club	1854

Crosskill's Implement Newspaper	1848
Poultry	1850
Field	1853
Poultry Chronicle	1854
J Farmers' Club	1854
Morton's New Farmers Almanac	1855
British Year Book for the Country	1856
Thorley's Farmer's Almanac	1856
Farmer's Record	1857
Thorley's Agricultural Gleaner	1860
Practical Farmer's Chronicle	1861
The Farmer ¹⁰	1865
Farmers J & Ag Mag	1866
Practice with Science	1867
C of Ag J & Farmers Chronicle	1869
Agricultural Economist	1870
Proc Cent Chamber of Ag	1870
Milk J & Farmers' Gazette	1871
Livestock Journal ¹¹	1874
Poultry World	1874
Ag Students' Gazette (Cirencester)	1875
Implement & Machinery Rev ¹²	1875
Dairymen	1876
Corn Trade J	1877
Corn Exchange	1877
J Brit Dairy F Assn	1877
Poultry Club Year Book	1877
Farmer's Gazette	1877
Agricultural World	1878
Livestock J Almanac	1878
Country Gentlemen's Almanack	1879
Farmer's & Country Gent Almanack	1879
Cowkeeper & Dairymen's J	1879

FIGURE 1
Agricultural Periodicals and Newspapers 1768-1880

- ¹Letters and Papers . . . 1780-1816.
²Little agricultural content before 1832.
³*Commercial and Agriculture Magazine* 1799-1802.
⁴Evans and Ruffy's *Farmers' Journal and Agricultural Advertiser*.
⁵*British Farmers' Chronicle* 1826-29.
⁶Contents identical with *Farmer's Magazine* after 1846.
⁷Quarterly dropped 1843; *Country Gentleman's Magazine* 1868.
⁸*With Gardener's Chronicle* until 1874.
⁹Continuation of *Ayrshire Agriculturist*.
¹⁰Continuation of *Scottish Farmer and Horticulturist*; published in London 1865.
¹¹*Fancier's Gazette* 1874-75.
¹²*Implement Manufacturer's Review* 1875-78.

of professional book, a view repeated by J C Morton.⁹

Comment of this nature, together with Young's exasperation with the limited sales of his *Annals of Agriculture*, the often rather contradictory advice given in some of the early titles and the apparent difficulty that the editor experienced in eliciting articles of the right quality for the *Edinburgh Farmer's Magazine*, had led to doubt as to whether the early agricultural periodicals had much importance or impact.¹⁰ Against this, Fussell noted that the 1805 issue of the *Farmer's Magazine* went through six editions while by 1810, it was claimed that the farming publications were instrumental in overcoming the isolation of agriculturists which was seen as an obstacle to progress. Clark Hillyard, a prominent Northamptonshire tenant-farmer during the early nineteenth century who wrote his own book on farming because of his disillusionment with the standard works, considered that in its early years, *Evans and Ruffy's Farmers' Journal* was 'so well conducted, and contained so many original letters on agricultural subjects as to make it a very interesting paper to those engaged in agricultural pursuits'.¹¹

The early agricultural periodicals need to be seen in the context of attempts to improve, however imperfectly, the flow of agricultural information; the inadequacy of

formal information channels was keenly felt by observers such as Young and Coke, and apart from the interest in periodicals, the growth of agricultural associations can also be seen as attempts to remedy this perceived deficiency. In contrast to the usual stress on the limited circulation of the *Annals*, Claudio Veliz has drawn attention to the support of Young's *Annals* by what he has termed the 'farming interest' of the late eighteenth century, a progressive group of agriculturists of substantial means who were interested in improved farm practice and agricultural experimentation. Veliz maintains that members of this group were articulate, gregarious, and had mild literary pretensions, and thus wrote on agriculture and formed themselves into agricultural societies. His analysis of the articles in the first 25 volumes of the *Annals* identified 316 different authors and 53 who contributed more than 5 articles each, the majority of which were on practical farm subjects and agricultural experiments. Allowing for multiple readership — and many local societies subscribed to the *Annals* — Veliz suggests that the *Annals* reached some 3000 regular readers. While this was a miniscule proportion of the farming community, and Veliz concludes that the agricultural writing of the time and the local societies had little *direct* influence on the ordinary farmer or farm practice, the early periodicals did at least provide a forum where ideas could be exchanged and opinions articulated among the progressive minority.¹²

Some tentative estimates of readership of the agricultural newspapers can be made from government stamp returns. Newspaper stamps were compulsory until 1855, but necessary thereafter only for those papers that were distributed by direct mailing which was an important mode of distribu-

⁹ Lord Somerville, *The System followed during the last Two Years by the Board of Agriculture*, 1800, p 16; *Communications to the Board of Agriculture*, new ser I, 1819, p iii; Monica C Grobel, 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge', unpublished MA thesis, Univ London, 1933, p 368, cited by Ellis A Wasson, 'The third Earl Spencer and Agriculture 1818-1845', *Agric Hist Rev*, 26, 1978, p 98; *Journal of Agriculture*, new ser, 1853, p 117; J C Morton 'Agricultural Education', *JRASE* 2nd ser, I, 1865, pp 455-7.

¹⁰ Stuart Macdonald, 'The Role of George Culley of Fenton in the Development of Northumberland Agriculture', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 5th ser, III, 1975, p 138; and *idem*, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers 1780-1815', *Agric Hist Rev*, 27, 1979, pp 31-2. The annual sale of the *Annals of Agriculture* was only 350 in 1791 (*Annals*, XV, 1791, pp 170-1).

¹¹ G E Fussell, *op cit*, p 422; 'Agriculture' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I, 1810, p 327; Clark Hillyard, *Practical Farming and Grazing*, 2nd ed Northampton 1837, p 59. Hillyard is briefly considered by G E Fussell, 'A famous Northamptonshire Farmer — Clark Hillyard Esq. of Thorpelds, Northampton', *Jour Land Agents' Society*, 50, 1951, pp 162-4.

¹² Claudio Veliz, 'Arthur Young and the English Landed Interest 1784-1813', unpublished PhD thesis, Univ London, 1959, esp pp 19-27, 279-87.

Source: Newspaper Stamp Returns in BPP, 1852, XXVIII; 1854, XXXIX; 1854-55 XXX; 1856 XXXVIII; 1857-58 XXXIV; 1859 (Sess 2) XV; 1860 XL; 1861 XXXIV; 1862 XXX; 1864 XXXIV; 1865 XXXI; 1866 XL; 1867-68 LV; 1870 XLI.

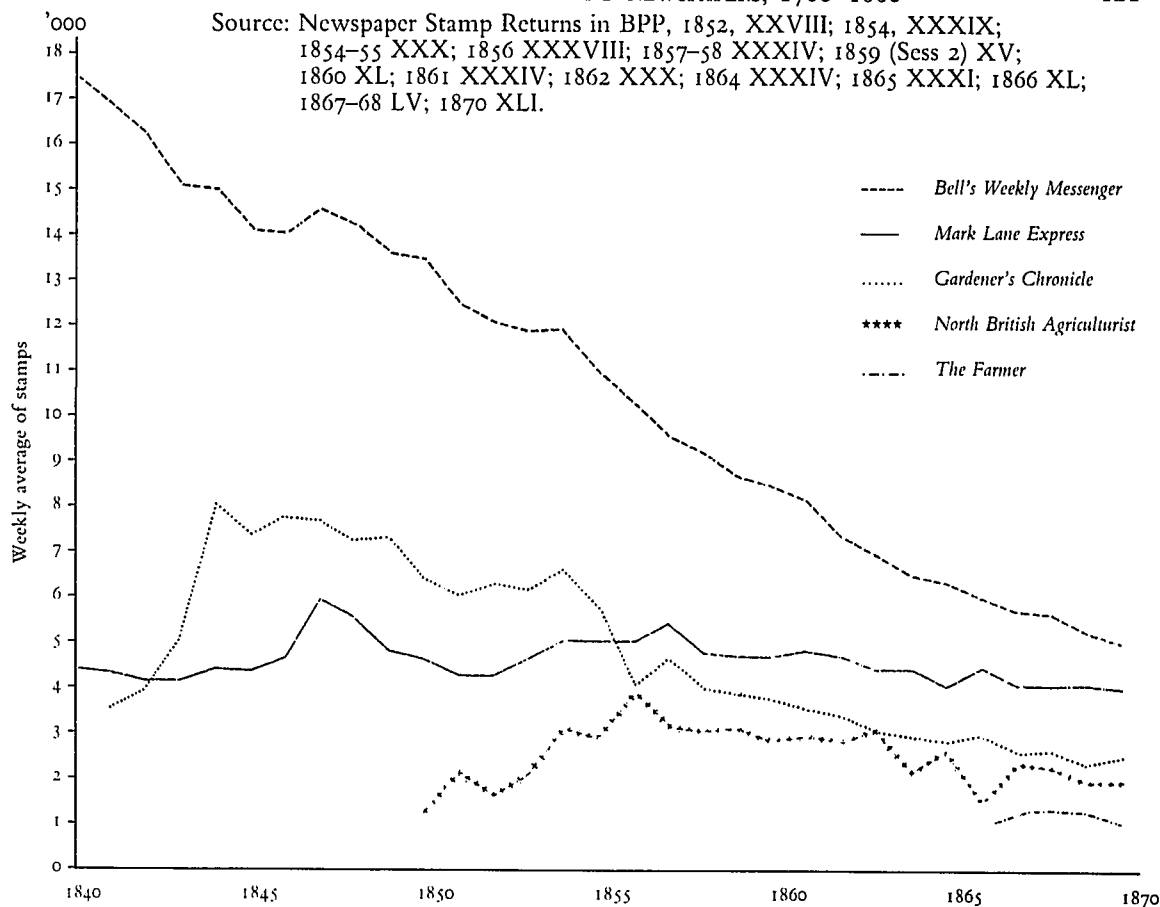


FIGURE 2
Stamps issued to leading Agricultural Newspapers 1840-70
(Weekly averages)

tion for country papers.¹³ The returns of stamps issued to specific papers were published until 1870, and they indicate that the weekly sale of the *Mark Lane Express* was of the order of 3750 in the late 1830s, and about 1500 for the *New Farmer's Journal* between 1841 and 1846.¹⁴ Weekly averages of stamp returns for the leading papers between 1840 and 1870 are plotted in Fig 2.

These graphs show a number of interesting features but need much qualification.

¹³ On the use of this source see Joel H Wiener, 'Circulation and the Stamp Tax', in J Dan Vann and Rosemary T Van Arsdell, *Victorian Periodicals*, New York, 1978, pp 149-73. The problem of the interpretation of the pre- and post-1855 statistics is considered by Alvar Ellegard, 'The Readership of the Periodical Press in mid-Victorian Britain', *Göteborgs Universitets Arsskrift*, LXIII, 1957, pp 4-40.

¹⁴ Estimates from BPP, XXVIII, 1852: 'Number of newspaper stamps at one penny issued to newspapers in England, Ireland, and Scotland from 1837 to 1850'.

Bell's Weekly Messenger exhibits a continuous decline which had started earlier in the century as competitors took some of its market.¹⁵ The distinct dip in 1853 may be related to the launch of *The Field*, which quickly established a reputation as a rural affairs paper and outsold *Bell's* by 1870.¹⁶ A difficulty in interpreting the *Bell's* statistics is that it was only the Monday issue which had a significant agricultural content and the separate editions are not differentiated in the returns. It is also probable that the Monday paper would also be taken by country readers who were not specifically 'agricultural'

¹⁵ For a comparison of the circulation of *Bell's* with other leading London papers, see A P Wadsworth, 'Newspaper Circulations 1800-1954', *Manchester Stat Soc*, 9 March 1955, p 13.

¹⁶ For a history of *The Field* see Robert Norman Rose, *The Field, 1853-1953; a Centenary Volume*, 1953.

readers. Thus the stamp totals need to be much reduced to establish the agricultural readership but the issue is further confused by the fact that it seems likely that the farming reputation of *Bell's* became steadily more important, so that as the total readership declined the agricultural readership became a much larger proportion of the lower circulation. Interpretation of the *Agricultural Gazette* returns is complicated because it was sold in conjunction with the *Gardener's Chronicle* until 1874, and it is difficult to know how many purchasers were buying it for the 'gardening' or 'agricultural' sections; there is, however, a distinct rise in sales shown at the time of the addition of the *Gazette* (1844). Morton claimed that the *Gazette* had an initial sale of 2000, a level of circulation that is indicated by the stamp returns.¹⁷ The *Chronicle* shows the most marked decline at the time of the repeal of the compulsory stamp in 1855, and it may be that the 'gardener' readers were more urban-based and did not receive their papers by direct mailing, leaving the majority of the *Chronicle* stamps after that year as relating to *Gazette* sales. Unstamped issues of the agricultural newspapers after 1855 are an unknown quantity and may explain the apparent tendency of static or declining sales.

With these qualifications, some estimates of the basic circulations may be made. In 1850, a time of low readership attributed by the *Gardeners' and Farmers' Journal* to the agricultural depression,¹⁸ the sales appear to have been as follows:

Sales of Leading Agricultural Newspapers, 1850

Title	Annual Stamps	Weekly Sales*
<i>Bell's Weekly Messenger</i>	703,500 =	13,530
<i>Gardener's Chronicle</i>	338,000 =	6,500
<i>Mark Lane Express</i>	246,000 =	4,730
<i>North British Agriculturist</i>	70,300 =	1,350
<i>Gardeners' and Farmers' Journal</i>	60,500 =	1,160

* to nearest 10. Source: BPP 1852, XXVIII.

¹⁷ AG, 26 December 1881.

¹⁸ *Gardeners' and Farmers' Journal*, 30 December 1848.

The *Bell's* figures have to be reduced to take account of the large non-agricultural readership, and in the early part of the century the Monday edition comprised less than one-third of weekly sales.¹⁹ By 1850 *Bell's* had strengthened its position as an agricultural paper, but many of the Monday subscribers would still be 'country' rather than specifically 'agricultural' readers, and thus the *Bell's* sales need to be reduced, possibly by as much as 50 per cent. If this is accepted, and the *Chronicle* sales are similarly reduced to allow for the 'gardening' readers, the figure indicated for the basic agricultural subscribers of the varied titles in 1850 is 17,255. By 1870 it may be that the majority of the stamped issues of *Bell's* and the *Chronicle* were for agricultural readers; the stamp totals for year ending 30 June 1870 are as follows:

Sales of Leading Agricultural Newspapers, 1869-1870

Title	Annual Stamps	Weekly Sales*
<i>Bell's Weekly Messenger</i>	272,000	5,230
<i>Mark Lane Express</i>	216,000	4,150
<i>Gardener's Chronicle</i>	140,000	2,690
<i>North British Agriculturist</i>	114,000	2,190
<i>Farmer</i>	66,000	1,270
<i>Chamber of Agriculture Journal</i>	43,000	830

* to nearest 10. Source: 1870, XLI.

which indicates a basic readership of 16,360. If the sale of unstamped copies was significant then this figure will be an underestimation, and there are indications that this is the case. The 1870s seem to have been a decade of steady but unspectacular increase in readership of all the agricultural titles, and the *Farmer* and *Chamber of Agriculture Journal*, as the most recent additions, may have gained new readers. Toward the end of 1873 Morton considered that the most 'liberal valuation of the united subscription lists' of

¹⁹ The issue of 4 August 1811 claimed 9100 sales for the Saturday edition and 4200 for the Monday edition. I am grateful to Dr L. Adrian for this reference.

all the weekly agricultural papers was 25,000.²⁰ The fact that Morton stressed that this was a maximum figure, and that the papers were gaining readers in the early part of the decade, suggests that a figure some way between the sales estimate revealed by the stamp issue and Morton's figure would be correct — perhaps a little in excess of 20,000 in 1870.

Basic sales are not directly equivalent to readership levels and it is clearly necessary to consider the extent of multiple readership if we are to estimate how many agriculturists came into direct contact with the papers. It is likely that the multiple readership would have been considerable, for the numerous local farmers' clubs and agricultural societies put stress on the maintenance of libraries and reading rooms where the papers could be consulted, and they would also be available at market hostleries; the difficulty is to find an appropriate multiplier.

That proposed here is a three-fold one, justified as follows. A discussion of the 'Farmers' Newspaper' in 1854 stated that modest tenant farmers would contribute 5s towards the average annual subscription of £1.10s for an agricultural paper and then share it between a local group; thus one of the characteristics of the farmers' paper was its 'itinerant character, carrying the news of the week from farmhouse to farmhouse' and this indicates a six-fold multiplier, a level of readership that has been postulated for the popular press of the time generally and has been noted for a local newspaper in an agricultural context, while the editor of *Bell's Weekly Messenger* thought that each issue was read by five different readers earlier in the nineteenth century.²¹ However, it is considered here that a five- or six-fold multiplier cannot be properly applied to the basic sales as many copies — those which went to

substantial landowners or farm bailiffs — would not be likely to enter into multiple readership, and there is the additional complication that some of the agricultural readers probably subscribed to more than one title. Thus the five- or six-fold level of multiple readership indicated needs to be reduced, and if a three-fold multiplier is applied to the basic sales that have been discussed then an estimate of readership of from 50,000 to over 60,000 between 1840 and 1870 may be taken as realistic.

This leads us to the question as to the proportion of all agriculturists that came in contact with an agricultural paper in the mid-nineteenth century. The census return enumerated 249,431 'farmers and graziers' in 1851 and 233,943 in 1881.²² In addition, there were 'landowners' and 'farm bailiffs' to be counted among potential subscribers. J C Morton thought that only those occupiers of holdings in excess of 100 acres could be reckoned as likely purchasers of agricultural newspapers.²³ The census of 1861 and 1871 looked at farm size in a sample of counties which indicated that a little over 20 per cent of farms were in excess of Morton's threshold figure.²⁴ (The 'average' farm was slightly larger than 100 acres, but the frequency distribution of nineteenth-century farm size is positively skewed.) From an examination of the census returns of 1861, Morton estimated the market for agricultural newspapers as 50,000 farmers occupying farms over 100 acres, 30,000 landowners, 10,000 farm bailiffs from England and Wales, and with some addition for Scotland and Ireland arrived at a total of 120,000 in 1865. Eight years later his estimate was similar at 125,000.²⁵ Morton's estimates of the potential readership raise certain doubts, such as the justification of the 100-acre threshold, yet they are useful as a working figure. If we accept them, the

²⁰ AG, 15 November 1873.

²¹ 'The Farmer's Newspaper', *Farmer's Magazine*, 3rd ser., VI, 1854, p. 486; Alan J Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914*, 1976, p. 35; Stuart Macdonald, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge among Northumberland Farmers 1780-1815', *Agric Hist Rev*, 27, 1979, pp. 31-2; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 4 August 1811.

²² J H Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain*, II, Cambridge, 1932, p. 263.

²³ J C Morton, 'Agricultural Education', p. 456.

²⁴ Clapham, *op cit*, p. 265.

²⁵ Morton, *loc cit*; AG, 15 November 1873.

conclusion is that the majority of agriculturists never came in contact with an agricultural paper at all, a finding that is fully in line with contemporary observations, but that as many as one-half of substantial tenant farmers or landowners — the critical 'opinion-leaders' or 'change-agents' — did read agricultural newspapers in Victorian times, and the view taken here is that this proportion is not unimpressive.

Morton thought otherwise, for he constantly deplored the indifference of agriculturists to agricultural publications. A crucial point here is that it is probable that at the level of sales discussed the agricultural newspapers were at the margin of financial viability. The *Gazette* seems to have been not far from collapse by the end of the 1870s despite the universal respect with which Morton was held; he complained that, because of lack of support, the *Gazette* had been an 'uphill game for the conductors' and a 'constant drain on the funds of the proprietors'.²⁶ Paradoxically, if proprietors were prepared to sustain losses on account of a wider concern for agricultural progress then this may have made it more difficult to achieve the mass readership that Morton so earnestly desired.

For, as J R Fisher has pointed out, the various publications were not made very attractive or readable, being ill set-out with dense columns of fine print.²⁷ In Morton's writing one can detect a continuation of that austere spirit which has been identified as a characteristic of the agricultural 'improvers' of the late eighteenth century but which became out of accord with the spirit of mid-Victorian times when, during the relative prosperity of the 1860s in particular, quite modest agriculturists had social pretensions.²⁸ Morton could not understand

why agricultural newspapers failed to pay while those which dealt with 'country sport' or catered for 'those interested in the colour of a canary, the swiftness of a pigeon, or the length of a rabbit's ears' (referring to *The Field, Land and Water* and the *Livestock Journal and Fancier's Gazette*) built up profitable circulations, though he admitted that such titles might well bring to agriculturists the small amount of agricultural information contained between the other more entertaining items. Morton was saddened by the fact that an intelligent working-farmer friend of his preferred the equivalent of an agricultural 'gossip column' to all the more important items in the *Gazette*, yet it is perhaps not difficult for us to appreciate that the ordinary farmer may have preferred to absorb agricultural information in conjunction with lighter material with a sporting or social flavour, and would soon become tired with too many 'dreary dissertations on the excess of non-nitrogenous constituents'.²⁹ As Chandos Wren Hoskyns replied to the old complaint that farmers were not 'a reading class': 'What did they have to make them so?'³⁰ The relative success of the *Mark Lane Express* was attributed in part to the inclusion of articles on such topics as the 'Herds of Great Britain' contributed by that quaint but entertaining writer, Henry Hall Dixon, who acquired something of a following in the 1860s, and was directly encouraged by George Parker Tuxford (who took an interest in the *Express* on the death of Joseph Rogerson in 1851), as is acknowledged in the preface to 'The Druid's' *Saddle and Sirloin* (1869).

There is little information available on the circulation of the periodicals but it seems safe to assume that they were mostly lower than that of the newspapers. The *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* was sent *gratis* to a membership which fluctuated from about 5000 to 7500 between 1840 and 1880. There

²⁶ AG, 26 December 1881. I am grateful to Dr J R Fisher for this reference.

²⁷ J R Fisher, 'Public Opinion and Agriculture 1875-1900', unpublished PhD thesis, Univ Hull, 1972, p. 23.

²⁸ Claudio Veliz identified 'austerity' as characteristic of his 'farming interest' group; on the mid-Victorian 'social pretensions' see C S Orwin and E H Whetham, *History of British Agriculture 1846-1914*, 1964, pp. 318-19.

²⁹ AG, 26 December 1881, cited by Fisher loc cit; AG, 22 August 1872.

³⁰ J S Arkwright, 'Introductory Note' to *Talpa*, 1903 edn, p. vi.

were also direct sales, and by 1878 some 500 copies were printed in addition to those distributed to members. The Society's *Journal* underwent three main phases during the period considered here. Under the direction of Philip Pusey it contained many short communications — reports of experiments and agricultural observations — as well as more substantial essays. It went through a rather dull period between the time of Pusey's death in 1855 and the appointment of H M Jenkins as joint secretary-editor at the end of 1868, J C Morton having been very controversially passed over for the editorship in 1860. During this time there is comment to the effect that many members who received the *Journal* never even cut its pages, though it seems to have become more widely consulted in the 1870s when the Society took up such questions as the adulteration of fertilizers which was of direct practical concern to the agriculturist. In general the *Journal* was not so important for direct readership but as the vehicle for the publication of original agricultural research, which in time found its way into more widely read media.³¹ The agricultural almanacs were a popular source of this technical information and their relatively large sales are worthy of note. The average annual sale of *Johnson and Shaw's* was 15,570 between 1841 and 1865 and was thus probably among the most widely read of all agricultural publications of the nineteenth century.³²

IV

From this discussion of the readership of the newspapers and periodicals we may now turn to a brief consideration of their 'influence', of which three broad categories may be identified: the dissemination of

agricultural price and commercial information, the articulation of agricultural opinion, and the spread of technical and scientific information on agriculture.

Most of the agricultural newspapers and periodicals made a point of relaying information on the market prices of agricultural commodities. It was this feature that contributed to the early reputation of *Bell's Weekly Messenger* as a rural affairs paper, and it was part of the original rationale of the *Mark Lane Express* (as its title suggests), for John Rogerson (one of its original founders) worked on the *Mercantile Journal* and was impressed by the imperfect way in which the corn markets were then reported.³³ Thus the *Mark Lane Express* always prided itself on its comprehensive coverage of the national and regional markets, and the *Agricultural Gazette* extended its market coverage in 1853. Extensive market coverage was costly to assemble, and it is for this reason that the *Express*, at 7d, was the most expensive of the London weekly newspapers in the early 1870s.³⁴ In addition to reports of national and regional markets there were also agricultural surveys on the state of the crops at various times of the year, and extensive advertisements for fertilizers and agricultural machinery (particularly in the almanacs) which contemporaries thought significant in aiding the diffusion of improved practice.

The newspapers and the more popular periodicals were forums where agriculturists' opinion could be expressed, and they were also sometimes linked with 'farmers' movements' of various types. An early example was the prominence given to local protection societies (under the leadership of George Webb Hall) between 1816 and 1819 in the *Farmers' Journal*, and Hall contributed lengthy epistles to that paper under the *nom de plume* of 'Alpha'. Issues of the *Farmers' Journal* were sometimes sent *gratis* to rural

³¹ For a discussion of the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society see N P W Goddard, 'The Royal Agricultural Society of England and Agricultural Progress 1838-1880', unpublished PhD thesis, Univ Kent, 1981, esp pp 134-75, 271-80.

³² The figures are from Morton's paper on 'Agricultural Education', pp 456-7.

³³ For a memoir of Joseph Rogerson see *Farmer's Magazine*, third ser., XVI, 1859, pp 87-8.

