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'*Pays réel* or *pays légal*'? Contrasting patterns of land tenure and social structure in eastern Norfolk and western Berkshire, 1450–1600*

by Jane Whittle and Margaret Yates

Abstract

Combining detailed studies of two contrasting regions, eastern Norfolk and western Berkshire, this article examines regional differences in land tenure and social structure in the period 1450–1600. Comparing manorial records with tax returns and probate records, it questions whether the patterns of landholding in the two regions were really as different as the manorial records alone would suggest. The use of non-manorial records also allows the relationship between manorial administration, land tenure, the land market, and social structure to be explored in some detail, touching on issues such as the cost of customary land, engrossment, sub-tenures and landlessness.

Customary land tenure in medieval and early modern England is infuriatingly complex. The countryside was a mosaic of manorial units, and each manor had its own customs determining types of tenure and access to land. The contrasts between manors has been a central theme of the economic history of rural England in the medieval period. Research has compared manors in different localities held by the same manorial lord, and manors of the same locality held by different lords.[1] Regional difference is also a familiar theme, in particular the contrast between the strongly manorialised Midlands and 'non-manorialised' areas of East Anglia and Kent.[2] In the former the boundaries of manor and parish were often the same, impartible inheritance was overwhelmingly dominant, and standard sized customary landholdings – yardlands or virgates – were ubiquitous; in the latter the boundaries of manor and parish rarely coincided, partible inheritance was common, standard sized holdings were absent or fragmented, and

* We would like to thank Dr Richard M. Smith who supervised both the D.Phil. theses on which this article is based.

[1] Examples of the former include Barbara Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its estates in the Middle Ages* (1977); Christopher Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a changing society. The estates of the bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540* (1980); J. Z. Titow, 'Some differences between manors and their effects on the condition of the peasant in the thirteenth century', *AgHR* 10 (1962), pp. 1–13. Examples of the latter include the studies in P. D. A. Harvey (ed.), *The peasant land market in medieval England* (1984); Mark Bailey, *A marginal economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later middle ages* (1989) and the regional chapters in E. Miller (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, III, *1348–1500* (1991).

[2] 'Non-manorialised' is M. M. Postan's term, see *The medieval economy and society* (1972), p. 97. It is truer to say that these areas of East Anglia and Kent were fully manorialised, but the manors had looser structures than those in the Midlands.

freehold land was more plentiful.[3] Only recently, however, have detailed studies of manors in these contrasting regions been compared. Differences in population density and the tenant land market have emerged as important themes, with East Anglia displaying the more active market and higher densities.[4] This article adds to the comparative literature by examining two sets of manors in these contrasting regions, with eastern Norfolk representing 'East Anglia', and western Berkshire 'the Midlands'. It combines the work of two researchers, each specialising in a different region but using similar research methods.[5]

Yet, this study aims to go further than comparing the manorial tenures of two regions. It also addresses a conundrum first raised by M. M. Postan in 'The charters of villeins', written as an introduction to the published edition of Peterborough Abbey's *Carte Nativorum*. In discovering the *Carte Nativorum*, a record of thirteenth-century land transfers that included purchases by the abbey's unfree tenants, Postan came into contact with the active and flexible land market in free and villein lands characteristic of much of medieval eastern England. Rather than concluding that this was a regional peculiarity Postan added a twist to the argument. He suggested the possibility that eastern England was a '*pays réel*', where weaker manorial structures allowed the nature of the tenant land market to be truthfully recorded, while Midland England was a '*pays légal*', where rigid manorial structures maintained standard sized landholdings and restricted sales of customary land. As a result the manorial documents of Midland England hid a large class of subtenants and an active market in short-term leases of land. The contrast was in the documentation and the manorial structure, but not in the nature of rural society. The social structure and the distribution of land among active agriculturalists in the two regions were broadly similar. In other words, the regional contrasts were a legal and documentary mirage.[6]

Postan's supposition raises a number of fundamental questions. Do manorial documents provide us with reliable evidence about the nature of social structure and access to land? Did the nature of land tenure – as determined by manorial customs – shape the nature of rural society? Or were manorial structures nothing more than an administrative convenience sitting above real patterns of rural life upon which they had little impact? The way these questions are answered has important implications for our understanding of the development of rural society and economy over time. If the documents overemphasize regional difference, they may also overemphasize change over time. Postan suggested that in contrasting the thirteenth century with the fifteenth century, 'much of what historians have reported as signs of social transformations may to some extent be an optical illusion: a mere change in the ability of our sources

[3] See G. C. Homans, *English villagers of the thirteenth century* (New York, 1960), pp. 109–132, 204–206; E. A. Kosminsky, *Studies in the agrarian history of England in the thirteenth century* (1956), pp. 126–134; Rosamond Faith, *The English peasantry and the growth of lordship* (1997), p. 136.

[4] Zvi Razi, 'The myth of the immutable English family', *Past and Present* 140 (1993), pp. 3–44. Jane Whittle, 'Individualism and the family-land bond. A reassessment of land transfer patterns among the English peasantry, *c.* 1270–1580', *Past and Present* 160 (1998), pp. 25–63.

[5] Whilst this article incorporates additional research to increase the comparability of our data, nevertheless it is based on J. Whittle, 'The development of agrarian capitalism in England from *c.* 1450–*c.* 1580' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1995) and M. Yates, 'Continuity and change in rural society, *c.* 1400–1600: West Hanney and Shaw (Berkshire) and their region' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1997).

[6] 'The charters of villeins', first published in 1960 and reprinted in M. M. Postan, *Essays on medieval agriculture and general problems of the medieval economy* (1973), pp. 107–49. *Pays réel* and *pays légal* appear on p. 145.

to reflect the facts of life'.[7] The study presented here restricts itself to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but it is not without relevance to the earlier period. In addition to manorial records there are more, non-manorial, documents relating to rural social structure for the years 1450–1600 than earlier: probate records, the Military Survey and tax returns of the 1520s, and early parish registers provide information that is independent of manorial records. These sources allow us to consider the social distribution of wealth, to estimate population density and the numbers of landless as well as tenant density, and to say something about non-agricultural forms of employment: thus the *pays réel* becomes evident. If manorial customs determining tenure and land transfers had a strong impact on sixteenth century rural society then it seems extremely unlikely that this impact was any less strong in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century. However, if manorial custom had little influence, then we need to look elsewhere for explanations of local and regional difference in early modern England, and should remain open to the possibility that earlier medieval documents present a very partial picture of village life.[8] The article begins with a brief introduction to the regions and manors studied, before moving on to examine tenurial structure, patterns of land transfer and the distribution of land between tenants, and finally social structure.

I

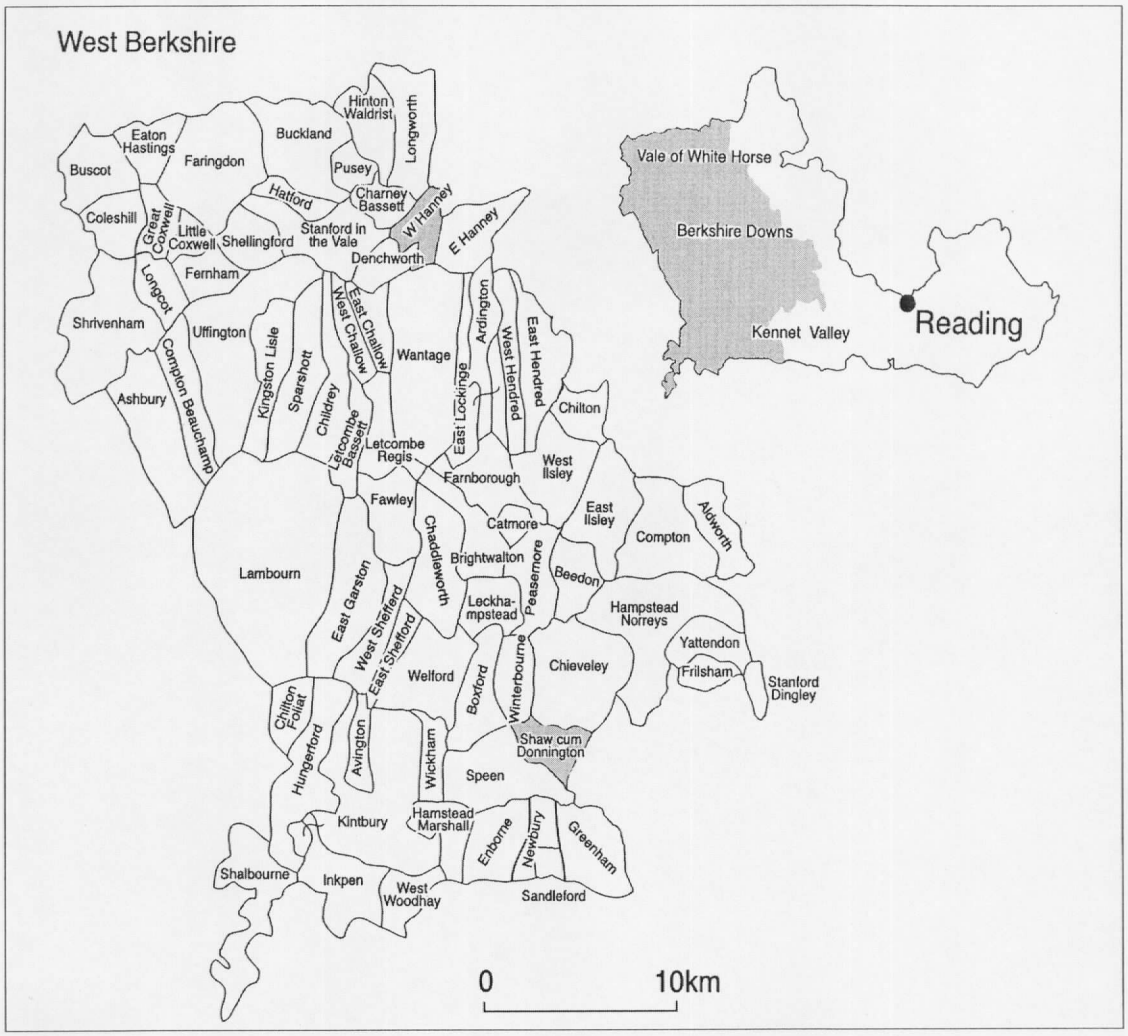
The area of west Berkshire considered in this paper is defined by the survival of the nominal returns of the 1381 Poll Tax and 1522 Military Survey (see Map 1). Its natural topography is divided by the Berkshire Downs into three distinctive regions; the Vale of the White Horse in the north, a flat, fertile alluvial plain; the Downs themselves which rise to 260 metres at White Horse Hill; and the varied terrain of the Kennet Valley. Of the three Berkshire manors examined here two, Priors Court and Seymours Court, were located in the parish of West Hanney in the Vale of the White Horse. West Hanney lies a mile from the major road leading from Oxford to Wantage and two and a half miles from the nearest town, Wantage. The local economy was almost completely dominated by mixed farming.[9] The lands of the village were divided between three small manors and a Rectory. New College, Oxford, held the largest manor of Priors Court comprising 495 acres. The other manors were held by local gentry families: the Eystons of West Hendred held Seymours Court (309.4 acres) and the Yates of Lyford were lords of Andrews Court (467.5 acres), and finally the Rectory had 110 acres.[10] These were not discreet lands but

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[8] Comparative studies of early modern communities are surprisingly rare: the classic is Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting communities. English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (1974). However, Spufford stresses different agricultural regimes rather than the effects of manorial structures. It should also be noted that the debate about 'open' and 'close' communities in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries has many parallels with the issues discussed here.

[9] The 45 surviving probate inventories from sixteenth century West Hanney show that 29.7 per cent of inventoried wealth was in crops and grain and 35.6 per cent in livestock. Alternative sources of income to farming were rarely mentioned. There were only three non-agricultural occupations: a miller, a blacksmith and a tailor. Berkshire RO [hereafter BRO], D/A1.

[10] The relative size of the different manors was calculated by dividing the total acreage of the parish, 1383 acres (taken from *Victoria County History of Berkshire* [hereafter *VCH Berkshire*], II, p. 242), by the number of yardlands for each manor and the rectory. The number of yardlands were recorded in 1599 in the resolution of a dispute over pasture rights between the three manors



MAP 1. Berkshire, showing the parishes of 'west Berkshire'.

were intermingled in the open fields of the village.[11] Documentary survival is sufficiently strong to enable the manors of Priors Court and Seymours Court to be studied, illustrating the different management strategies of two landlords in a single village, one a corporate body and the other a local gentry family.

(New College Archive [hereafter NCA], 1360); they were Priors Court 18 yardlands, Seymours Court 11.25, Andrews Court 17, and the Rectory 4 yardlands. Yardlands were measurements of arable land with the other resources of the manor allocated proportionately, for example tenants could pasture 30 sheep for every yardland held. It is assumed that the total acreage of the parish was available to the manors in proportion to the arable land of the yardlands.

[11] They are identifiable in the glebe terrier of 1634 and two detailed land transactions at Priors Court. In each case the acre strips were described by their situation in the various furlongs and the names of the occupants of the neighbouring strips were given. Glebe terrier, BRO, D/A2 c185, and NCA, 4060 (1502), 4061 (1525).

The third Berkshire manor, Shaw, lies within the parish of Shaw cum Donnington situated in the Kennet Valley within Newbury's rural hinterland. The town of Newbury was a prosperous and expanding centre of cloth production in the late fifteenth century.[12] The western boundary of the manor of Shaw was formed by the main road from Oxford to Winchester and its southern boundary by the River Lambourn which joined the Kennet to the east of the parish. It was a medium sized manor of 762.75 acres, held by Winchester College until 1543 when it was exchanged with the king and then sold to one of Newbury's successful clothiers, Thomas Dolman, in 1554.[13] Shaw's geological structure was more varied than West Hanney's being a mixture of chalk, gravel and clay. The local economy was also more diversified: in addition to mixed farming, there was some specialisation in livestock rearing, but more significantly there were industries including milling, tanning and there is evidence of some out-work for the Newbury cloth industry.[14]

In comparison to west Berkshire, the manorial structure of eastern Norfolk was complex and fragmented. Parishes typically contained more than one manor, and manors stretched into a number of parishes. The material presented here derives largely from a detailed study of a single manor in north-east Norfolk, Hevingham Bishops, with comparative data drawn from seven other manors in the same locality (see Map 2). The locality was well situated to serve Norwich, eight miles south of Hevingham, while the North Sea coastal trade could be accessed either from Cromer 12 miles to the north, or via the river Bure to Great Yarmouth. Hevingham Bishops manor neighboured on Aylsham, a thriving small town with regular markets, and on Cawston, a smaller market centre. North-east Norfolk is a region of good quality loamy soils, although there are also areas of sandy heathland. Its gently rolling landscape provides few obstacles to agriculture. It was an area of mixed farming and advanced techniques.[15] As with the area around Newbury in Berkshire, the cloth industry provided additional employment in some rural parishes. Of the communities studied, worsted weavers were found in Marsham, the main settlement in Hevingham Bishops manor, and in Buxton and Scottow.[16]

As well as dominating the parish of Marsham, Hevingham Bishops manor also extended into the parishes of Hevingham, Brampton, Buxton and Stratton Strawless. The other seven manors from which documents were examined include Hevingham Cattes, located mainly in the parish of Hevingham, and extending into the same parishes as Hevingham Bishops; and Buxton manor which also stretched into Marsham, Hevingham, Brampton and Stratton

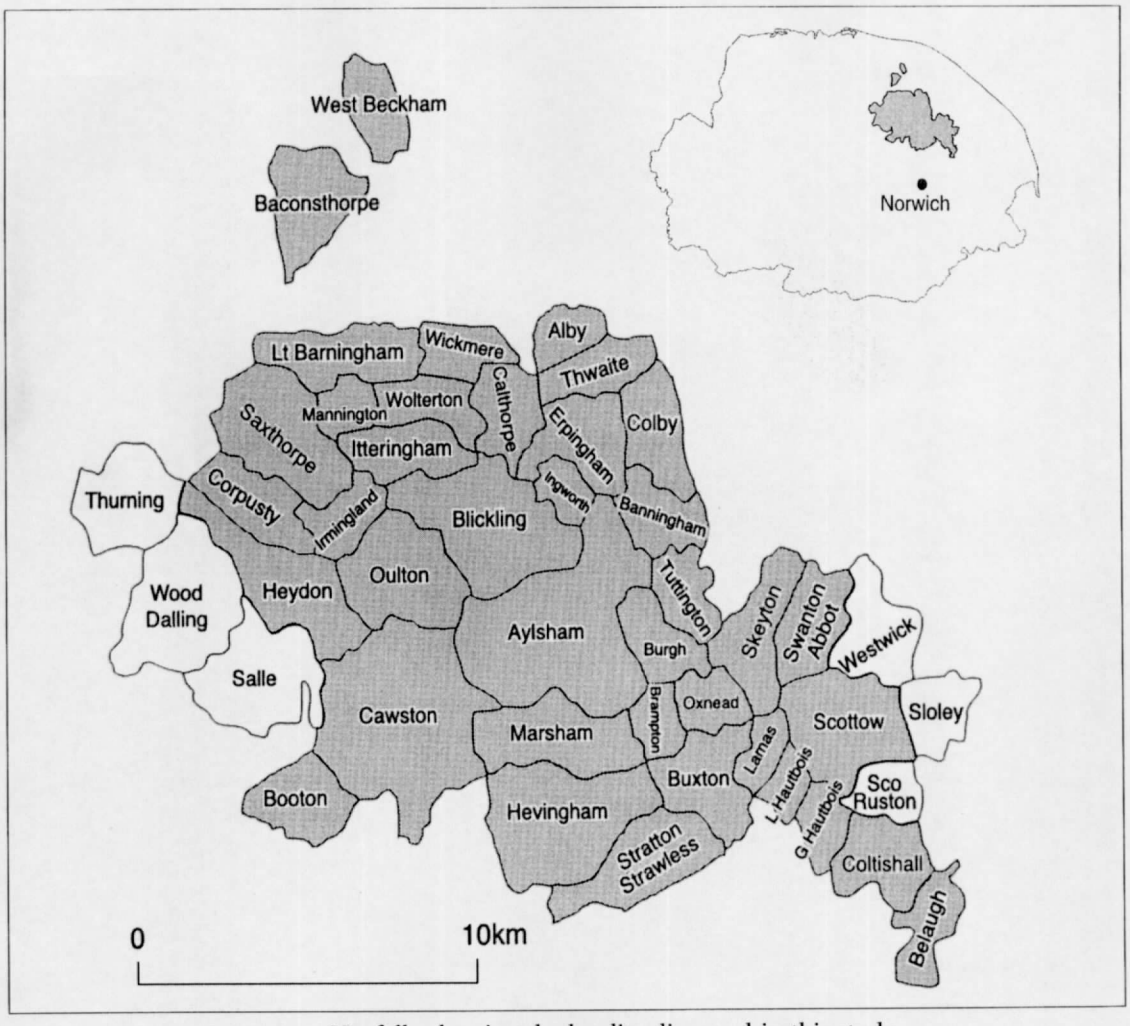
[12] *VCH Berkshire*, IV, p. 138.

[13] A detailed manorial survey survives for 1547 from which the acreages were calculated. PRO, LR2/187. The descent of the manor can be found in *VCH Berkshire*, IV, p. 89.

[14] The 18 surviving probate inventories from sixteenth-century Shaw show 20.8 per cent of inventoried wealth was in crops and grain and 55.8 per cent in livestock. Details of the mills, including a tanning mill, are recorded in the ministers' accounts, BRO, D/ENm1 M12–55. The scale of the tanning operation is seen in the will of Maurice Smart, PRO, PROB 11/33/22 and inventory of Maurice Shipton, BRO, D/A1/ 213/77. A weaver and two cloth finishers left probate inventories, BRO, D/A1/205/180, 173/30, 76/133.

[15] Bruce M. S. Campbell and Mark Overton, 'A new perspective on medieval and early modern agriculture. Six centuries of Norfolk farming, *c.* 1250–*c.* 1850', *Past & Present* 141 (1993), pp. 38–105.

[16] Of the documents studied, wills provide the most evidence of worsted weaving. See also Anne F. Sutton, 'The early linen and worsted industry of Norfolk and the evolution of the London Mercer's Company', *Norfolk Arch.* 40 (1989), pp. 201–25; K. J. Allison, 'The Norfolk worsted industry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research* 12 (1960), pp. 73–83.



MAP 2. Norfolk, showing the locality discussed in this study (the parishes of South Erpingham Hundred are shaded).

Strawless. The situation in Hevingham and Marsham was in some ways similar to that in West Hanney. The different manors' lands were intermingled in the fields. The relatively relaxed lordship of Hevingham Bishops, owned by the Bishop of Norwich until 1536, stands in contrast to Hevingham Cattes, which was owned by a small resident gentry family: first the Cattes and then jointly by the Thetfords and Yaxleys. Cattes manor had higher entry fines, and continued charging fines associated with personal serfdom to one family until the reign of Elizabeth.[17] The complexity of manorial structure in Hevingham and Marsham is repeated elsewhere in the locality. The manors of Saxthorpe Mickelhall and Saxthorpe Loundhall dominated the parishes of Saxthorpe and Corpusty, but also stretched into a minimum of eight other parishes. The

[17] Norfolk RO [hereafter NRO], Norwich, NRS 14653 29D2: Hevingham Cattes court roll 1554–66, court held March 1562.

manor of Salle Kirkhall had separate juries for the villages of Wood Dalling, Thurning and Oulton as well as Salle, and also extended into the parish of Heydon. Scottow manor had separate juries for Westwick, Sloley and Sco Ruston in addition to Scottow. Blickling manor was more consolidated, encompassing the majority of Blickling parish but also parts of Itteringham and Wolterton. Manorial ownership in this region of Norfolk was dominated by three locally resident families of the county gentry, the Boleyns, Heydons and Pastons.[18]

II

The fragmented manorial structure of eastern Norfolk was mirrored in the distribution of land amongst the tenants. There were no standard sized customary landholdings such as the virgates or yardlands of Midland England. Land area was measured in acres. However, all the manors studied did conform to the classic pattern of dividing land into demesne, freehold and customary tenures. No single document records the size of Hevingham Bishops manor, but rentals and an extent from the sixteenth century indicate that there were 566 acres of customary land and around 40 acres of freehold.[19] Sixty acres of demesne arable were split up and granted permanently in small pieces to various tenants in 1489 and 1491 and a further 40 acres of demesne pasture were leased out for terms of years during the early sixteenth century, suggesting that the manor originally had a small demesne of around 100 acres. In addition, the manor contained 500 acres of heathland. The records of a dispute in the early seventeenth century state that 300 acres of this were the tenants' common, while 200 acres were demesne – for the sole use of the lord's foldcourse.[20] The foldcourse, grazing rights for the lord's sheep, also extended over the tenants' lands when they were not sown with arable crops.

Hevingham Bishops contained an unusually small amount of freehold land for an east Norfolk manor. For instance Saxthorpe Mickelhall contained 93 acres of freehold, and Buxton manor had over 400 acres. Correspondingly, 15 per cent of Hevingham's tenants held freehold land from the manor, compared to 29 per cent of Saxthorpe Mickelhall's and 37 per cent of Buxton's. The majority, 53 per cent, of the freeholders in these three manors held customary land from the same manor as well.[21] This picture is reinforced by the Military Survey of 1522 which records the ownership of freehold land. In South Erpingham hundred, in which all but one of the Norfolk manors studied here were located, 32 per cent of individuals assessed owned freehold land. This land was mostly held in small pieces: of those who had land, 56 per cent owned

[18] The Boleyns owned Blickling, and Hevingham Bishops after 1540. The Heydons owned Saxthorpe Loundhall, and acquired Saxthorpe Mickelhall in the mid-sixteenth century. The Pastons owned Salle Kirkhall. In contrast Buxton was owned by the Lord Morley, who was not locally resident; while Scottow was owned by the Abbey of St Benet's until 1536 when it passed to the Bishop of Norwich.

[19] Hevingham Bishops manor: rental 1509, NRO, NRS 14759 29D4; undated extent (*c.* 1515), NRO, NRS 13714 28D6; rental 1573, NRO, NRS 13716 28D6, contained in a rough court book. The total for freehold land excludes submanors.

[20] Hevingham Bishops manor, court roll 1485–1509, NRO, NRS 19560 42D2, courts held March 1489 and June 1491; court roll 1509–47, NRO, NRS 13685 28D3, court held July 1529. The record of the dispute over the common is bundled with the rough court books of 1564–73, NRO, NRS 12945 27F2. The tenants claimed they had rights of common over the whole 500 acres.

[21] Saxthorpe Mickelhall manor rental 1500, NRO, NRS 19709 42E6; Buxton manor rental 1529, NRO, Castle Museum Deposit 20:8:59 (sheet T150D); Hevingham Bishops manor: rental 1509, NRO, NRS 14759 29D4.

TABLE 1. Rent per acre (modal value) in four Norfolk manors

Manor	*Leasehold*	*Customary*	*Soliat*	*Freehold*
Hevingham Bishops *c.* 1515	–	7*d.*	–	3*d.*
Saxthorpe Mickelhall 1500	8*d.*	9*d.* or 4*d.*	2*d.*	2*d.* or 4*d.*
Salle Kirkhall 1494	8*d.*	12*d.*	–	4*d.*
Buxton 1529	12*d.*	12*d.*	1*d.* or 4*d.*	1*d.* or 4*d.*

Sources: Hevingham Bishops undated extent, NRO, NRS 13714 28D6; Saxthorpe Mickelhall rental, NRO, NRS 19709 42E6; Salle Kirkhall rental, NRO, NRS 2702 12C6; Buxton rental, NRO, Castle Museum Deposit 20:8:59 (sheet T150D).

pieces worth less than £1 and 82 per cent owned land worth less than £2.[22] Unfortunately the Norfolk returns do not record where this land was located, or the number of people who owned freehold land in South Erpingham but were not resident in the hundred, so they are not strictly comparable with the Berkshire returns discussed below.

The form of customary tenure found in all the Norfolk manors studied here was copyhold of inheritance. This gave the tenant eternal, secure rights to the land as long as rents and fines were paid and other requirements met. As well as being heritable, landholdings could be bought, sold, mortgaged, split, amalgamated, held jointly by relatives or groups of non-relatives and held by non-resident tenants. In the absence of any definite evidence to the contrary, we can assume they could also be sublet for short terms. Land only returned permanently to the lord if there were no heirs, or if a tenant had seriously infringed the terms of tenure. As land could be surrendered out of court to anyone the tenant wished, including from a tenant's deathbed, provided the surrender was witnessed by other tenants and reported at the next court, lack of 'heirs' was extremely rare. Land was left in the lords' hands in the fifteenth century because there were no buyers, not because there were no heirs.

Levels of rents and fines are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Different levels of rent were paid according to the type of tenure, whether it was leasehold, customary land, freehold, or soliat land. (Soliat was freehold land which had been acquired by unfree tenants sometime during the medieval period and thus had become 'soiled' or tainted in status, and appears to have been unique to East Anglia.[23] Rent was paid at the same level as freehold land, but tenants also owed an entry fine, as was the case with customary land.) As expected, Table 1 shows that the rents for freehold and soliat land were low, while customary and leasehold land owed higher rents. Leasehold rents could be set at market rates, so we can assume that they reflect the current demand for land in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The fact that they were similar and occasionally lower than customary rents, and that there was variation between manors, is therefore important to note.

Entry fines were paid by the incoming tenant, whether purchaser or heir, each time a piece of land changed hands. Tenants owed no heriot (a death-duty or fine paid by the outgoing tenant): entry fines were the only manorial payment levied on land transfers. Within each manor there were variations in average fines per acre because different fines were charged in

[22] PRO, E101/61/16. Land was assessed on its yearly value, that is, its rental value not sale value.

[23] F. G. Davenport, *The economic development of a Norfolk manor* (1906), p. 70.

TABLE 2. Entry fines in seven Norfolk manors

	1444–68	*1515–32*	*1556–74*
Hevingham Bishops	4.8*d.* (4*d.*)	5.2*d.* (4*d.*)	6.1*d.* (6*d.*)
Hevingham Cattes	44.3*d.* (4*s.*)	–	41.2*d.* (4*s.*)
Saxthorpe Loundhall	17.5*d.* (1*s.*)	23.6*d.* (2*s.*)	25.3*d.* (2*s.*)
Saxthorpe Mickelhall	21.6*d.* (2*s.*)	6.4*d.* (6*d.*)	14.9*d.* (1*s.*)
Salle Kirkhall	–	44.0*d.* (4*s.*)	48.3*d.* (4*s.*)
Blickling	32.3*d.* (4*s.*)	–	45.0*d.* (4*s.*)
Scottow	–	44.0*d.* (4*s.*)	46.0*d.* (4*s.*)

Note: The table shows average (mean) fines per acre for transfers of ¼ acre or more in size, modal fines are shown in brackets and in bold when more than half of the fines accorded with the mode. Each sample was made up of the first 30 usable fines for that period, with the exception of Salle Kirkhall 1556–74 for which only 20 fines were usable.

Sources: Hevingham Bishops court rolls, NRO, NRS 19559 42D2, NRS 13685 28D3, NRS 14477 29C1; Hevingham Cattes court rolls, NRO, NRS 14746 29D4, NRS 14481 29C1, NRS 14653 29D2; Saxthorpe Loundhall court rolls, NRO, NRS 19670 42E2, NRS 19673 42E2, NRS 19675 42E3; Saxthorpe Mickelhall court rolls, NRO, NRS 19698 42E5, NRS 19701 42E5, NRS 19703 42E6; Salle Kirkhall court rolls, NRO, NRS 2607 12B5, NRS 2608 12B6, NRS 2609 12B6; Blickling court rolls, NRO, NRS 10192 25A1, NRS 11275 26A6; Scottow court books, NRO, SCO.8 111X2, SCO.10 111X2.

different circumstances. For instance, heathland was subject to lower fines in Blickling manor, presumably as a result of its low agricultural value. Reversions were sometimes liable to double fines as they eliminated a potential transfer, while certain types of regrants paid half fines. Fines, even more than rents, showed some significant variations between manors. Fines were fixed in Hevingham Cattes, Salle Kirkhall, Blickling and Scottow: all manors where the highest rate of 4*s.* an acre was paid. Fines in Hevingham Bishops were unusually low but variable until a dispute in the 1540s fixed them at 6*d.* an acre.[24] Fines were also variable in both Saxthorpe manors. There was no evidence of the rapid increase in fines during the sixteenth century which has been noted elsewhere in the country, and in Seymours Court, Berkshire, described below.[25] The fines are put into perspective by the price for which customary land was sold between tenants: an average of 30*s.* an acre in Hevingham Bishops in the late fifteenth century. It seems unlikely that rents and fines at these levels presented any threat to security of tenure.

Contrasts between the manors are also evident in the policy towards unoccupied land and the repair of buildings. Tenants' houses and farm buildings were part of the assets of the manor and it was the tenants' responsibility to maintain them. Lords were within their rights to insist that tenants kept properties in good repair, under threat of eviction if they failed to do so. Many of the more prosperous tenants engaged in engrossment during this period, amalgamating landholdings to enlarge their farms. Engrossment often resulted in disrepair as buildings surplus to the tenant's needs were allowed to deteriorate or collapse altogether. An active and intrusive manorial lord could hinder the process of engrossment by insisting that houses should not be pulled down or allowed to decay.

[24] Hevingham Bishops court roll 1509–47, NRO, NRS 13685 28D3, court held October 1543.

[25] R. H. Tawney, *The agrarian problem in the sixteenth century* (1967), pp. 305–6.

We would expect tenants to gravitate towards those manors with low rents and fines, and relaxed policies of administration towards matters such as repairs. This seems to have been the case. Hevingham Bishops manor with its low rents and fines was fully tenanted from at least the mid-fifteenth century onwards. Tenants were rarely reprimanded for failing to keep their property in repair. Despite the fact that the land was fully occupied, engrossment did take place as a result of the tenants' land market activities. The declining numbers of direct manorial tenants is the clearest indication of this. Hevingham Bishops had 52 direct tenants in 1509, but only 39 in 1573. There was an increase in the number of landholdings of over 50 acres in size during this period, although the proportion of tenants with less than one acre also increased, demonstrating that engrossment and polarisation had occurred simultaneously during the sixteenth century.[26] Nevertheless, there is little evidence that actual holdings were rationalized or consolidated. For instance Robert Bisshop, a large tenant in Hevingham Bishops manor, held 46 acres of customary land in *c.* 1515 in 26 separate pieces. When he died in 1556 he held 47 acres in 25 pieces.[27]

The situation was different on other north-east Norfolk manors. Hevingham Cattes had significantly higher entry fines than Hevingham Bishops with which it shared the fields of Hevingham and Marsham, and perhaps more than half the customary land was unoccupied in the mid-1440s.[28] Unfortunately the documentation for Cattes manor is too patchy to be able to trace the situation into the sixteenth century. However, the Paston's manor of Salle Kirkhall just a few miles to the west of Hevingham, was another manor with relatively high rents and fines. Among the manors studied, Salle Kirkhall and Cattes stand out for their tenacious maintenance of serfdom well into the sixteenth century.[29] In Salle in 1494 customary rents were considerably higher than those for leasehold. A list of customary tenements in Salle Kirkhall drawn up during the reign of Henry VIII recorded 36 per cent of the land area 'in the lord's hands', unoccupied by customary tenants.[30] An examination of the court rolls for a six year period from 1521–6 inclusive shows them to be littered with orders for tenants to repair their buildings. There were an average of five such orders a year, as well as repeat orders with higher fines. Fines ranged from 3*d.* for an initial presentment to 13*s.* 4*d.* for repeated failure to carry out repairs on properties. More significantly, during this short period two tenants forfeited their properties altogether for failing to carry out repairs.[31] It seems likely that this manor lacked customary tenants because of its unpopular manorial policies including the maintenance of serfdom, high rents and fines, and an insistence on repairs.

[26] Hevingham Bishops rental 1509, NRO, NRS 14759 29D4; and rental 1573, NRO, NRS 13716 28D6.

[27] Robert Bisshop also held freehold and demesne land from the manor, as well as land from Hevingham Cattes, Buxton manor, Bolwick Hall (a small manor between Marsham and Aylsham), and Marsham Rectory. He may well have held land from other manors as well. His total landholding was certainly over 100 acres in size at its peak.

[28] Hevingham Cattes custumal 1443/4, NRO, NRS 14471 29C1, lists 24 customary tenements of which six were fully occupied by customary tenants, nine were unoccupied, and eight were only partly occupied.

[29] Chevage, a fine to live outside ones' manor of origin was charged in Salle Kirkhall up to the 1530s, and in Cattes up to the 1560s. Such fines were only charged to those described as 'bondmen of blood' and not to the majority of customary tenants.

[30] Salle Kirkhall book of tenements temp. Henry VIII, NRO, NRS 2650 12C4. 126.5 acres of the land listed was in the lord's hands. It is possible that some of this land was leased.

[31] Salle Kirkhall court roll, NRO, NRS 2607 12B5.

TABLE 3. Rents per acre in pence on three Berkshire manors[a]

Manor	*Date*	*Demesne*	*Date*	*Customary*	*Freehold*
Priors Court, West Hanney	1443	14.5	1490	5.9	3.8
	1541	14.6	1605	5.7	4.3
Seymours Court, West Hanney	1445	8.7	1492	8.2	2*d.* or a rose[b]
	1512	8.9	*c.* 1600	6.9	
Shaw	1450	5.1	1450	2.4	2.3
	1547	5.4	1547	4.4	0.9

Notes: [a] See text for method of calculation.
[b] Freehold rent for Seymours Court is the nominal sum levied on the holding, not per acre.
Sources: Priors Court, NCA, 1443 ministers' account, 7191; 1490 rental, 4075; 1541 bailiffs' account, 1794; 1605 rental, 4076; Seymours Court, BRO, 1445 court roll, D/EX1/M1/5; 1492 rental, D/EX1/M7 and free land in court roll D/EX1/M3/2; 1512 court roll, D/EX1/M4/2; *c.* 1600 court book, D/EX1/M6, court rolls D/EX1/M5/1, D/EX1/M5/2; Shaw, PRO, 1450 rental within court roll, SC2/154/53, 1547 survey, LR2/187.

The lands of the Berkshire manors, like those of Norfolk, were held as demesne, freehold or customary tenure. Unlike those of Norfolk, however, they were predominantly held in standard units of yardlands or virgates.[32] These were made up of different numbers of acres of arable land, with pasture allocated in proportion to the arable and described in terms of the number of animals that could be grazed. The demesnes of Priors Court and Seymours Court were identical in area, being four virgates in size or roughly 110 acres. Shaw's demesne was 187 acres. The demesne lands of all three Berkshire manors were leased in their entirety for varying periods: Priors Court for ten to twenty years, Seymours Court for eight to ten years and Shaw for ten to thirty-two years. Demesne rents were significantly higher than other rents, as shown in Table 3, and varied little over time.[33] Those at Seymours Court were more expensive than at Priors Court despite the fact that the strips lay dispersed in the same fields of West Hanney.

The amount of the freehold land was relatively small in all three manors. At Seymours Court there was only 11.5 acres, some of which only owed a token annual rent of a red rose for the property. Priors Court had approximately four virgates of free land and Shaw 98 acres. All freehold rents were low, similar to the levels found in Norfolk: those of Shaw actually fell between 1450 and 1547. However, the Berkshire tenants also had to pay reliefs on the death of

[32] Although the detailed survey of Shaw described the lands in virgates and acres and the latter measurement is employed in this article. PRO, LR2/187.

[33] Rents per acre on the Berkshire lands as calculated here are very tentative and must be viewed with great caution. Rents were levied on individual holdings rather than on precise acres of land. To calculate the rent per acre at West Hanney the total rent for the year on each type of land – demesne, customary and free – was first divided into the number of its yardlands, and then converted into acres by employing the multiplier of yardlands to acres described above. At Shaw the total rents for the year were divided into the acreages derived from the 1547 survey and the common land of the manor was added to ensure that the figures were comparable with West Hanney. There were 161.5 acres of common on the manor and these were divided in proportion to the other lands of the manor and added to their total acreages before dividing that sum by the total rent for the year.

a free tenant. On the large freeholdings at Priors Court this was specified as a mounter, that is a horse with all its equipment, given as a fixed sum of 10s. in 1523. At Seymours Court the relief was a red rose. At Shaw the relief was a money sum, equivalent to a year's rent. Nevertheless, it is clear that the payments due for free land did not reflect its market value. Its real worth lay in the price that was paid when land was transferred, and this sum did not appear in the lord's manorial documents. Free tenants were usually non-resident in the parish and could include the lords of neighbouring manors. A general pattern of non-resident freeholders in west Berkshire is confirmed by the Military Survey of 1522.[34] The returns show that 94 per cent of those assessed were not resident in the village where their freehold lands were situated. Although the number of non-resident freeholders in Norfolk is unknown, this does suggest a different structure of ownership. Customary tenants in Berkshire were much less likely than those of eastern Norfolk to own freehold land.

Customary tenure on all three Berkshire manors was copyhold for lives rather than copyhold of inheritance. At Priors Court tenure was for the life of the tenant and his widow, if she did not remarry, and at Seymours Court and Shaw for three named lives, which were usually the life of the tenant, his wife and son. Although the potential existed for tenants to renew the customary tenure and extend the tenancy, this was rarely taken up. Renewals of tenures occurred only once at Priors Court, twice at Seymours Court and four times at Shaw.[35] Customary land was usually held in divisions of yardlands or virgates which varied in size. At Priors Court there were a total of 10 yardlands of customary land, at Seymours Court 7¼ yardlands, and at Shaw there were 6¼ virgates. When these are multiplied as a proportion of the total size of the manor the approximate acreages of customary land in each manor can be calculated: there were 275 acres at Priors Court, 200 acres at Seymours Court, and 382 acres at Shaw.[36] The level of customary rent had been set at some point in the past in West Hanney and was levied on a particular holding rather than number of acres, although changes did occur when holdings were amalgamated or consolidated. There was very little movement in the level of rent at Priors Court, whilst at Seymours Court rents were generally reduced after a re-negotiation of pasture rights and rents in the late fifteenth century. Calculations can only be very approximate, but it does appear that customary rents in West Hanney were set at around 6*d.* per acre on the manor of Priors Court and 8*d.* to 7*d.* on the gentry manor of Seymours Court. As in Norfolk, therefore, payments varied by manor even when the land lay in the same fields, although these rents were somewhat lower than those found in the Norfolk manors. At Shaw, the level of customary rent increased over time whilst remaining lower than at West Hanney; it almost doubled during the sixteenth century to nearly 4½*d.* per acre.[37]

Rents however, formed only one part of the cost of customary land to the tenant, for they also owed entry fines and heriots. Entry fines at Seymours Court and Shaw were more responsive than rents to the underlying economic conditions of the period. Unlike those in Norfolk, fines

[34] PRO, E315/464.

[35] Over the time periods 1444–1602 on Priors Court, 1435–1594 on Seymours Court, and 1405–1546 on Shaw. Specifically, the renewals took place in 1599 in Priors Court, 1577 and 1594 in Seymours Court, and 1407, 1465, 1480 and 1490 in Shaw.

[36] These acreages include common pasture.

[37] By necessity, rents had to be calculated by a different method for the Berkshire manors. It is likely that one of the reasons that rents are lower in Berkshire is because the acreages include common pasture, which is not the case for the Norfolk rents.

rose significantly over the period, although there were variations between manors reflecting different manorial policies. At Priors Court there was very little movement in the size of entry fines which were, on average, one year's rent in the early sixteenth century (very approximately 8*d.* per acre). At Seymours Court entry fines increased over time from a capon at the beginning of the fifteenth century, to the equivalent of one year's rent in the last quarter of the century, to approximately the level of ten years rent by the second half of the sixteenth century. For example, in 1559 John Donnesdon paid £10 for a messuage and one virgate of land, which was approximately 10*s.* an acre on that property.[38] At Shaw entry fines fluctuated before 1440 and then increased steadily throughout the rest of the period studied. For example, a messuage and half virgate of land which consisted of five acres of pasture and twelve acres of arable was charged an entry fine of 3*s.* 4*d.* in 1480, 11*s.* 4*d.* in 1538, and 40*s.* in 1605. That is an increase from 2.4*d.* per acre, to 8*d.*, to 28.2*d.* per acre in 1605. Entry fines on cottages in Shaw rose dramatically in the second half of the sixteenth century. For example, Nicholas King and his son renewed their tenancy in 1606 on a cottage with its adjacent close and paid 16*s.* as entry fine and 10*s.* annual rent. In 1474 this property had rendered an entry fine of 13*d.* and an annual rent of 3*s.* 4*d.*[39]

The final charge on customary holdings in Berkshire were heriots which were owed to the lord at the end of each tenure. The amount due was specified at the beginning of the tenure and was usually the best animal or its equivalent. This could be a cow, horse, or several sheep, and at Priors Court was often specified as an acre of corn. In 1511, on the manor of Seymours Court, the three members of the Unwey family had all died and the heriots from their tenement of a messuage and virgate of land, which included the Forge, were stipulated as: an anvil price 60*s.* due from John, from his wife's life was a pair of Forge bellows price 5*s.*, and from the son an iron vice worth 4*s.* 4*d.*[40] At Priors Court and Shaw the heriot was also described in monetary terms, for example a horse worth twelve shillings, and was usually the equivalent of one year's rent. Manorial accounts show this was typically received as a cash payment at the Colleges. Heriots were an additional charge on customary land and one that could make the cost of customary land in Berkshire more expensive than that of Norfolk, particularly if the tenancy was of short duration.

As in Norfolk there were contrasts between lords in their attitudes to disrepair and engrossment and these had important implications for the tenants. Tenants were presented for disrepair much more frequently in Seymours Court than Priors Court in West Hanney: between the mid-fifteenth century and the end of the sixteenth century 111 tenants were presented in Seymours Court compared to 47 in Priors Court. There were 61 cases at Shaw before 1545. At Seymours Court tenants were pursued in the manor court until their repairs were completed with increasing levels of penalty ranging from 3*s.* 4*d.* to £2, the modal value being 10*s.* On two occasions the eventual outcome was eviction. For example, the fifth penalty that Richard Willes incurred was of 40*s.*; he was ordered to sign a bond with the lord for the money and his tenement was later seized.[41] Penalties at Priors Court ranged from 4*d.* to £1 with a modal value of 6*s.* 8*d.* There were no evictions for failure to repair buildings at Priors Court; indeed, on

[38] BRO, D/EX1/M6.
[39] BRO, D/ENm1/M1–5; PRO, SC2/154/54.
[40] BRO, D/EX1/4/2.
[41] BRO, D/EX1/M1/2.

one occasion the tenant had withdrawn from his tenement and left the buildings in a ruinous state. At Shaw there were no evictions and penalties ranged from 3*s.* 4*d.* to £1, with the majority being 3*s.* 4*d.* Engrossment of holdings was another contrast between the manors. On the lands of the two corporate lords some engrossing was taking place, whilst at Seymours Court the lords tried to maintain the integrity of their customary holdings. This can be quantified by the number of direct customary tenants which fell from nine to five at Priors Court and eleven to eight at Shaw, but only from eight to seven in Seymours Court.[42] Engrossing of holdings may have made enclosure of some of those lands a possibility. There is evidence from Shaw that by 1547 approximately 59 per cent of all lands were contained in small enclosures.[43] For example, a typical holding of a messuage and half virgate was itemised as: four piddles of one acre each; two closes of half an acre each; one close of two acres of pasture; one close of two acres of arable; one close of three acres of arable; one close of seven acres of arable; and 4½ acres dispersed in the common fields.[44]

The most obvious contrasts between the two regions are the presence of a virgated structure of landholding in Berkshire, the different types of customary tenure (copyhold of inheritance in Norfolk and copyhold for lives in Berkshire), and the absence of heriot in Norfolk. Other contrasts were less expected given the traditional characterisation of Norfolk as more commercial and Berkshire as more heavily manorialised. Serfdom is the classic trait of heavy manorialism, yet it was the Norfolk manors on which serfdom was most persistent. Six out the seven manors studied were charging servile fines in the mid-fifteenth century, and four carried on doing so into the sixteenth century. Salle Kirkhall charged its last chevage fine in 1534, and Hevingham Cattes in 1562. In contrast, there was no mention of servile fines after the early fifteenth century in the Berkshire manors. The last payment of chevage occurred in Shaw in 1429, whilst there was no mention of servile fines in West Hanney in the fifteenth century, let alone the sixteenth.[45] On the other hand, the increased enclosure of land can be seen as an indicator of the commercialization of agriculture, and it is Shaw which displays conclusive evidence of enclosure, not Hevingham Bishops in Norfolk. Levels of rent, and entry fines present less of a contrast, although rents seem to have been somewhat lower in Berkshire, and entry fines were more variable. In the mid-fifteenth century fines were lower in Berkshire than in Norfolk; by the later sixteenth century they were generally higher. Finally, it is important to note the variations in tenurial conditions between manors within the two regions. Rents, fines and the tightness of administration differed from manor to manor. The contrasting management styles of lords affected the cost of customary land to the tenant and opportunities for engrossing lands. These factors seem to have affected the amount of land lying vacant. All the Berkshire manors had difficulties in finding tenants in the first half of the fifteenth century and at West Hanney this problem continued until the mid-sixteenth century on the gentry manor, whilst at Shaw holdings were fully occupied from 1450. In Norfolk Hevingham Bishops, like Shaw, was fully occupied in the mid-fifteenth century, while lands lay vacant in Hevingham Cattes. Salle Kirkhall was still experiencing problems in finding customary tenants during the reign of Henry VIII.

[42] Over the time periods 1490 to 1605, 1450 to 1547, and 1492 to *c.* 1600 respectively. References as Table 3.

[43] PRO, LR2/187. The Survey recorded a total of 762.75 acres for this manor of which 454.5 acres were enclosed.

[44] PRO, LR2/187.

[45] There were no payments of chevage in the West Hanney court rolls and the last payment at Shaw occurred in the court of 16 April 1429. PRO, SC2/154/53.

TABLE 4. Land transfers in the three Berkshire manors and Hevingham

	Family	*Other*	*One Way*	*Total*
Priors Court (1444–1602)	20	17	32	69
(%)	29.0	24.6	46.4	100
Seymours Court (1435–1594)	11	13	56	80
(%)	13.8	16.2	70.0	100
Shaw (1405–1546)	24	42	59	125
(%)	19.2	33.6	47.2	100
Hevingham Bishops (1444–1558)	169	570	53	792
(%)	21.3	72.0	6.7	100

Notes: Family = family relationship specified, Other = no relationship specified, One Way = to or from lord only, Total = total land transactions.
Sources: Priors Court court rolls, NCA, 4060–62. Seymours Court court rolls, BRO, D/EX1/M1–6 and Hendred House for the years 1536, 1541, 1542. Shaw court rolls, PRO, SC2/154/52–54, 18. Hevingham Bishops court rolls, NRO, NRS 19559 42D2, NRS 14763 29D4, NRS 19560 42D2, NRS 13685 28D3, NRS 14477 29C1, NRS 14487 29C1.

The administrative strategies of the different lords of the manor towards their lands influenced the level of occupancy, particularly during the fifteenth century, and by implication profitability on their estates. Discriminating tenants were exerting their power of choice and taking the more attractive tenancies to the detriment of other landlords.

III

The nature of land tenure had a clear impact on the pattern of land transfers between tenants. In western Berkshire customary land was held in standard units of quarter, half or whole virgates. Land was only transferred in these large units: there is no evidence for a market in small parcels of land. Villagers could hold portfolios of land made up of more than one virgate, and of properties taken from several manors, but they did not divide up particular virgates for piecemeal sales or bequests.

Table 4 categorises land transfers according to the parties involved: whether they were transfers within the family, to or from the lord, or of other types; and compares the pattern found in the three Berkshire manors with that in Hevingham Bishops, Norfolk. Transfers of land between family members (including widows and named lives) were not dominant in any of the manors studied, and presented little contrast between Hevingham and the Berkshire manors. Instead, the contrasts lie in the number of transfers and the importance of one way transfers in which the manorial lord took in or granted out properties. It is likely that this was largely a result of the restrictive form of tenure dampening the demand for land on the west Berkshire manors. One way transfers were the most common category of land transaction in west Berkshire, while in Hevingham such transfers were rare. By their very nature, such transfers could not have been sales between tenants. The types of transfers that were most likely to be sales, *inter vivos* transfers between non-relatives, were relatively uncommon in Berkshire, only 14–15 per cent at West Hanney. There was no record of sums of money passing between tenants for the sale of customary

TABLE 5. Land transfers in Hevingham Bishops, 1444–1558

	Number	*Area (acres)*	*Area per transfer (acres)*	*Transfers per year*
All transfers	792	4577	5.8	10.0
Grants and leases by lord	53	502	–	0.7
All inter-tenant transfers	739	4075	5.5	9.3
Transfers between relatives	169	1463	8.7	2.1
Transfers between others	570	2612	4.6	7.2
Transfers by inheritance custom	50	312	6.2	0.6
Inter vivos transfers	689	3763	5.5	8.7

Notes: Total area of customary land = 566 acres; total area transferred by tenants = 4075 acres. There is a gap in the court rolls from 1461–82, and stray missing courts in the rest of the period. Therefore the surviving court rolls represent 79 full years of courts in total. The equivalent of the total area was transferred 7.2 times in 79 years, or once every 11 years.

Sources: Hevingham Bishops court rolls, NRO, NRS 19559 42D2, NRS 14763 29D4, NRS 19560 42D2, NRS 13685 28D3, NRS 14477 29C1, NRS 14487 29C1.

land in the manor court rolls of west Berkshire. This does not indicate such sales did not take place, merely that they were not recorded in this particular documentary source.

Transfers were relatively infrequent in the Berkshire manors, but those that did take place involved a substantial amount of land. A rate of transfer can be calculated by dividing the number of transfers on each discrete holding by the number of years that the particular property was visible in the manor courts. On average properties changed hands every 17.67 years in Priors Court, every 15.23 years in Seymours Court, and every 10.3 years in Shaw. Further evidence of the turnover of land is provided by the introduction of new surnames into the communities. This reveals a period of rapid turnover of population at West Hanney in the second half of the fifteenth century, specifically at Seymours Court between 1470 and 1520 and at Priors Court from the late 1480s to around 1515. At Shaw the greatest turnover of population occurred in the period from 1405 to 1450, a time when landholdings were more fluid and income from the manor to the lord fluctuated considerably. Both communities had more families staying on their holdings as the sixteenth century progressed.

Land transfers were much more frequent in Hevingham Bishops. The land market was very active, with an average of 10 transfers per year (see Table 5). However, unlike the Berkshire manors, most land transfers were small, with inter-tenant transfers averaging 5.5 acres in size. As we have seen, the role of the lord in granting out land was fairly minor. Most of the grants and leases recorded here were made in the fifteenth century; in the sixteenth century there were only 11 grants by the lord recorded in the surviving court rolls, amounting to a total of 40 acres. The obvious differences between the land markets of Norfolk and Berkshire should not lead us to overlook some similarities. Although the number of transfers was much higher in Norfolk, the turnover of land in Hevingham Bishops, once very 11 years, was similar to that in Shaw. In

Norfolk this was achieved by frequent small transfers, in Berkshire by infrequent large transfers. But it is the contrasts which are more significant. The Norfolk situation looks like a land market – tenants participated actively in land exchange activities and the landlord had little influence on the distribution of land between tenants – while the Berkshire situation does not. Norfolk tenants had much greater flexibility of action with regard to customary land.

Both regions, in different ways, displayed evidence of increased demand for land over time. In Berkshire land spent a decreasing amount of unproductive time 'in the lords hands' waiting for a new tenant. The amount of land in the lords' hands fell after 1450 in Shaw, after 1525 at Priors Court and after 1557 at Seymours Court. In Hevingham demand for land was buoyant throughout the period studied. However, in contrast to the extremely fluidity of the land market in the late fifteenth century, the number of land transfers decreased in the sixteenth century, especially after 1530. At the same time the proportion of transfers within the family increased. The price of land sold between tenants, which was recorded on an average of between one and two transfers per year, rose from 30*s.* an acre in the late fifteenth century, to 48*s.* 8*d.* after 1530 and 114*s.* 4*d.* by the mid-sixteenth century. This was in part the effect of monetary inflation, but increases in local wage levels lagged well behind. The relative stagnation of Hevingham's land market in the mid-sixteenth century can be seen as the effect of demand outstripping supply: as land became increasingly expensive, so people became keener to hold on to it and keep it within the family, and the number of transfers declined.

IV

To what degree did differences in tenure and the land market affect the distribution of land between tenants, and to what extent did the distribution of land affect social structure more generally? Table 6 compares the landholding structure of three east Norfolk manors with the three west Berkshire manors. The figures for Hevingham Bishops and the three Berkshire manors refer to customary land only, those for Buxton and Saxthorpe Mickelhall also include freehold and demesne leasehold.

The first striking feature is the sheer number of tenants in the Norfolk manors. However, as these manors were quite large, the average landholding size provides a more accurate comparative measure. It remains clear that the Norfolk manors were more densely tenanted, with one tenant for every 12 to 19 acres of agricultural land, compared to one tenant for every 25 to 48 in Berkshire. The majority of the 'extra' tenants in Norfolk were smallholders with less than five acres, who made up between a quarter and a half of the tenants in the manors shown here. The larger size of landholdings in Berkshire is shown by the larger size of median holdings, and the higher proportion of tenants with more than 20 acres. However, these figures are more problematic than they might appear. As mentioned before, it is difficult to calculate the exact amount of land held by particular tenants in the Berkshire manors because this was recorded in virgates of varying sizes and not acres. All these figures relate to the amount of land held from particular manors, not tenants' total farm size. The Berkshire and Hevingham figures relate to customary land only. Therefore they are all underestimates. While this is a problem in both counties, Norfolk's complex manorial structure makes underestimation far more likely in the Norfolk manors. Larger tenants often held from at least three or four different manors,

TABLE 6. Distribution of land between tenants

	Hevingham Bishops c. 1515	*Buxton 1529*	*Saxthorpe Mickelhall 1500*	*Priors Court 1490*	*Seymours Court 1492*	*Shaw 1547*
Number of tenants	49	83	41	9	8	8
Land area (acres)	566.0	1161.3	797.2	275.0	200.0	382.0
Average (mean) landholding (acres)	11.6	14.0	19.4	30.5	25.0	47.8
Median landholding (acres)	6.8	4.5	12.3	28.3	28.6	32.5
Holdings of 5 acres or less	21	45	10	1	1	3
(%)	43	54	24	11	13	38
Holdings of 20 acres or more	9	15	15	5	5	5
(%)	18	18	37	56	63	63
Largest holding (acres)	49	145	99	85	57	124

Notes: The figures for Hevingham Bishops and the three Berkshire manors refer to customary land only, those for Buxton and Saxthorpe Mickelhall include freehold and demesne leasehold.
Sources: Hevingham Bishops extent undated, NRO, NRS 13714 28D6; rental of Sir Henry Parker, Lord Morley 1529 (Buxton etc.), NRO, Castle Museum Deposit 20:8:59 (sheet T150D); Saxthorpe Mickelhall rental 1500, NRO, NRS 19709 42E6. Priors Court rental NCA, 4075, Seymours Court rental BRO, D/EX1/M7, Shaw survey PRO, LR2/187.

as well as holding a mixture of customary land, freehold and leasehold. On the other hand, cross-referencing of manorial records indicates that there were many smallholders who held land from a single manor.

In addition, we have to consider the problem of subtenancy. Postan suggested large standard sized holdings and relatively inactive land markets in Midland manors hid the presence of subtenants and transfers of land on short-term leases. By implication he also suggested that such arrangements would have been unnecessary in East Anglia, where there were few restrictions on the splitting or transfer of landholdings. Subtenancy was almost entirely unrecorded in the manorial records studied here.[46] In both Berkshire and Norfolk no records of subtenancies were found in any of the rentals or extents studied. Norfolk court rolls do occasionally record leases between tenants. However, in Hevingham Bishops there was only one such court roll entry in the period 1483 to 1558, in which a messuage and five acres was leased for five years.[47] The minimum extent of subleasing can be inferred from the presence of non-resident or gentry tenants. In Hevingham Bishops in *c.* 1515 just over 90 acres or 16 per cent of the manor's customary land was held by tenants in these categories.[48] The situation was very similar in Berkshire. The theory held that licenses were required for subtenents and indeed, John Carver was commended by the lord at Shaw when he applied for one in 1484.[49] But he was unusual. An additional five licences were acquired to lease individual acres in a chalkpit at Shaw,

[46] Subtenancy is notoriously difficult to identify, see C. J. Harrison, 'Elizabethan village surveys: a comment', *AgHR* 27 (1979), pp. 82–9.

[47] Hevingham Bishops court roll, NRO, NRS 19560 42D2, court held July 1498

[48] Hevingham Bishops undated extent, NRO, NRS 13714 28D6.

[49] PRO, SC2/154/54, 11 May 1484.

otherwise John Carver was the only example. At Prior Court the first license to sublet was recorded in 1599 when Widow Sury was allowed to construct and let two cottages on her lands.[50] At Seymours Court three licenses were recorded in the period studied, all late in the sixteenth century between 1576 and 1594.[51] It is very likely that there were subtenants on freehold land as well, but again, there is no straightforward evidence of this in manorial records.

Manorial documents cannot prove or disprove Postan's supposition. An alternative perspective on social structure is needed. This is provided by the Military Survey of 1522, the subsidies of 1524 and 1525, and other documents such as wills, probate inventories and parish registers. The Military Survey recorded the wealth of all able-bodied men aged over 16, including those with nothing in wealth.[52] It allows us to estimate population densities, and to examine social structure in terms of ownership of moveable goods. This picture can then be compared with the landholding records provided by manorial documents. Returns survive both for the Hundred of South Erpingham in Norfolk, which contains all the Norfolk manors studied except Salle Kirkhall, and for the whole of west Berkshire.

There were marked differences between the population densities of Norfolk and Berkshire. These were calculated by employing a multiplier of 3.17 to account for women and children aged 16 or less and applying it to the total number of men enumerated in the survey. Towns were excluded from the calculations. The results reveal that the population density of rural South Erpingham, with 7.4 people per 100 acres, was higher than in rural west Berkshire, which had 4.9 per 100 acres.[53] This is a significant finding and we may presume that the differences in population densities between the two regions identified in the pre-Black Death period continued into the sixteenth century.[54] The smaller number of tenants in Berkshire was, in part, a reflection of a lower population density.

Table 7 shows the distribution of moveable wealth as assessed in 1522. West Berkshire had distinctive sub-regional characteristics.[55] Wealth was fairly equitably distributed in the Vale of the White Horse. Relatively few people were assessed in the low wealth band of under £2: they were outnumbered by those with goods valued at between £2 and £5, which represented a comfortable standard of living in this region. The Kennet Valley by comparison had a more polarized distribution of wealth with a large proportion of the population having a low assessment. In fact, wealth structure found in the Kennet Valley, and the manor of Shaw, had stronger

[50] NCA, 4062.

[51] BRO, D/EX1/M6, M5/1.

[52] R. W. Hoyle, *Tudor taxation records. A guide for users* (1994), p. 43.

[53] The Military Survey of 1522, PRO, E315/464 (Berkshire), PRO, E101/61/16 (South Erpingham). Berkshire acreages were taken from the nineteenth century census returns *VCH Berkshire*, II, pp. 236–243, and Norfolk acreages from the 1831 census abstracts. The populations and acreages of the towns of Aylsham, Norfolk, and Newbury and Wantage, Berkshire, were excluded from the calculations. There were 3033 men assessed, and 194,567 acres in rural west Berkshire; and 1081 men assessed, and 46,510 acres in rural South Erpingham. The multiplier was calculated by doubling the numbers of men assessed to account for women, and then an extra 37 per cent was added to account for children aged under 16. See E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541 to 1871: a reconstruction* (1981), p. 568.

[54] Razi, 'Myth of the immutable English family', p. 17.

[55] The document was scrutinized for alternate explanations such as commissioners who might have interpreted their instructions differently and produced a fuller range of information than others, as had happened in Gloucestershire: R. W. Hoyle (ed.), 'The Military Survey of Gloucestershire', *Gloucestershire Record Ser.*, 6 (1993), pp. xxii–xxv. However, no hundredal or other distinctive distributions were evident in the Berkshire manuscript and it is therefore assumed that this is a reasonable reflection of sub-regional characteristics.

TABLE 7. The Distribution of Moveable Wealth from the Military Survey of 1522

	nil (%)	*£1– <£2* (%)	*sub-total* (%)	*£2– <£5* (%)	*£5– <£10* (%)	*£10– <£20* (%)	*£20– <£50* (%)	*£50+* (%)	*Total number assessed*
Vale of White Horse, Berks.	2.5	31.4	33.9	46.1	11.3	4.3	3.2	1.3	914
Vale of Kennet, Berks.	23.7	24.1	47.8	32.1	9.3	6.0	3.1	1.7	701
West Berkshire	13.8	26.4	40.2	37.9	11.2	6.2	3.3	1.2	3252
W. Hanney, Berks.	2.9	23.5	26.4	55.9	5.9	5.9	2.9	2.9	34
Shaw, Berks.	20.6	26.5	47.1	29.4	8.8	2.9	5.8	5.8	34
South Erpingham, Norf.	36.0	21.4	57.4	26.8	9.0	3.8	1.8	1.1	1398
Marsham, Norf.	31.3	32.8	64.1	23.4	6.3	3.1	1.6	1.6	64
Buxton, Norf.	52.9	13.7	66.6	19.6	5.9	3.9	0.0	3.9	51
Saxthorpe, Norf.	54.7	11.3	66.0	18.8	13.2	0.0	1.9	0.0	53

Notes: The table shows the percentage of those assessed falling into different wealth bands. Wealth assessed in moveable goods is included, the value of freehold land is excluded.
Sources: PRO, E315/464 (Berkshire); E101/61/16 (South Erpingham).

similarities with that of South Erpingham than with the Vale of the White Horse. South Erpingham displayed the most strongly skewed distribution of wealth in the regions studied, with the majority of those assessed having less than £2. Marsham, the main settlement in Hevingham Bishops manor, Buxton and Saxthorpe, had even greater numbers assessed on less than £2 than South Erpingham as a whole.

A detailed comparison between landholding and assessed wealth can be made by comparing the Military Survey with manorial records for the villages of Marsham, Norfolk, and West Hanney and Shaw, Berkshire. The wealthiest resident of Marsham was William Bisshop assessed on £66 13*s.* 4*d.* in goods as well as freehold land. He was one of the largest customary tenants in Hevingham Bishops, with about 56 acres of customary land. William styled himself 'gentleman' in his will of 1545, which revealed that he also held a manor in Crostwight, as well as lands in nine other north-east Norfolk parishes.[56] William Bisshop's assessment was followed in rank by three men assessed on between £15 and £24, all of whom also owned freehold land. Two, Robert Louthe and Robert Bisshop, held similar amounts of customary land in the manor to William Bisshop – around 50 acres.[57] In the late 1520s Robert Bisshop was also farming the manor's 40 acre demesne enclosure. A third, John Bustyng, held less – about 35 acres – but combined farming with worsted weaving. Four further men were assessed on between £8 and £11. With one exception, they all held between 30 and 40 acres of customary land from the manor. The exception was John Reyner, who never held more than 10 acres of customary land from Hevingham Bishops. He was the son of a gentleman, and later inherited some of his father's lands, which included over 100 acres held from Buxton manor. These eight men were the wealthy elite of this village society, minor gentlemen or yeomen. They

[56] The will of William Busshoppe of Marsham, gent.: NRO, Norwich Consistory Court, register Whytefoot, p. 223.

[57] William and Robert were either unrelated or not closely related.

were the people most frequently appointed to serve as constable to the village and reeve to the manor.[58]

Those assessed on between £5 and £2 were more mixed. Most held freehold land. All were tenants, if not at the time of the assessment, then at sometime in the near future. They ranged from John Marsham, a husbandman with around 25 acres of customary land, to Simon Chapman, who never held more than a cottage from Hevingham Bishops manor. There was no sharp distinction between this group and those assessed on between £1 and £2, although those assessed on less than £2 very rarely held freehold land. Two held between 5 and 15 acres of customary land, nine were smallholders with between one and five acres. Four were currently landless, but acquired land in the future, while seven in this group never held land from Hevingham Bishops manor. Small tenants were active in the running of the manor, as almost all resident tenants served as jurors. Unlike the proto-yeomen however, they were only rarely elected as reeve or constable. Individuals assessed on nothing in wealth fall into three well defined groups. Two were smallholders. Five went on to become landholders, most of whom were the sons of more substantial landholders. The majority, 13, were neither present nor future tenants of Hevingham Bishops manor.

Further evidence about landlessness is provided by Marsham's parish register, which survives for the period 1538–56.[59] The christening of one child would suggest that the father was probably a resident householder, the christening of two or more children is a certain indication that the family was resident. Sixty different identifiable men had children christened in Marsham in this period. Only 25 of these men held customary land from Hevingham Bishops at the time that their first child was christened. A further 10 held land from the manor at some time after the christening of their first child. However, the other 25 men were not tenants of the manor at any time before 1558, when the series of court rolls ends.[60] The records of Hevingham Cattes manor were also checked. A list of tenants in 1557 revealed that one of the 25 held land from this manor.[61] This still leaves 24 men who held land from neither manor. Eleven of these men had more than one child christened, and were therefore certainly resident. Some were long term residents of the village. For instance, Thomas Thakway and Nicholas Downyng, who had children christened in 1539 and 1552, and 1545 respectively, had been assessed on nothing in 1522.[62] It seems clear that despite the large numbers of smallholders among the direct manorial tenants, there was a further section of householding subtenants about whom the manorial records provide little or no information.

Some of the men assessed with little or no wealth in 1522 were transient residents, young men working for wages, perhaps as servants in others' households. But others were smallholding direct tenants or subtenants. How exactly these smallholders made a living is a matter for

[58] None actually used the description 'yeoman', however. Of the 14 recorded appointments of men as constables between 1511 and 1542, eight were filled by members of this group. Of the 25 recorded appointments of reeves during the same period 18 were filled by members of this group.

[59] Marsham parish register, NRO, MF/RO 431/6.

[60] The parish register was cross-referenced with Hevingham Bishops court rolls: NRO, NRS 13685 28D3, NRS 14477 29C1, NRS 14487 29C1.

[61] Hevingham Cattes court roll, NRO, NRS 14653 29D2, court held March 1557.

[62] Thomas Thakway is recorded as a servant in the subsidy returns of 1524, listed after William Bisshop's name. William's widow left Thomas a bequest in her will of 1565, describing him as her 'sometime servant': the will of Margaret Bysshoppe of Marsham, widow: NRO, Norwich Archdeaconry Court, register Mendham, p. 100.

speculation. Those with 10 acres or more may have been full-time independent farmers, given the good soil, advanced agricultural techniques, and extensive common lands in the manor. Others were perhaps worsted weavers or practised other crafts.[63] Men with 5 acres or less and without a specific craft must either have sublet more land or have depended on wage labouring. The subsidies of 1524 and 1525, following soon after the Military Survey, distinguished between those assessed on goods and those assessed on wages. They recorded 25 per cent of those assessed in South Erpingham hundred as wage earners. This proportion was lower than the average of 35 per cent for all Norfolk's surviving returns, and interestingly Marsham, Saxthorpe and Buxton all recorded proportions of wage earners below the South Erpingham average.[64] Only four people were recorded as 'wage earners' in Marsham. Despite the relative poverty evident in these settlements, they do not appear to have been unusually proletarianized by regional standards.

In Berkshire, West Hanney and Shaw are representative of the social differences that have been identified in their sub-regions. At West Hanney the wealthiest individual was Oliver Wellysbourne who was assessed at £60, similar to William Bisshop, a gentleman whose will of 1553 revealed that he held lands both in West Hanney and elsewhere in the county.[65] The following assessment of £24 related to William Robyns, the farmer of the Priors Court demesne. It is this category of individual who dominated the possession of land in West Hanney. William Robyns was the son of the previous farmer of Priors Court demesne and in addition to the demesne of four virgates, held a messuage, three tofts and two and a half virgates of land, and free land of unspecified size. There was a strong familial link between the farmers of the demesne and their lands. On William's death in 1525 he was succeeded in all these lands by his heir Richard Sury. His son, also Richard, followed him and, when he died in 1586, held 40 per cent of the total lands of the manor. In his will he mentioned the corn growing on the lands of the demesne and on his copyhold lands; he was presumably farming them both himself. He left an inventory valued at just over £277.[66] The large demesne farmers were a dominant and constant feature of the economy of West Hanney throughout the period from 1435 to 1600.

The majority of the tenants of West Hanney were assessed as having goods valued at between £2 and £5. William Knight, assessed as a £2 householder, is an example of this group. He had acquired a messuage and three half-virgates of land with appurtenances in 1507, and in 1525 added another holding of a messuage and half virgate. He was a member of the manor court jury and homage at both Priors Court and Seymours Court, and held additional offices as head tithing man, ale taster and affeerer of the court. These, along with the hayward, were the main officers active in the manor courts of West Hanney.[67] William Knight represents the majority of the population of West Hanney who were farmers of properties that were between a half, and two and a half virgates of land. Their inventories reveal a comfortable standard of living

[63] Of the non-clerical men who made wills in Marsham between 1450 and 1580, 6 or 15 per cent were worsted weavers.

[64] South Erpingham Subsidy returns: PRO, E179/150/215 (1524), E179/150/274 (1524, part of Aylsham only), E179/150/222 (1525). Those described as labourer or servant, or assessed on wages in either 1524 or 1525 were taken to be wage earners. The figure for all Norfolk returns is taken from J. Sheail, 'The regional distribution of wealth in England as indicated in the 1524/5 lay subsidy returns', *List and Index Soc.*, 28–9 (1998), I, p. 16.

[65] BRO, will D/A1/10040, p. 72, inventory D/A1/132/55. His inventory was valued at £180 4*s.* 8*d.* with debts of £4 13*s.* 4*d.* owed to men in Abingdon and Wantage.

[66] BRO, D/A1/116/2.

[67] There was no mention of a reeve or constable on these manors.

and direct agricultural activity, and they frequently held manorial office. Those assessed at under £2 included three of the four servants of this vill. Labourers and servants did not form a large proportion of the population in this region, unlike in the Kennet Valley. The farmers of the demesne required additional labour on their farms and William Robyns had two of these servants enumerated with him.

Neither the manorial or fiscal records reveal a large group of low income or landless people. Nevertheless, it remains a possibility that there were subtenant households in West Hanney. Eleven of the 34 individuals listed in the Military Survey did not appear in the manorial records of Seymours Court or Priors Court. They could either have been tenants of the third manor of Andrews Court, or they were subtenants. A more detailed analysis of manorial documents suggests that at least some of them were subtenants. The courts surrounding the rentals of 1490 and 1492 revealed the names of jurors who were not associated with a landholding. At Priors Court between 1489 and 1491 there were 14 men who were jurors and neither appeared in the rental nor were observed taking land, while at Seymours Court between 1491 and 1494 there were two such men. It seems possible that these men were subtenants, thus indicating that subtenancy was much more common in Priors Court than Seymours Court.

The documentation for Shaw down in the Kennet Valley reveals a very different situation to that in West Hanney. The Military Survey in this region, unlike that of the Vale, listed individuals in two categories, as 'householders' or 'labourers and servants'. Of the 34 named individuals at Shaw, 14 were 'householders' holding 93 per cent of the goods and 20 were 'labourers and servants' with 7 per cent of goods. The wealthiest resident was Maurice Smart, also assessed at £60, a tanner and miller who, from the evidence of his will, had lands elsewhere in the country.[68] The assessment of the farmer of the demesne, John Hore was next in rank order with £40 of goods. He worked 27 per cent of the lands in the manor. The farmers of the demesne were a stable element in the community: they were active in the proceedings of the manorial court, and there was a strong familial attachment to the demesne lands which were passed from father to son as at West Hanney. Thomas Person was next in rank order of wealth, assessed at £30. He was the largest customary tenant and belonged to a family who had resided on the manor since the beginning of this study. Patrick Mountain, assessed at £4, provides an example of a miller. Millers formed a significant if rather transient element in Shaw's society. There were thirty different millers recorded between 1404 and 1542, and there was some specialization of milling, in particular the tanning mill was often held separately from the grain and malt mills.

There was a much higher percentage in the group assessed with less than £2 at Shaw than in West Hanney. The majority were categorized as 'labourers and servants'.[69] This section included nine junior members of families, whose labour must have been important in working the family farm such as the large customary holding of the Person family. Other labourers may have found employment in the minor industries of Shaw, such as the mills or brick kiln, or the craft industries such as weaving, or else in Newbury. Wage labour is revealed in the Lay Subsidy of 1524 where 12 individuals, or 46 per cent, were assessed on wages.[70] Nine were listed after major

[68] PRO, PROB11/33/22.

[69] There were only two householders assessed with goods valued at less than £2.

[70] PRO, E179/73/121. The 1524–5 lay subsidy returns for West Hanney do not survive.

tenants which suggests a working relationship. Of those listed in the 1522 assessment, 19 out of 34 did not hold land directly from the manor. Six of these were junior members of families: the other 13, or 38 per cent, must have been subtenants and/or relied on wage labour.[71] This is comparable to the situation in Norfolk. The presence of subtenants is also revealed in a study of the manor courts for the years preceding the 1547 survey. The survey listed the demesne farmer, the miller and eight customary tenants. The court rolls for 1543–6 listed nine jurors who were neither in the survey nor recorded acquiring land, and are therefore likely to have been subtenants.

V

Having reviewed systems of tenure and distribution of wealth in the two regions, what conclusions can we draw? First, many of the generalizations about contrasts between 'Midland' manors and 'East Anglian' manors mentioned in the introduction were borne out. The Norfolk manors studied had a more complex landholding structure, both in terms of the manors themselves, and the customary landholdings within them. The majority of Berkshire manors did not extend beyond a single parish, landholdings were held in virgates and yardlands of varying customary sizes, and cottage holdings were rare. In the Berkshire manors studied, the manorial administration retained control over the exchange of copyhold land, which was held for lives, although tenures were renewable. The result was that there was little land market to speak of. In Norfolk manors were sprawling structures extending over a number of parishes. Customary landholdings did not exist as standard sized units. The largest holdings of customary land were around 50 acres in size, but a great many (between a half and a quarter) were 5 acres or less in extent. All holdings could be split and regrouped as tenants wished. Tenure was copyhold of inheritance, which allowed the lord very little control over the land market activities of his tenants, and no choice in the selection of his tenants. The land market was active, although the majority of transfers were quite small. The great majority of transfers were *inter vivos*, between tenants.

Nevertheless, a number of similarities between west Berkshire and eastern Norfolk are apparent. Both regions had considerable diversity within them. There were contrasts in methods of manorial administration in both Norfolk and Berkshire, between tightly administered manors and loosely administered ones, and this did have an impact on demand for customary land. The more tightly administered manors, such as Hevingham Cattes, Salle Kirkhall, and Seymours Court, with higher rents and fines, and stricter controls on engrossment, had more vacant land indicating problems in attracting tenants in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. By contrast, loosely administered manors such as Hevingham Bishops and Shaw were fully tenanted from the mid-fifteenth century. Rents and entry fines showed fewer contrasts between the two regions than we might have expected. Although rents per acre are difficult to calculate for Berkshire, they appear to have been slightly lower than in Norfolk. Entry fines were more variable in Berkshire than in Norfolk, between holdings, between manors, and over time, but for most of the period they were often lower per acre than in Norfolk. However, tenants in

[71] The parish register survives from 1646 and cannot be employed as an additional source. The register for West Hanney includes Lyford and East Hanney and is therefore unsuitable for a comparative study with Marsham.