³⁴ J Grant, *The Newspaper Press*, III, 1872, p 127.

hostelries to secure full attention to particularly topical matters.³⁵ The *Agriculturist* was the organ of the Central Agricultural Society founded late in 1835, which agitated particularly on the currency question. As there was considerable internal dissension over the aims of this association and disagreement over the editorial policy of the *Agriculturist*, *Bell's Weekly Messenger* was for a time used to give publicity to the Central Society's proceedings.³⁶ Between 1844 and 1846 local protection societies were given a good deal of coverage in the *Mark Lane Express*; later, the Farmer's Alliance, a body formed in 1879 to articulate the grievances of tenant farmers, was closely associated with the *Express* as William Bear, then editor, was also the Secretary of the Alliance.³⁷ The Chambers of Agriculture had their own journals to give publicity to their proceedings. Henry Corbet criticised the Chambers in his *Express* editorials as being dominated by landlords and thus too concerned with issues such as local taxation at the expense of the Malt Tax (against which the *Express* unflaggingly campaigned without success), the Game Laws, and Tenant Right, and was particularly scathing about J A Clarke, the editor of the *Chamber of Agriculture Journal*.³⁸ Charles Clay, the founder of the Central Chamber, later recalled that Corbet's opposition had done much to hinder the early progress of the Chambers.³⁹

Agricultural protest movements are sometimes viewed as being rather narrow in outlook, particularly with regard to calls for protection and opposition to the extension of free trade. It is thus interesting to consider the role of some of the leading agricultural papers in bringing about a gradual accept-

ance of free trade opinion among agriculturists. This has been noted by Scott Watson and Hobbs in their discussion of the *North British Agriculturist*, but their contention that free trade principles did not extend to the English titles is incorrect.⁴⁰ Certainly *Bell's Weekly Messenger* and the *New Farmers' Journal* took a staunchly protectionist line, but the view of the *Gazette* and *Express* was somewhat different.

When the *Gazette* was launched in 1844 the young Morton clearly specified that the paper was to be independent of all party viewpoints.⁴¹ Though Morton took this neutral stance, his close friend Chandos Wren Hoskyns wrote frequent leaders which were thinly disguised free trade statements. The Corn Law debate which raged early in 1846 was hardly given a mention in the *Gazette* (though Hoskyns had to admit that it was an 'affectation' to ignore it), while Morton expressed disinterest in what he then saw as essentially an argument between 'landlords and manufacturers'. Hoskyns argued that agriculturists should be more concerned with obtaining maximum yield per unit area rather than maximum price, views which aroused the hostility of the *Gazette* readers.⁴² Morton later recalled Hoskyns as a leader in the growth of free-trade opinion among agriculturists.⁴³ The influences on Morton's thought can be identified, for his father was agent to the Earl of Ducie and kept the Earl's Whitfield example-farm, and with the geologist Joshua Trimmer wrote a pamphlet advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws from an agricultural point of view (in that stock-feeding would then be cheaper), while Ducie (who J C Morton acknowledged as having done much to advance his career) caused no little sensation when in 1844 he appeared on the platform of the Anti-Corn Law League and declared that under free trade in corn not

³⁵ Travis L Crosby, *English Farmers and the Politics of Protection 1815-1852*, Hassocks, 1977, p 36.

³⁶ *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 5 June 1837.

³⁷ On the Alliance see J R Fisher, 'The Farmers' Alliance: An Agricultural Protest Movement of the 1880s', *Agric Hist Rev*, 26, 1978, pp 15-25.

³⁸ *Mark Lane Express* 18 January, 19 April, 15 and 29 November 1869. See also W W Good, *Where are we Now? A Politico-Agricultural Letter to the Chairman of the Central Chamber of Agriculture*, Clare Sewell Read Esq., MP, 1869.

³⁹ *Journal of the Farmer's Club*, 1882-86, pp 18-19.

⁴⁰ *Great Farmers*, pp 247-8.

⁴¹ *Gardener's Chronicle*, 2 December 1843; AG, 6 January 1844.

⁴² AG, 3 January, 7, 14 February 1846.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 7 January 1871.

one acre of the Cotswolds would go out of cultivation.⁴⁴

To include the *Mark Lane Express* as being less than faithful to protectionism in the early 1840s may seem to be inconsistent with that paper's support of the local protection societies, but while William Shaw (its editor between 1832 and 1852) wrote strongly-worded leaders to the effect that the rural community had been slow to organize itself against the League and that Peel was prepared to betray the agricultural interest, his support for the Corn Laws was heavily qualified — enough to lead to the accusation that he edited a free trade paper.⁴⁵ Shaw certainly eschewed the more polemical aspects of the debate, and upheld the unity of interest, as he saw it, between manufacturers and agriculturists, but he viewed protection as necessary to compensate agriculture for the various financial burdens with which farmers had to contend. He thought that agricultural technique was insufficiently developed to stand unfettered competition in 1846, but his implication was that the Corn Laws were disposable in the longer term. After repeal Shaw was quick to pose the question as to whether agriculturists may have been mistaken in upholding the principle of protection, though he was unable to endorse Caird's pamphlet in 1849 which was enthusiastically reviewed in the *Gazette*.⁴⁶

Shaw gave particular attention to working for a better system of tenant-right, which he saw as essential for general agricultural advance, and he seems to have been largely instrumental in interesting Philip Pusey in the issue.⁴⁷ The leaders pages of the *Express* were embellished with an engraving of a plough and the slogans 'Live and Let Live'

and 'Property brings its Duties as well as its Rights'.⁴⁸ Shaw's extensive influence in agricultural affairs — aided by his position as an agricultural editor — is worthy of note. He was largely responsible for the establishment of the Royal Agricultural Society as he continually argued for a non-political body devoted to the technical and scientific aspects of agriculture in the *Express* and *Farmer's Magazine*. Shaw acted as the Secretary of the new body until 1840, and there was a proposal from his co-proprietors that the Society's *Journal* should be published in conjunction with the *Farmer's Magazine* after the model of the Highland Society's *Transactions* and the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, though this offer was not taken up. Shaw also founded the London Farmer's Club in 1842 and promoted local farmers' clubs of which he was a 'zealous advocate'; the *Express* and *Farmer's Magazine* made a particular point of covering the activities of these bodies and were thus instrumental in encouraging their phenomenal expansion in early Victorian England.⁴⁹

Henry Corbet, who succeeded Shaw at the *Express* in 1853, had earlier collaborated with him in their joint *Digest of Evidence on Agricultural Customs*, and it is thus Corbet and Morton who were the leading agricultural editors during the most prosperous period of Victorian 'high farming' of the 1850s and 1860s. They exhibited a fascinating contrast of styles. Morton was independent, sober-minded, yet tremendously optimistic as to what could be achieved by the adoption of the best practice in agriculture, and passionately believed in the need to raise the general intelligence of the farmer through improved agricultural education. Corbet was also interested in agricultural progress

⁴⁴ John Morton and Joshua Trimmer, *An Attempt to Estimate the Effects of Protecting Duties on the Profits of Agriculture*, 1844; *Mark Lane Express* 3 June, 22 July 1844. See also J C Morton's tributes to Ducie, *AG*, 4 June, 31 December 1853.

⁴⁵ *Mark Lane Express*, 19, 26 February 1844, 20 April 1846.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 June 1846, 28 May 1849; *AG*, 5 May 1849.

⁴⁷ On tenant right see J R Fisher, *Tenurial Deficiencies in the English Land System: The Mid-Nineteenth Century Debate*, Univ Newcastle, NSW, Australia, Department of Economics, Research Report, 58, 1980.

⁴⁸ Noted by Julian R McQuiston, 'Tenant Right: Farmer against Landlord in Victorian England', *Ag Hist*, XLVII, 1973, p 100, n 9.

⁴⁹ On Shaw see Nicholas Goddard, 'William Shaw "of the Strand" and the Foundation of the Royal Agricultural Society of England', *JRASE* (in press 1982). His connection with local agricultural societies has been noted in *idem*, 'Agricultural Societies', in G E Mingay, ed, *The Victorian Countryside*, I, 1981, pp 246, 252.

but was much more sceptical of the potentialities of some of the techniques and methods that were urged by the enthusiasts of the day: the use of sewage as a manure, for which much was claimed by Morton and others, but which proved to be virtually useless, is a case in point.⁵⁰ Corbet was much more interested in agricultural shows, cattle exhibitions, and country sport than was Morton, and wrote extensively for the *New Sporting Magazine*, also published by the *Express* firm of Rogerson and Tuxford. Corbet had great writing talent and deserves recognition as an incisive commentator on mid-Victorian agricultural affairs.⁵¹

All the Victorian agricultural periodicals and newspapers gave considerable attention to the technical and scientific aspects of agriculture, and the generation and diffusion of such information was the third area of their influence. Space does not permit a detailed examination of this very important aspect of their role, which I have attempted, in part, elsewhere, but information on such matters as drainage, fertilizers, theories of plant and animal nutrition, and the nature of pests and diseases, which often first appeared in articles in the less popular titles, were frequently abstracted or reported in the more widely-read publications which have been given particular attention in this survey.⁵² In addition, the numerous agricultural shows — where advanced machinery and improved stock were exhibited — received extensive coverage as did local lectures and discussions at agricultural clubs and societies. Readers' letters, which reported experiences or experiments, also generated knowledge and further comment and thus added to the totality of agricultural information available. What the ordinary agriculturist lacked was succinct summaries (rather than cumbersome encyclopaedic works) of the

best established farm-practice and agricultural knowledge. It was not until the 1870s that much progress was made in this direction when, for example, the Agricultural Co-operative Association published charts in the *Agricultural Economist* which gave advice on the action and application of different fertilizers and which drew upon the work of such pioneers as Lawes, Gilbert and Voelcker whose findings had been published during the preceding thirty years.⁵³ Morton tried to pull the scattered information together in his *Book of the Farm* series, the first volume of which, Robert Warington's *Chemistry of the Farm* (1879), enjoyed a particularly high level of popularity.

V

Between 1780 and 1880 the agricultural press had a sometimes precarious existence, a reflection of the agriculturists' distaste for reading and an increasing public indifference to agricultural affairs as the country became more urbanized.⁵⁴ While hard estimates of readership levels are, as we have seen, difficult to establish with precision, the figures that have been discussed do at least indicate that the agricultural periodicals and newspapers were read by a substantial proportion of larger farmers even if they lacked the mass readership among the agricultural community rather unrealistically hoped for by Morton. Thus while in the 1870s there were clearly still many prominent agriculturists like 'Billy' Torr of Aylesbury who despised 'paper farming', it is probable that they read an agricultural newspaper, and while of Torr it was said to be 'against his nature' to write on agricultural topics, he was very willing to speak at farmers' clubs with telling effect, and such discourses were invariably reported; for the farmer who did not read one of the

⁵⁰ Nicholas Goddard, 'Nineteenth Century Recycling: the Victorians and the Agricultural Utilisation of Sewage', *History Today*, 31 June 1981, pp 32–6.

⁵¹ Some of his writings were gathered together as Henry Corbet, *Tales and Traits of Sporting Life*, 1864.

⁵² For an examination of these 'information linkages' see Goddard, thesis, pp 280–305.

⁵³ Augustus Voelcker *et al*, *Agricultural Economy*, 1874.

⁵⁴ This was complained about by W E Bear, Corbet's successor at the *Mark Lane Express*. See W E Bear, 'The Public Interest in Agricultural Reform', *The Nineteenth Century*, V, 1879, pp 1079–80.

specifically agricultural titles, matter contained in them was frequently abstracted by the provincial press which often gave coverage to farming topics.⁵⁵

It has been no part of the purpose of this article to make elaborate claims for the status of the nineteenth-century agricultural periodical and newspaper. However, while the agricultural press was not successful in giving an influential 'voice' to the farming interest, and as H H Dixon stressed, the ordinary working-farmer was much more prepared to go to a technical lecture than read an article on the same subject, the not inconsiderable number of agriculturists who did take an agricultural paper were much better qualified for the conduct of their affairs

through the market information, reports of discoveries, inventions, experience, and rural news that it contained.⁵⁶ Further, it is doubtful if the local farmers' clubs and associations would have achieved the same degree of prominence and importance had they not been actively supported by the agricultural press. The newspapers and periodicals therefore need to be viewed in conjunction with these parallel and integrated channels as part of a complex web of information linkages. Thus by mid-Victorian times there was no shortage of agricultural information for those who wanted to avail themselves of it; whether the knowledge would 'pay' however, was quite another matter.

⁵⁵ 'The Business of a Farmers' Club', *Farmer's Magazine*, XLVIII, 1875, p 317; anon, 'The Late William Torr: a compilation from many Sources', *JRASE*, 2nd ser, XI, 1875, p 306.

⁵⁶ H H Dixon, 'The Royal Agricultural Society', *Gentleman's Magazine*, new ser, III, 1869, p 302.

APPENDIX

Notes on leading agricultural Periodicals and Newspapers 1780-1880 in chronological sequence (Year in parentheses indicates first publication)

Memoirs of Agriculture and other Oeconomical Arts (1768). Published selected communications from the Society of Arts. Edited until 1782 by Robert Dossie when the Society began a regular series of *Transactions* which continued until 1848; the *Journal of the Society of Arts* was begun in 1852. In the nineteenth century agriculture was not a major concern of the Society, but in Victorian times its *Journal* contained some important discussions on agricultural topics, generally on broad themes such as sewage farming or food supply.

Letters and Papers on Agriculture, Planting etc . . . (1780) of the Bath and West Society. (The Society was founded in 1777; see Kenneth Hudson, *The Bath and West: a Bicentennial History*, Bradford-on-Avon, 1976). Published until 1816, revived in 1853 by Thomas Dyke Acland as the Society's *Journal* which carried a number of original articles and reports as well as papers that had first appeared elsewhere. Acland was succeeded as editor in 1859 by Josiah Goodwin.

Annals of Agriculture (1784). Edited by Arthur Young, the *Annals* were the most significant of the late eighteenth-century agricultural periodicals. Continued until 1808 when Young's failing eyesight caused him to curtail some of his activities. A wide variety of

mostly short comment and articles on agricultural topics which have been analysed by Claudio Veliz, 'Arthur Young and the English Landed Interest 1784-1813', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1959.

Bell's Weekly Messenger (1796). Sometimes mistakenly taken as the oldest agricultural newspaper, it must be stressed that the agricultural content was small until 1832. Its reputation as a rural affairs paper derived from its Monday edition, begun in 1799, which was sent out to supply country readers with market information, including agricultural prices (Stanley Morison, *John Bell 1745-1831*, Cambridge, 1930, p 54).

Communications to the Board of Agriculture (1797), continued until 1811 (there was a single volume of a new series published in 1819). Contained long essays, often in response to topics specified by the Board and for which prizes were given.

Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous Literature (1799). Edited by J Anderson; ran for only three years and contained little agricultural material. Interestingly, there was a complaint about the lack of agricultural representation (volume I, 1799, p 287).

Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society (1799). The Highland Society was founded in 1784; between 1828 and 1866 the *Prize Essays* (styled *Transactions* after 1843) were published in conjunction with the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture* after which they reverted to independent annual publication. This journal was notable in the 1840s for carrying a large amount of original communications, particularly experiments in agricultural chemistry.

Agricultural Magazine (1799). This was much more structured than the *Annals* and had separate sections for original communications, reviews of agricultural publications, and farming reports. Ceased publication in 1811.

Farmer's Magazine (1800). Published by Constable in Edinburgh, it had a bias towards Scottish agricultural affairs but contained extensive reports from England. Edited until 1815 by Robert Brown of Markle. Ceased publication in 1825 when the publishers failed.

Evans and Ruffy's Farmers' Journal (1807). The first agricultural newspaper, although the contents were not exclusively agricultural. Extensive communications on agricultural subjects, reports and market information; after 1815 it became, for a time, the mouthpiece of the local protection society movement. Edited until 1825 by Benjamin Holditch, after which date the paper entered a decline. It ceased publication in 1832 on account of the financial difficulties of William Ruffy, and it was from this year that the Monday edition of *Bell's Weekly Messenger* had a column headed 'Farmers' Journal'.

British Farmer's Magazine (1826). Founded by H Fleming, dedicated to Coke, and edited (until 1836) by the Rev Henry Berry, a shorthorn authority. The title continued until 1881 but it is important to note that it was taken over by the *Farmer's Magazine* in 1846, after which the contents of these two periodicals were identical.

British Farmer's Chronicle (1826). Published for only three years and little on agriculture apart from price information. A continuation of *Fleming's Weekly Express* (1823-26).

Quarterly Journal of Agriculture (1828). Published from Edinburgh and edited for many years by Henry Stephens. The 'Quarterly' was dropped from the title in 1843. Substantial agricultural articles were published, although the content was quite diverse. In 1868 the title was changed to the *Country Gentleman's Magazine*, and from then on agriculture occupied a smaller proportion of the total content.

Mark Lane Express and Agricultural Journal (1832). The leading agricultural newspaper of the nineteenth century, it initially had five joint proprietors: John and Joseph Rogerson, brothers from a Lincolnshire farming family who worked in the printing industry in London (for memoirs see *Farmer's Magazine*, second series, XXIV, 1851, pp 1-3 (Joseph) and *ibid*, third series, XVI, 1859, pp 87-8 (John)); Cuthbert W Johnson, the writer on fertilizers; Dr J Blackstone; and William Shaw who edited the paper until late in 1852 when he was succeeded by Henry Corbet. Whiggish in tone, the paper staunchly reported the interest of the tenant farmer. For a history, see issue of 31 March 1902 ('70th Birthday Supplement').

Farmer's Magazine (1834). Under the same editorship and ownership as the *Mark Lane Express*, from which some of the material that it contained was taken. Published monthly until 1881 (the *British Farmers' Magazine* changed to monthly from quarterly publication on its takeover), the *Farmer's Magazine* was the leading independent agricultural periodical of the nineteenth century.

Agriculturist (1836-37). The short-lived organ of the Central Agricultural Society, edited by Robert Montgomery Martin.

Transactions of the Yorkshire Society (1838). Initially this had quite extensive essays and reports, but it underwent a decline after about 1860.

Farmers' Journal (1839). Dedicated to the maintenance of agricultural protection and ceased publication on 28 December 1846. 'New' was added to the title on 22 March 1841.

Johnson & Shaw's Farmer's Almanac (1840). Issued each year until 1872. Particularly important because of its large scale, it provided a full review of the leading events and debates of the previous agricultural year, and it was thus an important means by which the farmer could keep up to date on matters of agricultural progress. J C Morton began his own *New Farmer's Almanac* in 1855, and this followed a similar style. By the 1870s most of the agricultural newspapers issued an almanac; for a review see *Agricultural Gazette* 29 December 1879.

Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England (1840). Carried substantial essays on the technical and scientific aspects of agriculture, although there were more short communications during the 1840s. 'Political' topics were excluded by the terms of the Society's Charter. Editors: Philip Pusey 1840-55; C W Hoskyns, H S Thompson, T D Acland (jointly) 1855-58; H S Thompson (with assistance from J C Morton)

1858-59; P H Frere 1860-68; H M Jenkins 1869-87. The Editorship was a matter of some controversy in the 1850s and 1860s, particularly when Morton was passed over for the editorship in 1859. For a full discussion of the *JRASE* see N P W Goddard, 'The Royal Agricultural Society of England and Agricultural Progress 1838-1880', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1981, esp pp 134-305.

Farmer's Herald (1843). This was distinctive in that it was a monthly newspaper. It was published from Chester but seems to have had a national circulation.

Agricultural Gazette (1844). An addition to the *Gardener's Chronicle*, founded by Charles Wentworth Dilke in 1841, published separately after 1873. Its first editor, J C Morton, continued in the post until 1888. C W Hoskyns wrote many leaders in its early years, and H F Moore was appointed sub-editor in 1873. A leading agricultural newspaper of the nineteenth century; Morton enjoyed widespread respect in the agricultural community.

Agricultural Magazine (1845). This underwent several changes of title: *Agricultural Magazine and Journal of Scientific Farming* 1845-46; *Agricultural Magazine and Plough*, 1847-51; *Agricultural Magazine, Plough and Farmer's Journal* 1851-59. Reports of lectures, discussions, lettings, the corn trade, shows, and abstracted articles.

Gardeners' and Farmers' Journal (1847). Edited by M M Milburn, land agent and secretary to the Yorkshire Society. The first issue stated that profits were to be distributed for the relief of 'aged and indigent gardeners and farm bailiffs, their widows and orphans'. It carried numerous reports of experimental agriculture but seems to have become insignificant after Milburn's death in 1854 (see *Farmer's Magazine*, third series, VI, 1854, p 16), and the title was incorporated with the *Mark Lane Express* in 1880.

North British Agriculturist (1849). This was a continuation of the *Ayrshire Agriculturist* (1843-48) and was published from Edinburgh. Full attention was given to the proceedings of the Highland Society and technical matter on farming had a central place in the content.

Journal of the Farmer's Club (1854). Intermittent publication; the content was limited to the reports of the monthly lectures and discussions which were also published in the *Farmer's Magazine* and the weekly newspapers.

Farmer (1865). A continuation of the *Scottish Farmer and Horticulturist* (1861-65), this gained importance during the 1870s and was the forerunner of the *Farmer and Stockbreeder* (1889). Edited by H Kains Jackson.

Chamber of Agriculture Journal and Farmers' Chronicle (1869). Edited by J A Clarke who had written extensively for the Royal Agricultural Society and *The Times*. Concerned not only with the legislative topics pursued by the chambers but also with general farmer topics. Amalgamated with the *Farmer* in 1881 when Clarke moved to *Bell's Weekly Messenger*.

Agricultural Economist and Horticultural Review (1870). This was the organ of the Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operative Association, founded by E O Greening; it campaigned on such matters as adulterated fertilizers and feedstuffs and urged the merits of agricultural co-operation.

Proceedings of the Central Chamber of Agriculture (1870). Reported the affairs of the Central Chamber.

Livestock Journal and Fancier's Gazette (1875). Reflected the increased importance of livestock in English farming in the 1870s.

Implement Manufacturers Review and Agricultural Record (1875) (changed to *Implement and Machinery Review* in 1878). Reflected the increased interest in agricultural machinery in the 1870s as agriculturists became more concerned with the reduction of labour costs. Supported the Agricultural Engineers' Association.

Research Developments in American Agricultural History since 1960: The Northern Farm Economy*

By FRED BATEMAN

LOUIS B SCHMIDT, a pioneer in the study and teaching of agricultural history in the United States, urged historians in 1915 to direct more attention to American agriculture and its role in national economic development.¹ His call has been repeated with regularity ever since. A quarter-century later, Schmidt himself reiterated his plea in essentially identical terms, and twenty years after that, the US Department of Agriculture historian, Wayne Rasmussen, while appreciative of the field's growing strength and achievements, called for an increased output of research in certain neglected areas.² More recently, as the volume of published research expanded, entreaties for methodological change have begun to appear. Asserted John Schlebecker in 1960, 'Since agricultural history first acquired independent status it has been carried forward without much theoretical direction'.³ Harold Woodman, writing a decade later on the state of research, felt that 'What has been most lacking in a good deal of previous work and what is now needed in agricultural history is a synthesis, a conceptual framework'.⁴ Harry Scheiber com-

plained that 'More than perhaps any other major subfield of American economic history, research on agriculture has gone forward without much sense of a unifying broad design or "leading hypothesis"'.⁵

To what extent have agricultural historians responded to such challenges? This bibliographical essay is a progress report on research, debate and publication in American agricultural history since 1960. Its geographic coverage is limited to work concerned with the northern farm economy in the states of the Northeast and most of the Middle West. Occasionally, studies published before 1960 or dealing with other regions are considered, but usually only in the context of their influence on more recent work and on developments in the northern region. The coverage is not confined to the products of any single methodology or academic discipline, although it will be obvious that work done by those applying traditional historical techniques predominates.

The major topics discussed in the paper are those receiving the most attention in the periodical and monographic literature. The sizeable amount of work produced during this period precludes the citation of every pertinent work on these subjects or inclusion of other topics. The selections thus are representative rather than exhaustive on each topic or of the field as a whole. Readers who seek additional bibliographical sources will find especially valuable guides among the volumes published by the University of California (Davis) Agricultural History

*I wish to thank Jeremy Atack for his valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. (This is the second in a series of bibliographical articles on American agricultural history. The first article, by Allan G Bogue on North American Grasslands, appeared in Vol 30, part 1, 1982.)

¹Louis B Schmidt, 'The Economic History of American Agriculture as a Field of Study', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, III, June 1916, pp 39-40.

²Louis B Schmidt, 'The History of American Agriculture as a Field of Research', *Ag Hist*, XIV, July 1940, pp 117-26; Wayne D Rasmussen, 'Forty Years of Agricultural History', *Ag Hist*, XXXIII, Oct 1959, pp 177-84.

³John T Schlebecker, 'The World Metropolis and the History of American Agriculture', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXI, June 1960, p 187.

⁴Harold D Woodman, 'The State of Agricultural History', in Herbert J Bass (ed), *The State of American History*, Chicago, Quadrangle, 1970, p 223.

⁵Harry N Scheiber, 'Poetry, Prosaism, and Analysis in American Agricultural History', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXVI, Dec 1976, p 919.

Center on northern agricultural topics; those by Douglas E Bowers on American farming, by Bowers and James B Hoehn on midwestern agriculture, and by Henry C Dethloff on agrarian political organizations are particularly informative. Dennis Nordin's compilation of theses in agricultural history, and the annual listings of books in the field published each October in *Agricultural History*, offer additional bibliographic guidance.⁶

The Northern Farm Economy: An Overview

In the methodological sweep that began in the late 1950s to transform research in American economic history, scholars using the new techniques largely neglected the study of northern farming. Not that agricultural change in general was slighted. The article customarily credited as the first in this new genre, 'The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South', by Alfred Conrad and John Meyer, published in the *Journal of Political Economy* in 1957, dealt with this subject.⁷ This seminal paper, however, steered practitioners of the new methodology toward studies of the South, with its fascinating 'peculiar institution' of slavery, rather than toward analyses of the national agricultural economy. As yet, there exist no intensive econometric or theoretical studies for the East or Middle West comparable to those by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Gavin Wright, Richard Sutch, and Roger Ransom or others on the southern rural economy.

The apparent disinterest among the new economic historians, most of whom were trained as economists, in the national farm economy is puzzling. On the eve of the American Civil War, agriculture consumed a greater proportion of national resources than did any other single economic activity. Almost five times as many individuals worked in the agricultural sector as in manufacturing in 1860, and nearly eight times as much capital was utilized in farming as in either transport or manufactures. As late as 1879, agriculture still accounted for a larger share of total commodity output than did industry, mining or construction.⁸ Even within industrializing regions, the direct agricultural linkages to domestic manufacturing and to foreign trade remained strong throughout the nineteenth century. Agricultural production also experienced a substantial productivity gain in the presence of western land settlement, technological innovation and diffusion, and the advance of agricultural knowledge generally. Yet in the face of agricultural commercialization, industrialization and the emergence of large corporate organizations, farmers sought and ultimately secured governmental programmes that supported prices, curtailed output and slackened the exit of marginal producers from farming. Given its profound historical effect on national resource allocation, agriculture, particularly that of the northern states, deserves more attention than it has received from cliometricians.