Berkshire also owed heriot, which was not levied in Norfolk and formed another capital charge at the other end of the tenancy. In both regions there was evidence of demand for land increasing in the sixteenth century, and the turnover of tenants decreasing, especially in the mid-century and after. The number of direct manorial tenants declined over time – a sure sign of engrossment. Only on the tightly administered manor of Seymours Court was this trend not evident. In both Hevingham and Shaw, by the mid-sixteenth century there were a significant number of households who lacked direct manorial tenancies. So, in both regions manorial administration had an impact, and in both regions the effects of national trends were felt: a lack of tenants in the fifteenth century, and engrossment in the sixteenth.

However, both tenant density and population density were higher in Norfolk. There were more customary tenants per acre in Norfolk and this is reflected in the population densities calculated from the Military Survey of 1522. The Military Survey does provide a corrective to the manorial evidence. Rather than Norfolk and Berkshire lying at two polar extremes, it instead suggests a threefold division between the Vale of the White Horse, Berkshire; the Vale of the Kennet, Berkshire; and north-east Norfolk, as represented by South Erpingham. In many ways, the Vale of the Kennet and South Erpingham had more in common with each other than either had with the Vale of the White Horse. Both South Erpingham and the Vale of the Kennet, and the manors of Hevingham Bishops and Shaw, had large numbers of inhabitants assessed on less than £2, although the numbers were greater in Norfolk. This class of person was virtually absent from the Vale of the White Horse, unless the assessors of the Military Survey decided not to record them, which seems unlikely. While those assessed on higher levels of wealth in West Hanney were purely concerned with agriculture, a number of substantial householders in Shaw and Hevingham has interests in trade and industry as well as farming.

Contrary to Postan's suppositions, it seems that the documents of the classic Midland community of West Hanney, Berkshire, present the most accurate picture of the economic life of a community. Other documents provide little evidence of economic diversification or alternative sources of employment. It really was a purely agricultural community. If there was a hidden land market, it would have been in the purchase of temporary short-term leases from the large tenants of the manor, and predominantly from those of Priors Court rather than Seymours Court. The manorial documents of Hevingham, Norfolk, correctly present a picture of a fluid and commercialized society, and of significant differences of wealth between the few large tenants and the multitude of smallholders. However, other documents suggest this was not the complete picture. Below the smallholding manorial tenants was a substantial group of subtenants and servants. Worsted weaving, largely unrecorded in manorial documents, provided additional employment to agriculture. The manorial documents themselves are problematic. It is virtually impossible to reconstruct the complete landholdings of particular tenants because manors and parishes did not coincide, and because freehold and demesne lands were distributed piecemeal amongst tenants who also held customary land. The manorial documents of Shaw were the most misleading: here was a fairly typical midland manor with standard sized holdings and no significant land market. There was some economic diversification and trade links with Newbury were visible. But it is the non-manorial documents, the fiscal and probate records, that reveal the substrata of non-manorial tenants and wage labourers, and the full extent of commercial and industrial activity. Yet the significant number of people dwelling at Shaw who were not

direct manorial tenants does not appear to have made the population poorer than in Hevingham. The level of poverty was greater in South Erpingham than in the Vale of Kennet. The number of direct manorial smallholders in Norfolk merely meant there was an absolutely greater number of smallholders in Norfolk than Berkshire.

All manorial documents illustrate a *pays légal*, not a *pays réel*, but sometimes the two do coincide. Legal structures were not detached from the underlying economic situation. Manorial documents illustrate manorial administration, and the nature of manorial administration could both restrict and encourage certain developments. A loose manorial structure enabled economic diversification to occur. But more conventional manorial structures did not necessarily stamp out diversification, as in the case of Shaw. However, as a whole, eastern Norfolk was more thoroughly commercialised, and more densely populated, than western Berkshire. It seems likely that this was, in part, a consequence of patterns of landholding, which in turn were influenced by manorial structures and terms of tenure. The social structure of most of rural north-east Norfolk resembled that of Shaw, while a Norfolk twin of West Hanney has yet to be found. Manorial documents alone cannot be relied upon to reveal the social structure of regions or villages; they simply omit too much of the *pays réel*.

The seasonality of nineteenth-century poaching*

by Harvey Osborne

Abstract

Historians have generally explained the pronounced seasonal pattern of nineteenth-century poaching in economic terms, emphasising the apparent correlation between annual peaks in offending and cyclical periods of unemployment and poverty. There has been little acknowledgement of the role nature played in determining that most poaching activity occurred in the autumn and winter months. This paper will use evidence from case studies of salmon and game poaching in Victorian Cumberland, Westmorland and Suffolk to suggest that ecological and environmental factors played a fundamental part in shaping the annual pattern of offending. Poaching was a crime often linked to poverty, but its seasonal timing usually owed more to practical considerations concerning both the suitability of the natural environment for hunting and the availability, maturity and marketability of the quarry.

Recent studies by Neeson and Freeman have used an interdisciplinary approach to bring nature into the foreground of rural social history in a fashion rarely encountered outside the texts of American environmental historiography. In Neeson's case the result is an essentially symbiotic portrait of the relationship which eighteenth and nineteenth century commoners had with the natural environment, while in Freeman's work this same group are cast as both victims and predators in a case study of the social consequences of long term ecological change in a woodland environment.[1] Both studies demonstrate the relevance of White's dictum that 'physical nature does, at any given time, set limits on what is humanly possible', whether in terms of determining the viability of certain forms of social organisation as is Freeman's concern, or, as Neeson illustrates, by dictating the availability of natural resources throughout the seasons.[2]

The interplay between human activity and the natural world has, of course, long been recognized by historians examining seasonal patterns of marriage, work and leisure.[3] But a proper understanding of how far nature determines the possible has been largely lacking from explanations of the periodicity of offences like poaching which involved the 'theft' of living natural resources. Indeed, as Freeman has argued, citing work on eighteenth-century forest

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[1] J. M. Neeson, *Commoners. Common right, enclosure and social change in England, 1700–1820* (1993) and M. Freeman, 'Whichwood Forest, Oxfordshire. An episode in its recent environmental history', *AgHR* 45 (1997), pp. 137–149.

[2] R. White, 'American environmental history. The development of a new historical field', *Pacific History Rev.*, 54 (1985), p. 335.

communities by Thompson and others, all too often studies of poaching and other forms of rural crime appear to assume that the natural environments for offending were 'ecological constraints against which human agency operates'.[4] There has certainly been little acknowledgement of the way in which nature may have determined the availability of those creatures which were the poachers' quarry and thus helped shape the pattern of offending.

This discussion of the seasonal pattern of nineteenth-century poaching will suggest, however, that natural cycles often had a fundamental role in determining the times of the year at which this crime could occur. Poachers themselves may have had particular economic and social motivations to offend during certain periods, but an examination of poaching prosecutions from Cumberland, Westmorland and Suffolk suggests that factors relating to the availability, maturity and marketability of the quarry were often the key determinants of why offending exhibited such a marked seasonal pattern. Nature shaped the seasonal round of offending in different ways according to the fish, animal or game bird concerned, but in some way regulated the activity of all poachers, whether those who made all or a substantial part of their living from the crime, or casual offenders poaching occasionally for the pot.

Traditional explanations of poaching's distinct seasonal character do of course acknowledge the role of natural cycles, but only in so much as they had an obvious impact on human economic activity. In the rural and arable south and east of England especially, where most of those prosecuted were agricultural labourers, historians have always considered it particularly significant that the majority of offences were committed between October and March, a period when outdoor labour was most prone to interruption, demand for farm labour was slackest and therefore poverty most acute.[5] This marked seasonal pattern is seen as affirmation of the widely accepted link between poaching and the periodically acute underemployment and poverty that often characterized labouring life in the agrarian counties. Indeed seasonal peaks in poaching prosecutions largely mirror those Snell has identified in rural poor relief applications and have led historians to assume that the periodicity of the crime throughout the year was closely 'connected with the seasonal nature of employment'.[6]

I

We may begin to challenge the seasonal connection between unemployment and poaching by surveying the seasonality of salmon poaching in the Lake Counties. Even outside the agrarian south and east, poaching remained largely a winter activity. In Victorian Cumberland and Westmorland, for instance, where the structural winter unemployment associated with arable areas was obviously less apparent, most salmon poaching offences were still committed between September and February. Those prosecuted were overwhelmingly working class males, usually

[3] A. Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538–1840* (1990); E. L. Jones, *Seasons and prices. The role of the weather in English agricultural history* (1964).

[4] Freeman, 'Whichwood Forest', p. 137.

[5] A. Howkins, 'Economic crime and class law. Poaching and the Game Laws, 1840–1880', in S. B. Burman and B. E. Harrell-Bond (eds), *The Imposition of Law* (1979). J. E. Archer, *By a Flash and a Scare. Incendiarism, animal maiming and poaching in East Anglia* (1990) and D. J. V. Jones, 'The Victorian Poacher. A study in crime and protest', *Historical J.* 22 (1979), pp. 825–860.

[6] K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor* (1985). Howkins, 'Economic crime', p. 280.

employed as miners, iron workers, village craftsmen and general labourers.[7] Virtually all appear to have viewed poaching as something of a sport, but these were nonetheless poor men who had clear economic motives for poaching.[8] Some consumed the salmon they caught, but others poached for profit, either selling the fish directly within their own neighbourhood or passing them, normally via the rail network, to consumer markets in Carlisle, Penrith, Manchester and even London.[9]

However, the presence of poverty as a motive for offending should not lead us to confuse the periodicity of salmon poaching with distress. Indeed, the fact that the salmon is a migratory creature should indicate that explanations of the seasonal pattern of offending cannot rely on economic variables alone. In the case of the salmon, the highly idiosyncratic habits and life cycle of the fish itself were equally important determinants of why poaching occurred when it did. Three important points of the year on any salmon river are particularly significant in this context; the late spring, when the young fish migrate out to sea; the late summer or autumn, when the salmon return as adults to freshwater; and the winter, throughout which breeding occurs.[10] Of these, perhaps the last two were of the greatest importance to the poacher, for it was only at these times that the opportunity to obtain the adult salmon arose.

Some indication of just how seasonally concentrated the annual migration of adult salmon back into their natal freshwater can be is provided in Figure 1, courtesy of the Environmental Agency's fish counter on the Cumberland Derwent.[11] These figures relate to the number of salmon that passed through the lower river on their way to breed in the upper reaches in 1983, although in the case of the Derwent, the timing of this early autumn run has remained unchanged from Victorian times. The majority of other salmon rivers similarly receive the bulk of returning adult fish during the late summer and early autumn months, although there are also a significant number (including the Border Tweed and Cumberland Eden) that have traditionally enjoyed additional spring runs of fish. On any river, however, long or short term changes can occur in both the scale and timing of migrations, with obvious consequences for the viability and progress of commercial and leisure fishing as well as poaching.[12] Summer

[7] Of 267 Cumbrians prosecuted for salmon poaching between 1880 and 1882 whose occupation is known, the largest proportion (83) were described as general labourers. Other significant groups included coal and iron ore miners (45), village craftsmen (54), farmers and farm servants (12), iron workers (10), and railway workers (12). The remainder were mainly a mix of clerks, retailers, millers, mariners, domestic servants, factory and textile workers. Source, petty session reports in the *Carlisle J.* and *Cumberland Pacquet*, 1880–1882 and 1881 census.

[8] For salmon poaching as both sport and a response to poverty, see J. M. Denwood, *Cumbrian Nights* (1932). In the case of 142 prosecuted Cumbrian poachers, additional information on their characteristics and circumstances can be obtained from the 1881 census. All were male, typically between 25 and 35, with just over half married. The majority were born locally and resided in a household whose average size was 5–6 persons. The married men tended to have three or more children.

[9] For the trade in Cumbrian salmon to Manchester and London, BPP, 1873, XIX, *Twelfth annual report of the inspectors of salmon fisheries*, p. 42. Smolts or adult fish taken during or after the spawning period were more likely to be either consumed by poachers or hawked locally. J. Thistlethwaite, *Cumbrian women remember, Lake district life in the early 1900s* (1995), p. 180. *Carlisle J.*, 5 Apr 1878.

[10] D. Mills, *Ecology and management of the Atlantic Salmon* (1982), p. 10.

[11] This figure is based on information provided by Mr S. R. Douglas, E. A. Fisheries Manager (North Cumbria) in private correspondence of 29 Dec. 1995.

[12] A. S. Gee and N. J. Milner, 'Analysis of 70-year catch statistics for Atlantic Salmon in the River Wye and implications for stocks', *J. of Applied Ecology* 17 (1980), pp. 41–57.

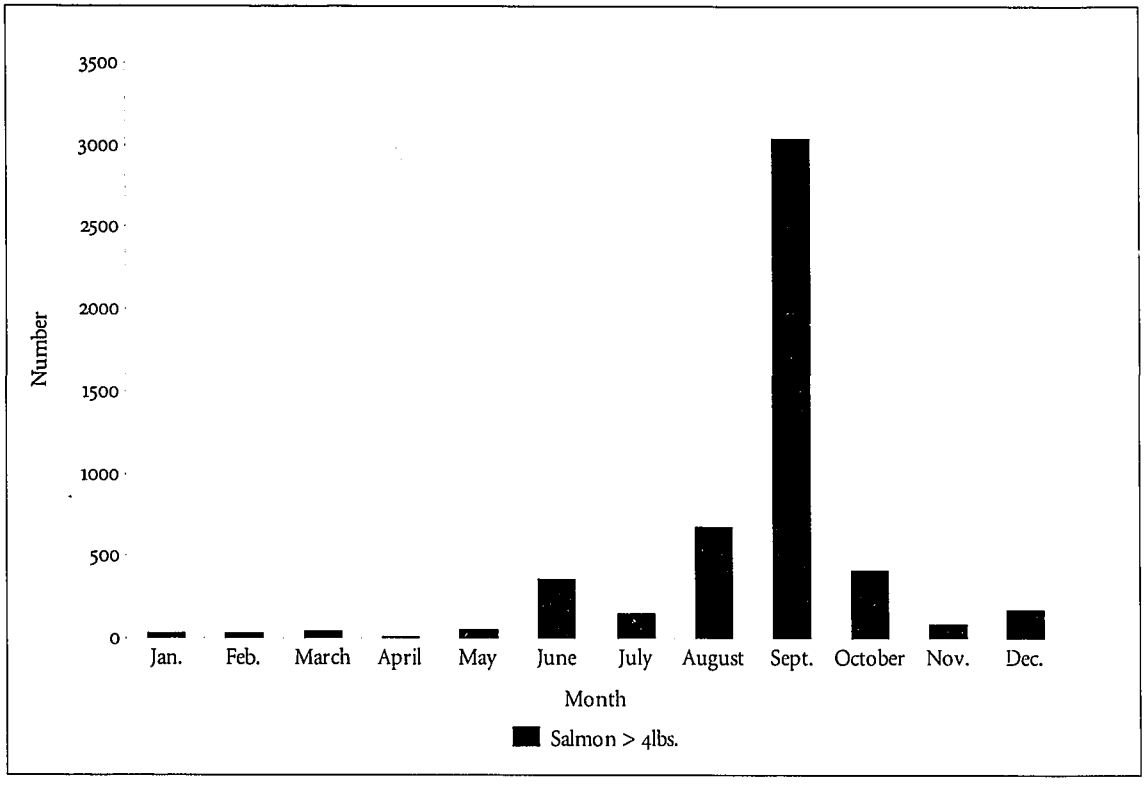


FIGURE 1. Numbers of Salmon entering the River Derwent by month during 1983. *Source*: Environmental Agency.

droughts usually delay the migration upstream and tend to reduce the number of fish that complete the journey to the spawning redds.[13] Disease among the spawning fish, freshwater pollution or high mortality rates among the fish at sea can also have a deleterious impact on salmon populations in subsequent years.[14]

In terms of the recurrent seasonal pattern of poaching it was the timing of both the migration and breeding of the adult salmon that were consistently most influential. This is clearly demonstrated by the pattern of 270 prosecuted poaching offences on the Cumberland Derwent and Eden during the period 1880 to 1882 shown in Figure 2.[15] The increase in prosecutions during the autumn months reflects what might be termed the first phase of poaching which followed the entry of the adult salmon into the rivers. The much higher numbers of prosecutions on both the Derwent and Eden during December, January and February reflect the second and more concentrated round of poaching which occurred as the salmon spawned during the winter months. That winter poaching tended to outweigh autumn offending was entirely a consequence

[13] J. S. Alabaster, ' River flow and upstream movement and catch of migratory salmonids', *J. of Fish Biology* 2 (1970), pp. 1–13.

[14] S. Mills, 'Salmon. Demise of the landlord's fish', *New Scientist*, 11 Feb. 1982.

[15] This figure is based on 270 summary prosecutions for poaching on the Eden and Derwent reported in the *Carlisle J.* and *Cumberland Pacquet*, 1880–1882. The dates used to form this figure relate to the date of the offence rather than that of the arrest or trial of the culprit. Newspapers are used in the absence of a complete series of original court records.

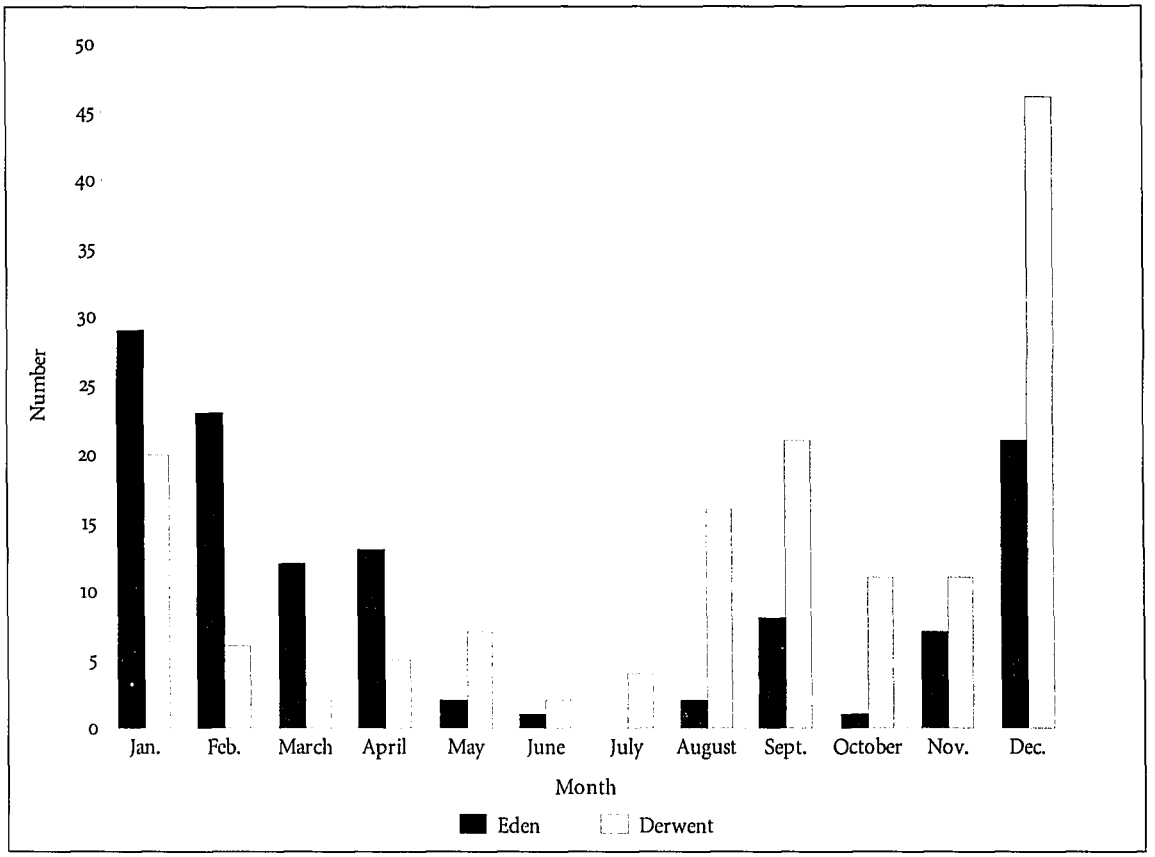


FIGURE 2. Salmon Poaching Prosecutions, Rivers Eden and Derwent, 1880–82.
Source: *Carlisle Journal* and *Cumberland Pacquet*, 1880–82.

of practical considerations. To attempt to take the salmon during their first weeks in freshwater, when the fish were travelling through the deeper lower reaches and when commercial and leisure fishing was at its peak, often required considerable expertise and guile and was usually an activity restricted to those poachers with access to nets. Most poaching, therefore, occurred in the winter following the arrival of the adult salmon in the higher reaches to breed, and for equally compelling practical reasons for it was at this time that the fish were most vulnerable and easily caught.

During reproduction, typically occurring in December, salmon assemble on their spawning beds in the shallow and narrow streams of the upper river. At this stage the fish are often gathered in numbers and usually become much more visible than in previous months. Contemporaries claimed, for example, that such was the density of salmon on the spawning redds of the Cumberland Derwent at times that it was often possible to 'see literally dozens of salmon fins out of the water'.[16] After spawning, exhausted by the exigencies of reproduction and their long period in freshwater without food, a high proportion of the spent fish, known as kelts, slowly die.[17] The remainder, however, gradually recuperate and eventually journey,

[16] Thistlethwaite, *Cumbrian women*, p. 180.

[17] Anywhere between 75 and 90% of salmon die after spawning. Those that survive are mainly hen fish.

assisted by spring freshets, back out to the sea from whence they will return again in following years to repeat the reproductive process.

It was at this stage of the salmon's life cycle, either as a spawning fish in the December shallows or a dying or recuperating early spring kelt, that the adult salmon were most easily taken by poachers. In a weakened state and often in shallow water, the fish fell victim to a variety of poaching implements including spears, pitchforks, gaffs, nets, snatches and even stones or clubs.[18] Unlike fish that were fresh from the sea, which were often passed to more demanding consumer markets, many of these poorly conditioned spawning or spent salmon were sold or distributed among the poor. The flesh of the spawning fish might also be a secondary consideration for commercial poachers who extracted salmon roe to sell as an illegal angling bait.[19] Nonetheless, such was the affinity between poaching and this breeding activity and its aftermath that some Cumbrian salmon poachers earned the epithet of 'kipper catchers' from local magistrates, owing to their association with the thin and darkened winter fish.[20]

Spawning and its immediate aftermath certainly witnessed the bulk of poaching activity on almost every salmon river, but it is clear that the life-cycle of the fish also determined the periodicity of offences in other ways. For instance, many rivers also experienced poaching activity during the late spring and summer. Some of this was directed at trout which appear to have been taken mainly during the summer months when the rivers were low enough to allow the netting of pools to be effective.[21] But the remainder, particularly during the late spring, again centred on salmon, although this time in their juvenile form. For in April and May, young salmon, known as smolts at this stage, move downstream in shoals on their first seaward journey and it was in response to this annual migration that poaching on the Eden and Derwent as well as on the Lancashire rivers Lune and Ribble often resumed. Usually however, the poaching of smolts was on nothing like the scale of the criminal activity that attended the adult salmon. The rewards were not necessarily less, but the migration was short and concentrated and usually required the use of nets fine enough to intercept the 4–6 inch fish as they made their way, often moving by night, down to the sea.[22]

At whichever point of the year however, whether during the months of spring, autumn or winter, it is clear that the migrations and habits of the salmon played a large part in dictating the seasonal pattern of poaching. The motivation to offend may have remained economic, particularly during winter. But the claim of one Cumbria poacher, 'that when work is not always to be had for the asking, the fish are then the most plentiful', helps demonstrate how far it was the arrival of the adult salmon to spawn that made poaching a viable response to winter poverty.[23]

[18] A snatch was a line with hooks at one end which was thrown across the salmon and then retrieved fiercely to impale the hooks in its side.

[19] Salmon roe, mainly the eggs from hen fish, was made into a paste for which there was an extraordinary demand among unscrupulous anglers as a fishing bait. BPP, XIII, 1902, *RC on the Salmon Fisheries*, pp. 114–7. The financial rewards of roe, which was said to fetch between 5*s.* and 10*s.* per lb., were comparable to those made from the body of the salmon itself, which tended to cost between 1*s.* and 3*s.* per lb. at provincial markets.

[20] *Carlisle J.*, 24 Jan. 1882.

[21] *Carlisle J.*, 1, 8 June 1880, and also J. Watson, *Poachers and Poaching* (1891), pp. 13–16.

[22] BPP, 1861, XXIII, *RC into the Salmon Fisheries*, pp. 258, 265. *Carlisle J.*, 14, 26 Apr 1881, also 3 May 1881

[23] Denwood, *Cumbrian nights*, p. 60.

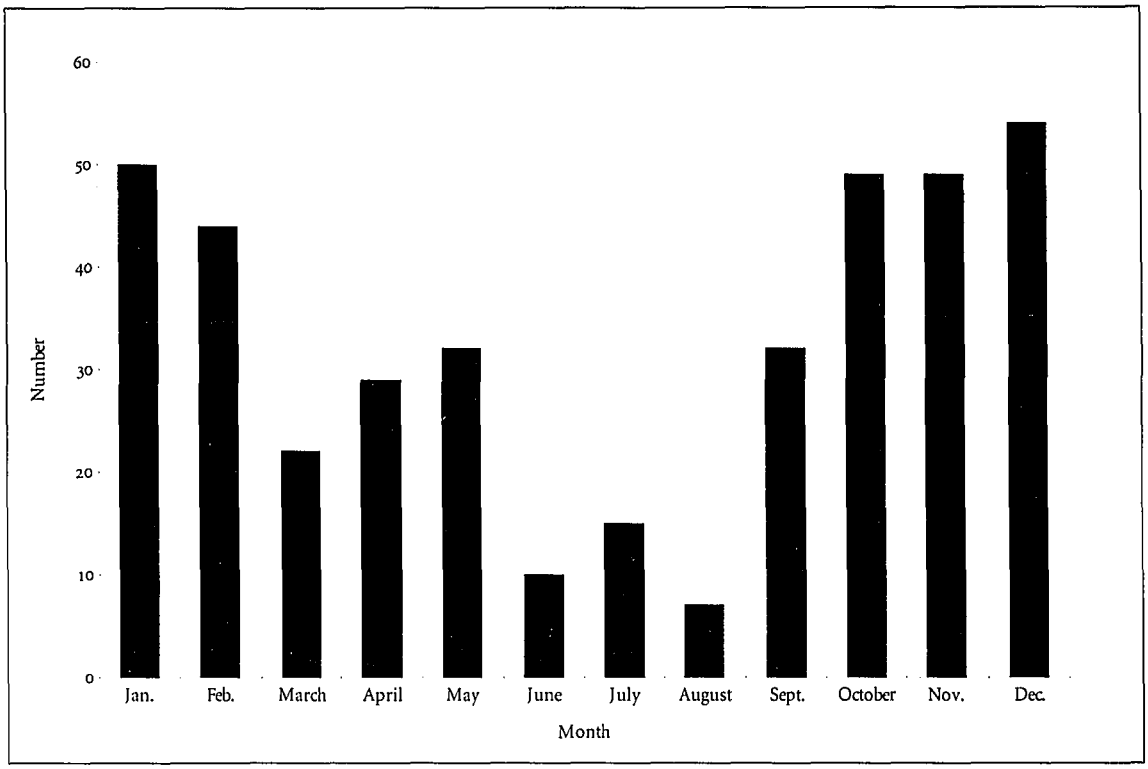


FIGURE 3. Poaching Prosecutions; 1847–55, East Suffolk, Woodbridge Petty Sessions.
Source: SRO, Ipswich, BB11/1/2/1–3.

II

It is perhaps easier to show how poaching's seasonal pattern was shaped by nature in the case of a migratory creature like the salmon, than it is with the nineteenth century poacher's more usual targets, winged and ground game. Unlike the adult salmon, pheasants, partridges, rabbits and hares were ever present, albeit in varying numbers, throughout the year. Nevertheless, despite their constant presence, factors relating to the natural life cycle and environment of these creatures still appear to have shaped the seasonal pattern of game poaching crime in ways not usually recognized by social historians.

Figure 3 shows the aggregate monthly incidence of 393 prosecuted poaching offences in East Suffolk during the period 1847–55.[24] This was an area with a high density of sporting estates and a predominantly agricultural labour force who were often intermittently employed during winter.[25] As such, it can be viewed as typical of the rural and arable environment with which economic explanations of poaching's seasonal pattern are most commonly associated, with the

[24] The prosecutions in fig. 3 occurred within a part of East Suffolk under the jurisdiction of the Woodbridge Petty Sessional Division. see Suffolk RO (Ipswich), Woodbridge petty session minute books, BB11/1/2/1–3, 1 Jan. 1847 to 13 Mar. 1855. Again, the dates used to form this figure and those that follow relate to the date of the offence rather than that of the arrest or trial of the culprit.

[25] J. Glyde, *Suffolk in the nineteenth century* (1856).

causation for winter peaks being mainly attributed to the increased poverty experienced by agricultural and other labouring groups at this time of the year.

The fact that most prosecuted offences in East Suffolk were committed between September and March would again appear to support this kind of interpretation. But even though poverty undoubtedly encouraged many to poach, it does not appear to have been the sole determinant of the crime's seasonality. A more detailed examination of the prosecutions in East Suffolk reveals that even within an already seasonally marked pattern of offending there were further sub-patterns according to which particular game bird or animal was involved.[26] These sub-patterns would appear to indicate that, like salmon poaching, the annual periodicity of game poaching was as much determined by nature, in terms of practical considerations about the availability and marketability of the creature concerned, as by cycles of rural unemployment and poverty.

The seasonal nature of the poaching, sporting and commercial activity which centred on England's principal game birds, pheasants and partridges, perhaps illustrates the point. Both species could only be legally shot and, following reform in 1831, sold, during the statutory game season which began in September for partridges and October for pheasants and ended in February for both. It seems likely that the majority of poachers targeting winged game, for which the rewards and risks were often greater, had commercial motives. Most poaching for these birds occurred between September and February due in part to the marketing opportunities which the statutory game season provided. But, it is important to recognize that the game season was not merely an incorporeal legal or cultural concept. The season's temporal span at least was fundamentally shaped by an understanding of nature. It reflected an understanding of when, for instance, it was actually practical or even possible to hunt and shoot in the countryside and, indeed, of when the birds were at a stage of maturity to suit the requirements of all concerned.

Maturity, for example, was a critical determinant of when the season began. It was not until the autumn months that the young partridges and pheasants raised in the preceding summer were strong enough to fly at a level to test the sportsmen's guns. Nor until this time were they of a sufficient size to sell or satisfactorily eat, a matter which certainly concerned game dealers and poulterers as well as commercial poachers. Frederick Gowing, for example, a commercial poacher from East Suffolk, only began taking partridges a week or two before the beginning of September on the grounds that before then 'the young would not be big enough'.[27]

Coincidentally, pheasants and partridges also reached maturity at a time of wider seasonal change in the natural and farming landscape which, for practical reasons, was equally influential in determining when poaching (or equally legitimate shooting) could begin. The shooting and poaching of partridges, for instance, were both critically dependent on the completion of the harvest, for it was only when the corn was gathered and the stubbles laid bare that these ground roosting birds became accessible or even visible.[28] Before then they remained hidden in the standing corn for much of the time and were thus beyond the reach of either the licensed shooter or the poacher with nets.

[26] Of 393 prosecutions it was possible to identify the quarry in 222 cases, of which 109 related to Game birds and eggs, and 113 to Ground Game.

[27] BPP, 1846, IX, *SC on the operation of the Game Laws*, p. 630.

[28] Jones, *Seasons*, p. 33. R. Jefferies, *The Gamekeeper at home* (1978), p. 40. *Carlisle J.*, 30 Aug. 1881.

Such was the relationship between harvest and partridge shooting that in Ireland the game season for these birds opened 20 days after that in England to account for the fact that crops consistently developed later than on the British mainland. Even in England however, backward harvests necessarily delayed the hunting activity of both poachers and shooters at times, although rarely to the extent witnessed in the 1790s, when, after a series of late harvests, parliament had to intervene to put back the beginning of the partridge season in order to prevent impatient sportsmen trampling down much needed corn.[29] The pressure from sporting interests to restore the season's traditional start date once harvests recovered, on the grounds that the legitimate gun 'should be allowed a fair start with the encroaching poacher' serves to illustrate just how far each group understood the importance of this habitat change.[30]

Pheasants did not rely on the standing corn for cover to quite the same extent, but for legitimate shooting to be effective, it was necessary that the fields were clear. Driven pheasant shooting of the battue style often required the guns to be situated in the fields adjoining woodland coverts and to do this while the crop was still standing would have antagonized farmers and led to the loss of a good deal of the shot game. These were obviously not issues that directly concerned poachers, but changes in the landscape and the habits of the birds themselves after harvest also benefited their activity. The increasingly large numbers of pheasants reared artificially were released from their woodland pens in the late summer, and during the autumn months that followed both reared and wild birds assumed a greater visibility. This was in part due to the pheasant's natural tendency to stray from its coverts, which was encouraged further after harvest by the feeding opportunities on the stubbles and the abundance of natural food in the hedgerows.[31] Once out of the coverts they provided a tempting target for the opportunistic offender. The commercial poacher, however, still often waited until the autumn gales had removed the leaves from the trees in which they roosted before attempting to take sizeable hauls from the coverts by night.[32]

The degree to which poaching and the statutory game season coincided, perhaps based on these kinds of understandings of quarry and environment, appears to be reflected in the pattern of East Suffolk prosecutions related to game birds shown in Figure 4.[33] Contemporary sources suggest that these figures understate the amount of poaching activity, especially in the early autumn, but they seem nonetheless to indicate that poachers closely followed the statutory game season.

It may well be, however, that Howkin's suggestion that poachers often 'followed in the wake of the fashionable shooting parties of the rich' needs some reappraisal.[34] In East Suffolk at least there some evidence to indicate that commercial poachers in particular often pre-empted legal sporting activity, beginning their criminal predations shortly before the statutory game season opened in both cases. To start poaching a week or two before the opening of the statutory season (if conditions allowed) made good practical and commercial sense. Partridges and pheasants on sporting estates had not yet been disturbed or dispersed by the beaters and

[29] F. Snell, *The autobiography of a poacher, edited by Caractacus* (1901), p. 215.

[30] P. B. Munsche, *Gentlemen and poachers. The English Game Laws 1671–1831* (1981), p. 46.

[31] Watson, *Poachers*, pp. 20–1. Jefferies, *Gamekeeper*, p. 115. Snell, *Autobiography*, p. 134.

[32] G. Baldry, *The rabbit skin cap* (1984), p. 129. Watson, *Poachers*, p. 22.

[33] SRO (Ipswich), BB11/1/2/1–3.

[34] Howkins 'Economic crime', p. 281.

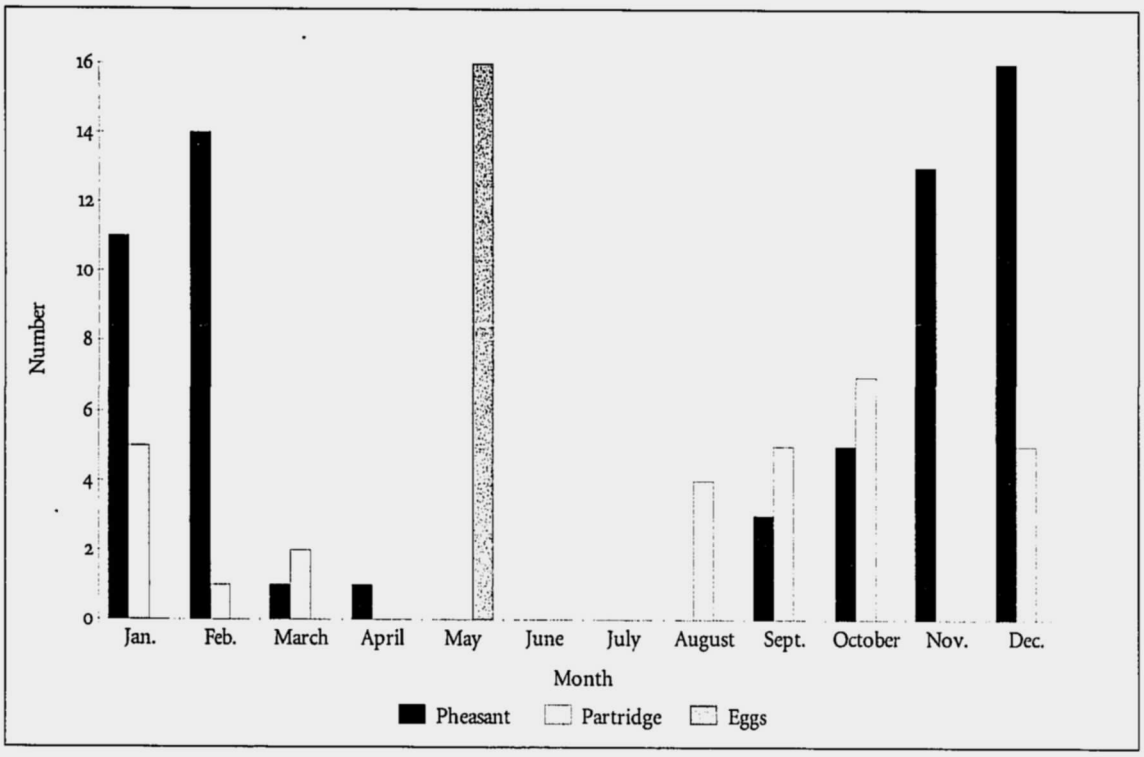


FIGURE 4. Poaching Prosecutions relating to game birds (Pheasant, Partridge, Eggs), 1847–55.
Source: SRO, Ipswich, BB11/1/2/1–3.

guns; those birds which reached the urban markets during the first days and weeks of the season always fetched the best prices. In this sense the legal boundaries of the statutory season clearly had a significant influence on the timing of poaching activity. But it is still necessary to recognize that these were boundaries essentially determined by nature, to which poaching largely conformed even before their legal enforcement in the market place.

Details of the game supplied to one London poultry salesman during 1827 may provide some illustration of this (Table 1). At this time, and until the 1831 Game Reform Act, the entire trade in pheasants, partridges and hares was completely illegal, although it was nonetheless still carried out in the London markets of Newgate and Leadenhall where poulterers were almost completely dependent on commercial poachers for their supply. As the annual pattern of this salesman's deliveries confirms, however, the supply of game birds from poachers was still seasonally marked with few arriving in the summer months. This is despite the fact that the poacher's incentive to follow the legal boundaries of the shooting season was less compelling given that the entire trade in game was illegal. It is also hard to believe that commercial poachers would not have supplied the markets with game birds during the summer months should this have been possible and profitable. That they did not only affirms the degree to which poaching was considered viable only when the birds met certain conditions of maturity and when they could be extracted from their natural environment in sufficient numbers.

TABLE 1. Returns of game received by G.H. during 1827.

	Pheasants	*Partridges*	*Hares*
January	232	601	312
February	115	204	143
March	111	76	265
April	24	9	49
May	6	0	28
June	1	0	49
July	0	2	74
August	3	473	108
September	44	2579	267
October	137	971	180
November	293	815	300
December	327	626	204

Source: BPP, 1828, VIII, *SC on the Law Relating to Game*, App. 1.

The alignment between poaching activity and natural cycles is even more obvious in the context of offences involving partridge and pheasant eggs. These were taken from the nest during April or May either for food or to be sold in the illegal trade in 'live' game. This trade was carried out extensively on a both a local and national level with the active complicity of gamekeepers and sportsmen who purchased eggs to hatch under domestic hens, as well as live adult birds, to bolster the stock of game on their estates.[35] Poachers charged with this kind of offence were likely to be either commercial poachers, or women and children who discovered the eggs while engaged in field work. Whatever the character or motivation of offenders, the timing of this form of poaching was, as the pattern of prosecutions in East Suffolk suggests, entirely a matter determined by the nesting season of the birds (Figure 4).

Undoubtedly the greatest proportion of all poaching offences, whether committed by habitual or occasional offenders, involved rabbits and hares. These offences appear to have been much less seasonally marked. Ground game seems to have been almost always available at market. Even the often low numbers of prosecutions that can be positively linked to these creatures in the East Suffolk sample shown in Figure 5 appear to suggest that they were taken by a variety of methods all year round.[36] This was possible because neither rabbits nor hares were inaccessible for long periods of the year because of habitat or breeding considerations whilst both existed in large numbers, on such a scale as to constitute a menace to agriculture, well beyond the confines of sporting estates.

[35] BPP, 1828, VIII, p. 17. BPP, 1846, IX, p. 630.

[36] SRO (Ipswich), BB11/1/2/1–3. The actual number of prosecutions in fig. 5 undoubtedly understate the amount of poaching that was related to ground game. Unfortunately magistrates appear to have been less inclined to record the quarry concerned in those cases, usually the most common, which involved hares and rabbits. The absence of prosecutions relating to rabbits in August and October is therefore more a consequence of a failure to identify with absolute certainty the quarry involved in 34 cases during these months, than a reflection of the amount of poaching involving hares and rabbits that occurred at these times.

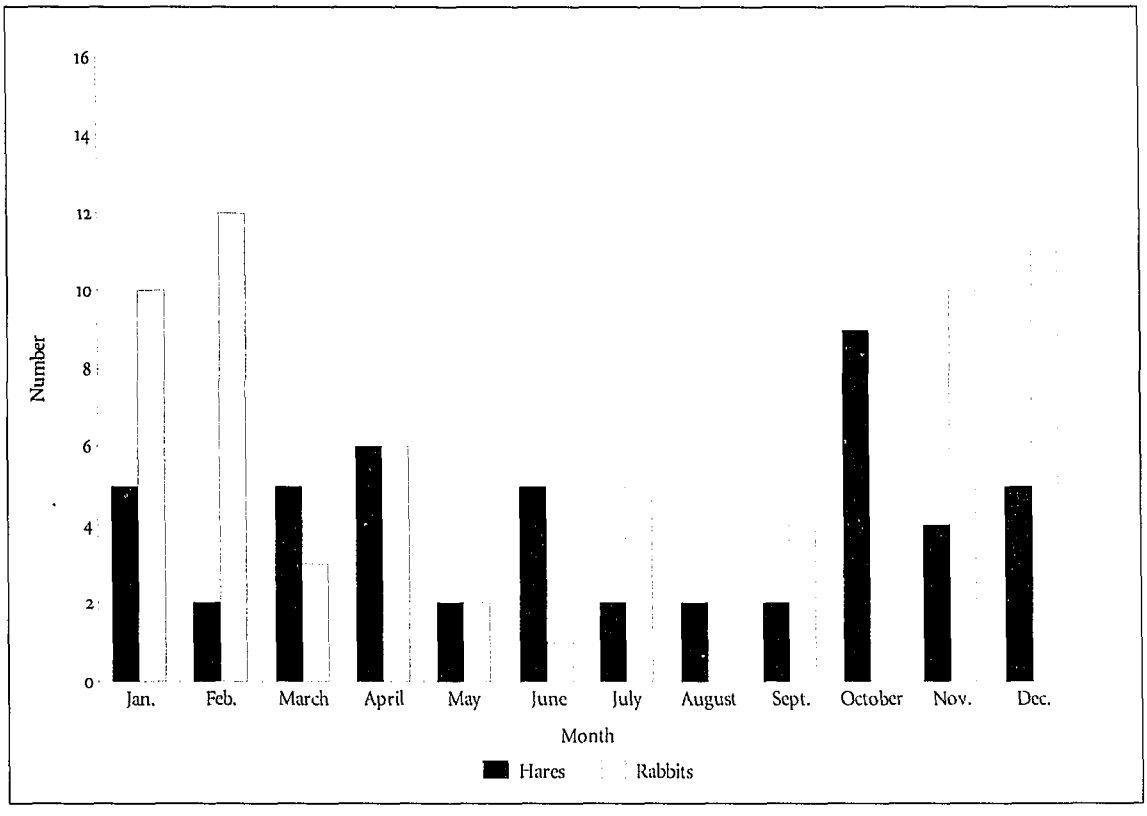


FIGURE 5. Poaching Prosecutions relating to ground game (Hares and Rabbits), 1847–55.
Source: SRO, Ipswich, BB11/1/2/1–3.

Nonetheless contemporary sources suggest that even the more sustained annual round of poaching activity which attended these creatures was still subject to seasonal variations which were again partly determined by factors relating to environment and life cycle. Like game birds, rabbits appeared in greater numbers after harvest and, as with partridges, it was also necessary for the fields to be clear before certain forms of poaching such as coursing or netting could be effective.[37] Practical considerations also governed the timing of other forms of hunting. Poachers and commercial warreners, who took rabbits from beneath ground, usually did so between November and February during the brief winter pause in the rabbit's reproductive activity, in acknowledgement of the fact that at all other times using ferrets to bolt burrows containing pregnant does and young was fraught with difficulty. Game dealers, who received the majority of their rabbits between October and March, also claimed that winter tended to see more killed because of the additional value of the animals' thicker winter pelt.[38]

Hares also appear to have been taken in the greatest numbers during the autumn and winter months, although again the breeding habits of the animal may have had some bearing on the timing of poaching activity. Most adult hares were received by game dealers between September

[37] Jefferies, *Gamekeeper*, p. 79.
[38] BPP, 1872, X, *SC on the Game Laws*, p. 154. BPP, 1873, XIII, *SC on the Game Laws*, p. 64.

and March, but very few were sold during the period from late April to early June when the young leverets were born, although, until the Hares Preservation Act of 1892, it appears that the leverets themselves were in considerable demand in many areas, being regarded as a particular delicacy among the urban middle classes.[39] However, both market returns and contemporary observers suggest that a great many adult hares were killed in the early spring months when the animals exhibit uncustomary boldness as they box and pair up to breed.[40]

Even for these most accessible of game animals, the seasonal pattern of poaching was often shaped by conditions in the natural world and changes in the agricultural landscape. There were certainly greater opportunities for poaching ground game throughout the year than game birds and salmon, but the period from early autumn to late winter was still usually the optimum time for poaching. While, however, this period was also often one of acute poverty for the labouring poor, economic distress itself was not responsible for the timing of poaching. It would be mistaken in any case to assume that rural poverty, low wages and temporary unemployment were only confined to the winter months. In many of the areas where poaching was an important crime, distress was often a constant feature of labouring life. It is significant, however, that even when distress was clearly apparent during the summer months, poaching was not usually a strategy that the poor could adopt.

Evidence of this can again be provided by events and conditions in Suffolk. It was in the west of the county and in neighbouring parts of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk that recurrent spates of incendiarism during the mid-1840s drew unprecedented attention to the problems of rural labouring communities. Several national journalists travelled to the area to report on the arson phenomenon. The correspondent for *The Times*, Thomas Campbell Foster soon became the most outspoken in his conviction that the fires were fuelled by labouring resentment over low wages, unemployment and the operation of the New Poor Law.[41] Foster arrived in West Suffolk in June 1844 at the height of the fires and yet his reports indicate that even at this time of the year poverty and underemployment were prevalent. In some villages agricultural wages were little higher than in the preceding winter and in almost all cases spring and early summer farm work had been severely interrupted by the weather. Foster was accused by leaders of the county's farming establishment of being sensationalist and selective in his examples of poverty. But there can be little doubt that the distress he and others highlighted during the summer of 1844 was real and widespread.

Despite this there were very few prosecutions for poaching during the summer months of 1844, even in the distressed areas of West Suffolk which were at the very epicentre of the arson epidemic between May and July (Figure 6).[42] The point here, however, is not to pursue a comparison between the periodicity of arson and poaching, but to stress how, even during a summer of clear economic distress, poaching appears to have remained tied to its familiar seasonal pattern.[43] Obviously the number of recorded committals will always understate the

[39] BPP, 1873, XIII, p. 64.

[40] BPP, 1828, VIII, App. I. Watson, *Poachers*, p. 6.

[41] *The Times*, 3–21 June 1844. D. J. V. Jones, 'Thomas Campbell Foster and the rural labourer. Incendiarism in East Anglia in the 1840s', *Social Hist.*, 1 (1976).

[42] The arson attacks shown in fig. 6 are based on a full survey of the *Bury and Norwich Post, and East Anglian*, 1844, and the poaching figures correspond to warrants issued, by date and number, for poaching offenders subsequently housed in Bury St Edmunds Gaol. See SRO (Bury St Edmunds), Q/AGR 1, register of prisoners (Gaol Receiving Books), 1844–5.

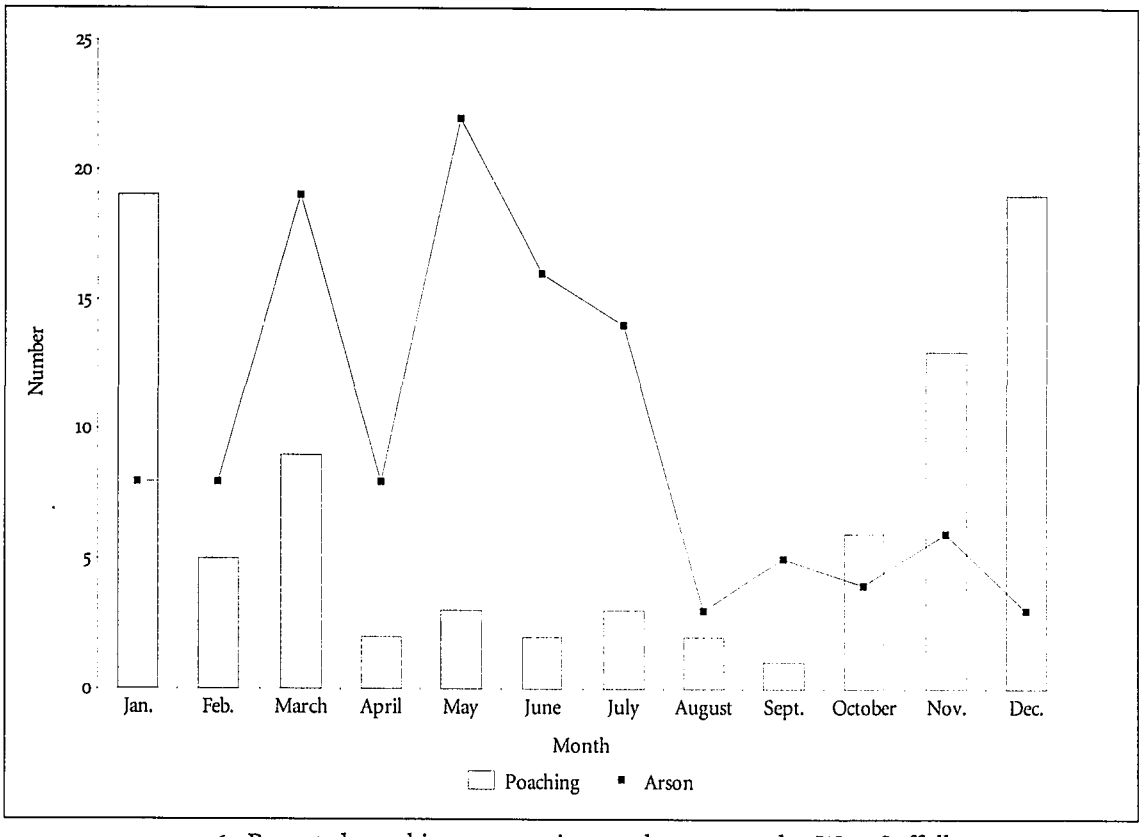


FIGURE 6. Reported poaching prosecutions and arson attacks, West Suffolk, 1844.
Sources: SRO, Bury, Q/AGR1. *East Anglian Times*, 1844.

true level of poaching activity, but nevertheless, the virtual absence of prosecutions during the summer months of 1844 would seem to underline just how far poaching was a crime whose seasonal timing was determined by natural cycles rather than merely periods of labouring poverty.

IV

It seems clear that historians cannot hope to fully understand the periodicity of crimes which involve natural resources without some understanding of nature itself. The motive of the criminal may have been predominantly economic, but in many cases the actual seasonality of the crime was determined rather more by the availability of the 'living' article which was taken than by the economic circumstances of the offender. Poaching provides perhaps the most obvious example of how nature determined the seasonal periodicity of offending, but it is conceivable that natural cycles may have also shaped the annual pattern of certain other 'rural' crimes, such as crop stealing, livestock theft and even some forms of criminalized wood

[43] For a full discussion of the seasonality of incendarism in nineteenth century East Anglia, see Archer, *By a flash and a scare*, p. 132.

gathering. It is probable, for example, that larceny offences relating to fruit and vegetables in rural areas had a fairly fixed annual periodicity. And while the motives of the sheep rustler were often even more varied than those of the poacher, the fact that the 'seasonal movements of sheep were marked', in response to the demands of both husbandry and markets, raises the possibility that at times this may have been reflected in the seasonality of crime.[44]

It is also possible that environmental factors may have had an effect on the long term periodicity of offending. The apparent decline of poaching toward the end of the nineteenth century, for example, is generally attributed to economic, cultural and demographic change, but it is also apparent that in some areas environmental factors played a part in undermining certain forms of the crime.[45] This was rarely evident in the context of those game birds and animals which could be easily reared and preserved, but on some salmon rivers the effects of long term environmental damage were becoming increasingly obvious as the century progressed. Effluent, obstructions and canalisation had caused the salmon to desert the Mersey and Thames completely by the 1850s and pollution from mines had made the once abundant salmon a rare visitor to many of the rivers of industrial South Wales and the South West of England.[46] By 1900 salmon numbers were also down significantly on the Border Tweed and the rivers of the industrial North East.[47] On the worst affected rivers poaching rapidly became a crime of declining significance, simply because, as riparian owners on the Devonshire Tamar reported in 1861, 'there has not been any salmon to poach'.[48]

An environmental perspective is clearly a useful adjunct to other ways of interpreting the periodicity of certain types of rural crime. Traditionally, social historians in particular have tended to focus on the part played by economic cycles in determining seasonal patterns of offending. Poaching may have been a crime of economic motives, but its seasonal pattern was predominately defined by supply. It was a crime only viable when the rural environment allowed and when the mature quarry was available in sufficient numbers. The seasonal pattern of this particularly rural crime was largely determined by such factors.

[44] R. A. E. Wells, 'Sheep-rustling in Yorkshire in the age of the industrial and agricultural revolutions', *Northern Hist.*, 20 (1984), p. 132.

[45] I am grateful to Dr J. E. Archer for the suggestion that the growing commercialism of sporting estates may have also contributed to the decline in game poaching. Increasing numbers of shot game were legally sold by landowners as the century progressed and this may have helped marginalize the commercial poacher.

[46] A. Netboy, *Salmon. The world's most harassed fish* (1980), pp. 77–82.

[47] BPP, 1902, XIII, pp. 24–5.

[48] BPP, 1861, XXIII, p. 457.

Aspects of the trade in British pedigree draught horses with the United States and Canada, *c.* 1850–1920

by R. J. Moore-Colyer

Abstract

The transatlantic export of pedigree draught horses was part of the extensive flow of livestock exports to North America in the nineteenth century. This article deals with various aspects of the organization of the trade in Clydesdale and Shire horses, considers the origin and destination of animals reaching the USA and Canada, and considers some of the reasons why the initial popularity of British breeds evaporated in the face of importations from mainland Europe.

The disappearance of the horse from both the northern and southern parts of the American continent is among the more intriguing mysteries of world prehistory. Whether by disease, excessive predation or some shattering natural disaster, the indigenously evolved *Equidae* ceased to exist in the Americas, and with the opening up of the Bering Straits between the sixth and fifth millennia BC, migrations from Eurasia were eliminated. It was to be some six thousand years before horses once again became established on the continent through the agency of Spanish colonists in the south and other European settlers in the north.[1]

French settlement in Quebec, and Dutch and English colonisation of the Atlantic seaboard ensured that by the third decade of the seventeenth century horses had once again become firmly established in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Lower Canada.[2] As settlement spread, so did horses, and as the animals were generally turned onto ranges to forage for themselves, many were forced to become feral or semi-feral. As little control was exercised over their breeding, conditions were created for the establishment of large herds of unowned horses. These appeared in a variety of localities from the Rio Grande to the Peace River. According to the demand for working animals and cavalry remounts, they were alternately rounded-up or left to their own devices.[3]

As European settlers headed westwards in the later nineteenth century, encouraged by the enthusiastic admonishments of the US immigration bureaux, they were accompanied by outflows of capital for investment in both farming and ranching in the seemingly limitless ranges of the west. The northwards expansion of the cattle industry from Texas offered enormous opportunities for financial profits by the late 1870s, when finished beef from the Great Plains found its way to the eastern seaboard of the American continent and thence to Europe. It was inevitable that when companies like the Edinburgh-based Prairie Cattle Company declared a

[1] R. Denhardt, *The horses of the Americas* (1974), pp. 104–6.

[2] R. W. Howard, *The horse in America* (1965), pp. 26–8.

[3] T. McKnight, 'Wild horses in western Anglo-America', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 49 (1959), p. 198.

dividend of 28 per cent in 1881, Scots and English capitalists would rush to invest in corporations competing with American organizations for range land, farming enterprises and cattle. The fact that this would lead to overstocking and associated problems later in the decade was of no immediate concern and, as capital was poured into ranch development and the importation of pedigree Durham, Devon and Hereford stock to upgrade local animals, investors could take a sanguine view of future prospects.[4] Ranching and farming, of course, demanded draught power, and part of the inevitable web of transatlantic connections in the later decades of the nineteenth century involved the export from Britain of heavy horses. It is with this trade that the present article is concerned.

I

By the close of the eighteenth century, the horse had substantially supplanted the ox as a draught animal in America, and except in the agrarian south where the mule held sway (the horse here being identified with pleasure and gentility), horse power was increasingly adopted on the farm.[5] European experience over several centuries had highlighted the speed, versatility and flexibility of the horse for draught purposes, especially when it came to undertaking agricultural tasks for which timeliness was of the essence. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century England, horses progressively took over from oxen for haulage work, and if the ox remained the principal ploughing animal on the grounds of relatively low maintenance costs, it became clear as the centuries rolled on and heavier horses became available, that adoption of the latter for primary cultivation would enhance agricultural efficiency.[6] As American farming was transformed from systems based upon the use of wooden, often home-made (and to some extent man-powered) field equipment to those utilising trailed machinery of iron and steel, the benefits of the horse became increasingly obvious.

In the 1840s, more than eight out of every ten Americans lived on farms, so that there was every incentive to invent and develop efficient means of cultivating, harvesting and processing. As the transition from wooden beam to steel mouldboard plough quickened, so were patents granted for disc harrows, grain drills, threshers and the whole gamut of equipment essential to the cultivation of wheat and corn.[7] These changes inevitably led to an increase in cultivated acreage, an expansion of individual farm size and a general enhancement of labour efficiency. 'Fifteen years ago', it was noted in 1861, 'the writer required twenty men to cultivate properly a garden of thirty acres; now, by the use of a few judiciously chosen horse tools, he cultivates many times that area with but eight farm hands, four of whom are boys'.[8]

Much of the primary and secondary cultivation equipment enabling these advances could be

[4] D. Ellis (ed.), *The frontier in American development* (1969), p. 396; R. A. Billington (ed.), *Westward expansion. A history of the American frontier* (4th edn, 1974), pp. 588–90; T. G. Jordan, *North American Cattle ranching frontiers. Origins, diffusion and differentiation* (1993), pp. 270–4.

[5] H. Barclay, *The role of the horse in man's culture* (1980), p. 166.

[6] J. Langdon, 'Horse hauling. A revolution in vehicular transport in twelfth and thirteenth century England', *Past and Present* 102 (1984), p. 39; *Ibid.*, 'The economics of horses and oxen in medieval England', *AgHR* 30 (1982), *passim.*

[7] H. Rasmussen, 'The impact of technological change on American agriculture, 1862–1962', *JEcH* 22 (1966), p. 579.

[8] E. B. Williams, 'The present condition of the farmer', *The New England Mag.* 3 (1890–1), p. 12.

TABLE 1. Horses and Mules on American farms, 1870–1922

	Horses ('000)	*Mules ('000)*
1870	7,633	1,245
1880	10,903	1,878
1890	15,732	2,322
1900	17,856	3,139
1910	19,972	4,239
1920	20,091	5,651

Source: USDA Yearbooks, 1870–1920.

readily drawn by cheaply-produced mature oxen or by horses, but only the latter could move forwards at a pace sufficient to work the reciprocating blades of the reaping machines first demonstrated by Obed Hussey and Cyrus McCormick in 1833 and 1834. The design problems of the early prototypes were rectified by the 1850s, and as mechanized reapers, and subsequently combine harvesters hauled by up to sixty horses were widely adopted in the cereal-growing areas of the United States and Canada, the humble ox, as an agricultural draught animal, was consigned to the backwaters.[9] For the next seven decades the horse or mule would remain virtually the sole motive force in the cultivation and harvesting of the dramatically expanding arable acreage of North America. Wheat acreage in the United States, for example, expanded from 15,424,000 acres in 1866 to 42,495,000 in 1900, while corn increased throughout the same period from 34,306,000 to 83,320,000 acres, rising to 104,035,000 acres in 1910.[10] Such a remarkable expansion could only be achieved with very high inputs of horse power. From the smaller farms of New England and the Middle Atlantic states, to the great corn and wheat holdings of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and the states to the west of the Mississippi, horse numbers increased sharply alongside concurrent increases in the mule population of the south. Indeed, by 1900 the farmlands of Iowa alone were host to 1,400,000 horses, and within ten years over one million horses were working on the farms of each of the states of Illinois, Texas, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.[11] (Table 1)

Moreover, horsepower was required for industrial purposes in the decades before 1890. Apart from iron foundries, canal operations, freight haulage, railways, and a variety of other enterprises, urban transport was making growing demands on draught power. The opening of the first 'horse-car railroad' on Fourth Avenue, New York in 1832 and, shortly afterwards, of similar transport systems in Boston and Philadelphia, set the trend for the major cities between the Atlantic seaboard and Chicago, and by 1860 no less than five hundred miles of horse-car lines were in operation.[12] Together with the electric streetcar, these remained the principal means of urban mass transport prior to the development of the internal combustion engine.

[9] A. Olmstead, 'The mechanisation of reaping and mowing in American agriculture, 1833–1870', *JEcH* 35 (1975), p. 327; R. Pomfret, 'The mechanisation of reaping in nineteenth century Ontario. A case study of the pace and causes of the diffusion of embodied technical change', *JEcH* 36 (1976), p. 399.

[10] Howard, *The horse in America*, pp. 215–6.

[11] F. W. Tuttle and J. M. Perry, *An economic history of the United States* (1970), pp. 312–3.

[12] Howard, *The horse in America*, pp. 170–1.

The evolution of local mass transport systems and the westwards expansion of agriculture inevitably stimulated demand for horses, yet no breed of draught horse emerged in North America to meet this demand. In the earlier nineteenth century the Conestoga, a distinctive light draught animal created from Dutch foundation stock in Pennsylvania, was the mainstay of the American haulier for general transport work.[13] However, like the Vermont drafter or the Mustang/Morgan crosses of California, the Conestoga failed to evolve into a true registered breed and, by the 1860s, was limited in distribution to the farms of the Amish communities where it continued to be prized as a plough and wagon workhorse.[14] The inability of these animals to establish any real national foothold can be attributed to their insufficiency of strength and substance either for urban draught purposes, farm-to-market haulage over rough prairie roads, or for pioneer ploughing work in the expanding croplands of the mid-west. Here, new and larger field machinery necessitated new and larger horses, and farmers, who had been impressed by the power and durability of Shires (or Shire types) imported from Ontario, became convinced of the need to look further afield for the sort of draught animals to meet their needs. An American commentator, noting in 1862 the success of English and Scots settlers with Clydesdale and other British heavy horses in western Canada, observed that whatever the intrinsic merits of these animals for farm and city draught work, '... they would be preferable to the horses now generally used for these purposes in this country'.[15]

So it was that American and Canadian farmers turned to Europe and despatched agents to Normandy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom with instructions to secure pedigree crossing sires of a type suited to produce horses capable not only of general draught work, but of supplying the power required for pioneer cultivation on the high plains. From the moment that Edward Harris of Moorestown, New Jersey imported two mares and a stallion 'of Norman breed' in 1839, there seemed, on the face of it, to be almost limitless opportunities for British and European breeders in the burgeoning North American market. Even as late as 1910, when the horse was assailed on all sides by the bicycle, the electric street car and the automobile, potential European exporters could still take heart from the assurances of the US Department of Agriculture that '... as a source of farm power and as a substitute for human labour in combination with machines, the horse's economic place on the farm is more strongly established than ever before'.[16]

By the mid-1850s North American farmers and breeders were no strangers to the qualities of the English heavy breeds since small numbers of stallions had been arriving from across the Atlantic for several decades. George E. Brown of Aurora, Illinois, a major importer of European draught horses with a knowledge of American horse breeding reaching back to the mid-nineteenth century, observed in 1901 that whereas substantial numbers of English horses were entering the USA from Upper Canada around 1850, there was no authentic account of direct transatlantic importations. Nevertheless, he had been informed by 'several old settlers' of the arrival of English cart horses in northern Illinois in the 'fifties; indeed, one of the

[13] F. Haines, *Horses in America* (1971), pp. 90–1.

[14] Denhardt, *Horses*, p. 93.

[15] S. Howard, 'Remarks on the Horse', *USDA Yearbook 1862*, p. 344.

[16] *United States Department of Agriculture* [hereafter *USDA*] *Yearbook 1910*, p. 191.

progeny of these animals had recently died on his own farm.[17] It is not certain however, whether these horses were directly imported or were the descendants of Canadian stallions of the like of 'Tamworth', sold by the British army to John Battenburg of Brucefield, Ontario in the late 1830s, or 'King Alfred', the property, in 1847, of a Mr Davidson of Toronto. Although virtually all the earlier records have been destroyed by fire so that authenticated pedigrees are unknown, the first volume of the *Canadian Shire Horse Stud Book*, published in 1901, records the imports, mainly to Ontario, of more than a dozen Shire stallions. In the main these arrived between 1850 and 1856, coinciding with the importation of the first Suffolk Punch stallion to Oxford, Ontario in 1854.

At much the same time isolated specimens were being imported directly from Britain to the United States. Among early examples were 'John Bull', purchased by a Mr Strickland of Aurora, Illinois in 1853; 'Sampson', imported several years later as a travelling stallion operating along the Fox River, and, rather confusingly, a second 'John Bull' who found his way to Kendall County.[18] Also, Clydesdales or, at least, Clydesdale types, began to arrive in Canada, initially to meet the needs of Scots settlers. Shortly after the landing of 'Cumberland', shipped to David Rowntree of Weston, Ontario, and the grey 'Young Clyde' who began his career in Toronto and eventually died in the United States in 1851, Clydesdale stallions travelled across the Atlantic in increasing numbers, and for years this breed and its cross-bred progeny were to become the dominant draught horses of Upper Canada.[19] Largely under the inspiration of men like Robert and Albert Ness of Howick, Quebec, and Joe Thompson, a native of Yorkshire who settled in Columbia, Ontario, the Clydesdale became widely publicized, and by 1870 more than seventy stallions were busily covering mares in the colony.[20] The breed was also attracting the attention of American buyers and advertisements began to appear, both for Clydesdale and Shire stallions, in the western agricultural papers. The Chicago auctioneer, Colonel J. W. Judy, considered it worthwhile to print a catalogue of imported and homebred Clydesdale stallions which he offered for sale in 1875.[21] These included the bay-roan 'Border Chief', bred in Berwickshire, the Lanarkshire-bred 'Rob Roy', and 'Sir William Wallace', a seven-year-old bay stallion who had swept all before him in shows throughout Yorkshire several years previously. The apparent success of this sale led to subsequent auctions including a major event at Norwood, Illinois in 1881 when the Colonel paraded numerous Clydesdale stallions and fillies for 'the consideration of the public'.[22]

II

On 21 March 1890, Burgess Brothers of Wenona, Illinois, among the largest and most successful of American importers, emphasized in the *Livestock Journal* that as far as they were concerned, British breeders would do best to concentrate upon the production of weight and substance in their horses.[23] After all, foreign buyers were anxious to secure animals capable of improving

[17] *Canadian Shire Horse Stud Book* 1 (1901).

[18] *American Shire Horse Stud Book* 1 (1888).

[19] R. L. Jones, *History of agriculture in Ontario, 1613–1880* (1977), p. 148.

[20] E. Baird, *The Clydesdale horse* (1982), p. 75.

[21] Sale Catalogue, *National Livestock Journal Print* (Chicago, 1875).

[22] Sale Catalogue, *National Livestock Journal Print* (Chicago, 1881).

[23] *Livestock J.*, 21 Mar. 1890.

the bone, size and substance of indigenous types. Urging readers to ignore the fanciful notions of those Americans who argued that the Shire horse in particular should be 'improved' by being bred with lighter bone 'and that fatal quality, prettiness', the Burgesses echoed the opinion of J. M. Critchlow of Pennsylvania who argued that for both agriculture and industry the '... heavy muscular type best for Liverpool ... is best also for Pittsburgh'.[24] But in reality they hardly needed to have concerned themselves since, on the whole, British Shire breeders had the good sense to breed for the home market, correctly anticipating that the export boom would prove a transitory phenomenon. As the Huntingdonshire breeder and commentator Sanders Spencer wisely noted, by concentrating breeding effort on hardening bone and sinews and improving walking action,

> ... we shall still breed a sufficient number of these lighter-limbed horses to which our foreign customers appear to be partial, and at the same time produce animals which will command a remunerative price for draught work as long as England remains the emporium of the civilized world.[25]

Like many of his contemporaries Spencer paid scant regard to the criticism that breeders were 'too careless of the trade which is done abroad', being fully aware that an obsession with fashionable quirks could readily lead to a home market overloaded with unsaleable horses.[26]

While they were by no means 'fashionable quirks', the heavy feathering of the legs and softness of the feet of some British horses, notably the Shire, were considered a singular disadvantage by many potential North American customers. 'Feather', a profusion of hair on the lower parts of the legs, was viewed by Shire breeders as a desirable characteristic. While it was widely believed by British breeders that the presence of 'feather' was genetically linked to physical strength, the American farmer, often obliged to work with his animals in prolonged muddy and snowy conditions, realized that an abundance of 'feather' meant a great deal of grooming and viewed it as a rather irksome feature, to be avoided if at all possible. Insistence upon heavy 'feathering' led to grave problems during the Great War when heavy horses dragging ordnance through the mud of Flanders were often placed under severe stress. Subsequently, selection pressure was applied against the 'feathering' characteristic and to the surprise of some breeders, if not to practitioners of the new science of genetics, 'feather' was successfully reduced without loss of bone or substance.

In the meantime however, 'feather' and other quibbles did little to deter a flourishing export trade throughout the 1880s, a period celebrated among the British heavy horse fraternity as the 'American Boom'. No reliable statistics of the breed pattern of transatlantic equine exports are available for the earlier period, but it is clear from anecdotal evidence that Shire and Clydesdale animals were shipped in considerable numbers. References to export certificates in the earlier volumes of the Stud Books probably grossly underestimate the total volume of the trade since many more animals are known to have been exported than were actually offered for breed registration. Indeed, it was maintained by one contemporary authority that up to 80 per cent of Clydesdales exported in the decade before 1890 were horses of which neither breeders nor Breed

[24] *Livestock J.*, 20 May 1891.

[25] *Shire Horse Society Stud Book* 12 (1891).

[26] *Minutes of evidence, Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock* (Cd 6032, 1912), Q. 3595.

Society had much knowledge.[27] What is abundantly clear, in the case of the two major British heavy breeds, is that the overall quality of horses sent to North America in the 1880s left much to be desired, and that players on both sides of the Atlantic were sometimes less than scrupulous in their conduct of the trade. Some commercially short-sighted British exporters, operating in a market overloaded with sub-standard stallions, saw the buoyant American demand as a golden opportunity to dispose of stock which could not readily be sold at home. It would, of course, have been a simple enough matter to castrate these inferior animals or, at the very least, to reject applications for export certificates. Yet, human nature being what it is, various exporters contrived to off-load many poor quality animals on the American market. Ultimately, to the discomfiture of élite breeders who had carefully ensured the quality of their exported animals, this was to prove a totally false economy when the many unsound, unsuitable and even impotent British stallions came to be unfavourably compared with horses of the Percheron and Belgian types whose breeders made sure that only the very best specimens reached the shores of North America.[28]

The Belgian (Brabançon), one of the numerous descendent breeds from the old Flemish heavy horse, was regarded for its massive size and great collar power, while the dappled Percheron, if smaller than the former, was widely prized for its innate docility and thriftiness of constitution. Originally bred as a powerful army and draught horse capable of pulling heavy loads over hard, rough surfaces – notably the stone block roads of Northern France – the Percheron developed a faster action than its British counterparts and, of major significance, was without 'feather'. This feature, and the high degree of prepotency in stallions which enabled them to generate stock of uniform type when mated to nondescript indigenous mares, would ultimately secure their popularity in the United States and Canada. In 1885 fifty US breeders were importing Percheron horses. By 1900, however, 1634 were breeding and importing the Percheron (largely under the auspices of the National French Draft Horse Association based at Fairfield, Iowa), this figure advancing to 5338 by 1910. Within ten years from this date, some 70,000 animals were registered in the US Percheron Stud Book compared with 11,000 Belgian, 19,000 Shire and 21,000 Clydesdale horses.[29]

In their rush to make short-term gains, numerous of the earlier British exporters appeared somewhat indifferent to the question of quality. Besides, many were of the opinion that well-bred, superior sires were wasted on the American farmer who tended to use them on indifferent local mares and thus to effect little in the way of improvement.[30] This view was even shared by some American observers, one of whom informed the editor of the *Livestock Journal* that whereas the Burgess Brothers, Peter Hopley and N. P. Clarke had achieved good results with their importations of Shires, Suffolks and Clydesdales, few other American importers had positively improved the standard of draught animals with imported British stock.[31] The upshot of this lack of attention to breeding became clear in the early 1890s when, after a series of severe droughts in the mid-west and the financial crisis of 1893, American farmers were left with large numbers of virtually unsaleable horses.[32]

[27] *Livestock J.*, 10 Apr 1891.

[28] *Livestock J.*, 14 Jan. 1913.

[29] W. H. Carter, 'The story of the horse', *National Geographical Mag.* 44 (3) (1923), p. 104; J. Dugast, *Le Cheval Percheron* (Amis du Perche, nd); R. Whitlock, *Gentle giants. The past, present and future of the heavy horse* (1976), pp. 66–8.

[30] *Livestock J.*, 10 Oct. 1890.

[31] *Livestock J.*, 4 Oct. 1895.

[32] *Livestock J.*, 28 Aug. 1903.

If British exporters could justifiably be accused of forcing the market by despatching unsolicited shiploads of indifferent horses across the Atlantic, American buying agents travelling the United Kingdom were not entirely blameless. To begin with, the very high prices of quality heavy horses, Shires in particular, circumscribed the activities of American buyers with a finite sum to spend. Surely, argued British breeders piously, little could be done to prevent these impecunious foreigners buying sub-standard stock if this is what they selected within the limits of their budgets?[33] Anyhow, the American agent was continually in a frantic rush, tearing pell-mell across the country buying a horse here and a horse there, rarely giving himself a chance to draw breath and carefully to inspect the range of animals available. Praising the studious attitude of Charles W. Comstock of Lost Nation, Iowa, who spent several months studying horses in Britain before making his purchases, a correspondent to the *Livestock Journal* could not avoid contrasting this '... to the headlong haste in which the many Americans seem to delight to indulge'. He went on to note that such assiduous attention to detail on the part of a buyer was of great benefit to the British breeder since the former could ascertain '... the real condition of the livestock interest in Great Britain, and their comparative merits with the French and other Continental horses'.[34]

While breeders hoping to sell stock to the likes of Charles Comstock were repeatedly advised to welcome the foreign buyer at their own front doors, some exporters preferred either to speculate by despatching a shipload of horses to America in the hope that purchasers would come forward, or to come to some prior gentleman's agreement with transatlantic buyers to buy shipments unseen. In the absence of a written commitment to cash on delivery or some other form of copper-bottomed guarantee, this procedure was fraught with risk. As many exporters found to their cost, their transatlantic cousins, in the full knowledge that altruism was far from the primary motivation of the exporter, were in the habit of refusing to pay the price demanded. Acting together in a pre-arranged manner, the Americans would allow the shipment into port and then refuse to buy the animals, insisting that they either return home or be maintained at the quayside at the exporter's expense. Knowing fully well that the last thing the exporter wanted was to see his stock returned to Glasgow, Southampton or Tilbury, the American buyers were accordingly able to procure the horses on their own terms.[35]

As implied above, the early phases of the trade were not without a modicum of skulduggery and sharp practice on both sides. However, as time passed, the American and Canadian governments tried to apply some control to what had previously been an unregulated market. By 1890 both governments were insisting upon prior veterinary inspection of all imported horses, while the McKinley Tariff imposed heavy duties on breeding animals entering the United States unless they were accompanied by a certified statement testifying both to their Stud Book registration and their pedigree authenticity for five generations on the male and

[33] *Minutes of evidence, Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock*, Q. 399.

[34] *Livestock J.*, 14 Aug. 1891. Unless they restricted themselves to a particular part of the country, the dispersed nature of breeding establishments in Britain probably compelled American buyers to act in this frenetic manner. This contrasted markedly with the situation in Le Perche where exports of Percherons were handled by four major breeders in neighbouring villages. American buyers frequently visited Nogent le Rotrou in May, taking their families with them.

[35] *Livestock J.*, 12 Nov. 1897.

four generations on the female side.[36] Meanwhile, the Editing Committees of the various British stud books, alarmed at accumulating evidence for the falsification of pedigree certificates which they viewed as a crime '. . . of national importance, because it also affects the honour of the country, more especially when fraud is discovered abroad', took positive steps to tighten up their registration procedures. Even so, by 1903 the US Treasury came to require for duty-free entry not only an authenticated pedigree certificate, but an affidavit, sworn before the US Customs, that the animal to be imported was identical to that described on the certificate.[37] The horse in question, furthermore, had to pass a strict veterinary examination at the port of entry and, if found to have the slightest symptom of one of a range of infectious diseases, was returned to its place of origin.[38] Kindred measures were taken in Canada where the government instituted rigorous veterinary procedures, and required certification from Ottawa in addition to the normal documentation, before a mare or stallion could enter the country free of duty.[39] The imposition of these various official hurdles concentrated the minds of British exporters and was to alter their attitude towards the North American market when demand began to recover in the years after 1900. Assiduous attention would now be paid to conformation, constitution and other aspects of quality, besides which no breeder worth his salt would offer an animal for export if it was possessed of the slightest hint of a veterinary defect. It will become apparent below that the British export trade in both Clydesdale and Shire horses in the early years of the present century was probably hampered less by quality considerations than by the price of the product relative to that of foreign competitors in the market.

III

Of the three major British breeds, the Suffolk Punch was a mere footnote in North American agricultural history. The Shire and Clydesdale, however, were of greater significance and some facets of the transatlantic export trade in these breeds is described below.

Under the guidance of a number of pioneer importers including the Powell Brothers of Springburgh, Pennsylvania, N. P. Clarke of Minnesota, Colonel Robert Holloway of Alexis, Illinois and the Galbraith Brothers of Janesville, Wisconsin, the American Clydesdale Society was formed in 1879. Within three years the British Clydesdale stud books were recording increasing American ownership, while registration of Canadian-owned Clydesdales escalated once the first volume of the Canadian Clydesdale stud book had appeared in 1886.[40] If the Clydesdale breed was eventually to prove more popular on the prairies of Canada than in the fields and cities of its southern neighbour, considerable numbers of stallions appear to have been exported to the United States in the 1880s. Indeed, many of these, together with Canadian-bred hybrids, crossed the border from Ontario whence they made their way to Boston, New York and Philadelphia, the farming regions of Dakota and Montana and the timber forests of Michigan.

[36] K. Chivers, *The Shire Horse* (1976), pp. 227–8.

[37] *J. Board of Agriculture* 11 (1904–5), p. 419.

[38] *J. Board of Agriculture* 10 (1903–4), p. 114.

[39] *Minutes of evidence, Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock*, Q. 4750.

[40] *UK Clydesdale Horse Society Stud Book* (1882). Complete runs of the UK Clydesdale stud books are available at the Clydesdale Horse Society's office in Ayr, while the Shire stud books can be consulted at the Society's headquarters in Woodbridge, Suffolk.

So much was this the case that it was maintained in 1885 that upwards of one-third of the horses bred in the hinterland of London, Ontario, travelled to the western states of America.[41]

Reflecting the predominance of British settlers in Canada, the Clydesdale was overwhelmingly the most important draught horse breed in the Dominion in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The Shire offered some limited competition, but this was of little real significance. Typically, the Clydesdale virtually monopolized the Toronto Industrial Exhibition of 1900, when 875 horses were exhibited. Again, at the Winnipeg Exhibition of the same year, two Shires and a single Percheron competed with several hundreds of Clydesdales.[42] Even so, the threat of competition from the Percheron and, increasingly, the Belgian breeds, was never far away. British exporters were increasingly attentive towards quality considerations by 1900, yet the continued obsession of some of them with 'show points' did little to help their cause, while the Canadian Clydesdale breed society took a somewhat lackadaisical approach to advertisement relative to the vigorous efforts of the promoters of the mainland European breeds.

Within five years of the arrival of the railroad in 1881, Brandon, Manitoba had become the self-styled 'Horse Capital' of Canada and the Mecca of breeders and dealers in Clydesdale horses. Firms like Colquhoun and Beattie and Trotter and Trotter established livery yards in the town, while further westwards W. H. Bryce of Arcola, the Mutch Brothers of Lumsden and R. H. Bryce of Lundie imported a succession of quality Scots Clydesdale mares and stallions.[43] Of the many dealers flocking to Brandon and the surrounding countryside, perhaps the most influential was Alexander Galbraith of Brandon and Edmonton. Born near Loch Lomond in Scotland, Galbraith and his brothers had originally settled in Janesville, Wisconsin and had imported many hundreds of horses of a variety of breeds prior to the financial panic of 1893. At the time of the financial crash the brothers came close to bankruptcy and were obliged to sever their partnership, causing Alexander to move to Canada where he became a major force in the development of the agriculture of Alberta.[44]

As a Scotsman, Galbraith strove to champion the Clydesdale horse arguing, during his period of office as President of the American Clydesdale Association, that as a crossing sire, the quality Clydesdale stallion produced stronger-legged and better-actioned progeny than stallions of competing breeds.[45] Yet, in both Canada and the United States, competition began to intensify. In 1884, Brandon Agricultural Society had purchased two Percheron stallions from M. W. Dunham of Illinois, thereby launching that breed on its western course through Canada. Ironically, as increasing numbers of carefully-selected, large Percheron mares and stallions came to North America from Europe, so Clydesdale quality was deteriorating. Throughout the 1890s some British breeders, obsessed with a craving to satisfy showyard judges, had committed the error of sacrificing weight and substance to what Alexander Galbraith had contemptuously dismissed as 'prettiness'.[46] Meanwhile, not only was the weight and draught capacity of imported Percherons increasing, but additional competition was on hand in the form of the heavy Belgian

[41] C. B. Jones (ed.), *Livestock on the Farm* (3 vols, 1915), III, p. 275; *American Suffolk Horse Stud Book, 1907*; *Canadian Suffolk Horse Stud Book, 1939*.

[42] G. MacEwan, *Power for Prairie Plows* (1976), p. 29.

[43] G. MacEwan, *Illustrated history of Western Canadian agriculture* (1980), pp. 123–5.

[44] MacEwan, *Prairie Plows*, p. 28

[45] Chivers, *Shire Horse*, p. 286. It has to be said that precisely the same claim was repeatedly made for the Percheron.

[46] Baird, *Clydesdale Horse*, p. 70.

horse. Thus was the scene set for the celebrated 'Battle of the Breeds', fought, tooth and nail, at fairs, livestock shows and agricultural meetings throughout Canada. The first decade of the present century bore witness to vitriolic exchanges in the columns of the agricultural press, while some local communities were divided according to their breed allegiance with an intensity which reached almost religious proportions. Interbreed rivalry came to the fore at agricultural shows where marshals struggled to prevent enthusiasts from coming to blows, and at country churches where Clydesdale supporters attended to their devotions on one side of the nave while Percheron and Belgian men prayed on the other![47] Active intervention in support of the Clydesdale by the Saskatchewan government's sponsoring breeding experiments at the local university, and the purchase from Scotland of the celebrated stallion 'Craigie Masterpiece' by the government of Alberta in 1920 in an attempt to stave off the Percheron onslaught were to little avail. By now the latter breed was dominating the American market and was beginning to threaten the predominance of the Clydesdale in Canada.

The westwards expansion in North America and the seemingly inexorable inflow of emigrants from Europe stimulated an expansion in the demand for horses. In the United States, for example, the human population advanced by 21 per cent between 1900 and 1910, with a concurrent increase in the horse and mule population of 70 per cent from 13 to 23 millions. This tremendous surge in horse numbers was due in large measure to the defects of transport technology. Automobiles and motor lorries were all very well on tarmacadamed urban roads, but were quite incapable of negotiating the quagmires, ruts and rocky lanes comprising most of the highways across the countryside, and these continued to remain the province of the horse-drawn vehicle. Here, then, was a market ideally suited to the sturdy, well-bred Clydesdale. And yet, British breeders as a whole failed to capitalize on the situation and allowed Percheron and Belgian importers to make substantial inroads into what in Canada, at least, could have been a virtual Clydesdale monopoly. Andrew Montgomery of Netherhall, breeder of practically all the winners at the Chicago World Fair of 1893, and Peter Walker of Liverpool, gold medallist at the same fair in 1900, could be congratulated '... for their spirited action in the interests of the breed', but they were in the minority and the overall quality of Clydesdale horses leaving Britain before 1900 left much to be desired.[48] An overzealous concern with 'show points', and a tendency to dump surplus stallions of questionable pedigree, conformation and breeding potential on the overseas market did little to enhance the reputation of the Clydesdale even among its most ardent transatlantic supporters. The Breed Society itself was not entirely blameless and made little real effort to advertise its wares in America beyond contributing medals and prizes at various fairs and, by way of acknowledgement of Canada's patronage of the Clydesdale, investing £1000 in Canadian securities.[49] This apart, there is compelling circumstantial evidence that the editorial board of early volumes of the British stud book unwittingly allowed suspect, or even forged, pedigrees to be passed for registration, a point emphasized on more than one occasion by the Clydesdale Society's secretary, Archibald McNeilage.[50] To be fair, the editors were under great pressure, especially at times when overseas demand was

[47] *Canadian Encyclopaedia* (Edmonton, 1985).
[48] *UK Clydesdale Horse Society Study Book* (1901).
[49] Baird, *Clydesdale Horse*, p. 70.
[50] *Minutes of evidence, Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock*, Q. 4745–4749.

buoyant and British breeders clamoured to register stallions which, under less propitious circumstances, would have been castrated.[51] As early as 1883 the Council of the Clydesdale Society was imploring breeders to supply accurate and genuine details of horses before registration, and more than twenty years later it rounded on potential exporters for failing to give heed to these matters.[52] The minds of both the Council and editorial board had been sharply concentrated in 1884 when legal proceedings in the American courts prompted considerable embarrassment. Apologising for the delay in publication of the second volume of the Clydesdale stud book, the Council pleaded in mitigation that

> The case of pedigree fabrication and forgery occupied so much of the time of the officials of the Society during the past winter that the Council thought it to be advisable to delay other business that this important matter might be thoroughly investigated and brought to an issue.[53]

The case in point concerned an American citizen, Joseph Raeside, who, along with his brother David, had conspired to procure the entry of fraudulent pedigrees in the British and American Clydesdale stud books. According to the transcript of the proceedings in Chicago, Raeside had bought horses from the Clydesdale breeder David Riddell and despatched his brother to Archibald McNeilage in the hope of persuading him to register their pedigrees. It took little time for McNeilage to realise that these were obvious forgeries. The Clydesdale Society subsequently took steps to arrange for the deportation of Raeside to Scotland where he would have an opportunity to defend his action. After four days of evidence and deposition, amounting to some 140 printed pages, the commissioner hearing the case in Chicago held that Raeside should be extradited. However, much to the irritation of the Clydesdale Society, the US Secretary of State ruled that the Raeside case did not fall within the provisions of the 1842 extradition treaty between the United States and Great Britain, so that no extradition warrant could be issued.[54] At the time this seemingly minor footnote in equine history was something of a *cause célèbre*; it seemed to threaten the very fabric of breed society structure and the much-vaunted notion of British fair play. 'This is ... an international affair' thundered the American *Breeders Gazette*, several days after the case had concluded, 'It concerns no individual; it threatens the honour and good name of a great industry. All breeders are interested in this question, and hence the importance that has been attached to this case'.[55]

How far the Raeside case damaged the reputation of the Clydesdale breed in the 1880s and 1890s is not clear. However, with the onset of the second major phase of transatlantic heavy horse exports in the early years of the present century, not only were strenuous attempts made on both sides of the Atlantic to improve the quality of horses arriving in North America, but the increasingly stringent regulations imposed by both American and Canadian authorities virtually eliminated the possibility of pedigree fraud. Besides, a steady advance in shipping rates probably had a material effect on the export trade. For most shipping companies, transporting human passengers was a more remunerative business than transporting horses, and as emigrants flowed from Europe to America, the spaces available for carrying animals were reduced so that

[51] *UK Clydesdale Horse Society Stud Book, 1901.*
[52] *Ibid., 1883.*
[53] *Ibid., 1885.*
[54] *Report of proceedings in the Raeside Case* (Glasgow, 1885).
[55] *The Breeders Gazette*, 11 Dec. 1884.

TABLE 2. Imports of Breeding Horses to the United States and imports of British heavy horses to the United States and Canada, 1892–1916 (quinquennial averages)

	Imports to USA			*Imports to Canada*	
	Total of breeding horses	*Clydesdale horses*	*Shire horses*	*Clydesdale horses*	*Shire horses*
1892–1896	–	222	210	138	15
1897–1901	–	180	143	484	22
1902–1906	14,611	274	213	2372	57
1907–1911	26,357	449	299	5135	67
1912–1916	17,817	218	268	2292	63

Sources: USDA Yearbooks, 1902–16; British Clydesdale Horse Society Stud Books, 1892–1919; British Shire Horse Society Stud Books, 1891–1920.

the cost, for example, of shipping a horse from Glasgow to Montreal increased from £4 to £6 between 1906 and 1910.[56] As shipping and insurance costs escalated, so the chances of profit from a shipload of indifferent mares or stallions declined. This apart, supply was by now ahead of demand and American and Canadian farmers were buying what they wanted, rather than absorbing a market surplus in the United Kingdom.[57]

Accurate statistical details of Clydesdale and Shire horse exports to the United States and Canada prior to the 1890s are not available, while data on export certificates published in the stud books for the later periods probably underestimate the total by an order of magnitude since many horses were exported without official pedigree registration. Accordingly, the figures set out in Table 2 should be treated with some caution.

Deficient though it is, the data illustrates both the recovery of the export trade after the difficult years of the 1890s, and the preponderance of Clydesdale exports to Canada rather than the United States. It indicates, moreover, the small contribution of the Clydesdale and the Shire to the totality of US imports of breeding stock which included large numbers of thoroughbred horses in this later period. The fact that total stud book registrations of Clydesdales in the USA had doubled to 21,000 between 1900 and 1920, and those of Shires had tripled from 5924 to 19,380 during the same period, hints at the volume of earlier unrecorded importations and the extent to which American breeders had multiplied home-produced stock.[58] While a consideration of statistics alone may obscure the influence of a relatively small number of well-advertised breeding animals on breed as a whole, a comparison of total UK horse exports with the numbers of exported heavy horse breeds returned by the Breed Societies for the 1911 Departmental Committee is revealing (Table 3). Apart from a limited number of racehorses and thoroughbred breeding stock, the overwhelming majority of exports comprised redundant agricultural and commercial animals which were destined for the slaughter houses of Holland and Belgium.

Clearly then, the volume of heavy horse exports from Britain as a proportion of the whole was very small even though it increased significantly in 1906–10 compared to 1901–5. Moreover, British *stallions* (of all breeds), as a proportion of total stallion imports to the USA and Canada,

[56] *Minutes of evidence, Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock*, Q. 3322.

[57] *Ibid.*, Q. 4750.

[58] *Clydesdale and Shire Stud Book* (US 1900–1920).

TABLE 3. The export of horses from the UK, 1901–10.

	Annual average export	*Exports to Holland and Belgium (%)*	*Heavy horses to all countries (as proportion of total exports) (%)*
1901–05	34,621	83.0	1.9
1906–10	57,789	85.0	3.2

Sources: *Report of the Departmental committee on the export trade in livestock* (cd 6032, 1912).

fell from 75 to 24 per cent between 1896 and 1910 as heavy breeds from mainland Europe increased their hold on the trade. This raises basic questions as to the overall importance of this small corner of the British export market. To the majority of heavy horse breeders in Britain, most of whom were concerned merely with breeding replacement stock for working their own farms and selling the occasional surplus animal, it was probably little more than a novelty trade. But it was another matter altogether to the various élite breeders, whose influence over the genetic advance of their breeds far exceeded what one might have expected from their numbers. Major players in the Shire horse market like the Forshaws of Worksop, the Freshneys of Louth, the Ambroses of Ely or the Trotters of Northumberland had no illusions about the significance of the export market both to their own pockets and to the reputation of Britain as one of the world's foremost stockbreeding nations. With this in mind, they expended a great deal of energy exhorting their colleagues to make every possible effort to sustain the quality of exports, especially to the United States. Not only did they tirelessly promote both Shire and Clydesdale breeds in the press and from the platform, but they carefully cultivated friendships and associations with American and Canadian importers. The latter, meanwhile, were primarily concerned with securing high quality, preferably prepotent, stallions which would either be mated with imported or home-bred mares of the same breed so to bulk up numbers of pure-breds, or be sold on to breeders of cross-bred draft horses.

Since it is impossible from the evidence available to state unequivocally the proportion of the 17.9 million American farm horses in 1900 which were genetically related to imported British and European draft animals, their overall importance in the development of the mid-West is difficult to assess. Given that there were very few 'native' animals capable of the draft power necessary for primary prairie cultivation, the value of a half or three-quarter bred Shire, Percheron or Clydesdale would be undeniable and it is probably reasonable to assume that any farmer able to lay his hands on such an animal would do so. As even a cursory glance at any stud book reveals, the influence of a particular sire over the genetic makeup of a breed can be enormous within a few generations. In the nineteenth century it was common for an active stallion to cover up to one hundred and twenty mares per breeding season and to continue doing so over ten or even fifteen seasons. Accordingly, given a generation interval of some five years, the 'blood' of a particular stallion would soon become widespread within a cross-bred population, especially where a proportion of his own cross-bred offspring were themselves used as sires. Provided every effort was made to avoid in-breeding, the use of cross-bred stallions would dramatically increase the number of draught horses in a very short time. In the meantime,

TABLE 4. Principal importers of Shire stallions to the USA before 1888

Name of Importers	(%)
George E. Brown & Co, Aurora, Ill.	17.0
Galbraith Bros, Janesville, Wisc.	16.0
Burgess Bros, Wenona, Ill.	15.0
William Fields, Cedar Falls, Iowa	6.0
Powell Brothers, Springfield, Penn.	6.0
L. Banks Wilson, Bedford, Iowa	5.0
J. D. Beckett, Chicago, Ill.	5.0
Premier Horse Importing Co., Waverly, Iowa	3.0
Norris & Clark, Dover, Ill.	3.0
Blair Bros & Curry, Aurora, Ill.	3.0
Total	79.0

Note: the total number of stallions known to have been imported is 967.
Source: *American Shire Horse Society Stud Book* 1 (1888).

the quality of foundation stock would be maintained by increasing the pool of home-bred Shire or Clydesdale animals, which, on a particular breeding unit, would be regularly supplemented by fresh blood in the form of an imported stallion. Such heady matters would be of prime importance to heavy horse importers, some of whose activities are considered below. In this context, considerations of space limit the discussion to the Shire breed only.

IV

By 1888, there were one hundred and fifty owners of registered Shire horses in the United States, of whom 44 per cent were domiciled in Illinois, 12 per cent in Iowa and the remainder in Kansas, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Minneapolis.[59] Although many of these owner/breeders had imported animals directly from Britain, others had purchased stallions or mares from one or more specialist importers, 64 of these being recorded in the first volume of the American stud book (Table 4). The ten principal stallion importers set out below bought in 79 per cent of the total numbers of stallions imported, with a mean of thirteen stallions per importer.

Of the names in Table 4, George E. Brown, Burgess Brothers and J. D. Beckett were responsible for no less than 47 per cent of the 246 imported and registered mares in the same period, the remainder being contributed by 29 importers at an average of five mares per importer. By 1890, George E. Brown & Co., and the Powell Brothers were less active, and other players like J. H. Truman of Bushnell, Illinois, O. Heffner of Bethany, Nebraska, S. Bell of Wayne, Ohio and Singmaster & Sons of Keota, Iowa became increasingly important. These four, along with the others named in Table 4, brought in from Britain some 25 per cent of all Shire animals imported between 1890 and 1900.

Some American and Canadian importers appear to have been unconcerned as to the English

[59] *American Shire Horse Society Stud Book* 1 (1888).

TABLE 5. Counties of origin of Shire horses exported to the USA and Canada

	USA		*Canada*
	1888 (%)	*1888–93 (%)*	*1880–90 (%)*
Lincoln/Cambridge/Huntingdon	40.0	43.0	26.0
Nottingham/Derby/Stafford	17.0	14.0	18.0
York/Lancashire	21.0	15.0	30.0
Others	22.0	28.0	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *British Shire Horse Society Stud Books* 9–14 (1888–93).

county of origin of their purchases, as in the case of the Galbraith, Powell and Burgess Brothers who evinced no noticeable preference for Shire horses from a particular area or with a particular stud prefix. Others, however, showed clearly defined regional preferences, so that of the 133 stallions imported by George E. Brown & Co., 93 per cent were bred in the counties of Cambridge and Lincoln. Similarly 72 per cent of L. Banks Wilson's stallions were born in these counties, while J. D. Beckett made the bulk (73 per cent) of his purchases from animals born and bred in Buckinghamshire. This may reflect demand for a particular type, as with the Galbraith's interest in stallions carrying the 'Carlton' and 'Grove' prefixes, and Banks Wilson's enthusiasm for horses from the stud of Cole Ambrose of Ely, Cambridgeshire. Equally it might be indicative of the strength of local business contacts and personal acquaintances, convenience, ease of transport and other factors.

Taken overall, the counties of origin of horses exported to the United States did not vary significantly between the periods up to 1888 and 1888–93 (Table 5). Although almost three quarters of exported Shires were born either in the Fens, on the midland limestones, in the Vale of York or in the Fylde of Lancashire, the remainder were widely distributed throughout the kingdom. Colts and fillies grazing the pasturelands of Devon, the Essex marches, the wetlands of Somerset, the chalk downs of Hampshire and the uplands of the Welsh border country were by no means immune from the uncomfortable, if not hazardous odyssey to North America. Upon arrival, a few found themselves despatched to Missouri, Minnesota, Kansas, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Michigan, but by far the majority ended up in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin, and later in Nebraska and Ohio (Table 6).

Destinations of mares reveal a slightly different pattern in that for both periods, almost 85 per cent went directly to Illinois and Iowa to the studs of Shire breeders. Given that 34 per cent of mares registered in the first volume of the American stud book are recorded as being bred and owned in the USA, it would seem fair to assume that American breeders were by now well-established in their craft. This applied equally to Canada where, of the 156 Shire mares registered in the first volume of the stud book, only 38 per cent had been imported after 1880, while 82 per cent of the 318 stallions had been bought in from Britain.[60] All but nine of the 93

[60] *Canadian Shire Horse Society Stud Book* 1 (1901).

TABLE 6. Destinations of imported Shire horses, 1888 and 1888–93

	1888 (%)	*1888–93* (%)
Illinois	47.0	30.0
Iowa	17.0	27.0
Wisconsin	14.0	9.0
Nebraska		8.0
Ohio		6.0
Others	22.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: *British Shire Horse Society Stud Books* 9–14 (1888–93).

Canadian importers hailed from Ontario, and with the exception of a handful of horses reaching Manitoba, all Shire imports were destined for the former province, the location of the major firms of A. C. Fenson and Sons of Toronto, Hendrie and Douglas of Hamiltonsville, and Morris, Stone and Wellington of Welland. The origins of the Shire horses entering Canada differed somewhat from the American pattern, with fewer from the Fens but a greater proportion from northern England (Table 5).

V

In 1897, Colonel Holloway of Alexis, Illinois, sometime lawyer and Civil War veteran, and by then of the world's biggest breeders of draught horses, exported the American-bred Clydesdale stallions 'Prince Sturdy' and 'Prince Cedric' to the United Kingdom.[61] This coincided with a steady increase in the shipment to Britain from the United States and Canada of Clydesdale, Shire and Percheron crossbreds to be used for van and omnibus work in London and the major cities. As demand for urban horses in the United States began to decline with the expansion of bicycle and streetcar transport, there was some urgency in the need to develop an American export trade and it was fortuitous that Britain looked across the Atlantic for supplies of horses previously secured from Germany.[62] Indeed of the annual average of 43,811 horses imported to the United Kingdom between 1895 and 1900, some 80 per cent derived from the United States and Canada.[63] With the entry of European and West Indian buyers into the American market, prices surged ahead and as the century turned British demand tended to slacken. Nevertheless, the US Department of Agriculture was sanguine about the future and firmly held that when prices began to fall, British buyers would return to the fold. In 1899 and 1900, Britain had purchased approximately half of all American horse exports (compared to one third in 1895), but in fact, with the exception of the four years of the Great War, the British market was never to recover to these levels.[64]

On the British side of the Atlantic, breeders of high class heavy horses believed they had little to fear from the United States and Canada, but that 'the ordinary run of horse-breeders',

[61] *Livestock J.*, 12 May 1898.
[62] *USDA Yearbook, 1895*, p. 23.
[63] Agricultural Returns, 1894–1900.
[64] *USDA Yearbook, 1904*, p. 531.

producing vanners and omnibus horses as sidelines on their farms, had just cause for concern.[65] How far the profits of these people were affected by the growing volume of imports at a time of generalized depression in the agricultural industry is a matter beyond the scope of the present essay. For the breeder of pedigree heavy horses, on the other hand, there were apparent benefits to be gained since a buoyant American export trade to Britain in crossbred working animals would theoretically be dependent upon a steady supply of quality breeding stock.[66] At the time it seemed reasonable to assume that this stock would be obtained from Britain, and as many of those American importers who had closed their businesses after 1893 returned to trade in the early 1900s, British producers were optimistic. But their optimism was unfounded. The fact that 90 per cent of the 'bus horses in London in the late 1890s were cross-bred Percherons imported from the United States, speaks volumes for the transatlantic success of that breed, besides which, the potential for extensive British sales withered on the altar of greed. Having fared relatively well during the years of depression, breeders could not resist the temptation of demanding excessive prices from overseas traders. There was little point in a would-be importer even considering the matter, complained a *Livestock Journal* editorial, 'when he is not offered a two year old Shire at less than £200'.[67]

Small wonder, then, that although British exports to America advanced in the first decade of the twentieth century, the focus of transatlantic attention concentrated increasingly on the Percheron which could be obtained at reasonable prices, and probably more consistent quality. Even so, the Shire and Clydesdale horses which had previously made the arduous and stressful crossing of the Atlantic had played out a significant role in the agricultural and urban development of North America. While the actual effect of pedigree blood from the British Isles on the draught and conformational qualities of the horses cultivating the plains of the mid-West cannot realistically be quantified, it is probable that, at the local level at least, these animals had a greater influence than the mere counting of heads would suggest. As importers advertised the qualities of their stallions and stimulated local interest, the genetic material of individual sires would soon become widely spread as farmers used them to upgrade their own stock. And yet, foresighted breeders and farmers in the first decade of the present century could not have failed to notice the fading relevance of all these efforts. The inexorable spread of mechanisation on the land and in the city meant that ultimately horse power was doomed. But for many, the horse was more than a mere tool; it was a potent symbol of strength and self-reliance, an icon of the pioneering past not to be lightly cast aside. People hoped against hope that the heavy horse would remain the focal point of the farm with the tractor as an adjunct, and that attention to breed improvement would tip the balance in its favour. But despite intensive Canadian experimentation to improve horse efficiency, and the innumerable demonstrations of equine strength by way of pulling contests (carefully measured by dynamometers pioneered at Iowa State University and sophisticated by Professor E. A. Hardy of Saskatchewan), the future of the draught horse looked increasingly bleak.[68] So bleak indeed that by the later 1920s, horses were disappearing from the farmscape to be despatched to the meat packers at the rate of half a million a year.[69]

[65] *Livestock J.*, 28 Sept. 1894; 25 Oct. 1895.

[66] *Ibid.*, 13 July 1900.

[67] *Ibid.*, 3 Nov. 1899.

[68] T. C. Barker in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *Horses in European economic history. A preliminary canter* (1983), pp. 105–107.

[69] Howard, *The horse in America*, p. 229.

Output and technical change in twentieth-century British agriculture*

by Paul Brassley

Abstract

Previous estimates of British agricultural output in the twentieth century have covered the period before the Second World War, or after it, but not both. This paper reconciles the differences between previous estimates and goes on to calculate changes in the volume of output between 1867 and 1985. As a result, it is suggested that output grew more rapidly between 1945 and 1965 than during any period before or since. Some of the reasons for this rapid growth are then examined, and it is suggested that the rapid adoption of pre-existing technology was of greater significance than the technical innovations of the period.

Many of the histories of British agriculture in the twentieth century imply, by their starting or finishing dates, that there was a discontinuity at the beginning or end of the Second World War. Thus Miss Whetham's volume in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* ends in 1939, Dr Perren's study of *Agriculture in Depression* in 1940, and Dr Brown's account in 1947.[1] The latter two also accept, as does Dr Thirsk[2] that the years between 1900 and 1939 represent a continuation of the period beginning in the 1870s, when high levels of imports produced low levels of domestic prices. This was the age of 'dog and stick' (i.e. low input-low output) farming, with increased emphasis on milk production, except for a brief period during and shortly after the First World War. Holderness goes so far as to assert that 'Farming in 1940 was not significantly different in structure and practice from farming in 1840'.[3] In contrast, the period after the Second World War is perceived as one in which government support ('subsidy' and 'feather bedding' are alternative terms which have been used) together with extra science and technology produced dramatic increases in output with a little less land, much less labour, and much more capital. In Joan Thirsk's terminology, the period between 1939/47 and 1985 is a period of mainstream agriculture. Historians of post-war agriculture have been concerned to explain how and why the output increases and technical changes of these years came about. Thus Seddon concentrates on the technology, Blaxter and Robertson on the science behind it,

* I would like to thank Derek Shepherd, Andrew Errington, and two anonymous referees for their comments on previous drafts of this paper, and Barbara Sheaves for her assistance with the preparation of the diagram.

[1] E. H. Whetham, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, VIII, *1914–1939* (1978); R. Perren, *Agriculture in depression, 1870–1940* (1995); J. Brown, *Agriculture in England. A survey of farming, 1870–1947* (1987).

[2] J. Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture. A history, from the Black Death to the present day* (1997).

[3] B. A. Holderness, 'Apropos the third Agricultural Revolution: how productive was British agriculture in the long boom, 1954–1973', in P. Mathias and J. A. Davis (eds), *Agriculture and Industrialization: from the eighteenth century to the present day* (1996), p. 69

and Collins and Holderness on productivity changes.[4] The post-war period is generally seen as a coherent whole, at least until the middle of the 1980s, when concerns over the cost of supporting agriculture, and its environmental effects, led to the first restrictions on output.

The following paper does not seek to argue that these approaches are fundamentally wrong, but that the pre-war / post-war dichotomy might be an over-simplification. This view is based upon a new attempt to produce a coherent dataset for the output of British agriculture over the period 1867–1985, details of which are given below. The consequent speculations about the reasons for the observed changes concentrate on the history of technical innovation and adoption, although the effects of labour and developments in government policy towards agriculture are not ignored.

I

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the output of British agriculture has increased, but not uniformly. Although the outputs of wheat, sugar beet, oilseed rape, milk, eggs, beef, pigmeat, and poultrymeat have all increased significantly, the quantity of sheepmeat produced has only increased a little and that of oats and root crops has decreased markedly.[5] To some extent, therefore, greater quantities of some products have been secured at the expense of smaller quantities of others. To measure overall output changes in physical units – tons or litres etc. – is therefore difficult and potentially misleading. This is not a new problem. It has been faced by all those attempting to measure productivity, and several approaches to overcoming it have been suggested. Campbell and Overton, for example, converted grain and potato outputs into energy equivalents.[6] Another solution is to measure all outputs in monetary rather than physical units. Not only does this render them all susceptible to addition, it also reflects the different values placed by society on various commodities. This is the approach adopted in National Product calculations, and consequently estimates of gross output, in current prices, are available for several industries, agriculture included, back to 1939. In addition, Ojala's well-known estimates of inputs and outputs cover the period from the initiation of the annual agricultural census, on which they are based, in 1866 (see Table A1). Although Ojala's figures are not directly comparable with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Departmental Net Income Calculation (DNIC), it is possible to adjust them to fit, and this has been done in the appendix to this paper.

Perhaps the main problem involved in using monetary units is their inconstancy. In order to make meaningful comparisons between different time periods, it is necessary to take account of the changing value of money. This too has been done in the appendix (Table A4). The

[4] Q. Seddon, *The silent revolution. Farming and the countryside into the twenty-first century* (1989); K. Blaxter and N. Robertson, *From dearth to plenty. The modern revolution in food production* (1995); E. J. T. Collins, 'Agricultural Revolution in a modern industrial state' (paper presented to the Economic History Society Conference at Canterbury, 1983); Holderness, 'Apropos the third Agricultural Revolution'.

[5] P. Brassley, *Agricultural economics and the CAP: an introduction* (1997), p. 38

[6] M. Overton and B. M. S. Campbell, 'Statistics of production and productivity in English agriculture 1086–1871', in B. J. P. van Bavel and E. Thoen (eds), *Land productivity and agro-systems in the North Sea area, Middle Ages-twentieth century: elements for comparison* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 199–202.

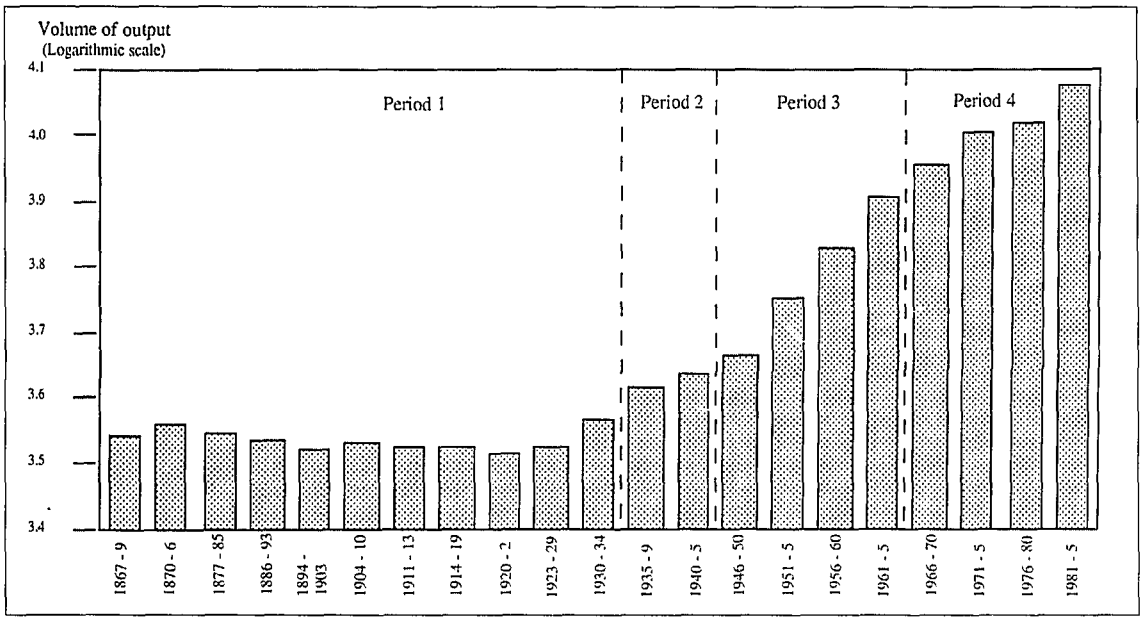


FIGURE 1. Changes in the volume of agricultural output in Britain, 1867–1985.
Source: See Table A4 below.

resulting figures, presented graphically in Figure 1, reveal an interesting pattern. Between 1867 and 1922, the output of British agriculture, in constant 1986 prices, was generally between £6 billion and £8 billion. Between 1924 and 1934 it fluctuated, but was always below £6 billion. Between 1935 and 1960 it rose from £6 billion to £12 billion, and thereafter remained between £12 billion and £14 billion. Thus it might be argued that there was a nineteenth-century plateau of production at the £6–8 billion level, and a late-twentieth century plateau at the £12–14 billion level. They are separated by a period of gradual decline in output, followed by a period of rapid increase in the two and a half decades between 1935 and 1960. However, a problem still remains. High levels of gross output may be produced either by high volumes of output or by high prices. Equally, volume increases may be masked if they occur at the same time as real farm price decreases. Consequently, it is also useful to calculate the volume of output, which can be done simply by deflating the gross output figures by the corresponding agricultural price indices. This in effect means that the physical output in any one period of time is multiplied by a constant price, so that the effects of increasing or decreasing prices are removed.[7]

The effect of this calculation, compared with the gross output figures, is to reduce the size of the change between 1940 and 1960, and to emphasize the continued expansion of output after 1965 (see Table A4). Nevertheless, as Table 1 demonstrates, the most rapid annual rate of output growth took place between 1946 and 1965. It therefore seems logical to divide the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries into four periods (as in Figure 1). In the first, up to the 1930s, prices declined but output was maintained as UK agriculture switched from arable to

[7] This is essentially the same as the method used by Turner for the 1867–1914 period, although the order of the calculations is different. See the discussion relating to Table A4 in the appendix, and M. Turner, 'Output and prices in UK Agriculture, 1867–1914, and the Great Agricultural Depression reconsidered', *AgHR* 40 (1992), pp. 38–51.

TABLE 1. Annual rates of growth in the volume of agricultural output

	% per annum
1870–1935	0.01
1935–1945	0.5
(1935–1965)	(2.3)
1946–1965	2.8
(1946–1985)	(2.3)
1966–1985	1.4

Source: for output volume figures, see table A4; the calculation of annual rates uses the method described in R. Floud, *An introduction to quantitative methods for historians* (2nd edn, 1979), pp. 94–5.

pastoral products. This was Turner's conclusion for the period up to 1914, and it seems to hold equally good for the post-World War I period.[8] The second period is the ten years or so between the mid-1930s and the mid-1940s. The gradual increase in output stimulated by government subsidies to wheat production and the success in the later 1930s of the Milk Marketing Board is often swamped by the drama of the war years. Overall, however, the input changes of this period (such as labour, fertilizer use and land reclamation) were more noticeable than the changes in the volume of output. Gross output certainly increased, but largely as a result of high wartime prices. It was in the third period, between 1946 and 1965, when prices were, initially at least, higher still (see Table A4) that the volume of output rose most rapidly as both arable and livestock sectors expanded.[9] In the final period, between 1965 and 1985, output still expanded, but at a reduced rate, as labour left agriculture rapidly, and much of the extra cereal production was fed to intensive livestock (pigs and poultry) and dairy cows.

II

A detailed explanation of the reason for these changes in the volume of output, and their timing, would take more space than is available here. Nevertheless it is possible to suggest some of the contributory factors. Those which appear to be especially important are changes in land use, changes in labour inputs, technical innovation and adoption, and agricultural policy, particularly its impact on farm prices and incomes.

Any change in the output of an individual crop can be attributed to a change either in the area devoted to the crop, or in the output per unit area. In any examination of the first of these, the cropped area, it makes sense to begin with the cereals, since these exhibited the greatest fluctuations in this period. As Table 2 demonstrates, the total cereal acreage fell between 1870 and 1930, before rising rapidly up to 1965 and rising further still until 1985. Within this

[8] Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 51

[9] The annual growth rates shown in Table 1 may be compared with the annual rates calculated for various periods between 1520 and 1850 by Overton, the greatest of which was 1.18 per cent for the period 1800–30. Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England. The transformation of the agrarian economy, 1500–1850* (1996), p. 85.

TABLE 2. Crop areas in Great Britain and the UK ('000 hectares)

	Wheat	Barley	Oats	total cereals	Potatoes	Sugar Beet	Fruit & Veg.	Fodder Crops	Temp Grass	Perm Grass	Rough Grazing
1870	1417	960	1118	3402	238	–	n.a.	1020	1825	4890	n.a.
1885	1003	913	1190	3251	222	–	233[a]	959	1885	6214	n.a.
1910	732	700	1223	2811	219	2	265[a]	812	1707	7066	n.a.
1930	567	456	1068	2291	277	141	266	556	1721	7389[b]	n.a.
1940s	1403	723	1490	3547	563	169	383	451	1620	5547	8683
1965	1025	2183	410	3656	300	184	263	158	2430	4912	7216
1985	1902	1965	133	4015	191	205	236	74	1700	5019	5019

Notes: [a] author's estimates; [b] 1929 figure.
Sources: H. F. Marks (ed. D. K. Britton), *A hundred years of British food and farming: a statistical survey* (1989), pp. 130, 158, 173–4, 179–80, 183, 187.

overall trend, though, there are considerable differences between wheat, the acreage of which increased most dramatically between 1965 and 1985, barley, which expanded most rapidly between the Second World War and the 1960s, and oats, the acreage of which remained virtually untouched by the price changes of the late nineteenth century, only to fall away rapidly and continuously after the 1940s as the farm horse disappeared. Thus some of the extra wheat and barley appeared because land was no longer needed for oats, but this is not a complete explanation, because the total cereals area roughly doubled from its low point in the inter-war years by 1985. The other main crop which took up more land was sugar beet, the area of which expanded most rapidly in the first half of the twentieth century. To some extent the extra area used by these expanding crops in the post-war years was made available by declining acreages of potatoes, fruit and vegetables, and, especially, fodder crops, the area of which declined steadily from the 1870s onwards. But these shrinkages provided only about one third of the extra land needed for the expanding crops. The bulk of the extra cropland came from the conversion and reclamation of permanent grass and rough grazing. The permanent grass area, having expanded considerably at the end of the nineteenth century as the cereal and roots acreages fell, was attacked enthusiastically at the beginning of the Second World War. Speaking in 1942, William Davies, one of the leading figures in the Plough-Up campaign, claimed that over four million acres (1.62m hectares) of the sixteen million acres identified by the pre-war Grassland Survey of England and Wales had been ploughed up.[10] This figure roughly agrees with the change in the permanent grass area between 1929 and 1942 shown in Table 2. After the war the permanent grass area declined a little further, but not in the dramatic fashion of the war years. The area of rough grazing also decreased between 1942 and 1965, and between 1965 and 1985 (Table 2). What happened before 1942 is less clear as a result of difficulties in definition and enumeration

[10] W. Davies, 'Taking the plough round the farm', a talk broadcast on the Home Service of the BBC on Thursday 12 Mar. 1942, subsequently printed in a collection of *Farming Today broadcasts* published by Littlebury & Co., Worcester (?1943), p. 17.

TABLE 3. Numbers of Agricultural Workers (excluding farmers) in Great Britain

	('000)		('000)
1867–69	1450	1935–39	738
1870–76	1385	1940–45	815
1877–85	1221	1946–50	865
1886–93	1124	1951–55	777
1894–03	1047	1956–60	678
1904–10	1075	1961–65	567
1911–13	1103	1966–70	432
1914–19	1050	1971–75	377
1920–22	996	1976–80	341
1923–19	907	1981–85	314
1930–34	825		

Source: Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 138. The Marks and Britton figures before 1923 are taken from the decennial censuses. The figure for 1867–69 is calculated from the average rate of decline over the decade; those for 1870–1922 from the census years that fall in the year groups, with the exceptions of the 1904–10 period, for which the figure is the average of the 1901 and 1911 figures, and the 1914–19 period, for which the figure is the average of the 1911 and 1921 figures. For the years after 1923 annual estimates from the agricultural census are available, and these are reported for each year by Marks and Britton, and have been averaged for each year group here. The figure used here for 1914–19 may be compared with Dewey's estimate, which is slightly lower, but measured in man-units, in which young males and all females are rated as less than one unit (P. Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (1989), pp. 44–5, 248–9).

in the agricultural returns.[11] What is certain is that the change in the permanent grass area between 1930 and 1985 (2.37m ha.) was more than enough to provide for the net increase in the area of the major crops in the same period (1.19m ha.), although it should be noted that much of the expanding urban area in this period was on land which would have been classified as arable, and much of the expanding forestry area on rough grazing.[12]

To some extent, therefore, the increasing volume of agricultural output in the second half of the twentieth century can be attributed to the more intensive use of land. Rough grazing was converted to permanent grass, and permanent grass to temporary grass or arable. But this will not explain all the changes, for while the process was being reversed (i.e. cropland was being converted to permanent grass) between 1870 and 1930, the volume of output was more or less maintained. And it was not maintained by simply substituting labour for land, because the move to pastoral farming saved labour (see Table 3). Conversely, the period of most rapid output increase, in the 1940s and '50s, was the only one in which the tendency to leave the land was reversed. Apart from the impact of the Womens' Land Army and prisoners of war during

[11] These problems are discussed at length in Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, *A century of agricultural statistics, 1866–1966* (1968), pp. 10–11, and P. Allanson and A. Moxey, 'Agricultural land use change in England and Wales, 1892–1992', *J. of Environmental Planning and Management* 39 (1996), pp. 243–54.

[12] A. G. Champion, 'Competition for agricultural land', in A. Edwards and A. Rogers (eds) *Agricultural Resources* (1974), pp. 213–44.

TABLE 4. Crop yields, Great Britain (to 1914) / UK (tonnes per hectare)

	Wheat	*Barley*	*Oats*	*Potatoes*	*Sugar Beet*
1885–9	2.06	1.96	1.66	14.7	
1910–14	2.17	1.96	1.71	15.8	
1930–34	2.23	2.02	1.97	16.5	20.2
1942–46	2.56	2.37	2.16	17.8	26.4
1965–69	3.93	3.61	3.22	25.4	37.4
1985	6.33	4.95	4.59	35.8	38.3

Source: Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, pp. 164, 175, 180.

the war itself, returning servicemen appear to have had some effect in the five years after the Second World War when labour numbers reached a peak. Thus, as pointed out above, output can be changed by using more or less land, but also by producing more or less from any given acre of land. Other things being equal, more labour applied to a given acreage will tend to increase the output, or yield per acre, and less to decrease it. But other things were clearly not equal, for both total volumes of output and arable yields remained reasonably constant while agriculture was becoming more pastoral and labour was leaving the land between 1870 and 1930. Equally, yields increased as labour decreased after 1960 (see Table 4). Something else was affecting output and yields. Technical change is the usual suspect, and it is to the impact of technology that the discussion must now turn.

III

The range of technical changes in twentieth-century agriculture, in the UK alone, is large. There have been new techniques for accomplishing existing activities, such as silage-making for grassland conservation and artificial insemination of animals. New crops, such as maize, oilseed rape, peas for freezing, and sugar beet, have become an important part of the industry's ouput. Although there have been no new animal enterprises (*pace* venison and ostrich meat, sheep and goats' milk and angora goats and llamas), the output of milk, pigmeat, and poultrymeat have increased significantly. In order to produce these new or increased outputs there have been new inputs, such as the change from Shorthorn to Friesian cows, underdrainage, artificial fertilizers, purchased feedingstuffs, pesticides, new varieties of crops, and the mechanization of many field and farmyard operations. This is not necessarily a complete list, but it includes most of the major changes, and it is interesting to note that many of them were originally developed before 1935, although they became widely used after 1950 or later.

This observation emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between innovation and adoption when assessing technical change. This is not to say that one is more important than the other: without innovation there is nothing to adopt; without adoption the innovation is ineffective. They work together like the blades of the scissors, but, unlike the scissors, they do not necessarily work at the same time. Some innovations have been adopted rapidly, and others much more slowly, but of all the changes listed above probably only one (peas for freezing) was totally

TABLE 5. Sugar Beet in the UK

	Area ('000 ha)	*Output ('000 tonnes)*	*Yield (tonnes per ha)*
1912	2		
1925	23	497	21.6
Pre-war	135	2785	20.6
1946–8	168	3996	24.0
1959–61	175	6320	36.4
1983–85	200	8076	40.8

Source: Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, pp. 179–81.

unknown before the beginning of the First World War. Equally, few of them had been adopted on a significant scale before the Second World War. The best-known exception to this generalization was sugar beet, which could have been introduced in the nineteenth century: in the event, the first factory in England was not built until 1911, and met considerable indifference from the surrounding farmers. Following the introduction of a subsidy in 1924 the cultivated area and output increased nearly sixfold between 1925 and 1939 (See Table 5).[13] By 1960 sugar beet yields and output were approaching modern levels, but most of the modern technical developments – monogerm seed, precision drills, herbicides and harvesters – had still to be adopted. The significant point about these post-1960 developments is that they were all labour-saving rather than output-increasing.

Some new cereal varieties were also widely adopted in the inter-war period. By 1926 17 per cent of the wheat samples received by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany at Cambridge for germination testing were of Yeoman, a variety which had not been introduced until 1916.[14] Similarly, by 1939, 78 per cent of the barley samples received were of the varieties Spratt-Archer (first selected in 1908 and not grown in England on a field scale until 1920), Plumage-Archer (first produced in 1905) and Plumage (1902). The Ministry of Agriculture calculated that the average yield for the period 1922–9 was between 6 and 7 per cent higher than the average yield for the period 1912–19, which one respected (but not impartial) authority attributed largely to varietal change.[15] More detailed calculations, which attempt to distinguish between the yield increases due to varietal change and those caused by other factors such as the use of fertilizers and pesticides, reductions in harvest losses, and improvements in the standard of husbandry, are available for the period between 1947 and 1975. These suggest that 'other factors' had their major impact before the late 1960s. Between 1947 and 1967 new wheat varieties increased the national average wheat yield by 0.63 tonnes per hectare, or 26 per cent, whereas the increase due to other factors was 0.87 tonnes per hectare, or 36 per cent of the 1947 yield. In contrast, in the following decade, new varieties increased yields by a further 24 per cent, whereas other factors

[13] A. Douet, 'Some aspects of sugar beet production in England, 1945–85', *Rural Hist.* 7 (1996), pp. 221, 222.

[14] R. Biffen and F. L. Engledow, *Wheat-breeding investigations at the Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge* (1926), pp. 61–2.

[15] H. Hunter, *The Barley crop* (1926), p. 32; E. S. Beaven, *Barley* (1947), pp. 103–5.

TABLE 6. New drainage in the UK ('000 hectares per year)

1941	6.1
1940–68 average	28.4
1968	58.7
1970s	100.0
1980s	55.0
1990s	10.0

Sources: B. D. Trafford, 'Field drainage', *JRASE* 131 (1970), pp. 132–3; B. D. Trafford, 'Recent progress in field drainage: Part 1', *JRASE* 138 (1977) p. 28; R. J. Parkinson, 'Field drainage' in R. J. Halley and R. J. Soffe (eds), *The Agricultural Notebook* (18th edn, 1988), p. 57; R. J. Parkinson, 'Soil management' in R. J. Soffe (ed.), *The Agricultural Notebook* (19th edn, 1995), p. 100.

had no effect. The story is similar for barley, although varietal change had a greater impact in the first post-war decade. The most prominent among the new varieties were Procter (a barley) and Capelle Desprez and Maris Huntsman (both winter wheats).[16]

Sugar beet was thus adopted between the wars, and cereal varieties at a greater or lesser rate over the whole century. There were other innovations which were adopted on a significant scale after 1960. There is no unequivocal test of 'adoption on a significant scale', but inspection of the available statistics reveals some clear trends. Bowers has pointed out that although the Ministry of Agriculture was successful in promoting arterial drainage schemes in the inter-war period, farmers and landowners did not follow them up with drainage schemes for individual fields.[17] Given the state of inter-war farm prices and profits, this should not be surprising. Table 6 reveals a peak in drainage activity in the 1960s and '70s which is quite clearly associated with the availability of drainage grants, which covered 65 per cent of the cost in the mid-1970s, but only 15 per cent by 1985 and after.[18]

The other principal post-1960 introductions were pesticides, silage, maize, and oilseed rape. Pesticide usage is not easy to measure using official statistics, for these do not seem to be available before about 1970. Estimates of pesticide output, which include both products used in the UK and those exported, show a much more rapid expansion after 1960 than before.[19] It might be argued that this represented relatively rapid adoption, because although sulphuric acid and copper sulphate had been used for weed control in cereals, on a small scale, since

[16] V. Silvey, 'The contribution of new varieties to increasing cereal yield in England and Wales', *J. of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany* 14 (1978), pp. 367–84; for a similar study on potato varieties, see P. M. Harris, 'Agronomic research and potato production practice', in R. G. Hurd, P. V. Biscoe and C. Dennis (eds), *Opportunities for increasing crop yield* (1980), pp. 205–17.

[17] J. Bowers, 'Inter-war land drainage and policy in England and Wales', *AgHR* 46 (1998), pp. 64–80.

[18] R. J. Parkinson, 'Field drainage', in R. J. Halley and R. J. Soffe (eds), *The Agricultural Notebook* (18th edn, 1988), pp. 56–7; R. J. Parkinson, 'Soil management', in R. J. Soffe (ed.), *The Agricultural Notebook* (19th edn, 1995), p. 100.

[19] D. Grigg, *English agriculture: an historical perspective* (1989), p. 75; Blaxter and Robertson, *From dearth to plenty*, ch. 6; K. Cowling, D. Metcalf and A. J. Rayner, *Resource structure of agriculture: an economic analysis* (1970), p. 138.

TABLE 7. Estimates of silage output in Britain

	('000 tonnes)
1884–6	58
1887–9	135
1940	240
1947	350
1950–4	2,195
1955–7	3,272
1962	4,293
1969	8,294
1970–4	13,558
1975–9	21,032
1980–4	32,290
1985–9	46,286

Source: P. Brassley, 'Silage in Britain, 1880–1990: the delayed adoption of an innovation', *AgHR* 44 (1996), pp. 63–87.

the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not until the early 1940s that the first modern selective herbicides, MCPA and 2,4-D and the insecticide DDT, were developed.[20] The subsequent expansion of scientific work on pesticides was dramatic: it was claimed that more than 10,000 scientific papers were published on herbicides alone between 1953 and 1958, although it took longer for the technology to be adopted at farm level.[21] Silage took much longer still. It was first introduced in the 1880s but not widely adopted for nearly 100 years despite the efforts of its official advocates (Table 7).[22] Adoption of silage required changes to the whole farming system, which was why it took time. But as farmers learned to make better grass silage, they transferred the knowledge and machinery to maize, and in addition, by the mid-1990s, maize qualified for Arable Area Payments of up to £320 per hectare. Thus Table 8 seems to indicate rapid expansion of the maize area from the 1980s onwards. Yet the first Board of Agriculture and Fisheries leaflet on maize appeared in 1902, and claimed that maize had then been grown in England for 20 years, and definitely since 1886, although there were also claims that it had been grown earlier, in the 1860s, back to Cobbett's time, and even in the eighteenth century.[23] In 1901 trials were being conducted at the South-Eastern Agricultural College (now Wye College, University of London), and there were further trials in the 1920s and 1940s. Nevertheless, until the late 1950s only about a thousand hectares were grown each

[20] G. E. Blackman, 'Weed control in cereals by chemical methods', *Agriculture* 53 (1946), pp. 16–22; H. W. Miles, 'DDT and the Farmer', *Agriculture* 53 (1946), pp. 217–9.

[21] E. J. Russell, 'Weeds. The ancient enemy', *Agriculture* 65 (1958), p. 8.

[22] P. Brassley, 'Silage in Britain, 1880–1990. The delayed adoption of an innovation', *AgHR* 44 (1996), pp. 63–87.

[23] Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Cultivation of Maize for Fodder* (Leaflet No. 73, 1902) subsequently published in Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Leaflets (Nos. 1 to 100)* (1913).

TABLE 8. Estimate of the maize area in England and Wales

	('000 ha)
late 1950s	5.0
1960–61	1.0
1975–9	28.6
1980–84	17.4
1985–89	23.0
1990–94	59.2
1995	106.0

Source: E. Bunting, 'Maize in Europe', in E. Bunting *et al* (eds), *Forage Maize* (1977); MAFF, *UK Agricultural Statistics* (various editions).

TABLE 9. Estimates of the oilseed rape area and output in Great Britain

	Area ('000 ha)	*Output ('000 tonnes)*
1969	5	9[a]
1970–74	11	20[a]
1975–79	56	131[a]
1980–84	176	541
1985	295	891

Note: [a] author's estimates
Source: Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 172.

year.[24] Similarly, rape has been grown as a forage crop since at least the nineteenth century, and there are references to rapeseed oil in seventeenth-century Northumberland. In the twentieth century it was grown for seed in Europe and North America, but not in Britain until the late 1960s. It was then that there was a search for a combinable arable break crop as all-cereal rotations became popular, and oilseed rape proved ideal, avoiding land-damaging winter cultivations and adding little to fixed costs. The other crucial factor was the decision of United Oilseeds to handle the crop. In effect, they created a market for it; the resultant increase in output is shown in Table 9.[25]

Thus those innovations which were only adopted on a significant scale after 1960, with the possible exception of underdrainage, were not necessarily output-increasing. Pesticides have

[24] J. Darby, 'On green or fodder crops not commonly grown which have been found serviceable for stock feeding', *J. Royal Agricultural Society of England (JRASE)*, 2nd ser., 18 (1882), pp. 138–141; J. Long, 'British dairy farming', *JRASE*, 2nd ser., 23 (1887), pp. 125–34; A. Pell, 'William Cobbett', *JRASE* 63 (1902), pp. 1–26; E. Bunting, 'Maize in Europe', in E. Bunting *et al* (eds), *Forage Maize* (1978). I am grateful to Rob Dixon for these references. The maize area figures are complicated by the fact that maize might be grown for grain or silage, although most is now grown for silage.

[25] P. Brassley, 'Northumberland and Durham', in J. Thirsk (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, V (i), *1640–1750* (1984), p. 56; Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture*, p. 231.

TABLE 10. Number of first inseminations in England and Wales

	('000)
1944–5	16
1954–5	1497
1960–1	2006
1972–3	2528
1985–6	1930

Source: Milk Marketing Board, *Dairy Facts and Figures* (published annually), various editions.

obviously had some yield effects, but herbicides in particular were labour-saving, to an extent which may not be easy to measure but which is put in context by Primrose McConnell's estimate (in 1919) that 'From a third to a half of the field labour on a farm is devoted to the destruction of growing weeds'.[26] Silage, maize and oilseed rape cannot be simply characterized as either output-increasing or labour-saving: they could do both, and affected the whole system of farming. The yield of conserved fodder may have been increased by the move from silage to hay, but at the same time silage also proved easier to mechanize than the hay harvest. On the other hand, the innovations of the 1920s and '30s, especially the new varieties, tended to increase output, but their impact was limited. New crop varieties had a much bigger effect on output after the war. But it was between these two periods, from the late 1930s to the late 1960s, that the most dramatic developments occurred.

Again, the technical changes of the 1935–65 period may be divided into the output-increasing and the labour-saving. Among the former were varietal change (as discussed above), fertilizers, feedingstuffs, Friesian cows and artificial insemination (AI). Among the latter were combine harvesters, tractors, and milking machines. And, once again, most of them had been invented for some time before they were widely adopted. The only exception to this generalisation is artificial insemination, which expanded from virtually nothing in 1942 to 80 per cent of its maximum level by 1960 (see Table 10). Building on scientific work in the 1930s in Russia, Denmark, and the USA, as well as in Britain, the first two trial centres, at Cambridge and Reading, were established in late 1942 and early 1943. The Artificial Insemination (Cattle) (England and Wales) Regulations of 1943 brought the whole process under government control and by 1945 eight centres were in operation, with eight more proposed.[27] The use of artificial fertilizers expanded during the nineteenth century, but although the half million tonnes used in the 1860s had increased by nearly a million in the late 1930s, the big increase came in the following twenty years (see Table 11). In those two decades the use of artificials increased fourfold, to within sight of the peak reached in 1985. Much of the increase was in the use of nitrogenous fertilizer, which has a more direct effect on yield than the other two principal

[26] P. McConnell, *Notebook of agricultural facts and figures for farmers and farm students* (9th edn, 1919), p. 278

[27] S. Bartlett and J. Mackintosh, 'The artificial insemination of cattle', *JRASE* 105 (1944), pp. 175–189; Anon., 'Artificial insemination of cattle', *Agriculture* 51 (1945), pp. 529–532.

TABLE 11. Fertilizer use in the UK

	(million tonnes)
1867–9	0.51
1904–10	1.05
1935–9	1.41
1950–1	4.15
1960–1	6.27
1970–1	6.95
1980–1	6.51
1985	7.09

Sources: 1967–1939 figures from E. M. Ojala, *Agriculture and economic progress* (1952), p. 212; subsequent figures from Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, pp. 254–5, calculated by dividing the expenditure totals in table 27.1 by the current price index in table 27.4. Rough and ready though this method is, it gives a figure (1.04 million tons) comparable with Ojala's for the late 1930s, and one (6.94) comparable with Marks and Britton's table 27.3 figure for total fertilizer use in 1985, assuming that tons of nutrient are converted to tons of product weight using a conversion factor of 30% N for N fertilizers, 40% P for P fertilizers, and 50% K for K fertilizers (estimated from J. Nix, *Farm Management Pocketbook* (5th edn, 1972), p. 121.

TABLE 12. UK Feedingstuffs use

	(million tonnes)
1904–10	6.1
1935–9	8.8
1959–62	13.4
1967–9	13.7
1985	16.3

Source: Ojala, *Agriculture and economic progress*, p. 212; Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, pp. 246–7. The 1959–62 figure is estimated from data for expenditure on purchased feeds in that period, deflated by the RPI.

nutrients, phosphate and potash.[28] Similarly, if not so dramatically, the use of purchased feedingstuffs, the other principal ingredient of Thompson's Second Agricultural Revolution in the nineteenth century, increased by fifty per cent between 1935 and 1962 (Table 12), despite the fact that they were rationed for pigs and poultry between 1939 and 1953.[29] And to consume at least part of these extra feedingstuffs there was a new breed of dairy cow: the Friesian. There have been importations of Dutch cattle since the eighteenth century, and there was probably some Dutch blood in the dominant breed in 1900, the Shorthorn, which accounted for 64 per cent of the national herd in 1908. Then, just at the beginning of the First World War, the first

[28] E. M. Crowther, 'Fertilizers in the agricultural expansion programme', *Agriculture* 54 (1948), pp. 491–500. It should be pointed out that the development of shorter-strawed varieties was necessary to allow the use of extra nitrogen on cereals without increasing the danger of lodging.

[29] F. M. L. Thompson, 'The second Agricultural Revolution, 1815–80', *EcHR*, 2nd ser., 21 (1968), pp. 62–77; V. H. Beynon, 'Bacon production from some home-grown foods', *Agriculture* 60 (1953), p. 208.

TABLE 13. Percentage of Friesian cows in the dairy herd (England and Wales)

1955	40.6
1965	64.2
1973–4	81.0
1985–6	85.8

Source: Milk Marketing Board, *Dairy facts and figures 1959*, p. 32; and subsequent editions for 1966, 1976, and 1986.

modern Friesians were imported. But again, they did not achieve their present dominance until after the Second World War (see Table 13).[30]

If the replacement of Shorthorns by Friesians increased milk yields, which it undoubtedly did, the labour required to extract the extra milk was reduced by the replacement of hand-milking by milking machines. Again, these were a nineteenth-century invention adopted in the 1940s and '50s. There were 237 patents for milking machines between 1860 and 1915, most of them of dubious worth. But the Struthers and Weir pulsator of 1892 and the Gillies teat cup of 1902 solved the major technical problems, so that by the late 1920s, according to Professor Collins, effective milking machines were available.[31] Nevertheless, ninety per cent of herds were still hand-milked in 1939. Between 1944 and 1961 the machine-milked proportion rose from ten to eighty five per cent. The delay in adoption was caused by cheap labour, high capital costs of machinery, small herds, and the association with the change from cowshed to parlour milking. As Collins points out, the eventual rapid uptake was 'part of a broader pattern of change affecting output, organisation, and the farm production function'.[32]

This broader pattern of change was also apparent in other aspects of farm mechanisation. It was eventually a labour-saving development, but not always initially. Roland Dudley of Linkenholt in Hampshire, who farmed a thousand acres of Hampshire cereal land, claimed in 1942 that '... on that same farm on which I employed three men and a boy just before the war I was employing thirty people as a result of mechanisation and today I haven't got enough cottages'. Geoffrey Tawell, a Bedfordshire market gardener, agreed with him: '... up-to-date equipment ... increases your gross output and so you become an employer of more labour rather than less'.[33] Mechanisation also contributed indirectly to output increases because not only human labour, but horse labour too, was saved. As horse numbers fell, so did the quantity of hay, oats and beans that had to be fed to them rather than to meat and milk producers. As Table 14 demonstrates, horse numbers were decreasing from the beginning of the twentieth

[30] Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, *The Agricultural Output of Great Britain* (Cd. 6277, 1912) (in BPP 1912–13, X, p. 529) table 11 p. 57; G. E. Mingay, *British Friesians. An epic of progress* (1982), pp. 34, 47.

[31] E. J. T. Collins, 'The uptake of the milking machine in England and Wales', in *Vom 'Fleissigen' zum 'Produktiven' Bauern. Aspekte zum Wandel der Europaischen Landwirtschaft des 19./20. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfolden: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1996), pp. 2–7. I am most grateful to Professor Collins and John Creasey for providing a copy of this paper.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[33] 'Machinery on the farm', a talk broadcast on the Home Service of the BBC on 3 Dec. 1942, in *Farming Today broadcasts*, p. 76.

TABLE 14. Tractors and Horses in Great Britain

	Horses ('000)	*Tractors ('000)*
1909	1132	0.05
1921	962	20
1940	642	66
1946	545	204
1950	347	332
1960	54	476
1971		477
1980		481
1985		491

Source: C. Cawood, *Vintage tractors* (1980), p. 3; Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 146.

century, although before 1940 some at least of the decrease reflected the fall in the arable acreage. Once again, it was during the 1940–60 period that the replacement of the horse by the tractor was at its most dramatic. And once again, the tractor was a nineteenth-century invention. There were tractors in the USA in the 1890s, the first British tractor was produced in 1902, and enough Fordsons were imported in the First World War to bring the numbers up to 7,000 by 1918. But, as Table 14 shows, adoption was at first slow, hampered by capital cost and steel wheels (for there were no rubber tractor tyres before the 1930s). Then a combination of wartime labour shortages and the major technical changes of weight transfer and live power take-off embodied in the Ferguson TE20 of 1948 made a difference: numbers increased sevenfold between 1940 and 1961. It should also be remembered that tractors increased in power and capability, and their drivers in expertise.[34] In 1942 it appeared to one speaker that '... farmers of the last generation had the knack of horsemanship ... It will take a few more generations of mechanical power before farmers have the same instinct for tractors and tractor implements'.[35] Presumably the implication of comments such as this is that Table 14 understates the increase in effective tractor power after 1960.

Combine harvesters, too, like the reaper-binders which preceded them, were an American invention which were adopted much more quickly in the United States than in Britain. There were combines in the USA by the 1840s, and two thirds of the Californian wheat crop was said to be combined in the 1880s. Internal combustion engines were added after the First World War, and by 1926 over 5000 combines in Kansas cut 30 per cent of the crop.[36] The first combines in Britain were imported only in 1928, and they were soon followed by home-produced competitors: Clayton and Shuttleworth, long-established as threshing machine manufacturers in

[34] C. Cawood, *Vintage tractors* (1980); K. Cowling *et al*, *Resource structure of agriculture*, pp. 96–9.

[35] S. J. Wright, 'More power to the land', a talk broadcast on the Home Service of the BBC on 12 Feb. 1942 in *Farming Today broadcasts*, p. 80.

[36] P. Fearon, 'Mechanisation and risk. Kansas wheat growers, 1915–1930', *Rural Hist.* 6 (1995), p. 232.

TABLE 15. Changes in cereal harvesting machinery in the United Kingdom, 1942–80

	Binders ('000)	*Combines ('000)*	*Balers ('000)*
1942	102	1	nd
1946	119	3	nd
1950	120	10	16
1960	75	48	58
1971		57	70
1980		47	74

Source: Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 146; MAFF, *Agricultural Statistics 1954/5: England and Wales Agricultural Censuses and Production* (1956), p. 89; *Agricultural Statistics 1960/1: England and Wales Agricultural Censuses and Production* (1962), p. 102; *Agricultural Statistics England and Wales 1976–7: Agricultural Censuses and Production* (1980), pp. 138–9.

Lincoln, exhibited a 'combined harvester and thresher' with a 12 foot cut at the Manchester Royal Show in 1930. In 1936 Allis-Chalmers had a small (5 foot cut) combine, powered by the tractor power take-off, which was said by the judges at the Bristol Royal Show in 1936 to be 'a distinct advance towards a combine suited to British conditions', on sale for £230.[37] Nevertheless, by 1939 there were only one hundred machines in the country. Their adoption was delayed by lower labour costs, smaller fields and farm sizes, the need for driers, the absence of balers to deal with the straw, and the capital cost involved. Consequently it came a little later than that of the tractor, and it was in the 1950s that it occurred most rapidly (Table 15).

IV

This is not a complete survey of the technical changes which have affected British agriculture in the twentieth century, but simply a selection of some of those which are judged to be both important and capable of quantification. There are obviously others which may be one or the other but not both. The intensification of pig and poultry production has clearly had a major impact on the output of eggs, pigmeat, and poultrymeat, but it is not easy to find figures which illustrate the change from hens running around the orchard and pigs in sties to battery cages and sow stalls over a long period of time. It might also be suggested that the identification of some quantifiable development as a technical change, which, in theoretical terms, produces a shift in the supply curve, as opposed to an increase or decrease in the use of inputs which produces a movement up or down along the supply curve, is, to some extent, a matter of judgement. The example of fertilizer use illustrates this admirably. It is not difficult to identify the introduction of artificial fertilizers in the nineteenth century as a technical change, but the impact of a few thousand tons of guano then may not have had as much effect on total agricultural output as the rapid increase in the use of ammonium sulphate in the 1940s and

[37] R. Borlase Matthews, 'Report on new implements at the Manchester Show, 1930', *JRASE* 91 (1930), pp. 247–8; T. Close, 'Report on new implements at the Bristol Show, 1936', *JRASE* 97 (1936), pp. 405–6.

'50s. Yet that was existing technology, which farmers were employing in response to increased wartime demand and guaranteed prices.

Clearly this brings the argument back to the question of innovation and adoption. The futility of trying to decide which of these is the more important has already been discussed. On the other hand, the desirability of identifying the factors which promote either or both of them is obvious. There is a long list of potential influences: output price changes; input price changes and relative movements of different input prices; the impact of inflation on the *perception* of cost and price changes; state control of farm rents and the increase in owner-occupation which allowed farmers to retain a bigger proportion of their profits; state promotion of agricultural research and extension services; changes in the business objectives of farmers from survival to profit maximisation as they came to assume that government support would continue; successful implementation of agricultural policy (especially the 1947 Agriculture Act); a patriotic response to a perceived national need; and a combination of several of these. They could all be important. It would require at least one (and probably more than one) further paper of the length of the present one to place them in order of precedence. However, it seems clear that the greatest expansion in output took place when prices, in real terms, had returned almost to nineteenth-century levels, which was also the point at which state propaganda and policy was encouraging output maximisation at almost any cost (see Table A4).[38] The preamble to the 1947 Agriculture Act declared the purpose of British agriculture to be the production of 'such part of the nation's food and other agricultural produce as in the national interest it is desirable to produce in the United Kingdom', and in the 1940s and '50s that seemed to mean as much as possible.[39] Consequently, not only was money made available for research, and for a National Agricultural Advisory Service to put the fruits of the research into the hands and minds of the farmers, but something also encouraged farmers to believe that attempts to increase output would not be met by a return to pre-war low price conditions, as they had been after the First World War. The 1947 Act is an obvious candidate.[40]

Several conclusions thus emerge from this examination of the relationship between price, output, and technical change. First, the output figures suggest that the development of British agriculture in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries should be considered in four periods: from the 1860s to the 1930s; from between 1930–35 to 1945; from 1945 to 1965; and the twenty

[38] Although it should be noted that the figures in Table A4 would obviously not support the contention that the volume of output was directly and closely related to the price level over the whole period 1867–1985.

[39] Agriculture Act, 1947, section 1(1), quoted in P. Self and H. J. Storing, *The state and the farmer* (1962), p. 23; Lord Williams of Barnburgh, *Digging for Britain* (1965), pp. 152–63.

[40] *The Economist* in 1950 called the 1947 Act 'the comprehensive measure of support British Agriculture has always wanted', and Lord Williams devoted an appendix of his autobiography to demonstrating the great increase in output between 1939 and 1959 (Williams, *Digging for Britain*, pp. 179 and 191–5). Tony Harman, who farmed in Buckinghamshire between 1931 and the 1980s felt that '. . . we made no *real* [his italics] progress until after the war ... when the war ended and farmers weren't immediately dropped ... but continued to be supported by the government, my confidence increased still further.' (T. Harman, *Seventy summers* (1986), pp. 186–7, 203). The impact of agricultural policy on producer expectations and consequent investment is discussed, in a different context, in A. Buckwell, 'Economic signals, farmers' response and environmental change', *J. Rural Studies*, 5 (1989), pp. 149–160. I am most grateful to Matt Lobley for this reference.

[41] Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 51.

years after 1965. Secondly, before 1935 the volume of output appears to vary little, as Turner suggested was the case before 1914.[41] There were only a few examples of technical adoption, and they did not change output very much one way or the other. In contrast, after 1965 both prices and labour inputs fell, but the impact of technology ensured that output continued to expand by increasing both land and labour productivities, probably at the expense of capital productivity. The crucial periods were the intervening years. The volume of output did not increase all that much in the Second World War, because the emphasis had to be placed on maximising self-sufficiency. Thus the changes in land use were dramatic, but the resultant increases in arable output were balanced by restrictions in livestock output needed to minimize the use of purchased feedstuffs. Once these restrictions were removed, from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, high prices, increasing labour, and the rapid adoption of what was mostly *existing* technology all combined to raise the volume of output more rapidly than ever before or since. This emphasis on adoption certainly attracted academic attention at the time.[42] Scientific breakthroughs and innovations, which have also attracted their share of academic interest,[43] could have had little influence on output in the absence of adopting producers. Thus, having identified the importance of the 1945–65 period, and made a case for the output increases depending on existing technology, the obvious next stage of research should be on the reasons for adoption. Given the prevalence of theories of technical change that claim the predominant influence of input prices,[44] the suggestion made here of the significance of high output prices is interesting. Detailed work on relative input price changes and other factors affecting labour and capital use is beyond the scope of the present paper,[45] but it would clearly be worthwhile. Further work is also needed to explain which of the other factors listed in the previous paragraph led farmers to become adopters. Whatever the reason for them, the dramatic output increases perhaps explain why farmers became so popular during the 1940s and '50s: extra output was required and farmers produced it. In other times and places it might have been called a Great Leap Forward.

Appendix
Calculation of gross output, prices and volume of output

This appendix explains the way in which gross output and price data have been brought together to form consistent series covering the period 1867–1985. First, a gross output series in current prices is constructed, then a retail price index (RPI) is produced and used to convert the gross output series to constant (1986) price terms. An agricultural price index (API) is also constructed, and deflated by the same RPI. Since no consistent data sets covering the whole of this period have been found, each of these series have been constructed from several sources. The deflated agricultural price index is then used to convert the gross output figures to a volume of output series.

[42] G. E. Jones, 'The diffusion of agricultural innovations', *J. Agricultural Economics* 15 (1963), pp. 387–409; E. H. Whetham, 'The mechanisation of British farming, 1910–1945', *J. Agricultural Economics*, 21 (1970), pp. 317–31. See also E. M. Rogers, *Diffusion of innovations* (1962).

[43] See, for example, Blaxter and Robertson, *From dearth to plenty.*

[44] These are summarized in B. M. Koppel (ed.), *Induced innovation theory and international agricultural development: a reassessment* (1995).

[45] Discussed to some extent in Holderness, 'Apropos the third Agricultural Revolution'

(i) Gross Output for UK Agriculture, 1867–1985.

Turner has discussed output and prices in UK agriculture, but only for the period 1867–1914. He concludes, after discussing previous estimates by Ojala, Dewey and Bellerby, that 'there are no reasonable estimates which we can use, but ... we should face up to the fact that a completely fresh approach to the problem of estimating output will be no guarantee of better results'.[1] Nevertheless, since the differences that he identifies between the various estimates are usually of the order of three or four per cent, and always less than ten per cent, it might be argued that for the purposes of the present study they are nugatory. The estimates used here are those produced by Ojala, adjusted to render them compatible with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Departmental Net Income Calculation (DNIC).[2] Once these two series can be put together, they produce a consistent data set covering the period from 1867 to the present day (although this study ends at 1985).

Although some of the categories used by Ojala and the DNIC are different (e.g. Ojala's 'horses' become 'other livestock' in the DNIC), their totals are the same except for Sundry Output, which is the annual value of own-account capital formation, such as the construction of glasshouses, silos, or pig and poultry houses. This is included in the DNIC but not in Ojala, so Ojala's figures need to be adjusted thus:

Ojala total output + sundry output = DNIC gross output.

Tasker uses Feinstein and Pollard's estimate of fixed capital formation.[3] Since these two sources use different year groupings, the Feinstein and Pollard figures are converted by assuming that the figure for each year is the same as the average for the group of years, and then adding the appropriate years for the Ojala year groupings. In addition, Ojala (p. 215) takes account of the impact of government subsidies on the gross output figures for 1930–4 and 1935–9 by adding £5 million and £10 million respectively. Having done this, he then concluded (pp. 207, 210) that the figures produced by MAFF for the 1935–9 period were better than his, and so in his final gross output estimate he used a figure of £279m. Adjusting this as above for sundry output (£4m) and subsidies (£10m) gives a gross output of £293m for 1935–9, which is in reasonable agreement with the figures reported by Britton and Marks for 1938 (£300m) and 1939 (£342m).[4]

Turner compares various output estimates for 1909–13, and Ojala's modified estimates are of the same order of magnitude.[5] There are certainly differences between Ojala and other estimators, but they are reasonably consistent, and, given the need for compatibility with the later MAFF DNIC figures to produce a data set covering the whole period under discussion, and the greater importance of relative changes as opposed to absolute levels of output, it seems permissible to use them here.