Scholars working with a more conventional methodology, however, sustained or even strengthened their interest in northern agriculture. Several books published since 1960 provide a fresh overview of agrarian development in that region. None do so more comprehensively than Clarence Danhof's *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870*. Covering such

⁶Douglas E Bowers, *A List of References for the History of Agriculture in the United States, 1790-1840*, Davis, Univ of California Agricultural History Center, 1969, Douglas E Bowers and James B Hoehn, *A List of References for the History of Agriculture in the Midwest, 1840-1900*, Davis, Univ of California Agricultural History Center, 1973, Henry C Dethloff, *A List of References for the History of Farmers Alliance and the Populist Party*, Davis, Univ of California Agricultural History Center, 1973, John T Schlebecker, *Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets on the History of Agriculture in the United States, 1607-1967*, Santa Barbara: American Bibliographical Center - Clio Press, 1969; Dennis S Nordin, 'Graduate Studies in American Agricultural History', *Ag Hist*, XLI, July 1967, pp 275-312.

⁷Alfred H Conrad and John R Meyer, 'The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South', *Jour Political Economy*, LXVI, April 1958, pp 95-122.

⁸See US Bureau of Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, and Robert E Gallman, 'Commodity Output, 1839-1899' in National Bureau of Economic Research, *Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, Princeton Univ Press, 1960, pp 13-71.

topics as commercialization, marketing, farm technology, farm-making, financing, and management of the farm enterprise, the book has become one of the most commonly cited works on this subject, and deservedly so. By combining an economist's outlook on issues with the historian's reliance on archival and other qualitative sources, Danhof produced a work both fresh in its perspective and accessible to a wide audience of readers. As a standard reference work it is unique among recent general monographs in its focus on the agriculture of the North.⁹ Three books that also present an overview but with a national orientation have strengthened our historical understanding of the American farmer. Paul Gates' *The Farmer's Age*, Gilbert Fite's *The Farmers' Frontier* and John Schlebecker's *Whereby We Thrive* each provide detailed, careful literary accounts of broad aspects of agricultural change that will appeal to readers who come to the subject from various disciplines and backgrounds, and each is produced by a mature scholar in American agricultural history.¹⁰

Complementing these volumes are various collections of articles published in book form or as special issues of journals. The symposia sponsored by the Agricultural History Association since 1967 have been published in the January issues of *Agricultural History* in 1969, 1972, 1974-77, 1979, 1980, and 1982. Several appeared as separate volumes, among them D P Kelsey (ed), *Farming in the New Nation: Interpreting American Agriculture, 1790-1840*, and James W Whitaker (ed), *Farming in the Midwest, 1840-1900*. As a collection reflecting research from the early years covered by this bibliographical review, Wayne Rasmussen's *Readings in the History of American Agriculture* published in 1960 is valuable, as is his

four-volume set, *Agriculture in the United States, A Documentary History*. Dealing with a more limited topical or geographic coverage are Earl Hayter's *The Troubled Farmer, 1850-1900: Rural Adjustment to Industrialization*, Allan Bogue's *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, Paul Gates' *Agriculture and the Civil War*, Gilbert Fite's *American Farmers: The New Minority* and Merle Curti's *The Making of an American Community*.¹¹

Land Policy, Settlement and the Westward Expansion

Few themes in American history are more deeply embedded in the national folklore or have commanded more enduring scholarly attention than the westward movement. The settlement of the West involved issues of public land disposal, land usage, migration and immigration, railroad development, financial speculation, frontier survival and adaption to new environmental conditions, to name a few. It formed a central part of the economic experience of farmers in the nineteenth-century North.

Among agricultural historians, no one has matched the contribution of Paul Gates to this subject, through his own work and that of his students. His productive longevity is impressive. Joining his list of publications since 1960 are his *History of Public Land Law Development*, *Pressure Groups and Recent American Land Policies*, and *Landlords and Tenants on the American Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy*. He has also continued his contributions to the journal literature,

⁹Clarence H Danhof, *Change in Agriculture, The Northern United States, 1820-1870*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard Univ Press, 1969.

¹⁰Paul W Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960; Gilbert C Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier, 1865-1900*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966; John T Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1977*, Ames: Iowa State Univ Press, 1975.

¹¹Wayne Rasmussen (ed), *Readings in the History of American Agriculture*, Urbana: Univ Illinois Press, 1960, and *Agriculture in the United States, A Documentary History*, New York: Random House, 1975. Earl Hayter, *The Troubled Farmer, 1850-1900: Rural Adjustment to Industrialization*, De Kalb, Northern Illinois Univ Press, 1968; Paul W Gates, *Agriculture and the Civil War*, New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1965; Gilbert Fite, *American Farmers: The New Minority*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ Press, 1981; Merle Curti, *The Making of an American Community*, Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 1959.

particularly with respect to the homestead laws.¹²

Gates' studies have been joined by that of several others, work well represented in three collections of essays. Vernon Carstensen's volume, *The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain*, contains articles by Clarence Danhof, Thomas Le Duc, Fred Shannon, and Gates that relate to land disposal and settlement. Howard B. Ottoson's *Land Use Policy and Problems in the United States* extends this concern with land usage. Finally, David M. Ellis' *The Frontier in American Development: Essays in Honor of Paul Wallace Gates* assembles a group of experts with divergent opinions on this topic.¹³ The volumes by Malcolm Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789-1837*, and Marion Clawson, *The Land System of the United States*, both published in 1968 complement these collections.¹⁴ The westward movement on a broader scale continues to interest historians, as reflected in the publication of the fourth edition of Ray Billington's *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* in 1974, his *The Westward Movement in the United States* (1959), and his second edition of *The American Frontier*, produced in 1966. A second edition of Thomas Clark's *Frontier America: The Study of the Westward Movement* appeared in 1969.¹⁵

¹² Paul W. Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development*, Rockville, Maryland, Zenger Publishing Co., 1978; *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1973; *Pressure Groups and Recent American Land Policies*, Ithaca: Department of History, Cornell Univ., 1980. See also, his 'The Homestead Law in Iowa', *Ag Hist.*, 38, April 1964, pp. 67-78; 'The Homestead Act: Free Land Policy in Operation', in Howard Ottoson (ed.), *Land Use Policy and Problems in the United States*, Lincoln, Univ. Nebraska Press, 1963; and 'Research in the History of the Public Lands', *Ag Hist.*, 48, Jan. 1974, pp. 31-50.

¹³ Vernon Carstensen (ed.), *The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain*, Madison, Univ. Wisconsin Press, 1962; Howard Ottoson, op. cit.; David M. Ellis (ed.), *The Frontier in American Development: Essays in Honor of Paul Wallace Gates*, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1969.

¹⁴ Malcolm Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands*, New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1968; Marion Clawson, *The Land System of the United States*, Lincoln, Univ. Nebraska Press, 1968.

¹⁵ Ray Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 4th edn., New York, Macmillan, 1974; *The Westward Movement in the United States*, Princeton, New Jersey, Van Nostrand, 1959, and *The American Frontier*, 2nd edn., Washington,

The sustained level of interest in this area has not diminished in the periodical literature. In a special symposium observing the American national bicentennial, both Paul Gates and Gilbert Fite contributed survey pieces on land policy and the pioneer farmer; in an earlier issue of *Agricultural History* Gates had reviewed research on public land history. Geographers revealed a strengthening interest in this subject as well.¹⁶ Readers desiring a more complete historiographical review should see Robert Swierenga's very thorough article in the *Western Historical Quarterly* in 1977.¹⁷

Economists, and historians using economic methods, in their research on land policy, disposal, usage, and speculation have focused both on issues of equity, such as identifying the beneficiaries of land policy, and efficiency, such as whether policies distorted resource allocation. At the centre lie such questions as the role of the speculator and the influence on industrial expansion exerted by the possible over-allocation of resources to agriculture as a result of the unrealistically cheap land. Robert Swierenga's work on Iowa land speculation, in articles and in his book *Pioneers and Profits*, reveals comparatively little distortive effect from speculation in that state. Robert Fogel and Jack Rutner, in an important but often overlooked cliometric study, investigated the efficiency effects of land policy and sale, including those resulting from speculative activity, and found them to be relatively

Service Center for Teachers of History, 1966; Thomas Clark, *Frontier America: The Story of the Westward Movement*, 2nd edn., New York, Schribner and Sons, 1969.

¹⁶ Paul W. Gates, 'An Overview of American Land Policy', in Vivian Wiser (ed.), 'Bicentennial Symposium: Two Centuries of American Agriculture', *Ag Hist.*, 50, Jan. 1976, pp. 213-29; Gilbert C. Fite, 'The Pioneer Farmer: A View Over Three Centuries', *ibid.*, pp. 275-89. For examples of the geographer's work, see Andrew H. Clark, 'Suggestions for the Geographical Study of Agricultural Change in the United States, 1790-1840', *Ag Hist.*, 46, Jan. 1972, pp. 155-72; Hildegard Binder Johnson, 'A Historical Perspective on Form and Function in Upper Midwest Rural Settlement', *Ag Hist.*, XLVIII, Jan. 1974, pp. 11-25, and P. J. Perry, 'Agricultural History: A Geographer's Critique', *Ag Hist.*, XLVI, April 1972, pp. 259-67.

¹⁷ Robert P. Swierenga, 'Land Speculation and its Impact on American Economic Growth and Welfare: A Historiographical Review', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 8, July 1977, pp. 283-302.

minor. Their conclusions, which differed from older views, were challenged by R Taylor Dennen, whose dynamic model suggested a more significant influence on efficiency, a conclusion closer in accord with that of such traditional land historians as Benjamin Hibbard. Peter Passell and Maria Schmundt, who analysed the relationship between land disposal policy and industrial development, found that combining cheap land with high tariffs encouraged rather than inhibited manufacturing growth in nineteenth-century America. On a related issue, the econometric studies by Peter Temin on land availability, and Peter Lindert on the influence of land scarcity on human fertility, land rents, and technological change, explore the aspects of this subject.¹⁸

The notion that the West offered a

'safety-valve' outlet for eastern labour continued to attract interest, particularly among economists. Ellen Von Nardroff's 'The American Frontier as a Safety Valve — The Life, Death, and Reincarnation and Justification of a Theory', published in 1962, offers both an economist's critique and a summary review of the literature. Working with a new census data sample (see footnote 21), Robert Ankli more recently has re-examined the validity of this concept. Based on his estimates, the cost of establishing a viable farm operation by someone already resident in newly-settled areas was substantially less than estimated by Clarence Danhof in his classic article on this subject. Adding to the continuing debate, Jeremy Attack calculated costs for farms that were actually operating in settled and frontier areas, providing figures that supplement, and generally lie between, those of Ankli and Danhof.¹⁹

Once in the West, individuals who had migrated started establishing their farm and beginning a family. Martin Primack's work on clearing, fencing and capital formation provides quantitative evidence on this aspect of western agricultural development.²⁰ Combining demographic with economic analyses, Richard Easterlin produced a sizeable body of new knowledge regarding farm families, fertility change and settlement. His work, and that of the graduate

¹⁸ Robert P Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier*, Ames, Iowa State Univ Press, 1968. Also see his 'The Tax Buyer as a Frontier Investor Type', *Explorations in Economic History*, 7, Spring 1970, pp 257-92, and 'Land Speculator "Profits" Reconsidered: Central Iowa as a Test Case', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXVI, March 1966, pp 1-28. The econometric analysis by Robert Fogel and Jack Rutner, 'The Efficiency Effects of Federal Land Policy, 1850-1900: A Report on Some Provisional Findings', is in William O Aydelotte, Allan G Bogue and Robert Fogel (eds), *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History*, Princeton, Princeton Univ Press, 1972, pp 390-418; Dennen's comments are in R Taylor Dennen, 'Some Efficiency Effects of Nineteenth-Century Federal Land Policy: A Dynamic Analysis', *Ag Hist*, 51, Oct 1977, pp 718-36. For another economic examination of land policy and speculation, see Edward H Rastatter, 'Nineteenth Century Public Land Policy: The Case for the Speculator', in David Klingaman and Richard Vedder (eds), *Essays in Nineteenth Century Economic History: The Old Northwest*, Athens, Ohio Univ Press, 1975, pp 118-32; Thomas De Luc offers an historian's comment on this issue in his 'Public Policy, Private Investment, and Land Use in American Agriculture, 1825-1875', *Ag Hist*, XXXVII, Jan 1963, pp 3-9. In the issues of land scarcity and its relationship to other economic variables, see Peter Passell and Maria Schmundt, 'Pre-Civil War Land Policy and the Growth of Manufacturing', *Explorations in Economic History*, 9, Fall 1971, pp 35-48; Peter Temin, 'Land Scarcity and American Economic Growth', *Jour Econ Hist*, 26, Sept 1966, pp 277-98; Peter Lindert, 'Land Scarcity and American Economic Growth', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXIV, Dec 1974, pp 851-84. For complementary studies on these issues, see Theodore Saloutos, 'Land Policy and its Relationship to Agricultural Production and Distribution, 1862-1933', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 445-60, and Folke Dövrings interesting report on contemporary reactions to US policy in his 'European Reactions to the Homestead Act', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 461-72. C Knick Harley, 'Western Settlement and the Price of Wheat, 1872-1913', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXVIII, Dec 1978, pp 865-78 offers an explanation of land expansion and settlement as a response to market prices in an interesting economic approach to the issue.

¹⁹ Ellen Von Nardroff, 'The American Frontier as a Safety Valve — The Life, Death and Reincarnation and Justification of a Theory', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, July 1962, pp 123-42; William M Tuttle, Jr, 'Forerunners of Frederick Jackson Turner: Nineteenth Century British Conservatives and the Frontier Thesis', *Ag Hist*, XLI, July 1967, pp 219-27; Robert E Ankli, 'Farm-Making Costs in the 1850's', *Ag Hist*, XLVIII, Jan 1974, pp 51-70 (see also Judith L V Klein's comments on Ankli's paper in the same issue on pp 71-4); Jeremy Attack, 'Farm and Farm-Making Costs Revisited', *Ag Hist*, 56, Oct 1982, pp 663-76. Danhof's piece appeared as 'Farm-Making Costs and the "Safety Valve": 1850-1860', *Jour Political Economy*, XLIX, June 1941, pp 317-59.

²⁰ Martin L Primack, *Farm Formed Capital in American Agriculture, 1850 to 1910*, New York: Arno Press, 1977; 'Farm Construction as a Use of Farm Labor in the United States, 1850-1910', *Jour Econ Hist*, 25, March 1965, pp 114-25; 'Farm Fencing in the Nineteenth Century', *Jour Econ Hist*, 29, June 1969, pp 287-89; 'Land Clearing Under Nineteenth Century Techniques: Some Preliminary Calculations', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 484-97; 'Land Capital Formation as a Use of Farm Labor in the United States, 1850-1910', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXVI, Sept 1966, pp 348-62.

students working with him, advanced our understanding of the complex interaction of population and economic change as it effected, and in turn was affected by, this establishment of agriculture in the western states. His is a skilful blend of theory, data and historical intuition. A large portion of this work draws upon a sample of economic and demographic data for 21,000 rural households randomly selected from the federal census manuscripts from 1860.²¹ In a series of articles and conference papers, Easterlin supplemented this data set with a wide range of additional materials to investigate rural family structure and characteristics, fertility decline, population change, settlement patterns and related subjects for the northern agricultural economy.²² Like Easterlin's, Richard Peet's analyses of the spatial expansion of agriculture, which applies von Thunen locational theory, both complements more traditional studies and points a way for further interdisciplinary investigation of agricultural development.²³

Technological Change, Scientific Farming and Productivity Growth

Technological improvement closely interacted with westward expansion and with a new attitude — a more scientific one — among American farmers. While not inducing a volume of books and articles equalling those on western land settlement or land policy, this subject nevertheless attracted a substantial degree of scholarly attention over the past two decades. Questions of technological innovation and diffusion lend themselves to economic analysis. In a classic cliometric study, 'The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest', Paul David developed a model involving farm size and relative factor prices to account for the slow acceptance of the mechanical reaper by American farmers. David's calculations of the threshold farm size required to justify adoption placed this major issue into a more quantitative, rigorous context, but some of his assumptions have been questioned. Alan Olmstead, for example, who proposed a generally more dynamic explanation, suggests that equipment-sharing among farmers could alter minimum farm size requirements for an individual producer, and Robert Ankli stresses the importance of machine reliability improvements and non-wage influences to reaper adoption.²⁴ To some degree the continuing controversy regarding reaper adoption reflects the inherent problems of applying microeconomic analysis to dynamic historical issues.

Articles by Rasmussen, Lave, Schlebeck, Drache, and Feller explore the ramifications of technological change in a broader context than those considering a single

²¹ Fred Bateman and James D Foust, *Agricultural and Demographic Records of 21,118 Rural Households Selected from the 1860 Manuscript Census* (computer data tape). Results of statistical tests of this sample are presented in Fred Bateman and James D Foust, 'A Sample of Rural Households Selected from the 1860 Manuscript Censuses', *Ag Hist*, XLVIII, Jan 1974, pp 75-93.

²² Richard Easterlin, George Alter and Gretchen A Condran, 'Farmers and Farm Families in Old and New Areas: The Northern States in 1860' (paper presented for the MSSB Summer Conference in Historical Demography, Williamstown, Massachusetts, July 1974); Richard Easterlin, 'Population Change and Farm Settlement in the Northern United States', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXVI, March 1976, pp 47-75; and his 'Factors in the Decline of Farm Fertility in the American North', *Jour American History*, LXIII, Dec 1976, pp 600-14. On this subject, also see Don R Leet, 'Human Fertility and Agricultural Opportunities in Ohio Counties: From Frontier to Maturity, 1820-60', in Klingaman and Vedder, *op cit*, pp 138-58, in which the author analyses the relationship between land availability and the fertility pattern.

²³ Richard Peet, 'The Spatial Dynamics of Commercial Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century: A Von Thunen Interpretation', *Economic Geography*, 45, Oct 1969, pp 283-301, and 'Von Thunen Theory and the Dynamics of Agricultural Expansion', *Explorations in Economic History*, 8, Winter 1970/71, pp 181-201. These works are based on his dissertation, *The Spatial Expansion of Commercial Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century: A Theoretical Analysis of British Import Zones and the Movement of Farming into the Interior United States* (dissertation, Univ California-Berkeley, 1968).

²⁴ Paul A David, 'The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest', in Henry Rosovsky (ed), *Industrialization in Two Systems: Essays in Honor of Alexander Gerschenkron*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1966; Alan L Olmstead, 'The Mechanization of Mowing and Reaping in American Agriculture, 1833-1870', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXV, June 1975, pp 327-52; Robert Ankli, 'The Coming of the Reaper', in Paul Uselding (ed), *Business and Economic History*, Urbana, Univ Illinois Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1976, pp 1-24. Those interested in the related issue of motive power in the Midwest should see Ankli's 'Horses vs. Tractors on the Corn Belt', *Ag Hist*, 54, Jan 1980, pp 134-48.

innovation such as the reaper.²⁵ Each reveals the comparative ease with which Americans in the northern states accepted and utilized new technology. Similarly, in pieces dealing with New York, Gould Colman and Richard A Wines investigate technological adoption by farmers in that state, both finding relatively ready acceptance of new machinery by producers.²⁶

Scientific farming, being a less tangible and somewhat later development, has received less study over the past twenty years by agricultural historians than has technological change. Margaret Rossiter's *The Emergence of Agricultural Science* explores the development and application of agricultural chemistry with reference to Justus Liebig, the agricultural chemist.²⁷ Zvi Griliches' econometric studies of the diffusion of hybrid corn demonstrates the substantial effect that this innovation had on corn yields in the United States, especially since the Second World War.²⁸ Although many writers stress the importance of biological and chemical advances, and in a broader sense the significance of a 'scientific outlook' among

American farmers, the area remains largely unexplored.

The question of whether the American Civil War accelerated or retarded the mechanization of farms in the North has gained renewed attention from economic historians. Thomas Cochran, in an article published in 1961, re-opened the issue in the broad context of the effect of that military conflict on industrialization. Subsequently both Wayne Rasmussen and Alan Olmstead directed the inquiry more specifically to agriculture. Thus far, however, the recent investigations have centred on single innovations, such as the reaper, or the broad impact of technology on agricultural change.²⁹

In 1961 the US Department of Agriculture published as a technical bulletin Ralph A Barton and Glen T Loomis' productivity data series for the 1870-1958 period, thus providing a new long-term continuous measure of change in agriculture; the following year, estimates for this same period were published by Charles Meiburg and Karl Brandt.³⁰ On a more analytical level, the effects of technological advance, innovative diffusion, scientific methods and western settlement on productivity growth also were investigated. In 1966, William Parker, working with Judith L V Klein, published what is generally accepted as the first 'new economic history' piece devoted exclusively to northern agricultural history. The article, 'Productivity Growth in Grain

²⁵ Wayne D Rasmussen surveys a century of technological development in 'The Impact of Technological Change on American Agriculture, 1862-1962', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 578-91; Lester B Lave, 'Empirical Estimates of Technological Change in United States Agriculture, 1850-1958', *Jour Farm Economics*, 44, Nov 1962, pp 941-52; John T Schlebecker, 'Farmers and Bureaucrats: Reflections on Technological Innovation', *Ag Hist*, 51, Oct 1977, pp 641-55; Irwin Feller focuses on innovation and patent activity in 'Inventive Activity in Agriculture, 1837-1890', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 560-77; Hiram Drache investigates the influence of technological change on midwestern agriculture in the recent past in 'Midwest Agriculture: Changing with Technology', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 290-302; E L Jones surveys long-term influences on agricultural evolution in 'Creative Disruptions in American Agriculture, 1620-1820', *Ag Hist*, XLVIII, Oct 1974, pp 510-28; Richard K Vedder examines technological development from the implement manufacturers' perspective in 'Some Evidence on the Scale of the Antebellum Farm Implement Industry', in Paul Uselding, op cit, pp 25-35.

²⁶ Gould P Colman, 'Innovation and Diffusion in Agriculture', *Ag Hist*, XLII, July 1968, pp 173-87; Richard A Wines, 'The Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Transition in an Eastern Long Island Community', *Ag Hist*, 55, Jan 1981, pp 50-63.

²⁷ Margaret Rossiter, *The Emergence of Agricultural Science: Justus Liebig and the Americans, 1840-1880*, New Haven, Yale Univ Press, 1975.

²⁸ Zvi Griliches, 'Hybrid Corn: An Exploration in the Economics of Technological Change', *Econometrica*, 25, Oct 1957, pp 501-22; 'Research Costs and Social Returns: Hybrid Corn and Related Innovation', *Jour Political Economy*, LXVI, Oct 1958, pp 419-31; 'Hybrid Corn and the Economics of Innovation', *Science*, 132, July 1960, pp 275-80.

²⁹ Thomas C Cochran, 'Did the Civil War Retard Industrialization?' *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 48, Sept 1961, pp 197-210; Wayne Rasmussen, 'The Civil War: A Catalyst of Agricultural Revolution', *Ag Hist*, 39, Oct 1965 pp 187-95; Alan L Olmstead, 'The Civil War as a Catalyst for Technological Change in Agriculture', in Paul Uselding, op cit, pp 36-50. Harry Scheiber reviews the broader issue of the war's effect on economic development in 'Economic Change in the Civil War Era: An Analysis of Recent Studies', *Civil War History*, 11, 1965, pp 396-411, and Robert Jones examines the war's effect on farming in one northern state in his *Ohio Agriculture During the Civil War*, Columbus, Ohio State Univ Press, 1962.

³⁰ Glen T Barton and Ralph A Loomis, *Productivity of Agriculture, United States, 1870-1958*, US Department of Agriculture Technical Bulletin 1238, Washington, US Government Printing Office, 1961; Charles O Meiburg and Karl Brandt, 'Agricultural Productivity in the United States: 1870-1960', *Stanford Research Institute Studies*, 3, May 1962, pp 63-85.

Production in the United States, 1840-60 and 1900-10', appeared in *Output, Employment and Productivity Growth in the United States*, a volume in the National Bureau of Economic Research's *Studies in Income and Wealth* series.³¹ As in an earlier book in this series, the articles in the collection had been presented originally at a conference jointly sponsored by the Economic History Association and the National Bureau in which methods of economics were applied to historical issues. Like some writers preceding them, Parker and Klein computed new quantitative estimates, there being in this instance figures on output, input use and labour productivity in wheat, corn and oats cultivation over the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. But they moved a step beyond, by attempting to assess the individual contribution of a complex of historical forces, notably the westward movement, technological change and scientific improvement, to measured productivity change. As a consequence the methods of the emerging new economic history were brought to the study of agriculture outside the slave South. The article became a landmark in the advance of the new methodology and in the historical study of northern agriculture, one still widely cited in the new literature and in contemporary textbooks. After this piece, Parker and others continued to expand the literature on related topics and for other farm products.³²

Parker, whose interests and skills led him to become a major link between the old and

the new in economic history as well as between economics and history, had been working on his agricultural studies since the late 1950s. His interest in both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of technology, science and productivity growth is longstanding. Prior to the appearance of the paper with Klein, he had presented portions of his results at meetings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Economic History Association. A related version was published in 1971 in *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*, edited by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman. His subsequent work elaborated upon the general theme of productivity growth, continuing into an article published in 1982 with Stephen J DeCanio that deals with scientific experimentation and market forecasting as sources of productivity growth in American agriculture. In a recent re-examination of the Parker-Klein analysis, Jeremy Atack and I, using a different data source for the nineteenth-century figures, calculated new yield and labour productivity estimates that were used to isolate the sources of measured change in an exercise modelled on the original one. Our conclusions indicate a larger growth in labour productivity in the 1860-90 period in wheat, oats and corn production, and enhanced the role of yield improvement relative to their original results.³³

Parker and Klein's study, while path-breaking, was nevertheless one that measured partial productivity. The next obvious need was to measure total factor productiv-

³¹ William N Parker and Judith L V Klein, 'Productivity Growth in Grain Production in the United States, 1840-1860 and 1900-1910', in National Bureau of Economic Research, *Output, Employment and Productivity in the United States After 1800*, New York, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1966, pp 523-82.

³² See, for example, Fred Bateman, 'Improvement in American Dairy Farming, 1850-1910', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXVIII, June 1968, pp 255-73, and 'Labor Inputs and Productivity in American Dairy Agriculture, 1850-1910', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXIX, June 1969, pp 206-29. These papers partition the sources of yield growth and measure the course of labour productivity change in dairy production over this period. They indicate that yield improvement, while substantial over this period (largely as a consequence of feeding improvement and diffusion of existing techniques) was insufficient to offset growing labour requirements resulting from increased commercialization of this branch of agrarian industry.