Two major problems remain. The first is that Ojala omits any estimate for the period of the

[1] Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 43.

[2] E. M. Ojala, *Agriculture and economic progress* (1952), pp. 208, 215; J. C. Tasker, 'An Investigation of Farm Income 1867 to 1939' (unpublished BSc (Hons) dissertation, University of Plymouth, 1994), pp. 43, 66; the MAFF DNIC figures are reported in H. F. Marks (ed. D. K. Britton), *A hundred years of British food and farming: a statistical survey* (1989), p. 149.

[3] Tasker, 'Farm Income', p. 42, app. C; C. H. Feinstein and S. Pollard (eds), *Studies in capital formation in the United Kingdom, 1750–1920* (1988), p. 269.

[4] Ojala, *Agriculture and economic progress*, p. 215; Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 149.

[5] Turner, 'Output and prices', pp. 42–3.

First World War. One way of dealing with this problem would be to produce a new estimate of output for 1914–19 using Ojala's methods. Unfortunately, many of the figures required are not easily available. A cruder approach was therefore adopted, in which Ojala's estimate for 1911–13 output was increased by the proportion in which the API rose between 1911–13 and 1914–19, giving a figure of £399.41 million. This method obviously takes no account of the changes in the pattern of agricultural production which occurred in 1914–19. However, it can be checked against Dewey's detailed calculation for the First World War years and Ojala's estimate for the 1920–22 period.[6] Dewey does not in fact estimate an output for 1919, so if his 1918 estimate is raised to 1919 prices, and all his figures for the whole 1914–19 period are then averaged, an estimated average gross output for the period of £286.5 million is produced. But this applies to Great Britain only, whereas Ojala's figures are for the United Kingdom, so the Irish output (from Turner[7]) needs to be added in. Taking Turner's 1911–13 Irish output figures, again raised by the proportionate increase in the API, gives an Irish 1914–19 output estimate of £87.4m, which, added to Dewey's figure for Great Britain, gives an estimate for the UK of £373.9m, which is only 6.4 per cent less than the crude estimate derived from proportionately increasing Ojala. Incidentally, using the API-proportionate method to go from Ojala's 1911–13 figure to 1920–22 produces agreement with Ojala's original figure to within 3 per cent. Therefore, despite their methodological simplicity, these figures have been incorporated into the output series reported below.

The other problem is Irish output. Ojala, in his output tables (pp. 208–9) simply points out that the UK excludes Eire after 1922. Since this paper attempts to trace changes in output in the long run, this approach is not ideal. The ideal would involve adjusting UK output to remove all of the Irish output, except for that produced in Northern Ireland, for the period before 1922, but Turner's estimate of Irish agricultural output deals with the whole island. Again, adopting the simplest possible procedure, Northern Ireland accounts for a little less than 20 per cent of the area of the whole of Ireland, so assuming that it produces roughly 20 per cent of the total Irish output should produce an estimate of the right order of magnitude, and there are sufficient sources of error in other parts of the calculation to render the pursuit of pinpoint accuracy, in this point, redundant.[8] Therefore eighty per cent of the Turner's Irish output figures have been deducted from Ojala's estimates, as modified by Tasker, for the years before 1922. For the years after 1940, the MAFF DNIC figures, reported by Britton and Marks, have been used, and the whole output series is shown in Table A1. However, since table A1 is reported in current price terms, and inflation, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, has not been insignificant, it is necessary to convert these estimates to constant price terms. This process requires a retail price index covering the whole period, which has had to be constructed.

[6] P. Dewey, *British agriculture in the First World War* (1989), pp. 244–8.

[7] M. Turner, *After the Famine. Irish agriculture 1850–1914* (1996), p. 108.

[8] *Ibid.*, table 4.2, p. 108. O'Grada has produced a different set of output estimates for Irish agriculture in 1912 (see C. O'Grada, 'Irish agriculture north and south since 1900', in B. M. S. Campbell and M. Overton (eds) *Land, labour and livestock. Historical studies in European agricultural productivity* (1991), pp. 439–456). He reports figures for all Ireland, and also the south and the north separately. His estimates are higher than Turner's, but he calculates the output of the six counties of the north to be 21.3 per cent of the total for all Ireland. Clearly, since Turner's figures are the only ones covering the whole period back to 1850 they have to be used here, but assuming a Northern Ireland output of 20 per cent of the total is not in violent disagreement with O'Grada.

TABLE A1. Gross output estimates for UK agriculture in current prices

	Ojala's Gross Output (£m)	*Ojala adjusted to DNIC (£m)*	*Irish output x 0.8 (£m)*	*Adjusted Ojala minus adjusted Irish output*
1867–69	229.83	236.43	31.94	204.49
1870–76	247.18	254.29	35.46	218.83
1877–85	219.20	225.62	31.61	194.01
1886–93	187.80	192.96	28.64	164.32
1894–03	182.78	186.94	29.81	157.13
1904–10	200.75	205.05	34.50	170.55
1911–13	222.12	226.92	38.87	188.05
1914–19	no data	404.21	69.92	334.29
1920–22	489.97	493.97	84.62	409.35
1923–19	279.67	283.67		283.67
1930–34	236.46	245.47		245.47
1935–39	244.53	293.00		293.00
1940–45				556.33
1946–50				818.40
1951–55				1258.60
1956–60				1541.40
1961–65				1817.20
1966–70				2213.20
1971–75				3735.60
1976–80				7498.40
1981–85				11454.40

Sources: E. M. Ojala, *Agriculture and economic progress* (1952), pp. 208, 215; J. C. Tasker, 'An Investigation of Farm Income 1867 to 1939' (unpublished BSc (Hons) dissertation, University of Plymouth, 1994), pp. 43, 66; M. Turner, *After the Famine. Irish Agriculture, 1850–1914* (1996), p. 108; Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 149.

(ii) A Retail Price Index for 1867–1986.

Feinstein's retail price index covers most of this period, but stops short in 1965.[9] Britton and Marks report gross output in both current and constant price terms back to 1938, thus implying a price index.[10] The two therefore overlap, and in fact bear a virtually constant relationship to each other. The Feinstein index has therefore been rebased on the 1986 base of the Britton and Marks index by means of a simple proportional calculation, and the results are shown in Table A2.

[9] C. H. Feinstein, *Statistical tables of national income, expenditure and output of the UK 1855–1965* (1972), table 61.
[10] Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, pp. 149–50.

TABLE A2. A retail price index, 1867–1986 (1986 = 100)

Year	*RPI*	*Year*	*RPI*	*Year*	*RPI*	*Year*	*RPI*
1867	2.58	1897	2.38	1927	4.95	1957	12.32
1868	2.58	1898	2.39	1928	4.94	1958	12.64
1869	2.58	1899	2.40	1929	4.89	1959	12.72
1870	2.59	1900	2.53	1930	4.76	1960	12.85
1871	2.64	1901	2.54	1931	4.55	1961	13.21
1872	2.76	1902	2.54	1932	4.44	1962	13.74
1873	2.84	1903	2.55	1933	4.34	1963	14.01
1874	2.75	1904	2.54	1934	4.34	1964	14.47
1875	2.69	1905	2.55	1935	4.37	1965	15.13
1876	2.69	1906	2.55	1936	4.40	1966	15.72
1877	2.67	1907	2.58	1937	4.55	1967	16.16
1878	2.61	1908	2.59	1938	4.62	1968	16.89
1879	2.49	1909	2.61	1939	4.92	1969	17.79
1880	2.57	1910	2.63	1940	5.46	1970	18.94
1881	2.54	1911	2.63	1941	6.58	1971	20.75
1882	2.57	1912	2.71	1942	7.04	1972	22.22
1883	2.56	1913	2.70	1943	7.26	1973	24.21
1884	2.48	1914	2.69	1944	7.40	1974	28.09
1885	2.41	1915	3.03	1945	7.53	1975	34.97
1886	2.38	1916	3.58	1946	7.62	1976	40.65
1887	2.36	1917	4.48	1947	8.14	1977	47.17
1888	2.38	1918	5.47	1948	8.76	1978	51.02
1889	2.41	1919	6.02	1949	8.97	1979	57.80
1890	2.41	1920	6.94	1950	9.23	1980	68.49
1891	2.41	1921	6.35	1951	10.06	1981	76.34
1892	2.42	1922	5.46	1952	10.68	1982	83.34
1893	2.38	1923	5.13	1953	10.86	1983	86.96
1894	2.38	1924	5.09	1954	11.04	1984	90.91
1895	2.35	1925	5.11	1955	11.43	1985	97.07
1896	2.35	1926	5.07	1956	11.92		

Source: see appendix text

(iii) An Agricultural Price Index for 1867–1986.

Once a retail price index is available, it can be used to express the index of prices of agricultural products in constant price terms. The most recent published agricultural price index for the UK is the one produced by Turner covering the period 1867–1914.[11] This overlaps with the MAFF estimates for 1906–66 reported in *A Century of Agricultural Statistics*, which are part of the same series as that used by Britton and Marks.[12] Thus it is possible to produce a consistent API, based on 1986 = 100 (this base being chosen as the one used by Britton and Marks and the same base as the RPI calculated above.) The annual API is shown in Table A3, which also shows the effect of deflating this index by the RPI.

(iv) Gross output, prices, and the volume of output.

The data available in tables A1–3 make it possible to express the two series of gross output data, originally produced by Ojala and MAFF, but now modified to be consistent with each other over the whole period 1867–1986, in constant price terms, and to compare them with the constant-price agricultural price index. The data so produced are shown in Table A4. The final stage of the calculation requires the gross output figures, now expressed in constant price terms, to be converted into volume terms. The decline, in constant price terms, of the API, implies that a greater volume of farm products had to be sold in the latter years of the century to generate the same revenue (in real terms) as in earlier years. For example, the API in Table A4 shows that agricultural products that were sold for £100 in 1986 would have realized £206 in 1951–5. Since the argument in this paper is concerned with the factors which produced more tons of wheat, gallons of milk, dozens of eggs, and so on from UK agriculture – in other words, with the *volume* of production – it is necessary to allow for the changes in the real farm prices. This can be done using the following formula:

$$\text{volume (£m)} = \text{gross output} \times \frac{100}{\text{API}(1986=100)}$$

This operation obviously has little impact when the API is close to 100, and increasingly more as the API increases. It is essentially the same as Turner's method (although he calculates the figures on an annual basis, expresses them as an index, and reports them as a graph) and, unsurprisingly, produces similar results for the period up to 1914.[13] These, together with those for subsequent years, are also shown in Table A4.

[11] Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 47.

[12] MAFF, *A century of agricultural statistics*, p. 85.

[13] Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 48.

TABLE A3. (1) an agricultural price index (1986 = 100) (2) deflated by the RPI (1986 = 100)

	(1)	(2)		(1)	(2)		(1)	(2)
1867	5.90	228.7	1907	5.15	199.6	1947	17.24	212.2
1868	6.03	233.7	1908	4.94	190.7	1948	17.85	203.8
1869	5.71	221.3	1909	5.07	194.3	1949	18.62	207.6
1870	5.54	213.9	1910	5.18	197.0	1950	19.33	209.4
1871	5.88	222.7	1911	5.42	206.1	1951	21.21	210.8
1872	6.10	221.0	1912	5.74	211.8	1952	21.92	205.2
1873	6.50	228.9	1913	5.67	210.0	1953	22.33	205.6
1874	6.23	226.5	1914	5.65	210.0	1954	22.23	201.4
1875	6.14	228.3	1915	7.12	235.0	1955	23.65	206.9
1876	6.02	223.8	1916	8.95	250.0	1956	23.14	194.1
1877	6.04	226.2	1917	11.24	250.9	1957	23.14	187.8
1878	5.90	226.1	1918	12.97	237.1	1958	23.35	184.7
1879	5.39	216.5	1919	14.45	240.0	1959	22.90	180.0
1880	5.69	221.4	1920	16.33	235.3	1960	21.72	169.0
1881	5.49	216.1	1921	12.26	193.1	1961	22.13	167.4
1882	5.72	222.6	1922	9.46	173.3	1962	22.33	162.5
1883	5.52	215.6	1923	8.80	171.5	1963	22.38	159.7
1884	5.20	209.7	1924	9.00	176.8	1964	22.69	156.8
1885	4.97	206.2	1925	8.90	174.2	1965	22.94	151.6
1886	4.82	202.5	1926	8.44	166.5	1966	23.45	149.2
1887	4.61	195.3	1927	8.04	162.4	1967	23.71	146.7
1888	4.76	200.0	1928	8.29	167.8	1968	24.14	142.9
1889	4.78	198.3	1929	8.04	164.4	1969	25.00	140.5
1890	4.82	200.0	1930	7.38	155.0	1970	26.3	138.9
1891	4.86	201.7	1931	6.82	149.9	1971	27.6	133.0
1892	4.85	200.4	1932	6.56	147.7	1972	30.4	136.8
1893	4.78	200.8	1933	6.27	144.5	1973	36.0	148.7
1894	4.71	197.9	1934	6.31	145.4	1974	41.3	147.0
1895	4.47	190.2	1935	6.66	152.4	1975	50.0	143.0
1896	4.28	182.1	1936	6.71	152.5	1976	65.5	161.1
1897	4.66	195.8	1937	7.38	162.2	1977	67.1	142.3
1898	4.84	202.5	1938	7.32	158.4	1978	68.6	134.5
1899	4.57	190.4	1939	7.38	150.0	1979	75.6	130.8
1900	4.88	192.9	1940	10.22	187.2	1980	79.6	116.2
1901	4.91	193.3	1941	12.31	187.1	1981	88.3	115.7
1902	5.22	205.5	1942	13.12	186.4	1982	95.2	114.2
1903	4.88	191.4	1943	13.38	184.3	1983	100.2	115.2
1904	4.79	188.6	1944	13.63	184.2	1984	100.3	110.3
1905	4.86	190.6	1945	14.04	186.5	1985	98.7	101.7
1906	5.10	200.0	1946	14.85	194.9	1986	100.0	100.0

Source: Turner, 'Output and prices', p. 47 (using the values for yearly weights); MAFF, *A Century of Agricultural Statistics*, p. 85; Central Statistical Office, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (various years); Marks (ed. Britton), *A hundred years*, p. 150.

TABLE A4. Gross output, prices and the volume of output.

	Gross Output £m (Current Prices)	*RPI 1986=100*	*Gross Output £m (Constant Prices)*	*API 1986=100*	*Volume of Output (£m)*
1867–69	204.49	2.58	7926.0	227.9	3477.84
1870–76	218.83	2.71	8075.0	223.6	3611.36
1877–85	194.01	2.54	7638.2	217.8	3506.99
1886–93	164.32	2.39	6875.3	199.9	3439.37
1894–03	157.13	2.44	6439.8	194.2	3316.07
1904–10	170.55	2.58	6610.5	194.4	3400.46
1911–13	188.05	2.68	7016.8	209.3	3352.51
1914–19	334.29	4.21	7940.4	237.2	3347.55
1920–22	409.35	6.25	6549.6	200.6	3265.01
1923–29	283.67	5.03	5639.6	169.1	3335.07
1930–34	245.47	4.49	5467.0	148.5	3681.48
1935–39	293.00	4.57	6411.4	155.1	4133.72
1940–45	556.33	6.88	8080.8	186.0	4344.52
1946–50	818.40	8.54	9526.6	205.6	4633.56
1951–55	1258.60	10.81	11617.2	206.0	5639.42
1956–60	1541.40	12.49	12337.6	183.1	6738.18
1961–65	1817.20	14.11	12871.8	159.6	8065.04
1966–70	2213.20	17.10	12943.8	143.6	9013.79
1971–75	3735.60	26.05	14255.4	141.7	10060.27
1976–80	7498.40	53.03	14248.6	137.0	10400.44
1981–85	11454.40	86.93	13185.2	111.4	11835.91

Sources: Tables A1-A3 above. Note small discrepancies due to rounding errors in the RPI and constant price figures after 1940. These arise because the figures for gross output at constant prices after 1940 have been calculated on an annual basis, and the annual series has then been averaged into year groups.

'Dewy-eyed veal calves'. Live animal exports and middle-class opinion, 1980–1995

by Alun Howkins and Linda Merricks

Abstract

Arguments about the treatment of animals and animal rights have become more and more central to political debate since the 1960s. This article looks at the 'practical' manifestation of these arguments as they emerged in relation to the campaign to halt the live transport of farm animals in 1994–5. The campaign is examined against the background of changing views of animal welfare and the movements of public opinon in 1994–5 and described through both press reports and material gathered through the organization Mass-Observation in the Spring of 1995. The paper argues that there was widespread support for the campaign and this was part of a wider, highly critical view of modern British farming. However, opposition to exports was based on traditional 'welfare' grounds rather than on newer theories of animal rights.

In 1945 British agriculture stood on the pinnacle of public esteem. Britain's farmers had 'done their bit' in the war effort and now deserved their reward. As a respondent to the organization Mass-Observation wrote, 'the farmers have done their damnedest for the country, it should be seen that they are not allowed to go back to penury and difficulty'.[1] Moreover, all this had been achieved with apparent little damage to England's 'green and pleasant land'. The immediate post-war world still saw a certain kind of deep England enshrined in the countryside. This was expressed, for instance, in the Festival of Britain in 1951.[2]

This happy state of affairs seems to have persisted, despite occasional complaints about 'featherbedded farmers', until the 1960s. Starting with the public debate about DDT (provoked by Carson's *Silent spring* in 1962), farming's comfortable image suffered a number of serious shocks. For our purposes, a key text was Ruth Harrison's *Animal machines* of 1964, which was the first widely read attack on the factory farming of animals.[3] This was followed by the first

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[1] Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex (hereafter M-O), Directive, Sept. 1942 3013, housewife, Berkhampstead.

[2] F. M. Lowenthal, '"A tonic to the Nation". The Festival of Britain, 1951', *Albion* 27 (1996); Alan Sinfield, 'The Government, the People and the Festival', in Jim Fyrth (ed.) *Labour's promised land. Culture and society in Labour Britain 1945–51* (1995).

[3] Ruth Harrison, *Animal machines: the new factory farming industry* (1964).

debates about the grubbing up of hedgerows. After Britain's entry into the Common Market between 1973 and 1978, stories of Lincolnshire aircraft hangars filled with subsidized wheat caused further disquiet. It was, however, the continuing use of herbicides and pesticides and the continuing problem of the public's attitude to the treatment of farm animals which did most damage to the reputation of farmers, culminating in 1994–5 with the campaign over live animal exports, which was followed shortly after by the suggestion of a link between BSE and CJD, and the EU ban on British beef exports. All this led to a much bleaker view of the countryside, which is now seen by many, especially urban dwellers, as a mixture of private game reserve and factory farm. Even those sympathetic to the rural areas in the Mass-Observation survey we conducted in 1995 noted these kinds of changes since the war.[4]

At the same time there has been a growing public consciousness of the relationship of human beings to their environment, and, as a part of this, a growing concern for the welfare of animals. As Keith Thomas demonstrated in his groundbreaking *Man and the natural world*, attitudes to animals have a long and somewhat confused history which includes an element of concern for their treatment.[5] Nevertheless, these concerns had little effect until the nineteenth century. Before then, within Judeao-Christian cultures at least, the assumption that animals had been created for the use of humans, as is stated in Genesis 1:26, was generally held by Biblical commentators and most philosophers. Since the foundation of the first animal protection movement, the Liverpool Society for Preventing Wanton Cruelty to Brute Animals in 1809 and then of the SPCA in 1824, similar organisations have proliferated. There were eight national organizations concerned with the protection of animals by the turn of the century; between 1900 and 1944 a further eight were founded. After this, only one was formed before 1960, but fourteen by the end of the 1980s.[6] The reasons for this increase are relatively straightforward. The nineteenth-century movements tended to be set within a wider attempt at moral reform, while the post 1960s organisations reflect the growth of environmental consciousness. Alongside the increase in number of national organisations has been the proliferation of local groups, with perhaps 300 in existence by the early 1990s. Finally, and most difficult to quantify, has been support from the general public who do not belong to any group but who sympathize with their aims. While the numbers here cannot be given, the strength of public feeling revealed itself in consumer pressure in the early 1990s. The Body Shop franchise made great play from the mid-1980s onwards of its ethical policy of not testing its products on animals. By the mid-1990s all the major producers in the cosmetics industry had been forced – by public expectation – into following suit, and were marketing their own 'cruelty free' brands.[7]

Public interest in animal welfare has not only increased but has become more and more radicalised in recent years. In part, this has led to the foundation of groups like the Animal Liberation Front who insist that conventional, democratic processes are too slow or ineffectual to protect animals, and that more immediate steps need to be taken. More important are the

[4] These arguments are summarized in an unpublished paper given to the RGS/IBG Conference, 2000, Alun Howkins, 'Qualifying the evidence. Perceptions of rural change in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century'.

[5] Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world. Changing attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (1983).

[6] Robert Garner, *Animals, politics and morality* (1993), p. 42.

[7] For the growth of environmentalist movements, see Grant Jordan and William Maloney, *The protest business? Mobilizing campaign groups* (1997), pp. 11–17.

environmentalists who have queried the right of humans to destroy or disturb the natural world. Since the 1960s, questions have been posed about the human duty to preserve nature, and the relationship of humans to nature. According to David Pepper, the Green movement has re-formulated the conventional argument that humans are separate from nature, so that nature 'can and should be exploited and dominated for human benefit' with one which insists that humans are part of nature. As a result, nature must be protected and respected for itself, regardless of its value to humans, and that the 'laws of nature' must be obeyed, even when they place limits on human behaviour.[8] From here, theorising about the welfare of animals amongst philosophers, social scientists and environmentalists has led to debates about animal rights (as opposed to animal welfare). This movement is well described by Garner. He distinguishes a 'continuum of views graduated in order of the moral recognition their exponents consider we ought to accord to animals'.[9] These range from those who would argue that animals have no moral status through the orthodoxy that they have some moral status but are inferior to humans. Garner divides these viewpoints into ones which argue that although animals are sentient, they lack any significant interest, and those which hold while animals have an interest in not suffering, this can and should be overridden to promote the greater good of humans who are truly autonomous. Finally there are those challenges to the orthodoxy which are based on animal rights of some kind.[10]

The most striking of these arguments comes from a number of philosophers whose roots lie in 1960s 'liberation politics', and who have, since the 1970s, developed radical theories of animal sentience. In these arguments two main positions can be distinguished. The first, and in many ways still most important, is that of Peter Singer, whose *Animal liberation*, published in 1975, remains an influential text. Putting it extremely crudely, Singer argues that the degree of sentiency in animals in the avoidance of pain and hunger should count as much as the comparable interests in humans. To deny this is akin to denying the specific claims of, for example, women or blacks (sexism and racism) and is therefore 'speciesism'. However Singer, as an 'act utilitarian' does concede, in the last analysis, that there might be situations where animals rights are subordinate to those of humans. This possibility is denied by Tom Regan in *All that dwell therein* (1982) and *The case for animal rights* (1984). Regan argues that if a creature has a life of its own, then that creature possesses rights akin to 'civil' rights. Such a creature also has intrinsic value, and is worth dignity and deserves respect. The logical outcome of Regan's position, which he does not deny, would be the end of animal husbandry in any recognisable form. For our purposes these writers have had two main effects. First, they have provided a lot of the theory for the new animal rights movements of the period since 1980. Second, and related to this, but much more problematic, is that by conceding rights to animals, they have blurred the distinction between animal and human animal. The rights or wrongs of this do not concern us here: the important thing is that a degree of blurring has taken place.

To recap briefly. The last twenty or thirty years have seen a substantial expansion in the number of groups concerned with animal protection and welfare, whilst at the same time a philosophical position has developed which concedes animals rights on a par with humans.

[8] David Pepper, *Modern environmentalism* (1996), p. 11.

[9] Garner, *Animals*, p. 10.

[10] *Ibid.*

As we shall see, even a long-established animal welfare society like the RSPCA was heavily influenced by these new ideas about the status of animals. The scene was thus set for a conflict between the animal welfare and animal rights groups and the public, many of whom were influenced by the new philosophy of animal rights, and the farming community, over the export of live farm animals in 1994–5. We intend to look at this campaign as an element in a wider concern about agriculture. More specifically, we want to examine how 'middle-class' opinion, which it was argued was so important in the campaign against live animal exports in 1993–5, understood what was happening in that period. What we find is a struggle for control of middle-class opinion between the anti-export groups and the farming 'lobby' (the NFU, the farming press and, to an extent, MAFF.) We also hope to give some sense of how these thoughts and opinions relate to debates about the status of animals and about broader attitudes to farming.

I

Opposition to the transport of live animals has a long history. The Humanitarian League ran campaigns between 1897 and 1903 (if not later still) against the transport of cattle across the Irish Sea.[11] More emotional in appeal, and securing wider support, were campaigns between the 1900s and the 1960s to stop the shipping of live horses to continental Europe for slaughter. In the 1950s, as a result of the demands of the US forces who argued that British abattoirs failed to come up to American standards, an export trade in live animals developed.[12] In response to this, an organisation called the Protection of Livestock for Slaughter Association was set up in 1956. Their campaign resulted in the establishment of the Balfour Committee whose report laid down certain 'assurances' governing the transport of live farm animals. The problem which emerged as the trade in live animals grew in importance in the 1960s and '70s was that the Balfour assurances were not being enforced and, by 1972, the RSPCA estimated that only about 20 per cent of animals going abroad had any protection. The RSPCA reported on a number of particularly unpleasant cases of maltreatment while, more tellingly, they carried out rigorous investigation by following individual lorries and filming in overseas abattoirs. They also mounted a national campaign under the slogan 'Stop Live Export of Food Animals'. However, despite attracting the support of a number of public figures, it seems to have had little success in mobilising public support.

In December 1972 Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), which had been founded to campaign against the factory farming of animals in 1967, organized and presented to Parliament a petition with half a million signatures calling for a ban on live animal exports. This, coupled with growing public interest generated by the RSPCA campaign and widespread media coverage, led to a ban on the export of sheep in February 1972. Following a government defeat in the Commons, the ban was extended to cattle and pigs in July of that year. The ban was temporary and was to be reviewed after a committee of inquiry under Lord O'Brien had reported.

The O'Brien Committee published its conclusions in March 1974. It argued that although

[11] See a very brief mention in Hilda Kean, 'The "Smooth Cool Men of Science". The feminist and socialist response to vivisection', *History Workshop J.* 40 (1995), p. 30.

[12] For much of what follows in this paragraph see Peter Stevenson, *A far cry from Noah. The live export trade in calves, sheep and pigs* (1994), part 1.

there had been problems with the export trade, a permanent ban was not justified on either economic or welfare grounds. It urged that new safeguards should be introduced (while dropping two of the Balfour assurances, on journey limits and re-imports), and looked to firmer EU regulation as a way of dealing with problems once animals had left the UK. As Peter Roberts of CIWF said, the O'Brien committee wanted to 'Keep live exports going; plug the leaks; make it respectable'.[13] This neatly sums up both government and farming industry opinion over the following 20 years.

As a result of the O'Brien Report, and despite the fact that Labour, which had opposed live exports the year before, was now in power, live animal exports were allowed to recommence in the early spring of 1975. However, we would suggest that this resumption marks a change in the attitudes of those who were campaigning against the trade. It seems at least possible that the growing arguments about animals rights, coupled with a real failure of parliament to act, pushed many, even respectable supporters of a ban on live exports, into a more militant position. A series of particularly brutal incidents in the so called 'lamb war' of 1990, when French farmers (probably unwittingly) burned a consignment of lambs alive, continued to focus media attention on the export trade and on conditions in continental abattoirs, especially those in southern Europe. This had the double effect of increasing the emotional temper of the campaign while introducing an element of anti-Europeanism. In addition, as Robert Garner argues, the RSPCA adopted increasingly radical policies in the 1970s and 1980s and, although the radical wing within the society was ultimately defeated, it entered the 1990s as a very different body to that which had existed in the 1960s and early 1970s.[14] This is clear, for instance, in their adoption of the *Declaration of animal rights* as well as their education pamphlets on the same subject.[15]

Despite these changes, the 1980s saw a huge increase in the export of live animals. In 1963 the UK exported a total of 655,000 live animals. The ban in 1972–5, along with the problems of farming, saw this number drop in the 1970s, but in the 1980s numbers started to rise, increasing very rapidly after 1986 (see Table 1). In January 1993, with the creation of a Single European Market, the regulations governing the transportation of live animals were relaxed. In the aftermath of this, a 'compromise' was patched up which allowed farm animals to be transported for up to 24 hours without stopping for rest, feed or water.[16] In the wake of this, the RSPCA and CIWF began a publicity campaign to end the live export trade totally. As CIWF wrote in Autumn of 1993

> CIWF believes that the time has now come for a radical change in policy. The trade in live animals must be stopped. Live exports from the UK should be halted and there should be an end to the trade in Europe as a whole.[17]

To this end they pursued a mixed policy, entirely peaceful, of applying pressure initially on

[13] quoted in Stevenson, *A far cry*, p. 15.

[14] Garner, *Animals*, pp. 54–60.

[15] The *Declaration of animal rights* was written by Richard Ryder who had worked closely with Singer. For other literature, see for example, *RSPCA Information. On the side of the animals; some contemporary philosophers' views* (Horsham, n.d. but *c.* 1994); and *RSPCA information. Ethical concerns for animals* (Horsham, n.d. but *c.* 1994). We would like to thank Paul Brassley for these references.

[16] *The Independent*, 20 Aug. 1994.

[17] *Agscene*, no. 112, Autumn 1993, pp. 4–5.

TABLE 1. Live Animal Exports 1986–1993

	1986	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*
Sheep	161,762	313,556	446,767	491,892	488,908	773,502	1,373,657	2,00,000
Cattle	190,683	365,166	234,651	302,223	338,806	399,599	420,620	450,00

Source: Compassion in World Farming from the Meat and Livestock Commission.

government and the EU and then on organisations concerned with the transport of live animals. Between the Autumn of 1993 and the Summer of 1994 three petitions were organized. One with half a million signatures was sent to Gillian Shepherd (then Secretary of State for Agriculture) in September 1993, one with a million signatures to the European Commission in April 1994 and an organized write-in produced more than 50,000 postcards, again to Shepherd, in July 1994. In addition the CIWF video, 'For a few pennies more', formed the basis of a *World in Action* report on live exports which went out in the Spring of 1994 and was watched by an estimated 5.8 million viewers.

The most important change was achieved though 'consumer' pressure brought to bear on the ferry companies and on airlines involved in the live export trade. The main groups involved were CIWF and the RSPCA. A much smaller organisation which was also involved was the highly successful Respect for Animals, founded by Mark Glover, a former Greenpeace activist and founder of LYNX.[18]

On 18 August 1994 British Airways announced an immediate ban on carrying live animals. An interesting sense of what was to come in the campaign can be seen in this first 'victory'. Two elements, which were to become very important in the later campaigns, are already apparent. First, the careful use of press support. On 16 August the *Daily Star*, prompted at least in part by a slow news season, carried a piece on the transport of live sheep from Perth (Australia) to Singapore. Second, 'public' protests took place involving, where possible, public figures. Here the 'key' figure in the ban was Sir Teddy Taylor's parliamentary researcher. As *The Times* wrote,

> British Airways announced an immediate ban on carrying live animals for slaughter yesterday, after an outcry over 50 sheep carried in the hold of a jumbo jet ... Passengers, including Mike Penning, commons researcher for the Tory MP Sir Teddy Taylor, were angered when they saw the 50 sheep being loaded onto the aircraft in small crates. Sir Teddy Taylor said of BA's decision; 'This is fantastic for animal welfare'.[19]

The use of high profile public figures continued and was successful in reversing power relations. It is significant that the only 'coverage' in *Farmers Weekly* of any of the petitions was a picture of the actress Joanna Lumley carrying a CIWF poster. It hardly counteracted the power of the farming lobby in the Commons: but it secured some notice.[20]

Vastly more important than the airline protests, if only for reason of numbers, were those directed at the ferries carrying live animals to mainland Europe. P&O carried 60 per cent of the trade, while most of the remainder was divided between Stena and Brittany Ferries. The

[18] *The Times*, 20 Apr. 1995.
[19] *The Times*, 18 Aug. 1994.
[20] *Farmers Weekly*, 11 Feb. 1994, p. 11

campaign against the ferry companies began peacefully; throughout 1993 and 1994 there had been pickets at Dover. Then, in June 1994, the 'less acceptable' face of the animal rights movement manifested itself with a firebomb attack on the Stena offices in Ashford. There were also bomb attacks carried out on road hauliers in Yorkshire and Gloucestershire. Although these were significant, of more immediate effect was a 'write in' campaign directed at the companies which led Stena to admit it had received 'hundreds of thousands of letters and cards' during 1994.[21] This claim was repeated by CIWF in the winter of 1994 when a contributor to *Agscene* wrote '... its your flood of letters and cards which have made the ferry companies realize the strength of public opposition to live exports ...'.[22]

In June 1994 *Farmers Weekly* ran a two page spread by Liz Mason under the headline 'No "horrors" on this lorry to France ...'. This was an account of a totally legal journey of a modern lorry taking sheep to southern France. It was illustrated by a picture of lots of happy animals sunning themselves on the slopes of a Provençal hill town. However the very existence of the article shows how the campaign was beginning to have its effect since, as we noted, none of the previous protests had received serious coverage in the farming press.[23] Initially the ferry companies were unmoved. Following the bomb sent to its Ashford office in June 1994, a Stena spokesman said 'We cannot succumb to terrorism ... We are happy to take livestock as long as all the rules and regulations are taken into account'.[24] However there was a swift *volte face.* In the first week of August P&O announced that despite the personal intervention of William Waldegrave (who had replaced Gillian Shepherd at MAFF) they were considering a ban on live animal shipments. They were quickly followed by Stena.[25] P&O announced a ban from 1 October (unless regulations were changed first) and Brittany Ferries stopped the transport of animals where the point of destination was south of the Loire. Then on 31 August Stena announced that it would introduce an immediate ban on the transport of live animals on its ferries.[26]

Three points are worth making here. Firstly the pressure seems to have been real enough. A Stena spokesman claimed on 31 August

> The number of people taking the trouble to make their feelings known to us about this issue has gone through the roof ... These are ordinary people who feel very strongly that there is no place for this business today. We're listening to the wishes of an increasing number of our passengers.[27]

Secondly this pressure came against the background of a price war in the eastern Channel. Although the effects on the ferry companies of the newly completed channel tunnel were not fully clear at this point, what was certain was that there was surplus ferry capacity. Ending the carriage of live animals provided good advertising for companies fighting for a share of a shrinking market.

Thirdly, however, opposition to the ban from the farming industry had already begun to emerge, especially from hill farmers, since the main part of the live export trade was in sheep. The spokesman for the British Association of Sheep Exporters, David Porter, had already

[21] *The Independent*, 31 Aug. 1994.
[22] *Agscene*, no. 116, Winter 1994, p. 4.
[23] *Farmers Weekly*, 3 June 1994, pp. 14–5.
[24] *Ibid.*, 10 June 1994, p. 7
[25] *Ibid.*, 5 Aug. 1994, p. 7
[26] *Ibid.*, 19 Aug. 1994, p. 5; 2 Sept. 1994, p. 7
[27] *The Independent*, 31 Aug. 1994.

complained in June about Gillian Shepherd's 'tightening up' on journey times saying, in a tone to become all too familiar 'I feel she has responded to the chattering classes'.[28] When the ferry bans were announced, Parker responded that he was seeking alternative routes. More important was the opposition from the Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW) whose members had a large stake in the live export of lamb, a growing trade, especially with France. As reported in *The Times* in early September 1994, 'Lamb production in France is small scale and costly'. It went on to quote a Dyfed farmer as saying 'most of the lambs I export are fed for another six months on French farms. They are then sold at a high price as French lamb'.[29] By the beginning of September the FUW had commenced a campaign, especially in Wales, to have the ban lifted.[30]

In contrast, the NFU seems to have maintained a relatively low profile. With the announcement of the ban, 'a spokesman' said 'This is going to be another body blow for farmers, but I'm sure that given their usual resilience they will find some way of getting over it. Obviously welfare is a matter of great concern to people'.[31] It was not until William Waldegrave intervened with 'tougher' legislation that the President of the NFU, Sir David Naish, spoke publicly. He took what was to be the first NFU 'line': conditions for transporting animals were worse on the continent and closing down the cross-channel route would drive foreign buyers to 'Eastern European countries where animal welfare is not the priority it is here'.[32] This view was pressed the next day by a letter to *The Times* from Peter Atkinson, Conservative MP for Hexham and a member of the NFU.[33] Perhaps more mindful of public opinion than it had been in the past, the NFU stressed farmers' concerns for animal welfare and argued they wished to tighten up controls on transport, while maintaining it was a 'European' problem. By November the NFU went further calling for a tougher line with 'cowboy operators', a view which had already been put forward by *Farmers Weekly*.[34] The NFU's position throughout remained moderate and Naish was later to be criticized for his inactivity by members of his own council.[35]

At the beginning of October, despite Waldegrave's 'tougher regulations', and the self-imposed ban by the large passenger ferry companies, two changes of great significance occurred. First, other transport companies moved to take over the ferry trade, employing aircraft or ships operating out of smaller ports with surplus docking capacity. Second, there was a subtle change of emphasis in the CIWF campaign to notice not only the transport of animals, but the conditions under which they would be treated when they arrived in continental Europe. This was new only in its connection to the animal export question. CIWF had played an important role in having veal crates banned in the UK and was involved in a long term campaign against their use in Europe. However, this more general concern about animal welfare had not been seen before in relation to the export ban. The change of direction was possibly used to continue the public pressure for change after the issue of new regulations which seemed to satisfy the concerns of 'moderate' opinion about transport. On 7 October, in an interview with *The Independent*, Peter Stevenson, political and legal director of CIWF said, 'conditions for transporting and slaughtering animals in France are worse and Holland and France both still use the crate method of rearing calves for veal which was banned in Britain four years

[28] *Ibid.*, 24 June 1994, p. 8.
[29] *The Times*, 5 Sept. 1994.
[30] *Farmers Weekly*, 16 Sept. 1994, p. 8.
[31] *The Independent*, 31 Aug. 1994.
[32] *The Times*, 6 Sept. 1994.
[33] *Ibid.*, 7 Sept. 1994.
[34] see *ibid.*, 23 Sept. 1994, p. 5; 11 Nov. 1994, p. 7.
[35] *Farmers Weekly*, 14 Oct. 1994, p. 8.

ago'.[36] This marked a shift from sheep to veal calves as the public centre of concern. The transport of calves, and, through a process of elision, any other live animal for slaughter, suddenly became indefensible in any way at all.

Here, there was the first curious coming together both of animal activist feeling and (perhaps cynically) the NFU. Their agreed point, although never publicly made, was a growing anti-Europeanism. Veal crates, Eastern European lorries and Spanish and Greek abattoirs became the newest version of populist xenophobia in the long and dishonourable tradition of headlines like 'Hop on a frog' and 'Up yours Delors'. It was also a convenient screen for MAFF and the NFU who could both protest (with some justification) that welfare on mainland Europe was out of their hands. This was given extra strength by Brittany Ferries' announcement in November that their concession to transporters was being withdrawn because of the disregard the majority of livestock exporters had shown for the code. 'Basically, they have misled us about the destination of the animals in their care.'[37] When we come to look at the M-O material, the extent of this anti-European feeling will be clearer still.

In the meantime, the transport of animals continued using local airports and the smaller ports. In November Ferrylink Freight Services opened a route from Sheerness in Kent to Vlissingen (Holland). Threats to the company caused the service to be cancelled. More significant, in the short term, was the use of airports at Humberside, Coventry and Bournemouth. Again protest, and the professed distaste of the Labour controlled local authorities who owned the airports, caused problems. The situation made worse by the crash of a Phoenix Aviation 737 at Coventry on 21 December which allowed Coventry Council, which was opposed to the trade but had been forced to allow it by a High Court ruling, to stop flights.

In response to this, on 30 December, a consortium of firms operating as ITF, and using a 'flag of convenience' vessel, announced that within the next 48 hours it would commence shipping animals out of Shoreham in Sussex. The move to Shoreham did not come out of the blue. In September 1994 Philip Lacey, General Manager of the Shoreham Port Authority, had stated that the port was open to take animal exports. This led to pickets of the Port Authorities' offices throughout the autumn, and the build up of a local campaign based on petitions and letter writing. It was not however until ITF approached the port for a berth for the 'Northern Cruiser' at the end of December that the movement took on mass proportions.

On 2 January the first attempt was made to load animals at Shoreham. About 200 demonstrators confronted a handful of police. As lorries carrying the animals tried to turn into the narrow dock road, the protesters sat down. After a few minutes the lorries turned around and left. The next night similar scenes occurred, although now both the numbers of police and protesters had increased. It was these night confrontations which really brought the campaign into the national news with television scenes of a young person with a balaclava helmet on the roof of a lorry smashing its windscreen. (Incidentally, the lorry belonged to A. Nicholay b.v., a Dutch Company prosecuted in October 1995 and fined £10,000 for inflicting suffering on calves being moved from Northern Ireland to Spain.[38])

The following night 1,300 police were brought in, lorries were taken through another entrance, and what the local press called 'the siege of Shoreham' began. For the next three weeks, at the

[36] *The Independent*, 7 Oct. 1994.

[37] Ian Carruthers, managing director, Brittany Ferries, quoted in *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1994.

[38] *The Guardian*, 24 Oct. 1995.

cost of some £2m, the port was kept more or less open, although the demonstrations continued. Locally the demonstrators were widely supported. Adur District Council (Lib/Dem controlled) and Hove Borough Council (Labour/Independent), who had minority interests in the port, were both opposed to the trade, as was Brighton's Labour controlled council. Further, one of Brighton's MPs, the Conservative Sir Andrew Bowden, was an animal rights campaigner and, with the usual disclaimers about violence, he gave the campaign his full support.[39] Perhaps most importantly so did the daily evening paper, the *Evening Argus* not, it should be said, a paper famous for its liberal sympathies. This was also the case at Brightlingsea in Essex, at least initially, where the Colchester *Evening Gazette* ran a series of articles under the headline 'Cargo of Shame'.[40]

The history of the Brightlingsea protest was slightly different. The Brightlingsea organisation BALE (Brightlingsea Against Live Exports) came into being in early January following the announcement that Richard Otley, a Huntingdonshire farmer and president of the British Association of Sheep Exporters, was to ship sheep through this small Essex port on a six month contract. The animals were to be moved by Roger Mills' company, 'Live Sheep Traders'. Although the run up to the campaign seems to have been much shorter than at Shoreham, the response was, if anything, greater. A survey carried out by the University of Essex in May 1995 estimated that 46 per cent of the population of Brightlingsea had attended at least one public meeting on the issue and 40 per cent had participated in at least one of the protests which stretched from January to October 1995.[41] Further, the same survey showed that 71 per cent of residents opposed all forms of live animal transport. The campaign at Brightlingsea attracted less attention than that at Shoreham, largely because it was 'second' and therefore less newsworthy. However it was different in character. It was, for instance, more ideological. Both Otley and Mills seem to have approached the breaking of the ban with an almost political enthusiasm. Otley insisted on travelling with the convoy of lorries and was eventually threatened with arrest by Essex Police.[42] Later in the campaign Mills refused any concession on transport of animals, despite being asked to delay a shipment when it was clear it would have to be at sea for upwards of 48 hours.[43] The personal identification of those involved, Otley, Mills and Ernest Oliver, the port owner, also heightened tension in Brightlingsea. Attitudes were also different in the surrounding area. Although there was a wide degree of support for the campaign in Brightlingsea and in north Essex, including that of the Conservative mayor of Brightlingsea, the MP for Colchester North, Bernard Jenkin, was hostile, perhaps because of his farming interests.[44] The attitude of the police also differed. The Chief Constable of Sussex made it clear throughout the Shoreham protests that he was opposed to the exports, and indeed in April 1995 imposed strict controls on the number of lorries going in and out. In Essex, on the other hand, the assistant Chief Constable took a much harder line, resorting on 18 April to the Criminal Justice Act. Obviously, in part this was to do with different policing situations, but it did have an effect on how the protests were viewed and reported.

[39] See *Evening Argus*, 20 Jan. 1995 for the 'history' of the campaign.

[40] *Evening Gazette*, 18 Jan. 1995.

[41] See Ted Benton and Simon Redfern, 'The politics of animal rights. Where is the Left?', *New Left Rev.* 215 (1996) and E. Tannenbaum, *Animal transport through Brightlingsea: report of an opinion survey* (Department of Government, University of Essex, 1995).

[42] *The Times*, 20 Jan. 1995.

[43] *Ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1995.

[44] See 'Members interests'. *The Guardian*, 8 May 1996.

What was striking from the start of the mass campaigns in Shoreham and Brightlingsea was the character of those protesting. From very early on, the local and national press stressed that these were 'new' protesters, even given the changing nature of public campaigns during the late 1980s and early 1990s. On 8 January *The Times*, which was studiously opposed to the protests, wrote 'a former fashion model turned animal rights activist stands beside a former Tory councillor. Nearby, a dreadlocked hippie yells abuse next to a well-dressed woman antiques dealer'.[45] Other reports stressed the diversity of those involved, but increasingly stressed the 'middle-class' and 'normal' appearance and status of most of those involved. On 7 January *The Guardian* noted ' a middle-aged language teacher' and his daughter, a women accountant and a nurse.[46] Later in the month the Brighton *Evening Argus* wrote

> It was the last place you would expect to see a rebellion against authority. But Shoreham Port became the venue for a particularly middle-class protest. The last eighteen days have seen pensioners with walking sticks standing alongside mums with toddlers playing on the pavement beside hardened campaigners.[47]

The Colchester *Evening Gazette* produced similar lists, although here 'residents' were stressed along with pensioners, 'young mums', the 'wife and daughter' of a magistrate, and a churchwarden.[48] The middle class nature of the protest became a watchword of the subsequent analysis, whether pompously sarcastic in *The Times* on 16 January or metropolitan patronising in *The Observer*.[49]

The truth of this view is difficult to assess. Protesters as a group are constantly changing; there is a lack of distinguishing marks amongst those who have spent hours in freezing wind and rain on the sea front. However, other accounts and personal observation suggests the characterisation of the crowds suggested by the media was correct. From accounts of the protest at Shoreham we find, a 44 year old residential care worker, a 57 year old library assistant, another 50 year old woman whose wrist was broken, a 13 year old girl and a five year old there with her father.[50] This is clearly seen in the many contributions to the 'memorial' volume issued during the Shoreham demonstrations. For example:

> The Port of Shame
>
> My husband and I are ordinary middle class folk who have never done anything spectacular in our lives – Until January 2nd 1995.
> We are both well into our seventies, but have stood in the cold and wet and windy weather to make our peaceful protests, along with other people, against the live transport at the Shoreham port.
> We are both very proud of what we are doing.
> With the help of CIWF, RSPCA, and IFAW may this evil trade be swiftly brought to an end.
> God Bless all the Animals – and Shame on Shoreham Port.
>
> E & FC, Steyning.[51]

[45] *The Sunday Times*, 8 Jan. 1995.
[46] *The Guardian*, 'Outlook', 7 Jan. 1995.
[47] *Evening Argus*, 20 Jan. 1995.
[48] *Evening Gazette*, 18 Jan. 1995.
[49] *The Times*, 16 Jan. 1995; *The Observer*, 8 Jan. 1995.
[50] *SchNEWS*, Issue Five, 12 Jan. 1995.
[51] Fiona Stephens and Wenda Shehata, *The siege of Shoreham. Reflections from the front line* (Brighton, 1995), p. 62.

Despite the presence of two universities within ten miles of the Shoreham protest, few students took part, while the Hunt Saboteurs and other animal rights activists, deliberately easily identified in their regular demonstrations through the town, were either disguised as 'ordinary' protesters on this occasion (which is unlikely), or were present only in small numbers. This raises questions about the intentions and objectives of the protesters. What was it about this issue that attracted such a distinctive protest, and such a large percentage of first-timer demonstrators?

Part of the answer lies in our earlier discussion of the changing nature of the 'animal' movement, and we will return to some of the points made there. However, there are less tangible reasons for the protest which lie mainly in the 'victims' at the heart of the protest. The animals whose transportation was criticized, first sheep and then calves, have characteristics attracting a sympathetic anthropomorphism. They are small, soft, gentle animals, and the fact that they were described as 'lambs' or were calves added a dimension of infantilism to the whole proceedings. Time and again the poems and statements which make up the protesters' book *The siege of Shoreham* refer to these characteristics. A calf sees the world 'through child's eyes'; another is referred to, like a child going to hospital, as 'My brave little one'. A child wrote, 'On those horrid lorries baby sheep and cows want their mummies'.[52] There is no doubt of the power and the sincerity of these views and we would in no way wish to minimize them. But, it goes further. Some, chosen animals, especially those with large eyes, furry bodies and human or child-like emission of sounds, inhabit an indeterminate state between animal and human. The distinction between them is lost. We have here an extreme form of the Singer/Regan view, where animals are not only granted sentience and rights but become in some way actually 'human'. 'A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy' to quote some animal rights protesters. Again this shows in the writings from Shoreham. A cow is made to cry 'Bring back my baby'; for another writer, calves have the same 'feelings' and even souls. 'Mama *we know* there is a heaven for us, /We'll play again in grass so green, under skies for ever blue'.[53]

This intense identification with the human nature of the animals transported also leads to the strength of feeling and emotion involved. The Shoreham material is overwhelmingly emotional in tone. It is significant that much of the material in the Shoreham writings takes the form of poetry, the literary form for expressing intense feelings. One man writes about seeing animals in the lorries, 'My heart and soul are torn apart / and inside I cry a thousand tears'. Or, as a Korean War veteran wrote (in prose), 'Tears flow from men, women, youngsters alike, tears of grief, rage and frustration'.[54] Many of the press reports spoke of people in tears as the lorries finally broke through the protesters, as well as intense bouts of 'feeling'.[55]

We would want to suggest that for those demonstrating (rather then simply supporting) this campaign, this intense identification with the human nature of animals was centrally important. They have taken the logic of the Singer/Regan arguments about sentience to its final conclusion, where the distinction between humans and animals disappears. Their suffering is suffering inflicted on humans. The metaphor of the Holocaust comes up time and again among protesters and their supporters (as we shall see); and a Labour councillor from Brighton compared the shipping of animals to the shipping of slaves from West Africa.[56]

[52] Stephens and Shehata, *Siege of Shoreham*, pp. 3, 9, 47.
[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 18.
[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 8.
[55] *Colchester Express*, 18 Jan. 1995, p. 7
[56] Councillor Tehmtan Framroze at St. Peter's Church, Brighton, 18 Feb. 1995.

II

In February 1995, at the height of the Shoreham and Brightlingsea demonstrations, we sent out a 'directive' through the Mass-Observation organization at the University of Sussex. The main purpose was to secure 'qualitative' data on current views of the countryside as part of a bigger project. However questions on live exports and road protests seemed a useful way of getting at feelings about rural areas. M-O encourages people to write at length rather than reply 'yes' or 'no' to questions and, as a result, the reports are difficult to analyse in a simple way. However certain kinds of quantitative data emerge clearly along with a lot of (perhaps more interesting) qualitative materials.

First a few words about the 'sample'. Those who write for M-O are self-selecting and so while it would be possible to create a control group within the respondents, the sample is initially non-correlated. Rather then loose interesting material, we left it like that. In total 249 women and 89 men replied to our request. For our purposes in this paper the group who replied were remarkably like the stereotype of the 'new' protesters identified above, i.e. white, middle-aged, middle-class, female and southern or south eastern. The majority of respondents were aged between 50 and 70 with a significant proportion aged more than seventy. Women outnumbered men by nearly three to one. About the same percentage of both men and women lived in rural areas (including country towns), that is 58 per cent of women and 49 per cent of men, while 50 per cent of women and 52 per cent lived in the South East. It is worth noting that the regional distribution accords very closely with 'national' distribution of population.

What can this group tell us about middle class opinion and the battle to enlist it for or against live animal exports? First, overwhelmingly, and perhaps not very surprisingly, the majority of those who responded were opposed to the live export of farm animals. Bringing together the two categories 'against' and 'against but accept', 63 per cent of women and 65 per cent of men opposed the traffic. We divided the categories in this rather rough and ready way to distinguish between those who had a positive alternative and those who simply 'didn't like' exports. The most striking thing about these figures is that they show little significant difference in terms of simple opposition between men and women. This is rather surprising since most recent work on the membership of animal welfare/rights organisations stresses, almost as a truism, that they are dominated by women. Garner details both the historical and contemporary significance of women in animal rights organisations including, very strikingly, CIWF, where, in 1993, he estimated that 77 per cent of local contacts were women.[57] In the light of this, why should our group be apparently so different? The most obvious reason lies in the age/class nature of the M-O group. Dorothy Sheridan and others have argued that writing, like that for M-O, can be seen as a 'feminine' form;[58] additionally, the class bias of the M-O group towards the middle class probably encourages a more environmentally 'sensitive' group. This tendency would be reinforced, if this argument has validity, by the relative lack of young, working class males amongst the M-O respondents.

[57] Garner, *Animals*, pp. 66–8

[58] David Bloome, Dorothy Sheridan and Brian Street, *Reading Mass-Observation writing. Theoretical and methodological issues in researching the Mass-Observation archive* (Mass-Observation Occasional paper no. 1, University of Sussex, 1993).

If the opposition to exports was clear, the basis of that opposition was less so. A very few had 'direct' experience. A non-demonstrating inhabitant of Sussex wrote:

> Shipping animals to Europe affects me very much because my husband works at the port where it happens. We were indifferent until he saw the calves on the lorries and said they were only babies ... They are so young and helpless.[59]

A man who lived in a village near Dover commented, 'I am pleased that we no longer have to share the boat with a truck load of animals being shipped to slaughter'; a view echoed by a woman from Cumberland 'It was brought home to me about two years ago on an overnight ferry from Southampton to Cherbourg. The noise and the stench of the sheep was incredible'.[60] Surprisingly, nobody claimed to have been on a demonstration, though some had friends who had or had signed petitions. We will return to them below.

Moving beyond that, and given the nature of the material, clear answers were not given, or sought. Some respondents simply wrote a line or two – others wrote hundreds of words, but the most frequently raised objection was one of 'inhumanity'. For example, a typist in her sixties wrote from Leighton Buzzard, 'I am horrified by the inhumane transport of animals to the continent ...'.[61] Or, a women from Croydon:

> I do think it is a pity that animals are shipped abroad alive, sometimes inhumanely. I have not actively protested but I admire those who do. I do not eat veal now that I know calves are force fed to make them fat.[62]

Inhumanity is a catch all phrase, but is not to be taken within this group as favouring modification of the trade. The largest single solution advocated by correspondents was home slaughtering. A change regulations was sought by relatively few respondents. A secretary in her 'fifties wrote from Bristol offering a typical response to both the reasons for protest and its solution.

> I do not agree with the shipping of live animals abroad ... I do not see why the animals cannot be humanely slaughtered in this country. To see them squashed in lorries, obviously terrified, is heartbreaking, and there is no justification for it at all.[63]

Even those using the phrase 'inhumanity' often have other, and sometimes equally compelling reasons for objecting to the trade. A significant number were vegetarians and their objections do not need spelling out. An eloquent, and ironic statement by a 31 year women from Liverpool can stand for all of these.

> If a person insists on eating meat full of hormones which pass into human immune systems, are linked with cancer, and might just pass on mad cow disease, if its beef, why on earth can't the animals be killed here and shipped over as frozen meat?[64]

A fairly small number had been converted to vegetarianism by the demonstrations and the

[59] Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex, Spring Directive 1995 (hereafter M-O 1995), W 632, w, 53 Sussex, Business analyst.

[60] M-O 1995, W 2174, m, 51, Dover, civil servant; W 2244, w, 65, Kendal, teacher.

[61] M-O 1995, B 89, w, 64, Leighton Buzzard, typist.

[62] M-O 1995, B 2611, w, 67, Croydon, ret. civil servant.

[63] M-O 1995, D 2585, w, 52, Bristol, secretary.

[64] M-O 1995, B 2653, w, 31, Liverpool, unemployed.

situation they revealed. A man from Derby wrote, 'so deeply do I feel about this issue, I have finally become a vegetarian'; or a women from Essex, 'I can see the faces of the animals peeping out of the trucks, and I do not fancy meat anymore'.[65]

There was, amongst our responses, a significant number who humanized and/or infantilised the animals in various ways. A 57 year old women from Yorkshire wrote , 'I feel upset about the shipping of live animals to other ports of Europe, I regard all small animals as babies'.[66] In a few cases this is taken still further and a parallel with the Holocaust, often made by the ALF for example, is employed. A librarian from Brighton wrote '... it makes me think with a shudder of the Nazi cattle trucks': and a women from Glasgow, 'I felt like a reasonably moral German in 1941 watching trainloads of Jewish people going to their deaths in wagons'.[67]

A much smaller group saw this anthropomorphism and were critical of it, their responses ranging from the mildly rebuking to the near offensive. As a teacher from Cornwall (who was anti-exports) wrote:

> There must be thousands of people, mostly women I suspect, and mostly middle-aged and over, who were brought up on Beatrice Potter and Little Grey Rabbit stories ... I sometimes wonder if that childhood background unconsciously urges them to join demonstrations against the shipping of live animals and other cruelties.[68]

In less measured tones a man from Kent commented:

> I have absolutely no sympathy with those who have been protesting at the ports and airports ... I believe there is a great deal of misplaced sentimentality and a touch of anthropomorphism in the animal demonstrations.[69]

A very small group, 3 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men, clearly identified themselves with the protesters, usually via some form of membership of a loosely 'green' or 'pro-animal' group. It was only here that we found a sense of a clear notion of animals' rights. A retired school teacher from Croydon was in favour of 'full political rights' for animals and showed how attitudes, even among the elderly supporters of respectable organisations, had changed in the years before 1994. 'For years the RSPCA have campaigned legitimately at ENORMOUS [*sic*] expense and look where it got them. So the demos have not been in vain'. She added that she believed in direct action 'but I am too old and too cowardly'.[70] However, such views were very rare.

When we come to look at actual comments on the demonstrators and their actions, a number of factors are revealed. First there was a very wide degree of support for the demonstrations, often using emotional language. A retired policeman from Brighton wrote, 'I have the greatest admiration for those brave souls who protest at the export of live animals, making me wish I had their courage'.[71] At least in part this support comes from the recognition that those who are protesting were like 'them': ordinary, middle class and even middle aged. 'Its amazing seeing middle-class women more or less creating an affray', wrote a 61 year old women from Sheffield.[72]

[65] M-O 1995, R 1418, 73, Derby ret. decorator; B 36, w, 80, Essex, ret. typist.

[66] M-O 1995, W 571, w, 57, W. Yorks, Sales Assistant.

[67] M-O 1995, S 2207, w, 52, Brighton, Librarian; M 1171, w, 38, Glasgow, housewife.

[68] M-O 1995 S 2190, w, 74, Cornwall, ret. teacher.

[69] M-O 1995, K 1515, m, 73, Kent, ret. civil servant.

[70] M-O 1995, A 1292, w, 62, South Croydon, teacher.

[71] M-O 1995, R 1389, m, 81, Brighton, ret. policeman.

[72] M-O 1195, B 1512, w, 61, Sheffield, teacher.

A librarian from Watford was 'so proud of the ordinary people, who have taken part in the protests'.[73] A secretary from Warwick went further.

> What has made an impression on me is that so many ordinary people of all ages, from all professions and even now different religious denominations have spoken out and physically demonstrated against this trade.[74]

Or, in the words of a 74 year old man from Peacehaven, 'this looks like a new form of protests, elderly people getting angry, there's go in the old ones yet and there is [*sic*] a lot of them. Watch this in future'.[75] Some (as in the Shoreham book) make a link between Britishness and protest; 'I am proud of the British – not the bomb brigade, but the steady protesters, standing out in the rain and risking their health and possible injury'.[76]

These and similar views open up two other factors about the trade and those who demonstrate against it. First, there was a degree of anti-EU feeling in the respondents. Ten per cent of women and 14 per cent of men linked the live export trade to anti-EU sentiments. These range from relatively mild complaints, which echo both the MAFF and NFU positions, to the extreme expressed by a 61 year old women who wrote from London with the lamb wars still in mind: 'no live animals should be exported, because as soon as they are, they are out of British control and the French ratbags can set fire to them or do whatever they like with impunity'.[77] In a way though, what was interesting is that so few 'blame' the EU or more generally 'foreigners'. This was, after all, at least in part, both the line of government and the farmers' organizations.

The second area which caused problems is 'anti-extremism'. Again, rather surprisingly, only 12 per cent of women and 14 per cent of men mentioned fears of extremists taking over demonstrations, although it was a significant number. This fear of extremism was, however, very high in those who supported the continuation of live animal exports, especially (if impressionistically) among the men, and often given as a reason for their support of the continuation of live exports.

Those who supported the continuation of live exports, even in a modified form, were a small group, 21 per cent among women respondents and 18 per cent among men. Those who wished the unmodified situation, i.e. the situation as it was in early 1995, to continue were much smaller still in numbers: seven per cent of women but 14 per cent of men. This is a very difficult group to discuss. Few amongst them were able to mount a real defence and those who did, were often linked to agriculture. A woman farmer from the Welsh borders mounted a fine defence of small farms and local production, while accusing protesters (and the authors of the directive and hence this paper) of being unrealistic and sentimental about country life. However, even she was far from uncritical.

> If supermarkets hadn't taken out the small butchers, farmers would slaughter their lambs locally. Why has veal got to be white anyway? ... the French realise proper meat is not all the pre-packed stuff ... *But* I wish they would accept lamb on the hook and not live.[78]

[73] M-O 1995, B 2260, w, 47, Waterford librarian.
[74] M-O 1995, H 1263, w, 46, Warwick secretary.
[75] M-O 1995, T 2741, m, 74, Peacehaven, Sussex ret. carpenter.
[76] M-O 1995, J 2631, w, 54, Lancing, Sussex, classroom assistant.
[77] M-O 1995, B 1665, w, 61, London, clerk.
[78] M-O 1995, H 1709, w, 70, Oswestry farmer.

A 39 year old farmer's wife from Cornwall made many of the same points, and argued in detail that cheap food policies since the war were largely to blame.[79] There was also a good deal of sympathy, amongst this group, for farmers' problems in a fairly general way, as a radiographer from Gloucestershire wrote. '[Exports] do not put me off farmers – I just feel sorry for their predicament – it puts me off the European Community even more'.[80] This point was taken further by an uncharacteristically virulent statement of support for farmers by a retired aircraft engineer from Middlesex.

> I think farmers do a thankless task raising animals for food and growing crops ... They should be given every support instead of being harried by Brussels directives, the MAFF snoopers interpretations of those directives and the activities of animal rights terrorists and rent-a-mob.[81]

This points, unfortunately, to the other area of 'support' for exports, those who saw the demonstrations as simply being about 'lawlessness' and had little positive to say about the exporters' case. A not untypical example of this view comes from a women technician in Cheshire. 'I think the trouble about shipping animals to Europe has just been caused by a vocal minority. The vast majority of people are not bothered about it'.[82]

III

In this paper we have concentrated on the issue of live animal exports and middle-class opinion. If our group is in anyway representative – and we would argue that it is – then there were definite winners in the argument about the rights and wrongs of the export trade. The majority of our group were, at the time of the survey, against the export trade. This was true of both men and women. The fact that so few objected to the extremists also suggests, along with other evidence, that those who demonstrated in the winter of 1994–5 had widespread support. This was despite a good deal of media talk of 'extremist infiltrators' to the extent that the reporting in the *Times* occasionally seemed to be talking about somewhere else.[83] The relatively small group who 'blamed' the EU also suggests that a lot of the defence of the British trade mounted by the farming press, the NFU and MAFF, was unsuccessful in winning the public's mind.

In general terms both the response of our group and our brief examination of the campaign leading to the ferry ban and the subsequent demonstrations, suggests that in the short term the groups involved made a very successful job of mobilising middle-class opinion both as consumers and as protesters. This was given the ultimate compliment in the editorial of *Farmers Weekly* on 13 January 1995. Under the headline, 'No longer enough to defend veal exports from legal position', the editorial concluded:

> Meanwhile, now is the time for farmers and those who claim to represent them to add their voices to what has become a one-sided debate. Defending livestock exports – simply on the

[79] M-O 1995, H 1820, w, 39, Cornwall, farmer's wife.
[80] M-O 1995, B 2154, w, 62, Glos, radiographer.
[81] M-O 1995, B 1442, m, Staines, aircraft engineer ret.
[82] M-O 1995, J 931, w, 49, Cheshire, technician
[83] See for example the report of 8 Jan. 1995, pp. 1–2, under headline 'Anarchists and fanatics hijack animal demos'.

> basis that it is a legal trade – is no longer sufficient. Farmers, animal welfarists and, indeed, consumers need and deserve more positive guidance.[84]

A sharp contrast to the anodyne defence of the trade some seven months earlier!

However, the complexity of the material does raise some doubts about this simple interpretation. The opposition to live animal exports continued to be on welfarist rather than rights grounds. There was little evidence that that recent arguments in favour of animal rights had made much headway among the M-O respondents since their criticism remained based on 'humane' grounds. Also, slightly oddly, concern centred on the 'British' issue of live transport. The issue of veal crates, which was perhaps seen as a rather distant issue, never caught the public's attention. Very few of the M-O correspondents made any mention of veal crates at all.

In contrast to these arguments, it is clear that many of those who took part in the demonstrations had taken animal rights' campaigners arguments on board. The attitudes of those involved at Shoreham, even the 'moderates', as expressed in their writing and in press comment, do appear to show a recognition of arguments about the 'nature' of animals. Similarly this group, or part of it, was been willing to carry on the campaign even in the face of defeat which came in the Summer of 1995.

What then about the 'losers'? To the extent that our group gave very little support to exports in February 1995, it is, at one level, clear that the 'farming lobby' had lost the battle, as indeed the *Farmers Weekly* leader quoted above admitted. At the time, the very little public support voiced on behalf of the farmers was coming very much from their own people. For instance, the 20,000 signatures collected by the FUW and the ubiquitous Richard Otley in September and October 1994 nearly all came from farmers, auctioneers and dealers.[85] Again, the very limited amount of material from our group would support this. One of the few active agriculturists in our group wrote, 'I think a great deal of what the animal protesters are saying needs to be listened to and acted upon'.[86] But it was more serious than that.

A large part of our group, though still probably a minority, said that the whole issue had affected their attitudes to farming and the countryside. Farmers were often seen as heartless and profit-led. 'Farmers only see animals as objects which provide an income – they don't see them as having feelings' wrote a women from Preston with an awareness of some of the animal rights issues.[87] Nor did the free enterprise pirates help. A retired typesetter wrote from Surrey

> The main item which maddened me about this was the clever dicks who tried to make a fast buck when the legitimate ferries and road haulers [sic] refused to transport the animals. Their only concern was their pockets and it was sickening to see some of them quoting their rights and saying they were not breaking any laws.[88]

The fact that, albeit late in the day, the NFU and even *Farmers Weekly* said something similar is little comfort.

The evidence from this group in relation to general changes in the environment was unambiguous. This is seen more clearly in answers to other questions in the directive, but it was also

[84] *Farmers Weekly*, 13 Jan. 1995, p. 5.
[85] *Farmers Weekly*, 7 Oct. 1994. p. 14.
[86] M-O 1995, H 1820, w, 39, Cornwall, farmer's wife.
[87] M-O 1995, C 1713 w, 46, Preston receptionist.
[88] M-O 1995, H 1806, m, 69, Surrey, typesetter ret.

explicitly linked by many to live animal exports. A teacher from rural Staffordshire, having detailed a history of post war agriculture dominated, as he saw it, by profit and pesticides, ends his writing for M-O, 'sadly though, the chief change I have seen in my life is that farmers are no longer in sympathy with the land'.[89]

The NFU and the farming lobby may argue, as they often do, that urban views of the countryside are sentimental and romantic but what people believe, especially when they form a majority, does matter. As *Farmers Weekly* put it in February 1994, just before the crisis over exports blew up, 'In an age when image matters more than reality, UK farming has become a vulnerable industry'.[90] In the short term the 'farmers' won. Live exports were revived, although not on passenger ferries, and all the breast beating was forgotten. Then in the spring of 1996 exports of calves were stopped by an even worse crisis – the discovery of the possibility of a link between BSE and CJD – although sheep exports continued.[91] But it was not BSE which made the end of the export ban a hollow victory; it was the increasing sense that British farming had forfeited the trust of the British public.

[89] M-O 1995, m, 50, Stone, teacher.

[90] *Farmers Weekly*, 11 Feb. 1994, p. 5.

[91] Between 5 July and 4 October 1996 435,600 sheep were shipped out of Dover on specially chartered vessels. Our thanks to Tim O'Brien of CIWF for these figures.

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Book Reviews

The British Isles

PETER BRANDON, *The South Downs* (Phillimore, 1998). xvi + 248 pp. 182 illus. £25.

Having been amongst the original list of landscapes recommended for designation as a National Park in 1945, but then dropped from the final list, the South Downs are in some ways the least fortunate of our areas of countryside beauty in England. With visitor pressure consistently on a level with the declared National Parks, the South Downs were given Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status in 1966, a designation which allows local authority planning departments to take full account of the requirements of conservation but which, until recently, attracted no extra central government funding. But from 1992 the South Downs (or at least the Sussex portion) were allocated a Conservation Board to administer the AONB, and funding now runs through to 2001 while the future standing of the area is decided. This was a significant step forward in countryside planning, with the Sussex Downs Conservation Board heralded as a possible way forward for other AONBs in England and Wales.

So this is a timely book by Peter Brandon, and one in which he brings his abundant knowledge of his own beloved Downs fully to bear on the current question of their future. This is an area on which he has worked for many years – indeed, some of the material is taken from his 1963 doctoral thesis – and all is written with his characteristic verve and depth of feeling. For example, on the post-war agricultural revolution he writes, 'The immediate aftermath of a bloody conflict was to prove a watershed in the history of the Downs. Most of their legendary beauty was extinguished as indiscriminately and as finally as were the lives of so many men and women who went to war to defend them'.

The volume is organized chronologically, with the first chapter setting out the landscape themes and the second dealing with the physical background, although the activities of the farming communities and their uses of the natural environment are always to the fore. With Chapter 3 we move on to early peoples, and thereafter we are conducted through the Saxon, the medieval, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and thus into the twentieth century and 'the austere present'. Thematic passages are also included within this broad chronological approach. And due attention is certainly given to the all-important Southdown sheep, whether in its medieval setting, or at the time of its great transformation at the hands of John Ellman of Glynde and other great contemporary flockmasters. Not only the vital agricultural importance of the animal is brought out, in its role in the precocious sheep/corn husbandry of the area, but also its social significance, as for example at the Lewes Wool Fair, which attracted nobility and gentry from near and far. Peter Brandon provides a fascinating account of this annual event, noting that hardly a Wealden farmer competed for prizes or helped organize the Fair, thereby underlining an ages-old division within Sussex between the Weald and the downland.

Much of the charm of this volume lies in its synthesis of historical and contemporary, artistic and literary themes throughout, and in its grand sweeps of vision. Widely available in Sussex high-street book retailers, it will appeal to general readers who should thereby be treated to a text which is at once erudite and eminently readable. But that is not to deny that others might take issue with some of the detail: can it be demonstrated, for example, that the South Saxons did settle in villages as well as individual farms as early as two or three centuries after their initial colonization, as implied (p. 33)? Indeed, the author himself elsewhere (pp. 50 and 59) notes that the downland (or more likely scarpfoot) villages date from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. The illustrations are generally well-chosen (there are several colour plates) and make their own full contribution to a volume which draws out the spirit of place of the Downs in a unique way. It is, however, unfortunate that in the version of the book sent to this reviewer, there are problems with some of the illustrations which render them virtually meaningless: on p. 67, for example, the values of sheep and corn tithes 1340 are identically shaded except for the highest values, and similar problems exist on pp. 65 and 94. I understand that a later print-run rectified this problem. It would have been helpful too for the sources of the diagrams to have been given, especially where these were derived from primary source material, as in Chapter 6, 'Farming communities in the Middle Ages (1100–1500)'.

To attempt such a grand sweep of history and to write a book which aims to extend readers' active enjoyment and understanding of their downland surroundings is at once an ambitious and laudable project. In this, Peter Brandon succeeds admirably.

BRIAN SHORT

DIANA K. CALDICOTT, *Monxton: a Hampshire village history* (The author, Mill Pound Cottage, Monxton, Andover, Hants SP11 8AW, 1998). xii + 179 pp. 44 illus; 4 maps. £11.50 incl. p & p.

This reasonably-priced paperback is a comprehensive economic and social history of the village, in which the author herself resides, from prehistory to present times. She has done this in the usual chronological way except for a large 'chunk' of Church of England history, 1700–1846; happily, the latter is relieved by tales about a wayward cleric who had an undue interest in the sins of the flesh. Each period is placed in a context, usually with reference to national political contemporary events, and the work is interspersed with appropriate maps and illustrations.

All sections are well researched and presented, and this review will concentrate on farming in the village during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period King's College, Cambridge held the manor of Monxton, and the wealth of their archive material forms a firm basis for detailed interpretation at a local level. Diana Caldicott has done this in a way which, for the most part, reflects the latest research elsewhere.

Perhaps the high point of the resource material is the invaluable map of the manor prepared in 1751. Amongst other things, it is evident that open field strip-farming was flourishing at this time, and that the tenants were readily adapting innovative crops to it. In this respect it is worth remembering that when the tenants sought retrospective permission from their landlord for enclosing a piece of common land known as Cowdown in the 1580s (p. 32), it would still have been worked on the strip system. In this sense, the enclosure of Cowdown was actually an encroachment, and simply an enlargement of the area devoted to open field husbandry.

Furthermore, a significant acreage of open field survived until the parliamentary enclosure of the parish in 1806–8. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the latter had less to do with more efficient cereal farming than with creating conditions more appropriate for the production of sheep meat. Indeed fencing and hedging are largely irrelevant for cereal production, but essential for the containment of livestock, and the provision of controlled feeding regimes for them. As further proof of this, the enclosure award at Monxton led directly to the creation of a new holding (Prospect Farm) on the old downland: here extensive common grazing was to be largely replaced by intensive feeding based on farm crops grown especially for the sheep flock.

GAVIN BOWIE

JOHN HUNTER, *The Essex landscape: a study of its form and history* (Essex Record Office Publications, 1999). x + 210 pp. 79 illus. £16.95.

This book fills a gap left by the omission of Essex from the series of county histories modelled on W. G. Hoskins' *Making of the English landscape.* Since 1955, when Hoskins wrote, further research in natural as well as cultural history has greatly advanced the understanding of how and why landscapes have evolved. John Hunter devotes two long chapters to describing geology, landforms, regions and subregions and his accounts of soils, drainage, woods, heaths and hedges draw extensively on the work of D. R. Bridgland, Oliver Rackham, George Peterkin and other ecologists.

Recent studies in archaeology and local history have thrown new light on early changes in the human landscape. Many recently-discovered Bronze Age artefacts on coastal inlets and on loam terrain in north-east Essex bear witness to widespread development of agriculture. Sites of large, fortified Iron Age towns have been investigated and evidence for extensive trade in salt, ewes' milk cheese and bacon has been found. A detailed account of the turbulent relations between Belgic tribes and Roman rulers is reflected in landscape changes. Towns were built, destroyed, fortified and rebuilt. In the countryside, trees were cleared for cultivation, villas were founded, sheep farming expanded and roads were constructed. At the end of Roman occupation population declined and cultivated land reverted to wood. From the early fifth century the land was overrun by bands of Saxons. Small territories united to form an East Saxon kingdom that flourished in the seventh century but in 991, the East Saxons were defeated by Danes at the Battle of Maldon and many villages were plundered and burnt. The Norman conquest was followed by a peaceful takeover of Essex and agrarian settlement revived. The Domesday Book compiled in 1086 recorded that no part of the county was densely populated but vills on chalky soils in the north-west had many plough-teams.

The fullest and most interesting section of John Hunter's book deals with medieval and early modern landscape changes. Diverse wood-pasture activities were developed over much of Essex. Large areas were set aside as royal hunting preserves for deer and other beasts of the chase. By the early fourteenth century, the boundless Forest of Essex had been reduced to four separate forests: Waltham with Hainault, Hatfield, Writtle and

Kingswood next to Colchester. At the same time, lords and prelates obtained licences to enclose private deer parks. Tracts of woodland were managed by lopping, chopping and coppicing to produce poles, charcoal and faggots. Thousands of pigs foraged in the undergrowth and cattle and horses grazed seasonally in open glades. Expansion of arable farming in the north-west and on the eastern side of the county was accompanied by the construction of great timbered barns. In the later middle ages, Essex suffered no less than other counties from famine, plague and civil war, but many survivors enjoyed new opportunities. Peasants won freedom from feudal obligations and occupied farms as tenants or independent owners. In north Essex, cloth manufacturing enriched a few merchants and paid for the building of magnificent churches and substantial town houses. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, new wealth, including profits obtained from acquisition of monastic lands, was poured into sumptuous mansions built in brick and stone, adorned with large glazed windows, surrounded by ornamental gardens.

As the pace of change speeded up after 1700, John Hunter's narrative becomes shorter and shorter. The making of Georgian landscapes is covered in 16 pages, dealing mostly with creations of large landowners, landscape gardens, agricultural improvements and civic architecture. The vast changes that occurred between the accession of Queen Victoria and World War Two are compressed into five pages. The era of high farming, the coming of the railway, the making of nineteenth- and twentieth-century townscapes are passed over rapidly. The building of factories, breweries, gasworks, miles of terraced houses, des. res., shops, pubs, chapels, schools and cemeteries are largely ignored. John Hunter's view of Colchester excludes its Victorian landmarks: the railway station, Severall's hospital, army barracks, gothic town hall and romanesque water tower. Contemporary Essex is dealt with in 12 pages. Traditional domestic architecture by Raymond Erith receives more attention than Frederick Gibberd's modern design for Harlow New Town and neither Stansted airport nor the two motorways, M11 and M25, are mentioned. John Hunter does not say that he disapproves of modern design but he leaves an impression that the best features in Essex were created before 1800.

The book fully engages the reader's interest and generates enthusiasm for traces of medieval landscapes. It contains many useful maps and imaginative bird's eye views of settlements and farms reconstructed by Frank Gardiner. It is an admirable successor to Hoskins' classic work.

HUGH PRINCE

DELLA HOOKE, *Warwickshire Anglo-Saxon charter bounds* (Boydell Press, 1999). iv + 145 pp. 8 plates; 25 maps. £35.

This is the third in a series of county volumes compiled by Dr Hooke, in which the topographical information in pre-Conquest charters is presented and interpreted. Each charter is calendared, and references are given for manuscript and printed versions. The parts of the charter which provide information about land, such as the number of hides or the brief formal descriptions of land use, are quoted verbatim, and translated. But the main purpose of the book is to provide the texts of the boundary clauses, accompanied in each case by a lengthy discussion of the exact location of boundary points, and a map showing their position. The documents are classified by century, from the eighth to the eleventh, with charters separated from leases. A further distinction is made within each category between those documents which have boundary clauses attached, and those which do not.

Readers are given in very accessible form a resource previously requiring searches through a dozen volumes. The charters and their boundaries are the most important written sources for landholding, land use and agriculture before Domesday, and their ready availability will assist work in this period. This evidence makes best sense when combined with other types of information, and Dr Hooke points the way by referring to Domesday, later documents, and archaeological finds, but there is insufficient space for this supplementary material to be presented comprehensively.

Warwickshire is not very fully provided with charters and boundary descriptions of this period, mainly because ancient church institutions held relatively small amounts of land in the county. There are groups of documents relating to the south-west of the county, in the Avon and Stour valleys, and a number for the south-eastern Feldon, but the wooded Arden in the north-west has little evidence. But the handful of bounds attached to the county's charters still contain much information of interest. Dr Hooke has done a formidable amount of research in identifying boundary points, by looking for names in early maps and other documents, and she has walked many of the boundaries. There are still mysteries, such as locating the place called *Fachanleah* (with a number of variant spellings) which was an estate and presumably a settlement of some importance near Stratford-upon-Avon. In the same part of the county, it is hard to explain why the boundary description attached to a charter for Shottery appears to exclude the village and territory which carried that name in the later middle ages. Indeed, Stratford and its many attached settlements would repay further detailed research. Its documents in the ninth to tenth centuries show the conventional process by which parts of an estate

were detached and granted to lesser lay lords, thus creating the pattern of territorial units – manors, townships and parishes – that provided the framework for the countryside in later centuries. However, the starting point for that process is normally seen to have been a large and primeval estate, yet Stratford's early charters refer to smaller units in the eighth century, and suggest that the 'ancient' estate was going through complex changes, and may even have been created at that time.

Agricultural historians will be particularly interested in the references to fields, crops and animals which appear in boundary clauses, but these are not very numerous in Warwickshire charters. A lease for Alveston in 966 grants 'acres' (meaning open-field strips) distributed over a field system, but unlike the Berkshire documents of this period, the boundaries do not pick their way in detail through the headlands and furrows of developed arable fields. We will not be fully aware of these regional differences, nor be in a position to explain them, until we have more of these valuable books.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

BRYAN WAITES, *Monasteries and the landscape in north east England: the medieval colonisation of the North York Moors* (Oakham: Multum in Parvo Press, 1997). x + 214 pp. Illus. £15.95; JANET BURTON, *The monastic order in Yorkshire, 1069–1215* (CUP, 1999). xxii + 352 pp. 6 tables; 3 maps. £40.

As well as their being concerned with Yorkshire, a joint review of these books is justified in that both summarize the more particular and detailed researches of their respective authors. That by Bryan Waites is, as he states in his introduction, a valedictory piece; but hopefully this will not be the last word on the subject by Janet Burton. The two books have, however, clearly differing aims. Dr Burton's purpose is to present a comprehensive and balanced account of the development of monasticism in the whole of Yorkshire between 1069, when there were no monasteries north of the Trent and when the county was enduring Norman conquest and settlement, and 1215, when the papacy forbade the creation of new monastic orders and the monastic map of Yorkshire was complete, except for the Charterhouse at Mount Grace founded towards the end of the fourteenth century. In contrast, Dr Waites covers a longer span of time but is narrower in his geographical and thematic focus: his concerns are exclusively economic and he concentrates on the land eastwards from the Vale of York and between the northern slope of the Wolds and the Tees. Because of this, I feel his title is too broad: North East England surely implies the old counties of Durham and Northumberland. As Dr Burton recognizes, the Tees is a boundary of considerable historical significance.

Although differing in purpose, both studies deal with matters of importance to all who are interested in medieval settlement formation, land organization and farming; and both historians come to the unequivocal conclusion that the development of Yorkshire owed a great deal to the ambitions and policies of the county's monastic houses and the orders to which they belonged.

However, to concentrate exclusively on the economic aspect would be unfair to Dr Burton since it would necessitate ignoring the important contribution her book makes to our understanding of the many other facets of monasticism in Yorkshire in a period which saw the birth of sixty-seven houses at an average rate of almost one every two years. Her analysis highlights two basic features. One is the primary role in monastic foundation of those who possessed land and political power. She argues that the Crown played a direct part only in the earliest phase when William I and William II were at pains to establish Selby and then (and more importantly) St Mary's, York as royal abbeys. Otherwise, the driving force on the lay side was the baronage introduced by the Norman kings, but with the knightly class gradually becoming more involved, although on an understandably smaller scale, in the later twelfth century. Surprisingly, perhaps, the largest group of houses (twenty-five or thirty-seven per-cent) were nunneries. All of them were much smaller and poorer than their male counterparts, essentially, Dr Burton stresses, because they were designed to fulfil more limited and localized functions.

The other important feature was the symbiotic association between monasteries and their lay founders and benefactors. As regards the former, Dr Burton insists that we must recognize the deep and genuine urge that moved men and women to enter the cenobitic life, although she underlines the fact that they did not, and were not expected, to live solely for themselves. While their prime duty was to offer spritual insurance and (hopefully) assurance, they were also expected to provide education, retirement facilities, prestigious burial grounds and solutions to family problems. In return, the laity furnished the real estate without which no monastery would have been viable. Thus, as members of endowed corporations, monks joined the laity in the economic world, while wealthy laymen and women engaged to some degree either in life or in death with the spiritual world of the cloister.

Of necessity, Dr Burton deals more briefly and broadly than Dr Waites with the economic aspects of Yorkshire monasticism, and in doing so is aware of Dr Waites's contribution in this field. One of her main purposes is to emphasize that monastic influence was felt

and was of great significance throughout the county, although it was more evident in the more sparsely settled districts. She contrasts the Benedictines and the Augustinians with the Cistercians and their Premonstratensian and Gilbertine imitators. The former acquired extensive properties in the densely settled parts of the county and were comfortable with the notion of having lordship as well as land, although she believes that the meagre evidence indicates that they were not engaged in direct exploitation. On the other hand, the eight Cistercian houses eschewed lordship and were closely engaged in the management of their eighty-three granges. She notes their prominence in the business of wool production, but cautions that prominence should not be interpreted as dominance.

Concerned as he is with only seventeen monasteries and with only one of their interests, Dr Waites has explored his chosen region in much greater depth and detail, including a very helpful preliminary description of its geological and geographical features. His analysis shows that in every case the bulk of a monastery's estate was located fairly close to the house, and that this tended to become more pronounced as most monasteries strove to remove the illogicalities and inconveniences of their foundation endowment by means of purchase, exchange and mortgage foreclosure.

Like Dr Burton, he emphasizes the importance of the grange, which he describes as 'the spearhead of the monastic *blitzkrieg* – the impact was just as great; the results just as overpowering'. However, he exposes the hyperbole of this statement by his explanation of how many granges evolved only gradually into consolidated farms: in many instances, the monks had to share their chosen sites with lay owners whom they were able to buy out only piecemeal and over an extended period. He also goes further than Dr Burton in arguing that many granges began as adjuncts of appropriated parish churches where the monks required facilities for collecting, storing and selling tithe produce. Overall, his perception is that geographical factors were of secondary importance in grange formation, although, like Dr Burton, he acknowledges their greater importance in areas of sparse settlement. He too emphasizes the important role played by monasteries in wool production, but he also stresses that the grange was not solely a pastoral phenomenon: at most granges there was some agrarian activity, and many were primarily concerned with grain production.

Because of his longer timespan, Dr Waites is able to calculate changes in the prosperity of his region as measured by the value of land. Using national taxation surveys and valuations from 1292 until 1535, he has estimated the impact of extraneous factors, notably the Scottish raids and the fall in the size of the population in the fourteenth century. What emerges is that, although land values changed in absolute terms, they remained highest in the Vales of Pickering, York and Tees and lowest in the Moorland and on the Coastal Plateau.

The one major difference between these two historians is their interpretation of the term 'waste' in Domesday Book. Dr Waites accepts the traditional and more pessimistic view that the county experienced massive disruption and depopulation in 1069–70. Dr Burton, however, recognizes the more recent perception of the 'harrying of the north' as less damaging than the word 'waste' suggests.

Both books in their respective ways add considerably to our knowledge and understanding of what was happening in medieval Yorkshire and of the roles played by monks and their supporters. They are valuable and worthy additions to the growing body of work on the county.

RICHARD LOMAS

RAY LOCK (ed.), 'The court rolls of Walsham-le-Willows 1303–50' (*Suffolk Records Society*, 41, 1998). vii + 373 pp. 2 plates; 2 maps. £30.

Of late there has been a minor glut of publications directly related to the late medieval manor court. The appearance of a further edition of manorial court rolls from the early fourteenth century is particularly welcome, offering as it does the easy opportunity for close inspection of a rather full series of courts at a moment when the historiography of medieval manorial court rolls is increasingly directing researchers to examine the nature of law in manorial courts and the extent to which those courts responded to developments in other jurisdictions, notably the common law.

The parish of Walsham-le-Willows is situated in West Suffolk, approximately ten miles north-east of Bury St Edmunds. Manor and village were not coterminous and the manorial rolls represent the proceedings of more than a relatively minor lay manorial lord, as Lock's introduction to the edition makes clear. The location and lordship of the manors certainly add to the interest of the court rolls: firstly, most, but not all, series of manorial court rolls exploited by researchers tend to come from the largest lay and ecclesiastical estates – it is very useful to have this edition of the proceedings of minor lay manorial courts; following from this, the close proximity of Walsham-le-Willows to a cluster of manors belonging to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, the manorial court rolls of which have been subjected to detailed investigation, also encourages comparison; further, the fact that the records of courts survive from those held by other than a single landlord allows further consideration of the extent to which individuals held land from more than a single lord.

We had been offered a foretaste of the Walsham-le-Willows rolls, which are presently kept at the Record Office in Bury St Edmunds, when a pre-publication excerpt from the 1349 rolls, which listed tenant death after tenant death, was published by Horrox in her edition of sources on the Black Death. These courts, of course, appear in full here, as do their early fourteenth century predecessors. Lock offers a translation as well as a transcription of the first two surviving courts, those of October 1303 and October 1316; thereafter the text of the rolls appears only in translation. The content of the rolls is, for the most part, fairly typical for this part of the country at this period. Inheritance was partible, the land market was very active and many of the entries record transfers of very small plots of land; the rolls are also full of the range of entries that we might expect to find: amercements for breaches of by-laws, brewing offences, acts of petty criminality, inter-tenant disputes, and so on. The inter-personal disputes generated, in the 1320s and 1330s, a number of rather detailed and interesting pleas of debt and covenant of a kind which help to add an extra dimension to our view of the pre-plague world of the peasantry. The manorial rolls of Walsham-le-Willows, as elsewhere, also shed most light on the great of the village community. This is well illustrated in the case of a substantial villager, the villein William Lene, who died in 1329 leaving a considerable estate in land, chattels, and livestock; symptomatic of the sort of acquisitive peasant who occupied a place at or near the top of the village pyramid. William, in leaving a will which included a bequest for someone to attend the shrine of St Thomas of Lancaster, the popular 'saint' killed by Edward II in 1322, also reminds us that the view of the early fourteenth century English peasantry did not stop at the nearest hedgerow.

There are some oddities of translation and extension. For instance 'incidit per inquisitionem/per cognitionem' has been translated as 'he intervened through the enquiry'/'by his own admission he intervened' (pp. 35, 39 and elsewhere) when the sense is surely that the party has lost by the ruling of an inquest / by his own recognizance. 'R.' (as p. 43) should be extended and translated as 'respite' rather than 'reply'). It would also have been useful to have been offered the Latin on more than one occasion where the entry is unusual: for example, it would be useful to know the verb, translated here as 'mortgaged', which was used in an entry recording an illegal lease made in the court of June 1335 (p. 187). There are also the almost inevitable errors of production: 11 and 12 Edward II is not the same, of course, as Jan. 1337-Jan. 1339 (p. 171). The index, is very full and useful, as is the glossary. In an ideal world, this translation would have been supported by an envelope of micro-fiche of the original rolls fixed inside the back cover but, no doubt, practical and financial constraints dictated otherwise. Irrespective of this, by producing this handsome edition of an important series of manorial court rolls, Ray Lock and the Suffolk Records Society have performed a service for historians of the medieval peasantry and of late medieval agrarian history.

PHILLIPP SCHOFIELD

BERYL SCHUMER, *Wychwood: the evolution of a wooded landscape* (Charlbury: The Wychwood Press, 1999). xi + 116 pp. 8 tables; 14 maps. £7.50.

This slim volume forms a new edition of a work first published by Leicester University Press in 1984. The text has been revised throughout, and illustrations and a new chapter (six) added. In his generous foreword, Harold Fox describes Beryl Schumer's account as belonging to a new phase of writing in woodland history, one that emphasizes not destruction but management. Whereas previous writers on woodland history (like W. G. Hoskins and H. C. Darby) had cast the period from the Norman Conquest until the Black Death as one of large-scale woodland clearance, the 'taming' of a wilderness, Schumer's *Wychwood* advances the view that much of its wooded area had, in prehistory, been cleared land. Thus Wychwood had seen cycles of clearance and regeneration. In parallel, she argues that in medieval times the picture in Wychwood was less one of rapid and continuous change than of remarkable stability – especially in the west and south parts of the forest where there was hardly any alteration in the woodland area between 1086 and the modern era. As Fox remarks, these various conclusions have found echo in other recent writing on woodland history.

The area studied coincides broadly with the current administrative district of West Oxfordshire. Historically, it covers 28 medieval parishes and at least 40 Domesday manors. Almost every parish demonstrates evidence of Roman settlement, implying that there was no large untouched area of primeval woodland left in Roman times. Under the Saxons, settlement contracted and some cleared areas reverted to wood pasture. However, by Domesday it is plain that the woodland of Wychwood was nothing like as extensive as often believed, nor did it belong exclusively to the King. Within it were large clearings occupied by Domesday manors. There were other 'open' forest areas used as sheep walks, not to mention a grid of routeways. Thus, Schumer concludes, medieval Wychwood was far from an indeterminate wilderness but rather 'an organized area of wood and wood pasture with definite and fairly stable boundaries' (p. 47). It follows, therefore, that the vills that were thought to be the result of post-Conquest assarting were mostly already in existence in 1086.

Wychwood reveals two distinctive sub-regions in the medieval period: river valley settlements which had stable populations, agriculture based on two fields of equal size and little or no assarting; and 'forest' vills where assarting led to the growth of irregular field systems. It was in these latter areas that population growth was greatest, helped by an influx of men from elsewhere, so running contrary to the accepted view that the medieval peasant was bound to his manor.

In Chapter Six (added for this edition), Schumer carries Wychwood's story beyond 1400. The extent of the woodland changed little, but ownership and organization in the forest did, particularly in association with Dissolution. This section of the book is probably the weakest. It lacks the level of detail of earlier chapters and appears somewhat disengaged from the vast array of writing on forests covering the period. Such criticism aside, it is hard to dissent from the view that Beryl Schumer's *Wychwood* remains a most scholarly contribution. Its detailed exposition of Domesday woodland and of settlement and rights within it is full of interest for the local historian. More widely, it affords revealing comparative perspectives alongside other forest realms.

MICHAEL FREEMAN

ELIZABETH K. BERRY (ed.), 'Swaledale wills and inventories, 1522–1600' (*Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Ser.* 152, 1998). xiv + 411 pp. 1 illus; 2 maps. £48.

The probate courts of the Yorkshire divide between the courts of the diocese of York (which covered most of the county) and those of the archdeaconry of Richmond, responsible for the western part of the North Riding. The records of the York court in the sixteenth century are primarily a marvellous set of probate registers, in which wills and their administrations were engrossed. Until the very end of the seventeenth century, the original wills and their inventories do not survive. For Richmond, we have the original wills and inventories – with many lacking – and it is upon these that any inventory-based assessment of the rural economy of Yorkshire before *c.* 1690 must be based. In this volume Mrs Berry prints all the surviving sixteenth-century wills and inventories for Swaledale above Richmond, 210 in all. As the inventories make plain, this was cattle rearing country with some evidence for cheese and butter production, but with relatively little arable. Indeed, some inventories with cattle make no mention of either grain or arable tools. A few inventories contain evidence for lead production.

The difficulty with wills and inventories is that read individually, they normally contain very few surprises, and so it proves with this volume. There are a few gentry wills, a scattering of women's wills and such oddities as the will of a household servant and a Dutchman resident in Gunnerside (no. 153). A Downholme yeoman had £329 owing him from 120 individuals: this, and many other individual wills, could profitably be investigated further. The interest of wills lies in our ability to infer norms and exceptions from them and in this respect 210 remains a small number. The transcriptions look to be well executed but rather under edited. Mrs Berry prints verbatim to the point of neither punctuating nor paragraphing her texts: she does not extend 'wch' or 'yt' nor, in an inventory in which every line ends 'p' (and not, in her transcript, 'p") explain that this stands for price. (And see also 'jnor', 'L:ship' and 'qter'). More regrettably, she provides no subject index. For references to pasture gates or bee hives and swarms, one has to search the text. I can readily understand why, but this will reduce the utility of the volume to historians. To a degree, the extensive introduction stands for a subject index, for here Mrs Berry fillets her wills and draws attention to many of their features. But the introduction also reflects the essential weakness of the volume. Mrs Berry is not a historian. The introduction sticks very closely to the evidence of the wills themselves, supplemented by a small number of printed sources. It is determinedly not quantitative. It makes no comment on the preambles to the wills despite the enormous literature on the subject. It is of some interest that in the first will (of 1572) in which the testator claims to be a member of the elect, the offending phrase has been struck out. When? By whom? A distinctive form of preamble was being used in Grinton in the 1580s (cf nos. 118, 123, 126, 129, 130, 132): what does this tell us? Elsewhere Mrs Berry falls into error by saying that her testators were mostly copyholders: they were not. They held by tenant right. It is to be hoped that Mrs Berry's stamina extends to offering us a second volume, perhaps running through to 1640: a large undertaking, but one which would reveal social change within the dale. A companion volume of lowland wills and inventories from the archdeaconry archives would also be a desirable companion. We cannot have too many of these volumes, and for preparing this one, Mrs Berry deserves our gratitude and encouragement to undertake another.

R. W. HOYLE

ANDREW MCRAE, *God speed the plough. The representation of agrarian England, 1500–1660* (CUP, 1996). xv + 335 pp. 13 illus. £40.

Agricultural historians of early modern England are familiar with contemporary authors such as Tusser, Blith, and Worlidge and have used their writings to illustrate husbandry practices. *God speed the plough* uses these authors – and a great many more – to explore the changing attitudes to rural England during the period 1500 to 1660. In addition to the more familiar agricultural

writers, the author takes opinions from sermons, speeches, pamphlets, poetry and drama in an attempt not to document agricultural practice but to reveal changing ideologies of the nature of rural society.

The central argument of the book is that while in the sixteenth century responses to crisis were through appeals to the virtues of rural stability and community, by the seventeenth century the discourse of improvement emphasized a new morality of thrift and property. Thus complaints about the conversion of tillage to pasture saw it as an unnatural threat to the moral ideal of an arable commonfield community: conversion to sheep walk would lead to moral decay through idleness and a decrease in charity. The greatest threat to the conventional order was 'enclosure', a term used in a very broad sense by contemporaries ranging from the imposition of private property rights to engrossing and the decay of tillage. By the end of the sixteenth century the opposing argument was gaining currency: that self-interest and individualism were positive forces in the countryside. Even Thomas Tusser encouraged his readers to 'folow profit earnestlie' in 1573. These ideas were further developed in the succeeding century, by agricultural authors and others, so that by the Restoration there is plenty of evidence that a new moral order was in place.

The implication throughout the book is that this change in attitude was a response to a changed economic order, in crude terms that it was an ideological response to the replacement of a 'moral economy' by agrarian capitalism. However, unlike, for example, the work of E. P. Thompson, the relationship between ideology and the economic structure of farming is not explored. While extracts from contemporary literature are woven together to construct a plausible argument, they are left rather in the air, devoid of an economic and social context. Thus, from the viewpoint of an agrarian historian, there is little that is novel in this book. One question it does raise is the issue of chronology. McRae argues that a new ideological order was in place by the Restoration, whereas Thompson's arguments were applied to the eighteenth century. Almost twenty years ago Keith Tribe compared the agrarian literature of the late seventeenth century with that of the mid-eighteenth, concluding there had been an ideological shift which he saw as evidence of the establishment of an agrarian capitalism. The opportunity is not taken to explore this apparent contradiction since Tribe's work is not mentioned nor included in the bibliography.

Despite these limitations, the range of examples in the book makes for interesting reading, and on occasions offers new insights into contemporaries' understandings of their world.

MARK OVERTON

MARTIN W. DOWLING, *Tenant right and agrarian society in Ulster, 1600–1870* (Irish Academic Press, 1999). xi + 388 pp. 1 map. £42.50 (hbk); £18.95 (pbk).

To most British agricultural historians tenant right in its most basic form is fairly simple to understand. It was the compensation that was paid to the outgoing tenant for the unexpired value of his own investment in the land, recognizing that this year's labours and applications of manure, and other inputs, may not be realized until after the tenancy ends, in which case the new tenant enjoys the rewards. It revolves around the unexhausted improvements which incoming tenants enjoyed as a result of the husbandry of the outgoing tenant. This was a purely economic relationship. In Ulster there developed over the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries what was known as the 'Ulster Custom' of tenant right. Whilst it embodied an important economic relationship, it was also a symbol of the property rights of the tenants, and this was crucial when it was tested and scrutinized in the nineteenth century. In its economic form Dowling likens it to the traditional tenure system practised in England under the system of beneficial leases, but with one important difference. In the English case the incoming tenants paid the landlord a high entry fine, or if already tenants they paid a high renewal fine, and subsequent rents were set below rack, competitive or Ricardian rent levels. In Ulster, it was the outgoing tenant who received the lookalike entry fine, not the landlord. This amounted effectively to the selling of leases at a tenurial level below the landlord, and represented one of the most important means by which capital circulated.

All of this can be modelled in purely economic terms. Dowling recognizes this but also argues that it represents many of the contradictions in the wider Irish landlord system, which eventually exploded in the land wars of the late nineteenth century. Hitherto, historians have concentrated on the end result, the land wars and the resulting tenurial adjustments that took place. To do so, Dowling argues, is to miss the historical setting that grew over nearly three hundred years. It was the tenants, not the landlords, who seemed to control the property rights, and this at a time when commercialization, capitalism by any other name, was becoming the dominant mode of production more generally in many western European economies – 'the existence of custom [was] ... incompatible with agrarian capitalism' (p. 10). This rather different economic mode of production also had its own social mode of organization. Dowling explores this special, and narrowly located tenurial situation (though it, or its lookalike was not entirely confined to Ulster). He reviews both the customary tenure that prevailed in pre-colonial Ulster, and also the colonial plantation system that developed. Initially, at least, this made null and

void all customary and communal property rights, and introduced a leasehold system instead. Yet out of this situation there then arose in the seventeenth century this Ulster Custom of tenant right, carrying with it all the ambiguities of property rights. The origin and initial use of the terms and the words is somewhat obscure, as Dowling shows, but subsequently in the next three centuries both the recognition and the use of the term was subject to different interpretations according to customary and judicial views of the law. But it was not until the land issue in Ireland became an important political football after about 1830 that these customary and judicial interpretations came out into the open, and the imprecision of the custom and the possible invention of tradition by agrarian society were severely tested in public enquiries and land based laws. This is a long and dense book based on an intimate and detailed knowledge of over sixty landed estates, but for the patient reader it will offer rewards that will further confirm that Ireland is someplace else.

MICHAEL TURNER

JOCELYNE FINBERG, *Exploring villages* (Sutton Publishing, 1998; first edition 1958). xii + 252 pp. 8 plates; 60 figs, £14.99

Reissued here with a brief introduction by Trevor Rowley, Jocelyn Finberg's classic text still remains as fresh and vibrant as when it first saw the light of day in 1958. Inevitably some of the remarks about the origins of villages being rooted in the Anglo-Saxon settlement have become outdated as a result of the past forty years of archaeological investigation, yet the general notion of the village being a reflection of the triumphs and catastrophes of national history remains. Fields, farms, hedges, schools, churches and their close inter-relationships are all highlighted in a book which continues to be a key work for those interested in the history of their home community. Readers of this *Review* will be especially fascinated by the descriptive writing (who, these days, would describe the oolitic limestone as lying 'across the breast of the land like a garter ribbon'?) and the richness of detail; of the carving of king posts, the arcane operations of the village ale-tester, and the reason why few village churches face precisely due east. It is deliciously done and this reissue, illustrated extensively with Finberg's own pen and ink drawings is deserving of a wide readership.

At the time of the first edition the problem of rural depopulation was of major public and official concern. Reflecting on my own childhood at the time, the countryside certainly seemed a very quiet place. Bikes could be safely ridden, roadside picnics comfortably eaten, car journeys undertaken for pleasure and unlocked churches visited with ease. Yet to my juvenile eye there always seemed to be plenty of village shops to buy sweets (and later that most perfect of pleasures, the cigarette) on one's tramps and rides around the East Midlands, while there was no shortage of people about. Nor too, was there any shortage of buses, seen by Finberg as being one of the answers to depopulation, in the sense that they could allow the country person ready access to the town without actually having to live in it. Readers of less than thirty who travel on the (rare) rural buses today will reflect with interest on her description of the service in the 1950s; '... the atmosphere of happiness and good humour which pervades its progress, crammed with housewives, schoolchildren and workers ...'.

Recent surveys suggest that the English village, largely divorced from its organic link with the surrounding farmscape, is rapidly becoming a dormitory whence issues each morning a stream of vehicles headed for the cramped car parks of the nearest town. The farm within the village has disappeared; its barns converted, its pond filled in and its rick yard a protected play area surrounded by a 'close' of cunningly-contrived houses pathetically straining for antique effect. Perhaps for the young the immediate post-war village was a rather boring place to be, with the village hall and playing-field offering little beyond the most innocent of pleasures. Yet, as the timely republication of Jocelyne Finberg's book reminds us, it still retained the vestige of a soul, and the ghostly footfall of the medieval craftsman and the yeoman copyholder could just be remotely discerned. Post-modern students of rural community development would do well to read Finberg and reflect upon the notion of reviving the English village as a vibrant economic unit based upon localism, craftsmanship, and a view of the land which perceives virtue in how many members of the community a farm can support rather than its net productivity per hectare.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

SIMON REES, *The Charlton Hunt: a history* (Phillimore, 1998). xvii + 288 pp. Illus. £35.

If 'hunting with dogs', as the ill-bred description goes, is to be banned, it is perhaps fitting that what claims to be the oldest regular fox hunt in the world should attract another history to add to the older and more aristocratic accounts. Simon Rees is a retired consultant from Barts and the Royal Brompton Hospital with a weekend cottage in West Sussex, and what he lacks in the insider knowledge and aristocratic connections of previous chroniclers like the Earl of March and Earl Bathurst he more than makes up with his boundless enthusiasm for pursuing the lives of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Charlton notables as well as the foxes they were

after. Among the hounds, horses, and foxes which throng this book, there are most rewarding sketches of the strenuous activities of the cream of the nobility on and off the hunting field, of their pranks and their mistresses, so that if one judiciously skips the naming of couples of hounds, this book may be used as a quick reference to the coupling of various lords and ladies. The selection of stories is exceedingly rich. There is the romantic, as when the heir to the Earl of Tankerville pursued a butcher's daughter from a ball in Newcastle across to Rotterdam and back again, concealed in a barrel on her ship, marrying her at Jarrow on landing. There is the brutally practical, as when the future first Earl of Tankerville justified his seduction of his wife's younger sister remarking, 'I married the elder sister expecting to find a maiden's head; but not finding it, I resolved to find one in the family if any be left.' Or there is the uncannily modern, as when the bigamous Duchess of Kingston, already married to the Earl of Bristol, firmly went about topless in society, declaiming her abhorrence of mock modesty.

All these and many more besides had some connection with the Charlton through their hunting menfolk, and the juicy bits from their life stories enliven the accounts of the breeding of hounds, the memorable great runs, the spectacular accidents in the field, and the most gory kills which are the meat of normal hunt histories. For most readers the couple of pages in Raymond Carr's *English fox hunting* (1976) devoted to the Charlton probably contain all they wish to know about the hunt, but the information in them is not entirely accurate. For those with an interest in the ways in which hunts were organized, managed, and financed, Rees gives a clear, detailed, account of how the casually run affair of the early eighteenth century led to the disastrous killing of 14 sheep by the pack which was allowed to escape, causing the aristocratic hunters to take control of the pack into the hands of an exclusive club in 1738, a fashionable oligarchy which ran the hunt, built a banqueting hall, the Fox Hall, for feasting after the chase, and whose members acquired or built hunting lodges for themselves in Charlton village. For a short while, until about 1750, this club hunt was the height of fashion and membership was eagerly sought and carefully controlled. Then interest began to flag, young aristocrats found other countries and other prey to hunt, and the Charlton was transformed into the Goodwood Hunt, managed and financed by the Duke of Richmond, until that in turn petered out early in the nineteenth century. The hunting cottages in Charlton village disappeared, but the Fox Hall survived, rather dilapidated, to be taken over and restored by the Landmark Trust in 1979, used, apart from its normal life as a holiday cottage, for the annual dinner of the Charlton Hunt which has been re-formed as a dining club. Hence this book, by one of its keenest members.

F. M. L. THOMPSON

JOHN GASCOIGNE, *Science in the service of empire. Joseph Banks, the British state and the uses of science in the age of revolution* (CUP, 1998). vii + 247 pp. 27 illus. £40.

It was Francis Bacon who coined the term 'Knowledge itself is power'. To judge from this detailed examination of the man and his influence, it was Joseph Banks who most evidently saw – and made work – the connections between science, political power and the interests of the early modern British state. The two men and their worlds were connected. Gascoigne sees Bacon's emphasis upon the utility of science and, more particularly, the work of the early Royal Society, as providing 'the beginnings of [that] British "science policy"' (p. 16) which Banks was so profoundly to shape, even if the two men differed in their belief in the essentially humanitarian ends to natural philosophy (Bacon), and in the role of science as a means to extend national interests (Banks).

Gascoigne here presents Banks as a sort of ultimately well-connected courtier and man of political influence. What we are given is not alone a portrait of one man's authority in promoting and sanctioning science in the British interest. It is, additionally, an institutional history of the nature and of the making of the British state and of those socio-scientific bodies – such as the Privy Council Committee for Trade, the Board of Agriculture, the Admiralty, the East India Company, the African Association, the Royal Society and many more – which acted to co-ordinate British interest in science and to engender and sustain both the idea of Empire and the practices needed to extend Britain's imperial reach. The strength of this clearly-written and thoughtfully-illustrated book rests in the ways in which Gascoigne brings together the personal and the political: in his description of Banks as a scientific lobbyist and in his portrayal of the political make-up of late-eighteenth century London as a metropolitan centre that was both small enough for men of science and influence to know one another, dine together and serve on institutions together, yet one rapidly growing as a centre of imperial calculation in ways which increasingly demanded specialist understanding and particular means of intervention. Gascoigne stresses the importance of associational politics and of the ethos of public service in the interests of Britain and sees important connections between the philosophy of improving one's own estate – Banks was, of course, an influential landowner having inherited the Revesby estates in Lincolnshire in 1761 – and managing Britain's overseas interests so as to reap the best return. Science served empire, then. But science was also a matter of

gentlemanly practice and of individual scholarly concerns that transcended national and even international politics, as Gascoigne shows in discussing Banks's endeavours to keep open the lines of scientific communication even in times of war. In those terms, it was important to keep science away from politicians. At the same time, the slow shift from gentlemanly virtuoso to professional 'scientist' that Gascoigne charts for Banks and other natural philosophers was mirrored in the halting creation of a 'professional' civil service geared to serve the nation and the expanding empire but not to know the science.

To some degree, however, the emphasis here upon the personal and the political obscures the very things to which Banks and others were directing their attention: science and empire. 'Science' is treated here rather holistically (as, to an extent, it was by contemporaries), yet it is clear, too, that differences were recognised between, say, taxonomic botany, the commercial value of mineral deposits and the benefits of agricultural chemistry. It is unclear, for example, how far knowledge of science as a process as well as of particular branches of learning within and of Britain by the late eighteenth century was, as it were, 'transported' to the colonies to be used in managing estates and mines there. And how far should we think of the science-empire nexus working the other way?: that science in Britain drew first its intellectual and second its political authority from an increased understanding of specimens and observations from far distant outposts of empire? What, more exactly and in those different places that made up the British empire, did the connections between empiricism and imperialism demand?: trust in natives' knowledge or dismissal of it?; collection at the 'margins' but corroboration only in the 'metropolitan core'?; reliance upon exported classificatory schema to make sense of the encountered natural diversity or a preparedness to think anew?

To have treated of such concerns would have made for a much bigger book, of course, and Gascoigne has in his other writings engaged with just such questions. But readers other than this one, whilst being alike greatly informed by the splendid treatment of Banks and of the political and institutional bases to science in the service of the British state, may also want to know more than we are told here about the complexities of that empire and of that science Banks and others so dutifully served.

CHARLES W. J. WITHERS

CHRISTINE HALLAS, *Rural responses to industrialization. The North Yorkshire Pennines, 1790–1914* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999). x + 348 pp. 16 figs; 6 maps. £32.

The publication of an economic history of a rural locality is a relatively rare event and much to be welcomed. In this instance, Christine Hallas analyzes changes in the Pennine dales of Wensleydale and Swaledale between 1790 and 1914. Some experiences were shared with other British upland areas, while others were specific to the local physical environment or arose from proximity to the burgeoning industrial centres of northern England.

Dr Hallas' premise is that a full understanding of historical change requires meticulous analysis of every facet of the economy. Following an overview of recent work and attendant hypotheses relating to countryside changes in Britain, and a brief description of the environment of the two dales in the nineteenth century, the core of the book comprises chapters on landholding and farmholding, livestock, animal produce, extractive industries, textile industries, transport and population movements. Each chapter is a self-contained essay (several are modifications of published articles), with only occasional cross-references to other parts of the book. Every conceivable source has been exploited for the numerous tables and graphs, with the aim of providing a precise factual basis for describing the changes through time in terms of output or monetary values. Sometimes the determination to find appropriate statistics displays an ingenuity that stretches credulity. In the final chapter, the various strands are brought together and an attempt is made to evaluate how changes in the contribution of each element modified the total economy.

Three sub-regions are recognised. Swaledale depended on lead mining for its prosperity during the first half of the period covered, but the industry's subsequent decline led to much out-migration and a new emphasis on store cattle production. Upper Wensleydale was relatively inaccessible before the railway arrived in 1878 and its main sources of income were cheese, butter, wool spinning and knitting. Later, textile activity declined and liquid milk became the major source of income. Lower Wensleydale, always the most accessible of the three sub-regions, had a more varied economy throughout the century.

Dr Hallas set herself the difficult task of providing a balanced account of the evolution of a local economy where several industries interacted, each playing a significant role at different times and in different sub-regions. The resultant book will be valued for its orderly approach and comprehensiveness, though certain of the interpretations may well be disputed. Those with an interest in the locality are particularly well-served and no doubt the volume will be used for years to come as a stimulus to further study, both of the economy itself and in cognate fields such as demographic history. For instance, the industrial trends described could underpin a detailed analysis of outmigrants in terms of their age, sex, family status and former occupation. Those more interested in

wider aspects of the changing rural economy of Britain might profitably start with the concluding chapter before dipping into relevant earlier sections. The very full bibliography will be appreciated by all.

JUNE A. SHEPPARD

MARGARET ROAKE (ed.), 'Religious worship in Kent: the census of 1851' (*Kent Records*, 27, 1999). liii + 460 pp. 9 plates; 7 maps. £34.50 incl. p & p, from Kent Archaeological Society, Ashton Lodge, Church Road, Lyminge, Folkestone CT18 8JA.

This book on Kent joins an ever-growing collection of volumes, normally but not exclusively concerned with individual counties, featuring transcriptions from the original returns of the 1851 census of religious worship.

On Sunday 30 March 1851, for the first and, as it turned out, last time, questions were asked about the religious make-up of Great Britain as part of the decennial census. The population census itself took place the following day but, on this Sunday in March, Mothering Sunday, at every place of worship a person in a position of responsibility was asked to complete a census form. The actual returns vary slightly between three denominational groups. The Church of England returns requested financial details relating to the living for example, whereas nonconformist returns did not ask for this information. The Society of Friends, or Quakers, were not asked to supply information on seating but simply the dimensions of their meeting houses. At the core of the religious census were two sets of information – statistics relating to seating and statistics relating to attendances. Seating information was divided into free, appropriated (or 'other') and standing room in each place of worship (with the exception of the Quakers as mentioned above). Attendance data were more complex. Attendances were to be divided between morning, afternoon and evening attendances. Information on numbers of Sunday scholars (Sunday School attendees) could also be recorded, as could data relating to average attendances over a specified period over the previous few months.

The census of religious worship has its problems as a source for the scholar. Because it is unique there was no opportunity to learn from previous mistakes, as happened with the population censuses which were honed from one census to the next. Further, its aims were slightly muddled, as were its results. Hence, we cannot assess the number of actual attenders at worship, merely attendances. In addition, there was no compulsion to complete the returns so missing returns, returns that were in fact never completed, can be a problem. None the less, the religious census is a valuable and powerful resource that deserves more attention.

The bulk of this book is devoted to detailed transcriptions of the returns made by each vicar, priest, minister or other responsible person extracted from the forms provided by the enumerators. The transcriptions, which stretch to over 390 pages, have been standardized to some extent and supplemented with additional useful information for each parish in which a place of worship was located, such as parish area, housing data and population figures from 1801 to 1851 for every census year. All these data have been extracted from a table contained in the 1851 published population census. In addition, and again usefully, religion statistics at registration district level for Kent have been reproduced from the published Registrar General's Report. Also, the results of the 1902–3 *Daily News* survey of religious attendance in London are reproduced for those areas which fell into Kent. Following a pattern established for most other county transcriptions of the religious census, there is a fairly short scholarly essay which serves as an introduction to the Religious Census and its manifestation in Kent. Accompanying the essay are seven maps.

Overall, many hours of work must have been spent transcribing the returns and adding supplementary information. Kent is not small; the registration county encompassed 444 parishes and almost 1,000 returns. More examination of this painstakingly collected resource would have been welcome, particularly more rigorous quantitative analysis. The religious census, although it includes comments from those completing the proformas, is essentially a statistical source. Perhaps, however, a volume such as this is not the place to carry out such an analysis. Finally, it would be valuable to release the transcribed returns in a machine-readable form, perhaps on a disk or CD-ROM. The Economic and Social Research Council's Data Archive at the University of Essex would, I am sure, welcome this data-set for preservation and dissemination.

PAUL S. ELL

Scottish Farm Buildings Survey, I, *East Central Scotland* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1998). 24 pp. Illus; II, *Orkney* (RCAHMS, 1998). 27 pp. Illus. No price given.

These two slim A4 fascicules are the first published results of the Scottish Royal Commission's national farm buildings survey. The preface outlines how a rapid survey of over 3000 steadings (about ten per cent of existing farms) was a preliminary to the more detailed examination of fifteen small areas, chosen to represent the range of agricultural regions in Scotland. The surveys of farmsteads in east central Scotland and Orkney are presented in the publications under review, and fascicules will follow, we are promised, for the remaining regions.

The preface makes clear the objective behind publication: the regional fascicules are intended as a guide to the archive gathered during the surveys and held by the National Monuments Record of Scotland. The ultimate goal is to use the 'representative national record of Scottish farm buildings' collected in the fifteen regional studies to provide an overview of national development.

The volumes contain useful and well researched introductions to the areas and very brief summaries of the farm buildings. Some building types, in particular the grain-drying kilns of Orkney, and the common use in both areas of mechanical power for processing, are of great interest. For the agricultural historian, however, these volumes are not the means to investigate these and other aspects of agricultural buildings in any detail, for descriptions are minimalist. Some photographs and a number of Graham Douglas's wonderful survey drawings are included, but like the text these merely whet the appetite. The fascicules do enough to demonstrate that important evidence for agricultural, technological and architectural change has been collected, available to the historian in the form of the raw survey data listed in these publications, but the material deserves full exposition in the promised national synthesis. The delivery of this overview alone will allow a judgement about the value of the survey to different facets of Scotland's history.

COLUM GILES

BOB SMYTH, *Forest people and places* (Sutton Publishing, 1998). x + 118 pp. Illus. £9.99

The Forest of Dean has been well-served by its historians and memorialists. Cyril Hart's scholarly studies, along with the works of Ralph Anstis and others, are complemented by the fictional and autobiographical writings of Humphrey Phelps and Winifred Foley to produce a very substantial body of literature for so small a corner of England. But then, the Forest of Dean is a very special place, its complex geology, varied scenery and often unusual history lending it a peculiarity enjoyed by denizens and visitors alike. This volume, however, is not a history, but little more than a series of rather slight pen-portraits of contemporary 'characters' or, according to the blurb, 'outstanding characters'. I'm not entirely certain what defines a 'character', outstanding or otherwise, but there is little about this lot to cause the pulse to race or the nerves to jangle.

Maiden ladies making pottery, discontented publicans, vicars with a mission, fairground organ enthusiasts, retired professors dabbling with local history, and goodness knows how many Foresters, Deputy Surveyors, Verderers, Gavellers, and Rangers all flit briefly across the pages. And how very respectable they seem! Where are the descendants of the poachers, deer-stealers, enclosure rioters and others representing the profound and honourable traditions of subversion associated with Dean? Does a subversive tradition disappear within two or three generations, or are the true unsung subversives joyfully reading this book and filling the gaps between Bob Smyth's rather bloodless lines?

In this celebration of local people there is little of interest for agricultural or economic historians. Several of the larger houses, including the Speech House itself, are the subjects of thumbnail histories, but potentially interesting aspects of contemporary forest life such as the communing of five thousand sheep within its present bounds are dismissed within a couple of lines. Here surely was an opportunity to link together past and present management practices and to consider the social tensions inevitable in the commoning tradition. Colleagues who have eschewed late night spiritous liquors in favour of more anodyne concoctions will be interested to learn that the 'Malt Shovel' at Ruardean was where the brothers William and James Horlick (1844–1921) experimented with the beverage which bears their name. That they failed to raise capital locally to develop the product and had to go to the U.S.A. for the purpose probably rebounds to the credit of the men of Dean!

R. J. MOORE-COLYER

KEN HOWARTH, *Oral history: a handbook* (Sutton Publishing, 1998). ix + 214 pp. Illus. £25

Ken Howarth was a pioneer of organized oral history and he remains one of the most active practitioners in Britain. His achievement in building up the North West Sound Archive, and then keeping it functioning as a public service through the 1990s must command enormous respect. This book thus forms a communication from the sharp end, and no-one is better qualified to give advice on consultancy and on privately funded projects. There is also a good deal of material on the related subject of use in museums. It probably completes the transformation of the literature on British oral history as a methodology which has occurred since the mid-eighties. Paul Thompson's seminal work was then the only one generally available and accessible, but we now have several recent titles from a variety of perspectives. It is hard to see the need for any more for some time, and a handbook of practice would have been the perfect last stone in the arch.

There is a great deal of interest in here along those lines, with a reproduction of specimen copyright clearance forms and the Oral History Society's ethical guidelines; guidance on equipment to use, especially for those thinking of trying video; useful addresses and

explicit lists of topics and interview questions; and so on. The bibliography is very short, however, and there are few references in the text to published work that has arisen from oral investigations. Howarth also does not seem to have decided if he was writing a true handbook or a more general study, and some determined editing would have vastly improved the book's usefulness to the potential oral historian. The structure is obscure, with thematic chapters that are heavily and hierarchically divided up under clear subject headings, but the arrangement is idiosyncratic, and topics can only be reliably located through the comprehensive index. The sections are rarely complete in themselves as well. Thus, a subsection on artificial light for video recording, headed 'Lighting the Scene', is located logically in the chapter 'Oral History on Video', but within the section 'Preparing the Questions', and it is only six lines long. Another snippet lies lower down the same page under 'Recording the Interview', but most of the (very sensible) practical advice, adding up to a full page, is actually to be found two pages earlier as part of 'Equipment', with no distinguishing sub-heading. Several important sections on the nature and purpose of oral history lie buried in illogical locations with no headings to direct the reader, and here the index is of no help.

There is a great deal about the North West Sound Archive, but only as fragments, and it seems a lost opportunity that the lessons learned from the creation and operation of this institution have not been chronicled in a more organized manner for others to learn from. It is also disappointing that though it is lavishly and well illustrated with photographs, there are hardly any sections of oral testimony, and the many brief descriptions of projects rarely give a real sense of what was achieved. A lively section on role-playing within schools stands out precisely because it is anchored by a reasonably lengthy quote, and has a detailed description of the use made of that quote by teachers and pupils. Finally, while some sections are simply lists of key words associated with a topic, others are argued out in conventional prose though apparently no different in purpose.

Despite these weaknesses, it stretches the definitions of the discipline as most academics envisage it and forces some hard thinking about where to draw the boundary that divides oral history from general oral investigation, or if a boundary should exist at all. Oral history is enthusiastically championed as a tool for industrial training and in the management of firms, as well as recommended for more usual educational and community initiatives. Howarth encourages the general public to get involved, but he also sees interviewing as an increasingly professional activity with its own ethos, and closes with an appeal for a regulatory organization. All this is very useful now that the heady days of national government funding for projects via unemployment relief are just a memory, and local government funding via libraries and museums is dwindling fast. The mass of material collected over the past four decades still lies largely untapped, and is all too often in danger of being lost or destroyed. Oral history has not managed to embed itself in the practice of either academic or non-academic history as it once seemed likely to, but this book contributes to maintaining an awareness of its potential.

STEPHEN CAUNCE

JIM WILKIE, *An illustrated history of tractors* (Ian Allan Publishing, 1999). 128 pp. Illus. £18.99.

Books about tractors come along at fairly frequent intervals. Ever since Philip Wright's *Old farm tractors* in 1962, there has been a steady stream from specialists in this field such as the late Charles Cawood, Michael Williams and Nick Baldwin. This is therefore the latest in a long line so it is not easy to be original, even in the title (Robert Moorhouse's *The illustrated history of tractors* appeared in 1996). There is a solid market amongst enthusiasts and collectors for this kind of material, not least as birthday and Christmas presents, so as the last one fades away another one soon comes along to take its place.

Jim Wilkie's contribution is a decent addition to the list. As the title suggests, it is the illustrations that really count and here there are plenty of them, very sharply reproduced, and with detailed, informative captions. One suspects most readers would treat the book essentially as a series of annotated photographs and in that sense it works well. The actual text follows a familiar path, tracing the story of tractor development from the Ivel onwards, and concentrating primarily upon the machines themselves, their specifications and manufacturers. Thus the spotlight shines solely on this one piece in the jigsaw. The wider agricultural context, in which tractors were both an indicator as well as an instigator of change, is mostly left undisturbed, but this is common to the genre which is probably not, in any case, the right form in which to tackle it.

ROY BRIGDEN

Elsewhere and General

EVA CRANE, *The world history of beekeeping and honey hunting* (Duckworth, 1999). xxii + 682 pp. Tables; Illus. £85.

Neither bees nor honey have attracted much attention from agricultural historians (there have been no articles on bees in the *Review*). Yet until the early nineteenth century honey was a cheaper source of sweetness than sugar made from sugar-cane, whilst the honey bee was

also a provider of beeswax, and alcoholic drinks, of which mead was the best known.

This is a quite remarkable book with over 600 pages of text and a bibliography of 42 pages. It is lavishly illustrated with photographs, sketches and maps, and is a pleasure to read and handle. The internet cannot compete with books as well produced as this! It is also remarkably comprehensive; it is truly a world history, dealing with bees and their products in all the world's regions, from the earliest evidence – cave art – to the present. The width of interest is formidable ranging from the ownership of bees nests in the Americas and Oceania (pp. 114–115) to the bee in religion (pp. 601–603), although the bulk of the book deals with the history of the techniques of bee-keeping.

There have been honey bees for 50 million years, and the collecting of honey from nests in the wild was practised by early man, and continues to the present day. Honey-hunting was practised in every continent, each with its own traditional methods, perhaps the most unusual being in parts of Africa where hunters were assisted by a bird, the Honeyguide. But honey collecting declined with the adoption of the hive. These were in use in Egypt at least as early as 2400BC and were used by both the ancient Greeks and the Romans. Their hives were horizontal cylinders, but in the deciduous forests of northern Europe upright logs were preferred. In the west timber was scarcer and hives were woven from wicker. Eventually groups of hives – apiaries – became the norm, sometimes in walls, on rock faces and in specially built houses.

There seem to be few people who do not like sweetness, but honey came with a penalty: bees sting, so protective clothing has had to be used. In Europe the head was covered with a hood from the fifteenth century and gloves were used at an even earlier date. In medieval Europe criminals were sometimes executed by being stung to death, and occasionally bees were used as a military weapon. The crucial advances in protection came in the mid-nineteenth century, with the use of brimmed hat and veil.

As Europeans spread around the world in the sixteenth century they took with them hives of European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) which had a far higher honey output than *A. cerana* in Asia or the stingless *Meliponinae* of the tropics of Africa, Australia and the Americas. Improvements in beekeeping were very slow, although interest in rational beekeeping increased from the 1660s. But the most significant improvement was the introduction of the movable frame hive, invented in the United States in 1851 by the Rev. L. l. Langstroth. In earlier hives it was difficult to remove honey without breaking the combs of beeswax in which the bees secreted it. Langstroth overcame this and his invention spread rapidly to Europe and elsewhere. Improvement in the bees themselves was much slower to occur, not least because so little was known about them. Before 1586 it was not realized that the ruler of the nest was female, and only in the 1770s was it shown that the queen mated. Attempts at artificial insemination were made in the 1790s, but the techniqc only became practicable early in the twentieth century. Thereafter, queens' produce could be purchased to restock or commence a hive.

Honey is the best known of the products of the bee, and is still widely consumed in Europe, although the leading exporter is China. Honey has of course lost its importance as a sweetener to sugar, which is now far cheaper. In England honey was one-twentieth the price of sugar in the fifteenth century, half the price in 1700; but by 1850 a pound of sugar was a quarter of the price of honey, and the latter is now seven times the price of sugar. Beeswax has also lost much of its market for making candles and as a polish, whilst mead, once consumed more than beer or wine in parts of Europe, is now a rarity. In South America the alcoholic drinks made from honey have been displaced by those made from the juice of sugar cane. But bee-keeping of course has not disappeared and remains not only as a commercial enterprise, but the passion of numerous amateurs, who will gain knowledge and pleasure from this splendid book.

DAVID GRIGG

L. T. EVANS, *Feeding the ten billion. Plants and population growth* (CUP, 1998). xiv + 247 pp. 32 figs. £35 (hbk); £11.95 (pbk).

Lloyd Evans follows up his earlier wide-ranging and comprehensive survey of crop evolution (*Crop evolution, adaptation and yield*, CUP 1993; reviewed in Volume 46 of this journal, 1998) with an equally magisterial but more explicitly historical account of human:plant relationships. The book is structured around successive billion additions to the human population, which clocked six billion in the autumn of 1999. Each billion addition after the attainment of the first billion (*c.* 1825) is given its own chapter, which means that the recent developments in plant science are given more space than the earlier. Four chapters cover the period from the dawn of agriculture to the early nineteenth century. The first chapter, 'Timebomb or Treadmill?', contrasts Malthusian pessimism, founded on the assumption that population growth is a dependent variable, with the optimism that stems from Boserup's vision of population growth as an independent variable, driving productivity upwards.

This is a fine book, but not totally unproblematic. Evans shares the assumption, prevalent at the time the book was being drafted, that 'a world population of at

least 10 billion is almost inevitable by the latter half of the twenty-first century' (p. 2) In fact, the consensus now is that a stable world population may well be reached at no more than 9 billion (i.e. half as big again as at present) in 100 to 150 years time. Second, one wonders about the book's target audience. Those teaching introductory courses in agricultural science degree schemes may find the book suits their needs provided they are prepared to take a more population-focused approach than at present. For introductory courses in geography degree schemes, such as I teach, the population focus poses no problems, but the amount of rather heavy genetics and plant science does. For my course, the book therefore currently has the status of 'strongly recommended but with reservations'. It would be a pity if the book were to fall between specialist stools, for it is well written, thoroughly researched, and highly informative, and deserves to succeed.

JOHN R. WALTON

ANNAMARIA POZAN, *Zosagna. Paesaggio agrario, proprietà e conduzione di un territorio tra Piave e Sile nella prima metà del secolo XVI* (Treviso: Edizioni Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche / Canova, 1997). 203 pp. 1 map. Lit. 28,000; GIANPIER NICOLETTI, *Le Campagne. Un'area rurale tra Sile e Montello nei secoli XV e XVI* (1999). 2 vols, xxxi + 566 pp. 140 tables; 1 map. Lit. 65,000; MARIA GRAZIA BISCARO, *Mestre. Paesaggio agrario, proprietà e conduzione di una podesteria nella prima metà del secolo XVI* (1999). xix + 223 pp. 45 tables; 1 map. Lit. 28,000.

For the last ten years, the Benetton Foundation has sponsored the study of the rural history of part of the Venetian hinterland. This is a vast research project founded on the 1542 tax inquiry (*estimo*) of the Treviso district, under the supervision of Prof. Gaetano Cozzi and Dr Danilo Gasparini. Since the series was first reviewed in Volume 44 of this journal (1996), the three volumes (numbers 5 to 7) reviewed here have appeared.

Around 1380, the Venetian nobility and wealthy merchants began to acquire lands in the countryside around Treviso and to establish political dominion at the expense of the local nobility and communes. The movement towards land ownership became more deliberate in the first half of the sixteenth century, both as an investment and as a defensive response to rising food prices. This process altered the features of the Treviso region and started a wave of rural rebuilding similar to that identified in England by W. G. Hoskins (see especially Nicoletti, pp. 320 ff.). Brick peasant dwellings were built, as well as water and fustian mills along the newly designed irrigation canal, the Brentella. In the Campagne the country residences of the better-off from Treviso and Venice dotted the countryside, and ten per cent of the total area was devoted to walled gardens and orchards. Yet the main feature of the rural landscape were the enclosed fields and meadows studded with regimented rows of trees draped with vines (the so-called *piantata* of the northern Italian agrarian system) (Nicoletti, I, p. 37 ff). Both private and communal woods supplied oak and other timber to the arsenal at Venice. Only trivial amounts of land were left uncultivated.

This man-made landscape, the result of changes since the 1450s, maximised returns to both peasant and aristocratic farming. Small farms (*poderi*) were the dominant features of this agrarian system throughout the whole area. Only small variations appeared around Mestre and Zosagna in response to local circumstances, whilst in the territory between Venice and Mestre enclosures, gardens and commercial orchards were the key feature of the landscape. In the upper and lower Zosagne vast areas remained under bogs, fens and natural pastures where cattle brought from Hungary to supply Venetian consumers via the Rialto meat market were grazed.

These researchers support the findings of earlier volumes in the series that many farmers were either sharecroppers or tenants who paid rents mainly in kind (41 per cent in Mestre according to Biscaro), or in money and kind. Owner-occupiers were very few in these areas (occupying about 15 per cent of the total area in the Campagne according to Nicoletti). The size of the average farm, rented or owned, was between one and five hectares. In the Campagne, probably the best farmed area of the Treviso district, farms around one hectare outnumbered the rest. By 1542 most of the countryside had changed hands, with city dwellers, local burgers and noblemen owning about 60 per cent of the farmland (Nicoletti, I, p. 63 ff., Pozzan, pp. 113–14). Industrial buildings, including paper and fustian mills, were sought by non-local investors seeking to take advantage of Venice's markets. As in many other Italian and European regions, locals were left with a minimum of the regional resource.

All three volumes offer a vast amount of information, drawn from the 1542 tax inquiry and similar records, which adds to that presented in earlier contributions in the series. There are plenty of facts about tools, crops, cattle, rural buildings, and so on. Nicoletti's study is particularly valuable, since it offers deep insights into important details, such as the management of a large estate (Santa Maria dei Battuti Hospital in Treviso, I, pp. 111 ff.), animal husbandry (pp. 127 ff.), and a peasant family's budget for 1462 (pp. 224 ff.). He also dedicates a whole chapter to the business activities of the Fontana brothers (pp. 239 ff.), who emigrated from Bergamo and were active in Venice in the early decades of the sixteenth

century, but later moved to Treviso where they built a fortune as ironmongers, land and property owners, grain merchants and moneylenders.

MAURO AMBROSOLI

L. M. CULLEN, *The brandy trade under the ancien régime: regional specialisation in the Charente* (CUP, 1998). xvii + 284 pp. 3 maps; 1 fig. £45.

Louis Cullen's study of the brandy trade has been a twenty-year labour of love, beginning, like so many research projects, from a modest detour from his original path, the lifetime study of the Irish mercantile community in France. The outcome is a demanding book, and one employing an extraordinary range of archival sources to plot the rise of brandy production and trade, roughly from the later seventeenth century, shifting mercantile organization and ultimate markets, and the development of specialized regions of production, and distinctive products. It also makes a significant assault upon the conventional history of brandy and its viticultural base, and upon the classic Labrousse historiography linking wine and the background to the Revolution.

Several striking themes recur in this study, the first of which is the overwhelming dominance of market forces, and of the capacity of producers in provincial France, to switch output in the face of demand mediated through merchant houses. Modest farmers, often disparaged in British historiography, demonstrated a readiness to switch towards the premium good, wine for distillation into cognac, first under the all-powerful mercantile organization of La Rochelle, and, from the 1720s, increasingly through larger and multi-centred markets, including Tonnay-Charente, Jarnac, and for the lesser goods Bordeaux, with Bayonne the outlet for Armagnac. Brandy was not, in Cullen's analysis, the marketable product for those trapped in zones of poor viticulture, as in the conventional historiography: rather they switched, at least in the Cognac, from the production of high quality sweet white wine for extra-regional sale, to growing the folle blanche, the grape that yielded a thin acidic wine ideal for distilling. Agrarian historians may find apparent technical inversion a surprising outcome of commercialization.

The second grand theme is that of 'otherness', in the Huguenot and foreign families that came to dominate the early trades of La Rochelle, and who, like so many in the Bordeaux wine trade, came to dominate the mature export trades of the middle and later eighteenth century. From the early Augiers through the Delamains to Martell and Hennessy, many of the principal négotiants were local protestants, or other outsiders, the last two respectively, Guernseyman and Irishman. Such was the strength of this that the local self-improving clan, the Otards in the later eighteenth century, claimed Scottish ancestry through a spurious genealogy, and proved their case by spelling the name, on occasion, 'O'Tard'. Cullen's close analysis of familial and mercantile linkages provides a detailed picture of the trading system and its family links.

The reasons, of course lay in the importance of brandy as a premium export good, heavily demanded by Angleterre, the recorded destination for much of these exports. French trade records cover the whole of the British Isles. Ireland thus took a major role in the brandy trade as both merchant and consumer, until, after the 1760s, England predominated. For much of the period of expansion, after 1720, it was London-based demand that ruled, not least because London importers seem to have been absolutely reliable issuing houses for bills, making the London bill the premium instrument in Paris as well as the Cognac. Though not closely focused upon the agrarian history of this region, Cullen's book thus offers much to interest the student of marketing and trade, and their implicit backward linkages to the fields.

Cullen also addresses the classic Labrousse model of the wine trades, seeing the 1760s not as a plateau from which prices cascaded with catastrophic impact in the 1780s, but rather as a peak, unrepresentative of the second half of the century, in which a more realistic assessment would stress the development of the claret trade, like that of brandy, by a mercantile community characterized by 'otherness'. Both products boomed in the 1780s, both met standards of quality, strength, and colour demanded by distant, largely British, markets, and both thus illustrated the niches available in eighteenth-century Europe for well-made premium alcoholic beverages.

Cullen's book covers the details of manufacture, and describes with care the phasing of development and the ebb and flow of trade fortunes. He also explores the demanding complexities of bubble-tests and hydrometers, the concomitants of interregional and international trade, especially as state revenues attached increasingly to the strength of produce after mid-century, the structure of the industry, and its presence in French domestic overland and river Seine trade. If Prof. Cullen's preface appears apologetic about the time taken for this study to reach fruition, its significance as a French study with major international comparative dimensions, makes that wait worthwhile, and the range of archival sources used to create his analysis, makes the delay readily understandable. This book may make little of viticulture, but it is of fundamental interest to the agrarian historian interested in product development and market responses in early modern Europe.

J. A. CHARTRES

PETER MCPHEE, *Revolution and environment in southern France. Peasants, lords, and murder in the Corbières, 1780–1830* (Clarendon Press, 1999). x + 272 pp. 7 tables; 1 fig; 4 maps. £45.

As the title suggests, this book rolls two histories into one. On the one hand, it is a history of the Corbières subregion, the hilly hinterland of the Mediterranean plain to the west of Narbonne, spanning the years of the French Revolution. On other, it is a history of shifting land-use and environmental change which carries a broader message for historians of rural societies in the modern period. There is no real tension between the two stories because the environmental theme emerges directly from the spatial analysis. Such is the quality of the case-study evidence, indeed, that the author is even able to illustrate his arguments at the level of individuals, individual families and individual communities. This is where the 'murder' episode referred to in the title fits in. It is not gratuitous, and serves rather as an emblem of the sort of tensions that can be unleashed when root-and-branch political change overlaps with – and complicates – the process of economic restructuring.

The opening chapters of the book are conventional inasmuch as they set the scene, introduce most of the actors who will have a role to play later on, and narrate the history of the Revolution in this little known and little studied part of rural France. They will be of interest chiefly to specialist historians of the French Revolution, although these pages also prepare the way for the discussion of the larger agrarian issues which lie at the heart of the book. The author depicts the economic crisis afflicting the area during the final decades of the ancien régime, and draws attention to the continuing vigour of seigneurialism in the villages of the Corbières. The crisis stemmed largely, it seems, from the vicissitudes of the woollen textile industry centred on Carcassonne. As markets were lost and production declined, the traditional pastoral use of the stony hillsides or garrigues of the Corbières was thrown into question. Poor peasants started to clear the land in order to grow cereals and vegetables for their own consumption or, increasingly, in order to plant vines and to replace thereby the dwindling income from cottage industry. But this would set cultivators and pastoralists on a collision course. Clearance also initiated a process of environmental degradation, and it raised the awkward question of who actually owned the garrigues. Was it the seigneurs or the village communities?

Chapters five, six and seven will be of most interest to readers. They are solidly researched and in some respects path-breaking. Here the author combines an unrivalled knowledge of the history and ecology of the Corbières with a longer time-frame. As a result he is able to penetrate to the heart of the disputes about land that set so many of the inhabitants of these villages at loggerheads. We find whole communities (the rich as well as poor) participating in the land grab, and then manoeuvring with remarkable skill, and not a little complicity from higher authorities, in order to keep possession of their cleared plots. We find seigneurial and ex-seigneurial families transmitting from one generation to the next their sense of hurt and outrage at the gains achieved at their expense during the years of the Revolution. They, too, manoeuvred and strutted at each turn of the political tide, in one instance with fatal consequences. All of this takes place against a background story of a dislocating rural economy, and mounting official concern at the environmental consequences of unchecked deforestation.

The forces in play were not negligible. According to the Napoleonic prefect, the acreage of cultivated land in the department of the Aude increased by 20 per cent during the Revolutionary decade, essentially as a result of the activities of peasant clearers. In the Corbières the figure must have been higher still, the author calculates; in which case this little known corner of the province of Languedoc provides the historian with a signal opportunity to explore and measure the accelerating effect of political revolution on agrarian change. The first point that the author makes is that the shift in land-use cannot be confined to the Revolutionary decade alone, whatever contemporary observers might have supposed. What was the cleared land used for, he then asks? This is a critical question, for a firm answer would help to shed light on both the innate tendencies of the 'peasant revolution' of 1789, and the subsequent evolution of the region towards vine monoculture. The author believes that the rural revolution in the Corbières provides a clear example of what has become known as the 'voie paysanne' thesis, that is to say small holders exploiting the post-Revolutionary land settlement in order to indulge in petty commodity production.

The demonstration, while persuasive in some respects, is not totally convincing. For, on the author's own evidence, the Corbières as a whole did not convert to vine production. Map Four, drawn on the basis of cadastral land-use data for the early nineteenth century, shows that the substantial switch occurred only in villages situated along the eastern and southern perimeter of the Corbières; in villages, that is, with good road access to urban markets. What were the small peasants who had seized and cleared land elsewhere in the Corbières doing with their plots? The author does not really address this question, with the result that the case for 'a significant shift in the economic strategies of many of the communities of the Corbières' (p. 176) is left dangling rather unsatisfactorily. Presumably such peasants were

practising neo-subsistence forms of husbandry which would scarcely place them in the van of agricultural change in the nineteenth century. But if the defence of peasant entrepreneurship on the morrow of the Revolution is somewhat lopsided, there can be no doubt that the author greatly enhances our understanding of the pressures impacting on the regional infrastructure during this period. He shows that the exodus from the pastoral economy and dependence on textiles – in the eastern Corbières at least – was taking place far earlier than is commonly supposed. The struggles of these villagers against sundry landlords and flockowners therefore helped to prepare the way for the viticultural revolution that would transform the landscape of lowland Languedoc.

P. M. JONES

SAMUEL AMARAL, *The rise of capitalism on the Pampas: the estancias of Buenos Aires, 1785–1870* (CUP, 1998). xviii + 359 pp. 67 tables; 65 figs; 7 maps. £40.

Estancias and their owners occupy much space in the iconography of Argentina. For example, as this monograph reminds us, the Argentine version of the board game 'Monopoly' is called 'Estanciero'. Landownership and power are firmly linked in the popular mind in Argentina, where the performance of the ranching sector has been a topic of much polemic in debates about national development, especially since the Second World War. This book casts its vision to a much earlier time. While not ignoring the political dimensions, it seeks the economic rationale for the development of ranches in Buenos Aires from the beginning of economic expansion towards the end of the eighteenth century through to the advent of improved rural technology. If estancias offered 'a vast and productive field to an active and far-seeing man', as one observer had it in the 1870s, much the same can be said of Samuel Amaral's scholarship on the topic. Here is economic history rich in research effort and in substance.

This book deals with a period for which we still have much to learn and it shows the paths to further research. The author has combed a broad and international set of sources, including probate records and travel accounts, in his effort to clarify the internal workings and territorial expansion of the estancias. Organized in four parts, the book begins with an analysis of the broad working conditions of the estancias. This is followed by sections dealing with the conditions of production and of human action – issues of labour and management. A final portion deals with the results of all of this human effort on the grasslands, through the placing of ranch products into the markets. For Amaral, the capitalism in his title has less to do with any stage models than the increasing prevalence of market forces.

Amaral's study contains major research achievements. He demonstrates that the ranches in Buenos Aires were fundamentally profitable even at the end of the eighteenth century, before the full impact of north Atlantic markets was experienced in the Río de la Plata. He clarifies the forces of expansion in the rural system; for example, the area grazed by cattle had increased at least fourfold between 1800 and 1850. The book is also useful for grounding many of the recent discussions in Argentine rural historiography, where some arguments have seemed far removed from the reality of operating systems. It identifies the marked seasonality of patterns in the management routines and hence in the demand for labour. Amaral is especially good at the reinterpretation of familiar sources. An example is his discussion of the analysis of ranching around the opening of the nineteenth century by the Spanish polymath Félix de Azara. Bringing ancillary data and his skill with handling numbers, Amaral extends knowledge of feasible profitability rates. His findings push these downwards, heightening our respect for human achievements on the pampas. Profit took effort. For example, his discussion of ranch management letters from the 1820s (Chapter 9) gives concrete evidence of the obstacles to profit identified earlier in the study.

This book shows considerable strengths and has much to offer the careful reader. I was struck especially by its use of quantitative data. However, I do have some reservations. Firstly, the reader needs more maps. Territorial expansion is a major theme of the early sections of the book. Maps analyzing regional change would enhance understanding far more than those the author provides, which serve mainly to locate individual properties. The only guide to general locations in the book is an interesting historical map, which has reproduced poorly in printing, not, alas, an isolated editing slip. Also, the coverage of themes is at times uneven. For example, the chapter on the physical environment is devoted almost entirely to thistles. Amaral is convincing and interesting on their influence in shaping rural routines but he provides little analysis of other biophysical elements, including fire and water. In the chapter on markets, jerked beef, identified as 'one of Buenos Aires's leading exports', receives only a paragraph of discussion (p. 281).

While the book is emphatically economic history, it would benefit from a closer knowledge of methodology in the ancillary discipline of historical geography. The 'still life' depictions (p. 101) of estancias in 1820 and 1850 stand close to H. C. Darby's technique of cross-sectional comparison. Amaral's very limited knowledge of historical geography is clearly revealed when he misinterprets the work of Patricio Randle, a leading exponent of

'geografía histórica' in Argentina, as 'geographical history' (p. 12). While he accounts for the extensive nature of the estancia system, intensification through technology receives less adequate treatment. The seeds of technological change are played down, perhaps a consequence of the constant effort to push social and political issues aside in order to uncover the economic workings of the estancias. But, the interfaces between the world of economic rationality and those of society and politics could use closer elaboration. For example, when the politician Valentín Alsina was 'asked' (p. 144) to prepare the draft for the Rural Code in 1862, whose interests did he represent? The innovation of early legal reform on the pampas surely involved more than economic determinism stemming from changing ranching practices.

Britain's significance in the later agrarian development of Argentina is widely known to readers of this journal. While not one of Amaral's research themes, his book provides useful insight into the impressive depth of the British connection with ranching improvements before 1870 – pioneering of sheep and alfalfa, high profit rates from model properties in British hands, even vain attempts to develop machinery aimed at thistle removal on the grasslands.

Samuel Amaral's book merits careful attention and should find its way to the shelves of all those interested in Argentina, or in ranching more generally. His study will undoubtedly serve as one of the important foundations for further scholarship on the rural economy of the Plata during the first half of the nineteenth century.

STEPHEN BELL

JAMIE L. BRONSTEIN, *Land reform and working class experience in Britain and the United States, 1800–1862* (Stanford UP, 1999). ix + 372 pp. £35.

In both Britain and the United States land reform was an important component of popular politics in the first half of the nineteenth century. This is paradoxical in view of the marked political and economic differences between the two countries. Britain was already a highly urbanized society, with a large industrial working class which was excluded from the franchise. Landownership was concentrated in the hands of a small elite, and the high value of land made the farming life an unrealistic aspiration for those without substantial capital. The United States, by contrast, remained a primarily rural society, in which white adult males of all classes enjoyed the vote. Not only was land less expensive, but much land still remained unoccupied.

Bronstein demonstrates that despite these differences, the land reform movements in the two countries used similar arguments and methods. In both countries, the claim that land reform would act as a 'safety valve', removing excess labour from industry and so raising wages, was linked with hostility to factories. Other arguments (religious, patriotic and gender-based) were also closely comparable. Land reformers in both countries defined themselves against powerful liberal middle-class movements: the Anti-Corn Law League in Britain, and abolitionism in the United States. Shared organizational features included non-working class leadership, extensive use of the press and a rich mix of supporting social activities.

These striking similarities can be explained by a common intellectual heritage deriving from thinkers such as Paine and Spence, by mutual influence through personal contact and through the press, and by a greater degree of shared experience than has previously been acknowledged. The shadow of the factory hung over American as well as British workers: the independent status of artisans was as much threatened by the 'market revolution' in the United States as by the industrial revolution in Britain.

However, the British and American land reform movements did differ in one important respect: their composition. The author's innovative case study of subscriptions to the Chartist Land Company in the cotton textile towns of Cheshire and Lancashire demonstrates that at least a quarter of all subscribers came from these towns. The National Reform movement in America drew support from factory workers as well, but artisans, tradesmen and farmers were equally important. In the context of the differing political traditions of the two countries, this contrast was to have decisive consequences. By presenting itself as the paternalistic protector of an unenfranchised and easily duped working class, the British state was able to close down the Chartist Land Company on the pretext of rescuing the subscribers from O'Connor's delusive promises. In the United States, however, the National Reform movement's demands for free land for settlers and for homestead exemption from distraint for debt resonated with American political tradition. As a non-extreme demand made by a broadly-based movement of enfranchised citizens, land reform could not easily be dismissed. Modest success was the ultimate result: in 1862 the Republican Party passed the long-awaited Homestead Act.

What is the value of Bronstein's comparative perspective? Firstly, the similarity between the rhetorical and cultural forms developed by the British and American land reform movements strengthens the claim that popular politics in the first half of the nineteenth century was shaped as much by continuities of political discourse as by socio-economic factors. Secondly, the relative success of land reform in America draws attention to the narrow class base of land reform in Britain, its close association with extreme radicalism, and the entrenched

strength of the British state as reasons for the failure of British land reform.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book for agricultural historians is its demonstration that in the 1840s land reform created a ferment of excitement amongst British industrial workers. Land reform was not backward-looking in 1840s Britain: we now know that industry was by this time neither sufficiently prevalent nor benign to make a partially land-based solution irrational. But it remains unclear whether it was negative experience of industrialism or positive experience of land which popularized land reform. Bronstein's case study of the north-west cotton textile towns unfortunately does not explore whether subscribers were ex-rural migrants, nor what degree of access to land they were able to achieve in and around their home towns. The author's urban focus also precludes engagement with recent work on rural Chartism.

There are, inevitably, some questionable statements (it is simply wrong to describe the allotment movement as 'Tory' in the 1830s and 1840s, for example). But this remains a deeply researched and conceptually sophisticated work, which significantly advances our understanding of land reform on both sides of the Atlantic in the first half of the nineteenth century.

JEREMY BURCHARDT

ALAN R. H. BAKER, *Fraternity among the French peasantry. Sociability and voluntary associations in the Loire valley, 1815–1914* (CUP, 1999). xviii + 373 pp. 65 figs; 23 photographs. £45.

The representation of the peasant by nineteenth-century observers and subsequently by historians and geographers has been extremely varied. However, in recent years images of technical conservatism and general 'backwardness' have increasingly been displaced by more 'optimistic' views, at least in terms of assessments of the productivity of small-scale farming. Alan Baker sets out to dissect another 'myth', that of the peasant as 'a sturdy individualist', lacking any sense of community. He does so on the basis of a detailed analysis of the chronology and geography of the establishment of voluntary associations in the department of Loir-et-Cher, selected because of its internal diversity, straddling as it does the frontier between the 'two Frances' – that of the north and east with its nucleated villages and open fields, and the south and west with its hamlets, dispersed farms and enclosed fields. To this is added a comparison between his own findings and those of historians and geographers working on other regions.

Peasant caution is explained in terms of risk avoidance and placed alongside a willingness to develop new co-operative strategies in the struggle for economic survival. The Revolution had posed an individualistic liberal challenge to traditional collective practices, and, together with improved communications, market integration and the development of 'capitalism', promoted change on a scale never before encountered. In particular, Baker highlights a turning away from religious reassurance towards secular forms of 'risk management'. A range of 'instrumental' voluntary associations was created which provided material benefits and generally eased the process of adaptation to social change. Membership of these organizations allowed peasant activists to develop organizational and leadership skills and provided a means of exerting pressure on government officials. The greater confidence of peasants in their ability to control their own lives resulted in a 'revolution in attitudes', which promoted politicization and 'peasant empowerment', a reinforced sense of community and increasingly of 'class'. Voluntary associations were thus, Baker insists, important 'instruments of acculturation'.