³³ William N Parker, 'Productivity Growth in American Grain Farming: An Analysis of its 19th-Century Sources', in Robert W Fogel and Stanley L Engerman (eds), *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, pp 175-86; 'Sources of Agricultural Productivity in the Nineteenth Century', *Jour Farm Economics*, XLIX, 1967, pp 1455-68; 'On a Certain Parallelism in Form Between Two Historical Processes of Productivity Growth', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 101-16; and William N Parker and Stephen J DeCanio, 'Two Hidden Sources of Productivity Growth in American Agriculture, 1860-1930', *Ag Hist*, 56, Oct 1982, pp 648-62. See also Parker's 'The Magic of Property', *Ag Hist*, 54, Oct 1980, pp 447-89. Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, 'Mid-Nineteenth Century Crop Yields and Labor Productivity Growth in American Agriculture: A New Look at Parker and Klein', in Gavin Wright and Gary Saxenhouse (eds), *Essays in Honor of William N. Parker* (forthcoming).

ity, a step taken by Robert Gallman in papers published in 1972 and 1975.³⁴ His estimates reveal a sustained and substantial expansion of productivity growth through the nineteenth century. These two carefully-crafted pieces quickly became standard references on this subject.

Although concerned directly with efficiency under the southern slave system, the 1971 article co-authored by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman by necessity of comparison, relates to northern agricultural productivity as do their comments on this same issue in their study of slavery, *Time on the Cross*. In a 1977 issue of the *American Economic Review*, they produced another analysis of this issue, a piece that partly was in response to their earlier work but which itself engendered further comments by Thomas Hashell, Donald Schaeffer and Mark Schmitz, Paul David and Peter Temin, and Gavin Wright. Their reply to this criticism appears in that journal in September 1980.³⁵ Agricultural historians, even those with professional interests totally unrelated to slave agriculture, will find this debate both informative and provocative in its implications for nineteenth century farming in other regions and under other organizational forms. The analysis of wheat supply and productivity by Franklin Fisher and Peter Temin, and the responses it elicited from Robert Higgs and Walter Page, although

more limited in scope, provide a similarly interesting exchange on an issue that merits attention from a wide range of scholars.³⁶

Agrarian Discontent, Railroads and Populism

Farmer discontent over economic conditions, and the resultant political agitation that occurred after the Civil War continued to interest historians during the past two decades. The subject is a compelling one that involves social and political events as well as economic ones. Under the pressures of deflation, indebtedness, increasing farm commercialization, growing dependence on railroads, the rise of large-scale corporate enterprise, enlarging geographic market size, and accelerating urbanization, American farmers, perceiving their situation to be worsening, sought political solutions to their woes. Out of this turmoil emerged a political philosophy that continues to be influential in the United States today. That scholars would develop and maintain an interest in these issues appears inevitable.

On these complicated historical questions, many leading historians accepted the position that the discontent expressed by farmers was justified. This view is represented in John Hicks' *The Populist Revolt*, originally published in 1931. While this subject involves an admittedly complex amalgam of economic and non-economic elements, farmers' complaints ultimately rested on their perception of economic sacrifice and discrimination. Thus several purely economic issues are fundamental, most notably, the level and trend in railroad rates for agricultural commodities, the course of income distributional changes

³⁴ Robert Gallman, 'Changes in Total U.S. Agricultural Factor Productivity in the Nineteenth Century', *Ag Hist*, XLVI, Jan 1972, pp 191-210, and 'The Agricultural Sector and the Pace of Economic Growth: U.S. Experience in the Nineteenth Century', in David Klingaman and Richard K Vedder, op cit, 35-76.

³⁵ Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, 'The Relative Efficiency of Slavery: A Comparison of Northern and Southern Agriculture in 1860', *Explorations in Economic History*, 8, Spring 1971, pp 353-67; 'Explaining the Relative Efficiency of Slave Agriculture in the Antebellum South', *American Economic Review*, 67, June 1977, pp 275-96; 'Explaining the Relative Effect of Slavery: Reply', *American Econ Rev*, 70, Sept 1980, pp 672-90. Thomas L Haskell, 'Explaining the Relative Efficiency of Slave Agriculture in the Antebellum South: A Reply to Fogel and Engerman', *American Econ Rev*, 69, March 1979, pp 206-7; Donald F Schaeffer and Mark D Schmitz, 'The Relative Efficiency of Slave Agriculture: A Comment', *American Econ Rev*, 69, March 1979, pp 208-12; Paul A David and Peter Temin, 'Examining the Relative Efficiency of Slavery: Comment', *American Econ Rev*, 69, March 1979, pp 213-18; Gavin Wright, 'The Efficiency of Slavery: Another Interpretation', *American Econ Rev*, 69, March 1979, pp 219-26.

³⁶ Franklin M Fisher and Peter Temin, 'Regional Specialization and the Supply of Wheat in the United States, 1867-1914', *Review of Economics and Statistics*, LII, May 1970, pp 134-49; Robert Higgs, 'Regional Specialization and the Supply of Wheat in the United States, 1867-1914: A Comment', *Rev Economics and Statistics*, LIII, Feb 1971, pp 101-2; Peter Temin, 'Regional Specialization and the Supply of Wheat in the United States, 1867-1914: A Reply', *Rev Economics and Statistics*, LIII, Feb 1971, pp 102-3. On the subject of productivity before the nineteenth century, see Duane E Ball and Gary M Walton, 'Agricultural Productivity Change in Eighteenth Century Pennsylvania', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXVI, March 1976, pp 102-17.

between farm and non-farm sectors, domestic terms of trade in the agricultural sector, allegedly discriminatory interest or mortgage rates, and the presumed monopoly power exercised against farmers by the middlemen with whom they had to deal.

Since World War II, two parallel re-evaluations of late nineteenth-century agrarian unrest and the political response it engendered were emerging, one dominated by historians and the other by economists. In his presidential address before the Agricultural History Society in 1966, Theodore Saloutos reviewed the long history of academic debate over populism, focusing on the changing perceptions of that political movement. Among those who had been engaged in this re-examination were Richard Hofstadter, Seymour Lipset, David Shannon, Walter T K Nugent, Oscar Handlin, and Norman Pollack. Historians, usually displaying a broader interest than the purely political one, produced several books on this enduring topic in US history, including such studies as Pollack's *The Populist Response to Industrial America*, Nugent's *The Tolerant Populists*, the collection of essays edited by Vernon Carstensen, *Farmer Discontent, 1865-1900*, and Lawrence Goodwyn's *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America*.³⁷

While historians debated the political implications of populism and the unrest from which it arose, economists were focusing more specifically on the economic

questions. In his *Growth and Welfare in the American Past*, Douglass North joined the debate by abstracting from the wider social and political context to examine railroad rates, agricultural terms of trade and mortgage charges. Using aggregated and long-term data series, he found little to support the protestors' economic complaints. Among historians more concerned with what actually happened than with what justifiably should have, North's seemingly attenuated analysis was received sceptically. But even fellow economists sympathetic to his methodological approach questioned North's conclusions. On the level and trend of railroad rates, for example, North's data, like that of Robert Fogel in his book on railroads, indicated that generally rates had fallen over the decades of the 'agrarian unrest'. Robert Higgs, however, failed to find any clear trend in farmers' terms of trade with the railways. Indeed his calculations showed real rates rising during the periods of most intense farmer agitation, a finding consistent with the traditional interpretation, yet his series also reveal years when, despite complaints to the contrary, rates paid to ship agricultural products were declining, and terms of trade shifting toward farmers. More recently, Mark Aldrich has challenged even Higgs' somewhat guarded conclusion that economic conditions at least during some periods justified farmer dissatisfaction, presenting a stronger economic case in favour of farmer political protest.³⁸

On a related economic issue, John Bowman had analysed midwestern land values in his dissertation and in subsequent published work. In 1974, working with Richard Keehn, he entered the debate regarding agricultural terms of trade during the last

³⁷ Theodore Saloutos, 'The Professors and the Populists', *Ag Hist*, XL, Oct 1966, pp 235-54; Richard Hofstadter, 'The Folklore of Populism', in *The Age of Reform*, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1955; Seymour Lipset, 'The Source of the Radical Right', in Daniel Bell (ed), *The Radical Right*, 1st edn, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1961; David Shannon, 'Was McCarthy a Political Heir of LaFollette?', *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XLV, Autumn 1961, pp 3-9; Walter T K Nugent, 'Some Parameters of Populism', *Ag Hist*, XXXIX, April 1965, pp 68-74; Norman Pollack, 'Fear of Man: Populism, Authoritarianism, and the Historian', *Ag Hist*, XXXIX, April 1965, pp 59-67. J Roger Hollingsworth comments on Handlin's and Pollack's papers in 'Populism: The Problem of Rhetoric and Reality', *Ag Hist*, XXXIX, April 1965, pp 81-5. Among the relevant books are Norman Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ Press, 1962; Walter T K Nugent, *The Tolerant Populists*, Chicago, Univ Chicago Press, 1963; Vernon Carstensen (ed), *Farmer Discontent, 1865-1900*, New York, John Wiley, 1974; Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: the Populist Movement in America*, New York, Oxford Univ Press, 1976.

³⁸ Douglass C North, *Growth and Welfare in the American Past*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1966, ch 11; Robert Fogel, *Railroads in American Economic Growth*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Univ Press, 1964; Robert Higgs, 'Railroad Rates and the Populist Uprising', *Ag Hist*, XLIV, July 1970, pp 291-7; Mark Aldrich, 'A Note on Railroad Rates and the Populist Uprising', *Ag Hist*, 54, July 1980, pp 424-32. For more detail on Higgs' position, see his *The Transformation of the American Economy, 1865-1914*, New York, John Wiley and Co, 1971.

three decades of the nineteenth century. Bowman and Keehn found no support for believing that farmers in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin suffered from deteriorating terms of trade over that period (1870–1900) as a whole. Actually, their analysis indicated a secular improvement in farmer's real purchasing power in those four states. On the other hand, like Higgs, they found substantial year-to-year fluctuations, and a close correspondence between them and variations in the strength of farmer protest. To some extent, Anne Mayhew attempted to bridge the seemingly contradictory gap between the nineteenth-century farmers' protestations and the positions of North, Fogel, and Bowman and Keehn, by arguing that the agrarian outcries were in large measure a response to the commercialization of American agriculture, a development that, through price and market behaviour, introduced the farmer to the unfamiliar, sometimes intimidating, world of business.³⁹

Beyond the more specific debates on the political interpretation of agrarian political movements, and on the economic condition of the farmer during the last third of the nineteenth century, historical scholars continued to investigate a variety of other aspects of this phenomenon. Don F Hadwiger offered a political scientist's comment on the general issue of farmers' historic role in politics, and several others, including Harold Woodman, William D Barns and George Cerny, have continued to examine the activities of the Grange and related phenomena. These have been supplemented with studies by, among others, K D Bicha on

populism in the Dakotas and Gerald Prescott on farm leaders in Wisconsin.⁴⁰

International and Interregional Trade and Marketing

As westward settlement, eastern urbanization and the extension of the transportation system in nineteenth-century America created new market opportunities, farmers were tempted increasingly into commercial production. As they moved into the exchange economy, they sought to produce surpluses beyond their immediate family needs to sell or barter for other goods. Technological improvement and rising productivity facilitated their attaining this objective as the nineteenth century wore on. Becoming more enmeshed in the market system, first on a local level but ultimately on an international one, farmers found not only new opportunities to increase their incomes but new problems as well. Still, the impulse proved irresistible. The rise of commercialized agriculture and the demise of family-oriented farm mark a central point in the transformation of agriculture in the United States.

The historic significance has been matched by scholarly interest. One of the most important continuing debates during the past two decades has centred on economic specialization and regional trade in the nineteenth century. The controversy extended beyond the usual bounds of agricultural history into the broader area of

³⁹ John D Bowman, 'An Economic Analysis of Midwestern Farm Land Values and Farm Land Income, 1860 to 1910', *Yale Economic Essays*, 5, Fall 1965, pp 317–62; John D Bowman and Richard Keehn, 'Agricultural Terms of Trade in Four Midwestern States, 1870–1900', *Jour Econ Hist*, 34, Sept 1974, pp 592–609; Anne Mayhew, 'A Reappraisal of the Causes of Farm Protest in the United States, 1870–1900', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXII, June 1972, pp 464–75. See also Robert Klepper, 'The Economic Bases for Agrarian Protest in the United States, 1870–1900' (paper prepared for the University of Chicago Workshop in Economic History, April 1970), and Jeffrey C Williams, 'Economics and Politics: Voting Behavior in Kansas During the Populist Decade', *Explorations in Economic History*, 18, July 1981, pp 233–56.

⁴⁰ Don F Hadwiger, 'Farmers in Politics', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 156–70; Harold D Woodman, 'Chicago Businessmen and the "Granger" Laws', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, Jan 1962, pp 16–24; William D Barns, 'Oliver Hudson Kelley and the Genesis of the Grange: A Reappraisal', *Ag Hist*, XLI, July 1967, pp 219–42; George Cerny, 'Cooperation in the Midwest in the Granger Era, 1869–1875', *Ag Hist*, XXXVII, Oct 1963, pp 187–205; K D Bicha, 'The Conservative Populists: A Hypothesis', *Ag Hist*, XLVII, Jan 1973, pp 9–24, and his 'Western Populists: Marginal Reformers of the 1890's', *Ag Hist*, 50, Oct 1976, pp 626–35; Gerald Prescott, 'Wisconsin Farm Leaders in the Gilded Age', *Ag Hist*, XLIV, April 1974, pp 183–99. In addition to the piece by Henry C Dethloff cited earlier, bibliographic source material for this topic is available in Denton E Morrison, *Farmers' Organizations and Movements: Research Needs and a Bibliography of the United States and Canada*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin Number 24, East Lansing, Michigan, 1970.

economic development. At the centre of the academic exchange are questions of surplus, self-sufficiency and interregional trade patterns. The belief in an emerging system of regional specialization is an old one, in which the Northeast was seen as the major manufacturing zone, the Middle West as the food production centre and the South as the area where agricultural staples were produced for international export.

In an early product of the new economic history, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, Douglass North developed a model for American development around this traditional concept of regional specialization. Two years after its publication, at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association, Albert Fishlow questioned North's position on interregional interdependence. North had placed cotton exports at the heart of his explanation of American economic development; Fishlow, using data for receipts from the West at New Orleans, disputed the importance of West-South trade that his scheme presumes. In Fishlow's framework, the growing East-West interdependence between agricultural and industrial markets was far more significant than any West-South connection.⁴¹

With the lines thus drawn, several researchers entered the arena. Perhaps not unexpectedly, given American economic historians' fascination with the South, the work focused initially on that region, but the implications for northern agriculture remained clear. Generally, all have confirmed the position of a weak southern-western trade dependence, but a strengthening trade relationship between Midwest and East. Robert Gallman, focusing upon southern food production, found little southern need for food imported from the Middle West;

William Hutchinson and Samuel Williamson also discovered minimal reliance among southerners on western foodstuffs. In her study of interregional grain trade, Diane Lindstrom reached a similar conclusion. Lawrence Herbst's research on North-South commodity trade further weakens the traditional, long-standing hypothesis of major regional specialization in the nineteenth-century United States.⁴²

There have also been studies concerned more directly with northern agriculture. Fisher and Temin's papers on wheat supplies (cited above) reflect upon aspects of regional specialization after the Civil War as does John C Clark's book on the western grain trade. More recently, Colleen Callahan and William Hutchinson have examined interregional trade from the western perspective, finding an East-West food exchange link but, like most others, no notable southern demand for western agricultural commodities.⁴³

Despite the strong American comparative advantage in agriculture that has existed historically, and endures today, compared with the debate regarding interregional trade, surprising little attention has been directed recently toward northern agricultural participation in international markets.

⁴² Robert Gallman, 'Self-Sufficiency of the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South', *Ag Hist*, XLIV, Jan 1970, pp 5-24; William K Hutchinson and Samuel H Williamson, 'The Self-Sufficiency of the Antebellum South: Estimates of the Food Supply', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXI, Sept 1971, pp 591-609; Diane Lindstrom, 'Southern Dependence Upon Interregional Grain Supplies: A Review of the Trade Flows', *Ag Hist*, XLIV, Jan 1970, pp 101-14; Lawrence A Herbst, 'Interregional Commodity Trade from the North to South, and American Economic Development in the Antebellum Period', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXV, March 1975, pp 264-70.

⁴³ Fisher and Temin, op cit; John G Clark, *The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest*, Urbana, Univ Illinois Press, 1966, and 'The Antebellum Grain Trade of New Orleans: Changing Patterns in the Relation of New Orleans with the Old Northwest', *Ag Hist*, XXXVIII, July 1964, pp 131-42; Colleen Callahan and William K Hutchinson, 'Antebellum Interregional Trade in Agricultural Goods: Preliminary Results', *Jour Econ Hist*, XL, March 1980, pp 25-31. Those interested in trade patterns within a smaller area should see James Mak, 'Interregional Trade in the Antebellum West: Ohio, A Case Study', *Ag Hist*, XLVI, Oct 1972, pp 489-97. For a measurement of the potential surplus and revenue in northern dairying, see Fred Bateman, 'The "Marketable Surplus" in Northern Dairy Farming: New Evidence by Size of Farm in 1860', *Ag Hist*, 52, July 1978, pp 345-63, which indicates a reasonably large potential for surplus sales in the East, but relatively little in midwestern states in 1860.

⁴¹ Douglass C North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1961; Albert Fishlow, 'Antebellum Interregional Trade Reconsidered', *American Econ Rev*, LIV, May 1961, pp 352-64. See also Richard Easterlin's review of North's book in *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, March 1962, pp 122-26, and the review of the debate in Susan Previant Lee and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History*, New York and London, W W Norton and Co, 1979, ch 7.

Morton Rothstein fortunately has continued his interest in American export of agricultural goods, particularly with reference to trade relationships between Great Britain and the United States during the last half of the nineteenth century. His research provides an extremely useful perspective on this important aspect of America's foreign trade in agricultural goods during this period of national development. William David Zimmerman's study of the export trade in livestock between these two countries complements this work, as does Harry D Fornari's historical survey pieces on American grain exports. Western agricultural trade on the Erie Canal link that played a major role in the Northeast-Midwest trade is discussed well in Robert Shaw's *Erie Water West*.⁴⁴

As the magnitude of commercial agricultural production and trade grew, so did the need for improved marketing mechanisms. Rothstein's article on wheat and cotton exports (cited above) compares marketing arrangements for these crops; Thomas Olde has reviewed the evolving co-operative efforts among grain merchants in the Great Lakes region as they struggled to deal with the marketing of that product during the last century; Norman Crockett has investigated wool marketing procedures. Although most such studies concern nineteenth-century practices, John Schlebecker's investigation of agricultural marketing in the 1774-77 period provides some clues to an earlier time. Among individual farm products, dairying continues to concern writers with an interest in

marketing, such as H E Erdmar, in his examination of the 'associated dairies' of New York, H S Irwin, who investigated butter marketing in Chicago and Roy Ashmen, who studied butter price determination by the Elgin, New York Board of Trade.⁴⁵

Other Issues in Northern Agriculture

Although the subjects examined above dominated the literature, as concerns of scholars interested in northern agricultural history, other topics appeared with some frequency. Agricultural education was among the more prominently studied over the past twenty years as it had been for decades before. The history of agricultural education in the United States is a fascinating one, involving the enactment of such public policy legislation as the Morrill and Hatch Acts, the land-grant colleges, the experiment stations, agricultural institutes, county agents and extension services. In an agricultural economy as geographically dispersed, and as diverse in soil types and terrain, a system of education that stressed local conditions and reached out to the practising farmer came to play a major role in the diffusion of knowledge regarding agricultural production. As the more subtle aspects of scientific farming evolved, the educational and research process became even more significant in overcoming resistance or apathy to newly-developed ideas.

⁴⁴ Morton Rothstein, 'America in the International Rivalry for the British Wheat Market, 1860-1914', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVII, Dec 1960, pp 401-18; 'The American West and Foreign Markets, 1850-1900', in David M Ellis (ed), *The Frontier in American Development*, Ithaca, Cornell Univ Press, 1969, pp 381-406, and 'Antebellum Wheat and Cotton Exports: Contrast in Marketing Organization and Economic Development', *Ag Hist*, XL, April 1966, pp 91-100. William David Zimmerman, 'Live Cattle Export Trade Between the United States and Great Britain, 1868-1885', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, Jan 1962, pp 46-52; Harry D Fornari, *Bread Upon the Waters: A History of U.S. Grain Exports*, Nashville and London, Aurora Publishers, 1973, and 'U.S. Grain Exports: A Bicentennial Overview', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 137-50; Ronald Shaw, *Erie Water West*, Lexington, Univ Kentucky Press, 1966.

⁴⁵ Rothstein, op cit; Thomas Odle, 'Entrepreneurial Cooperation on the Great Lakes: The Origin of the Methods of American Grain Marketing', *Business History Review*, XXXVIII, Winter 1964, pp 439-55; Norman Crockett, 'The Marketing of Wool in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Middle West', *Ag Hist*, XLII, Oct 1964, pp 315-26; John Schlebecker, 'Agricultural Markets and Marketing in the North, 1774-1777', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 21-36; H E Erdman, 'The "Associated Dairies" of New York as Precursors of American Agricultural Cooperation', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, April 1962, pp 82-90; H S Irwin, 'Some Early Chicago Butter Marketing Practices', *Ag Hist*, 35, July 1961, p 82-4; Roy Ashmen, 'Price Discrimination in the Butter Market: The Elgin Board of Trade, 1872-1917', *Ag Hist*, XXXV, July 1961, pp 156-62. On related topics, see 'The Business Economy of Marketing Change, 1790-1840: A Study of Sources of Efficiency', *Ag Hist*, XLVI, Jan 1972, pp 211-26, and Dale E Trevelen, 'Railroads, Elevators and Grain Dealers: The Genesis of Antimonopolism in Milwaukee', *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 52, Spring 1969, p 205-22.

The literature produced by the state experiment stations was prodigious, providing nineteenth-century farmers with abundant, detailed information on new techniques, plant cultivation, livestock husbandry, and other aspects of agrarian knowledge as applied to local conditions. Not only were the agricultural colleges and experiment station personnel developing new techniques and adaptations of existing ones, they were also instrumental in their diffusion into the oftentimes sceptical farm community.

The most comprehensive recent survey of the extension system is presented in Roy V Scott's *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914*. In it he discusses the stimulative effects of the era of agricultural discontent on farmer education, the emergence of the institute movement, demonstration work and the role of the county agent. The volume contains a thorough bibliography including references to Scott's other work on agricultural education in Missouri, Minnesota and Illinois. Allied with the experiment station activity, the colleges of agriculture and their related institutions of higher learning, the land-grant colleges, also played a major role in agricultural research and teaching. Several studies place this topic within a broad context, among them Paul E Waggoner's overview of American agricultural education and research, Wilson Smith's review of education's social history and Mary Jean Bowman's economic analysis of the land-grant colleges' contribution to developing human resources. State or regional variations in the pursuit and development of formal agricultural education can be seen in research on such states as New York, Minnesota, Maryland, and Illinois.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Roy V Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914*, Urbana, Univ Illinois Press, 1970; Paul E Waggoner, 'Research and Education in American Agriculture', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 230-47; Wilson Smith, "'Cow College' Mythology and Social History: A View of Some Centennial Literature', *Ag Hist*, XLIV, July 1970, pp 299-310; Mary Jean Bowman, 'The Land-Grant Colleges and Universities in Human Resource Development', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXII, Dec 1962, pp 523-46. For work on individual states, see Donald B Marti, 'The

Beyond issues of education, there have been several studies of labour in northern agriculture, although not to an extent approaching that for southern workers. David E Schob's *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-1860*, provides a wide-ranging survey of labour on northern farms. On specific tasks such as land-clearing or capital-building, the works of Martin Primack and of Schob are useful; on the aggregate level research on the rural and urban labour force by Thomas Weiss, and by Weiss and Ermisch, are revealing of broad trends. Edith Lang, Theodore Saloutos and Frank Lewis have provided new insights into migration and mobility in the agricultural sector. And within the past few years, increased attention has been paid to the long-neglected study of the role of women in the farm labour supply and in farm operations generally.⁴⁷

Another area of continuing research among agricultural historians has been

Purposes of Agricultural Education: Ideas and Projects in New York State, 1819-1865', *Ag Hist*, XLV, Oct 1971, pp 271-84; Roy V Scott, 'Early Agricultural Education in Minnesota: The Institute Phase', *Ag Hist*, XXXVII, Jan 1963, pp 21-34; Vivian Wiser, 'Maryland in the Early Land-Grant College Movement', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, Oct 1962, pp 194-9; Gould P Colman, 'Pioneering in Agricultural Education: Cornell University, 1867-1890', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, Oct 1962, pp 200-6. Richard Gordon Moore provides a history of a major college of agriculture in *Fields of Rich Toil: The Development of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture*, Urbana, Univ Illinois Press, 1970.