A series of chapters focus on particular forms of association, on local insurance societies – small, self-regulating, based upon mutuality and providing means of protecting the buildings and livestock, which were the farmers' most valuable assets, through the socialization of risk; mutual aid societies, usually thought of as an urban phenomenon, but which by the turn of the century provided relief and medical assistance in around half of the department's communes, as well as imposing new standards of socially acceptable behaviour; voluntary fire brigades; anti-phylloxera syndicates from the 1880s; and agricultural associations, which existed in about one in six communes nationally by 1914. These offered facilities for the collective purchase of machinery and chemical fertilizer, and for the diffusion of best practice, and frequently possessed an informal political agenda.

Baker maintains that by neglecting anything other than the agricultural syndicates, which developed late in the century, historians have underestimated the earlier importance of collective solidarity within rural communities. The period from the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s, and not just the 1880s and early 1900s, was extremely fruitful in the creation of voluntary associations. The explanation provided is complex and stresses the limitations of a 'straightforward functionalist, fundamentally economic' approach as well as one which seeks to relate developments to the emergence of a more permissive legislative-administrative framework. Cultural and political factors, discourses which favoured fraternity, also mattered, as did the historical traditions of mutual and reciprocal assistance represented both by collective agricultural practices and religious fraternities. The approach of the geographer is particularly evident in the mapping of associations in relation to the existence

of a 'critical mass' of people and networks of information. The basic model is one of 'hierarchical spatial and social diffusion'. However, although voluntary associations were especially likely in the larger rural centres they also penetrated into smaller communities. The members of these overwhelmingly male-dominated associations were likely to be the small farmers – especially vignerons – particularly exposed to the forces of change. Bourgeois professionals, members of the rising class of rural notables, nevertheless, often took up leadership roles particularly as the scale and complexity of organization grew and state regulation (in return for subsidy) required a greater formalization of activity.

The essential focus of Baker's attention is the 'instrumental association'. He deliberately chooses to neglect the more diffuse informal sociability promoted by markets, fairs, the church, community and family and the more organized and 'expressive' musical and recreational groups. This self-denying ordinance is both a strength and weakness of the book. It allows him to concentrate, very effectively, on previously neglected spheres of activity, but at the same time decontextualizes them and makes it difficult to assess their importance 'as part of the broader phenomenon of sociability'.

ROGER PRICE

JUDITH PALLOT, *Land reform in Russia, 1906–1917. Peasant responses to Stolypin's project of rural transformation* (Clarendon Press, 1999). xv + 255 pp. 1 table; 4 plates; 11 figs. £45.

In 1913, Fedor Volkhov, a peasant from Tver' province, sought permission to acquire the title to his strips in the open fields in hereditary, rather than communal, tenure, and to consolidate them into an otrub (an enclosed farm) under the provisions of the Stolypin land reform. His plans were overtaken, however, when his village commune decided to undertake a community-wide enclosure of all their land. Volkhov complained to the authorities:

> The peasants do not consider what the system of land-holding will be like after the land settlement; they try to carry out the land division in such a way that the end result will resemble the obshchina [peasant land commune]. They make sure that every household will have a parcel of arable and a parcel of meadow ... then woodland is left in common use and [some] pasture is left in common ... This is not all. It can happen that the outfields are not included in the division because none of the peasants will willingly accept it ... so it ends up that each household receives land in two or three places ... [T]he result of all this is not a reorganization of the land but its disorganization (p. 189).

Many communes reacted in similar ways to what they saw as the threat of individual households' separating. They were acting to prevent the loss of parts of their land, to retain control over meadows, pastures, woodland and other resources held in common and, indeed, to retain as much as possible of their existing arrangements. Other communes took steps, including intimidation, to prevent members from breaking away, or tried to undo enclosures by removing boundary markers and symbolically re-possessing the land.

Those peasants who, in spite of the hostility most faced, did seek to separate from their communes had a variety of motives. Some feared loosing out after some of their fellow-villagers had broken away. Others saw opportunities in separating. Under the communal and repartitional land tenure that prevailed in much of central Russia, households that had lost members, for example through death or the departure of married sons, also lost entitlements to shares of the communal land. It made sense, therefore, for such households to use the reform to acquire the full titles to all their existing land before parts were taken away from them. Likewise, households with disproportionate shares of better quality land had an incentive to separate. A number of households acquired the titles to their land to sell up and leave their villages for a city or resettlement in Siberia. Only a minority of peasants, however, sought to take advantage of the reform in order to modernize their farming methods and become the 'independent, prosperous husbandmen and loyal citizens of Stolypin's imaginings' (p. 251).

Pallot's explanation for the peasants' responses to the reform lies in the gap between the reformers' conviction in the incontrovertible benefits of enclosure and 'farm modernization', compared with what they saw as the 'backward' traditions of the 'ignorant' peasantry (discussed in Chapter 2, 'The land reform as administrative utopia'), and most peasants' equally strong beliefs in the efficacy of the customary ways they held and cultivated their land. The analysis in Chapter 3 of the advantages to the peasants of 'open fields, scattered strips, and repartitions' develops McClosky's well-known argument. It occurred to this reviewer that if anyone involved in the Stolypin reforms was 'ignorant' and 'backward' it may not have been the peasants. The author concludes: 'Conceived as a broad measure to modernize peasant farming and create a loyal peasantry, the final verdict on the Stolypin Reform must be that it was too narrowly conceived to be able to deliver this result' (p. 247).

This conclusion, which contradicts the more positive

views of many earlier commentators, is both plausible and, in the view of this reviewer, convincing. The book is based on considerable research carried out over many years in the vast body of printed and archival sources generated by the reform. The author is equally persuasive in her interpretations of the aims and behaviour of both reformers and peasants, and is careful to locate her work in the contexts of much of the latest empirical and theoretical work in these areas. Any criticisms of the book under review are relatively minor. As a historical geographer, the author naturally pays considerable attention to spatial variations at both regional and micro-levels. Nevertheless, the implication throughout that Ukraine and other areas are 'regions' of 'Russia' cannot be left without comment. The instruction to local officials quoted on p. 39 that 'no angle on a farm boundary ... should be more than forty-five degrees' should surely read 'less than' (see the plan of a model village after enclosure on p. 51). At a more prosaic level, the absence of a bibliography and the provision of only a very short index are to be regretted.

Nevertheless, the considerable strengths of the book under review far outweigh any weaknesses. It nicely complements and significantly revises much of the recent work on the reforms, such as that of David Macey, George Yaney and P. N. Zyrianov. In particular, the notion that many peasants in the Russian Empire responded to the Stolypin reforms in the ways the authorities hoped is no longer tenable.

DAVID MOON

Conference Report: Winter Conference 1999 'Commons, Common Rights and Commoners'

by Jane Whittle

The winter conference goes from strength to strength. On Saturday 4 December around 80 people gathered at the Institute of Historical Research in London to hear four papers exploring the extent and use of common land in England from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day. Professor Christopher Dyer (Birmingham) started the conference by demonstrating that conflicts over common land have a longer history than we might expect. As far back as the Anglo-Saxon period people were in dispute over common rights. With increased settlement density, boundaries and use rights were increasingly carefully defined. Areas of common land, which were usually on the edges of parishes, often shared between parishes, and sometimes even detached and distant from the parish to which the belonged, were complicated to define and delineate. Disputes inevitably arose, as charters indicate. The extent and layout of early commons can be reconstructed from post-medieval maps and from aerial photographs of fossilised ridge and furrow systems. Common pasture was surprisingly limited in many champion villages before the Black Death, where the great majority of land lay in open arable fields, and as little as 10 per cent was left for common pasture. The situation was very different in woodland and mixed villages, where there was more enclosed pasture, but also more common pasture as well. It is therefore surprising to find that in the high medieval period, when the pressure of population on the land was at its highest, disputes over common land are recorded most frequently in the woodland and mixed communities. Here, villagers defended their common land against the encroachment of new enclosures by throwing down hedges, much as they are known to have done in later periods. In the arable, champion villages, where common land was in limited supply, and pressure on its use presumably that much greater, the court rolls provide little or no evidence of tension over common rights. However, it is also contradictory, and perhaps part of the same pattern, that after the Black Death, when population levels had slumped and land was relatively plentiful, village by-laws relating to the use of commons were increasingly recorded, and increasingly infringed. Wealthy peasants were wealthier, and keeping more animals: pressures on common land were increasingly profit motivated, rather than arising from the necessity of subsistence.

Dyer showed that conflict over the use of common land arose between peasant tenants: between the inhabitants of different villages, and between those who sought to enclose land or exploit commons for profit, and those who wanted to retain common land as a common resource. Lords might ally themselves with one side or another, depending on how their own interests were affected. Dr Steve Hindle (Warwick) was also concerned with conflict between ordinary villagers examining 'Rights, regulation and residence: continuity and change on the English manor, 1550–1650'. Rapid population growth and falling real wages in the second half of the sixteenth century intensified differences between moderately well-off farming households and those with little or no land: cottagers and squatters. However, the effects of population growth were not evenly spread, and again, the contrasts between champion and pastoral communities were stressed. Champion villages with little common land shed population, and these people moved towards forest, fen and upland areas where common land was more plentiful. As a result, such pastoral communities experienced particularly rapid population growth, and it was on this these pastoral communities that Hindle's paper concentrated. The inequalities between parishes in the resources available exasperated inequalities within them. Numerous examples from around the country were used to show that faced with rapidly increasing numbers of cottagers and squatters the wealthier inhabitants of pastoral communities turned to one or more of three strategies. First, they sought to exclude poor households by forbidding the building of new cottages or the subletting of housing to 'inmates' or 'undertenants'. Secondly, the regulation of common resources was increased, with tighter stints reducing the number of animals smallholders could keep

on the common, and excluding new households from common rights altogether. Thirdly, larger tenants in some instances sought the ultimate solution in enclosing common land – privatising the commons – with compensation offered to established households and squatters thrown off village lands.

Perhaps the most interesting theme to emerge from this discussion was the increasingly sharp distinction that developed in this period between 'inhabitants' (direct tenants of the manor) and cottagers, squatters, and 'strangers' (subtenants and those without formal tenancies). This change in attitudes was partly the result of introduction of poor rates, but also surely a consequence of the increasing polarisation of wealth within village communities below the level of the gentry that is so characteristic of this period. Conflict over common rights was one of the clearest expressions of the increasing divisions within village society. Hindle concluded that common rights, rather than being an equalising force, became an arena of conflict, division and exclusion.

This discussion provided supporting evidence for Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor's (Cambridge) conclusions regarding the period 1750–1850. His paper examined the question of whether agricultural labourers possessed common rights before parliamentary enclosure. We cannot hope to understand the consequences of parliamentary enclosure unless we have a clear understanding of pre-enclosure situation. Considering the amount of stinting, exclusion and enclosure that took place between 1550–1650 it seems likely that labourers in many communities lost their access to common rights well before the Parliamentary enclosures. However, given the degree of variation that existed between even neighbouring villages, the question of whether some mid-eighteenth century communities offered valuable common rights, especially the right to keep of cow, to labouring families remains a pertinent one. If, as Jane Humphries has calculated, a cow was worth half an adult male labourer's yearly wage, the ability to keep a cow on the common both raised a family's standard of living and reduced their dependency on waged work. By 1750 common rights were usually carefully defined, and often bought and sold separately from land and houses. Shaw-Taylor argued for a rigorous approach to labourers' possession and use of cow keeping rights, splitting the question into three issues: did labourers own common rights; if not, did they rent common rights; and finally, even if they had common rights, did labourers actually own one or more cows? Having demonstrated elsewhere that in 11 villages in the south and east England with records complete enough to reconstruct such matters in detail, only 2–3 per cent of labourers owned common right cottages, while a further 12–18 per cent rented such cottages and may or may not have had access to common rights. Given the lack of firm, widespread evidence of labourers' access to the commons, contemporary commentators are a valuable source of information. However, we should be cautious which authors' we rely on. Some, like S. Addington are manifestly unreliable, and can be shown to have created evidence to fit their arguments. Others such as Arthur Young, wrote from observation, and provided evidence that can be quantified. An analysis of Young's comments showed that labourers with common rights were usually a very small minority in south and east England. However, cow keeping and the possession of common rights did not necessarily correlate, and the percentage of labourers keeping cows was higher in some places, usually parishes with very extensive commons in fen and coastal areas. This was because employers sometimes allowed labourers to use some of their rights, and because labourers sometimes used the common illegally. On the other hand, not all labourers who possessed common rights necessarily owned a cow. On the whole, Shaw-Taylor argued, the great majority of labourers had lost the means to keep a cow before parliamentary enclosures.

In the final paper Professor Alan Everitt (Leicester) brought the history of the commons into the twentieth century, reminding us that despite enclosures, an estimated 1.55 million acres of common land existed in England in the 1950s. This land was mostly in the upland areas of the north and west, but parts of the south also maintained surprising large tracts of commons. Even in the vicinity of London extensive woodland commons survived into the 20th century. Such commons were poor agriculturally, but relatively rich in minerals, plants and wild animals. They were reservoirs of varied resources which supported equally various petty industries. On such land brick makers, potters, quarrymen, woodsmen, charcoal burners, ash burners, brush makers, clog makers, hurdle makers, turners, and others made a living from small scale production using freely available wood and mineral resources. Such commons did not necessarily support poorer households by allowing the maintenance of a traditional subsistence economy, but instead, and in keeping with the era, allowed them to develop and adopt low-tech but innovative strategies of industrial production.

Overall the success of the conference lay not only in the high quality of the papers, but in the recurring themes that emerged from them, in particular the importance of local and regional difference, the use of resources from the commons in the makeshift economies of the poor, and conflict over common rights as an arena in which differences of power and wealth within village communities were played out. Once again, John Broad should be thanked for organizing a successful and thought provoking one-day conference.

The Rural History Database at the Rural History Centre, University of Reading

by Jeremy Burchardt

The Rural History Database is the most comprehensive specialist bibliography of rural history in existence, containing over 42,000 references. It is compiled by staff at the Rural History Centre in the University of Reading, and is due to be released in an on-line version available on the World Wide Web at http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Instits/im/home.html on 2 May 2000.

The bibliography initially developed as a by-product of the core collection and research functions of the Rural History Centre (or Institute of Agricultural History and Museum of English Rural Life as it then was). In 1970 it was decided that the bibliographical work already going on in the Institute should be formalized and centralized through the establishment of a Bibliographical Unit, the primary task of which would be to construct on a systematic basis as comprehensive a bibliography of rural history as was possible. At this stage the bibliography consisted solely of a set of related card indexes. But by the 1980s it was clear that information technology had made it possible to make bibliographical databases available electronically to the academic world at large. It was therefore decided that a computerised version of the bibliography should be developed. This was an ambitious undertaking in view of the Institute's limited resources, because it required not only a daunting quantity of data transfer, but also involved a steep learning curve for staff with little previous experience in this complex area. Raine Morgan was largely responsible for the conception and design of the database and, in the first few years, for data entry. Her determination and commitment to the project brought it to an advanced stage before her untimely death in 1996. Since then Janet Collett and others at the Centre have continued her work, to the point where it can now be made available to the public on-line.

The main strength of the Rural History Database is in British agrarian history, within which coverage is intended to be comprehensive. A broad definition of 'rural' has been adopted, building on the subject classification under which references were collected for the original card index. This consisted of eight primary sections: landscape and environment, economy, agriculture, industry, rural society, transport and communications, histories and surveys and museology. The existence of sub-sections on economic theory, demography, health and medicine, politics and market towns indicates the wide definition of rural used in compiling the database. However, the majority of references relate more directly to agriculture, food, and rural economy and society.

The type of material included in the database is equally broad-ranging, with an emphasis on journal articles. Articles from over 1,500 journals are included. For the more important journals (such as the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, from which 1,400 articles have been extracted), coverage extends back to the date of first publication, often in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Less well-known journals have also been searched, with a bias towards articles written after 1940.

Other categories of material include books, collections of essays and articles, occasional publications and theses. Over 5,000 theses awarded degrees in this subject area world-wide since the 1870s are listed. Since the database is a bibliography of printed (secondary) works, manuscripts are excluded, but numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century printed contemporary works of historical value are referenced.

The database is continuously updated, but limitations on staff resources mean there is currently a backlog of about 5,000 references awaiting input. Many of these are however listed in the card indexes available for consultation by visitors to the Centre. It is anticipated that much of the backlog of more recent (1995–9) references will be cleared by the end of the year. Beyond this, future development plans include a project to identify post-1920 articles which although contemporary when written have since become of historical interest.

Five search methods are currently available to users: author, title, subject, keyword and series title (journal or book). All five methods permit the use of wildcards, Boolean operators and fuzzy matching. A thesaurus is

currently being developed in order to facilitate more accurate subject searching.

The main advantage of the Rural History Database is its coverage of British and Irish rural history, which is wider than any alternative on-line bibliography. Whilst databases such as BIDS-ISI and OCLC's ArticleFirst are based on an even wider range of journals, they do not include books and other non-journal references (and, unlike the Rural History Database, do not offer references to articles published before their dates of inception, respectively 1981 and 1992). Conversely, large library catalogues or compilations of catalogues such as the Library of Congress or the OCLC WorldCat do not detail journal articles. Furthermore, the Rural History Database is confined to references to British and Irish rural history. So it does not suffer to the same extent from the problem of large numbers of unwanted and irrelevant hits when searching by author or title. The subject classification is also of course more refined and detailed than those used by non-specialist bibliographical databases. Historians of rural Britain and Ireland will obtain a larger list of relevant references more quickly by using the Rural History Database than by any other search strategy currently available.

Forthcoming Conferences

British Agricultural History Society Autumn Conference
Saturday 23 September 2000
Canterbury Christ Church College
Industries in the countryside

British Agricultural History Society Winter Conference
Saturday 2 December 2000
Institute of Historical Research, London
Livestock in the farming economy

Details of the society's conferences will be posted on the society's web site as soon as they become available and circulated to members during the summer.

The Society's Spring Conference, 2001, will be held at Ambleside, Cumbria, on 9–11 April. Offers of papers should be directed to the society's secretary, Dr Peter Dewey, by 31 August.

The Rural History Centre, University of Reading, announces an interdisciplinary conference, *The contested countryside*, to be held at the Centre on on 18 September 2000.

Recent and ongoing debates about the British countryside have often suffered from a lack of historical perspective. Virtually all the issues raised, such as farm incomes, animal disease, hunting, rambling, agriculture and the environment, and urban attitudes to the countryside, have long and complex histories. The conference will explore these histories through short papers and discussion. Speakers will include Paul Brassley, Philip Conford, Graham Cox, Berkeley Hill, Alun Howkins and Simon Miller.

Details and a booking form are available from Dr Jeremy Burchardt, Rural History Centre, PO Box 229, Whiteknights, University of Reading, Reading, RG6 6AG, e.mail j.f.burchardt@reading.ac.uk.

Agricultural History Review

A journal of agricultural and rural history

Editors:
Prof. R. W. HOYLE (articles)
and Dr J. R. WALTON (reviews)

Agricultural History Review is published twice yearly by the British Agricultural History Society and issued to all members. The editors welcome contributions on any aspect of the history of agriculture, rural society and rural economy. Articles are normally expected to be about 8,000 words in length, but the editors are willing to consider longer papers on their merits. The *Review* also publishes occasional supplements. Proposals for supplements, which may be monographs or collections of essays about a common theme, should in the first instance be sent to the editors. All intending contributors are advised to first obtain a copy of the *Review's* 'Notes for Authors and Reviewers' from the editors. (This can also be found on the society's web page, http://www.bahs.org.uk.)

Articles, proposals for supplements or general editorial correspondence should be directed to Professor R. W. Hoyle at the Department of Historical and Critical Studies, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, e.mail R. Hoyle@uclan.ac.uk. From September 2000, the editorial address of the *Review* will be at the Rural History Centre, University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 229, Reading RG6 6AG.

Books for review and completed reviews should be directed to Dr J. R. Walton, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, SY23 3DB.

The society does not accept responsibility for the opinions expressed by contributors, or for the accidental loss of manuscripts, or for the return of manuscripts not accepted for publication.

Current and back copies of the *Review* and its supplements are available for purchase from the society's Exeter office (for whose address see the inside front cover). Single issues of the *Review* are £7.50 to members and £12.50 to non-members and agencies. The society's supplement, *Roots of Change*, is £17.50 post free to non-members and institutions: a discount is available to members and booksellers. Enquiries about advertising in the *Review*, or the insertion of fliers into the society's regular mailings to members, should also be addressed to the Exeter office.

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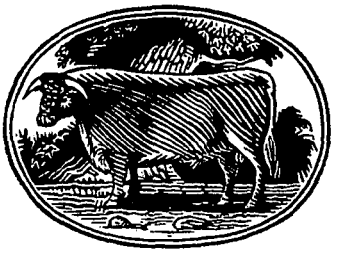
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a journal of agricultural and rural history

Volume 48, Part II
2000

The British Agricultural History Society

2000–1

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The Society aims to promote the study of agricultural history and the history of rural economy and society, amongst other ways, through (a) the publication of *Agricultural History Review* together with supplements and other appppropriate items; (b) the holding of conferences in its own right and in conjunction with other organizations; (c) the promotion of the conservation of historically significant landscapes and the rural environment; (d) the promotion of the teaching of the history of agriculture, the rural economy and society, and the environment, at all levels of education; (e) the promotion of links with societies and institutions in Europe and world-wide which have similar aims and objectives.

The society holds two conferences each year: a residential Easter conference (to be held at Ambleside in 2001) and a London winter conference on the first Saturday in December. Details of these will be found in the *Review* and on the society's web pages. The society's conferences are open to non-members of the society.

Membership is open to all those who support the aims of the society. The annual subscription is £15 for individual subscribers and £35 for libraries and institutions. Subscriptions are due on the 1 February annually. A standing order form is available from the Treasurer. There is a reduced rate for students not in full time employment and those registered unemployed of £5. Full details can be obtained from the Treasurer, BAHS, c/o Department of History, The University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4RJ (e.mail BAHS@Exeter.ac.uk) to whom all applications for and correspondence concerning membership (including changes of address) should be directed.

Correspondence concerning all other aspects of the society's activities, including its conferences, should be directed to the Secretary, BAHS, Department of History, Royal Holloway, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX. Advance details of the society's meetings and other information concerning the society can be found on our web pages, http://www.bahs.org.uk/.

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British Agricultural History Society Forthcoming Conferences, 2000–1

Winter Conference 2000

Saturday 2 December 2000
at the Institute of Historical Research, London

LIVESTOCK IN THE FARMING ECONOMY

Prof. Bruce Campbell (Queen's University Belfast)
'Medieval pastoral husbandry, some answers and questions'

Prof. Richard Hoyle (Reading)
'The cattle trade of north-west England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'

Louise Curth (Royal Holloway, London)
'Seventeenth-century animal healthcare from English almanacks'

John Gall (Beamish Museum)
'Livestock breeding in north-east England, 1770–1900'

A booking form is available on the Society's website, www.bahs.org.uk

The Society's Spring Conference, 2001

will be held at the Ambleside campus of St Martin's College Lancaster,
Monday 9 April-Wednesday 11 April 2001.

The provisional programme includes
Dr J. R. Walton, 'Absentee interests, title disputes and parliamentary enclosure'
* Prof. E. J. T. Collins, 'Energy, techniques and labour productivity in English agriculture, 1840–1939' * Dr Harry Kitsikopoulos, 'The cost of enclosure and the benefits of convertable husbandry amongst peasant holdings in Medieval England' * Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor, 'Stock keeping and crop growing by the rural poor' * Dr Michael Winstanley and Harvey Osborne, 'The strange decline of poaching in Victorian England'
and papers by Dr Paul Warde and Dr Philip Conford.

Symposium: 'Browne of Townend and the Cumbrian Statesman'

Full details will be circulated in January or may be obtained from the society's website, www.bahs.org.uk

Announcement
Golden Jubilee prize essay competition, 2003

To mark the celebration, in 2003, of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the British Agricultural History Society, the Society invites submissions for its Golden Jubilee prize essay competition.

The author of the winning essay will be awarded a prize of £500 and the author of the essay judged to be *proxime accessit* £250. It is intended that the prize winning essays will be read at the Society's Spring Conference in 2003 and published in *Agricultural History Review.*

There is no restriction on the subject matter of the essays save that they fall within the remit of the *Review.* The competition is open to all, with no restrictions on age, but essays from younger authors, and those employing new methodologies or exploring new areas of interest will be especially welcomed. Essays should be no longer than 10,000 words including footnotes and any appendices. They should be submitted in the house style of the *Review* and intending authors are asked to obtain a copy of the *Review's* 'Guidelines for contributors' from the editors or direct from the Society's web site at http://www.bahs.org.uk.

The essays will be judged by a panel appointed by the Executive Committee of the Society.

Three copies of each essay should be sent to the Secretary of the Society, Dr P. E. Dewey, Department of History, Royal Holloway, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX. The author's names should not be on the title page but on a separate detachable cover sheet. The latest date for the submission of essays is 30 September 2002.

Early modern servants in husbandry revisited*

by Donald Woodward

Abstract

The publication of Ann Kussmaul's *Servants in husbandry* in 1981 was a landmark for rural history. Much of what she revealed has stood the test of time but two areas need further exploration. First, why did employers continue to favour annual contracts, especially for their younger workers? It is argued here that the value of the arrangement lay in the availability of servants for work 24 hours a day throughout the year. Secondly, doubt is cast on Kussmaul's argument for the existence of long-run swings in the incidence of service in husbandry between the late fifteenth and the nineteenth century.

Since the publication of Ann Kussmaul's *Servants in husbandry* in 1981, historians have been far more aware of the importance of service to early modern farmers.[1] It was predominantly a life-cycle phenomenon; girls and boys became servants in their early to mid-teens. Perhaps sixty per cent of those aged 15 to 24 were servants at any one time. Service provided secure employment, board and lodgings in their employer's household, and a small cash income for many adolescents before they embarked on marriage in their mid to late twenties. Most were hired on annual contracts and at the end of each year many moved on, negotiating new terms of employment with a new master.[2] Service was at the heart of the agricultural arrangements of early modern England but, despite the efforts of Ann Kussmaul, the institution has not yet been fully anatomized. In particular, two areas which need further analysis will be investigated in this short article. The first section will discuss the rationale of service and its value to the employer, emphasising the central features of the institution; the second section will challenge the belief that the incidence of service from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century was characterized by long-term swings determined by employers' changing attitude to the employment of servants, based on the cost of feeding them.

I

It has recently been suggested by Caunce that service was valued by employers because it provided a well motivated and permanent labour force. Day labourers existed in late medieval and early modern times but, unfortunately, 'they could not deliver a *reliable permanent* labour

* I have benefited from the comments of Richard Hoyle and my colleagues Michael Turner and Judith Spicksley on earlier drafts of this article.

[1] A. Kussmaul, *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (1981).

[2] Alan Everitt had little to say about servants in his excellent discussion of farm labourers: A. Everitt, 'Farm labourers', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, IV, *1500–1640* (1967), pp. 396–465. S. Caunce, 'Farm servants and the development of capitalism in English agriculture', *AgHR* 45 (1997), pp. 49–60.

force, and while serfdom could do that, it could not *motivate* workers'. Service, on the other hand, 'could do both, and capitalism needed that mix'.[3] So, we are to believe that service provided an ideal labour force for thrusting capitalist farmers like Robert Loder and Henry Best who were fully aware that time meant money.[4]

The permanency of servants is not in any doubt; many were hired for the year and would be liable to the various penalties laid down by statute if they left before their contracts were completed. However, their reliability and motivation *is* open to question. Two of the most articulate employers in early-modern England, Henry Best and Robert Loder, together with Parson Woodforde and William Marshall in the later eighteenth century, had no doubt that servants needed to be supervised with great care. Best's advice to his son made it plain that the master should oversee work closely: 'you must call' to the reapers 'to stoop and to cut low and round'. In this he was echoing Tusser who had given the advice: 'Go muster thy servants, be captain thyself'. Sometimes, however, advice was passed on to the foreman who then supervised the servants. When hiring servants, Best was equally circumspect. His advice was to enquire from a former master or neighbour 'to know of them whether he be true and trusty, if he be a gentle and quiet fellow, whether he be addicted to company-keeping or no': indeed, 'if he have any of the forenamed ill properties, your best way will be to forebear hiring of him'. Maid servants should not be 'of a sluggish and sleepy disposition for danger of fire'; moreover, maids should never be hired who were 'too near their friends, for occasion is said to make a thief'. Once engaged, continued vigilance was necessary: 'see into all things yourself ... keep as much as you can under lock and key'.[5]

Robert Loder was equally aware of the possible deficiencies of his employees. In 1618 he contemplated a particular course of action, but only 'if I can have trusty servants'; and he found threshing especially difficult to supervise. When calculating the cost of threshing by the piece in 1612 he had observed that 'all workmen almost ... will play "legerdemaine" with their masters and favour themselves'; and later, when comparing the cost of the operation from one year to another, he added 'thus men can work if they list and so they can loiter'. He was also fully aware that his servants stole corn from him, possibly to feed to the horses in their charge: on one occasion he felt that this was because two of his servants were 'then in great love'. Finally, in 1618, he decided that it would be better to hire men than women to pick cherries: the men 'would do twice so much I think; and then there might be perhaps half those eaten by our gatherers saved'.[6] In the eighteenth century William Marshall found servants uncooperative and Parson Woodforde, who hired an average of five servants a year, had difficulty with a number of his employees. Over a period of 26 years, ending with his death in 1802, we are given the reasons for the departure of 15 servants. In eight instances it was Woodforde's own decision to terminate their employment: the grounds were drunkenness, incompetence, foul language,

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 51–2 (my italics).

[4] D. Woodward (ed.), 'The farming and memorandum books of Henry Best of Elmswell, 1642', *British Academy Records of Social and Economic History*, new ser. 8 (1984, hereafter 'Best'); G. E. Fussell (ed.), 'Robert Loder's farm accounts, 1610–1620', *Camden Soc.*, 3rd ser., 53 (1936, hereafter 'Loder').

[5] 'Best', pp. lvii, 49, 113, 140–1. For thieving by servants see P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class. Business, society and family life in London, 1660–1730* (1991), pp. 102–3; Kussmaul, *Servants*, pp. 35, 45.

[6] 'Loder', pp. 25, 59, 127, 148, 156. Legerdemain is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as 'sleight of hand, conjuring tricks, juggling; trickery; sophistry'.

illness, and pregnancy. The remaining seven left to return home, enlist, go to better service, or because the youth considered himself too old to be 'a boy'.[7]

Suspicion of servants permeated the whole of society; higher up the social ladder, in the early seventeenth century, Sir William Wentworth was in no doubt that servants needed to be watched carefully. In his *Advice to his son* he voiced the strongest reservations:

> For servants be very careful to keep only those that be born of good and honest friends and be well willing, humble, diligent and honest. Yet in any case trust them not more than you needs must in matters that may greatly concern your danger. For almost all treacheries have been wrought by servants and the final end of their service is gain and advancement ... .[8]

There is no reason to suppose that servants were intrinsically more reliable than day labourers; indeed, given the youth of the majority of servants, and the absence of the responsibility which marriage brought to day labourers, it is likely that servants were among the least reliable of employees and would have been even more unsteady without close supervision.

The essence of service, which made it so attractive to early modern farmers, was that it provided a central core of workers who were available throughout the year, at any time of the day or night,[9] and that they remained under the direct gaze of the master or his foreman most of the time. Day labourers worked long hours – first defined in the statute of 1495 – but they were free to pursue other activities, whether leisure or income-generating, when they were not at work and could not be called out to deal with a sudden emergency in the middle of the night without the employer incurring further expense.[10] In contrast, the statute was silent on the issue of the hours which servants were expected to work. Service often involved working unsocial hours, including essential work every Sunday and even on Christmas Day. On a farm this included feeding the stock, milking and any other chores which could not be deferred until the following day.

Most accounts which refer to the work of servants of all varieties indicate that they worked long hours. As Henry Best explained: 'when our folks go to Malton [some fifteen hilly miles away], they are usually stirring 4 hours before day, which is about 3 of the clock'. In the spring, corn was taken to that market by wains from the surrounding countryside and they 'went all night ... and were met out of Malton before seven of the clock'. When artisans were lodged at Elmswell for short periods, they were expected to graft like servants: cobblers 'are to work with a candle after supper 'til such time as they go to bed'.[11] Similarly, as an apprentice, William Stout, the Lancaster shopkeeper, worked very long hours. 'We apprentices laying in the shop were early called up'. A few years into his apprenticeship he 'attended the shop in winter with the widows open, without [any] sash or screen, until nine in the evening and with the windows shut and the door open till ten o'clock without coming into the house except to our victuals or to the fire, having our bed in the shop'.[12] The domestic servants of Samuel Pepys were also

[7] Kussmaul, *Servants*, pp. 44–8, 55–6.

[8] J. P. Cooper (ed.), 'Wentworth papers, 1597–1628', *Camden Soc.*, 4th ser., 12 (1973), p. 15.

[9] Kussmaul, *Servants*, p. 4 makes this point in passing but without stressing it in any way. For supervision, see also A. H. Smith, 'Labourers in late sixteenth-century England: a case study from north Norfolk', *Continuity and Change* 4 (1989), p. 17.

[10] 11 Henry VII, c. 22. For a detailed discussion of the hours worked by labourers and building craftsmen and arrangements for overtime payments, D. Woodward, *Men at work: labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450–1750* (1995), pp. 122–8.

[11] Best, pp. 106–7, 149.

[12] J. D. Marshall (ed.), *The autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665–1732* (1967), pp. 75, 81, 90.

aroused at unsocial hours to do their chores: on 26 October 1663 he 'waked about one a-clock in the morning to piss ... and then my wife, being waked, rung her bell and the maids rose and went to washing'. Pepys and his wife returned to bed. In the later eighteenth century William Marshall explained that Yorkshire servants were notable, among other things, 'for the length of their working hours'.[13]

Servants of all varieties were able to work such long hours because they were fed well; certainly they fared better than many married day labourers who did not always know from where their next meal was coming. To calculate the cost of feeding his servants, Robert Loder simply divided his total annual food bill by the number sitting at his table; servants and family members ate alike. This implies that his servants were well nourished. Although Henry Best's servants did not always eat as well as their master, they were better fed than many in early Stuart society and Best himself was convinced that he fed them better than did most men. William Marshall was not altogether impressed by the diet given to servants in Yorkshire; they had plenty of milk but meat only once a day. 'Nevertheless', he admitted, 'if one may judge from their appearance, and from the quantity of labour they dispatch, their mode of living is conducive to health'.[14] Workers – like draught animals – worked much better on a full stomach. In contrast, it has been suggested that many workers, whose daily incomes were erratic, were often insufficiently fed to allow them to sustain long periods of hard work.[15]

No doubt there were seasonal variations in the amount of work expected of servants.[16] They probably worked shorter hours in the winter, although they would have been kept hard at it during those hours, and indoor work, by candle or rush light, was always a possibility. There was much to be done round the farm in winter and it is unlikely that Henry Best, Robert Loder and their peers would have allowed their servants to indulge in long hours of idleness. Much more labour was required during the summer months – and especially during harvest periods – and this involved unremittingly hard work for both the servants and the day labourers who were hired and fed for the season. Throughout the year the closely supervised servants provided the central core of the labour force on many farms and they were expected to work hard at all seasons, no doubt switching – where possible – to indoor work during inclement periods. On rainy mornings, Henry Best made his harvest workers mend the barn floors or thresh some peas.[17]

II

According to Ann Kussmaul, the propensity of farmers to employ servants before the nineteenth century was linked to changing demographic structures and associated shifts in living standards. She argued that in the late fifteenth century, the incidence of service was at a 'probable high point' because the population was relatively low and the cost of food, which was an important

[13] R. C. Latham and W. Matthew (eds.), *The diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols, 1970–83), IV, p. 348; W. Marshall, *The rural economy of Yorkshire* (2 vols, 1788), I, p. 259.

[14] 'Loder', pp. 45, 68; 'Best', pp. xlvii–ix; Marshall, *Rural economy*, I, p. 259. See also S. Caunce, *Amongst farm horses. The horselads of East Yorkshire* (1991), pp. 137–46; W. A. Armstrong and J. P. Huzel, 'Labour II: food, shelter and self-help', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, VI, *1750–1850* (1989), p. 729.

[15] On the inability of many workers to work at a sustained rate because of an inadequate diet, see H. Freudenberger and G. Cummins, 'Health, work and leisure before the Industrial Revolution', *Explorations in Economic History* 13 (1976), pp. 1–12.

[16] Caunce, 'Farm servants', p. 53.

[17] 'Best', p. 114.

component in the remuneration of servants, was relatively low compared with the price of labour. This made the employment of living-in servants particularly attractive to employers. As the population rose substantially in the course of the sixteenth century, the situation began to change and by the early seventeenth century surplus labour was readily available so that it was no longer essential to hire labour by the year. She argued that

> Desperation, not annual contracts, would have ensured the attendance of workers when they were needed. Wages need have been paid only for work done, and annual contracts, which served as insurance against the everyday risk of finding no workers willing to work, were unnecessary.

Thereafter, as population growth petered out around the middle of the seventeenth century, fears about adequate supplies of labour began to be felt once more and farmers began to keep servants in greater numbers. Service reached a second peak in the middle of the eighteenth century before its disappearance from many areas in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[18]

Plausible though these views may appear at first glance, they are not built on firm foundations. Ann Kussmaul's construction of long run shifts in the incidence of service is based on three broad lines of argument: economic reasoning based on her analysis of what was in the interests of employers in different situations; evidence relating to changes in the seasonality of marriage which can be interpreted to indicate shifts in the incidence of service; and direct evidence of the decline of service. Over time the argument becomes more compelling: to support her belief in high levels of service in the later fifteenth century, Ann Kussmaul was forced to rely on economic logic alone; for the trough of the early seventeenth century the same economic logic can be bolstered by the evidence of shifting marriage strategies; for the later eighteenth centuries all three lines of argument can be deployed for a period undoubtedly characterized by a movement away from service in many southern and eastern counties.

Central to Ann Kussmaul's second study – *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538–1840* – is the belief that the nature of local economies and the associated seasonality of annual hirings determined, to some degree, the timing of marriage. A peak period for marriage in many parishes was just after the end of the contract year when young people, who did not intend to return to service, were able to marry. A knowledge of marriage patterns (derived from parish registers) could, she argued, indicate the nature of the economy of particular parishes and also the relative importance of annual service. In predominantly arable areas, annual hiring took place in the autumn after harvest (typically at Michaelmas – 29 September – in southern England and at Martinmas – 11 November – in the North): thus, any move away from an autumnal concentration of marriage could indicate either a shift in the nature of the local economy (hirings in pastoral districts were usually in the early summer after lambing and calving) or a decline in the incidence of annual hiring.[19]

The whole of the Kussmaul thesis relating to long-term swings in the incidence of service in early modern England depends on the interpretation of events in the early seventeenth century, although we know of only one employer who articulated the problem of whether or not to hire

[18] Kussmaul, *Servants*, pp. 97, 100–1.

[19] A. Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538–1840* (1990), *passim*.

servants. On a number of occasions in the second decade of the century, Loder calculated the cost of feeding his servants at between £10 and £12 a year; this level of remuneration was more than most day labourers could earn in a year.[20] In 1613 he argued that 'it were good for me to keep all my servants at board wages [i.e. money wages plus a food allowance], or else to keep none at all if I could handsomely bring it to pass'. Loder experimented with putting his carter on board wages but the experiment proved too costly and he continued to provide board and lodging for his servants.[21] However, the carter would still have been a servant in essence, with the expectation that he would turn out for his master at any time of the day or night. Loder did not contemplate the apparently cheaper option of dispensing with his servants and relying on day labourers.

Loder returned to the theme of his labour problems the following year:

> Memorandum that every of these [servants] spent me in meat and drink ... one with another £12 apiece and a little above. So that I judge it were good (in such dear years) to keep as few servants as a man possibly can, by any means convenient to effect which I know no other means, but by putting forth a man's land to tillage, or at a rent, or else keeping them on board wages.[22]

In fact, Loder did none of those things but continued to hire servants as before. The same was true of the Tokes of Kent and Henry Best; the engagement of servants by the latter seems to have varied with the amount of land in hand rather than with the price of provisions.[23] There is no direct evidence that service was on the wane in early seventeenth-century England. And it is difficult to see how commercial farmers like Best could have managed without a central core of workers who could be called upon any hour of the day or night for 365 days a year; to have done so would have involved developing a completely different approach to the organization of their enterprises. Loder recognized the problem of escalating costs but did not feel that he could do anything to remedy the situation; he certainly did not contemplate switching wholeheartedly to day labourers.

Ann Kussmaul's belief in the existence of significant long-term swings in the incidence of farm service relies heavily on the discovery that in 56 southern parishes there was some movement away from autumnal marriages in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. This finding gave an air of plausibility to her broader hypothesis based on economic reasoning. Evidence from the 56 parishes suggested that from the middle of the sixteenth century, when the incidence of October marriages stood at 2.3 times the expected frequency which a random distribution would suggest, the proportion fell to a low point of 1.6 in the early 1650s. Thereafter the incidence of October marriages rose to over twice the random frequency by the end of the seventeenth century and to 2.5 times by the middle of the eighteenth century. On the basis of this evidence – and the arguments relating to the relatively high costs of keeping servants in

[20] Loder paid his day labourers 6*d.* to 8*d.* a day in winter and a penny or tuppence more in the summer. When mowing hay or reaping corn they got between 14*d.* and 16*d.* a day. If a man worked for 20 weeks at 8*d.*, 20 weeks at 10*d.* and 10 weeks at 16*d.* a day he would earn £13: this is based on the assumption that he would and could work for an unbroken period of 300 days. In practice, of course, few would be offered so much work. 'Loder', p. xviii.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 68; Kussmaul, *Servants*, p. 103.

[22] 'Loder', p. 90.

[23] E. C. Lodge, 'The account book of a Kentish estate', *British Academy Records of Social and Economic History* 6 (1927); 'Best', pp. xxxvii–viii.

an inflationary era – Kussmaul argued that there was a significant reduction in the frequency with which farmers hired servants by the year in the early seventeenth century.[24]

We might ask why it took so long for farmers to realise that hiring servants was a fool's game. Inflation began in the early decades of the sixteenth century and the complaints of the wage labour force made it apparent that by the middle of the century their standards of living were being seriously eroded.[25] Conditions worsened as the century ended and, in terms of relative costs, the employment of servants was becoming increasingly uneconomic. Nevertheless, some early parish censuses – and especially that for Ealing in 1599 – indicate high numbers of servants.[26] Thereafter, according to the evidence of the 56 parishes, the incidence of service fell, although it is difficult to understand why this particular response to rising prices should have been so long delayed.

Since the early 1980s historians have focused increasingly on shifts in marriage strategies in their search for explanations of changes in demographic trends, and the current fashion is to stress the significant rise in the proportion of those who never married; numbers of celibates are believed to have risen from around 10 per cent in the later sixteenth century until they may have accounted for over 20 per cent of the population by the middle of the seventeenth century.[27] Given that some of the never-marrieds would have been servants, a rise in the proportion of celibates was likely to affect the number and significance of October marriages. Indeed, it is highly probable that those who were not inclined to marry would seek to remain in service for a longer period. That is, a decline in the proportion of October marriages could have been the product of the combination of increased celibacy and an increase – rather than a decrease – in the incidence of service. Changes in the incidence of October marriages may tell us little about shifts in the incidence of service.

There is also a problem about the nature of the data derived from the parish registers. Ann Kussmaul admitted that the decline in October marriages – to the low point of 1.6 times the random distribution in 1653 – was exaggerated because of the impact of the Commonwealth Marriage Act of that year. The act, which instituted civil marriage before JPs, came into force on 29 September and led to 'the virtual absence of October marriages in 1653' in her 56 parishes, thereby depressing the proportion of October marriages for 1653 and surrounding years. The act also distorted the marriage evidence in other ways, although it is evident that Ann Kussmaul did not take this into account when she processed the data derived from the aggregations available at the Cambridge Group.[28]

It is not possible at this stage to analyse the distortions caused by the Marriage Act to Ann Kussmaul's 56 registers for southern England – although this would be highly desirable – but a cursory look at the printed parish registers for Yorkshire indicates the nature and scale of the problem. After 1653, marriages often took place at the home of the JP and a record made in the register of the parish to which at least one of the partners belonged. But this was not always

[24] Kussmaul, *Servants*, pp. 97–100.

[25] D. Woodward, 'The background to the statute of artificers. The genesis of labour policy, 1558–1563', *EcHR* 33 (1980), pp. 32–44.

[26] Kussmaul, *Servants*, p. 71.

[27] E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield, *English population from family reconstitution, 1580–1837* (1997), pp. 121–6, 552; ex inf. Roger Schofield.

[28] D. Woodward, 'The impact of the Commonwealth Act on Yorkshire parish registers', *Local Population Stud.*, 14 (1975), pp. 15–31; Kussmaul, *Servants*, pp. 97–8.

TABLE 1: Howden Marriages

	Average number of marriages per annum	*Percentage of November marriages*
1590–9	36	20
1630–9	28	29
1654–6	42	13
1661–70	26	23

Source: G. E. Weddall (ed.), 'The registers of the parish of Howden, I, 1595–1658'; II '1543–1702', *Yorkshire Parish Register Soc.*, 18 (1904); 24 (1905).

the case and it is evident that these vital events were sometimes logged in a register other than that which would have been the usual one. This is indicated by the significant increase in the numbers of marriages recorded for some places. At Leeds the annual average number of marriages, which had stood at 109 during the 1640s, shot up to an average of 185 during the years 1654–7 before falling back to 74 in 1658 and averaging 90 in the early 1660s. Similarly at Hull, the average number of marriages was 49 during the 1640s but rose to 137 in 1654 and averaged 101 for the years 1654–8; the average in the 1660s stood at 48. In the York parish of All Saints, Pavement, there were six marriages a year in the late 1630s and early 1640s but the number rose to 86 in the four years 1654–7 before sinking back to a low level in the late 1650s. Conversely, no marriages at all were recorded at St. Crux, York, from May 1654 to October 1659.[29] Substantial changes occured elsewhere. At Howden in the East Riding overall numbers rose but there was a fall in the incidence of November marriages in the mid-1650s. However, the level in the 1660s was closer to that of the 1630s than the 1650s.

The disruption caused by the Marriage Act of 1653 may well have helped to cause the apparent reduction in October marriages noted by Kussmaul. The transfer of the recording of marriages from their natural registers probably distorted the true pattern of events in at least some parishes. And there may well have been other factors at work, including the availability of a willing JP. At Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales, John Assheton, a local JP, married eight couples on a single day in June 1655, while in the small hamlet of Scorborough in East Yorkshire two couples, where one of the partners was recorded as 'servant' in each case, had to wait until early January to be married although their banns had been called in the previous November.[30]

Distortions caused by the Marriage Act of 1653 and doubts about the meaning of changes in the levels of October marriages in southern England prompt doubts about the reality of the drift away from service in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

Some medievalists, convinced by the arguments indicating the decline of service in the early

[29] I am grateful to the Cambridge Group for supplying me with the aggregative analysis data for the two Hull parishes. G. D. Lumb (ed.), 'The registers of the parish church of Leeds, 1639–67', *Proc. Thoresby Soc.* 7 (1897); T. M. Fisher (ed.), 'The parish register of All Saints Pavement, York', I, '1554–1690', *Yorkshire Parish Register Soc.* (hereafter *YPRS*), 100 (1935); R. B. Cook and P. Harrison (eds), 'The parish register of St Crux, York, 1539–1716', *YPRS* 68 (1922). All numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number. It would, of course, have been better to re-process the 56 registers used by Ann Kussmaul; perhaps this will be possible in the future.

[30] J. Charlesworth (ed.), 'The parish registers of Clapham', I, '1595–1683', *YPRS* 67 (1921); A. T. Winn (ed.), 'The registers of Scorborough', *YPRS* 8 (1901).

seventeenth century, have argued that 'backward extrapolation of the early-modern cyclical patterns is plausible, and that the weight of agricultural labour was probably tilted more towards servants and away from labourers during the century and a half after 1350 than the preceding and succeeding periods'.[31] This is despite the fact that the same author tells us on three separate occasions that the sources 'simply do not exist to demonstrate empirically whether the same forces acted with equal effect in England before 1500' as in the early seventeenth century.[32] The supposed high water mark of service in the later fifteenth century flies in the face of much of the available evidence. As Christopher Dyer explains:

> the numerous disputes over the wages paid for short-term employment found in manorial court rolls, and the mass of complaints that after 1349 workers refused annual contracts and preferred to be hired by the day, suggest that the part-timers were becoming more important sources of labour than the servants.[33]

If this were the case, and it has been restated recently with telling effect by Mark Bailey,[34] the desire of farmers to take on greater numbers of servants was not realised because of the reluctance of labour to accept annual contracts. It seems highly likely that the fifteenth century did not witness a peak in the incidence of service.

III

Long-run swings in the incidence of service may well turn out to be illusory. In the late medieval period, prices were relatively low and, given the buoyancy of real wages during the period, it would have been in the interest of employers to engage large numbers of servants and pay the bulk of their remuneration in kind; but the availability of land and the relative shortage of labour meant that many older workers were reluctant to commit themselves for a year at a time. As Christopher Dyer points out, service in husbandry was a feature of the late-medieval economy, but the period probably did not witness the peak of activity envisaged by Ann Kussmaul and others.[35] It seems likely that many younger workers moved into service for some years, encouraged to do so by their parents who were relieved of the burden of supporting them. But it is unlikely that being bound into annual servitude held any great attraction for older workers, especially those with families to support. By the early seventeenth century the combined effects of inflation and population growth led at least one employer to question the sense of hiring servants; but Loder and others continued to do so and we have only the dubious marriage evidence for a number of southern parishes to suggest a general drift away from service. Moreover, as outlined earlier, a reduction in the number of autumn marriages could

[31] L. R. Poos, *A rural society after the Black Death: Essex, 1350–1525* (1991), p. 223 following R. M. Smith, 'Some issues concerning families and their property in rural England, 1250–1800', in R. M. Smith (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (1984), pp. 35–7, and Kussmaul, *Servants*.

[32] Poos, *A rural society*, pp. 182, 233, 225.

[33] C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later middle ages* (1989), p. 213.

[34] M. Bailey, 'Demographic decline in late medieval England: some thoughts on recent research', *EcHR* 49 (1996), pp. 5–17. Also J. Hatcher, 'England in the aftermath of the Black Death', *Past and Present* 144 (1994), pp. 13–17. See also the interesting case study by Deborah Youngs, 'Servants and labourers on a late medieval demesne: the case of Newton, Cheshire, 1498–1520', *AgHR* 47 (1999), pp. 145–60.

[35] Dyer, *Standards of living*, p. 21.

have been associated with an increase in the number of servants; that is, an increase in the number of those not available for marriage. And there is the further complication of the disruption to the parish registers caused by the act of 1653.

From the middle of the seventeenth century food prices continued to reflect shifts in harvest qualities but no longer continued their secular upwards drift. Perhaps this induced some farmers to seek to employ more servants while others turned to the practice for the first time, although there is little doubt that the labour market remained overstocked and casual labour continued to be available at the going wage. Economic logic would suggest that out-workers remained keen to find paid employment and it is difficult to believe that there was substantial pressure on farmers to employ servants in order to avert a labour shortage. Thus, if there had been a drift away from service in the early seventeenth century, it is not entirely clear why the process should have been reversed in the later decades of the century. It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that service remained crucial for the maintenance of essential work on the great majority of early modern farms throughout the period, and that levels of service – especially by young males and females – may not have varied markedly from one period to another. It is possible, however, that higher stocking rates within English agriculture during the Tudor and Stuart periods dictated some movement towards service rather than away from it.[36]

In the eighteenth century the picture is somewhat clearer. It is generally accepted that the level of farm service was high in the first half of the eighteenth century – as perhaps it had been during previous centuries – but that it began to decline, especially in the southern and eastern counties, after mid-century. On this occasion there is direct evidence of the flight from service shown in the settlement documents analysed by Keith Snell.[37]

Any important new study like Ann Kussmaul's *Servants in husbandry* leads historians, for at least some years, to believe that a particular subject has been adequately dealt with. This is rarely the case. Once the dust settles, we find that there is much that still remains obscure. In this instance, the existence of long swings in the incidence of farm service before the middle of the eighteenth century has not been established beyond reasonable doubt. For historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there is another agenda. By the middle of the nineteenth century, service in husbandry had largely disappeared from a broad swathe of the southern and eastern counties, although it remained remarkably resilient throughout much of the North. Various explanations have been advanced to account for these differing experiences, although even a cursory glance at the literature reveals that there is little agreement among historians. Why precisely did service survive so long in the North of England? It would be good to know.

[36] B. M. S. Campbell and M. Overton, 'A new perspective on medieval and early modern agriculture. Six centuries of Norfolk farming, *c.* 1250-*c.* 1850', *Past and Present* 141 (1993), p. 83.

[37] Kussmaul, *Servants*, p. 97; K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor. Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (1983), pp. 67–103.

Housing the rural poor in southern England, 1650–1850

by John Broad

Abstract

This article surveys local provision for the homeless poor in England under the Old Poor Law, considering the effects of a mobile and growing population, and the shifting basis of village agriculture. It analyses the types of housing available and the legal framework for provision before focusing on the part played by housing owned by parishes and local charities. The paper argues that this played a significant role in supporting the poor over much of England. It uses two sources to estimate the scale of provision before the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act required parishes to sell their housing stock to pay for workhouses.

When in May 1660, John Butcher, a twenty-year-old native of Middle Claydon in Buckinghamshire, sought permission to marry from the rector of the parish, Edward Butterfield, his request was immediately referred to the lord of the manor and sole parish landowner, Sir Ralph Verney. Butcher claimed the right to live in his father's unoccupied and padlocked house in the village, but Verney refused to allow it. In defiance, Butcher made plans to marry in the adjacent small market town of Winslow, but drew back when Sir Ralph ordered his bailiff to make the house uninhabitable by removing the floorboards and demolishing the chimney.[1] Butcher and his sweetheart waited two and a half years before again seeking permission. They were refused and the bailiff again pulled down an empty house the couple had their eyes on. When Sir Ralph was celebrating his son's wedding to the heiress from the adjoining village six months later, Butcher applied again, hoping to find Verney in a more receptive mood. On this rejection he changed tactics, claimed his betrothed was pregnant, and married by licence elsewhere. The couple returned to Middle Claydon and set up house in a barn. Sir Ralph was furious and lobbied a neighbouring JP in a bid to prevent the Quarter Sessions ordering him to house Butcher. When he failed he threatened (on Butterfield's suggestion) to penalize the couple by forcing them to lodge with the bride's mother, well known for her bad temper. Butcher and his wife nevertheless obtained a house and remained resident in Claydon, but were exempt

* This article has benefited from the comments of those who heard it as a paper in Cambridge in January 1999 and at the British Agricultural History Society's autumn conference 1999, at Northampton, but more particularly from Malcolm Airs, Nat Alcock, Sara Birtles, David Brown, Alan Everitt, Steve Hindle, Tim Hitchcock and Leigh Shaw-Taylor.

[1] Edward Butterfield to Sir Ralph Verney, 14 May, 4 June 1660, Verney MSS at Claydon House, Buckinghamshire (hereafter Verney MSS) Microfilm reel 17 (henceforth R17); Hugh Holmes to Sir Ralph Verney, 4 June 1660, R17. For a wider survey of attempts to control pauper marriage, see S. Hindle, 'The problem of pauper marriage in seventeenth-century England' *Trans. Royal Historical Society* 6th ser., 8 (1998), pp. 71–89.

from the Hearth Tax within ten years, and were receiving help from charities and occasionally on relief twenty years later.[2]

I

The story of John Butcher and his wife highlights the crucial importance of housing in the life choices of young people without money or property in early modern England. Their marriage was delayed three years. Less determined couples who still respected the link between economic independence and marriage might have been put off even longer. Butcher was the victim of the changing nature of the local agricultural economy. He lived in a parish recently enclosed and converted to ring-fenced pasture farms for fattening or dairying. Demand for labour on these new farms fell short of the local supply and the Verneys were keen to see labouring families emigrate to London or even abroad. At one point Butcher even hoped Sir Ralph Verney would arrange for him and his spouse to be shipped to the colonies as vagrants.

A vital aspect of these social changes was the Settlement Act of 1662, which established rules governing the residence rights of individuals and families. This had enormous implications for where people lived and the pressures that could be exerted on them; yet the housing of the rural poor has been surprisingly neglected in studies of poverty and rural society in the long eighteenth century.

This article examines how labouring and pauper families were housed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and how changes in rural economy and society affected their access to housing. It focuses on the place of publicly owned community housing in the spectrum of resources available to needy families. In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the idea that the poor should be confined to the workhouse, with its segregation, rules and discipline, and encouragement to productive work became the predominant intellectual current in discussions of the treatment of the poor.[3] This article questions the dominance of the workhouse as the preferred solution to the problems of housing a rural under-class. Eighteenth-century workhouse experiments began with a commitment to practical labour but increasingly maintained only the old, orphans, vagrants and quasi–vagrant groups in the community. The legal framework surrounding housing and the poor led to decentralized decision-making by parish elites, who often co-ordinated both charitable and rate-raised resources, and employed them in a variety of flexible and creative ways that did not necessarily entail workhouse building.[4] Most poor families continued to be housed in family units, as parishes and charities

[2] Hugh Holmes to Sir Ralph Verney, 16 Feb. 1662/3, Verney MSS, R18; 25 June 1663, R19; Edward Butterfield to Sir Ralph Verney, 2 Mar. 1662/3, R18; 26 Apr. 1663, R19; Butterfield to Sir Ralph Verney, 13 July 1663, 4/5/16.

[3] Much of the intellectual underpinning for an interest in the institutionalisation of charitable work and particularly the poor comes from Michel Foucault, particularly his *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* tr. A. Sheridan (1977). The early eighteenth-century literature on poverty has been carefully reviewed by S. Lloyd, 'Perceptions of the poor' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1991). The workhouse movement before 1834 is covered by T. Hitchcock, 'The English workhouse: a study in institutional poor relief in selected counties, 1696–1750' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1985) and A. Digby, *Pauper palaces* (1978).

[4] On this see my 'Parish economies of welfare, 1650–1834', *Hist. J.*, 42 (1999), pp. 985–1006, and D. Eastwood, 'The republic in the village: parish and poor at Bampton, 1780–1834', *J. Regional and Local Studies* 12 (1992), pp. 18–28; J. R. Kent, 'The centre and the localities: state formation and parish government in England, 1640–1740', *Hist. J.*,

responded to local needs by providing accommodation. This paper will describe how parishes approached these problems in southern England where agricultural conditions and changes had greatest impact on rural society.

The problems of housing the rural poor were apparent well before the Restoration, but the settlement law of 1662 defined residence rights more clearly and sharpened parish and landlord politics. Its complex terms generated an enormous volume of litigation.[5] Poor individuals and families were more easily removed to a distant parish where their links were old, remote, or tenuous, and where suitable housing stock was not necessarily available. During the next hundred years some parishes, of which Middle Claydon was one, promoted policies that encouraged out-migration and exacerbated the situation. Whilst England's population remained roughly static between 1660 and 1730 and rose only slowly until after 1780, much of that rise was concentrated in the developing and industrial regions of the midlands and North, and in London. Rural southern English parishes were probably losing population overall, but there was enormous variation between parishes. Some 14 per cent of English parishes may well have lost population between 1660 and 1801, yet a significant number of southern rural parishes, not uncommonly adjacent to declining neighbours, experienced substantial increases, without any economic incentive to growth. In such communities, the demand for new housing was high. They were the 'open' villages that became the recipients of individuals and families increasingly excluded from landlord-dominated 'close' villages. Landlords there enlarged farms to encourage tenants with capital, and where soils were suitable, converted enclosed land to pasture. The opportunities for labourers to take on small farms fell, while conversion to pasture, and the more efficient labour practices on all farms in the eighteenth century, reduced demand for agricultural labour. For every redundant farmhouse and cottage Sir Ralph Verney pulled down in Middle Claydon, there was a housing shortfall elsewhere, and by no means all of it was concentrated in urban areas.[6]

II

Poor families could be housed in one of three broad ways. Firstly they could take over existing accommodation such as empty farmhouses, or cottages. Individuals were more likely to lodge with existing farmers and cottagers. In other cases it was landlords who subdivided larger village buildings into tenements to let to incoming families. Outmoded farmhouses – occasionally even

38 (1995), pp. 363–409; S. Hindle, 'Exclusion crises: poverty, migration and parochial responsibility in English rural communities, *c.* 1560–1660', *Rural Hist.*, 7 (1996), pp. 125–49 and his 'Power, poor relief, and social relations in Holland fen, *c.* 1600–1800', *Hist. J.*, 41 (1998), pp. 67–96; S. Birtles, 'Common land, poor relief and enclosure. The use of manorial resources in fulfilling parish obligations, 1601–1834', *Past and Present* 165 (1999), pp. 74–106.

[5] P. Styles, 'The evolution of the laws of settlement', *University of Birmingham Historical J.*, 9 (1963), J. S. Taylor, 'The impact of pauper settlement, 1691–1834', *Past and Present* 73 (1976), pp. 42–74 and more recently Hindle, 'Exclusion crises'.

[6] On the population shifts and regional variation see E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1538–1871* (1981), p. 163 and P. Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688–1959* (1967), pp. 106–22; on open and closed villages, see S. J. Banks, 'Nineteenth-century scandal or twentieth model? A new look at "open" and "closed" parishes', *EcHR* 41 (1988), pp. 51–73; D. R. Mills, *Lord and peasant in nineteenth-century Britain* (1980) and B. A. Holderness, 'Open and close parishes in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth century', *AgHR* 20 (1972), pp. 126–39.

manor houses such as the fifteenth-century hall house at Wofhamcote (Warwicks.) – were converted or remodelled.[7] This is difficult to quantify during the eighteenth century, but the 1831 census gives figures for houses and families. It shows that in a significant number of villages, particularly in the south midlands, the number of families exceeded houses by 30–50 per cent. At the higher end this meant that up to half of a village's housing stock was subdivided. Secondly, they could live in newly-constructed accommodation, built by landlords, or small freeholders, or construct a cottage themselves. Timber-framed buildings were extremely flexible and renewable and could easily be moved.[8] The wooden frame needed little more than thatch on top, panels of wattle and daub as its sides, and re-usable doors, window shutters (though glass was increasingly common) and floor boards. One item, the stone or brick chimney, required rather more construction skills. John Butcher squatted in a barn and made it his home. In a high court settlement case in 1774 a cottage was described as 'part of a barn'.[9] In 1732 a cottage on the waste at Wotton Underwood (Bucks.) was described as 'properly but a barn, a chimney having been raised to it but of late years'. The structures might be very small, one or two rooms at most.[10]

Many such cottages were built on marginal waste and common land, often in outlying parts of large parishes where manorial and community control was lax. Hamlets with names such as Little London, California, Gibraltar, often originated as squatter settlements. Such squatter houses could still be built in the nineteenth century. The architect Gilbert Scott's reminiscences of a Buckinghamshire childhood include a description of a deranged Gawcott man's endeavours in the 1820s:

> After this his great desire was to build himself a house with his own unaided hands on a piece of waste ground by the road side. He made many beginnings but what he built in the day the young men of the village pulled down at night. At length, however, his perseverance and active defence of his work prevailed, and he succeeded in completing a very tolerable batchelors cottage – and enclosed a long piece of waste as a garden which he successfully cultivated.[11]

These antics reflected the continuing popular belief that a squatter gained legal rights if his house was successfully put up overnight.

When squatters built their own homes on waste, the attitude of landlords and manorial courts was vital in deciding whether their erection would be tolerated. At Wotton Underwood between 1617 and 1657, the Grenvilles were demolishing cottages and farmhouses as they increased farm sizes on their manor. At the same time the Mercers' Company allowed the erection of fourteen new cottages elsewhere in the parish on waste belonging to their manor.[12] Elsewhere manorial

[7] N. W. Alcock and C. T. P. Woodfield, 'Social pretensions in architecture and ancestry: Hall House, Sawbridge, Warwickshire, and the Andrewe family', *Antiquaries J.*, 76 (1996), esp. pp. 69–72.

[8] E.g. a bill for £25 for moving a house within Hillesden (Bucks.) in the 1660s. Coke MSS microfilm at Buckinghamshire Record Office (hereafter BRO).

[9] Rex *v.* Woburn in J. Burrow, *Settlement Cases, 1738–76* (1786), no. 244, for other cases see *ibid.*, nos 34, 194, 195; H. Davies 'The making of a modern landscape: Wotton Underwood, 1649–1743' (unpublished Reading MA thesis, 1993), p. 63.

[10] Steve Hindle has found barns, kitchens, stables and outhouses converted for pauper housing in Hoddesdon, (Herts.), and kilns licensed for poor dwellings in early seventeenth-century Cheshire.

[11] I. Toplis, G. Clarke, I. Beckett and H. Hanley (eds), 'Recollections of nineteenth-century Buckinghamshire', *Buckinghamshire Rec. Soc.* 31 (1998), p. 27.

[12] Davies, 'Wotton Underwood', pp. 29–30

lords permitted, and sometimes built, cottages on a large scale as is evident from early seventeenth century surveys of nearby Brill, just before the disafforestation of Bernwood, and in the adjoining Otmoor parishes.[13] But even more housing undoubtedly became available through the subdivision of existing houses or the doubling up of houses on garden plots.

Much building was haphazardly permitted for profit. Manorial lords increased their income by acknowledging new cottages on manorial wastes in return for fines and quit rents. However their gain also threatened to increase poor rates, and exacerbate pressure on commonable resources in open field villages. New cottages were a threat to the balance of agricultural life because their inhabitants claimed common rights in manorial waste even where they also enclosed closes and gardens from the waste. As Coke remarked in his *Institutes*, such cottages were 'nests to hatch idlenesse, the mother of pickings, thieveries, stealing of wood etc, tending also to the prejudice of lawful commoners: for that new erected cottages ... ought not to common waste.[14] Many of the cottage inhabitants on wastes were newcomers and presented a problem in agricultural parishes long before 1660. In Layston (Herts.), community controversy and tensions in the 1630s were expressed in the vicar's diatribe against the misuse of community housing resources to provide for newcomers arriving in the parish.[15] The preamble to the 1662 Settlement Act specifically refers to idle people settling on the waste, but the act itself raised a new threat. If the occupiers of cottages on the waste were able to prove freehold title by default because declining manorial courts did not contest their claims, then the cottage occupiers gained settlement as of right.

Thirdly, poor families might turn to the parish and charitable foundations for help. This was particularly important for incomers without kinship or neighbourly networks, or the ready cash to pay rent in advance. Parish housing resources in the early modern period were much more varied than the many almshouses and 'hospitals' that are the most prominent surviving buildings for the poor in towns and villages all over England. Such endowed charitable institutions were normally dedicated to the care of the aged or disabled, and were frequently inhabited by the oldest widowed inhabitants of the parish. In many cases they provided an honourable period of retirement for the respectable poor.

Much less is known about the church houses and poor houses, and the cottages built by the parish and charitable foundations for the poor. These have frequently been confused with parish workhouses, but occurred widely across England. Many of the older ones were late medieval buildings that belonged to the parish as a collectivity. Church houses were widely built to provide a meeting place and suitable accommodation for church ales. A survey of Devon church houses revealed that some 162 Devon parishes, or 21 per cent of the total, contained identifiable church house buildings. An 1818 survey showed that at least 61 parishes used them to house the poor.[16] Bishop Wake's diocesan survey at Lincoln provides evidence of 100 parishes, about 10 per cent of the total, with church houses in 1709–12, but many poor houses were omitted, such

[13] J. Broad and R. Hoyle (eds) *Bernwood. The life and afterlife of a forest* (1997), ch. 3.

[14] E. Coke, *The second part of the institutes of the laws of England* (1797 edn), p. 797.

[15] Hindle, 'Exclusion crises'.

[16] G. W. Copland, 'Devonshire church houses', *Trans. Devonshire Association* 92–96, 99, 107 (1960–75), *passim*. For the 1818 survey see ibid., 92, p. 122. See also P. Cowley, *The church houses* (1970) for a more broadly-based piece that probably overestimates the west country's predominance.

as those at East and Steeple Claydon in Buckinghamshire.[17] In some cases such buildings had reverted to private hands. In Steeple Claydon the building originally granted to the churchwardens by the Abbot of Oseney in 1468 had, by 1704, become part of the lord of the manor's property.[18]

Church houses were found in most parts of the country. Another source of communal property that was often used to house the poor was the parish guildhall in East Anglia. There are plentiful examples of such use in eighteenth century Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Old chantry houses were sometimes converted to parish use after the Dissolution, while the general proximity of many parish-owned properties to the parish church in nineteenth century surveys suggests a continuing connection with medieval benefactions of various kinds.[19]

III

Church houses and poor houses were an ancient parish resource that could provide housing for a relatively static or slowly changing village community. The internal expansion of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries increased the separation of rural families from small farms in southern England even more than the North, while rising levels of migration exacerbated local housing shortages.[20] The late sixteenth century saw a recognition that cottager and labourer families were increasingly dependent on wage labour as their access to land to grow food was diminished. The implications for family self-sufficiency and for increasing poverty and homelessness were recognized in the provisions of two Elizabethan Statutes. The 1589 Act against the erecting and maintaining of cottages forbade the building of cottages without four acres of land in most circumstances, but a let-out clause permitted the Assizes and Quarter Sessions to allow cottages to remain once built. Lodgers and subdivision of houses were not permitted, but the major burden of enforcing the law was entrusted to the increasingly redundant manorial courts leet.[21] The 1589 statute remained in force until 1775 when it was repealed by a short act whose preamble cited the difficulties poor people had in finding 'habitation' and a fear of the lessening of population.[22] The 1589 Act provided a manorial framework for the erection of cottages by private individuals, either labouring squatters building their own cottages, or their construction by landlords for rent. The act may have been more effective at regulating cottage building than ensuring that new cottages had four-acre plots attached. Presentments to Quarter Sessions to legitimate existing cottages indicate that it was used even

[17] Christ Church, Oxford, Wake MSS, vols 324–6.

[18] Verney Mss, 2/433–4, 831

[19] On guildhalls and the poor in Cambridgeshire see E. Hampson, *The treatment of poverty in Cambridgeshire, 1597–1834* (1939), For Suffolk see PRO, MH12 papers for examples such as Laxfield, Worlingworth Bardwell, and Chevington. For a recent general discussion, see D. Dymond. 'God's disputed acre', *J. Ecclesiastical Hist.*, 50 (1999), pp. 480–1. I would like to thank Steve Hindle for the last reference.

[20] On north-south differences between the kind of land available to labouring families see A. Everitt, 'Farm labourers', in J. Thirsk (ed.) *Agrarian History of England and Wales* IV (1967), ch. 7.

[21] 31 Eliz. c. 7. Cottages in ports and fishing villages, in towns, and close to quarries and coal mines were exempt.

[22] 25 Geo. III c. 32. There is very little known about the origins of the repeal, but *Observations on the scheme before parliament for the maintenance of the poor* (1776) p. 21 points to pressure from the judges after a case at Chester Assizes in 1774 in which a gentleman was indicted under the act. I would like to think Joanna Innes for this reference.

in the second quarter of the eighteenth century in many counties including Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. The 1589 Act enshrined the concept of the independent labouring man, able to raise a subsistence from his four acres, but likely to sell his skills to farmers and tradesmen for part of the year to supplement his income.

Less well known are the important cottage-building clauses (cl. 4 and 5) in the Poor Law Act of 1601.[23] These gave a majority of churchwardens and overseers, or the JPs at Quarter Sessions, the right to erect 'convenient houses of habitation for poor impotent people' on manorial waste with the agreement of the lord of the manor. It diverged from the 1589 statute in two respects: it did not stipulate that any ground had to be attached to the cottage, and it allowed the sub-division of houses for several families. However it did insist that a house erected under its terms could only be used for 'impotent paupers' and could not be resold by the parish. Cottages built under this act form the core of what became 'community' housing stock in many parishes. Additionally, we may note that the 1722 Act that allowed many parishes to build workhouses and combine parish resources nowhere defined the nature or organisation of a building acquired for parish purposes. Technically, it enabled parishes to build or buy houses for the use of poor. Many parish poor houses built under this act oscillated between an institutional regime, and providing family accommodation.[24]

While the statutes of 1601 and 1722 permitted parish authorities to build or acquire a housing stock from the poor rate, this was not the only source of community housing available to poor families. Village charities also came to be important providers of housing for the poor all over England, but important distinctions are needed. Local charities often owned property within the benefiting parish, and let it out to produce income that was distributed in accordance with the charity's terms. Yet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries parish charities often distributed their funds flexibly outside the strict terms of their deeds. Some charities began to let out their houses to poor families rent-free even when they were not specifically providing for the poor. The numbers of houses involved were often small – one, two or three – but plenty of parish charities owned five to fifteen houses and a surprising number had substantially more. Although their administration was supposedly quite separate from that of the parish and in some cases the separation was jealously guarded, in many small parishes it merged with that of parish-owned housing and poor relief. The minister, churchwardens or overseers were often trustees of the charities, and in some cases charities' accounts have survived because they were kept in churchwardens' or overseers' books.[25]

IV

These practical parish solutions to housing need are in stark contrast to the main thrust of writing about the poor and the poor laws during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These frequently pressed for solutions that involved increasing control over under-employed families. While there was a growing concern about under-population nationally, there were numerous poor, able-bodied but under-employed families in both the countryside and the town. The solutions – putting poor children into apprenticeships, threatening to withdraw

[23] 43 Eliz. c. 2.

[24] 9 Geo. I c. 7.

[25] For more on the interchange between parish and charity functions, see my 'Parish economies of welfare'.

relief from families who had grown children living at home without work – were much less successful.[26] The most prominently discussed schemes involved the provision of institutional housing for the poor in various forms of workhouse. Amongst advocates of these options from the 1690s onwards were John Bellers, the SPCK, and Matthew Marriott whose didactic pamphlets on parish workhouses were based on his experiences in Northamptonshire and north Buckinghamshire in the 1720s.[27] Josiah Tucker stated that 'if the poor are maintained in separate families, which is a frequent practice in the country, they are under no government at all'.[28] An increasing number of larger, more populous parishes, groups of parishes (especially after Gilbert's Act of 1782) and even some counties (notably Suffolk) built accommodation for the poor. Most of these linked the removal of paupers from family units into an institutional framework in which they were expected to contribute to their upkeep by productive work. There were exceptions: the late eighteenth-century workhouse plans for Smallburgh in Norfolk provided small numbers of explicitly designated spaces for family units.[29] In practice, workhouses rarely housed homeless family units, and increasingly became a depository for orphans, the aged poor and the disabled and disturbed. The wording of Gilbert's Act (1782) acknowledged the failure of the 'work' element in the system by consistently using the term 'poorhouse' in place of 'workhouse'.

However, practical evidence and a slim pamphlet literature suggests that the workhouse remained a contested institution among parish policy makers. However much intellectuals and the parliamentary classes favoured institutional solutions and successfully pressed them on a wide range of parishes, they were only the most vocal element in the debate on controlling the English rural poor. There were sceptics who remained loyal to traditional values that reflected the fundamental features of the 'European marriage pattern', the idea that a couple had a right to a home of their own. One of the few writers who expressed such views in print wrote in 1751 of the importance of couples having their own homes to make 'young labourious people venture to marry where nothing else could'. If this possibility were restricted in any way 'what despondency will it drive them into then that they will no longer have a home'.[30]

There are a few recorded practical examples of the continuing importance of such deeply engrained ideas. In East Claydon (Bucks.), the four families living in the church house in 1677 'make fires without chimneys against wattled walls, only daubed over with mortar. There is but one common chimney in the said house, but none of them will use it, because every one will be private'.[31] It is this tradition of the independent labouring cottager that I want to follow through, and the ways in which landlords, parish officers and JPs reacted to it. Elite perceptions were mixed. Edmund Verney's description of how the East Claydon church house functioned ended with two reproving notes. He remembered that his father-in-law had forced residents

[26] On this see Broad and Hoyle (eds), *Bernwood*, ch. 5.

[27] T. Hitchcock, 'Paupers and preachers: the SPCK and the parochial workhouse movement', in L. Davison, T. Hitchcock, T. Keirn and R. Shoemaker (eds) *Stilling the grumbling hive. The response to social and economic problems in England, 1689–1750* (1992).

[28] J. Tucker, *The manifold causes of the increase of the poor* ... (1760), p. 4.

[29] Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, pp. 42–3 shows family units in the plan of Smallburgh workhouse.

[30] [Charles Gray] *Considerations on several proposals lately made for the better maintenance of the poor* (1751), pp. 4–5.