⁴⁷ David E Schob, *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-1860*, Urbana, Univ Illinois Press, 1975; see also his 'Sodbusting on the Upper Midwestern Frontier, 1820-1860', *Ag Hist*, XLVII, Jan 1973, pp 47-56; Martin Primack, op cit, Thomas Weiss, 'The Industrial Distribution of the Urban and Rural Workforces: Estimates for the United States, 1870-1910', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXXII, Dec 1972, pp 919-37 and John Ermisch and Thomas Weiss, 'The Impact of the Rural Market on the Growth of the Urban Workforce, U.S., 1870-1900', *Explorations in Economic History*, 11, Winter 1973/74, pp 137-53; Edith Lang, 'The Effects of Net Interregional Migration on Agricultural Income Growth: The United States, 1850-1860', *Jour Econ Hist*, 32, March 1972, pp 393-5; Theodore Saloutos, 'The Immigrant Contribution to American Agriculture', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 45-67; Frank Lewis, 'Exploring Rural Emigration in the United States: 1869-1899; Partial and General Equilibrium Approaches to Determining the Impact of Productivity Change on the Direction of Labor Migration', MSSB Workshop paper, Madison, Wisconsin, 1972. On the contribution of women to the agricultural enterprise, see Mary W M Hargreaves, 'Women in the Agricultural Settlement of the Northern Plains'; Gladys L Baker, 'Women in the United States Department of Agriculture'; Minnie Miller Brown, 'Black Women in American Agriculture', all in *Ag Hist*, 50, 1976, pp 179-89, 190-201 and 202-12 respectively; Donald B Marti, 'Women's Work in the Grange: Mary Ann Mayo of Michigan, 1882-1903', *Ag Hist*, 56, April 1982.

livestock husbandry and, to a lesser extent, plant cultivation. Among the books devoted to livestock are Eric Lampard's *The Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin*, and Paul Henlein's *The Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley, 1783-1860*. There have also been articles on sheep husbandry, dairy agriculture and animal science that extend our understanding of this branch of the agricultural enterprise as it grew in importance through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.⁴⁸

Finally, over the period covered by this bibliographic review, we have gained a new understanding of the broad aggregates of northern agriculture through the work of Robert Gallman, Richard Easterlin, Wayne Rasmussen, and others. By now, most of their statistical work appears in the standard reference work, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, and in textbooks in economic history.⁴⁹ These data, and the analysis that frequently accompanies them, have filled major gaps in measurement of farm production, income, revenues, investment, and yields that still existed twenty years ago.

Conclusion

While the hopes expressed by Louis B Schmidt and others for expanding scholarly interest in American agricultural history have been realized, the more recent calls for a methodological transformation remained unanswered. There still is no unifying

theme, no general theoretical framework, no dominant methodology and no central school of thought. There has been no 'revolution' as occurred in American economic history nor any serious battle lines drawn between old and new practitioners. Yet, as this report on the past two decades reveals, the field is alive and well. Old issues have gained added dimensions, traditional interpretations of events have been challenged, and new questions posed. To an extent exceeding that in business or labour history, there have been incursions by the more general economic historians, the economists and the cliometricians into an area of scholarly investigation traditionally dominated by historians. A similar review of research and publication for the 1940-60 period would no doubt reveal less diversity, at least of methodology, than did this one. Any ultimate judgement on the merits of this turn of events should remain with the reader.

A fruitful way to evaluate the overall thrust of research in northern agricultural history is to reflect upon what has *not* been done over these twenty years. Consider first the relative lack of intensity in scholarly debate on issues regarding northern agriculture as compared with southern. Antebellum northern farming lacks the central feature of slavery, and postbellum northern agriculture, even in the midwestern heartland, must compete for academic interest with the industrial development that occurred so dramatically in the North. Throughout the nineteenth century only the phenomenon of 'agrarian unrest' competes in emotional intensity with such grand issues in American economic history as slavery or the rise of corporate 'big business'. The subject of agrarian discontent continues, after all that has been written in previous debates, to be one of the dominant research topics in this field. Otherwise, the pool of issues in the history of agriculture for the northern United States remains a relatively calm one.

Despite the persistence of potentially

⁴⁸ Eric E Lampard, *The Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin: A Study in Agricultural Change, 1820-1920*, Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963; Paul C Henlein, *The Cattle Kingdom in the Ohio Valley, 1783-1860*, Lexington, Univ Kentucky, 1959. John Stover, 'Early Sheep Husbandry in Ohio', *Ag Hist*, XXXVI, April 1962, pp 101-7; T C Byerly, 'Changes in Animal Science', *Ag Hist*, 50, Jan 1976, pp 259-74; Fred Bateman, *op cit* (see footnotes 32 and 43).

⁴⁹ Robert Gallman, *op cit*, and 'A Note on the Patent Office Crop Estimates, 1841-1848', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXIII, June 1963, pp 185-95; Richard Easterlin, 'Farm Production and Income in Old and New Areas at Mid-Century', in Klingaman and Vedder, *op cit*, pp 77-117; Marvin W Towne and Wayne D Rasmussen, 'Farm Gross Product and Gross Investment in the Nineteenth Century', in National Bureau of Economic Research, *Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Income and Wealth, Vol 24, Princeton, Princeton Univ Press, 1960, pp 255-312.

significant economic issues, with the exceptions seen above, the cliometricians generally have remained clear of this area. When Jeremy Atack and I undertook an investigation of northern agricultural profitability, for example, we found little on which to build.⁵⁰ While the profitability of slavery and southern agriculture had been argued almost *ad nauseum*, the rate of return earned in the northern agricultural system against which it was implicitly being compared was simply assumed to be a competitively determined one. Unlike the more systematic measurement of profit in slave agriculture, most reports on northern farm returns came from scattered examples that were of questionable statistical representativeness of the entire northern farm economy. Although Clarence Danhof has contributed to this area by presenting less aggregated estimates of farm profitability, generally little else has been done on a topic that is important not only to understanding the development of northern farming, but to evaluating resource allocation throughout the American economy during a period of profound economic transformation.⁵¹

The nexus between agriculture and manufacturing during the early years of industrialization also remains unexplored, even for the most obvious relationships. The two activities were joined by supply conditions

such as labour or capital, and through demand, yet a study that probes these interactions has yet to appear. Similarly, the role played by farmers in the industrial investment process remains unclear. Although there have been hypotheses, and even tentative explanations, regarding the possible over-allocation of resources to agriculture in the nineteenth-century United States, the phenomenon awaits serious, systematic analysis by economists and historians.

Other questions that seem ripe for research involve wealth and income distribution in the agricultural North during the pre-Civil War era and afterward, the market structure of nineteenth-century agriculture, the history of northern agricultural labour, investment and risk-taking behaviour among northern farmers, and the economic effects of twentieth-century public policies on the composition, organization and performance of the farm sector.⁵² The functioning of agriculture as a business enterprise similarly merits serious scholarly study.⁵³

Many of the questions that demand investigation call for the skills of scholars from several disciplines, among them not just agricultural historians or even general historians, but economists, geographers, sociologists, and individuals from such business fields as accounting or finance. While it is no doubt fanciful to hope for a grand interdisciplinary movement into the field of northern agricultural history, the

⁵⁰ Fred Bateman and Jeremy Atack, 'The Profitability of Northern Agriculture in 1860', in Paul Uselding (ed), *Research in Economic History*, IV, July 1979, pp 87-125. The rates of return were calculated for the Northeast and Middle West using a formula comparable to that previously used for southern agriculture profitability. Among other results, the estimates indicate a rate of return in northern agriculture that is low relative to rates in manufacturing or transport enterprises, but comparable to that being earned in southern agriculture.

⁵¹ Clarence Danhof, 'The Farm Enterprise: The Northern United States, 1820-1860s', in Uselding, *ibid*, pp 126-91. In this piece, Danhof offers an intensive examination of financial accounts for 190 individual farms, combining both historical and economic perspectives. For other papers on aspects of profit see David Galenson, 'The Profitability of the Long Drive', *Ag Hist*, 51, Oct 1977, pp 737-58; Allan G Bogue and Margaret B Bogue, 'Profits' and the Frontier Land Speculator', *Jour Econ Hist*, XVII, March 1957, pp 1-24; Robert Swierenga, 'Land Speculator "Profits" Reconsidered: Central Iowa as a Test Case', *Jour Econ Hist*, XXVI, March 1966, pp 1-28, and Jonathan Lurie, 'Speculation and Profits: The Ambivalent Agrarian in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Ag Hist*, XLVI, April 1972, pp 269-78.

⁵² For a recent economic analysis of wealth distribution in the agricultural North, see Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, 'The "Egalitarian Ideal" and the Distribution of Wealth in the Northern Agricultural Community: A Backward Look', *Rev Economics and Statistics*, LXIII, Feb 1981, pp 124-9. A major episode in twentieth-century agricultural policy is documented in Theodore Saloutos, *The American Farmer and the New Deal*, Ames, Iowa State Univ Press, 1982.

⁵³ In his presidential address to the Business History Conference, Harold Woodman reviewed the business aspects of farming; the address is published as 'The Business of Agriculture', in Jeremy Atack (ed), *Business and Economic History*, 2nd ser, 10, Urbana, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Univ Illinois, 1981, pp 1-12. The farmer's entrepreneurial role is investigated by Adam Ward Rome in his 'American Farmers as Entrepreneurs', *Ag Hist*, 56, April 1982, pp 37-49.

limited involvement of individuals from some of the disciplines over the past twenty years points the way, and the potential, for work that cuts across disciplines and methodologies. One can at least hope that the study of northern agriculture would gain a place on the historical agenda commensurate with that accorded southern agriculture over the years. If it did, twenty years from now a

bibliographical review could be written that might conclude that American agricultural history was closer toward the goal of becoming a more unified and structured field of research. In the process, not only would knowledge of a specific region or a single economic activity be advanced, but so would our understanding of American economic development generally.

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Discourses on British Field Systems

By ALAN R H BAKER

THE debate about the origins and development of British field systems must be one of the longest-running dramas of historico-geographical detection: it has, after all, endured for at least a century, since the publication in 1883 of F Seebohm's discussion of the English village community.¹ Far from flagging, the debate generated principally by H L Gray, by C S Orwin and C S Orwin and by J Thirsk, and sustained by numerous historians and geographers, has taken on a new lease of life.² The discussion thrives on the identification of new problems, on the utilization of new sources, on the application of new analytical techniques and on the consideration of new interpretative theories. Furthermore, temporal flexibility and spatial diversity characterized field systems, rendering difficult any mediation between local particularization and broad generalization. That such a dialectical tension can be mutually productive would not be agreed by all students of field systems. Both antagonists and protagonists of such a view could find support for their positions in three recently-published studies of British field systems.³

Consistently and explicitly theoretical approaches to the understanding of field systems have rarely been attempted, even though all historical enquiry occasionally demands imaginative leaps across gaps in the evidence. But Carl Dahlman relies un-

ashamedly and exclusively upon secondary sources and upon a theoretical approach in his search for an explanation of the totality of relations that formed 'the open field system'. After identifying the salient characteristics of the system, Dahlman endeavours to construct an economic model which will adequately account for all of them, in the explicated belief that existing views cannot do so. His approach is grounded in economic theory relating to property rights, to transaction costs and to institutions. His argument is complex. Theoretical analysis of the economics of common pastures, of common fields and of enclosure leads Dahlman to conclude that open field systems were economically rational institutions intended to maximize communal organization in order to minimize transaction costs. Dahlman argues that through village councils decision-costs about the use of resources could be kept low by the implementation of a known and stable rule for the reaching of collective decisions, and this saved on the costs of a chain of private transactions. 'The collective ownership of the waste saves on the costs of establishing joint usership of the grazing areas as compared with private property in the waste because it eliminates the necessity of a series of transactions. The scattering [of parcels in open fields] while imposing some costs on the individual, saves on other costs by virtue of the fact that it creates the incentive for the farmer to keep the collective decision-making organization strong and viable; thus, scattering saves on the costs of market exchanges required to make the farmer participate in the communal grazing.'⁴ Collective property rights were

¹F Seebohm, *The English Village Community*, 1883.

²H L Gray, *English Field Systems*, Cambridge, Mass, 1915; C S Orwin and C S Orwin, *The Open Fields*, Oxford, 1938; J Thirsk, 'The Common Fields' *Past and Present*, XXIX, 1964, pp 3-29; A R H Baker and R A Butlin (eds), *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, Cambridge, 1973.

³C J Dahlman, *The Open Field System: a Property Rights Analysis of an Economic Institution*, Cambridge, 1980; R A Dodgshon, *The Origin of British Field Systems: an Interpretation*, 1980; T Rowley (ed), *The Origins of Open Fields*, 1981.

⁴Dahlman, *op cit*, p 138.

cheaper than private property rights and farmers chose to preserve the scattering of their plots because this provided an incentive to farm collectively. In this way, Dahlman argues, an apparently inefficient system can be shown to have been an economically rational one, devised, imposed and preserved in order to maximize private wealth. The open field system gave way to enclosure only when agricultural specialization became profitable and a greater flexibility in production desirable. Creditably, Dahlman self-critically evaluates his theoretical interpretation and in doing so both adjusts it to bring it into closer accord with earlier work and rehabilitates much of this work within his own framework. This is a difficult but provocative book. Its strongly theoretical flavour will be unpalatable for many students of field systems but it ought nonetheless to be a stimulant.

A more broadly-based but equally interpretative approach to the origins of British field systems is attempted by Robert Dodgshon who has pulled together into a book the strands of an argument which he has been developing in an impressive series of disparate papers published during the last ten years.⁵ His book will demand notice from students of field systems who have neglected his papers, perhaps because of Dodgshon's concentration upon Scottish rather than English systems. From a perceptive critique of past work, Dodgshon concludes that the existing lack of consensus about the origins of field systems means that a new formulation of the problem is needed. Dodgshon is convinced that field systems were not consciously-designed institutions, considered responses to the desire for a communal system of farming. Field systems were, in his view, much more makeshift in character and origin, products of an amalgamation of responses to diverse influences not all of

which bore directly or exclusively upon the question of field layout. Field systems, he reasonably argues, need to be investigated as part of the total history of rural communities. Dodgshon pursues three main themes. Firstly, he investigates the origin of subdivided fields and argues that they were primarily products of piecemeal colonization (the sharing out of assarts) and that communal farming emerged as a response to the logistical problems posed by the formation of subdivided fields. Subsequently, scattered parcels were formalized into shared holdings. Secondly, he explores the nature of infield-outfield systems and suggests that the significant distinction was a tenurial one, between assessed (infield) and non-assessed (outfield) land, rather than a technical one, based upon cropping and pasturing practices. Thirdly, Dodgshon examines the evidence for the splitting of townships in medieval Britain into two or more sub-townships, postulating that such major reorganizations had important repercussions both for the remodelling of field patterns within such townships and for the adoption of similarly rationalized field systems in others, even though they did not undergo the splitting process themselves. This is an important book, simultaneously circumspect and provocative, the admirable product of a controlled and informed imagination.

Open rather than closed minds were assembled at an Oxford seminar on the origins of open-field agriculture, and Trevor Rowley has brought their private ideas into a public world. The result is a very readable collection of ten thoughtful essays. C C Taylor considers very cautiously the limited light which archaeological evidence can logically be expected to throw upon the origins of subdivided field systems, whereas David Hall more ambitiously but not always convincingly argues that the archaeological evidence indicates an eighth- and ninth-century origin for subdivided fields laid out *ab initio* rather than being products of an

⁵For a critique of these papers, see: A R H Baker, 'Observations on the open fields: the present position of studies in British field systems' *Jour Historical Geography*, V, 1979, pp 315-23. For the reply, see R A Dodgshon, 'Observations on the open fields: a reply' *Jour Historical Geography*, V, pp 423-6.

evolutionary process. Della Hooke examines minutely the evidence of pre-Conquest charters of the West Midlands, concluding that subdivided common, meadow and arable lands were well-established in some areas by the late Anglo-Saxon period. H S A Fox contributes a scholarly survey not so much of the earliest origins but of the adoption of what he persists in calling the Midland field system. His combined topographical and comparative approach leads him to conclude that Thirsk's chronology of the maturation of common field systems was correct relatively rather than absolutely and that the system was probably a response to the growing scarcity of pastures rather than to the growing pressure of populations and that it was possibly linked to the fission of multiple estates and their settlements in the late-Saxon period. Searching for an explanation of regional variations in field systems, Bruce Campbell also questions whether the structural remodelling of field systems should be seen as a response to differential population pressure because an alternative response was technological innovation (the adoption of new methods) and involution (the intensification of existing methods). Thus very progressive agricultural methods came to be associated with highly irregular field systems in certain regions. While this regional variation might have been related to population pressure it was, Campbell argues, also likely to have been associated with differences in lordship: regular common field systems being linked to strong lordship, irregular field systems to weak lordship. In another general essay Dodgshon usefully summarizes the views expounded in his book.

The remaining contributions in the Rowley volume are somewhat more local and less speculative in character. Brian Roberts argues that comparison of field forms derived from widely differing spatial and temporal contexts is 'an attractive but dangerous exercise'. Nonetheless, his par-

ticular concern with the field system of one County Durham township does not prevent his offering generalizations about the origins of townfields and comparisons with continental European studies. The difficulty he encounters in tracing the origins of the field systems of a single township underscores the problems faced by endeavours to generalize about field systems as a whole. Victor Skipp's detailed examination of the evolution of settlements and open fields in five contiguous north Arden parishes leads him to conclude that 'although an evolution from communal assarting and co-aration could never be proved, so much circumstantial evidence seems to point in this direction . . . that it would at least appear to be the most likely available explanation'. Planned field systems in Holderness are investigated by Mary Harvey, who suggests for them a post-Conquest origin related to lordship and to tax assessments. Finally, Glanville G R Jones's examination of early customary tenures in Wales leads him to conjecture that the origins of subdivided fields in both England and Wales must be sought in a distant British past. The variety of approaches and views represented in these papers produced an editorial despondency, for Rowley pronounced: 'It is impossible to come to any conclusions which would be either chronologically or geographically valid. There was no consensus at the seminar.'

Such a negative assessment, if justified, would be a sad commentary upon more than a century of scholarship. But Dodgshon has also opined that there is still no agreement on any major aspect of the origins of field systems. Such pessimism is arguably both ill-founded and mis-placed: much has been learned (the discoveries of earlier workers are too easily understated in order to excuse our own limited achievements), and the whole truth will never be revealed (to believe otherwise is to create the intellectual frustration of expectations beyond realization). The spatial diversity, the temporal flexibility and

the functional complexity of field systems linked both with the incomplete and inconclusive character of much of the evidence relating to them and with the inevitably sterile, endless, search for ultimate origins constitute an eternal triangle: no matter how much pressure is exerted upon one or more sides, it retains its shape and steadfastly refuses to be changed into a circle. Each generation of students, it seems, has to learn this lesson anew: in the study of field systems 'there is no such thing as success, only degrees of unsuccess'.⁶

Although the precise origins — in terms both of chronology and of causes — of many subdivided field systems are unknown and will remain unknowable, understanding of the functioning and transformation of such systems in particular periods and places has advanced considerably and is undoubtedly capable of being further enhanced. A research emphasis upon function and processes of change is likely to be more enlightening than one upon genesis and origins. In particular, any attempt to offer a mono-causal explanation of the development of subdivided field systems must surely now be discredited at the outset. The roll-call of the 'causes' of such systems is long: it includes co-aration, shareholding, partible inheritance, piecemeal colonization, risk aversion, planned rationalization and remodelling, and the minimization of transaction costs. To require only one of these to step forward as the prime instigator is to misunderstand the nature of the problem, the essentially interdependent development of the individual components of a system. It is unduly simplistic, for example, to argue that all open field systems were products of risk aversion when this objective could also be achieved by

enclosed field systems and when other processes can more convincingly be shown to have produced patterns of scattered parcels.⁷ At least a more functional, at best a more holistic, interpretation of field systems is to be expected and is now almost invariably attempted by those who have immersed themselves in detailed studies of particular open field systems.

The limitations of mono-causal explanations ought not to deter — indeed, should encourage — attempts to formulate comprehensive generalizations which will serve to integrate conceptually the processes operating in the development of field systems both through time and over space. Many of the generalizations advanced tentatively a decade ago remain worthy of further consideration.⁸ The works under review here build upon those generalizations rather than undermine them: they signal most significantly a shift of emphasis towards the Anglo-Scandinavian period as being especially formative, and consequently towards a more effective combination of archaeological, topographical and documentary evidence than was offered previously. Given the different field systems which have been specified for particular periods and places, two important, comparative, tasks demand attention: the recognition of synthesizing concepts which will enable us firstly to interpret changes in field systems historically and, secondly, to understand contrasts in field systems geographically. For any *general* interpretation of field systems to be acceptable it must be capable of accommodating their *regional* differences.

One potentially integrative concept is that of scarcity.⁹ Before and throughout the early medieval period, British agricultural communities struggled not to produce a surplus

⁶The phrase was originally applied to the practice of historical geography: H C Darby, 'An Historical Geography of England: Twenty Years After' *Geog Jour*, CXXVI, 1960, pp 147-59 (on p 155).

⁷D N McCloskey, 'The Persistence of English Common Fields' in W N Parker and E L Jones (eds), *European Peasants and their Markets*, Princeton, 1975, pp 71-119, and 'English Open Fields as Behaviour towards Risk' *Research in Economic History*, 1, 1976, pp 124-70. For discussion of the risk-aversion thesis, see Baker, *op*

cit, pp 317-20 and D N McCloskey, 'Another Way of Observing the Open Fields: a Reply to A R H Baker' *Jour Historical Geography*, V, 1979, pp 426-9.

⁸Baker and Butlin, *op cit*, pp 619-56.

⁹J-P Sartre, *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Paris, 1960; trans A Sheridan-Smith, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, London, 1976, pp 122-52.

— as historical materialists might argue — but in order to survive. The struggle was fundamentally between man and nature: its outcome was a 'naturally' produced scarcity rather than a 'socially' produced surplus. In an economy within which *capital* did not yet play a leading role and in which *labour* tended to be in plentiful supply, it was *land*, in its varied forms, which constituted the scarce resource. This concept of an enslaving scarcity is, of course, one that cuts across liberalizing optimism about the progressive conquest of nature embodied in the romantic narrative success story of the making of the landscape in terms of woodland clearance, marshland drainage and heathland reclamation. Pressure upon resources — wastes, woods, pastures, meadows, and arable — was continuous but not (given, for example, demographic fluctuations) on a constant level. The problem of scarcity was countered by both social and technical solutions: a common field system may be viewed as a group project to overcome scarcity, as a means of ensuring personal survival, preserving a collective but not an individual freedom. The considered use of physical resources and their increasingly sophisticated management in order to limit — and possibly to transcend — scarcity become, according to this view, the *general* issues requiring adequate explanation in any *particular* historical context. A planned response — whether by individual householders or by whole communities — to the problems of scarcity may be postulated as the norm and the historical and archaeological record searched for evidence of it.

The concept of scarcity and the idea of planning have been implicit in many studies of field systems and are increasingly being made explicit. H L Gray long ago recognized the role of extensive wastes, woods, pastures, and meadows in the development of what he termed irregular field systems: where such foraging resources were, for whatever reason, scarce, the arable itself was likely to be managed additionally for

pasturage.¹⁰ Such management practices varied in detail from one community to another but, as Fox stresses, their *principle* underpinned the regular open field system of many Midland townships. As pasturage resources became increasingly scarce, so their management tended to become more precisely regulated. Similarly, Maitland long ago detected a movement in land law from the vague to the definite, and Dodgshon now argues that as certain categories of land resource became more scarce so property rights came to be more assiduously defined.¹¹ Dodgshon paints a convincing picture of adaptable farming communities emerging in response to the practical problems posed by subdivided fields, with some resources within a township being communalized before others. Over time there was a cumulative recognition of devices for controlling the resources of a community: there emerged a variety of regulations and arrangements for controlling grazing, for the planned use of scarce pasture resources. Such control might be exerted by small groups of farming households acting in their collective interest or by all of the farmers in a township where the lordship was strong enough to translate local agreements into ones affecting an entire community. Evidence is coming increasingly to light of the ability of farming communities throughout the British Isles at differing times to undertake wholesale physical replanning, the *remembrement* of their farm holdings, of their field and parcel patterns, and even of their settlements. The challenge here is to reveal the planning principles, the conscious ideas, which operated to produce particular regulated landscapes: to decode convincingly not only the letters, words and sentences of such a landscape but also its grammatical and syntactical rules.

Similar ends could, of course, be achieved by varied means and to differing degrees: a uniformity of field forms and systems is not

¹⁰ Gray, *op cit*, pp 47, 83–97.

¹¹ Dodgshon, *op cit*, pp 52–3.

to be expected either temporally or spatially. The geographical diversity of British field systems has been as much a challenge to scholars as has their historical complexity. The rationale for stressing differences rather than similarities is provided, for example, by Postan's claim that 'it is even more dangerous to generalize about the organization of medieval agriculture than about its physical and demographic background. The rules and institutions which regulated medieval agriculture and ordered rural society differed in almost every particular from place to place and from generation to generation.'¹² Countless local and regional studies appear to provide support for this view and it is easy to make a case for the uniqueness of any particular field system. It is much more difficult to search for acceptable generalizations. Spatial differences locally, regionally and nationally in the complex of factors — physical, socio-economic, cultural, technological — influencing field systems inevitably resulted in contrasting rural settlement patterns and farming systems. These spatial differences were compounded by temporal discontinuities (the history of British farming systems is not one of continuous and uninterrupted progression towards increasing sophistication, commercialization and specialization) and diffusions (the process of the diffusion of agricultural innovations meant that, in respect both of individual practices and of entire farming systems, there existed time-lags in agricultural development from one area to another). The identification and interpretation of basic regional contrasts in British field systems at particular moments or periods in their history remains a difficult but worthwhile task. Such endeavours — for example, those of H. L. Gray and of Joan Thirsk — at the very least provide a regional framework within which further research can be conducted and correlated.

But behind and beyond this regional complexity there might be detectable a fundamental simplicity. Baker and Butlin suggested that it could be argued in general that British field systems after, say, 1086, became increasingly varied, both in terms of the farming methods and systems of organization being practised. They considered that both theoretically and empirically there was reason to believe that an early and basic form of settlement and agrarian organization throughout much of western and central Europe, including the British Isles, was the hamlet and its associated infield-outfield system and that a variety of settlement and field systems evolved from this basic model.¹³ This view is strengthened in principle (if not precisely in practice) by more recent work. For example, Dodgshon's studies lead him to challenge the notion of regional types of field systems possessing substantive differences: 'Field systems everywhere were structured in response to the same basic problems. When sorting out regional differences, it is the variety of response, not the variety of influences, that we need to focus upon.'¹⁴ Similarly, while finding some room for the role of diffusion, Fox concludes that 'there is much to be said for the notion that communities arrived independently at the same solutions as they approached towards the adoption of the Midland system'.¹⁵ And although Campbell challenges the Thirsk thesis in his interrogation of the regional dimension of common field origins, by suggesting that the remodelling of field systems was likely to occur in areas of low population pressure and strong lordship, he nonetheless also extends it by associating areas of high population pressure and weak lordship with the intensification of irregular field systems with a minimum of common rights and regulations.¹⁶ The complex medieval field systems of East Anglia studied

¹² M. M. Postan, 'Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime. 7. England' being pp. 548–632 of M. M. Postan (ed.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: I. The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn, 1966. The quotation comes from p. 571.

¹³ Baker and Butlin, *op cit*, pp. 655–6.

¹⁴ Dodgshon, *op cit*, p. 25.

¹⁵ Rowley, *op cit*, p. 102.

¹⁶ Rowley, *op cit*, p. 125–9.

by Campbell contrast with the Midland system described by Fox and the early field systems envisaged by Dodgshon. But all three systems have both theoretical and evidential links, whose detailed investigation — as opposed to general exploration — demands more and closer co-operation among students of British field systems than has been customary. Perhaps the research effort in this academic field now needs to be remodelled, the efforts of pioneering indi-

viduals concerted into a communal organization. The study of British population history has progressed in this way.¹⁷ A modest first step would be for Campbell, Dodgshon and Fox to work as a collective, synthesizing their ideas and experiences. Seebohm would have relished the formation of such a scholarly community.

¹⁷Through the collaborative work of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure: E A Wrigley and R S Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871*, London, 1981.

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Past and Present in the Victorian Countryside

By ALAN EVERITT

[Review article of: G E Mingay, ed, *The Victorian Countryside*, 1981, Routledge and Kegan Paul. 2 vols, xvi + ix + 702 pp, 172 illus. £40.]

The publication of this book is a landmark in the historiography of rural Britain and the study of Victorian society. Its 46 chapters, organized in 5 sections on 'The Land', 'Agriculture in the Victorian Countryside', 'Country Towns and Country Industries', 'Landed Society', and 'Labouring Life', cover an extraordinary diversity of topics. Their 40 authors break much new ground, draw on a massive range of sources, sum up familiar themes with fresh insight, and point the way to many fields where further research is needed. How rich in interest that world was, every bit as fascinating as the over-written Victorian city, and how rich is the literature about it! The Bibliography alone to this book is a mine of information, almost 40 pages of it with 30 or 40 items to the page, a truly daunting catalogue of contemporary sources and secondary works which anyone working on the period henceforth will need to master. To read these two beautifully produced volumes and realize the depth and breadth of research behind them is indeed a chastening experience. Rarely has the work of so many experts been brought together within the limits of a single book. That many of them are already noted for their work on the period indicates the unsuspected wealth of publication on the Victorian countryside over the past generation.

Inevitably in a work of this scope the quality of contributions varies, so that generalizations are difficult to arrive at. Quite a number of the topics discussed must have been difficult to cover in the 10 pages or

so allotted to them; in many cases the longer contributions have an edge over the shorter, and the more factual or statistical over the impressionistic. What I want to do in this article is to comment briefly on the more successful contributions, and then single out a few broad themes which, in the light of the book as a whole, need further consideration by students of the Victorian countryside.

I

In a balanced opening chapter on 'Rural England in the Industrial Age' the editor indicates the essential threads of change and continuity in the Victorian countryside. This is a task of great complexity but the case is clearly stated and illuminated with beautifully chosen quotations. I particularly liked the account of the north-country hand-knitters, who, 'when work was over and the children put to bed, . . . took their cloaks and lanterns "and set out with their knitting to the house of the neighbour where the sitting falls in rotation, for it is a regularly circulating assembly from house to house through the particular neighbourhood. The whole troop of neighbours being collected, they sit and knit, sing knitting-songs, and tell knitting-stories. Here all the old stories and traditions of the dale come up, and they often get so excited that they say 'Neighbours, we'll not part tonight', that is, till after twelve o'clock"' (p 14). It is well to be reminded at the outset of the extent to which elements of tradition were still woven into the fabric of rural society at this time.

This first section contains several other important contributions. R J Olney's sensitive account of 'The Politics of Land' is a model of lucidity in assessing the relative strength of change and continuity in this

field, in exploring the interaction of town and county, in stressing the diversity of the English countryside, and the importance of market towns as well as aristocratic drawing-rooms in influencing county politics. It is followed by three regional chapters. That on Wales is disappointingly generalized; but Malcolm Gray's crisply statistical survey of Scotland benefits from a keen visual sense and from an understanding of the structure of landownership and of regional variation north of the Border. His map of land-use c 1870 is one that might have been imitated by other contributors. His account of the layout and social organization of the great Scottish arable farms, with their miniature armies of ploughmen, cattlemen, 'orramen', shepherds, and so on, all organized on a strictly hierarchical basis, is fascinating. These were genuine rural communities in their own right, whose inhabitants rarely went beyond the bounds of the farm except to attend kirk and school. L M Cullen's revisionist account of Ireland and its problems is one that every English historian of the period ought to read, though unfortunately compressed into a mere eight pages, so that it demands close attention to extract its full significance. Professor Cullen makes so many unfamiliar points that it seems unfortunate that in subsequent chapters Ireland (like Scotland) tends to drop out of the discussion.

These chapters are followed by two impressive essays by F M L Thompson and W A Armstrong. Professor Thompson's account of 'Free Trade and the Land', if somewhat impersonal, provides a masterly reassessment of the Great Depression, its backdrop and its consequences, further developing the ideas behind T W Fletcher's well-known articles of 1961 in this journal and *The Economic History Review*. Regional contrasts are strikingly illuminated, and though in no way minimizing the impact of Depression, Professor Thompson makes the important point that it was the decline of rural industries and their increasing concen-

tration on the coalfields and in urban centres that 'was the main cause of the apparent improverishment of the countryside' (p 115). Alan Armstrong's discussion of rural depopulation in 'The Flight from the Land' is admirably factual, balanced, and wide-ranging, without oversimplifying a process that was more complex than is sometimes supposed. Dr Armstrong seems to be one of the few historians who can write on population without getting themselves locked in a tunnel; unlike some demographers he sees beyond the essential statistics to the society they speak of; it is one of the merits of this chapter that he shews how much work still needs to be done.

These contributions in the opening section of the book are in the first rank of scholarship, and apart from that on Wales well ahead of the rest in substance and perception. The chapters on literature by W J Keith and Louis James, and on 'The Victorian Picture of the Country' by Rosemary Treble, touch on matters of the deepest interest, but are not backed up by an adequate grasp of historical development. Philip S Bagwell has much of value to tell us on rural transport; but in 'Victorian Rural Landscapes' by Hugh Prince, and 'The Land and the Church' by Alan D Gilbert, there is insufficient sense of regional and local contrast or of that balance of ancient and modern which characterized the period.

The second section of the book is shorter, but three of its six chapters are excellent. In 'The Age of Machinery' E J T Collins achieves an almost perfect blend of balanced generalization, telling observation, and illuminating figures. He is the one author to point out that between 1830 and 1880 agricultural output actually rose by 60-80 per cent (p 200), a fact that needs to be firmly set against the somewhat excessive preoccupation of some contributors with rural decline. He points out the extraordinary scale of a few agricultural machinery firms, like Ransomes of Ipswich, with a workforce of 2500, but also stresses that the over-

whelming majority of the 900 or so firms involved employed fewer than 50 hands each. He draws a sharp contrast between the importance of mechanization for reaping and for ploughing, pointing out that at the peak of their popularity the cumbersome and expensive steam-ploughs were no more than an auxiliary to the horse, numbered in hundreds, whereas steam threshers were numbered in thousands. He also tells us that by the 1870s two-thirds of all corn was cut and threshed by machine, yet emphasizes that the 'pace and pattern varied not only between regions and farming systems but often between adjoining farms in the same parish' (p 206). He is especially good at noticing crucial differences of detail, such as the fact that the steam-plough was uneconomic except in large rectangular fields, and that to accommodate it many farms had to be remodelled. For Dr Collins, in short, the Victorian countryside in all its diversity is a real place, whereas to some contributors it is rather something read of in books and documents, not seen with the eye of intelligent observation.

This chapter is followed by Stuart MacDonald's thought-provoking study of 'Model Farms'. He brings a scientific eye and a dry wit to bear on the realities, possibilities, and practical limitations of the species. In a book where most of the illustrations provide atmosphere rather than hard evidence, his is one of the few contributions to integrate illustrations with text. He concludes that the model farm was an aspect of Victorian morality and idealism rather than Victorian materialism. If the example of Alderman Mechi was typical, with his double metropolitan fortune, his dream-farm in Essex, his endless lecture-tours about its profitability, his *How to Farm Profitably: or the Sayings and Doings of Mr Alderman Mechi* (1859), and his death in penury, the point must be conceded. Like modern university science departments, model farms were always greedy, and almost always unprofitable, though perhaps not wholly useless as centres of

experiment. One point might perhaps repay further exploration: is it possible that the home-farm of the ordinary landed estate, wheresoever limited element of experimentation may have been undertaken, offered the tenant farmer a more practical and familiar source of ideas?

In Chapter 18 Nicholas Goddard gives us a clear, straightforward account of the agricultural societies of the period. He provides a useful map of the 93 local agricultural associations known to have existed in England and Wales in 1835, and another of agricultural societies, farmers' clubs, and chambers of agriculture c 1900. He also tabulates (p 248) the remarkable numbers attending the annual shows of the Royal Agricultural Society between 1860 and 1902. It is interesting to note that, except at Windsor, all the highest figures were associated with the great urban centres rather than agricultural towns: Manchester, with 217,980 in 1897; Kilburn (London), with 187,323 in 1879; Cardiff, with 166,899 in 1901; Birmingham, with 163,413 in 1876; Windsor, with 155,707 in 1889; Nottingham, with 147,927 in 1888; Leicester, with 146,277 in 1896; and Leeds, with 145,738 in 1861. This intriguing circumstance perhaps tells us as much about the Victorian city as about the Victorian countryside: the romance of life on the farm at Ambridge has a long ancestry behind it.

II

It was an admirable idea to include a section on 'Country Towns and Country Industries', and taken as a whole this is perhaps the most successful of the five. C W Chalklin's eleven succinct pages on 'Country Towns' are excellent value. He has done his homework in a wide range of directories, census reports and local histories, covering towns like Tadcaster, Huntingdon and Tonbridge, and counties like Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Sussex. He makes the important point, too often unrecognized, that 'There

was some industry in nearly every country town' (p 283) at this time; he is particularly good on millers, and on breweries, maltings, foundries, and tanneries. J A Chartres carries the story further in his chapter on 'Country Tradesmen', one of the few to attempt a systematic investigation of the *structure* of the rural population. His occupational analyses based on the census reports for 1851-1901 and on Yorkshire directories for 1820 and 1879 are just what we need; though why he finds it 'something of a puzzle to meet the general shopkeeper' in country towns and villages (p 309) as well as the specialist I am at a loss to imagine; they still exist — why not visit one?

With G L Turnbull, Dr Chartres follows this with a second chapter, on 'Country Craftsmen'. Again the statistics are fascinating, demonstrating the crucial role of craftsmen like wheelwrights, carpenters, millwrights, coopers, blacksmiths, saddlers, and harness-makers throughout the period. While some traditional occupations like straw-plaiting declined, the number of blacksmiths (for example) increased from 94,780 in 1851 to 140,020 in 1891, and saddlers and harness-makers from 16,800 to 30,680 in 1901, while wheelwrights and coopers broadly maintained their numbers at about 29,000 and 16,000 respectively. The two detailed pages on blacksmiths and their creative ingenuity in meeting the new needs of the time are particularly well-observed. My one small criticism of this chapter, and of Jennifer Tann's otherwise workmanlike account of 'Country Outworkers: the Men's Trades', which follows it, is that they do not always make sufficient distinction between town and country. Blacksmiths and carpenters, for example, were by no means confined to country towns and villages; much of the framework-knitting and shoemaking mentioned by Dr Tann was situated in industrial towns like Leicester and Northampton. It must be admitted, however, that the boundaries are often difficult to draw without intensive local research.

Pamela Horn's balanced, sympathetic survey of 'Women's Cottage Industries' suggests how much more there is to this subject in the nineteenth century than some of us have realized. To me at least, the button-makers of east Dorset and the net-braiding industry around Bridport were unfamiliar; in the latter there was a good deal of specialization in different types of net as between different villages. Though the evidence is sometimes sketchy, Dr Horn has the gift of picking out the telling detail: "you could smell a matter a mile off" (p 350) was one local woman's vivid comment on the rush-seat makers of Buckinghamshire. This chapter is followed by one of the outstanding successes of the volume, David Hey's account of 'Industrialized Villages'. It is successful because Dr Hey, like Dr Collins, has the gift not only of seeing the general in the particular but of selecting the illuminating example. He ranges widely over the country and discusses many different types of industrial settlement, quite a number of them wholly new foundations, several of them adding fresh dimensions to the familiar concept of 'open villages'. For Dr Hey, as for Dr Collins, one feels that the Victorian countryside is a real place, not something just read about in books and documents; a sense of its localized idiosyncrasy is one of the secrets of his success. This is a chapter whose ideas will surely be followed up in detailed studies in many industrialized areas.

In section IV, on 'Landed Society', Michael Havinden and Eric Richards contribute excellent chapters on 'The Model Village' and 'The Land Agent', while Jill Franklin's on 'The Victorian Country House' is outstanding. Mr Havinden succeeds because, like David Hey, he combines the visual evidence with an intimate understanding of the social and economic history behind it. This is a field where the visual evidence is particularly eloquent, moreover, and he is thus able to extend his well-known study of the Berkshire villages of Ardington and Lockinge (1966) and range over a wide

spectrum of comparable villages in other parts of England.

Eric Richards's study provides a most suggestive account of the growing power, prestige, and expertise of the land-agent in Victorian England, and an important corrective to the tendency to regard that England as purely and simply an 'industrial' nation. As great estate-owners like the Bedfords and Sutherlands diversified their interests into 'big business', their agents came to head a whole bureaucracy of estate officials: bailiffs, stewards, ground-officers, clerks, mineral managers, and sub-agents of all sorts. The best training for such men seems to have been apprenticeship to one of the top managers of the day, such as Clutton, Sturge, Squarey, Woolley, Thomas Smith, or the Lochs, all of whom raised a succession of articulated pupils who moved on into senior positions elsewhere. Most agents were drawn from the middling ranks of society, the younger sons of country gentlemen, clerics, lawyers, or farmers, while a remarkable number were sons or nephews of agents themselves. As a consequence, there were 'many instances of dynasties of land agents whose hereditary claims on the position were almost a parallel to those of their patrons' (p 443), while a few, like the Oxley Parkers of Essex, eventually established landed families of their own. Some land agents acted as highly respected consultants to other estates, moreover, so that an important interchange of expertise developed between one area and another, facilitated by the ramifications of the country house network.

No less fascinating is Dr Franklin's brilliant analysis of the Victorian country house and the social logic behind its complex evolution and arrangement. She has a sharp visual sense, a noticing eye for the telling detail, and an ability to see things through contemporary eyes. Where others might find only irrational inconvenience and confusion, she is thus able to perceive the genuine social rationale behind each detail in the elaborate planning of a country house like

Stoke Rochford in Lincolnshire. This one article, in short, like Professor Richards's, sheds a vivid shaft of light on the structure and ethos of Victorian society as a whole, and on the subtle nuances of its rigidly stratified hierarchy — both upstairs and downstairs — as expressed in the country houses of the time. These are themes that Dr Franklin has explored at greater length in *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan, 1835-1914* (1981).

The other contributions to the section on 'Landed Society' are not quite up to this level. Mr Beastall, however, has much of value to say on 'Landlords and Tenants', though his account is based almost entirely on the 'great' estates, and his remark that the 'north and the west of England were more influenced by the landlord-tenant system than the south and the east' (p 430) needs elucidation. D C Moore writes on both 'The Landed Aristocracy' and 'The Gentry'; he gives us some idea of the numbers of these groups — though in the latter case a debatable one — and a useful outline of the general trends of power and wealth. These two chapters raise a general point, however, which ought perhaps to be ventilated here. Both Mr Moore (p 390) and Mr Beastall (p 430) seem to imply that the geographical distribution of 'great' estates and 'small' or 'medium' estates was predominantly a factor of relative proximity to London. While it is true that most of the largest estates were at some distance from the capital, it is doubtful how far the smaller average scale of properties in the south-east was in fact directly attributable to metropolitan influence. Within Mr Moore's fifteen-mile radius of London it may well have been so, especially in Middlesex and Surrey; but that area was quite untypical of the south-eastern segment of England as a whole. Many of the greatest estates of the Midlands and the North had themselves been built up on metropolitan wealth, moreover, while among the areas where the average estate was relatively small were remote counties like Herefordshire as well as areas like Essex and Kent. It would be

hazardous to adduce any single factor behind these regional contrasts; but one circumstance worth exploring is the fact that regions of small and medium estates were often regions of old enclosure. There was less scope to build up a great estate in counties like Kent, where landownership had always been much fragmented, than in those transformed by parliamentary enclosure, *inter alia*, like Lincolnshire or Rutland. Metropolitan wealth has played a major role in the build-up of landed property; but it is important to remember that it never operated in a virgin countryside. Its impact has necessarily been conditioned by local *opportunities* for investment and by the resistance of local economies to intrusion. Old-enclosed landscapes, with their often substantial numbers of deeply-rooted proprietors, were better fitted to resist intrusion of this kind than those subjected to extensive remodelling in recent centuries.

III

The final section of the book is devoted to 'Labouring Life'. Though uneven in achievement, it is good to have the searchlight turned on this field. Alan Armstrong begins admirably with a thorough, balanced, and authoritative demographic account of 'The Workfolk'. Among his many figures worth following up we find that of the 249,000 farmers and graziers recorded in the 1851 Census, 23,000 were women; that these farming households comprised a further 269,000 female relatives and 99,000 female servants; and that women-labourers declined in numbers from 143,500 in that year to a mere 13,600 in 1911. These facts alone epitomize a whole tract of Victorian social history; once again Dr Armstrong has pointed the way to an extensive field for further research. In the following chapter, on 'The Labourer and his Work', Alun Howkins gives us a fine account of the hierarchy of skills among farmworkers and the annual, almost rituali-

stic, cycle of work on the farm. Unlike some contributors, he speaks from intimate knowledge of life in the countryside and is thus able to sense the situation from within, as it appeared to the labourers themselves. He does not fall into the vulgar error of regarding these often highly-skilled men as country bumpkins; he is also aware of the importance of regional variation. In a mere twelve pages, in short, Mr Howkins succeeds in giving us the framework of the subject, while making us feel that we also need a volume on it.

Pamela Horn supplies two good chapters in this section, on 'Country Children' and 'Labour Organizations', both of them balanced and objective surveys of subjects she has made her own. Though a little thin, they are illuminated by a sequence of well-chosen illustrations. In the former chapter, for example, her discussion of the gang-system of the eastern counties is brought home by the heartbreaking story of a Northamptonshire gang which included 35 boys and 26 girls aged 7 to 12 years, and 5 boys under the age of 7, of whom one poor little mite had to be *carried* home from work; to its credit the Victorian conscience was deeply shocked by these revelations, which led to the Gangs Act of 1867. It is also interesting to learn that the 'bondager' system, by which a man had to supply a female labourer as part of his contract, was not quite peculiar to Northumberland, as is sometimes suggested, but was also paralleled as far south as Dorset, where it was customary to require married labourers to keep members of their family available for employment, and where Dr Horn has found advertisements for labourers 'with a working family' (p 523) as late as the 1890s.

In discussing the origins of agricultural unionism, Dr Horn sheds fresh light on the familiar role of Primitive Methodism in the new movement. The impression has often been given that it was the structure of chapel organization that was the crucial circumstance; but in fact the motive force behind it

was rather the fire of religious conviction. At the inaugural meeting of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union at Leamington in 1872, the delegates' speeches 'were punctuated with "devout utterances of 'Amen', and 'Praise Him'", while one member remarked to another, "Sir, this be a blessed day: this 'ere Union be the Moses to lead us poor men up out o' Egypt'" (p 584). In this sense the new movement rather looked back to the origins of Methodist enthusiasm than forward to an age of secular organization; it derived its deepest inspiration from that image of the despised and rejected Christ, the Friend of the outcast and the poor, which was so deeply embedded in Evangelical Nonconformity.

Two other contributions to this section are notable for their imaginative approach. Charles Phythian-Adams discusses the survival of traditional rural culture. He is careful not to overstate the case, but with telling examples argues that 'while certain observances had long been discontinued in many areas, and with them some or all of their attendant ritual detail, many of the mental *attitudes* on which such practices were founded do appear often to have survived' (p 620). Towns like Exeter and Tunbridge Wells, for example, still had their 'wise men' in the high Victorian era (p 616); counties like Sussex and Suffolk 'contained pockets of traditional culture down to the Great War at least' (p 618). In discussing contrasting regional attitudes to 'sacred' birds like the robin and the wren, he observes that such traditions 'helped to perpetuate those invisible barriers between one locality and another which together still contributed to the colour and diversity' of rural England: a line of thought that some other contributors might have taken into fuller consideration.

It was a happy inspiration of the editor's to conclude the volume with Michael Winstanley's chapter, 'Voices from the Past: Rural Kent at the Close of an Era'. Mr Winstanley has a gift for getting at what people remember, and getting them to talk about it.

Like any historical source, the oral evidence demands critical appraisal; where opinion is concerned the memory of the aged may be unconsciously distorted; yet on countless points it affords a kind of insight which no other testimony is likely to yield. One revealing example is the way these Kentish country folk, however poor themselves, tended to look down on townsmen, especially on Londoners, because they were so slovenly and dirty. The Cockney families who came down to the hopfields every summer might be "not too bad" and "tremendously good hop pickers" . . . but they were widely regarded as an inferior class of beings. Their women went into pubs and could be seen smoking, both criminal acts in the rural code. Above all they were dirty. "After they went back we always used to pray for good rain", was one Kentish woman's vivid comment (p 635). Like the tin-miners in Devon and Cornwall, the London hop-pickers were thus looked on as social outcasts, as pariahs, as a race apart: I can remember the last of this attitude myself in the 1930's, when every farmhouse window had to be kept shut, and locked, against those ever-pilfering fingers.

The other contributions to the final section of the book are not quite of this calibre. In her account of 'The Rural Poor', however, Anne Digby usefully highlights the importance of voluntary charity, citing a figure of 4-7 per cent of gross income thus expended by the aristocracy and 1-2 per cent by the gentry. Such facts must be seen in perspective; their contribution to the problem of poverty as a whole must have been small; but they need to be remembered if we are to visualize the complex web of personal relationships in the countryside. On 'Country Diet' John Burnett also has many useful points to make, and commendably stresses the influence of regional and occupational diversity in this respect. Like several other contributors he cites the familiar fact that rural wages were generally highest in the north and north-west, and attributes this to opportunities for

industrial employment. In a general way no doubt this is true enough; but Alan Armstrong's figures (p 499) do not suggest quite so straightforward a relationship. England's largest *industrial* city was, after all, in the south-east; wages were also high in predominantly rural counties like Lincolnshire, Rutland, Westmorland, and the North Riding; and in the early nineteenth century, as Mr Burnett himself records, they were actually higher in Cumberland than in the neighbourhood of Oldham (p 555). There must, in short, be other circumstances behind this oft-repeated suggestion which would bear further investigation.

IV

The wealth of issues raised by *The Victorian Countryside* prompts a number of general reflections which seem to me to need further discussion. First and foremost it must be said that the richness of the book and the range of topics discussed entirely dispel the view that the Victorian countryside was but a poor relation of the Victorian city, without any great interest or personality of its own. Some of the contributors whose work I have not commented on seem to share this view and strike me as a little suburban in their outlook, a little remote from the earthy realities of country life, a little too fond of academic abstraction. Abstraction is an essential tool of the historian's craft; but we also need to see the Victorian countryside through the eyes of country people: we need to see it on its own terms, to recognize its diversity and vitality, and to realize its creative potential as well as its grinding poverty. It was, after all, the world of Adam Bede and the Poyzers, of George Sturt and George Borrow, of J C Atkinson and Flora Thompson.

One of the ways, it seems to me, in which we can make further progress to this end is to devote more expert attention to the visual evidence, and to the landscape itself as an historical document. The illustrations to this book are superb; they have obviously been

chosen with great care; but in a work of this kind it is no longer enough to reproduce pictorial evidence as stage-scenery, however evocative, or merely to give the 'feel' of the period. It also needs to be examined, detail by detail, in the light of the economic and social history of the time and place in question: and for that purpose more intellectual rigour needs to be brought to bear on its interpretation. There is a world of nineteenth-century evidence still to be discovered in the surviving landscape and its buildings, moreover, a dimension of which some contributors to this volume seem almost unaware, and in the unique abundance of contemporary maps. There is no county, not even those revolutionized by urban or industrial development, where the third edition of the Ordnance Survey—or for that matter the modern 2½" map—has not much to teach us; scarcely a sheet which does not tell us something of that marvellous interweaving of past and present, of ancient and modern, which moulded the mentality of the age: 'New things and old co-twisted as if Time were nothing', to borrow Tennyson's expression.¹ These are dimensions of rural society which are comparatively little explored in this volume: there are few maps, and there is not much apart from Mr Prince's chapter about the Victorian countryside in the sense of landscape or scenery.

Following on from that we also need to recognize in the Victorian countryside a more complex regional structure than some contributors allow for. In recent years a highly simplistic version of that structure has come to be accepted among English historians; the contrast in particular between a supposedly 'pastoral north-and-west' and 'arable south-and-east' has become far too schematically envisaged. The basic geographical dichotomy behind it, between the Highland Zone and the Lowland Zone, is a fundamental one; but it is important to recognize that, owing to the complexity of

¹From 'Gareth and Lynette', *The Idylls of the King*; it is quoted in J W Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, 1981, p 220, *vis à vis* E A Freeman.

The Highland Zone and Lowland Zone, c 1866: Arable Land and Livestock¹

	Total Area (1,000 ac)	Corn Crops ² (1,000 ac)	Green Crops ³ (1,000 ac)	Total Crops (1,000 ac)	(%) ⁴	Cattle ⁵ (1,000 Head)	(%) ⁶	Sheep (1,000 Head)	(%) ⁶
<i>I. Highland Zone</i>	19,768	2,666	1,033	3,699	18.7	2,432	61.3	7,178	42.7
1. 16 English Counties ⁷	15,036	2,146	895	3,041	22.2	1,885	47.5	5,510	32.8
2. 12 Welsh Counties	4,732	520	138	658	13.9	547	13.8	1,668	9.9
<i>II. Lowland Zone</i>	17,551	5,253	1,857	7,110	40.5	1,535	38.7	9,617	57.3
1. 12 'Arable' Counties ⁸	8,801	3,192	1,098	4,290	48.8	708	17.8	4,566	27.2
2. 14 'Mixed' Counties ⁹	8,751	2,061	759	2,820	32.2	827	20.9	5,051	30.1
<i>III. England and Wales</i>	37,319	7,919	2,890	10,809	28.9	3,967	100.0	16,795	100.0

¹ Four counties straddle the boundary between the zones: Staffs and Derbys more closely approximate to the Highland pattern, Worcs and Glos to the Lowland pattern; they have been thus allocated respectively.