[31] Edmund Verney to Sir Ralph Verney 29 Jan. 1677/8. Clayton Mss, R31 quoted in M. M. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney family* (4 vols, 1892–9), IV, p. 213

to use the common chimney and believed that the current overseers were negligent, allowing the fabric of the house to decay 'to save their purses', and permitting 'the now dwellers to do what they please'. Poorhouse inhabitants were seen, like John Butcher, as irresponsible people unable to support themselves or their own houses. The law continued to uphold the idea that couples should not marry until they could afford housing. On a parish appeal against an order to provide a house for a poor family in 1670, Judge Twisden ruled that able bodied couples who married without means of support in a parish, could be sent to the house of correction until able 'to provide for themselves' but that this should not be considered a punishment 'unless they refuse to work'.[32]

Ordinary people continued to uphold the idea that families should live in their own homes, even when village elites introduced the workhouse. Ashwell in Hertfordshire is an interesting case in point. In 1728, Ashwell set up a workhouse and gave the poor five days' notice to move into it. The workhouse was well planned with carefully drawn up rules that suggest a humane environment for the poor. Yet ordinary parishioners were soon in uproar about it in ways that suggest that the principle of workhouse authority rather than cost to the rates was at issue. Within fifteen months, a vestry coup saw new vestrymen, several of whom could not sign their names, ordering the suppression of the workhouse and deciding 'to maintain the poor of our said parish according to the usual way, before the said workhouse was erected'.[33] Ashwell was not alone in doing this. Eaton Socon in Bedfordshire had set up a workhouse in 1719 but in 1727 decided to pay in the inmates doles in-house, and in the following year closed it entirely.[34]

Where Eaton Socon's poorhouse inmates were expected to go was a problem, but in general the business of building housing for the poor was a local, parish, matter for much of the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the century cottage building emerged as a matter of architectural interest with the publication of books of designs for picturesque cottages after 1780 that were aimed at improving estate owners. Publications held in the British Library with the word 'cottage' or 'cottagers' in the title were numerous, but their numbers declined (though perhaps coincidentally) after the defeat of Samuel Whitbread's poor bill of 1807. This explicitly provided for parochial cottage building and advocated removing the poor from workhouses and poorhouses wherever possible.[35]

[32] J. Keble, *Reports in the court of King's Bench* (1685), p. 537. Rex *v* Grant etc, Trin. term, 21 Car. II: 'if Persons able marry in the parish, or come thither, they may be sent to the house of correction to work until they can provide by themselves; but not to be there punished, unless they refuse to work'.

[33] Hertfordshire RO (hereafter HRO), D/P7/25/1, Ashwell vestry minutes dated 8 Jan. 1727/8, 5 June 1729.

[34] F. G. Emmison, 'The relief of the poor at Eaton Socon, 1706–1834', *Bedfordshire Hist. Rec. Soc.* 14 (1933), pp. 26–7; cf Kent, 'The centre and the localities'.

[35] J. L. Poynter, *Society and pauperism. English ideas on poor relief, 1795–1834* (1969), pp. 207–19; on Whitbread's investigations on the state of poorhouses see below p. 166. The evidence of publication frequency from the British Library catalogue entries provides a greater sense of the dynamic that the more selective descriptions available in J. Archer, *The literature of British domestic architecture, 1715–1842* (Boston 1985), Appendix E. I would like to thank Malcolm Airs for drawing the latter to my attention. The fluctuations in publication figures are at least as likely to reflect trends in the building cycle where housing starts shrank rapidly after 1805, before a slow rise to a new peak in 1825. For this, see F. Sheppard, V. Belcher and P. Cottrell, 'The Middlesex and Yorkshire deeds registry and the study of building fluctuation' *London J.*, 5 (1979), pp. 176–217.

V

It is within this context that I want to turn to the central point of this paper – the provision of housing for the poor by parishes and charities in the period 1660–1834. However anachronistic the term may seem, it may be viewed as a first foray into local authority house construction and ownership. The problem will be considered in terms of the pressures on rural housing and how parishes responded to them within the periods 1660–1780 and 1780–1840. This will be followed by an estimate of the scale of rural public housing provision by parishes and charities in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Peter Clark claimed that one of the 'most striking developments in poor relief' in the later seventeenth century was 'the proliferation of ... habitation orders, authorising the erection of cottages for the poor, the provision of rented housing and so on'. He cites the 'mass licensing' of cottages in Northamptonshire.[36] Such orders came in two forms. One was retrospective legitimization of housing, built on the waste under the terms of the statute 31 Elizabeth, where cottages did not have four-acre plots attached. This was common across midland England, with plentiful examples in the Quarter Sessions records for later seventeenth-century Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.[37]

The Justices also put pressure on parishes to construct cottages under the statute of 43 Elizabeth for specifically named paupers. Such orders predate the Act of Settlement of 1662. Buckinghamshire Quarter Sessions made a number of such orders in 1647.[38] The Oxfordshire and Warwickshire records after 1662 have been examined in detail. In Oxfordshire between 1660 and 1720, individuals from all over the county petitioned Quarter Sessions because they were homeless and the parish refused to help them. Many of these petitions portray village elites as cruel and ruthless to long-established families quite as much as incomers. There are examples of petitioners who claimed to be sick, old and vulnerable who were particularly harshly dealt with. Ruth Goodson of Hampton Gay had 'formerly lived well and relieved others' but when her husband deserted her and their three small children, the landlord threatened to turn her out. Thomas Adams of Enstone suffered multiple disabilities – rupture, diabetes and colic – but a year after his parents died the parish pushed him into lodgings and then found him 'mean service'. He was so ill he returned after a fortnight to find his room padlocked. Another poor labourer in Chalgrave with a wife and three children found his landlord intending to pull his house down. Elizabeth Rence of Wheatley had been assigned to live in her old and blind father's house for some eighteen years. Two years after his death she was herself aged and lame. Then suddenly two weeks before her petition three men broke into her house and ejected her. She spent two days and one night in the street before a poor neighbour took her in. Ellis Edwards of Bicester was made homeless and spent five nights in the open porch of Mr Busby's home in 1701. Several petitions asked the justices for aid because their overseers had put them

[36] P. Clark 'Migration in England, 1650–1750' in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds), *Migration and society in early modern England* (1987), pp. 240–1 citing Northamptonshire RO (hereafter NRO), QSR 1.10.70 and others references.

[37] For Northamptonshire see NRO, QS Minute book 1708–27 especially St. Thomas day 1 Geo. I, Michaelmas 4 Geo. I and Easter 4 Geo. I. I would like to thank Leigh Shaw-Taylor for drawing my attention to the Oxfordshire references.

[38] W. Le Hardy and G. L. Reckitt, *Buckinghamshire Sessions Records* (1939), App. 2, pp. 31C–14.

in clearly unsuitable accommodation. One family was living in an 'old untiled stable with no fireplace' while a family of six was living in a single room which they claimed was so small that lighting a fire in it would set fire to the parish.

Petitions only give one side of the story, and some are clearly misleading. Ben Castle of Wilcot claimed he had gone away to do harvest work in Berkshire but when his wife died in his absence the overseers 'took away' his two children and pulled down his house. Yet the same sessions issued a warrant committing Castle to the House of Correction because he had deserted his wife and children and 'is now about marrying again a lewd idle woman'. The Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions petitions show that parishes discriminated against individuals and families who seemed potential candidates for long-term poor relief. Among these are at least half a dozen petitions asking the justices to give people habitation orders when they had been refused a house despite offering to pay rent with cash down. This suggests that in some parishes householders were equally hostile to outsiders, even those who had the means to pay their way and wanted more permanent residence in the community.[39]

In Warwickshire, the JPs made many habitation orders before 1730. In 1689 Quarter Sessions made three orders to parishes to provide poor relief 'until the said overseers provide a habitation'. On one occasion the relief was set at the punitive rate of 4*s.* per week, and annotated that this was to ensure a house was provided.[40] A woman found living in a church was also given a habitation order. On the other hand the Warwickshire justices did not recklessly encourage cottage builders. They also ordered the demolition of two cottages in Packwood whose occupants had moved on. In Cambridgeshire a similar regime existed and Hampson notes the need for 'concerted action of the bench' to ensure that overseers obeyed orders to provide a house.[41]

In both Oxfordshire and Warwickshire overseers and parishes sometimes contested the Justices' proactive stance. All the cases on cottage provision that went to higher courts and provided precedents in case law reference books seem to derive from Warwickshire. Judges in poor law cases in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made judgements that were frequently divergent, even contradictory and ignorant of precedent. Yet there were a clutch of King's Bench cases around 1670 all bearing on questions of pauper housing. One case turned on whether JPs could order a parish to provide a house for someone who was not 'impotent'. Another concerned the question of whether people could be placed as inmates (lodgers) in existing houses. A third adjudicated on whether houses could only be used for the impotent poor once they had been built. By about 1725 legal commentators believed that the JPs could no longer order parishes to build new houses, apparently basing their view on the cases from around 1670. Considerable numbers of building orders exist up to the early eighteenth century, but very few are noted in Quarter Sessions records in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, and Warwickshire after 1730.[42]

[39] Oxfordshire RO, Oxfordshire QS Calendars 1681–1830, III, pp. 326, 311, 313, 342, 370, 389, 313, 375. Compare Norma Landau's recent discussion of the timing and purposes of settlement examinations: N. Landau, 'Who was subjected to the laws of settlement? Procedure under the settlement laws in eighteenth-century England', *AgHR* 43 (1995), pp. 139–59.

[40] S. C. Ratcliffe and H. C. Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records* (9 vols, 1935–64), VIII, pp. 259, 263, 270; VII, p. 90; IX, pp. 21–257–8, 65, 73, 131. I would like to thank David Brown for additional interesting references from this source.

[41] Hampson, *Treatment of Poverty*, pp. 67–72.

[42] S. Carter, *Legal provision for the poor* (London, 1725), unpaginated.

It is unclear whether JPs ceased to order parishes to build houses for the poor, or whether such orders remained unrecorded as they became part of the summary business conducted before individual JPs or Petty Sessions. It does not mean that parishes ceased to build, although the records in parish overseers' and other accounts are opaque and rare. At East Claydon the church house was considered to be an endowed charity in 1677. There is one entry in the overseers' accounts about its repair in 1721.[43] By the time of the charity commissioners' report in the early nineteenth century, it had disappeared. There are exceptions where the history of parish housing can be followed closely in the record. The poor house at Ruston in Norfolk, built for £14 14*s.* 0*d.* in 1709, was a wood-framed building, rush-thatched with three doors, glazed, and with an iron oven. It was extensively rebuilt in brick in 1727 at a cost of £26 15*s.* 0*d.* Its counterpart in Blickling was regularly repaired on an almost annual basis in the period 1758–97.[44] Parish-owned, or charitable housing built during the century after 1660, was not systematically reported or recorded, so most information has come from micro-studies, or from chance or random discoveries. Mary Barker-Read's detailed study of five Kentish parishes concluded that most parishes had a stock of rent-free housing for the poor and gives examples of different types, while in Cambridgeshire the village of Linton spent money in a variety of schemes to house the poor between 1700 and 1710. Elsewhere in Cambridgeshire there was extensive building of poorhouses around Ely in the period 1735–45.[45] However it is difficult to ascertain the scale of provision in the period 1660–1780 at a national or even county level beyond the existence of long-standing church and poor houses. Some more detailed information is recorded in Bridges' history of Northamptonshire which records cottages 'set aside' or 'built for' the poor for many parishes in the county in the early eighteenth century, though it does not specify parish or charitable ownership. It suggests a range of 5–10 per cent of village housing stock was devoted to the poor, though one parish, Guilsborough had over 25 per cent of its housing assigned to the use of the poor.[46] Despite a lack of a single national source there is evidence of widespread, small-scale building, as well as chance findings of substantial blocks of housing throughout the country.

In many cases, parish, but not usually charitable, property lacked proper title deeds. In the 1840s much parish property was so claimed by virtue of local folk memory, with properties assigned to parish ownership where they had been repaired consistently in living memory, which rarely took the story further back than the 1780s. Myth could often become established, as Barbara English showed in her critique of the historical basis of Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*. The origins of *Lark Rise*, otherwise Juniper Hill, a hamlet settlement in the north Oxfordshire parish of Cottesford, lay not in Flora Thompson's six original freeholders, but in the two 'poor's houses' built by the overseers in 1754, with the addition of two more later.[47]

[43] BRO, PR51/12/1, East Claydon overseers' accounts.

[44] Norfolk RO, PD38/25 and PD434/24. I am most grateful to Sara Birtles informing me of the source and for sending me her transcripts of the records.

[45] M. Barker-Read, 'The treatment of the aged poor in five selected West Kent parishes, from settlement to Speenhamland' (unpublished Open University PhD thesis, 1988), pp. 76–88. I would like to thank Penelope Corfield for this reference. Hampson, *Treatment of Poverty*, pp. 71–2, 93.

[46] J. Bridges, *The history and antiquities of the county of Northampton* (?1740). I would like to thank Leigh Shaw-Taylor for this reference. An interesting sidelight on this is that by 1840 there appears to have been neither parish-owned, nor charity housing, in Guilsborough.

[47] B. English, 'Lark Rise and Juniper Hill: a Victorian community in literature and history', *Victorian Studies* 29 (1985/6), pp. 7–34.

The survival of charitable trust records is also patchy, but a few well-documented cases show that in some parishes charities had acquired large blocks of housing before the nineteenth century. Great Brington in Northamptonshire, at the very centre of the Spencer estates near Althorp, had a substantial charity estate, but it was not a paternalist enterprise of the Spencers. Its origins lie in a deed of 1450 leaving land to thirteen trustees for 'the use and profit of the parishioners ... in greatest need'.[48] After the dissolution of the chantries the villagers protested so vigorously at its confiscation that they obtained the land 'no use but to be employed by the parishioners to such use as to them shall seem good and necessary'.[49] By 1690 there were five cottages and five more 'lately made eight tenements'.[50] Control had fallen to the Spencers by the early eighteenth century because the deeds had been entrusted to them for protection during the Civil War. By 1743 the Spencers had managed to have the terms changed from 'other' to 'pious' uses.

Yet folk memory came to the defence of what was truly a parish charity. It emerged in an undated petition, almost certainly just before 1771, in which four local men balanced due deference to Earl Spencer with a firm commitment to the charity's independence. They demanded that the deeds be put back in the iron parish chest where they had lain for centuries, but also that the trustees be properly reconstituted. They were confident that the writings would be returned but were anxious 'that we may not bring a curse upon ourselves and our children here after' if this did not occur. They suggested that the Spencers chose some 'neighbouring gentlemen' as trustees, but pointed out that there used to be fifteen or sixteen tenants and freeholders amongst the trustees. When new trustees were duly appointed in 1771, all four men appeared on the list. In 1539, the Great Brington charity seems to have had 4 messuages, 2 cottages, and 3¾ yardlands. By 1820 there were 29 houses, of which 13 were let rent-free. Not all this had been done by subdivision: in 1815 the Charity Commissioners reported that one trustee was owed sums for building four new cottages, and rebuilding some old ones.[51]

Parishes and their charities not only built houses; they also frequently bought them. In Kent, Maidstone bought houses in sixteenth century, Cowden and Tonbridge in the early seventeenth century, while Ashwell in Hertfordshire did so in the years around 1700.[52] This begs the question why should they have made financial commitments on such a scale, and why private enterprise was not doing the job effectively. Margaret Spufford has suggested that it was only in the late seventeenth century that permanent cottage accommodation was built that survived more than a couple of generations.[53] The increasing use of brick for cottages made structures more permanent, yet brick houses remained conspicuously more expensive than their wattle and daub counterparts in 1700.[54] Even in the nineteenth century parishes built 'mud' houses for

[48] NRO, Great Brington charity estate records.

[49] G. Baker, *The history and antiquities of the county of Northampton* (2 vols, 1822–41), I, p. 100.

[50] NRO, Great Brington charity estate records, deed dated 13 June 1690.

[51] NRO, Great Brington charity estate Mss, deeds – some of which are reprinted in *Tracts ... relating to Northamptonshire* sec. ser. (Northampton, 1881) from the original tract of 1876. Elizabeth Hurren's researches at University College Northampton show that popular control of the charity was again reasserted in the 1890s.

[52] Barker-Read, 'Treatment of the aged poor', pp. 80–1, 84–6; HRO, D/P7/25/1, in loose papers at the end of the volume.

[53] M. Spufford, *The great reclothing of rural England* (1984), pp. 1–3.

[54] M. Airs and J. Broad, 'The management of rural building in seventeenth-century Buckinghamshire', *Vernacular Architecture* 29 (1998), pp. 43–56

poor families.[55] Although landlords and benefactors built brick almshouses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they rarely built cottages to a high standard before the era of the grand country seat, with its wholesale redesigning of the landscape and movement of entire villages. Lord Orford undertook a considerable amount of cottage building at Chippenham in Cambridgeshire between 1696 and 1712, when he bought out the copyholders in preparation for redesigning the village and expanding the park. The Earl of Harcourt provided a correspondent with a description and sketch of cottages he built at Nuneham Courtenay in these circumstances in 1767, and made the point that each cottage had its own chimney (and therefore hearth).[56] Such model villages spawned the vogue for picturesque cottage design and the sentimental cult of the cottager, but left most villages untouched. As Potter wrote grandiloquently in 1775:

> Whilst we are rolling thro' the kingdom in our post-coaches, post-chaises, chairs, whiskies, and a variety of whirligigis of a whimsical construction, the high culture of our lands gives us the idea of a *Ferme bien orné*, our nobility live in palaces, our gentry in villas, commerce has made us a nation of gentry, every farm-house is a grange, and the whole is one delightful scene of convenience, plenty, elegance, splendor, and magnificence. Mean time our interior police is disgrac'd with the number of our starving, naked, unshelter'd, miserable Poor; this is an ulcer in our vitals.[57]

It was more than thirty years before the movement for better cottage conditions appeared and allotments and smallholdings for the poor began to be developed.

Those villages and communities that lay outside the constructed landscape of the eighteenth-century gentry were subject to another feature of changing Poor Law administration in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Many seventeenth-century landlords of a traditional and paternal outlook made no attempt to extract rents from poor cottagers who were in receipt of poor relief, as for instance on the Verney estates in Buckinghamshire where rentals between 1679 and 1694 consistently give lists of cottagers who paid no rents. This practice appears to have changed in many places between 1700 and 1725. At Middle Claydon, seven or eight cottage rents were regularly paid from the overseers' accounts after 1710. At Bledlow (Bucks.), four rents were chargeable in 1702, but this had increased to 14 by 1721.[58] In Ashwell (Herts.), additional rent payments account for a significant part of the rise in poor rates in the period leading to the setting up of the workhouse. In 1678 only two or three rents were being paid, but in 1716 and 1721 there were twelve and thirteen respectively.[59] In Butlers Marston (Warwicks.) the parish began paying rents rather later (in 1731) but by the 1790s was paying for eight cottages or about 12 per cent of the parish housing stock.[60]

[55] N. Alcock 'Halford Cottages: mud construction', *Birmingham and Warwick Archaeological Society* 87 (1975), pp. 133–6. Alcock argues that these cottages, which can be dated from accounts to 1820–1, are in appearance more reminiscent of late eighteenth-century cottages and were deliberately old-fashioned in both design and construction material.

[56] M. Spufford, 'A Cambridgeshire Community. Chippenham from settlement to enclosure', *Department of English Local History Occasional Papers* 20 (1965); NRO, H(K) 192, Earl of Harcourt to William Hanbury, May 1767. This document was discovered by Dr Keith Goodway, and drawn to my attention by Malcolm Airs.

[57] R. Potter, *Observations on the poor laws on the present state of the poor, and on houses of industry* (1775), p. 31.

[58] BRO, PR17/12/1 (Bledlow).

[59] HRO, D/P7/12/12/1 (Ashwell).

[60] J. Lane, 'The administration of Butlers Marston in the eighteenth century', *Dugdale Society occasional papers* 21 (1973), pp. 9–10.

In Middle Claydon a major land-owning family was off-loading its cottage rents as part of the professionalisation of estate administration, and tightening accountancy practices. In parishes with much more diffuse landownership patterns, there were similar practices. One factor was the rise in absentee ownership of village smallholdings and cottage properties that Chibnall found in Sherington (Bucks). There, new absentee owners had no personal interest in the plight of poor village families and saw their property only as a source of income. Yet the new owners were as likely to be the offspring or siblings of old village families who had inherited the properties and now lived elsewhere.[61]

In the period 1660–1780, pressure on rural housing became a significant factor in the administration of poor relief, affecting not just rent subsidies but the building of additional housing. The physical division of cottages into tenements or the lodging of several families in a single house also provided additional accommodation. While some parishes tried institutional solutions, erecting workhouses and poorhouses, many built houses for poor families with parish money. In other communities charitable funds were used to build additional cottages, or charities made their existing houses available to the poor rent-free.

VI

Between 1780 and 1834 a rapidly rising rural population affected the scale of rural housing provision while increasing public concern for the welfare of the rural poor spurred attention to its quality. The late eighteenth century population increase has been linked to rising nuptuality, which meant that more families needed housing. At the same time the rural population of southern England became more static than before. Housing became an acute problem in villages as pauperisation increased.

David Brown has shown that it was still possible for large and important squatter communities to develop in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on marginal waste at county edges in Staffordshire and Herefordshire. Such settlements were increasingly rare as the pace of enclosure accelerated.[62] Yet parishes in southern and midland England also developed communities on the wastes, separate from the main village (as at Juniper Hill). While much building of this sort was unsanctioned, there is good evidence that parishes and charities increased village housing stock over the period 1780–1830 by financing building and purchase with borrowed money as well as accumulated revenues. The quality of provision was more doubtful. In some respects 'less eligibility' was a reality before 1834. While workhouses built in the period were overwhelmingly substantial brick structures, cottages often remained primitive. Few accounts survive, but one, for a new cottage erected by the overseers in Halford (Warwickshire) in 1820 explicitly states that it was mud-built. This has been confirmed by inspection.[63] It is impossible to say whether overall additions to the parish housing stock increased faster than in earlier period because of deficiencies in earlier records, but there is plenty of evidence of activity after 1780 from the returns made under the New Poor Law.[64]

[61] A. C. Chibnall, *Sherington: fiefs and fields of a Buckinghamshire village* (1965), pp. 202–4, 230.

[62] D. G. Brown, 'Enclosure and improvement. An investigation into the motives for parliamentary enclosure' (unpublished Wolverhampton Polytechnic PhD thesis, 1992).

[63] Alcock, 'Holford cottages'.

[64] See below p. 167.

Parishes also acquired housing stock by two other mechanisms. Peter King has shown that from the later eighteenth century, parishes increasingly came to agreements with individuals and families in crisis by which the parish supported the family for life in return for all the family's goods and real property. King's examples relate to Essex, and focus on household goods, but freehold cottage properties passed to parishes in this way all over southern and midland England between 1780 and 1834 and were specified in the parish property returns after 1834.[65] Parishes also acquired property when absentee owners failed to repair property in which paupers were living. Such landlords found it difficult to extract rent from impoverished labourer tenants. In the earlier period they would have looked to the parish for their rent, but in a period of rising rural poverty they were caught in a double bind, forced to make a choice between paying higher poor rates to finance parish rent subsidies, or receiving no rent.[66] In the 1830s a large number of parishes became the imputed owners of properties only because they could prove they had repaired them over many years.

Some cottage building may reflect the public outcry against conditions in parish workhouses and poor houses that took place after 1790. Samuel Whitbread's graphic descriptions of conditions in Bedfordshire between 1801 and 1814, following the Workhouse Inspection Act of 1790, show many poor houses were in ruinous condition and harmful to their inhabitants.[67] Evidence from poor houses and workhouses in several counties suggest they were often under-used, and had sometimes been partially re-divided to allow some families to live as family units. A verse description of 'The village poor house' in 1832 suggests it contained many young people, including an unmarried couple. Many reports around 1834 argued that administrative discipline had broken down and that those supposedly in charge had little practical capacity to influence day-to-day activities. New union officials may have been keen to impress a fledgling Poor Law Board about to institute wholesale change, but their reports were probably not wholly misleading.[68]

By 1834, a considerable number of parishes nationwide had acquired, by a variety of means, a significant influence over the housing supply for the poor. The pattern across England varies, but in most of the hundreds and/or Poor Law Unions investigated for this paper, there was at least one parish with an important block of family housing, and others with significant amounts. The remainder of this article will attempt to answer the question of why this has remained unknown to historians, and how far it can be quantified.

VII

My researches make possible a reasonably accurate estimate of parish and charity owned housing in the last years of the Old Poor Law regime. Data has been collected for ten counties south of the Trent which confirms general trends across six midland and southern counties analysed in more detail. Further analysis of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire at the level of

[65] P. King, 'Pauper inventories and the material lives of the poor in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', in T. Hitchcock, P. King and P. Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty. The voices and strategies of the English poor, 1640–1840* (1997), pp. 155–91.

[66] The problem is well highlighted in W. W. Whymper, *Reasons why landlords should pay the poor rates for tenants of 10s and under* (Woodbridge, 1833).

[67] See Bedfordshire RO (hereafter Beds. RO), W1/762–72. The Act is 30 Geo III c. 49.

[68] 'A country curate', *The village poor house* (1832). There are reports on existing workhouse and poor house provision made in 1834 in a number of poor law unions. e.g. PRO, MH12/380, 525, 21.

post-1834 Poor Law Union provides evidence of more local differentiation and sub-regional patterns. The figures combine information from two reasonably reliable sources that do not duplicate each other and, incidentally, confirm that there was significant provision before 1780.

Charitable housing figures have been drawn from the Charity Commissioners' reports, scattered through the Parliamentary Papers for the first third of the nineteenth century, and made practically accessible through the 1843 Abstract Tables.[69] The figures for parish-owned housing are derived from central Poor Law records. These records are also the reason why the scale of parish housing provision has been underestimated for so long. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act laid down that all parish housing should be sold off to pay for the building of the new workhouses, a position buttressed by a further clarifying act in 1835.[70] Under the New Poor Law, parish housing became redundant, since outdoor relief was prohibited and paupers should not be living in cottages. Parishes were required to inform the Poor Law board of the property they owned and the distinctive yellow and blue forms used give property descriptions, current use, and putative valuations.[71]

Data for parish and charitable housing for three south and east Midland counties – Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire – has been collated and is presented with the equivalent material from Warwickshire and the Dorset for comparative purposes. The data is substantially complete, and the main sources of error appear small and tend to deflate rather than inflate totals.[72] In the case of charitable housing, the Abstract Tables record where housing is being let to poor people, or for no rent. In doubtful cases, reference has been made back to the original reports. This has made it possible to derive an estimate of the scale of community housing, combining parish-owned and charity-owned property, has been derived for five Poor Law counties as shown in Table 1. This estimate has then been expressed as a percentage of all houses discovered by the 1831 census.

The figures presented there indicate marked variations both in numbers, and in the proportions of community housing owned by parish authorities and by charities. Northamptonshire, a large county with many parishes, stands out in the size of its overall provision, which was overwhelmingly parish-owned. Its 1101 houses were equivalent to the number of houses in a medium sized hundred of ten or fifteen villages. Warwickshire had by far the largest proportion of charity-owned housing. This probably reflects the importance of Gilbert's Act and other workhouse incorporations before 1834, rather than the absence of parochial activity, which as we noted earlier is well recorded in Quarter Sessions material for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The workings of Gilbert's Act nationally need some re-appraisal in this

[69] BPP, 1843, XVI, XVII, 'Analytical digest of the reports made by the Commissioners of Inquiry into charities'.

[70] 5 and 6 Wm IV, c. 69.

[71] These forms are all to be found amongst the MH 12 series at the PRO. I am extremely grateful to Bridget Lewis of University College Northampton for bringing this source to my attention. I would like to thank Meryl Wilson for her help in gathering this material.

[72] All sales from the relevant central Poor Law records have been abstracted from the MH 12 volumes covering the period 1834–42. Most sales took place in that period, although checks up to 1854 on a random selection of unions show rare occasions where sales were delayed beyond 1850. Some parish property was not sold because sharp-witted landed proprietors did deals with parishes that favoured them. For instance the Duke of Bedford, at Chenies in Buckinghamshire, agreed an exchange of ten parish cottages for the old workhouse that was technically held on his lease. Elsewhere there are examples of parishes attempting to circumvent open sale by transfer to debtors (sometimes the builders of houses) or the conversion of parish property into schools – see MH12/382.

TABLE 1. Community housing in five selected Poor Law counties, *c.* 1834

	Parish houses	*Charity houses*	*Total*	*Percentage of houses*
Bedfordshire	291	107	398	26.9
Buckinghamshire	445	125	529	23.6
Dorset	306	16	322	5.0
Northamptonshire	978	123	1101	11.2
Warwickshire	271	163	434	37.6

Source: see text p. 167.

light, for it also included a clause allowing the voluntary unions to sell parish properties to finance poorhouses.[73] This appears to have happened in Rugby Poor Law Union, where the Gilbert's Act union was dissolved in 1834. In the parishes of the old union there were virtually no properties to sell. However the New Poor Law union included parishes from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire where there were large blocks of 10, 20 or, at Crick, 39 parish cottages. In Dorset, the southern side of the county had much lower levels of both parish and charitable housing. More parishes had no community provision, but where it occurred numbers and types of provision followed a similar pattern to elsewhere in the country. The underlying demographic, migratory, and economic and social dynamics of these features need further exploration. However, the northern part of the county, especially around Shaftesbury, had much larger numbers of parish houses. Preliminary indications from the Welsh borders, East Anglia, and the south east of England also show varied patterns of provision within counties.

Analysis of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire Poor Law counties at parish level by Poor Law Union permits a greater level of sophistication and probes some of the variation within counties (Table 2). In the two counties, half of all parishes had some community housing, while almost a quarter of parishes had five or more houses, and more than ten per cent had more than ten houses. Viewed from another angle, ten per cent of parishes held more than ten per cent of their total housing stock in community hands. Such a percentage is relatively easy to derive in a small village of fifty houses (250 inhabitants) or fewer, but this was not an important factor. Further investigations showed that one third of parishes with more than ten per cent of their housing stock in parish hands had more than 100 houses. Detailed analysis also brings out a range of geographical variation. Comparison of unions that had many pre-existing workhouses with those that had few reveals little correlation in their ownership of housing. Aylesbury Union had only two existing workhouses in 1834, yet fewer parish houses than Eton Union where over half the parishes had workhouses. Newport Union, in north-east Buckinghamshire, where Matthew Marriott's early eighteenth century workhouses had flourished, was one of the unions with fewest workhouses in 1834. Some part of that legacy may persist in the fact that in Newport hundred there was very little parish-owned housing, but a considerable stock owned by charities. This was in sharp contrast to the adjoining unions

[73] 22 Geo III c. 83, cl. 43 permits the sale of 'any house, cottage or building which shall have been erected or purchased for the use of any poor person or persons at the expense of such parish, lordship or place'.

TABLE 2. Parish and Charity housing in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire by poor law union, *c.* 1834.

Poor Law Union	*number of parishes*	*number with houses*	*number with >10 houses*	*number with ≥5 houses*	*Total parish houses*	*Total charity houses*	*Number with workhouse*
Bedfordshire:							
Ampthill	17	13	2	4	45	30	4
Bedford	38	15	1	8	58	13	0
Biggleswade	24	13	1	4	37	12	5
Leighton	11	7	2	2	69	27	2
Luton	11	8	2	2	54	8	2
Woburn	16	10	1	3	28	17	6
TOTAL	117	66	9	23	291	107	19
(%)		56	8	20			16
Buckinghamshire:							
Amersham	10	8	2	3	32	9	6
Aylesbury	34	19	4	7	28	5	2
Buckingham	26	11	4	7	91	0	1
Eton	17	10	1	2	9	22	9
Newport	37	14	4	9	39	73	1
Winslow	16	7	5	7	158	2	1
Wycombe	28	15	3	10	88	14	8
TOTAL	168	84	23	45	445	125	28
(%)		50	14	27			17
TOTAL of both counties (%)	285	150	32	68	736	232	47
		53	11	24			16

Source: PRO, MH 12/1–138, 380–529 *passim* (volumes covering 1834–44); BPP 1843 XVI, tables for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

of Buckingham and Winslow where parishes owned large numbers of houses, but practically none belonged to charities.[74]

Within the two counties there were both individual parishes, and clusters of parishes including a number of small towns, with large numbers of community-owned houses. The greatest number of houses in a parish across the two counties was found in Leighton Buzzard, a market town with several dependent chapelries, which boasted sixty community-owned houses. Since there were over 1000 households and 5000 inhabitants in the parish, the overall percentage was not high (5.9 per cent) but the impact may have been considerable. Other towns that indulged in cottage building rather than workhouses were Luton (33), Buckingham (31) and Winslow (42).[75] By far the most marked concentration of cottage-owning was in Winslow poor law union

[74] On Marriott, see Hitchcock, 'The English workhouse', ch. 2.

[75] Some of the processes of building in Luton can be seen from the Consolidated Charity fund accounts, in the Distribution fund; see Beds RO, P85/25/1/1.

where over one third of the parishes had more than ten houses, and more than ten per cent of the housing stock. In addition to Winslow, the parishes of Stewkley, with 27, and Mursley, with 39, stand out. Mursley's parish housing represented almost 39 per cent of the total housing in the village. What is equally interesting is that in that area, there appears to have been almost no charitable housing.

The findings from analysis of these five selected counties has prompted further research to sample data from other regions such as East Anglia, where the workhouse movement became more systematically established in the mid-eighteenth century. Preliminary findings from there, from the south-east of England, and the western borders, suggest parish and charitable housing was a national, not a regional phenomenon, but it remains to be seen whether the findings for the south and east midlands represent the greatest regional concentration of such housing. The next stage of the project will examine the more rapidly industrialising north of England to see whether the economic and social dynamic of that area produced similar local responses. From the national sample it is then intended to look at how parish house ownership related to questions of multiple occupancy and poor rates indicated in the 1831 census, and the effects of later eighteenth century workhouse schemes.[76]

VIII

This preliminary survey has shown that under the Old Poor Law, a high proportion of parishes throughout England owned, either in their own right, or through local charities, a significant proportion of the village housing stock which they used to provide for poor and pauper families. They added to this stock by purchasing and actively building houses using money from the poor rates, or taking loans on its security, and not simply by putting abandoned local housing to makeshift use. Village communities continued the tradition of providing Englishmen and Englishwomen and their families with a separate home, or at least private space, through all the pressures of the early nineteenth century surge in population. They did so despite the heavy weight of propaganda advocating workhouses and other alternatives to the old poor law, which fill the pamphlets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The opposing voices are there, but their very lack of novelty made them less interesting to contemporaries, and perhaps since to historians. Moreover, their achievements were destroyed by the New Poor Law. Once outdoor relief became an anathema, pauper housing was redundant. Logically, the only thing to do with such housing was to sell it off. Rate-paying farmers, just emerging from the rough times of agricultural depression, were unlikely to oppose such an attractive proposition. Parishes in the 1820s and 1830s were rarely rich, and some not only had high poor rates, but had also borrowed money to build new houses. Parish housing, like any other housing stock, needed periodic repair and rebuilding. The forms filled in by parishes at the time of sale maybe tendentious in their description of the state of their properties, but a high proportion was described as in decayed or ruinous condition. There are many parallels in situation and solutions with what has happened to a much greater publicly owned housing stock during the course of the twentieth century.

[76] The further data collection, and comparisons with census and poor law material has been made possible by a grant from the British Academy awarded after the submission and acceptance of this paper.

Urban agriculture, commons and commoners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the case of Sudbury, Suffolk

by H. R. French

Abstract

Urban agriculture and town commons have been largely overlooked in the existing literature, and have never been systematically surveyed. This study lays out a typology of urban commons, citing examples from across the country. It focuses on the uses and users of one urban common, in the cloth-producing town of Sudbury, Suffolk, between 1710–28. It details the occupational profile of commoners, distinguishes differences in their use of the commons, and compares them with those freemen who did not common animals. The study explores corporate management of this resource, in response to economic uncertainty, and in the context of wider urban agriculture. It concludes that the importance of urban agriculture and agrarian resources has been under-estimated, as has their survival and significance into the 'modern' period.

It has become a truism among historians that the dividing lines between the 'urban' and the 'rural' were blurred in early modern England.[1] Most towns in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had small populations, extended over limited geographical areas, and were immersed in the agrarian life – in the seasonality, economy, employment and environment – of their rural surroundings.[2] However, as John Chartres observed almost a decade ago, the historiographies of urban and rural England have diverged as each has been studied in more detail.[3] While urban historians have had to admit that, in economic and social terms, most small towns were little more than big villages, neither they, nor rural historians, have investigated the agricultural economy of towns. The history has yet to be written of the many

[1] A. Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English urban history* (1972); P. Clark (ed.), *The early modern town: a reader* (1976); P. Clark and P. Slack (eds), *English towns in transition, 1500–1700* (1976); P. Clark (ed.), *County towns in pre-industrial England* (1981); P. Clark (ed.), *Small towns in early modern Europe* (1995).

[2] See K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor. Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (1985); A. Everitt, 'The Banburys of England', *Urban History Yearbook* 1 (1974), pp. 28–38; id., 'The marketing of agricultural produce, 1500–1640', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, IV. (1967), pp. 466–592; J. A. Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce, 1640–1750', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian History*, V (ii), pp. 406–502.

[3] J. A. Chartres, 'City and towns, farmers and economic change', *Historical Res.* 64 (1991), pp. 138–9. Chartres attempts to bridge this gap by examining the market function of towns and their relationship to rural hinterlands. The connection between urban demographic growth and agrarian productivity has been best explored by E. A. Wrigley, 'Urban growth and agricultural change. England and the continent in the early modern period' in id., *People, cities and wealth. The transformation of traditional society* (1987), pp. 157–93.

town-dwelling (but practising) yeomen and husbandmen found in any sample of urban probate inventories. Urban agriculturalists remain an anomaly, a case of terminological confusion, rather than a phenomenon to be studied in their own right.

Similarly, there has been little systematic research on the use, misuse and eventual demise of the forum for much of this urban agriculture – the town common. While the fates of the small landowner, of open field agriculture, and of the enclosure of the rural commons have inspired each succeeding generation of agrarian historian since 1900, the town commons have been largely overlooked.[4] Common land, and the process of enclosure, has been regarded as a phenomenon of rural society. In some senses, this perspective is understandable. Whatever the debate about the economic significance, and consequences of the enclosure of common land and open fields, these must have been greater in small rural settlements where opportunities for by-employments were less than in towns. Moreover, enclosure encompassed a much greater acreage and had a deeper 'global' effect in the countryside. Assumptions such as these are the cause of the neglect of urban commons.

However, urban commons and common rights belonging to towns were not infrequent, arcane medieval survivals. At the end of the parliamentary enclosure process, in 1870, the House of Commons sent a questionnaire to all corporate and borough towns (including those disenfranchised in 1835). In England, 48 responded either that they possessed commons or common rights, or that these had been extinguished 'recently'.[5] They included such well-known examples of towns with commons as Cambridge, Coventry, Oxford, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Leicester, Lincoln, Norwich and York, but also less familiar locations, such as Bath, Bedford, Beverley, Colchester, Derby, Durham, Eye, Gloucester, Hertford, Marlborough, Newbury, Northampton, Preston, Southampton, Tamworth and Warwick. On closer inspection, it appears that many of these 'town lands' were actually the surviving remnants of much larger commons after extensive enclosure or sale, as in Cambridge, Coventry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Leicester, York, Colchester, Derby, Durham. Northampton, Norwich, Preston and Southampton.[6] Many were about to enter a municipal after-life, as public parks and pleasure gardens.[7]

[4] Town commons receive only passing reference even in L. Dudley Stamp and W. G. Hoskins, *The common lands of England and Wales* (1963), pp. 63–4, and for London commons, pp. 65–78.

[5] British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), 1870, LV, pp. 95–123; House of Commons' Report, 24 March 1870, 'Return of all boroughs and cities in the United Kingdom possessing common or other lands, in respect of which the freemen or other privileged inhabitants claim any exclusive right of property or use ...'.

[6] C. P. Hall and J. R. Ravensdale, 'The West Fields of Cambridge', *Cambridge Antiquarian Records Society* 3 (1976); R. B. Rose, 'The city of Coventry: the commons', Victoria County History (hereafter VCH), *Warwickshire*, VIII, pp. 199–207; E. Halcrow, 'The Town Moor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser. 31 (1953), pp. 149–164; E. W. J. Kerridge, 'Social and economic history', VCH *Leicestershire*, IV, pp. 99–100; VCH *City of York*, p. 505; C. C. Thornton, 'The Common Lands', VCH *Essex*, IX, p. 259; 'Return of all boroughs and cities ...', Derby and Durham returns, pp. 102–3, 103–4; H. M. Cann, 'Northampton Borough', VCH *Northamptonshire*, III, pp. 22–3; Mousehold Heath, Norwich, N. MacMaster, 'The battle for Mousehold Heath, 1857–1884. "Popular politics" and the Victorian public park', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), pp. 117–154; A. Hewitson, *History of Preston* (1883), pp. 326–9; A. Temple Patterson, *A History of Southampton 1700–1914:* (3 vols, 1966–75), II, pp. 57–8.

[7] However, York, Beverley, Oxford, Marlborough, Sudbury and Cambridge survived as working commons into the first half of the twentieth century. VCH *City of York*, p. 505; VCH *East Riding*, VI, p. 215; VCH *Oxfordshire*, IV, pp. 279–80; VCH *Wiltshire*, XII, p. 207; Cambridge's commons were used (in 1870) by a few freemen and butchers, 'Return of all boroughs and cities ...', p. 99.

These were only the last remains of a much more extensive system of urban commons which perished primarily in the age of parliamentary enclosure. A survey of the list of parliamentary enclosure acts published in 1914 reveals that 160 towns sought enclosure acts between *c.* 1720 and *c.* 1870.[8] This can only be a preliminary estimate. All 'metropolitan' enclosure acts for London suburbs in Middlesex and Surrey have been excluded, to allow easier identification of distinct, autonomous, 'towns'. There are also obvious definitional problems. Many of the rapidly expanding, industrialising 'towns' of the early nineteenth-century had been no more than villages a century earlier and their commons may more properly be defined as 'rural'. Many of the enclosure acts for these upland towns in the North and west were for sub-townships within their titular parishes and have been excluded.[9] In addition, without studying the individual acts, it is impossible to establish the size and significance of the enclosure act, or whether it dealt with reclamation of roadside wasteland, the enclosure of open fields, or the extinction of common rights of herbage. There is also the unresolved and ultimately insoluble problem of estimating how much urban enclosure happened by private agreement. A further 20 towns listed in the 1870 return appear never to have sought an enclosure act for their commons,[10] making a minimum of 180 towns that had been possessed of commons or common rights in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While this is figure is little more than an educated guess, it begins to illustrate the widespread presence of town commons, and the degree to which enclosure was also an urban phenomenon. It also suggests how commons and common rights were part of the fabric of English towns, and integrated within their economic system. At present, the outlines of this system have to be discerned from town histories and the pages of the *Victoria County History.*

It is possible to construct a preliminary typology of five types of urban common land. The first type consisted of rights of herbage exercised by the freemen over lands within or adjoining the borough or township. These common rights were usually restricted to certain times of the year, and were often distinct from ownership of the land, which could be vested in neighbouring manorial lords or landowners. At other times of the year these herbage rights might be held privately by the individual owners. In Stamford in 1870 it was reported that the freemen had pasture rights over 25 acres called 'The Lings' for part of the year. Similarly in Walsall, freeholders and (rate-paying) inhabitants had rights over 21 acres of meadow between Lammas and Candlemas.[11] Such rights of access to 'half-year' commons often existed in addition to a core

[8] BPP, 1914, LXVII, pp. 325–412, return 'in chronological order of all acts passed for the inclosure of commons or waste lands, separately, in England and Wales ...', 13 Aug. 1913. I am grateful to Prof. Michael Turner for this reference.

[9] The question of identification of 'towns' is a difficult one, and depends on the adoption of a suitabie definition. In this preliminary survey, I have selected all those places that could be classified as 'towns' in 1801 whether because they possessed a distinct corporate identity and system of government (even if in decay) or were acquiring these rapidly as part of the industrialising process, the latter particularly manufacturing towns in the West Riding and the Potteries. I concede that more rigorous definitions are required in any future study, together with more investigation of the scope and intent of each of these acts. I am grateful to Dr. A. J. Gritt for his comments on this point.

[10] These were Abingdon, Altrincham, Arundel, Bath, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Durham, Gloucester, Huntingdon, King's Lynn, Lewes, Marlborough, Morpeth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Pevensey, Preston, St. Clear, Warwick, Wigan and Woodstock. However, Durham was subject to an enclosure act in 1801, and Preston in 1833, but these are not listed in the 1914 return. See 'Return of all boroughs and cities ...', pp. 103–4; Hewitson, *Preston*, p. 327.

[11] 'Return of all boroughs and cities ...', pp. 119, 121.

holding of town lands, to which access was granted to freemen for most or all of the year. This was the case at Newbury, where the town commons consisted of 'The Marsh', on which every householder could depasture one horse and two cows at any time of the year, supplemented by herbage rights on 'Northcroft' between 12 August and 6 April.[12] As will be shown below, the same mixture of rights existed in the town of Sudbury.

The second type of urban common consisted of lowland arable land owned by the manorial lord or lords of the township, or by the corporation – the latter sometimes buying from the former as the settlement and its government expanded.[13] Access to such land was, in theory, restricted to manorial tenants or borough freemen; in practice, by the seventeenth century these rights were sometimes extended to all ratepaying inhabitants without distinction.[14] Such common arable land tended to be held in the classic format of unenclosed strips. Often, although not exclusively, the presence of such fields denoted a township that had grown out of a medieval village, preserving its open fields as it grew. The best example of this was Leicester, which J. E. Martin has described as 'more an overgrown village than an autonomous urban centre'.[15] The town's three open fields amounted to approximately 2,600 acres of arable, meadow and pasture in the sixteenth century, with burgesses holding strips, and the pasture coming increasingly under the influence of cow-keeping butchers and graziers.[16] Similar open fields existed in Nottingham,[17] Cambridge, Newcastle-under-Lyme,[18] Tewkesbury,[19] and Northampton. Yet, they could also exist in areas of ancient enclosure. Colchester possessed three arable fields, south-west, south-east and north-east of the borough, with approximately 2,000 acres of woodland north of the town. By the early modern period, these fields had been enclosed, but they remained subject to the burgesses' 'half-year' grazing rights.[20] Engrossment and enfranchisement seems to have undermined open field agriculture in Banbury, speeding enclosure in 1760.[21] Similar processes occurred to the open fields in and around Tetbury in the seventeenth century.[22]

By contrast, however, Marlborough's two open fields continued to function as allotments exclusive to the freemen, the 80 acres being divided into one or two acre strips, with one only

[12] Idem, p. 113.

[13] For example, this happened in Newcastle-under-Lyme without formal agreement in the later medieval period, VCH *Staffordshire*, VIII, p. 15; in Tetbury in 1633, VCH *Gloucestershire*, XI, p. 270; Preston in 1650, D. Hunt, *A history of Preston* (1992), p. 75; and caused considerable dispute in Wigan between 1583 and 1624, VCH *Lancashire*, IV, pp. 72–3.

[14] The extension of common rights to non-freemen in the early modern period occurred in Nottingham, J. D. Chambers, 'Population change in Nottingham, 1700–1800' in L. S. Presnell (ed.), *Studies in the Industrial Revolution* (1960), pp. 101–2; Beverley, VCH *East Riding*, VI, p. 214 and Tewkesbury, VCH *Gloucestershire*, VIII, p. 138; rights were relaxed in Marlborough, but only in 1836, VCH *Wiltshire*, XII, p. 207; restrictions to freemen or burgesses only remained in force, or were tightened in Northampton, VCH *Northamptonshire*, III, pp. 22–3; Colchester, VCH *Essex*, IX, p. 258; Oxford, VCH *Oxfordshire*, IV, p. 280; Coventry, VCH *Warwickshire*, VIII, p. 199 and Berwick-upon-Tweed, S. and B. Webb, *English local government: the manor and the borough*, (5 vols, 1906–22) II, p. 517.

[15] J. E. Martin, *Feudalism to capitalism: peasant and landlord in English agrarian development* (1983), p. 193.

[16] W. G. Hoskins, *Provincial England. Essays in economic and social history* (1963), pp. 89, 96–7.

[17] Nottingham was surrounded by common fields and pasture. As long as it remained unenclosed the town could not expand, causing insanitary conditions and severe overcrowding in the early nineteenth century. See Chambers, 'Population change', p. 99.

[18] VCH *Staffordshire*, VIII, pp. 49–50.

[19] VCH *Gloucestershire*, VIII, p. 138.

[20] VCH *Essex*, IX, p. 256.

[21] VCH *Oxfordshire*, X, pp. 49–54.

[22] VCH *Gloucestershire*, XI, p. 269.

being allotted to each freeman for life. This arrangement endured into the nineteenth century. In 1808 13 freemen held the 36 acres in Southfield, while the 54 acres in Northfield were in the hands of 38 freemen.[23] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the corporation of Berwick-on-Tweed practised a similar arrangement of life leases to freemen of 1 to 4 acre parcels of land, supposedly worth between £5 to £15 per annum to their possessors. The system was converted to 21-year leasehold after 1759, with 160 freemen receiving such grants, in addition to grazing rights.[24]

The third type of urban common was pasture land located within the boundaries of the township or borough, and owned by the lord of the manor, or the corporation. As in most open-field villages, such pasture land was comprised both of post-harvest and fallow grazing rights on the arable fields, and dedicated pasture, meadow land, or waste. Some townships possessed only pasture commons. This was true in Oxford, where Port Meadow was largely unstinted, and existed with intercommoning rights with neighbouring villages.[25] It was also the case in Coventry, whose commons adopted the character of the enclosed fielden-pasture communities of its immediate hinterland, rather than the open fields of other Midlands boroughs.[26] Coventry's townfields contained approximately 300 acres of waste land, with 1,100 acres of half-year grazing. Such pasture rights were often supplemented by meadow grazing in towns that adjoined rivers, as in Berwick-on-Tweed, Oxford, Cambridge, Colchester, Gloucester, Wilton,[27] Sudbury, Northampton, Nottingham, Hertford, and Preston.

The fourth type of common was a sub-variant of Type 3, the 'inland' commons of upland townships – lying within the immediate township boundaries of the settlement. Into the late eighteenth century, these 'townfields' could be arable as well as pasture.[28] Particularly in the Pennines, Westmorland and Cumberland, arable strips persisted in small towns and villages alike.

> Small towns retained their common fields little disturbed by engrossing and enclosure until the eighteenth century. Penrith, Workington, Whitehaven and Wigton in Cumberland; Kendal and Kirkby Stephen in Westmorland; Dalton, Ulverston, Clitheroe and Prescot in Lancashire; Stockport, Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Sandbach in Cheshire all ... retained their functions as agricultural communities farming common arable fields.[29]

As in the Midlands, many of these small towns had grown out of village settlements, and had preserved their open fields and common pastures. The parliamentary enclosure process was particularly marked in all those areas,[30] and in the West Riding, Peak District, and Cannock

[23] VCH *Wiltshire*, XII, p. 207.

[24] S. and B. Webb, *English local government*, II, p. 519.

[25] VCH *Oxfordshire*, IV, pp. 280–1.

[26] VCH *Warwickshire*, VIII, p. 199.

[27] VCH *Wiltshire*, VI, pp. 18–19.

[28] This persistence is explained because such arable land remained more valuable than pasture in these settlements in the eighteenth century. H. R. French and R. W. Hoyle, 'The land market of a Pennine manor: Slaidburn, 1650–1780', *Continuity and Change* 14 (1999), pp. 376–9.

[29] G. Elliott, 'Field systems of northwest England' in A. R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin, *Studies of field systems in the British Isles* (1972), p. 54. In fact, Clitheroe seems never to have possessed common arable fields, but it did have 531 statute acres of 'in-land' pasture commons on enclosure in 1786. Lancashire RO, DP 440 (Acc. 4026), Clitheroe Commons Allotment Book, 1786.

[30] However, not all enclosure occurred through legislation. For example, Liverpool lost its town fields during the eighteenth century without an enclosure act. Sir J. A. Picton, *City of Liverpool municipal archives and records, from A. D. 700 to the passing of the municipal reform act, 1835* (1886), p. 132.

Chase amongst rapidly growing, and industrializing towns between 1780 and 1810.[31] The process was complicated by the amount of intercommoning that occurred between neighbouring townships within these large parishes. The parishes of Halifax, Sheffield, Bradford and Leeds in the West Riding, and Glossop and Bakewell in the Peak District contained linked networks of commons distributed among multiple townships, and required sheaves of enclosure legislation.[32] This type of intercommoning was also a feature of York into the eighteenth century. Here, ironically, the enclosure process created the type of consolidated, exclusive, intra-mural pasture commons found in other unenclosed boroughs, by extinguishing and exchanging wider rights of common with neighbouring townships. Previously, York's rights had extended into the surrounding townships of Clifton, Huntington, Rawcliffe, Wigginton and Stockton moors, Tilmire and Knavesmire, and Hob moor.[33]

These 'inland' common fields and pastures were linked to the fifth type of common, upland grazing rights exercised by the residents of towns over surrounding moorland. Such rights usually existed in areas of medieval transhumance in the Pennines, Cumbria and Northumberland, and in the Malverns, Mendips, on Exmoor and in the Chilterns.[34] The massive, dispersed parish of Sheffield illustrates the relationship between these expanses and the 'inland' township commons in the seventeenth century.[35] In 1637 the parishes of Sheffield, Ecclesfield and Bradfield contained 21,363 acres of common land, 10,767 acres lying at an altitude of more than 1,100 feet. The remaining land was designated as 'moore', 'common' and 'greene'. There were more than forty of the latter, attached to settlements at lower altitudes, forming 'a sort of intercellular cement between the blocks of fields ... the social rendezvous of the people who lived on and around them ... manured and overgrazed by tethered animals, and by geese'.[36] All these upland commons were 'fre', available for summer grazing, and as a resource for fuel (heather) and game, for inhabitants of the townships within the area. Many enclosures of 'urban' parishes in the southwest and northwest in the later eighteenth century appear to have included the enclosures of moorland over which common rights were exercised.[37] In fact, in these instances, the extinction of intra-mural rights to relatively small commons or greens may have occurred almost as an after-thought.

I

It can be shown that a substantial number of towns possessed one or more of several types of common. However, we know almost nothing of their use, the types of crops cultivated on them,

[31] See for example, Dewsbury in the West Riding, which had only 289 acres of common land, but whose population rose from 1,050 in 1793, to more than 4,500 in 1801. Enclosure occurred between 1803–6. J. E. Broadbent, 'Dewsbury Inclosure, 1796–1806', *Yorkshire Archaeological J.*, 69 (1997), pp. 209–10.

[32] 'Return in chronological order ...', pp. 385–87, 407–12. The parish of Glossop required five enclosure acts between 1810 and 1829, Bakewell needed seven between 1771 and 1823. Halifax's townships were enclosed in nine acts, Sheffield's in four, Bradford's in four and Leeds' in six acts, in the period 1780–1840.

[33] VCH *City of York*, pp. 499, 500–5.

[34] VCH *Wiltshire*, IV, pp. 43–64.

[35] G. Scurfield, 'Seventeenth-century Sheffield and its environs', *Yorkshire Archaeological J.*, 58 (1986), pp. 147–171.

[36] Ibid, p. 163.

[37] 'Return in chronological order ...'. For example, after the 1801 Act stipulating the inclusion of acreages, enclosures in Bakewell parish totalled 8,700 acres, pp. 386–7; Rugeley included 4,790 acres of Cannock Chase in 1864, p. 387; Kirkby Stephen included 5,149 acres, pp. 395–6; while Penrith was enclosed in 1803, with the rest of the Forest of Inglewood, amounting to 28,000 acres, p. 337. See also P. Riden, *Tudor and Stuart Chesterfield* (1984), pp. 29–30.

the kinds of regulations governing them, their economic significance to urban markets, or to individual household budgets. We remain largely ignorant of who used these commons, how they were used, and to what effect, economically and socially.

This study represents an introductory investigation of a single urban common, and the social profile and economic activities of those possessing and exercising rights over it in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Its aim is to establish how far the commons acted as a significant economic resource in a manufacturing town, and the manner in which they did so. It will review access to the commons, the social distinctions between commoners and the wider body of inhabitants, the occupational profile and material wealth of commoners and non-commoners, and the ways in which this corporate resource was managed in a time of economic uncertainty. The study also seeks to locate the economy of the town common within a wider system of urban agriculture. These analyses illustrate the relationship between agrarian and manufacturing economies in an urban setting, and to explore in detail one of the systems of common outlined above. In short, it seeks to consider how rural a small town might be.

The commons studied are those of Sudbury, Suffolk. In the typology of commons, Sudbury's water meadows and pasture grazing lands fall into types one and three; pasture land under the control of the corporation, but also with limited half-year grazing rights extending onto land not owned by the town. Sudbury had possessed its commons since 1262, when Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, granted three fields to the burgesses in perpetuity. These were situated to the south of the town straddling the River Stour.[38] King's Mere or Marsh meadow comprised 18 acres on the southern (Essex) side of the River Stour; Portman's Croft, 4.5 acres, and Freeman's Little Common, 19.2 acres, lay on the opposite northern (Suffolk) bank. In 1731, immediately after the end of the present study, the corporation bought Little Fulling Pit meadow, 8 acres, with an additional croft of 2.45 acres, next to the existing common meadow on the Essex side of the Stour. They may have rented these in the period immediately preceding the sale. This gave the burgesses of the borough access to between 41.7 and 52.15 acres of land immediately adjacent to the town. The half-yearly grazing rights that augmented these pastures were also long standing. The freemen had access to 14 acres of pasture in Bulmer, Essex, two miles south of Sudbury, under rights granted to the corporation by Thomas West in the mid-fifteenth century. It is unclear how this outlying land was used, since the borough records deal only with Richard de Clare's grant. However, it appears that the burgesses only enjoyed rights to summer grazing on both these commons. Burgesses had the right to depasture cows, horses or mares, usually from the end of the first or second week of May, presumably until Michaelmas, although this is never stated explicitly in the corporation records.[39]

The corporation's records allow a detailed study of the stocking of the commons, and of the social and economic profile of the commoners, and other non-commoning freemen. Between

[38] J. Wardman, *Sudbury common lands. The meadows, freemen and the borough*, (1996), pp. 18–19. Wardman speculates that since the acreage granted to the town by Richard de Clare matched the acreage listed in Domesday as belonging to the burgesses and St. Gregory's church, the freemen's use of the commons may have pre-dated the gift.

[39] PRO, E 134/11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 10 Buxton Underwood *v.* Lawrence Gibbon, Robert Sparrow, Roger Voice and Roger Scarling, 15 Jan. 1713. In this case Thomas Winn, a yeoman of Great Cornard, gave evidence that the freemen were allowed to depasture their animals on the common after the first hay crop had been cut.

1710 and 1728 annual lists were prepared of the names of those freemen who paid to turn out their animals on the commons. In addition, the names were also listed of freemen (or widows of freemen) who were entitled to a share of the money raised from commons' charges.[40] Sudbury also has a range of other borough records. In particular, it possesses a good series of apprenticeship indentures between 1656 and 1688, and records of men admitted to the freedom of the town, allowing approximate ages to be established.[41] A large number of wills are also available which provide occupational data for the post-1710 freemen group. The corporation records list freemen, chief burgesses and aldermen between 1717 and 1733, and these serve to identify the higher status inhabitants of the town.[42] There are also poll books for 1710 and 1727, allowing basic distinctions to be made between enfranchised and non-enfranchised freemen.[43] These sources make Sudbury's commons better documented, and more visible historically, than the commons of some other towns, and (perhaps) the majority of villages in the period. Conversely, the records of land ownership, that might be well recorded in a rural manorial court, are fragmentary for Sudbury, which like some other towns contained more than one manor.[44] Given this imbalance, it will be emphasised below that while the commons were the most prominent agrarian resource in the town, they may not have been the most significant for production or employment.

The other weaknesses of the borough's records are that there are no comprehensive national or local taxation listings so that no definitive estimate of personal wealth can be made. There are also no records of poor law disbursements for the whole town in this period, making it impossible to establish whether some of those receiving commons' money were also receiving poor relief. Despite these deficiencies, however, a database has been constructed containing 972 individuals, 2389 entries of animals depastured by freemen, and 4079 instances of commons' money being received by non-pasturing freemen, 1710–28. All the analyses undertaken below are based on interrogations of this dataset.

II

Custom governed the use and regulation of the commons, but (as so often in this period) custom was not immutable. The rules were listed in May 1644.[45] Prior to that time, the mayor and the six aldermen had been allowed to depasture four head of cattle; the 24 chief burgesses three

[40] Suffolk RO (hereafter SRO) (Bury), EE 501/2/7, Sudbury Borough Town Book, 1639–72: contains annual listings of cattle depastured by freemen between 1710 and 1728 (1717 missing). Those receiving commons' collection money are also listed annually in this volume in this period.

[41] SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/1, Sudbury Cocket Book, 1656–88 (760 apprenticeship indentures, 175 freemen's admissions), 1695–1723 (18 apprenticeship indentures, 51 freemen's admissions); EE 501/4/2, Sudbury Cocket Book, 1724–70 (60 apprenticeship indentures, 1717–34, 36 freemen's indentures); Archdeaconry of Sudbury will register (microfilm) J. 543/51–56, Sudbury wills 1710–51 (124 wills).

[42] SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/9, Sudbury Borough Book of Orders and Decrees, 1717–33. The town was governed by a mayor, six aldermen, and 24 chief burgesses (from whom the aldermen were co-opted). In addition, in October each year 48 free burgesses selected the new mayor from among the aldermen. These free burgesses were drawn from the 500–600 resident free burgesses in the town. This system continued unaltered, despite the loss of the borough charter in 1685.

[43] *Suffolk Poll Book, 1710* (1994); *Suffolk Poll Book, 1727* (1727).

[44] Sudbury encompassed three manors, Neales als. Nayles, Places and Woodhall. Places and Woodhall have court rolls for the early eighteenth century, but few other materials. Woodhall was part of the Duchy of Lancaster.

[45] SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/7, order dated 6 May 1644.

head each, while 'every freeholder and other sufficient inhabitants' (that is the free burgesses), had depastured two each. Now, it was acknowledged that pressure on the commons was so great that in future only senior members of the corporation (including chief burgesses) would be allowed two head, while ordinary free burgesses would have to make do with one animal each.[46] By the early eighteenth century, distinctions between senior and other corporation members had disappeared, with none allowed more than two animals each. Similar stints were introduced in the seventeenth century in Oxford, Marlborough, York, Colchester, Calne and Tewkesbury.[47]

Other features endured into the eighteenth century. All animals entered onto the commons had to be branded by the town crier, which cost 2*d.* per head in 1644. By 1725, branding had been replaced with a system of wooden bobbins or 'Tottles or Gruggs' threaded onto the horns of all cows depastured, for which 1*d.* per head was to be paid to the Beadle.[48] Each horse cost 1*s.* for a season's grazing and each cow 10*d.* in 1644. Between 1710 and 1728 the agistment for a single animal was never less than 3*s.*, rising in the harsh economic conditions of 1713 to 6*s.* 6*d.*, with two costing between 13*s.* and £1 (again in 1713) as may be seen in Table 3. The rules of 1644 also laid down a series of fines for overstocking, depasturing without rights, and for turning out ungelded horses or mangy cattle.

The corporation attempted to protect the commons from other infringements through the century. In November 1647, the minutes recorded that no one should be allowed to plant willow trees on the (ideal) meadow lands of the commons.[49] In 1663, the council ordered that a writ be taken out in King's Bench against Francis King and John Barker for letting their hogs trespass on the commons, the disproportionate punishment presumably being attempted in order to establish a precedent. In 1721, William White was fined 10*s.* for sowing turnips on a section of the commons, signifying moves both towards agricultural improvement, and to bolster the fodder crop of the commons later in the year.[50]

By the 1720s, the commons operated under a settled regime, under the control of a keeper or beadle. During the pasture season, he was to ensure that the gate into the commons was locked at 10pm, and not opened again until 4am. Any latecomers or early risers were to pay him a penny for releasing their animals out of hours. In effect, the commons acted as a municipal pound, in which cows could graze securely, and in which horses and mares could be rested over night, and when not employed during the day.

This resource was sufficiently useful for more than 150 people to pay a sum equivalent to one weeks' day labourer's wages in order to depasture a single animal, and as much as six or ten weeks' wages for grazing rights for two animals.[51] Even at this cost, it may have been a good

[46] In 1653, the stint was reduced to one head of cattle per burgess, of whatever rank. SRO (Bury) EE 501/2/7, order dated 5 Apr. 1653.

[47] VCH *Oxfordshire*, IV, p. 280 – this stint broke down after *c.* 1680; VCH *Wiltshire*, XII, p. 287; VCH *City of York*, p. 499; VCH *Essex*, IX, pp. 257–8; R. C. Richardson and T. B. James (eds), *The urban experience: a source book* (1983), pp. 54–5; VCH *Gloucestershire*, VIII, p. 138.

[48] A. W. Berry, *Suffolk country town: a Sudbury miscellany* (1997), pp. 195–6, quoting SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/9, Sudbury Borough Book of Orders and Decrees, 1717–33, 5–6 May 1725.

[49] SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/7, order dated 20 Nov. 1647.

[50] SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/7, list of freemen depasturing cattle, 22 May 1721.

[51] See Table 2. Between 1710 and 1728, between 146 and 195 freemen depastured their animals on the common each year, the average figure being 173. Contemporaries made similar estimates. PRO, E 134/1 Geo. 1/East. 7, Buxton Underwood *v.* Lawrence Gibbon, Robert Sparrow and Roger Voice. Luke Leake testified that the commons supported between 140 and 160 animals per annum.

bargain. In 1715, one commoner, James Lee, a weaver, estimated that the 18 acres of King's Marsh would have had a commercial rent of £2 10*s.* 0*d.* per acre, exclusive of all taxes (which added 11*s.* 0*d.* in the pound).[52] So, the freeman gained access to lands worth perhaps £157 10*s.* 0*d.* per annum (42 acres at £3 17*s.* 6*d.* per acre), for a total cost of £31 that year. In other years, the total cost to the freemen was as high as £69 10*s.* 0*d.*, but it averaged £50 between 1710–28, under one-third of the market value of the lands.[53]

III

The other constant feature of commons' management in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the distribution of the money collected from commoners to the use of other free inhabitants and householders in the borough. This feature was mentioned in the orders of 1644. After 1710, longer lists of the names of those who received the commons' collection money accompany the lists of freemen depasturing animals. This distinction, between those able to depasture animals and those who received collection money, is of considerable significance in understanding the nature of the town's social order and its economy. The corporation appears to have enforced this distinction by allowing rights of common only to those who paid the highest level of fine for their freedom. In 1654, it was recorded that henceforth no person paying a fine of less that £5 would be admitted to full rights of freedom of the borough, including common rights. Residents of more than three years standing could gain the freedom (to trade?) for a fine of £2, but without entitlement to the commons.[54] Freemen's sons appear to have enjoyed heritable rights of common. This differential caused some dispute in the early eighteenth century.

The economy of Sudbury depended absolutely on the production of woollen worsted cloth. After the introduction of the 'new draperies' by Flemish refugees in the later sixteenth century, Sudbury had specialised in the production of 'says', the lightest and cheapest of these worsted cloths.[55] Involvement in the trade was total. In the period between 1656–88, 59 per cent of apprenticeship indentures (257 out of 436) recorded in the borough were in textile trades, the next largest sector being (unsurprisingly) the food and drink trades.[56] Cloth production created a peculiar and proletarianised social order. The cloth-producing region of Essex and Suffolk routinely had much higher levels of poverty than surrounding, non-industrial settlements. K. H. Burley found that across the twenty hundreds of the county of Essex, exemption from the hearth tax averaged 35 per cent of all those assessed, but in the two cloth producing hundreds

[52] PRO, E 134/1 Geo. 1/East. 7. Evidence of James Lee, of Sudbury, sayweaver. Lee received commons' contribution money in 15 years between 1710–28.

[53] This valuation was a subject of dispute between the parties contesting PRO, E 134/1 Geo. 1/East 7. See below, n. 72.

[54] SRO (Bury) EE 501/2/5 Sudbury Borough book of orders and decrees, 1628–85, 30 Oct. 1654. Between 1657 and 1723 216 individuals purchased the freedom of the town. Of these, 75 paid more than £5; 58 paid less than £5; with 93 for whom no fine was recorded. SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/1.

[55] J. E. Pilgrim, 'The rise of the new draperies in Essex', *University of Birmingham Historical J.* 7 (1959–60), p. 41. 'Says' weighed between 3–13lbs. finished; 'Bays', new draperies made largely in Essex weighed 20–50lbs.; English broad cloth could weigh 80–100lbs.

[56] SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/1. A 'cocket' was the local name for the excise stamp put on the dockets held by newly enfranchised freemen.

of Hinckford and Lexden, exemption rates were 59 and 50 per cent respectively.[57] In the Sudbury parish of St. Peter's in 1674, 43 per cent of those assessed for the tax were exempt. The cloth trade created towns full of families whose primary source of income was the production of cloth, and who possessed few other resources.

Defoe, who knew the area well in this period, described Sudbury and damned it accurately in a few words. 'I know nothing for which this town is remarkable, except for being very populous and very poor. They have a great manufacture of Says and Perpetuanas; and multitudes of poor people are employ'd in working them; but the number of the poor is almost ready to eat up the rich'.[58] As a consequence of this dependence, the extreme cyclical fluctuations in the demand (and prices paid) for cloth created boom and bust conditions for clothiers and their weavers, the latter almost entirely dependent on highly variable and erratic wage or piece rates. The years from 1660 to 1685 were ones of sustained growth in the trade, which extended its grip on the economy of the town and its hinterland.[59] Thereafter, growth ceased. Serious and sustained decline began after the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1707, when the main export markets for East Anglian cloth were cut off.[60] Until the end of the war, the region was in deep recession, with a number of clothiers and other tradesmen going bankrupt.[61] As a result, poor rates in the clothing district rocketed upwards by 150 per cent or more.[62]

Adverse economic conditions placed an increased strain on the Sudbury commons, and drew attention to what Steve Hindle has described recently as the 'politics of entitlement'.[63] In June

[57] K. H. Burley, 'Economic development in Essex in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries' (Unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1957), p. 335. The effectiveness of the hearth tax as a measure of relative wealth and poverty has been the subject of considerable historical debate. However, there has been more agreement about its utility as a measure of poverty (through exemption rates) than of relative wealth. See T. Arkell, 'The incidence of poverty in England in the later seventeenth century', *Social Hist.* 12 (1987), pp. 23–48; C. Husbands, 'Hearths, wealth and occupations: an exploration of the Hearth Tax in the later seventeenth century' in K. Schurer and T. Arkell (eds.), *Surveying the people: the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century* (1992), pp. 65–77.

[58] D. Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain* (1968 edn), p. 48.

[59] The best surrogate for the dynamics of the trade in this period are the figures for 'rawbote' fines in the Colchester Dutch Bay Hall. 'Rawbotes' were the fines levied on 'new draperies' produced by English producers in the town, passing through the 'Dutch'-controlled Bay Hall. Taking the fines for the quinquennium 1650–54 as the base figure of 100, the figure for 1670–74 was 250; for 1680–84 it was just over 400; for 1695–99, it was 340. Essex Record Office (Colchester), Acc. C1, Borough of Colchester Thursday Court Books, 25 Oct. 1646–19 Jun. 1701 (17 vols.).

[60] A. F. J. Brown, 'Colchester in the eighteenth century' in L. M. Munby (ed.), *East Anglian Studies* (1968), pp. 146–73; P. Sharpe, 'Deindustrialisation and re-industrialisation: women's employment and the changing character of Colchester, 1700–1850', *Urban History* 21 (1994), pp. 77–96.

[61] The *London Gazette* lists the following Sudbury bankruptcy commissions: John Parish, factor, 12 June 1711; William Shearman, chapman, 14 Feb. 1712; William Durwood, victualler, 21 Feb. 1712; Peter Newton, 28 Feb. 1713; Pleasant Spring, saymaker, 26 July 1715. Parish, Newton and Spring all depastured animals on the commons in the period.

[62] Although figures are unobtainable for Sudbury, in the cloth-producing towns of Braintree, Finchingfield (Essex) and Stoke-by-Nayland and East Bergholt (Suffolk) poor relief disbursements peaked between 1710–14. In Braintree in the 1690s the average disbursement was £320, between 1710–14 it was £499; in Finchingfield the figure for 1699 was £184, in 1710 it reached £330; in East Bergholt disbursements increased from £116 in 1705–6 to £188 in 1713–14; in Stoke-by-Nayland disbursements rose from £80 in 1707 to £157 in 1711. ERO (Chelmsford) D/P/264/8/5a; D/P 14/8/1a; SRO (Ipswich) FB 191/A1/2; SRO (Bury St. Edmunds) FB 80/A1/2.

[63] S. Hindle, 'Hierarchy and community in the Elizabethan parish: the Swallowfield articles of 1596', *Historical J.*, 42 (1999), pp. 835–52.

1713, in the trough of the recession, a case was brought in Chancery to secure wider access to the town's commons.[64] Two free burgesses, Luke Leake, a goldsmith, and William Mainwaring, a turner, were the chief prosecution witnesses in an action in Chancery brought by the Attorney-General against the mayor of Sudbury, Lawrence Gibbon, and the corporation. Leake and Mainwaring disputed the power of the corporation to exclude some freemen from depasturing animals on the commons by differentials in the freedom fines. They suggested that the original grant from Richard de Clare had vested control in *all* the free burgesses and their successors, not merely in the mayor and corporation. They also alleged, for good measure, that the commons' contribution money, which was supposed to be paid to the use of 'the poorest sort' in the town, had been spent among the corporation for themselves, or upon those who they thought fit, without proper accounts being rendered. They questioned whether any such money should be levied for the exercise of this right.

In fact, while the amounts of commons money distributed per capita to those qualified to receive it were useful additions to the household income, they were not (in themselves) particularly significant. Between 1710 and 1728, the amounts distributed varied from 1*s.* 3*d.* per head in 1711, to a maximum of 2*s.* 6*d.* in 1724, falling back to 2*s.* in 1728. These were the equivalent of approximately a week's wages in this period, no more than a useful one-off supplement, and a symbolic recognition both of need and entitlement among the recipients as members of the borough's 'body politic'. Indeed, the desire to be as inclusive as possible may have dictated low levels of per capita distribution. In the period under observation, the money was paid to between 214 (in 1711) and 262 (in 1718) recipients, the average being 240 individuals (Table 4).[65] While the desire might have been to help the 'poorest sort' of free inhabitant in the town, resources were spread very wide, and very thin.

The central issue in the Chancery case concerned the power of the corporation to limit the rights of free burgesses to depasture cattle, and to decide the numbers, and sums levied per head. The mayor and his co-defendants argued that the lands were not a public charity, nor held by the corporation as a body politic, nor destined specifically for the use or relief of the poor. Instead, they asserted that the free burgesses merely held the lands in common, for depasturing animals. All subsequent arrangements about entitlements, stints and contribution money had been decided purely at the discretion of the free burgesses (or their corporate representatives), not in accordance with an equal right of access for all freemen to this 'public' resource. The outcome of the case is unknown. However, the fact that the existing arrangements about pasture rights and contribution money continued unaltered into the 1730s suggests that Leake and Mainwaring lost. Their action may just have been one skirmish in a larger battle over the question of whether tithes were due on the commons, in which Lawrence Gibbon and his co-defendants were sued four times in the Exchequer.[66]

[64] PRO C10/406/10 Attorney General *v.* Lawrence Gibbon and others, 6 June 1713.

[65] It is difficult to establish what proportion of all free burgesses were helped in this way. SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/3, list of freemen entitled to vote in 1703, records 727 free burgesses, 146 of whom resided outside the borough. If a further *c.* 130 were entitled to depasture animals, with another *c.* 240 receiving commons' money, this leaves a further *c.* 200 who neither depastured cattle, nor received collection money. Since only approximately 150 burgesses actually voted, and the 1703 list was the result of a parliamentary enquiry into voting irregularities in the borough, the overall number of burgesses may be grossly inflated.

[66] PRO, E 134/11 Anne/Mich. 5; /11 and 12 Anne, Hil. 1; /11 and 12 Anne, Hil. 10; /1 Geo. 1, East. 7.

TABLE 1. Occupations of Sudbury freemen depasturing cattle or receiving money, 1710–28.

	Depasturing cattle		*Receiving money*		*Those in both groups*	
Occupational groups:	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Agricultural	11	6	4	4	2	4
Woodworkers	11	6	6	6	3	6
clothiers	28	15	8	7	4	8
weavers	31	17	56	52	19	39
allied textile trades	10	4	5	5	3	6
All clothworkers	69	38	69	64	26	53
Leatherworkers	14	8	8	7	5	10
Food producers	24	13	7	6	6	12
Metalworkers	8	4	2	2	1	6
Medical	10	5	3	3	3	6
Services	7	4	2	2	2	4
Clothing	9	5	5	5	0	0
Misc. crafts	7	4	1	1	0	0
Gents.	11	6	1	1	1	2
Clerics	2	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	183	100	108	100	49	100
TOTAL GROUP	383		589		138	
% with known occupations		48		18		36
Median date of birth		1671		1664		1664
n =		111		59		24

Source: Suffolk RO (Bury), EE 501/2/7 collated with occupational designations drawn mostly from EE 501/4/1 and other sources.
Note: date of birth estimated as apprenticeship date – 17 years or freedom date – 24 years.