² Wheat, barley, oats, rye, beans, and peas.

³ Potatoes, turnips, swedes, mangolds, carrots, cabbage, kohlrabi, rape, vetches; lucerne, and any other crop except clover and grass.

⁴ Percentage of total area of counties in question (see column 1).

⁵ 'Estimated'; the figures are close to those for 1867.

⁶ Percentage of total number for England and Wales (see bottom line).

⁷ Ches, Cornwall, Cumberland, Derbys, Devon, Durham, Herefs, Lancs, Mon, Northumberland, Salop, Som, Staffs, Westmorland, Yorks NR, Yorks WR.

⁸ Beds, Berks, Cambs, Essex, Herts, Hunts, Lincs, Norfolk, Notts, Oxon, Suffolk, Yorks ER: in all these arable land exceeded 40 per cent of the total area.

⁹ Bucks, Dorset, Glos, Hants, Kent, Leics, Middx, Northants, Rutland, Surrey, Sussex, Warwicks, Wilts, Worcs: in all these less than 40 per cent of the total area was arable; in Middx special circumstances operated.

the physical structure of these islands, diversity is the keynote of both zones. For the Victorian period the first Agricultural Returns of 1866 prove this beyond any question. Though it is not possible to utilize these to reconstruct a complete picture of agricultural land-use at that date, since 'hill-pastures' are excluded,² it is possible to compare the acreage under crops in each county and the total numbers of cattle and sheep. The figures for England and Wales are summarized in the table above. They should not be regarded as infallible, since the Returns of 1866 provided the first official 'census'; the numbers of sheep in particular were probably underestimated at that time; nevertheless, the overall picture is confirmed by subsequent figures and the main conclusions are sufficiently clear.³

These figures shew plainly enough the pastoral emphasis of the Highland Zone and the arable emphasis of the Lowland Zone; but they do not indicate a black and white contrast. What they point to is rather the diversity of husbandry in both zones and the unsuspected extent of pastoral activity in many Lowland counties. There were nearly 4 m cattle in England and Wales as a whole at this date, and of these more than 60 per cent were to be found in the Highland Zone, in the great stock-raising counties of the north and west with their vast reserves of rough pasture. Yet of the total of nearly 17 m sheep only a little over 7 m, or 42.7 per cent were to be found in the Highland region, whereas

1868, XII, Appendix, pp 4-5. The figures for cattle in 1867 were close to those described as 'estimated' in this source (4,007,000:3,967,000). The fact that the figures for sheep were substantially higher in 1867 than 1866 (22,014,000:16,795,000) suggests underestimation in the latter year, particularly in certain counties, such as Lincs (1,088,000:1,652,000) and Kent (731,000:1,063,000); but the proportions as between the two zones and their constituent parts did not greatly differ.

²For Great Britain, but not for Ireland.

³The table is based on the abstract of the Returns for 1866 and the Census of 1861 in *The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland*,

there were more than $9\frac{1}{2}$ m, or 57.3 per cent in the Lowlands. Put in another way, these figures shew that there were 555 sheep to every 1000 acres in the latter region but only 370 to every 1000 in the former. In the two counties of Lincoln and Kent alone, indeed, there were more sheep (1.8 m) than in the whole of Wales (1.7 m), while the figure for Kent (731,000) was not far short of double that for Cumberland, a county of similar extent and one of the principal sheep-raising districts of the Highland Zone.⁴

When we turn to the figures for crops, we find that just over 40 per cent of the Lowland Zone was under the plough, or more than 7 m acres in all, in comparison with 18.7 per cent in the 'Highland' counties, or 3.7 m acres. Yet it is also significant to note that there was a pronounced dichotomy in this respect in both zones. In Wales only 13.9 per cent of the total land-area was ploughland, whereas in the English counties of the Highland Zone the proportion was as high as 22.2 per cent and amounted to a little over 3 m acres. In the Lowlands there was an equally striking contrast. On one hand we find the great arable counties of the east, extending from Berkshire and Essex up to the East Riding, where almost half the total area — sometimes more than half — was under the plough: these were indeed the golden counties of English agriculture. On the other hand there was the great arc of 'mixed' Lowland counties, which included Midland shires like Leicester and Warwick and all those south of the Thames except Berkshire, where only 32.2 per cent of the total land-area was under crops, and in some cases substantially less. The extent of ploughland in the Highland Zone of England was thus far from insignificant; in absolute terms it actually exceeded that of the 14 'mixed' counties of southern England. There is a sense, indeed, in which it is sometimes more useful to think of a threefold division of this country, into Highland, Lowland, and

'Upland' countrysides, in place of the familiar twofold division, though this is not an argument that should be pressed too far.

The figures in the table raise many further points of interest which cannot be pursued here; they are also subject, of course, to some fundamental qualifications. They do not mean that *corn-crops* covered 22.2 per cent of the English Highland counties. Neither do they mean that sheep formed a more substantial element in the *economy* of the Lowlands than in that of the Highlands, since much of the former region was more intensively farmed than the latter, and a substantial proportion of its sheep-population was no doubt associated with a sheep-corn husbandry. What they do mean, however, is that the *diametrical* contrast often drawn between 'the pastoral north-and-west' and 'the arable south-and-east' is illusory, and that conclusions based upon it *tout court* should be regarded with suspicion. No amount of ingenuity can explain away the 3 m acres of arable land in the Highland Zone of England, or the major pastoral interests of so many Lowland counties.

When we consider the obvious diversity of landscape to be found in both these zones of Britain, such conclusions should not surprise us. In the Highland Zone, after all, there are dramatic contrasts between the Vale of York and the Pennine Dales, between the Cheshire Plain and the Peak District, and between the Cumberland Plain and the Lakeland fells. Such contrasts as these cannot be averaged out; extensive areas of vale and plain cannot be dismissed as mere 'pockets' or exceptions; they have always formed essential elements in the economy of the northern counties; they have moulded their history quite as profoundly as the fells and the moorlands; much of the fascination of the Highland Zone surely arises from the age-old interaction between vale and upland. The same element of historic counterpoint is also to be found in the Lowland Zone, moreover, in those contrasts between fenland, field, and forest countrysides which have moulded the

⁴In 1867 it was more than double (1,063,000:525,000).

evolution of the southern counties, the Midlands, and East Anglia. There was a notable tendency towards pastoralism in the Highland Zone, and towards arable farming in the Lowland Zone, but it is important to recognize that it was no more than a tendency.

Stretching across these divisions, both modifying and amplifying their development, we must also recognize further contrasts of landscape and scenery: between former common-field areas and areas of farming in severalty; between areas where family farms still predominated and areas of tenant-farming; between areas of nucleated villages and of dispersed settlements; between districts dominated by aristocrats and those dominated by squires or gentry; between predominantly 'Anglican' districts and those where Nonconformity tended to prevail; between 'open' and 'closed' parishes, between different types of parochial structure, and between agrarian parishes, industrialized parishes, and the parishes of country towns: and so on. None of these subdivisions can be explained solely in terms of the contrast between Highland Zone and Lowland Zone, though they were not unaffected by it. There was no direct relationship between common-field communities (for example) and either zone: though they were particularly characteristic of the Lowland Zone, they were also found in the vales and plains of the North, while they were as rare in the forest counties of the south-east as they were in the Pennines. I am not suggesting that regional complexities of this kind are ignored in the present volume; but there are some chapters where they might have been taken into fuller consideration, since they still formed the matrix of rural society in every part of Britain.

They also furnish us with a necessary framework for reconstructing the changing outlines of the rural economy of the period: its demographic development, its agricultural development, its landed structure, its social structure, and its cultural diversity.

These are matters on which this volume has much to tell us; but what they now need is more *systematic* investigation. Unless I have missed it, we are not in fact given a total figure for the rural population of this country at any date; there is little on its changing regional distribution between 1837 and 1901; the remarkable fact that at the beginning of the Queen's reign England and Wales were more thinly populated than Ireland — in many rural areas much more thinly — might usefully have been commented on. There may be readers who feel that we should also have been given some analysis of a great Victorian source like the *Return of Owners of Land, 1873*, though anyone who has utilized it will know the daunting problems involved and understand the omission. Nevertheless, systematic understanding of the structure of the rural economy as a whole is clearly necessary. In that connexion farming society in particular seems to be accorded distinctly short measure in this book. In the Census of 1851 there were more than 260,000 farmers, graziers, and farm-bailiffs in England and Wales alone;⁵ their farmhouses formed focal points in virtually every rural parish; they made or marred the lives of more than 1¼ m agricultural labourers and farm-servants; and they gave subsidiary employment to many thousands of professional families and rural craftsmen. Yet though appearing incidentally in various scattered places, they are given but a single chapter to themselves: and there is scarcely a word on that lynchpin of the Victorian countryside, the farmer's wife.

V

One of the most difficult tasks for the historian of the period is that of striking a balance between progress and decline, between the forces of continuity and the forces of transformation. This is a problem on which this book sheds a good deal of light and the editor strikes a notably judicious tone in his opening chapter. If there is imbalance,

⁵Pamela Horn, *The Rural World, 1780-1850*, 1980, p. 244.

it is in the tendency of some writers, I think, to overstate the theme of decline; this is a point that calls for some discussion.

The process of transformation varied profoundly of course between different types of countryside, different types of community, different types of farming, different types of occupation, and different classes of society; there can be no clear-cut resolution of it; but in approaching it there is a threefold distinction that needs to be borne in mind. First, the period under review was plainly a far from homogeneous one. Speaking broadly, most people would probably admit that a phase of progress and prosperity during the first 30 or 40 years of the Queen's reign was followed by a phase of widespread stringency or decline. That is quite a different proposition from the period of *continuous* decline envisaged by some contributors, and it enabled many traditional threads in the fabric of provincial society to survive unbroken until a surprisingly late date. Secondly, we need to make a clear distinction between absolute decline and relative decline. In his chapter on 'Agriculture and Industrialization in the Victorian Economy' Dr Holderness dwells quite properly on the relative decline of the farming community in supplying industry with its raw materials; in 1830, for example, British farmers may have supplied 90 per cent of the wool for the cloth industry, whereas by 1900 their proportion had fallen to a mere 20 per cent. Over this same period, however, we must also note that they actually increased their *total* annual production from about 120 m lbs to 130–140 m (p 186). From the point of view of their stake in the economy as a whole, their importance was dwindling: but from the point of view of the *rural* economy of Britain they achieved a modest increase: not a sufficient increase to affect their national standing, but quite sufficient to safeguard a way of life from destruction.

Thirdly, we need to distinguish between those changes which entailed the obliteration of traditional activities and those which

involved their adaptation to new opportunities. This is a distinction which needs to be more consistently observed than it often is. In the former category we must reckon the disappearance of the last of the peasantry, for example, and the virtual extinction of traditional country industries like straw-plaiting and lacemaking. But there were many occupations, like those of the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and the village carrier, which remained essential to the Victorian economy and responded to the contemporary challenge with unsuspected vigour and ingenuity. At some points, indeed, industrial development itself for a time breathed new life into traditional activities, as in the case of woodland occupations in the old coppice-countries of England.⁶ There were also a number of social institutions, such as the village alehouse and the provincial market town, where decline was by no means universal. Even the massive growth of tenant-farming, at the expense of owner-occupiers, did not entail a total transformation of the rural economy, since tenant-farmers were often descended from old farming dynasties and their farmsteads still remained the economic centres of agrarian society. What we find, in other words, is an interweaving of progress and decay, a pattern of continuity within a pattern of change.

These remarks are not intended to imply that change and decay were not profound realities of the time, or that in the long run they were not destined to destroy the whole fabric of tradition. What they do mean is that we need to devote more systematic attention to the survival of earlier forms of life, and to cultivate a more sensitive ear to the language of tradition, a more sympathetic understanding of its *mentalité*. Most of us probably find it easier to observe movement than stability; the modern tendency to restrict our historical interests to a single period, however justifiable on other grounds, does not

⁶I owe this information to Dr E J T Collins.

help us to identify elements of continuity. A certain absence of perspective before the nineteenth century seems to me to have led a number of contributors to underestimate the legacy which the Victorians inherited from their predecessors, and to attribute novelty to some aspects of the countryside which in fact stemmed from ancestral roots. It is easy to overstate the decline of rural isolation, for example — though it was certainly real — and to over-simplify the self-sufficiency of the pre-Victorian village; yet a moment's reflection suggests that if rural society had ever been truly self-sufficient there would have been no need for the medieval market town. There are many topics of this kind in which we ought, perhaps, to delve further back into the origin of Victorian species and to hearken, so to speak, to the testimony of the rocks. In that connexion the touching faith of one or two contributors in the inerrancy of government reports perhaps calls for some revision; provincial people did not always tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to inspectors and officials; they do not do so today.

There is one approach to these problems which, I believe, might help us to appreciate more fully the way in which past and present were interwoven in the Victorian countryside: and that is by reconstructing individual communities and localities in the round, by investigating every aspect of their history, and tracing out all their subtle ramifications, and the manifold interconnexions between them. Some notable progress in this direction has been made by historians like Richard Olney, Raphael Samuel, and Brian Davey;⁷ but as yet it can hardly be said that we have many studies for the nineteenth century that are truly comparable with those for earlier periods like W G Hoskins's *Midland Peasant*

(1957), Margaret Spufford's *Contrasting Communities* (1974), or David Hey's *English Rural Community* (1974). It would not have been appropriate to include studies of this kind in the work under review; yet a recognition of the need to see people as members of a community as well as members of a social class is surely necessary if we are to achieve a real understanding of the complexity of rural society.

In saying that, I am not minimizing the importance of class-ties and class-thinking in the Victorian countryside; they were often paramount. Yet in seeking to escape from the excessive empiricism of the English scholarly tradition, it seems unfortunate that social history often appears unable as yet to think beyond a few well-worn phrases like 'deference', 'paternalism', 'popular protest', and 'social control'. There is nothing wrong with these phrases; they relate to real ideas; they take us some of the way towards an answer; but they are too simplistic. To reach the heart of the problem demands a more rigorous intellectual approach, more originality of mind, and more historical imagination. For country people in the nineteenth century it was a whole web of personal relationships that made up the daily round of life: their links with village, parish, and neighbourhood, with family, farm, and alehouse, with manor house, church, and market town, as well as with social class. For a labourer in the Yorkshire Dales (for example) such relationships as these were necessarily more familiar, more pressing, more ubiquitous in their impact than impersonal links with fellow-labourers elsewhere. That is not to idealize the bonds of the local community, which could be unbearably restrictive, but to acknowledge an inescapable fact of Victorian society, a circumstance built into its structure. For the re-creation of that structure we need imaginative understanding of all those intricate bonds of neighbourhood, community, kinship, and personality in which the country people of the period lived and moved and had their being.

⁷Eg. R J Olney, *Lincolnshire Politics, 1832-1885*, 1973; Raphael Samuel, "'Quarry Roughts': Life and Labour in Headington Quarry, 1860-1920", in Raphael Samuel, ed, *Village Life and Labour*, 1975; B J Davey, *Ashwell, 1830-1914: the Decline of a Village Community* (University of Leicester, Department of English Local History, Occasional Papers, Third Ser, No 5), 1980.

In tracing out these themes, in seeing how they were articulated in the multifarious landscapes and communities of the time, there is also much that we can learn from the circumstantial evidence of contemporary observers. The work of writers like Flora Thompson is frequently cited to good effect in this book; the editor himself makes telling use of William Howitt, whose *Rural Life of England*, first published in 1838, has already been quoted. The nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable efflorescence of literature of this kind, from the days of William Cobbett onwards. Though it varies greatly in historical value, at its best, like the oral evidence, it opens up an interior view of the period, like a Dutch painting of the seventeenth century, which conveys a more vivid impression of reality than the formal structures of professional history. We cannot dispense with those structures, as I have already argued; but in feeling our way into the *mentalité* of the time, into the customs and assumptions of a society which was still so very different from our own, literary evidence of this kind is uniquely illuminating and has little parallel in earlier centuries.

It points up, moreover, one of the great paradoxes of the Victorian period: the fact that, though it was an era of dramatic changes and unparalleled urbanization, it drew so much of its inspiration and idealism from those vestiges of an older world in which, at many points, it was still embedded. For it is not only in nineteenth-century literature that we see this, but in developments like the Ecclesiological Movement and the Arts and Crafts Movement; in the work of the Vernacular Revival architects,

like George Devey, C F A Voysey, and Norman Shaw; in the long line of topographical artists and engravers, like Herbert Railton, Howard Gaye, and F L Griggs; in the great historians of the period, like William Stubbs, Frederic Seebohm, and F W Maitland, from whom all of us consciously or unconsciously are descended; and in countless other aspects of the age. Why was it that the forms and structures of antiquity, the churches and manor houses of this country, the villages, hamlets, and farmsteads, the market towns and old cathedral cities, so haunted the imagination of the Victorians? How can we explain their intense preoccupation with that tufa-like deposit of the past, that gradual, unremitting accretion of minute historic detail which over the centuries had built up the kingdoms and communities they knew? At one level, no doubt, we can dismiss much of it as escapism; yet at another we can see it as a sign of the unsuspected extent to which the past still lived on in the present, was still interwoven with it, still refracted through the prism of the years. These are not matters that are directly explored in the volume under review; yet incidentally *The Victorian Countryside* sheds a vivid light on them, and that is no small measure of its achievement. For in the long run the marvellous inspiration which the Victorians derived from the past, as they remembered it from childhood, as they found it in the rural world around them, and as they expressed it in literature, in architecture, in topographical art, and in historiography itself, may yet prove to be one of their most enduring contributions to civilization.

List of Books and Pamphlets on Agrarian History 1982*

Compiled by MARGARET C SMYTH

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Book Reviews

DELLA HOOKE, *Anglo-Saxon Landscapes of the West Midlands: the Charter evidence*. BAR Brit Series 95, 1981. Obtainable from BAR, 122 Banbury Road, Oxford, 380 pp. £15.

This is a very important book that will be essential reading for most readers of this journal: it also has interest for anyone concerned with Anglo-Saxon studies in any shape or form. Dr Hooke has studied the boundary clause of the charters of the medieval diocese of Worcester with a thoroughness never before attempted. She has done this in a context of archaeological evidence, place-name study and topography, marrying the art of the historian with that of the geographer. There are dozens of helpful maps, though I regretted the omission of a version of the very first one (of estates in the Avon valley), with the Domesday royal demesne added. This would give us some idea of how complete the archives of the churches of Worcester, as we have them, are. There is also no index. I can see that an index for this book would be an enormous job but I think it would have been useful. Dr Hooke accepts the view of the late Canon Taylor that the shire system of the West Midlands was formed in the early eleventh century. I think it was much more probably the work of Edgar. The translated passage, pp 4-5, should be correctly referred to Liebermann's *Gesetze*, i, pp 454-5, and I am not sure that *tun* is correctly rendered by *manor*. But these are small blemishes in a generally most scholarly book.

The second half of the book is a close look at the principal words used in Anglo-Saxon agrarian vocabulary, and is full of insights into the nature of Anglo-Saxon farming techniques and estate management. What there is here is much too rich to summarize. But one must mention the discussion of the meaning of *hamm*, the establishment of the probability that *stow* means holy place, and her proof that the Anglo-Saxons went in for enclosing land on a large scale. The first half of the book ranges over more general issues. Dr Hooke notes that the scribes of the charters make mistakes in the boundary clauses that suggest they did not always know the locality. This has important implications for the study of where charters were written. She is very much a disciple of Professor Glanvil Jones, and has no difficulty in making a very strong case that the estates booked in the charters were already of some antiquity. By looking at estate bounds in connection with surviving iron-age earthworks she raises the probability that some of these arrangements do in fact go back to the iron age. She does not shirk Celtic

parallels, and has many useful points in favour of a maximizing of these parallels, and she develops a very strong case for rural continuity between Anglo-Saxon England and what went before. It is evident that the multiple estate was common enough in the West Midlands, and she has a fascinating discussion as to why a place so far west as Worcester was the 'capital' of the region. She is sceptical of the mass-migration of Anglo-Saxons into her chosen region and she takes the story of Roman and Saxon Withington further than the late Professor Finberg did. Altogether this is a book very much in the Finberg tradition. Herbert Finberg would have loved it, for its contribution to methodology as much as its palatable conclusions.

ERIC JOHN

LEONARD CANTOR (ed), *The English Medieval Landscape*. Croom Helm, 1982. 225 pp. 41 figs, 2 tables, 8 plates. £12.95.

Landscape history is a relatively new specialism, standing on the frontiers where archaeology, history and geography meet. This book is a collection of seven essays by five authors, all of whom are geographers and are presumably writing for a readership of geography students. This means that the book lacks some of the zest of the multi-disciplinary approach that can mark the best work in this subject; new landscape history is more than just an extension of old historical geography. Defining the scope of the subject for the purposes of this book has led to some problems. Everyone would agree that fields, forests and parks, marshes and wastes, settlements, and roads should be included, and there are essays here on all of these. More difficult to explain is the inclusion of an essay on 'castles, moated homesteads and monasteries', and the lack of any special treatment of lesser houses and churches. Agrarian historians will be disappointed that the whole problem of the organization of the landscape into estates, townships, and other land units, which has figured prominently in the new landscape history, does not receive much attention. This is symptomatic of the weakness of an approach that studies the man-made landscape but pays scant attention to the social relationships and productive forces that helped to create it.

The special contribution of the recent advances in landscape history has been to provide us with a new type of evidence, so that we can more readily identify those elements in the modern pattern of

fields and streets that date back to the medieval or pre-medieval periods. Such a method makes no more than a fitful appearance in these essays; for example, the essay on fields rightly puts much emphasis on the surviving ridge and furrow, while the author of the essay on roads relies almost entirely on documentary and cartographic evidence, not on surviving traces of medieval roads. This is unfortunate, because in other ways the discussion of roads is the most interesting in the book, developing new ideas and pointing to future research rather than being content to summarize existing knowledge.

The students who may use this book will find it puzzling that the authors contradict one another; the editor, for example, gives population figures in his introduction that differ considerably from those chosen by two of the authors (pp 18, 87, 89, 155). Some of the information is plainly wrong, like the population estimate for England of 4.0 or 4.5 million in 1377 (p 87). The editor and an author give different totals for the number of deserted villages, both of which disagree with the commonly accepted figures (pp 22, 120). Careless captioning of illustrations on pp 26 and 34 will give readers the impression that headland ridges are the main surviving features of medieval field systems, and that ridge and furrow is 'Celtic'. It is also to be regretted that more discrimination has not been used in borrowing material from other authors. A glaring example is a misleading map of changing medieval land use (p 93), which has been unnecessarily resurrected from obscurity to confuse readers.

This book offers students a great deal of information, most of it accurate, but it will give them little stimulation. While they will occasionally glimpse some of the insights that landscape history can provide, their main impression will be that this is a dull subject. Their gloom will not be relieved by the photographs, which have been reproduced so inadequately that they appear to have been taken at dusk.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

WILLIAM LINNARD, *Welsh Woods and Forests: History and Utilisation*, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1982, 203 pp. Illus. £7.

The appearance of this volume was eagerly anticipated, and then warmly welcomed, as the first major historical study of forests and forestry in Wales. The subject is surveyed from the Ice Age to the formation of the Forestry Commission in 1919, and the concluding Epilogue assesses the main historical processes which have been influenced both the landscape

and fluctuating attitudes towards woodland vegetation.

The extent of the chronological span prohibits the examination in depth of developments in several important periods: the climacteric events of the Black Death, Glyndwr Rebellion and Wars of the Roses are considered in two paragraphs with two references, both to the same source (p 44). Nevertheless, the author succeeds in presenting a coherent examination of the subject, and he understandably exploits his own impressive research-work, especially in the sections dealing with the medieval Welsh Laws (Chapters I and III) and the Hafod and Plymouth estates in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Chapters VI, VII and VIII).

A skilful use is made of a variety of sources and techniques. Dr Linnard relies extensively on the results of pollen-analysis and archaeological excavation in Chapter I whilst the discussion of eighteenth-century trends (in Chapter VII) benefits from the author's use of estate records, travellers' accounts, topographical prints and official reports. Appropriate literary allusions are included throughout the volume. The Epilogue concludes with the quotation of extracts from two Welsh poems as illustrations of the marked change in attitudes displayed towards woodlands in Wales: the first is a sixteenth-century lament inspired by the felling of woods in Glamorgan by English iron-masters, and the second a twentieth-century attack on the planting of trees by an alien-based Forestry Commission.

The impact of other external factors, such as military and industrial requirements, is assessed in the discussion of the four main forest products: charcoal, shiptimber, tanbark, and pitwood (Chapter VI). The influence of Scots foresters on Welsh estates from the late eighteenth century onwards is also emphasized in Chapter VIII ('Professional Foresters and Private Estate Management in the Nineteenth Century').

The volume has been handsomely produced with an attractive, and extremely suitable cover illustration reproduced from a thirteenth-century legal manuscript (Peniarth MS 28) and depicting the medieval forest-management practices of coppicing and lopping. An index and six appendices, including a glossary of special terms, are presented. Numerous illustrations, figures and tables supplement and clarify the text but unfortunately a complete list of illustrative material has not been compiled.

Dr Douglas A Bassett, Director of the National Museum of Wales, surveys in his foreword to the volume the multi-disciplinary interest displayed over the years in this subject by members of the National Museum of Wales and its first major out-station, the Welsh Folk Museum. The National Museum, celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, is to be con-

gratulated for the enlightened decision to publish a work which represents a valuable pioneering contribution to our understanding of 'one of the major natural resources of the county, one of the main forms of land-use and of natural habitat'.

D HUW OWEN

JOHN W SHAFFER, *Family and Farm: Agrarian Change and Household Organization in the Loire Valley 1500-1900*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1982. 258 pp. Illus. \$39 hardback; \$12.95 paper.

To explore the past of one's own country is to discover another place; to examine the past of another country involves an additional distancing of a researcher from his goal, the attainment of which thereby becomes doubly difficult. The recent colonization by American academics of the study of French modern history illustrates both the potential and the problems of such excursions into the pasts of foreign parts; illuminating, culturally-immersed studies are forced to share shelf-space with works which tell a reader more about American historical scholarship today than about any aspect of French *civilisation* yesterday. Between them must be placed books like this one by John Shaffer.

The main thrust of Shaffer's study is demographic rather than agricultural but his concern is to examine the relationships between those two systems in one French *département*, Nièvre, from the early-sixteenth until the late-nineteenth century. An opening chapter discusses generally how modernization theorists have accounted for changes in family patterns and establishes the Nivernais as an historical testing-ground. Then follows a detailed examination of the legal, social and economic basis of family and household organization in the Nivernais, stressing the persistence until the mid-nineteenth century of large joint households and of their involvement especially in sharecropping. Shaffer argues that *communautés* — of perhaps 20 or even 30 people — developed initially in order to counter the divisive effects of partible inheritance but then adapted to meet the need for considerable labour forces on large farms held in *métayage*. During the nineteenth century (and especially after 1840) the joint household declined, Shaffer argues, in response to the transformation of agrarian structures, notably the growing number of small farms (products of the practice of partible inheritance) and a significant reduction in the overall demand for labour coupled with its increasingly seasonal character as farming focused upon meadows and pastures devoted to cattle-raising and fattening for newly-accessible urban markets.

Throughout his study, Shaffer usefully highlights the regional variations in household and agrarian

structures identifiable within the *département* of Nièvre, notably between the heavily-forested and relatively isolated uplands of the Morvan and the other, more agriculturally progressive and commercially connected, areas. Furthermore, his general argument is creditably founded on particular studies of two communes and grounded in surviving primary sources. Nonetheless, Shaffer's account remains often at a purely descriptive level, in part because he has refrained from considering interpretations other than the one advanced by himself. For example, rural emigration is seen definitively as a consequence of the decline of joint agricultural households rather than possibly related to the rise of employment opportunities in industries and towns; and the decay of joint households is assumed to have involved a shift from communal to individual life-worlds, although Shaffer has not considered whether any other forms of collective organization were being developed in the Nivernais while the joint household was being dissolved. Finally, it must be emphasized that this book is concerned with one French *département* and not with the Loire valley as a whole.

ALAN R H BAKER

GREGOR DALLAS, *The Imperfect Peasant Economy: the Loire Country, 1800-1900*. Cambridge, CUP, 1982. xi, 352 pp.

Gregor Dallas has written a book about rural society or, rather, about two particular rural societies, their evolution from the period of the Napoleonic Wars to that of the First World War, their resilience in the face of France's growing urban and industrial sectors. He eschews the familiar theme of gradual assimilation of rural communities into a larger, more complex society, and shows instead (the nuance is crucial) how peasant economies held their own within that society, and maintained their particular form of cultural identity under pressure. It is a very good book, because it refuses to accept stereotypes, questions established assumptions, provides the reader with a lot of useful information, and remains readable and good humoured throughout.

The Loire Country of the title consists of the Orléanais (105 communes in the Loiret) and of the Nantais (93 communes of Loire-Inférieure), regions not far removed from each other yet sufficiently different to provide grounds for suggestive comparisons of how country folk coped with circumstances that in some respects remained fairly constant over time. Within these areas and against their wider regional background, Dallas discusses demography, landholding patterns, commercial and other relations to urban centres, and the role of mediators —

especially large landowners, teachers and priests — whom he prefers to call 'connectors'.

Dallas is chiefly interested in the economic aspect of things. The data that he marshals lead him to conclude, among other things, that peasants managed their economy quite well; that migration, a solution of last resort, was always less than has been assumed and then directed rather towards new land (as in Sologne) than towards town; above all, that gloomy interpretations of nineteenth-century fragmentation of landholdings are unfounded, at least for peasants in his areas, for whom the relative decadence and dispatching of large estates owned by non-residents was a measure of survival and success. By dint of limitless familial effort, by using labour to replace the capital they lacked, and more intensive toil to make up for the modern equipment they could not afford, peasant communities survived the challenges of the century, gained ground at the expense of urban landowners, or — at worst — held their own; while peasant culture adjusted successfully and on its own terms to the possibilities and demands of the changing world around.

I disagree with some of the views Dallas expresses (St Nazaire *was* very soon perceived and resented at Nantes as a rival and a menace); but if I have a serious disagreement, it is with his view that demographic population study 'provides the surest, most complete way of fathoming out how the individual experience was related to society at large'. I would not dream to question the usefulness of the large-scale indications furnished by the computer studies that fed this book. Rich, and enriching, though it be, such information provides only partial understanding. It yields more when used in conjunction with more subjective data, which Dallas does not ignore, but tends to underplay. Yet individual experience *is* individual; even collective experience is not merely statistical, but communal. Statistics can confirm, or question, or complete, the impressions of lived experience; they cannot substitute for it.

Revealingly, the weakest chapter of this excellent book is about politics, because politics, which are largely about personalities, clans and memories, especially at the local level, lend themselves ill to abstraction. The discussion of 'collective violence' is superficial and unconvincing; the presentation of forest problems is one-sided and incomplete; so, on another level, are the glancing references to peasant 'superstition'. But Dallas rampages so cheerfully all over the show, and his enterprise and *brio* pay off most of the time, that he is bound to totter now and then. And it is far better to be debatable than to be dull.

Dull he never is, and suggestive always. Much shall be forgiven him for that. For that, and for his determination to do what too few others seem

willing to do: approach the history of town and country in harness.

EUGEN WEBER

DAVID FOSTER, *The Rural Constabulary Act 1839*. Standing Conference for Local History, Bedford Square Press, 1982. 48 pp. £2.95.

This small but interesting booklet is concerned with one of the more important and controversial statutes of the nineteenth century. The first chapter is primarily devoted to a study of law enforcement in the early years of that century. It is essentially a summary of known information, with a few strands of original material. Dr Foster's analysis of the Royal Commission of 1839 is more substantial and provides useful insights into the influence of Edwin Chadwick and the categories of crime identified in the Report. The author shows how the evidence before the Commission was carefully selected and how the Report came to a revolutionary conclusion on the need for a national and centrally-organized police force.

The chapter on the Act itself is too short, and the reader should have been given more information on the preparations for, and on the actual character of, the parliamentary debates on such controversial legislation. This is a pity, for Dr Foster is good on Lord John Russell's difficult political position, and on the general opposition to the Bill in the country.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the last chapter is the most valuable section of the book. The author describes how 24 counties adopted the Act in the first two years of its existence, whilst another 11 did so during the subsequent 15 years. Many of these counties had a history of industrial and political conflict, but by no means all of them. The West Riding, Middlesex and Monmouthshire, for example, did not favour the Act. For Edward Denison, the Yorkshire MP, such opposition was simply a matter 'of pounds, shillings and pence'. But there was also much distrust of county policemen as agents of the central government. In a few counties serious attempts were made to abolish the force after it had been established though it proved impossible to raise the necessary two-thirds majority at Quarter Sessions.

According to Dr Foster, organized opposition to the Act lasted a remarkably short period of time. During the 1840s and 1850s people began to make extravagant claims about the efficiency of the new county forces, especially in the field of public order, and the relations between magistrates and chief constables were reasonably good. The leaders, religious and otherwise, of county society soon found

that professional policemen could control vagrancy and even help in the work of moral reformation. In 1853 Edwin Chadwick, a critic of the Act in 1839, was forced to admit that he was rather pleased with its outcome.

DAVID JONES

RUDOLF BIČANIĆ, *How the People Live: Life in the Passive Regions*. Edited by Joel M Halpern and Elinor Murray Despalatović. Research Report No 21, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, September 1981. 162 pp. Maps, tables.

In July 1935 the Croatian Peasant Party established the Peasant Economic Union (*Gospodarska Sloga*). Its function was to improve the material and cultural standard of the peasant's life and it concerned itself with such matters as the setting up of co-operatives, grain reserves and marketing organizations for peasant producers. Amongst its other functions was 'systematic research to discover the immediate and long-range economic and social problems of the Croatian peasants' (p 11, from the introductory essay by Elinor Murray Despalatović). The first fruit of this endeavour was Bičanić's *How the People Live*. It is a minor classic. Bičanić set off to make an in-depth study of conditions in one of the poorest regions of the country, that 'within a land triangle which stretches from Banja Luka to Split in Mostar' (p 1), a part of the 'Passive Regions', so called because there was no capital accumulation in the area. The result, now published in English for the first time with admirable introductory and concluding essays by the two editors, is a fully detailed and perceptive catalogue of the ailments which affected one of Europe's poorest agrarian areas at a time when agriculture itself was still reeling from the disastrous impact of the depression. The problems are generally familiar. Methods were hopelessly backward, land was parcelled beyond economic or social reason, peasant life was ruled and sometimes ruined by what

Bičanić called, 'The Tyranny of Custom', and above all there was the burden of debt. For the passive regions of Croatia there was also the problem of water of which the peasants had too much in winter and far too little in spring and summer. Bičanić's remedies for these ills are typical of the agrarian activist of the interwar period. He wanted less reliance on the merchant — what was the use of producing milk for commercial dairies if the prices given for the raw material by the merchant were so low and the prices charged by that same merchant for the finished product so high that not only could the peasant not afford to buy dairy produce himself but was forced, often by debt obligations to the merchant, to sell all his milk thus depriving his own children of that precious commodity? The better way to do things would be to remove the merchant's profit and the merchant by relying on co-operatives. Likewise Bičanić looked forward to a time when the peasant made more of his own clothing, either domestically or in small village workshops, for dependence on the capitalist market forced the peasant, and the state, to sell food abroad cheaply and buy expensive textiles; here the price scissors really hurt. Not only are Bičanić's agrarian credentials proved in the solutions he advocates but they are to be seen too in his moral attitudes. He disapproves strongly, and understandably, of a system which can encourage poor peasants to spend valuable cash on cosmetics when they are in desperate need of metal rather than wooden ploughs, and, like all good agrarians throughout eastern Europe, he had a robust dislike for the lawyer, the politician, the tax-collector, and the many other stock characters of the agrarians' chamber of horrors. Professors Halpern and Despalatović are to be congratulated on making available a work which is important and informative not only of the conditions studied but also of the attitudes which dominated an important political movement in eastern Europe between the wars.

R J CRAMPTON

Shorter Notices

RICHARD DUNCAN-JONES, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*, 2nd edn. CUP, 1982, xviii + 414 pp. £25.

The first edition of Dr Duncan-Jones' volume of essays on wealth, agricultural investment and yield, prices and demography, published in 1974 at £7.60, was warmly received in this journal by K D White: 25 (1977), pp 53–54. The second edition is a photocopy of the corrected reprint of 1977 with the

addition of a few titles to the bibliography, a new appendix on Roman weights and measures, and 13 pages of supplementary notes. The great majority of the latter are bibliographical addenda of one to three lines. Only in three places are there more extended discussions (one to three pages) of criticisms or new arguments that followed the original publication.

M I FINLEY

P THOMPSON, L McKENNA and J MACKILLOP, *Ploughlands and Pastures: The Imprint of Agrarian History in four Cheshire Townships — Peckforton, Haughton, Bunbury and Huxley*. Cheshire Libraries and Museums, Chester, 1982. 112 pp. No price given.

This delightful little book skilfully combines thorough and careful field studies with equally competent examinations of maps, aerial photographs and estate documents to make an exemplary survey of four townships that straddle the Peckforton Hills. Here one may follow the history of farms and fields,

of buildings and hedges, and of cultivation and vegetation in wholly satisfying detail and with the assistance of a wealth of maps, diagrams and drawings. This work will be of inestimable value to agricultural and local historians and will afford all the more pleasure for that these places (with Beeston Castle also) constitute a favourite resort for the people of Crewe, Chester and other large towns in the vicinity. I heartily recommend both this book and the beautiful and fascinating district it deals with.

ERIC KERRIDGE

Books Received

IAN BECKWITH, *Three Studies in Seventeenth Century Rural History*. Centre for the Study of Rural Society, Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, 12 pp. 25p.

C J BLISS and N H STERN, *Palampur: The Economy of an Indian Village*. OUP, 1982. 334 pp. Tables. £15.

PHILIP and BARBARA BULLER, *Pots, Platters & Ploughs: Sarratt Wills & Inventories 1435-1832*. Mrs B Buller, Little Bragmans, Belsize, Rickmansworth, Herts. £5 (+ p & p £1.20).

NICHOLAS P CUSHNER, *Farm & Factory: The Jesuits and the Development of Agrarian Capitalism in Colonial Quito, 1600-1767*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 1982. 224 pp. Maps and tables.

POLLY HILL, *Dry Grain Farming Families, Hausaland (Nigeria) & Karnataka (India) compared*. CUP, 1982. 306 pp. Figs, Tables, Plates. £25 (paperback £9.95).

JOHN W HOUSE, *Frontier on the Rio Grande: A Political Geography of Development and Social Pathology*. OUP, 1982. 268 pp. Figs, Tables, Plates. £17.50.

WILLIAM LANIER HUNT, *Southern Gardens, Southern Gardening*. Duke University Press, 1982. 180 pp. Illus. \$16.50.

INTERNATIONAL BEE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, three catalogues: 1. *Publications*; 2. *Book Selection*; 3. *Audio Visual Material*. IBRA, 1982. 25p for the three catalogues. Free to members.

A JAMES (ed) *Fareham Past & Present Book XI, Vol. II, Book XII, Vol. II*. Fareham Local History Group, 1982. 30p each.

W MINCHINTON (ed), *Agricultural Improvement: Medieval & Modern*. Exeter Papers in Economic History No 14. University of Exeter, 1981. 137 pp. £2.50.

J MOULLIN (ed), *Bulletin No. 37*, 1982. Cambridgeshire Local History Council. 31 pp. Subscriptions £1.50 individuals, £2.50 husband and wife, due 1 April.

ERIC RICHARDS, *A History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886*. Paperback edn, Croom Helm, 1982. 532 pp. £10.95.

THEODORE SALOUTOS, *The American Farmer and the New Deal*. Iowa State University Press, 1982. 319 pp. Photographs, cartoons. \$25.75.

SIBYLLE SCHÜLER, *Die Klostersäkularisation in Kent 1535-1558*. Schöningh, 1980. 150 pp. DM29.

OWEN STINCHCOMBE, *Lucky to Survive: A Centenary History of Gotherington School*. Obtainable from Gotherington Primary School, Gotherington, Nr Cheltenham. 119 pp. Illus. £2.75.

ROBERT D STORCH (ed), *Popular Culture and Custom in 19th Century England*. Croom Helm, 1982. 208 pp. £13.95.

TELFORD COMMUNITY ARTS, *The Hadley Book in the words of Hadley people*. Telford Community Arts, 72 Southgate, Sutton Hill, Telford, Shropshire, 1982. 155 pp. Illus. £2.50.

MARTIN J WIENER, *English Culture & The Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*. CUP, 1982. 209 pp. £4.95 paperback.

Notes and Comments

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM, 1983

The Spring Conference of the Society was held at Christ Church College, Canterbury, on 11–13 April 1983. Papers were presented by Mr A J Percival, 'Faversham and its Region'; Professor D N McCloskey, 'Corn at Interest: the Cost and Extent of Storage of Grain in Medieval England'; Mr J Bieleman, 'Rural Change in the Dutch Province of Drenthe, 1600–1800'; Sir John Habakkuk, Dr J V Beckett and Dr P Roebuck, 'Symposium: Post-Restoration English Landownership'; Mr J Young, 'Naval Timber, 1660–1860: Feast or Famine?'; and Mr J K Bowers, 'The Economics of Agricultural Support in post-war Britain'. Dr D A Baker conducted an excellent excursion to the Faversham Heritage Centre, the Shepherd Neame Brewery in Faversham, and to Mr Basil Neame's hop and fruit farm, near Faversham.

The thirty-first AGM was held on 12 April 1983. Professor Mingay, Dr Chartres and Dr Collins were re-elected as officers of the Society. Dr Joan Thirsk was elected as the President of the Society in the place of Professor Chaloner, who reached the end of a three-year term of office. The meeting expressed its thanks and great appreciation of Professor Chaloner's work as President. Professor Chaloner assumed Dr Thirsk's seat as a member of the Executive Committee, and four vacancies on the Committee were filled by the re-election of Dr D W Howell, Dr R Perren and Dr W J Rowe, and by the election of Dr H S A Fox.

Mr M A Havinden was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee, but in his absence Professor Thompson, retiring Chairman, presented the report. The Society had enjoyed another very successful year, with membership so buoyant that the print run of the *Review* had been further increased. The Winter Conference in 1982 had again been held at the Institute of Historical Research, which had now become the normal venue for these meetings, on the theme 'Capitalism in Agriculture'. The next Winter Conference will be on 'The Urban Consumption and Marketing of Agricultural Produce' and will be held on Saturday 3 December 1983 at the Institute. This conference will again be run jointly with the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers. Just before the conference, the Society had acted as one of the first two subject groups to present a session to the Economic History Society Conference. This had been held at the University of Kent, 8–10 April 1983. Four papers, by Drs Overton, Collins and Turner, and Professor McCloskey had been presented to this conference in booklet form, and further copies were available from the Secretary. It seemed generally

agreed that the session had displayed the Society in a very favourable light. The Executive Committee had considered a report from the officers on the possible uses for the Society's accumulated surpluses, and were proposing to expand the size of the *Review* and to undertake a further publication venture in the issue in book form of the papers on the *Horse* presented to the international conference in Budapest. It was hoped to publish this volume during the summer. The next Spring Conference would be held 9–11 April 1984 at Charlotte Mason College of Education, Ambleside, Cumbria. At the conclusion of the report the meeting congratulated Professor Thompson on his election to the Presidency of the Economic History Society.

The Treasurer reported on another satisfactory year for the Society, in which rising postage and printing costs had again been accommodated without eroding reserves. The Society had a small surplus on the year, and there was no present need to raise subscriptions. Stocks of back issues of the *Review* were now generally low, and, subject to agreement with a Dutch firm, arrangements were being made to give them the right to reprint, in return for a decent royalty. Membership continued to rise, and allowing for new membership coming in at the beginning of the financial year, now stood around 850. It was with great regret that he had to report that Miss Gilliam Beazley, who had been for so many years the effective business manager of the Society, was to give up this work. The meeting expressed its thanks to her and agreed to make her a substantial gift in recognition of her services. A replacement had been found, and to ease administration, the Society was to computerize its accounting. The meeting appointed Mr A K Giles, of the University of Reading, as its auditor.

The Secretary presented the Editor's report to the effect that preparations for the next issue of the *Review* were well advanced before he left for the USA, and the past year had seen the submission of an exceptional number of good articles: after the publication of Part II a backlog of eleven articles would remain. In the next issue the second of the regional surveys of American agriculture would appear, by Fred Bateman on the northern states. The two librarians at the University of Kent who had compiled the annual list of articles had indicated that they wished to give up the task, and the Editor would appreciate offers to replace them. The Chairman drew attention to the late appearance of Part I and noted that the Secretary was taking matters up with the press. From now on, a slightly larger *Review* was to be standard, and attention was directed to the proposed supplement series, a notice

about which had appeared in Part I of the *Review*.

Thanks were extended to Dr Baker and to Christ Church College for the arrangements for the conference.

HISTORY OF THE ARMY ON SALISBURY PLAIN

The Army is proposing to commission a history of its associations with Salisbury Plain, and to this end is seeking information about the social, economic, agrarian, and environmental history of the area, both before the army arrived and afterwards. Members with information to assist this project, or historical advice to offer, should write to the Commander Education, HQ South West District, Bulford Camp, Near Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 9NY.

ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE PAPERS

A very limited number of copies of the pamphlet produced for the 1983 Economic History Society conference is available from the Secretary. This pamphlet, *Agricultural History*, is of 73 pages, with card cover, and contains four papers: M Overton, 'An Agricultural Revolution, 1650-1750?'; E J T Collins, 'Agricultural Revolution in a Modern Industrial Economy: Britain, 1950-1980'; M E Turner, 'Sitting on the Fence of Parliamentary Enclosure: a Regressive Social Tax with Problematic Efficiency Gains'; and D N McCloskey, 'Theses on Enclosure'. Supplies are very limited, and sales will be made on a first come first served basis. Those requiring copies should write to the Secretary enclosing a cheque for £2 for each copy required (price inclusive of postage) made payable to the Society.

BRITISH COAL ROYALTIES

Coal royalties, together with surface wayleaves (the right to move coal across property), were nationalized in Britain in 1938 and compensation paid to the previous owners. Under grants made available by the SSRC, the Nuffield Foundation, and the University of London, data have been collected for compensation paid. The information is organized in much the same way as the assessments for compensation were made. In general, this involved determining the value to a landowner of the coal which would be worked for each colliery and from each piece of land owned. Accordingly, the compensation paid is detailed by landowner and by colliery. It is fully computerized so that, in principle, requests for information can be met. The data will be deposited in the SSRC Archive at the University of Essex. It should be of use in a wide variety of fields including the economic history of the coal industry

and of landed estates, the geography of these subjects and as a source of information concerning the distribution of wealth in the form of landed property. It will be invaluable to those wishing to undertake studies of mining or regions. Those interested in the data should write to: Ben Fine, Department of Economics, Birkbeck College, 7-15 Gresse Street, London W1P 1PA. Please state as precisely as possible what information is required and for what purpose.

CONFERENCE OF THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The 1984 conference of the Canadian Historical Association will be held at the University of Guelph, and proposals for session and for papers are invited by the organizers. Three areas have been selected for special emphasis at this conference: the eighteenth century; rural history; and the North American ethnic experience. Members wishing to offer contributions to the programme should write as soon as possible to Professor T A Crowley, Department of History, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1.

WINTER CONFERENCE, 1983

The Society's Winter Conference will be held in conjunction with the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers on Saturday 3 December 1983 at the Institute of Historical Research. The theme this year will be 'The Urban Consumption and Marketing of Agricultural Produce' and the speakers as follows: Dr R H Britnell (University of Durham), 'Agricultural Trade and the market place in medieval towns'; Dr J A Chartres (University of Leeds), 'The modernization of agricultural marketing after 1640'; Dr G Shaw (University of Exeter), 'Food supply in Victorian cities'; and Dr P J Atkins (University of Durham), 'A comparative study of marketing and consumption in London's dairy and fruit and vegetable trades, c 1800-1914'. A copy of this programme together with the booking form is inserted in this issue of the *Review*. Enquiries should be addressed to Dr Mark Overton, Department of Geography, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU.

SPRING CONFERENCE, 1984

The next Spring Conference of the Society will be held at Charlotte Mason College of Education, Ambleside, Cumbria, 9-11 April 1984. Suggestions or offers of papers for the programme should be addressed with any more general enquiries to the

Secretary. The programme and booking forms will appear in the next issue of the *Review*.

HORSES IN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

The Society is pleased to announce the publication on 16 September 1983 of a book *Horses in European Economic History: a Preliminary Canter*, edited by Professor F M L Thompson. This soft covered book of 212 pages prints revised versions of ten papers presented to the Eighth International Economic History Congress, Budapest, 1982, with an introduction by the Editor. A further notice about this publication appears elsewhere in the *Review* and an order form is inserted in this issue. Enquiries should be sent to the Treasurer.

THE HISTORY OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

A Symposium on the History of Soil and Water Conservation is to be held at the University of Missouri-Columbia, 24-26 May 1984. This symposium is organized jointly by the Agricultural History Society, the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Soil Conservation Service. It will emphasize the conservation of agricultural lands and water resources, and proposals for papers should be submitted

in two-page outline form to Douglas Helms, Historian, SCS-USDA, PO Box 2890, Washington DC 20013, USA, by mid-September 1983. Papers accepted for the symposium will be published in *Agricultural History*, and the selected authors will receive honoraria of \$200. General enquiries should be sent to Douglas Helms, or to Susan Flader, Department of History, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211, USA.

RECORDING FARM BUILDINGS

Saturday 15 to Sunday 16 October 1983. Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Shropshire

The second conference organized by the Institute of Industrial Archaeology on agricultural architecture will provide practical guidance and a forum on the requirements and techniques of recording farm buildings. The course chairman will be John Weller. Fieldwork will be combined with lectures and discussion and full accommodation for the weekend can be provided. For further details please contact Michael Stratton, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7AW. Telephone: (0952 45 3522 ext 32).

NEW PUBLICATION

Horses in European Economic History

Edited by F M L Thompson

The British Agricultural History Society announces the publication of a new soft-bound book, 212 pp, edited by F M L Thompson, *Horses in European Economic History: a Preliminary Canter*, now available from the Treasurer, BAHS, Institute of Agricultural History, The University, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 2AG.

Contents: 'Introduction', F M L Thompson; 'The Medieval Warhorse', R H C Davis; 'Horse Power', J Tann; 'The Supply of Horses in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century', K Chivers; 'Horses and Hay in Britain, 1830-1918', F M L Thompson; 'The Farm Horse Economy of England and Wales in the Early Tractor Age, 1900-40', E J T Collins and D Hallam; 'The Delayed Decline of the Horse in the Twentieth Century', T C Barker; 'The Horse Trade in Tudor and Stuart England', P R Edwards; 'Horses in the Netherlands at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century', H Diederiks; 'The Role of Horses in a Backward Economy: Spain in the Nineteenth Century', A Gomez Mendoza; and 'Horses and Management of a large Agricultural Estate in Russia at the end of the Nineteenth Century', O Crisp.

PRICE: £4.50 (\$10) to members of BAHS; £6.50 (\$15) to non members.

ORDERS: to E J T Collins, Treasurer BAHS, Institute of Agricultural History, The University, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 2AG.

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THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Articles and correspondence relating to editorial matter for the *Agricultural History Review*, and books for review, should be sent to Professor G E Mingay, Editor, *Agricultural History Review*, Rutherford College, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent.

Correspondence about conferences and meetings of the Society should be sent to Dr J A Chartres, School of Economic Studies, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT.

Correspondence on matters relating to membership, subscriptions, details of change of address, sale of publications, and exchange publications should be addressed to E J T Collins, Treasurer, BAHS, Museum of English Rural Life, The University, Whiteknights, Reading, Berkshire.

Correspondence on advertising should be sent to Dr R Perren, Department of Economic History, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB9 2TY.

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The Society aims at encouraging the study of the history of every aspect of the countryside by holding conferences and courses and by publishing *The Agricultural History Review*.

Membership is open to all who are interested in the subject and the subscription is £5 due on 1 February in each year. Details may be obtained from the Treasurer.

The Agricultural History Review

EDITOR: G E MINGAY

RUTHERFORD COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF KENT
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