IV

Whatever its outcome, the Chancery suit highlighted the differences in access to the commons. A closer examination of the two groups, those with and those without cattle on the commons, illustrates the effects of town's polarised social order. Table 1 illustrates the occupational profiles of the two groups. In both cases, the dominance of the cloth trade is apparent immediately. Thirty-eight per cent of commoners whose occupations are known were involved in the trade, while 64 per cent of those receiving the commons' money were in clothing trades. Two other features are evident, and both suggest a difference in wealth between the two groups. The first is that a much higher proportion of the occupations of commoners can be detected than of non-commoners. The two main sources used to distinguish occupations, the Sudbury borough 'Cocket books', and wills, both favoured freemen, and the more prosperous inhabitants. The second indication of the social distance between the two groups is the fact that only 17 per cent

of the commoner group were weavers, while more than half the non-commoner group were members of this trade. By contrast, the proportion of clothiers in the commoner sample was more than twice as high as among the non-commoners. There were also higher proportions of food producers or suppliers (bakers, butchers, maltsters, millers and grocers) among the commoner group, as well as a higher proportion of those who styled themselves gentlemen.

As the table shows, however, the two groups were not mutually exclusive. Of the 972 individuals in the study, 138 depastured animals and received commons money at some point between 1710 and 1728. This group exhibits the same occupational profile as the other two, emphasising the dominance of the cloth trade. The fact that this group contained many more weavers than clothiers may illustrate the fact that those with more marginal income levels were more likely to move between the two groups, according to their financial circumstances. More than half the weavers who possessed animals also received collection money at some point, a higher proportion than for any other occupational group in the sample. This is an indication of the precarious nature of their income.

Another trend may also be evident, but perhaps less conclusively. While a smaller proportion of the non-commoner group can be found among the apprenticeship records of the borough, these people appear to have been older than freemen who had cattle on the commons. By calculating the approximate date of birth of a freeman as either his date of apprenticeship minus seventeen years, or his date of freedom minus twenty-four years, it is possible to establish notional ages.[67] By this rough-and-ready method, the median date of birth for commoners between 1710–28 was 1671, for non-commoners it was 1664. While the group about whom we know nothing is much larger than either of these age samples, it may be that those receiving commons money were older and poorer than those who depastured animals on the commons.[68] The similarity in the age profile of those in both categories with the commons money group as a whole suggests that age may have been a factor in the move from commoning to receiving money.

However, the evidence does not suggest that this was the only dynamic at work among the group of individuals who commoned animals and received money in the period. Of these 138 people, 64 exhibited no clear trajectory, moving back and forth between possessing animals and receiving money through the period. A further 40 moved, chronologically, from depasturing animals to receiving commons' money, but the remaining 34 moved the other way, from receiving money to exercising common rights. There are too few apprenticeship or freedom dates for these people to establish whether these moves were part of their life-cycle experience.[69] Instead, it is important to emphasize how mobility between the groups was actually very

[67] For example, in PRO, E 134/1 Geo. 1/East. 7, James Lee, a sayweaver, was recorded as aged 60 years in 1715. James Lee, son of William Lee, was apprenticed to Joseph Pentlow, sayweaver, 29 Sept. 1672, SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/1. In PRO, E 134/11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 12, his brother Jonathan was given as aged 50 years in 1713, he was apprenticed to his father William, 2 June 1680, SRO (Bury), EE 501/4/1.

[68] This finding may, however, be influenced by chronological biases in the source material. The 'Cocket' book of enrolled apprenticeships (containing occupations both of apprentice and master) contains much more material for the period 1660–90 than for later decades, increasing the chances of locating occupations among older freemen. 96 apprenticeships were enrolled between 1657 and 1659; 202 between 1660 and 1669; 226 between 1670 and 1679; 236 between 1680 and 1689; but only 18 between 1693 and 1695, with a further 60 between 1717 and 1734.

[69] There were only five dates of apprenticeship and one of freedom for the group who moved from commoning to receiving money; for the group moving in the

infrequent, and how differences engendered by freedom fines remained entrenched thereafter. In general in the town, freemen and their widows *either* exercised pasture rights *or* received commons money. Only 14 per cent of the 972 individuals in these two categories did both, and only 10 per cent (98) depastured animals and received money, or moved from receiving money to possessing animals. A longer period of observation might have disclosed more movement, but it appears that the divide between the two groups was substantial, and difficult to traverse.

Much of the difficulty in establishing the nature and depth of this divide is created by the absence of local or national taxation records for the town in this period. One crude measure of wealth is an analysis the extent to which the two groups participated in parliamentary elections in the town.[70] When the poll books for 1710 and 1727 are matched to the personnel of the two groups through the period, a clear pattern emerges. In the 1710 election, 79 of the 383 commoners voted (20.6 per cent), compared to only 38 of the 589 who received money (6.5 per cent). However of these 38, 19 also depastured animals at some point between 1710–28. This meant that 53 per cent of voters in 1710 (79 out of 149) had depastured animals on the commons, or would do so, whereas 13 per cent (19 out of 149) had only received money, or would only do so. The trend was more pronounced in 1727. In that year, 75 of the commoners voted compared to 33 who had received commons money. Of the latter, 25 had also depastured animals at some point in the period. In this instance, 57 per cent of the voters (75 out of 130) had depastured animals on the commons, with a further fifteen voters non-resident, and only 6 per cent (8 out of 130) of the commons money group voting. In total, twenty per cent of those who used the commons in the period voted, while only 5–6 per cent of those who received money did so.[71]

V

If possession and exercise of rights to use the commons was influenced heavily by wealth and occupation, but not entirely dependent upon them, how were the commons used by those able to do so? In the first place, they were used more intensively over time. Stocking rates are shown in Table 2. There were two distinct periods in the use of the commons, 1710–18 and 1719–28. In the first period an average of 129 freemen depastured an average of 158 animals. The table illustrates that the proportions of cows, horses and mares on the commons in the period was not subject to much variation, although the proportion of cows on the commons was higher at the beginning of the period than at the end. In the second period, after 1719, 136 freemen, on average, were allowed pasture rights, bringing with them an average of 185 animals each year.

The increase in the numbers of freemen may simply have followed a demographic trend. It may, perhaps, have been the result of a slight opening of access in the wake of the case brought on behalf of Leake and Mainwaring. It might also reflect the prior integration into the commons' management regime of the lands bought in 1731. In 1715, Joshua Oakeley of Melford said that

other direction, there were three dates of apprenticeship, and fifteen for the group exhibiting no clear pattern.

[70] Sudbury lost its borough franchise on the surrender of its charter in 1685. Thereafter the town was included in county elections for Suffolk, and the usual £2 county freehold franchise applied.

[71] That is, 79 and 75 out of 383 commoners (21 and 20 per cent), and 38 and 33 out of 589 who received money (6 per cent); 19 and 25 out of 138 in both groups voted (14 and 18 per cent).

TABLE 2. Number and proportion of animal types, Sudbury common, 1710–28

	People	*total number of animals*	*cows*		*horses*		*mares*	
	n	*n*	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1710	131	165	58	35	63	38	44	27
1711	126	151	58	38	52	34	41	27
1712	135	158	77	49	45	28	36	23
1713	123	146	55	38	60	41	31	41
1714	129	155	48	31	71	46	36	23
1715	127	153	54	35	54	35	45	29
1716	132	169	52	31	69	41	48	28
1717								
1718	126	169	52	31	71	42	46	27
1719	135	188	62	33	78	41	48	26
1720	132	187	58	31	80	43	49	26
1721	124	165	58	35	70	42	37	22
1722	137	192	61	32	74	38	57	30
1723	136	186	73	39	65	35	48	26
1724	138	188	61	32	70	37	57	30
1725	135	183	52	28	63	34	68	37
1726	146	195	54	28	79	40	62	32
1727	135	182	59	32	72	40	51	28
1728	144	188	59	31	69	37	60	32
AVERAGE	126	164	55	32	63	36	46	26

Source: Suffolk RO (Bury), EE501/2/7 (no list survives for 1717).
Note: the categories of cows, horses and mares are those employed in the original source.

since about 1711 he had noticed these lands being used as common pasture after the first hay crop.[72] The addition of 10 acres to the commons might have accommodated the extra 30 head of livestock without changing stocking rates.[73] These would have remained at around 3.5 animals per acre, a very high figure.[74] In 1715, Cornelius Brewer, a 'gentleman' from the neighbouring

[72] PRO, E 134/Geo. 1/East. 7, Joshua Oakeley, Melford, woolcomber, aged 47 years.

[73] If the size of the common was increased from 41.7 acres to 52.15 acres, while the average number of animals increased from 158 to 185, stocking rates would have fallen slightly, from 3.8 animals per acre to 3.5. In PRO, E 134/1 Geo. 1/East. 7, Luke Leake testified that the commons contained only about 40–50 acres. In E 134/11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 10, Thomas Hall of Great Cornard, stated that the additional area over which the freemen had grazing rights (Friars, Fulling Pit Meadow, and arable lands called Wents, Ingrams and Wells) added only a further 11 acres.

[74] Other towns had stocking rates that were lower, but hardly more sustainable if the animals relied solely on pasture for sustenance. In Beverley between 1744 and 1761, 150–200 animals were depastured on 110 acres (1.8

village of Borley in Essex, alleged that this stocking rate was so high that the available pasture was eaten up within a couple of weeks.[75] He also suggested, not necessarily objectively, that the residual value of the depleted pasture was no more than 10*d.* per head, just over half the fee levied that year.[76] This pressure explains why the corporation felt compelled to fight Leake and Mainwaring, but also why it purchased these additional lands in 1731 to achieve the first formal increase in the size of the commons for more than 450 years.

While the proportion of cows, horses and mares remained largely stable through the period, the corporation's manipulation of the per capita fine from year to year appears to have been designed, and to have achieved, a redistribution of resources. In 1710, the fine for one 'beast' was 3*s.* 4*d.*; the fine for two was 13*s.* 8*d.* Table 3 shows that in 1710 97 individuals depastured only one animal, while 34 depastured two. Between 1710 and 1714, the fine for a single animal increased to 6*s.* 6*d.*, for two to £1. As the fines for two animals rose, commoners opted for only one animal each, as illustrated in Table 3. This was, effectively, a stint, which gave a larger number of commoners (135 – the highest number until 1723) access to the commons, but with only one beast per person. Between 1715 and 1722, the fines moved in the other direction, remaining at 3*s.* and 13*s.* respectively. As a consequence, the advantage shifted towards having two animals on the commons. Between 1712 and 1720 the numbers swung from 112 freemen with one beast and 23 with two, to 77 and 55 respectively. In response, fines were raised and once more loaded more heavily against those with two animals. This time, although there was a shift in favour of those with one animal only, the numbers with two remained high. The 1720s saw the commons' policy being adjusted in favour of lone animals, but the double fine was no longer sufficiently prohibitive to produce the kind of swing seen up to 1712.

It is interesting that the corporation now employed the price mechanism to enforce a stint, rather than simply changing the numbers by fiat, as in 1644. Table 4 provides an obvious explanation for this policy. The profit accruing to the corporation increased from £15.9 in 1715, when the per capita rates were cut, to £44.9 in 1726, when they had been increased to 5*s.* 6*d.* and 18*s.* Sadly no figures are available for the key years 1712–14. This makes it difficult to establish whether this policy was designed to increase civic revenues in order to help poor relief in the

per acre for the higher figure); the figures for the larger Westwood common (504 acres) rose from 2–300 in *c.* 1750 to more than 500 in 1831, that is from 0.5 per acre to about 1.0 per acre. VCH *East Riding*, VI, pp. 214–5. In York in 1846 685 animals were depastured on 791 acres of 'strays', a ratio of 0.87 per acre, although the ratio varied between 1.7 per acre and 0.5 per acre between the 'strays' of the four wards. VCH *City of York*, p. 505. In Clitheroe, 531 statute acres supported 279 animals, or 0.5 per acre. Lancashire RO, MBC 27, Clitheroe commons' marking book, 1764. Jane Humphries has suggested that 3 acres of arable fallow would support one cow for a year. J. Humphries, 'Enclosure, common rights and women: the proletarianization of families in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *JEcH* 50 (1990), p. 27, table 1, note g.

[75] PRO, E134/1 Geo. 1/East 7, 2nd interrogatory, Cornelius Brewer, Borley, Essex, gent., aged 56 years. Brewer had managed the estate of Francis Dashwood in the town for 7–8 years.

[76] Although there is no evidence about the composition of the meadow pasture in Sudbury, contemporary improvement propaganda suggested that much higher stocking rates were possible with the introduction of clover. Andrew Yarranton wrote in 1663 that 'I can make it appear, six acres of land in clover will keep as many cattle, as thirty acres of natural grass ...', quoted in C. Lane, 'The development of pastures and meadows during the sixteenth century', *AgHR* 28 (1980), p. 27.

TABLE 3. The cost of commoning and numbers of animals commoned, Sudbury Commons, 1710–28.

	Fine one animal	*% change on year*	*Fine two animals*	*% change on year*	*commoners with one animal*	*%*	*commoners with two animals*	*%*	*Total commoners*
1710	3*s.* 4*d.*	0	13*s.* 8*d.*	0	97	74	34	26	131
1711	4*s.* 0*d.*	17	15*s.* 0*d.*	9	101	80	25	20	126
1712	5*s.* 6*d.*	27	18*s.* 0*d.*	17	112	83	23	17	135
1713	6*s.* 6*d.*	15	20*s.* 0*d.*	10	101	82	22	18	123
1714	6*s.* 6*d.*	0	20*s.* 0*d.*	0	104	81	25	19	129
1715	3*s.* 0*d.*	–54	13*s.* 0*d.*	–54	100	79	26	21	126
1716	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	95	72	37	28	132
1717									
1718	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	83	66	43	34	126
1719	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	83	61	52	39	135
1720	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	77	58	55	42	132
1721	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	81	66	42	34	123
1722	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	82	60	55	40	137
1723	5*s.* 6*d.*	45	18*s.* 0*d.*	28	86	63	50	37	136
1724	5*s.* 6*d.*	0	18*s.* 0*d.*	0	89	64	49	36	138
1725	5*s.* 6*d.*	0	18*s.* 0*d.*	0	87	64	48	36	135
1726	5*s.* 6*d.*	0	18*s.* 0*d.*	0	99	68	47	32	146
1727	3*s.* 0*d.*	–45	13*s.* 0*d.*	–28	89	66	46	34	135
1728	3*s.* 0*d.*	0	13*s.* 0*d.*	0	100	69	44	31	144
Average					88	93	38	40	132

Source: Suffolk RO (Bury), EE 501/2/7 (no list survives for 1717).

recession, or whether, as Leake and Mainwaring alleged, the money was used exclusively for the entertainment and hospitality expenses of the mayor, aldermen and chief burgesses.[77]

While use of the commons increased slightly, not all trades used the land for the same purpose. Table 5 shows the proportion of different type of animals depastured on the commons by the town's various occupational sectors. Most trade sectors used the commons more for the pasturing of animals used for traction than for dairying. Only woodworkers, weavers and allied subsidiary cloth trades and (strangely) medical practitioners depastured a higher proportion of cows on the commons than horses. Two-thirds or more of all the other animals introduced to the commons by other trade groups were horses or mares. For these trades, it appears that the

[77] PRO, C10/406/10. Mainwaring and Leake alleged that in c. 1683 the bailiff, one French, received £10 in profits from the commons and used it to pay for the bailiff's feast. It may be significant that the commons' records are written in the back of a volume in which mayoral expenses are recorded, for the period 1645–72, SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/7.

TABLE 4. Amounts of Money raised and spent from Sudbury Commons, 1710–28

Year	*Number Using Commons*	*Income (£)*	*Number receiving Money*	*Expenditure (£)*	*Surplus (£)*
1710	131	39.0	241	18.1	20.9
1711	126	39.0	214	13.4	25.6
1712	135	50.7			
1713	123	54.8	228		
1714	129	58.8	241		
1715	127	33.9	240	18.0	15.9
1716	132	38.3	221		
1717					
1718	126	40.4	262	22.9	17.5
1719	135	46.3	258	25.8	20.5
1720	132	47.3	257	25.7	21.6
1721	124	39.5	248	21.7	17.8
1722	137	46.8	244		
1723	136	68.7	236		
1724	138	68.6	226	28.3	40.3
1725	135	67.1	224	25.2	41.9
1726	146	69.5	246	24.6	44.9
1727	135	43.3	253	29.5	13.8
1728	144	42.3	240	24.0	18.3
Average	133	50.0	240	23.0	25.0

Source: Suffolk RO, EE 501/2/7. Gaps in the table indicate no evidence.

commons were a conveniently located town-centre park for their business transport, saving the necessity of accommodating animals at a distance. For woodworkers and the textile producing and processing trades, the proportions were reversed. More than half the animals depastured were cows, and a majority in all these groups favoured cows, kept presumably as a source of fresh milk and butter, and definitely as a second income stream.[78] The bovine bias was most evident in the weaving and allied cloth trades.[79] This may be why, in Table 2, the proportion of cows rises to almost fifty per cent in the worst years of recession in the cloth trade, between

[78] David Levine has suggested that the labourer's cow was 'worth almost as much as his wages' in the eighteenth century, D. Levine, *Reproducing families: the political economy of English population history* (1987), p. 67. Jane Humphries has estimated the yield at 'often more than half the adult male labourer's wage' in the later eighteenth century, Humphries, 'Enclosure', p. 31. In a cloth town like Sudbury, the stability of dairy demand and profits may have been more important than whether they matched male household income from weaving (which often fluctuated more than labouring wages).

[79] The allied trades included woolcombers, combmakers, shearmen, 'pappers' (yarn-bleachers), and sayscourers and dyers.

TABLE 5. Total number of animals depastured by occupational group, 1710–28

	Average Number Per Person			*Proportion of Animals (%)*		
	cows	*horses*	*mares*	*cows*	*horses*	*mares*
Agricultural	3.3	5.5	3.3	26	49	24
Woodworkers	9.2	5.3	2.5	57	37	6
clothiers	6.8	7.6	5.8	22	44	34
weavers	6.5	4.0	4.1	52	26	22
allied	10.3	3.3	7.0	73	16	11
All Clothworkers	7.4	5.7	5.2	41	33	26
Leatherworkers	7.0	6.2	5.4	25	41	34
Food producers	6.8	6.0	3.9	30	43	27
Metalworkers	2.5	3.4	5.0	10	33	58
Medical	2.0	5.8	7.3	46	44	10
Services	5.5	4.5	1.4	19	64	17
Clothing	2.4	5.5	2.8	16	60	23
Misc. Crafts	10.0	8.7	9.3	22	38	40
Gents.	3.5	5.1	8.0	13	52	35
Clerics	0	5.0	1.0	0	91	9
All Trades	3.2	4.5	3.2	33	40	27
Unknown Occ.	2.5	2.7	1.9	39	35	26
Total	2.7	3.1	2.3	35	39	26

Source: SRO (Bury), EE 501/2/7 collated with occupational designations drawn mostly from the cocket books, EE 501/4/1 and other sources.
Note: Average number per person in each occupational group is the number of animals grazed over the entire period divided by the number of people grazing that type of animal in the occupational group.

1710–12. It may also have added to the sense of urgency among those petitioning for access to the commons in these years.

The commons served as a useful resource for a proportion of freemen in Sudbury. For most of these tradesmen, this land provided a means of pasturing animals used for traction or for 'business transport'. Yet, within this group, other trades, particularly wage earners in the cloth trade, appear to have been using the commons as a resource in a dual economy. These trades showed a slight preference for cows over horses, and (presumably) for dairy produce over transportation. In these trades it was the employers who transported raw materials and finished products, not their household producers. The increasingly precarious nature of employment and payment in the cloth trade meant that all alternative sources of income were welcome.[80]

[80] One of the consequences of the 1707–14 recession in the cloth trade elsewhere in this region was that clothiers forced down wage rates, paid in kind or in truck or delayed payment for as long as possible (to stave off their own credit crises). See K. H. Burley, 'A labour dispute in early eighteenth-century Colchester', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 29 (1956), pp. 230–40.

Dairying may have been a particularly important supplement to female incomes, particularly in the cloth trades. While this fact is hidden for most married women, 52 (14 per cent of the total) of those who depastured animals were widows. They showed a marked tendency to possess cows rather than horses. In the seventeen years covered by the commons' book, they depastured 111 cows, 38 horses and 37 mares. Of the group almost half (24 out of 52) owned only cows. This may illustrate the female use of the commons for dairying, which underlay use of the commons by freemen. In general, though, female household heads were more likely to receive money from the commons, than they were to depasture animals on them.[81] As a consequence, for Sudbury weavers, their wives and their widows, access to the commons appears to have been a distinct financial bonus, but one that was distributed inequitably.

VI

The wider impact of urban agriculture, or of access to agrarian resources, can be detected in probate inventories for borough inhabitants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There are few of these sources for freemen in the period under observation in this article. Frustratingly, the Sudbury inventories decline in number and quality around 1700, just before the start of the commons lists. As a result, there are only 94 inventories for townsmen between 1625 and 1720, and only four of these can be connected positively to individuals in the database.[82] However, some estimates can be made. These inventories contain a large number of senior members of the corporation. Thirty six out of the 94 testators were aldermen, chief burgesses or members of groups of free burgesses who represented the wider burgess population during annual mayoral elections. It seems safe to infer that this group of wealthier inhabitants drew disproportionately on their rights to the commons. Between 1710–28, all ten aldermen did so, 34 out of 36 chief burgesses did so, as did 85 out of 127 free burgesses.[83] Obviously, such an assumption is more difficult to prove among the wider burgess population. If the 1703 burgess list is accurate, perhaps only a quarter of the resident, eligible free burgesses used the commons, a further 40 per cent received commons money, with 35 per cent unaccounted for.[84]

Among the higher echelons of the corporation the above patterns are repeated. Positions among, and promotion to, the ranks of the chief burgesses depended on length of service and wealth.[85] Aldermen and chief burgesses were wealthier than free burgesses, and were promoted out of the ranks of the latter group. Table 6 illustrates the differences in commoning patterns

[81] 159 out of 589 persons (27 per cent) receiving money from the commons between 1710 and 1728 were women – that is, almost double the proportion of women who depastured animals on the commons.

[82] The inventories are all those found in SRO (Bury), will registers IC/500/3/2 to 3/43 (1647–1720), supplemented by a few inventories found in Norfolk RO, Inv 32–46 (1625–40) and in PRO PROB 4 and PROB 5. The four are SRO (Bury), Probate Register 1C/500/3/38/56 (Phillip Garrard, maltster, d. 1712); 1C/500/3/39/20 (William Fothergill, apothecary, d. 1713); 1C/500/3/43/15 (Robert Soles, butcher, d. 1719) and PRO, PROB 3/18/161 (Roger Kineston, salesman, d. 1719).

[83] SRO (Bury) EE 501/2/9.

[84] See above, n. 65. These percentages are based on the assumption that if the total number of resident free burgesses was *c.* 580 (with a further *c.* 140 non-resident), then on average *c.* 130 of them depastured cattle; *c.* 240 received commons money, with a further *c.* 200 not appearing on either list.

[85] See H. R. French, 'Social status, localism and the "middle sort of people" in England, 1630–1750', *Past and Present* 166 (2000), pp. 66–99.

TABLE 6. Proportion of animal types depastured, by officeholding in Sudbury corporation, 1710–28

		Average number per person			*proportion of animals (%)*			*Average number of years in*
	N	*cows*	*horses*	*mares*	*cows*	*horses*	*mares*	*database*
Free Burgesses:								
1–4 years service	47	7.6	5.8	3.7	28	48	34	8.0
5–12 years service	35	7.2	8.0	8.7	31	37	32	11.0
Chief Burgesses								
1–9 years service	19	5.6	4.8	3.7	14	46	40	7.8
10–17 years service	14	2.7	6.4	9.8	9	47	44	10.0
Aldermen	12	2.8	7.5	9.4	9	49	41	11.0

Source: identification of burgesses, chief burgesses and aldermen (and their period of service) taken from Suffolk RO, EE 501/2/9, collated with annual lists of commoners in EE501/2/7.
Note: averages calculated as Table 5.

among these groups between 1710 and 1728. Free burgesses, whatever their length of service, were three times more likely to have cows on the commons than the longest-serving chief burgesses and aldermen. These two highest groups depastured horses and mares in 90 per cent of cases. This is a different perspective on the findings of Table 5, that higher status trades were more likely to common horses than cows. Weavers and lower-level cloth trades, who were most likely to common cows, were only present among the free burgesses, and were not represented among the top two levels of the corporation (only one weaver was a chief burgess).

Among the inventories, twelve out of sixteen inventories of chief burgesses and aldermen mention livestock; only eight out of twenty free burgesses' do so; while among the other testators, livestock is mentioned in only 28 out of 58 inventories. In all, 48 out of 94 inventories value livestock (51 per cent). Table 7 shows the differences in the types of animal possessed in the inventories of different occupational groups. Most of these groups are too small to be significant. However, two trends are important.[86] The first is that, once again, clothiers tended to possess draught animals far more frequently than they owned other livestock: 12 out of the 23 clothiers in the sample owned horses or mares. By contrast, ownership (or mention) of any livestock was rare among the weavers and allied cloth trades. The other trend is the (logical) tendency for food producers, notably innkeepers, bakers and maltsters, to own pigs, fed on surplus grain and malt mash. Two bakers, two brewers, two innkeepers and one maltster owned

[86] The large numbers of animals among the 'miscellaneous trades' category is due to the inventory of Joseph Andrews, merchant, 1701, PRO, PROB 5/4854. His total personal estate was valued at £946, with household goods of £111, and a fully-fledged farm of 13 acres wheat, 27 acres rye, 10 combs of barley, 2 loads of maslin, 45 sheep, 40 lambs, 12 cows, one bull, six bullocks, eleven working horses and 3 colts, as well as a sow and pigs, and 3 tumbrels, 2 waggons, 2 ploughs and a harrow. In 1697, he held 11 acres of land in St. Gregory's parish in the town, SRO (Bury), FL 634/1/1 St. Gregory's Sudbury Parish Book, 1661–1829, account of lands in the parish, 1696; his nephew Oliver Andrews farmed a further 28 acres in the parish that year. He was impropriator of St. Gregory's too, PRO E 134/11 Anne/Mich. 5; 11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 1 and 1 Geo. 1/East. 7.

TABLE 7. Distribution of animals in Sudbury probate inventories, 1625–1720

	N	*cows*	*horses*	*mares*	*pigs*	*sheep*	*Incidence of animals in inventories*
Agricultural	4	2	8	0	2	0	2/4
Woodworkers	3	1	2	0	0	0	2/3
clothiers	23	5	20	4	3	18	14/23
weavers	15	0	0	1	1	0	2/15
allied	3	5	0	0	1	0	1/3
All Clothworkers	41	10	20	5	5	18	17/41
Leatherworkers	3	1	1	0	0	0	1/3
Food producers	19	4	4	3	38	0	13/19
Metalworkers	5	0	3	1	0	0	3/5
Medical	3	0	0	1	0	0	1/3
Services	3	4	0	0	2	0	2/3
Clothing	7	0	4	4	0	0	5/7
Misc. Crafts	3	17	11	0	2	85	1/3
Gents.	2	1	0	0	0	0	1/2
Clerics	0						
TOTAL	92						

Source: inventories as described in footnote 82. One inventory without an occupational designation is omitted.

38 pigs between them.[87] The relative absence of pigs in other inventories suggests that only those with the means to feed them cheaply kept pigs in any numbers. As has been shown, pigs were prohibited from the commons.

Other agrarian products featured in the inventories. Of the group of 94, 25 mentioned hay and fodder for animals. Sixteen inventories listed wheat, barley, oats, maslin or rye. Four inventories included stocks of peas, beans and legumes, four mentioned hops, seven had stocks of malt (excluding maltsters and brewers), three listed agricultural equipment (ploughs, harrows, waggons, carts, or tumbrels), and five mentioned acreages of land, or the value of tillage. Others give indications of the variety of produce available in Sudbury. George Porter possessed 18 bushels of apples, and some walnuts, in his inventory of November 1650.[88] John

[87] SRO (Bury), Probate Registers 1C/500/3/11/15 (William Elliston, innkeeper, 1666, 9 pigs); PRO, PROB 4/12413 (Ambrose Hayward, innkeeper, 1666, 9 pigs); SRO (Bury) 1C/500/3/11/58 (Robert Buxton, brewer, 1666, 6 pigs); 1C/500/3/10/24 (Henry Somersett, brewer, 1664, 3 pigs); 1C/500/3/19/13 (John Place, baker, 1677, 3 pigs); 1C/500/3/26/80 (John King, baker, 1701, 6 pigs); 1C/500/3/21/77 (Joseph Nunn, maltster, 1682, 2 or more pigs). The urban pig, particularly the malt fed-variety, has recently found its historian in Prof. Chartres.

[88] SRO (Bury), 1C/500/3/3/100 (George Porter, Sudbury, comber, 21 Nov. 1650).

TABLE 8. The possession of cattle and other goods in Sudbury inventories, 1625–1720

	Inventories with cattle		*Inventories without cattle*	
	average number of items	*% with*	*average number of items*	*% with*
Possession of:				
Beds (unspecified)	3.3	17	2.6	41
Featherbeds	3.5	63	2.7	52
Flockbeds	3.2	73	2.0	50
Long/Square Tables	4.5	92	3.8	74
Octagonal/Round Tables	2.8	33	2.5	46
Oval/Dining Tables	1.4	21	2.0	2
Joined Stools/Chairs	21.2	81	18.3	48
Rush/Wicker Chairs	9.7	58	9.4	47
Upholstered Chairs	7.4	27	4.8	17
Leather Chairs	7.5	29	5.0	13
Couches	4.5	13	1.0	2
Glass Keeps	1.3	50	1.5	26
Chests	1.9	65	1.8	54
Chests of Drawers	1.8	48	1.7	39
Cushions	10.1	44	6.9	26
Window Curtains	6.9	35	3.7	15
Tea/Coffee Sets	1.5	4	2.0	4
China	0	0	0.0	0
Sheets (pairs)	11.2	19	6.0	24
Looking Glasses	2.1	46	2.3	26
Clocks	1.2	21	1.1	15
Pictures/Maps	4.6	17	2.7	7
Wall Hangings	6	4	0.0	0
Musical Instruments	2	2	1.0	2
Books	3.5	23	1.9	17
Silver Spoons	5.9	21	2.8	20
Guns	2.5	31	2.6	11

Totty, a gardener, had seed beans and seed peas, and 'white roots' (either turnips or parsnips) worth £1 in September 1682.[89] Significantly, both he, and Stephen Carter, the other 'husbandman' in the sample, owned a pair of looms, for by-employment could work in both directions

[89] SRO (Bury), 1C/500/3/21/122 (John Totty, Sudbury, gardener, 7 Sept. 1682).

Average value of inventory measured as:		
Average household goods (£)	4.4	29.9
Average total inventory valuation (£)	297.5	101.7
Average trade stock (£)	208.5	76.0
Median household goods (£)	49.2	20.4
Median total inventory value (£)	203.5	45.2
Median trade stock (£)	52.1	19.1
Average household goods/total inventory valuation (%)	35.0	51.0

Source: inventories as described in footnote 82. One inventory without an occupational designation is omitted.
Note: 48 inventories with cattle and 46 without are in observation.

in the town.[90] A further six of the inventory sample appear to have been engaged actively in farming, including two clothiers, a lawyer, a haberdasher, a merchant, and one 'gent.'

While the presence of animals in inventories does not, necessarily, indicate the possession or use of common rights, the distinctions between testators with and without animals are interesting, and are shown in Table 8. In this table the wealth of the testators has been analysed in two ways. Firstly, the propensity to possess a range of twenty-seven 'status-indicating' household items has been measured. Secondly, a series of inventory valuations have been calculated at the foot of the table. These deal with the average and median values of, respectively, the household goods in the inventory,[91] the total value of all items in the inventory, and the value of the trade stock. The percentage of the value of the household goods to the total inventory value has also been calculated.

The table indicates that those who possessed animals as part of their inventoried goods tended to be richer in two respects than those who did not.[92] The former owned a higher number of these household furnishings per head, one more bed each, one more table, three more chairs, more upholstered furniture, more cushions, twice as many curtains and nearly twice as much (expensive) bed linen. In addition, these items were owned by approximately ten per cent more of the group possessing animals, than by those whose inventories omitted livestock. This difference in personal wealth is accentuated in the valuations of household and total estate and for trade stock. Those possessing animals had double the median value of household goods, nearly four times the total inventoried wealth, and more than double the amount of trade stock. Among the inventoried population of the town (its top twenty per cent), ownership of livestock

[90] SRO (Bury), 1C/500/3/24/6, (Stephen Carter, Sudbury, husbandman, 13 May 1691). The same was true of William Hewes, a 'yeoman', who appears to have been a clothier, with £226 worth of cloth in London. PRO, PROB4/12655 (1670).

[91] These include all household furniture, bedding, cooking equipment, equipment in food preparation and storage rooms (milk houses, butteries, beer cellars), but excluding trade or farm tools and stock, goods stored outside the house, furniture in other houses, food and drink, clothes and ready money.

[92] The differences cannot be explained by any disparity in the chronological distributions of the inventories of the two groups between 1625 and 1720. For inventories with animals, two inventories preceded 1640, 26 were from 1660–79, 11 from 1680–1699, and 9 between 1710–19 (n = 48). For inventories without animals 3 preceded 1640, 6 were from 1641–59, 17 from 1660–79, 11 from 1680–99 and 9 from 1700–19 (n = 46).

accompanied other forms of wealth. It may have consolidated this wealth by allowing a diversification of resources. In the case of clothiers and large-scale craft and processing trades (carpenters, tallow chandlers, millers and maltsters), ownership of draught animals may have been part of the capital investment in the business, a function of scale. Among less wealthy trading households, the dairy cow may have provided an important supplement to female income, which, in a town like Sudbury, was probably even more dependent than male income on the buoyancy of wage rates in the cloth trade.[93] Most households, however, lacked access even to this relatively modest by-employment.

Just as agrarian by-employments existed within the wider framework of the cloth industry, so Sudbury's commons existed within a wider farming landscape. The commons were situated in St. Gregory's parish, and half-year common pasture rights spilled over the formal bounds of the commons, into the neighbouring closes and the town's two other parishes. In addition, individuals who possessed common rights sometimes owned small parcels, or held land by leasehold, or sub-leasing. A 1696 parochial survey of lands in St. Gregory's, possibly complied for tithe purposes, makes this point. Although the names of commoners are not recorded until 1710, 10 of the 34 occupiers of lands in 1696 later exercised common rights.

The area was a mix of holdings of various sizes. The total acreage was at least 338 acres, distributed among 32 occupiers.[94] This gives an average acreage of 10.5 acres, but the median was only 5 acres. The parish was divided up into a mix of workable farms, and field or meadow plots of less than five acres, held by wealthier residents of the town, sometimes alongside rights of common.[95] William Cock had 0.75 acres in North meadow; William Fothergill, an apothecary, had 2 acres; Samuel Abbott had 6 acres in Windmill Field; Thomas Bracket had 3 acres there; John Baker had 7 acres there, plus 0.75 acres of meadow; Roger Scarling had 8 acres in Windmill Field, and 2 acres in North meadow. All went on to become aldermen or chief burgesses, except Baker, who was a Quaker. Holdings of this size could yield a diverse harvest. William King, a prosperous haberdasher and chief burgess died in July 1685, in possession of such a smallholding in the town. His inventory listed 2.75 acres of barley, the same amount of wheat, a lease of 1 acre of meadow (valued at £30), a parcel of beans, 3 seams of peas, 3 bushels of oats, 3 seams of malt, half a bushel of meal, and one parcel of pea straw.[96] This produce was valued at £24, a tiny proportion of his total wealth of £313, but an indication of the range of activities on such parcels. These smallholdings functioned as part of the real estate investment properties of the

[93] Defoe noted 'after the late plague in France and the Peace in Spain' (*c.* 1721?) 'the poor women in Essex could earn one shilling to one shilling and six pence per diem by spinning ... the poor farmers could get no dary maids, the wenches told them in so many words that they would not go to service for twelve pence a week when they could get nine shillings a week at their own hands ... so they all run along to Bocking, to Sudbury, to Braintree, and to Colchester ...'. D. Defoe, *The plan of English commerce* (1728), pp. 267–9.

[94] SRO (Bury), FL 634/1/1. The 'account of lands lying in St. Gregory's' is not a fully detailed survey with every field and acreage itemised, but appears to be a listing of lands for tithe purposes. Some acreages are approximate, and 3 individuals have no acreage given to them.

[95] The parochial survey does not distinguish between owners and occupiers. Evidence from PRO, E 134/11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 1 and 10 and will of Nathaniel King, Sudbury, 1668, SRO (Bury), Archdeaconry of Sudbury Will Register, Edgar 1666–9, suggests that most of the lands were either in the hands of sub-tenants, or held under long lease. Only two of the 35 landholders listed were definitely freeholders in the parish.

[96] PRO, PROB5/4385 (William King, Sudbury, gent., 17 July 1685).

corporation's trading elite,[97] rather than merely representing the remnants of a past generation of urban husbandmen.

Interspersed with these plots were larger, economically viable land holdings. William Hazell possessed 21 acres, Samuel Hazell 41 acres, Buxton Underwood 35 acres, Oliver Andrews 28 acres and Mr. Wiggoner who held the farm called Bartholomew's of approximately 28 acres.[98] In 1713, James Hurrell, of Ballingdon (Sudbury's Essex suburb), yeoman, testified that he had been the sub-tenant to this farm between 1690 and 1705, for which he had paid £85 per annum, just over £3 per acre.[99] It consisted of 20.5 acres of arable, some in a common field, and 3 acres of meadow, with a cottage and 6 acres in nearby Bulmer, Essex. Similarly, in 1696 Samuel Carter, later a chief burgess, was tenant to Sir Jervase Elwes' lands, a farm of 18.5 acres, divided between 8.5 acres of meadow and 10 of arable. Elsewhere the agrarian economy was being superseded by the wharf, coal yards, and horse paddocks of the River Stour Navigation – a feature of Constable's Suffolk landscapes which has come, ironically, to symbolize a pre-industrial countryside.[100]

The land in the possession of Samuel Hazell in 1696 was in use by 1710–12 as half-year pasture to absorb additional cattle from the over-stretched commons. This extension of common rights was a way in which the siege around the commons, enforced through market rents, could be lifted – on a further 10 acres, for part of the year. In other respects, in a town bounded to the south by a series of water meadows, the determined urban cow or horse keeper may have found it cheaper, in the long run, to buy hay, rather than rent meadow at market rates.[101]

VII

This detailed survey of the use of the town commons in Sudbury allows us to begin to place this resource in its appropriate social and economic context. The primary function of the commons was as a cheap source of accommodation for draught animals in a town that was heavily, if decreasingly, dependent on manufacturing. In general, this was a right held only by those whose businesses could afford, and justify, the possession of a horse or mare. For most of the less wealthy freemen, engaged in textile or related trades, a horse was both unnecessary and expensive. For most inhabitants of the town, the commons were the source of a yearly dole,

[97] The main form of real estate investment was in urban housing. Out of 36 Sudbury wills that mentioned real estate between 1730–50, seven mentioned land only, seven mentioned both houses and land, while the remaining 22 mentioned only houses and tenements. Of this group of 36 testators, 23 had been commoners, and three had also received collection money. SRO (Bury), Archdeaconry of Sudbury Will Registers 1728–1751, microfilms J. 545/53–6.

[98] Only part of this farm lay within St. Gregory's parish. The parish boundaries and the extent of tithe liability were at the heart of the disputes in PRO, E 134/11 Anne/Mich. 5, 11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 1, 2. For an indication of the output of such farms, see above n. 85.

[99] PRO, E 134/11 and 12 Anne/Hil. 2, James Hurrell, Ballingdon, yeoman, aged 60 years.

[100] PRO E 134/11 Anne/Mich 5, Robert Hooper, Sudbury, gent., aged 37 years. 'Nonsuch' field 5 acres, in All Saints' and St. Gregory's parishes was used by the Stour Navigation proprietors, for loading wagons, as a coal yard, for a quay, with the rest of the field used to feed the company's draught horses. See J. S. Hull, 'The River Stour Navigation Company', *Proc. of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology* 32 (1972), pp. 221–54.

[101] PRO E 134/11 Anne/Mich 5. In 1712, Robert Hooper of Sudbury testified that 2.5 or 3 acres of 'Nonsuch Field' next to the commons produced three 'loads' of hay, worth £3. This volume was approximately the amount required to feed a cow or a horse for a year. 19 Sudbury inventories valued hay, the average valuation was £2 16*s.* 8*d.* The average value per cow or horse, in 13 inventories, was £1 10*s.* 0*d.*, or approximately 1.5 loads, or six months' fodder.

equivalent to a week's income – not to be dismissed lightly, perhaps, but not a particularly significant contribution to the household budget. Where they had beasts on the common, these poorer freemen may have favoured cows over horses – and the means of deriving a second income over the means of assisting a primary one. This was probably a second income source for women, rather than for their husbands. It is significant that occupations outside the economically vulnerable cloth making and finishing trades seem not to have opted for this 'insurance policy'.

While the commons were themselves of only modest importance to the incomes of most of the households in the town, it must be remembered that they existed only as a fragment of a much larger agrarian economy. The commons were by no means the only lands within the boundaries of the town. Depasturing animals was by no means the only source of agrarian income available to the town's inhabitants. Cows and horses could be kept on lands other than the commons, as could poultry. Hay, cereal, fruit and hop harvests required labour, and could, for a few weeks of the year, pay better than weaving or spinning. The 'arable' crop grown in the town's hinterland often included the disparate and diverse products of market gardening, as well as the usual grain staples.[102] These might be grown in small, sub-let, parcels by those ostensibly engaged in 'urban' trades, or by their families. Such parcels provided investment opportunities for landowners within the town, and outside it. This agrarian 'hinterland' functioned in two directions, providing a base for the agrarian endeavours of townspeople, but also acting as the conduit by which the rural economy and its systems of land tenure and management penetrated urban institutions and activities. In this study the accent has been placed on the former, but the latter also deserves to be remembered.

An examination of the Sudbury commons can only hint at these possibilities. The prevalence of urban commons and common rights and the wider question of the nature and significance of urban agriculture are also more a matter for conjecture than for proof. Much more research into these areas is required, but it does involve a change in our perspectives. In particular, we need to extend our understanding of the pre-industrial economy by considering the agrarian history of towns, large and small. This research suggests that the distributive and demographic urban-rural connections posited by Chartres and Wrigley were matched by some overlap of output and employment opportunities. This is an urban agrarian history of land tenure and production, as well as of processing and exchange; of urban demand and wealth reaching out into the countryside, but also of rural capacity and tenurial structures reaching into towns. In addition, it poses town governments as managers of communal landed resources, and urban dwellers and freemen as enfranchised property holders – concepts that are more easily recognized in the village Courts Leet, rather than in corporation minutes. It is also a history that extended into the nineteenth century, and which was subject to considerable change. Urban agriculture evolved with the size and shape of the settlements around which it was based. This involved changes in demand, in land use, in tenure and sub-tenure, and in controls on access. These features also remain to be explored.

Urban development, manufacturing and household economies continued to rely on the

[102] No evidence of this has been found for Sudbury, but in Colchester in 1688, Anne Clarke occupied a 2-acre field in St. Botolph's parish (the heart of the weaving district), on which she cultivated 'garden stuff' including parsnips, carrots, cucumbers, onions, 'red roots' (beetroot?), French beans and one 'midling' walnut tree, valued at £15 for the year. PRO E 134/1 Wm. and Mary/Mich. 15.

agrarian resources of towns, and their hinterlands. Agricultural production and labour requirements provided by-employments for an urban workforce.[103] Such opportunities may have contributed to the 'economy of makeshifts'[104] of such households, and may also have offered some resistance to the trend towards reliance on a single source of waged income. The case of Sudbury suggests that the town lands offered such a possibility, but only to less than half the freemen, and to a smaller minority of waged workers. It also implies, however, that the commons were not the only landed resource available to the town's inhabitants, nor the only form of agricultural endeavour. Each of the five types of town common existed within different urban agrarian, manufacturing and service economies, and within different agricultural regions. Each of these facets adds another layer of complexity to the story of urban agriculture, and its development through time. However, the fact that we still know so little about each of these elements suggests that it is time that this story was told.

[103] Joan Thirsk's seminal article on 'by-employments' emphasises the role of rural commons in providing resources and opportunities for dual household economies in the countryside, a model that might usefully be extended to urban commons. J. Thirsk, 'Industries in the countryside' in id., *The rural economy of England: collected essays* (1984), pp. 217–34.

[104] The phrase is coined by T. Wales, 'Poverty, poor relief and the life-cycle: some evidence from seventeenth-century Norfolk' in R. M. Smith (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (1984), pp. 351–404.

Agricultural trade unionism and the crusade against outdoor relief: poor law politics in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire, 1870–75*

by Elizabeth T. Hurren

Abstract

This article examines the impact of the crusade against outdoor relief in the Brixworth Union (Northamptonshire), which was one of the most fervent supporters of central government's poor law retrenchment campaign in the late-Victorian era. The paper examines the relationship between the origins of the crusade against out-relief and the advent of agricultural trade unionism. It argues that guardians of the poor in the Brixworth Union anticipated central government's new anti-out-relief guidelines because they wanted to make a pre-emptive strike against trade union combination in 1871–2. This set the stage for a very protracted and bitter contest that was not resolved until the poor law was democratized in the mid-1890s.

In the nineteenth century one of the key welfare debates within government was whether guardians of the poor ought to grant outdoor relief allowances to claimants such as the able-bodied unemployed, disabled, elderly and sick, rather than compelling them to be admitted as paupers into the workhouse.[1] The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 stipulated that guardians

* I am indebted to Peter Bartrip and Peter King of University College Northampton, my doctoral supervisors, for their comments and suggestions regarding this article. I am also grateful to Emily Elsie Hurren (1909–1995) and Charlotte May Poole (1904–1989) who first shared the radical history of their native county, Northamptonshire, with me in 1988.

[1] Although there is an extensive poor law historiography that discusses mid-Victorian out-relief debates, few welfare textbooks analyse the crusade against out-relief after 1870. The following selection of texts examine aspects of the crusade controversy: Derek Fraser, *The evolution of the British welfare state* (1973); Karel Williams, *From pauperism to poverty* (1981); Michael E. Rose, 'The crisis of poor relief in England, 1860–1900', in W. J. Mommsen and W. Mock (eds), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany, 1850–1950* (1981), pp. 50–70; Anne Digby, 'The rural poor', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside* (2 vols, 1981), II, pp. 591–601; Anne Digby, *The poor law in nineteenth-century England and Wales* (1982); David Thomson, 'Workhouse to nursing home; residential care of elderly people in England since 1840', *Ageing and Society* 3 (1983), pp. 43–69; David Thomson, 'I am not my father's keeper; families and the elderly in nineteenth-century England', *Law and History Review* 2 (1984), pp. 265–86; David Thomson, 'The decline of social security. Falling state support for the elderly since early Victorian times,' *Ageing and Society* 4 (1984), pp. 299–336; Michael E. Rose, *The relief of poverty* (1986); David Thomson, 'Welfare and the historians', in L. Bonfield, R. M. Smith and K. Wrightson (eds), *The world we have gained* (1986), pp. 355–78; Mary Mackinnon, 'English poor law policy and the crusade against out-relief', *JEcHist* 47 (1987), pp. 603–25; Christine Bellamy, *Administering central-local relations, 1871–1918* (1988); David Thomson, 'The welfare of the elderly in the past, a family or community responsibility?', in M. Pelling and R. Smith (eds), *Life, death and the elderly, historical perspectives* (1991), pp. 194–222; Felix Driver, *Power and Pauperism. The workhouse system, 1834–1884* (1993); G. Finlayson, *Citizen, state and social welfare in Britain, 1830–1990* (1994); Robert Humphreys, *Sin, organized charity and the poor law in Victorian England* (1995); David Englander, *Poverty and the poor law in nineteenth-century Britain, 1834–1914. From Chadwick to Booth* (1998); Alan Kidd, *State, society and the poor in nineteenth-century England* (1999).

ought to apply the workhouse test to each poor relief applicant to ensure that the rates were being spent on the relief of destitution, rather than poverty. Guardians were advised to compel each destitute pauper to accept indoor relief care for the duration of their claim for welfare assistance and to refuse out-relief funding, particularly if the applicant was categorized as 'able-bodied'. Benthamite reformers, who framed the New Poor Law, argued that by utilising the workhouse test guardians would ensure that poor relief was each claimant's 'less eligible' option, which would deter undeserving applicants from applying for parish funding, thereby discouraging them from becoming welfare dependants. They believed that these new anti-out-relief regulations would promote an ethos of self-help, introduce more uniform administrative practices and reduce the national cost of poor relief expenditure. In reality, as numerous regional studies have shown, the 1834 statute contained a number of procedural loopholes that gave guardians considerable discretionary powers to continue to grant out-relief allowances. Guardians were able to administer poor relief according to local economic conditions. As an example, Anne Digby's studies of East Anglia have shown that in many rural areas, out-relief was a useful wage supplement which arable farmers, who served as guardians of the poor, used to maintain their labour supplies over the winter season when work was scarce.[2] Medical out relief (allowances granted on medical advice which included supplements of 2*s.* 6*d.* and medical extras in kind such as bread) could potentially form an important part of the income of the non-institutionalized poor. In addition, most guardians, both rural and urban, preferred to spend the poor rates on out-relief provision because it was cheaper then the costs of housing pauper families in the workhouse. Consequently, 'variety rather than uniformity characterized out-relief administration' throughout the mid-Victorian period.[3]

In 1863–4 debates concerning out-relief funding were revived after the national cost of poor relief expenditure increased by around 20 per cent during a series of trade slumps and industrial crises, most notably in Lancashire and London.[4] Many poor law unions did not have the workhouse capacity to provide unlimited indoor relief provision during the economic downturn and they were forced to pay out-relief allowances more liberally. Guardians feared if they did not reintroduce out-relief funding but turned away poor relief claimants who they could not admit into the workhouse, their inaction would result in social unrest (which in fact did break out in the East End of London in 1867–9). However, this trend alarmed senior civil servants and at their instigation, central government passed the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, which compelled individual parishes to pool their rates into a centralized pauperism fund in each poor law union to fund the expansion of workhouse facilities.[5] In the following decade, central government commissioned three reports by senior civil servants, which re-examined the contentious issue of out-relief management. They culminated in a set of radical recommendations, which advocated that guardians should withdraw all out-relief funding and only implement the workhouse test. Each of the three reports represented a formative stage in what became known as the crusade against out-relief.

After the Poor Law Board was merged into the newly created Local Government Board in

[2] A. Digby, *The Poor Law in nineteenth-century England and Wales* (1982), pp. 19–26.

[3] David Roberts, *Victorian origins of the welfare state* (1960), p. 109; Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, p. 107.

[4] Rose, 'Crisis of poor relief', pp. 50–70.

[5] Ibid, p. 59.

1871, civil servants encouraged guardians to adopt the Goschen Minute (1869) which recommended that poor law unions should work in tandem with large charitable bodies, as exemplified by the Charity Organisation Society, to eradicate out-relief funding.[6] Then the Fleming Report (1871) advocated major cuts in out-relief expenditure on a broad front. Finally, the Longley strategy (1874) was sent to all poor law unions asserting that out-relief should be totally abolished. This final report created a new competitive administrative poor relief climate with the introduction of poor law charters, performance league tables and annual reports on out-relief expenditure. Civil servants praised those who adopted the 'crusade' ethos and condemned recalcitrant poor law unions which continued to grant liberal out-relief. Karel Williams has explained how a total of 41 'model' poor law unions, responsible for about 16 per cent of the total population in England and Wales, adopted these new tactics of deterrence for over twenty years, approximately 1873–93.[7] Arguably the most notorious strict 'model' rural poor law union to implement these guidelines was the Brixworth Union in Northamptonshire, which is the subject of this article.

The Brixworth Union was established in 1835 when the first Assistant Poor Law Commissioner for the south Midlands region, Richard Earle, allocated 33 parishes (later increased to 36) under section 38 of the Poor Law Amendment Act to form a new rural poor law union in mid-Northamptonshire.[8] As a result of political pressure which the leading local landowners exerted on central government, the boundaries of the Brixworth Union were not centred on a market town. The Spencer family, who owned the largest landed estate in the area, Althorp Park (17,030 acres), dominated farming life in mid-Northamptonshire.[9] In fact, their land agent managed three out of five of the largest landed estates in the district (Althorp, Overstone and Holdenby) and this gave him *de facto* control over some 37,000 acres or around two-thirds of farming land in the Brixworth Union. Thus, the Spencers set the farming tone for the district and they were determined to continue to control the poor law. Consequently in 1835, the third Earl Spencer used his political position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire to ensure that the Brixworth Union boundaries were drawn around his Althorp estate.[10] This boundary agreement, the creation of *ex-officio* guardians (appointed by Spencer) and the property qualifications in rural poor law elections (which favoured landowners and their tenant farmers by discriminating against ordinary small ratepayers, professionals, traders, artisans and agricultural workers) allowed the Spencers to dominate the local poor law decision-making process.[11] Consequently, residents accurately

[6] Charles L. Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society, 1869–1913: its ideas and work* (1961); J. Fido, 'The COS and social case-work in London, 1869–1900' in A. P. Donajgrodzki (ed.), *Social control in nineteenth-century Britain* (1977), pp. 207–30; A. W. Vincent, 'The poor law reports of 1909 and the social theory of the Charity Organisation Society,' *Victorian Studies* 27 (1983–4), pp. 343–65; Humphreys, *Sin*, pp. 21–8, 50–9.

[7] Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, pp. 102–5, 107.

[8] Anthony Brundage, 'The landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reappraisal of the revolution in government', *EcHR* 27 (1972), pp. 27–48.

[9] Charles Spencer, *The Spencer family* (1999), pp. 185–289, outlines the Victorian history of the Spencer family.

[10] Brundage, 'The landed interest and the New Poor Law', p. 42.

[11] Ibid., pp. 29–30. Brian Keith-Lucas, *The English local government franchise. A short history* (1952), explains that in rural guardian elections, landowners who paid annual rates on land valued above a threshold of £175 could vote up to six times, whereas ordinary ratepayers had to own property rated annually above a much higher threshold of £400 to be able to vote three times.

described the Brixworth Union as a 'farmers' parliament' because the five major landowners and their tenant farmers held, on average, two-thirds of the guardians' seats by virtue of their economic hegemony and property rights.

Contemporary accounts suggest that the New Poor Law settled down into a regular administrative pattern in the Brixworth Union during the mid-Victorian period. In 1835–6 guardians commissioned the building of a new workhouse in Brixworth parish, which was the logical administrative centre of the district. In common with other mixed-farming areas, farmer guardians exploited a number of out-relief procedural loopholes. They calculated that it was advantageous to use the poor rates to supplement low wages. For instance, they often paid out-relief to the able-bodied unemployed in winter, rather than applying the workhouse test, which would have been more costly and might have depleted labour supplies. Spencer's land agent's records also suggest that a number of poverty safety nets, most notably generous medical out-relief and charitable provision, were revived in the high farming era by tenant farmers in the interests of higher profitability. Although wage relations in the district were antagonistic, the farmer exploiting agricultural workers for minimal wages and labourers needing higher wages to avoid the workhouse, these customary wage supplements seem to have stabilized social relations. After 1865, however, the economic and political climate in the Brixworth Union started to change. There was a series of poorer harvests that resulted in severe cut backs in out-relief, which anticipated central government's crusade against out-relief. This retrenchment policy appears to have been a key motivating factor behind the advent of agricultural trade unionism in the district, which then led to a full-scale crusade against all out-relief provision because farmers were determined to use the poor law to make a pre-emptive strike against union combination.

Although the advent of agricultural trade union combination was linked to a wide range of grievances, not simply reductions in out-relief expenditure, and the reaction of farmer guardians in the Brixworth Union was not uncommon, the relationship between unionisation and the crusade controversy is seldom discussed in textbook accounts. Yet, agricultural historians, like Arthur Brown, Pamela Horn and Alun Howkins have noted its influence.[12] This case study has been chosen because the Brixworth Union was one of the most notorious poor law unions to adopt the crusade against out-relief and guardians have left a well-documented account of the political battle over out-relief that unfolded throughout the late-Victorian period. It gives us an opportunity to analyse the relationship between central government and local poor law authorities, revealing how guardians of the poor exploited an anti-out-relief policy to pursue their political goals for economic and ideological reasons after 1870.

I

Three guardians of the poor, all of whom were leading supporters of the ethos of the Charity Organisation Society (COS), championed the crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union.

[12] Arthur Brown, *Meagre harvest. The Essex farm workers' struggle against poverty, 1750–1914* (1990); Pamela L. R. Horn, 'Agricultural labourers in four Midlands counties, 1860–1900' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1968); id., 'Nineteenth-century Naseby farm workers', *Northants. Past and Present* 3 (1968/9), pp. 167–73; id., 'Northamptonshire agricultural labourers the quest for allotments – the 1870s', ibid., 6 (1971/2), pp. 371–77; Alun Howkins, *Poor labouring men. Rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1870–1923* (1985).

Mr Albert Pell, Conservative MP for south Leicestershire and the newly appointed *ex-officio* guardian of the poor for Haselbech parish, was primarily responsible for reviving local interest in the contentious issue of out-relief funding at a meeting of the Brixworth Union board of guardians in December 1866.[13] Pell was a gentleman farmer who rented 685 acres of mixed-farming land near the Northamptonshire-Leicestershire border on a 21 year lease from Sir Charles Isham of the Lamport estate (his wife's cousin), who was one of the major landowners in the Brixworth Union.[14] Pell also jointly owned Wilburton Manor in Cambridgeshire and land on the Isle of Ely, which was managed by his brother. When the COS was established in 1869, Pell became one of its leading members. He believed that poverty was the moral fault of each individual and that lax out-relief administration encouraged work-shy individuals to become welfare dependants. Pell's biographer described his poor law convictions,

> as I have already said, upon all Poor Law matters he was a Whig of the highest economic orthodoxy, going rather beyond the famous Poor Law Commission Report of 1834, in his aversion to outdoor relief, and scouting all proposals for Old Age Pensions.[15]

Pell first became interested in debates concerning out-relief when he met Mr Stevens of Bradfield, who was one of the original assistant Poor Law Commissioners and later a leading guardian in Berkshire, in the House of Commons in the mid-1860s. Stevens advised Pell that many guardians of the poor did not follow out-relief guidelines and this was contributing to the spiralling cost of poor relief expenditure nationally. Since Pell was a co-opted COS guardian in St George-in-the-East in London and an *ex-officio* guardian in the Brixworth Union, he thought that he ought to research the subject in greater depth in the House of Commons library. He studied 'Walker (the Original), Dr. Chalmers, Arthur Young and above all the reports of the great Poor Law Commissioners in the 1830s'.[16] His research convinced him that poverty was the moral fault of each individual and generous out-relief provision exacerbated, rather than resolved, problems of impoverishment. Pell concluded that,

> The administration of the Poor Laws is a matter of police, not sentiment, and should be applied unswervingly in obedience to fixed principles, and not become the haphazard display of sentiment and a counterfeit charity ... [otherwise] the incentives of industry are weakened; the fear of the consequences such as cold, hunger and distress, is diminished or vanishes; and a distinct and pernicious inducement offered to the practice of deceit and fraud, and the total abandonment of conscientious, honest effort for self-maintenance unfolds.[17]

Pell published numerous articles outlining his convictions and his stance earned him the position of chairman of the central committee of Poor Law Conferences, a post he held from 1869 until his retirement in 1896.[18] He often referred to the writings of Arthur Young, whom he admired. He was fond of repeating Young's oft quoted remark that, 'in England the more

[13] Northamptonshire RO (hereafter NRO), P/L 2/14, Brixworth Union guardians' minute books, 2 Dec. 1866.

[14] Albert Pell and Thomas MacKay, *The reminiscences of Albert Pell, sometime MP for south Leicestershire* (London, 1908).

[15] Pell and MacKay, *Reminiscences*, p. 14, introduction.

[16] Ibid., pp. 236–7.

[17] Albert Pell, 'Out-Relief. A paper read at a poor law conference as chairman of the Central Committee held at Crewe Arms Hotel on Tuesday October 14th 1890,' in *Tracts, 1843–1893* (London, 1900), pp. 1–16.

[18] I am indebted to Sir David Hughes Bt who kindly gave me access to the Pell family archive, which he retains in his possession.

money is expended, even well, and humanely, the more poor are created, and that the degree of indigence and misery is exactly in proportion to the assistance given them by the rates'.[19] Pell was convinced that out-relief created a culture of welfare dependency and therefore guardians had a duty to teach the poor that outdoor allowances were not a customary right.

Pell decided to implement a crusade against out-relief in the two poor law unions where he served as a guardian of the poor. In St George-in-the-East in London he had the support of a number of national COS leaders, such as George Crowder, but in the Brixworth Union he lacked supporters. Consequently, he focused attention on the high cost of out-relief provision, which had risen to an unprecedented sum of around £6000 per annum by the late 1860s. Pell hoped that those farmer guardians who were starting to experience a series of poorer harvests and rate changes under the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, which made paupers the responsibility of all the parishes of a union and not simply ratepayers in the villages where pauperism occurred, might support a campaign to cut expenditure by withdrawing medical out-relief. In April 1867 he managed to convince a sufficient number of tenant farmers on the Brixworth board of guardians to pass a motion to set up a review process to re-examine all grants of out-relief made between 1846 and 1866. The review committee's primary aim was to ascertain 'whether the feeling of the poor is as independent as it was, or whether they are abandoning their own resources for medical relief out of the rates'.[20] The review took two years to complete and reported in the summer of 1869 that medical out-relief expenditure was excessive, recommending that it should be abolished and replaced by the offer of workhouse medical care only. However, few tenant farmer guardians, at this juncture, would support such a far-reaching measure because they recognized that it would damage social relations and therefore further undermine profitability. Consequently, Pell decided that he needed to recruit to his cause the landowners who could exert influence over their tenant farmers who sat on the Brixworth Union board. He decided to approach the largest landowner in the district, the fifth Earl Spencer.[21]

Spencer was a leading Whig grandee and close political ally of W. E. Gladstone, then Prime Minister. Like his family predecessors, he also served as Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and therefore was a figure who exerted considerable national and local political influence. Pell first became acquainted with Spencer in the early 1860s when they both served on a number of local charitable bodies.[22] They discovered that although their political allegiances differed (Pell was a staunch Conservative and Spencer was a devout Liberal), in poor law matters they took a similar Whiggish stance. Both believed that out-relief accentuated problems of poverty. Spencer had always believed in the strict application of the workhouse test, but like most Whig grandees he had preferred to delegate tedious poor relief management to his fellow guardians of the poor in the high farming period.[23] However, during his first tenure as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1868–74) he began to take a closer in interest in poor relief management because

[19] Albert Pell, 'Arthur Young: agriculturalist, author and statesman', *J. of the Farmers' Club*, April (1882), p. 62.

[20] British Library (hereafter BL), Althorp Mss, K372, Pell to Spencer, 30 Apr. 1867.

[21] Spencer, *The Spencer family*, pp. 255–89. The fifth Earl succeeded to the title in 1857, d. 1910.

[22] BL, Althorp Mss, K372, Pell to Spencer 22 Jan., 2 Jan., 19 Feb. 1861.

[23] J. P. D. Gordon (ed.), *The Red Earl. The papers of the fifth Earl Spencer, 1835–1910*, I (1981), pp. 1–20 outlines Spencer's COS and retrenchment ethos.

one of his duties was to oversee a review of Irish out-relief procedures.[24] As a leading member of a government hostile to out-relief, he needed to be seen to be promoting the anti-out-relief campaign, which was instigated by the newly created Local Government Board.[25] He had also wanted for some time to reduce his charitable expenditure on his Althorp estate because, following the passing of the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, it was no longer in his financial interest to supplement out-relief. Any cost savings that Spencer hoped to make by supporting a range of poverty safety nets now served to reduce the rates throughout the Brixworth Union. Hence his estate charities no longer made financial sense. Consequently, his attitude to out-relief hardened and, at about the same time, he instructed his land agent to set up a contributory pension scheme to compel agricultural workers on his Althorp estate to save for their old age so that he could abolish estate pensions.

> I wish some plan would be discussed for some superannuation fund for all whom I employ. I would act as a banker and pay a percentage to the fund. It would not be difficult to draw a scheme out. Provision would be made for them to withdraw their money. It would then be made that no parish pension would be thereafter granted.[26]

By 1871 Spencer was determined to limit the number of requests he received through his land agent for charitable assistance for elderly paupers. Yet, the Spencer archive is filled with descriptions of worn-out labourers who could not afford to save for their old age. For example:

> John Manning. He is 78 years of age has worked all his life for Lord Spencer and is predominantly a good honest man. He is now left quite alone in the world and has nothing but his parish allowance and is literally starving. An addition to his income of two or even one shilling would be a great boon ...

> Thomas Worley ... he has been a useful and valuable man. Whatever, however, he had saved is now gone. He suffers painfully from heart disease and has been unable to work but little for some time, indeed he cannot walk to work.[27]

Spencer agreed to give these men a temporary pension of 2*s.* 6*d.* per week on the condition that they also applied for parish funding and submit to the workhouse test. He anticipated that they would have to accept workhouse admittance, but he believed that it should be mandatory for the state to support only the destitute. He held that the only way to alleviate poverty and reduce poor relief expenditure was to promote 'Smilesian attitudes about individual motivation', such as hard work and thrift.[28] Although Spencer was away in Ireland, he instructed his land agent to inform Pell that he supported his campaign to limit out-relief provision. This delighted Pell, but he also needed to win the support of a local guardian who attended poor law board meetings regularly and could speak on their behalf when he and Spencer were absent at

[24] Sir Alfred Power, *A paper on out-door relief in Ireland prepared at Earl Spencer's request* (London, 1875), summarizes the Irish review process and Spencer's involvement.

[25] Alan Sykes, *The rise and fall of British liberalism, 1776–1988* (1997), pp. 75–87, outlines the Liberal government's retrenchment priorities.

[26] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, Beasley to Spencer, 14 Feb. 1871, Spencer to Beasley, 15 Feb. 1871, Beasley to Boyle, 7 May 1872.

[27] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, Beasley to Boyle, 30 Apr. 1872.

[28] Humphreys, *Sin*, p. 24.

Westminster or in Ireland. That guardian needed to be a conscientious administrator and skilled bureaucrat who was capable of out-witting opponents who would try to ignore poor law technicalities. Pell discovered that the Rev. William Bury, his local rector, was the ideal candidate

Bury, rector and guardian of the poor for Haselbech parish in the Brixworth Union, was not Pell's natural ally because he had believed in generous out-relief provision in the early 1860s. He had considerable sympathy for the plight of the labouring poor. However, Pell was determined to convert Bury to his retrenchment cause. He persuaded Bury to visit every pauper on Haselbech's relieving officer's lists and apply the workhouse test. Pell hoped that this would teach Bury that the labouring poor abused the poor law system. Bury found that many pauper families had meagre savings or relatives who could support them. However, he argued that it was every clergyman's 'duty to protect these unfortunates, and that any confidences' about other sources of funding 'should not be betrayed' to the relieving officer.[29] Consequently, Pell took Bury on a tour of the homes of elderly paupers in the neighbourhood and showed him their appalling living conditions. The sub-standard housing, poor sanitation and the depths of poverty convinced Bury that out-relief only accentuated pauperism. They visited one bed-ridden female pauper who lived 'in a miserable hut of only one room, the wall of which was made of cobble or red earth', where she slept in a recess that had been cut out of the wall.[30] She was a lace-maker who was 'half-blind', as a result of doing intricate work in a poorly lit cottage. Pell argued that as the woman's 'pay, supplemented by the Poor Law dole, was starvation pay', she should be forced to enter the workhouse. He informed Bury that a clergyman ought to use his position of influence to 'guide and govern' his parishioners. As a result of these enquiries Bury became a convert to the COS and a zealous exponent of the anti-out-relief cause. He defended his conversion on that basis that although,

> a reform so radical ... cannot have been effected without a certain amount of suffering often endured in silence, escaping the notice of the most careful investigation and difficult to estimate as it is to prevent. Yet, as the same time it should be remembered that such consequences, however, much to be deplored, are really due not to the reform itself, but to the neglect in former years which rendered such reform necessary.[31]

It is somewhat ironic that Bury came to take this stance since out-relief abuses were the result of his lax administrative practices before 1870, but for ideological reasons he was now prepared to overlook his former views and sympathy for the impoverished. Bury, like Pell, published numerous papers outlining the reasons for his conversion. He argued that 'exceptional cases of hardship, can, ought to be, and are met by individual charity', which was a much more discriminating way of relieving the poor.[32] This prevented guardians acting impulsively because 'kindness to an individual ... often means cruelty to a class'. Charity was not a legal, civil or customary right. Its judicious management encouraged thrift and independence. Instead of giving generous out-relief allowances, which would be 'injurious', charity could be 'safely and widely exercised'. Bury was convinced that charity, not out-relief funding,

[29] Pell, *Reminiscences*, pp. 238–9.

[30] Ibid., pp. 240–1.

[31] *BPP*, 1873, *Third annual report of the Local Government Board*, App. B, W. Bury, 'Report on outdoor pauperism in the Brixworth Union', pp. 119–125.

[32] W. Bury, 'Charity and the poor law,' *Poor Law Conference Report* (1876), p. 44; id., 'Poor law progress and reform', *Poor Law Conference Report* (1889), p. 319.

was the only appropriate poverty safety net in society. He explained that 'the *desire* to do good is easy enough, but to *do* good was the hardest thing' because it meant taking unpopular decisions. Bury admitted that Pell taught him to act in a more discriminating objective manner in poor law affairs.

By 1871 Spencer, Pell and Bury had decided to try to implement a crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union. Pell and Bury were primarily motivated by ideological convictions, whereas Spencer believed in a COS ethos, because it was politically expedient and would cut his expenditure. At first Pell faced overwhelming opposition amongst farmer guardians, but Spencer's influence and the growth of agricultural trade unionism in the district during late 1871 persuaded many of his opponents to change allegiance. Farmers used Pell's crusade against out-relief to make a pre-emptive strike against union combination.

II

The timing and extent of the growth of agricultural trade unionism in south-eastern English counties differed considerably in the late Victorian period. Pamela Horn's studies of midland counties suggest that agricultural trade unionism in Northamptonshire began around mid-1872.[33] Horn found that by 1874 there were a number of small trade union branches in the Brixworth Union, which were affiliated to the Market Harborough regional office of Joseph Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union (NALU). For example, local newspapers reported in 1874 that 220 labourers from the village of Naseby met to advance union combination and to celebrate the annual commemoration of Cromwell's defeat of Charles I in their parish.[34] However, the recently catalogued Spencer archive at the Northamptonshire Record Office reveals that agricultural trade unionism in the Brixworth Union began a little earlier than Horn's studies suggested, around March-April 1872. This confirms Dunbabin's findings that there was some early union combination in 1871 (and more in 1872) in some of the corn-growing areas of south-eastern England.[35] Labourers felt aggrieved about their low wages of around 12*s.* per week, at a time when farmers, despite the poorer harvests of the late 1860s, were still making substantial profits. They wanted an equitable share of the profits of their labour, a 'stake in the soil', at a time when labourers believed farmers could afford to pay them higher wages.[36] The advent of union combination, although highly localized at first, made a significant impact in the Brixworth Union because farmers believed that it undermined the traditional social order by challenging their authority.

[33] Horn, 'Agricultural labourers', p. 95.

[34] Ibid., pp. 167–8.

[35] J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'The "Revolt of the Field". The agricultural labourers' movement in the 1870s', *Past and Present* 26 (1963), pp. 68–96.

[36] There is a very large historiography that discusses the formation of the NALU including J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of the agricultural trades unionism in the 1870s', *AgHR* 16 (1968), pp. 114–141; J. P. D. Dunbabin (ed.), *Rural discontent in the nineteenth-century Britain* (1974); Howkins, *Poor labouring men:* John Archer, *"By a flash and a scare". Arson, animal maiming and poaching in East Anglia, 1815–1870* (1990); Nigel Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field. A study of the Methodist contribution to agricultural trade unionism in East Anglia, 1872–96* (1981); id., 'The National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the demand for the stake in the soil, 1872–1896', in E. F. Biaginni (ed.), *Citizenship and community. Radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (1996), pp. 151–67; Bob Scarth, *'We'll all be union men'. The story of Joseph Arch and his union* (1998).

Although Pell's initial review of medical out-relief procedures in 1866–9 failed to convince the majority of farmer guardians to support his campaign to eradicate all poor relief funding outside the workhouse, by 1870–1 farmers were prepared to reconsider his schemes for cutting rateable expenditure. They changed allegiance primarily because there had been a poor farming season in 1868 and another in 1871. Pell recorded that 'the drought in 1871 was excessive' and he noted that farmers who borrowed in the high farming period to make improvements and had large loans to service were determined to cut out-relief expenditure to save on the rates.[37] Consequently, a majority of guardians had decided to implement a campaign to reduce out-relief funding by the late spring of 1871. This action anticipated the second stage of central government's crusade against out-relief, outlined in the Fleming Report (December 1871) by some six months. Their decision to cut out-relief spending alarmed traditional out-relief claimants who were already experiencing cut backs in conventional income supplements, as exemplified by Spencer's decision to withdraw his estate pensions. Spencer's land agent's records reveal that the labouring poor's primary concern was the contentious issue of the sudden withdrawal of medical out-relief and that this exacerbated farmer-labourer tensions, which were probably growing throughout the high farming period. The labouring poor relied on medical out-relief payments to feed their families over the winter period and few could afford to loose such a vital supplement to their incomes. Consequently, in the late-winter and early spring of 1872, agricultural workers in the Brixworth Union began to combine into small localized trade union branches to fight for a wage increase to replace the sudden withdrawal of out-relief. However, this produced a strong reaction amongst the majority of farmer guardians who felt threatened by unionisation. They decided to take pre-emptive action by supporting Pell's crusade to eradicate out-relief totally. Again, guardians anticipated the third stage of central government's crusade against out-relief, as exemplified in the Longley strategy of 1874 which advocated that out-relief should be wholly abolished.

Spencer first learned about the impact of these out-relief changes and how they influenced the advent of unionisation in a letter he received in Ireland from a fellow Liberal *ex-officio* guardian, H. O. Nethercote, in late March of 1872. He informed Spencer that, 'the weather is winterly to a degree and the contemplated labourers' strikes will probably be deferred to a more *convenient* season'. Nethercote noted that the out-relief issue was dividing the agricultural community along class lines, but complained, 'how the farmers are to meet increasing wages and decreasing prices I do not see'.[38] In early April Spencer's land agent, John Beasley reported that the out-relief controversy had convinced an increasing number of labourers to establish union branches. 'The Labourers are giving much trouble and forming unions. Our own people have hitherto behaved well but I fear will get contaminated'.[39] These comments reveal how social relations in the district were very strained by the spring of 1872. Moreover, Beasley noted that labourers' main complaint was that farmers expected them to put aside their differences during harvest in the interest of profitability, but in the autumn they refused to listen to their legitimate wage demands.[40] Tenant farmers argued that labour rates were set by market condi-

[37] Pell and MacKay, *Reminiscences*, p. 233.

[38] BL, Althorp Mss, K383, Nethercote to Spencer, 29 Mar. 1872.

[39] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, Beasley to Spencer, 8 Apr. 1872.

[40] Ibid., Beasley to Spencer, 1 Apr. 1873, recounts wage grievances in 1872–3.

tions and for this reason they had introduced piecework wages, which paid each worker for their productivity. Beasley understood why poorer labouring families resented the insecurity of this unpredictable seasonal wage pattern. In private he had considerable sympathy for their precarious financial position. Local newspapers also sided with the labourers' cause. 'Facts', an editorial in the *Northampton Radical* warned, 'make short work of bombastic rhetoric, about happy and contented labourers'.[41]

One of the first local unions to be formed on the Althorp estate was the 'Brington, Harlestone, Brampton and Whilton' section, comprising 'over 200 members' in early 1872. There is no evidence that they were affiliated at this stage to the NALU in Warwickshire, but a hand-copy of a farm labourers' catechism written by the Chairman of the North Essex district of the NALU has survived amongst the Spencer papers dating from the Spring of 1872.[42] It suggests that the NALU probably sent recruitment officers into the Brixworth Union at that time and found a ready audience. Spencer's land agent kept a copy of the NALU's recruitment paraphernalia and monitored the growing tensions between farmers and labourers closely. In a letter of early April 1872, Beasley informed Spencer that although a meeting had been convened between the two sides in late March to discuss wage differences, it had not been a resounding success, even though it persuaded labourers not to go on strike *en masse* immediately. The land agent anticipated further tensions during the summer when it was more prudent from the labourers' viewpoint to strike during the harvest. He commented that

> Your lordship's tenants have all hired a sufficient number of men to get the harvest and plenty more are to be had. They are giving higher wages and there have been some strikes but could not discover if the difficulty had been greater in this neighbourhood than elsewhere. I quite believe that if farmers and labourers are left to make their own arrangements, the difficulty will soon subside. The labourers will get higher wages which the farmers are able and willing to pay. If however busy bodies and men who want to make political capital out of anything, will unite here much mischief will be done.[43]

This quotation reveals three important points. First, one of the problems labourers faced was under-employment even during harvest, which decreased wage levels. As we saw, some farmers were increasing wages during harvest and then using piecework rates to make pay cuts in the autumn, which was deeply resented. Secondly, even though farmers were concerned about lower profit margins, most conceded privately that higher wage demands were justified and they could afford to pay them. Thirdly, farmers feared the growth of the NALU in the area and were determined to oppose union combination. They would not tolerate an intermediary in the district. Farmers were convinced that unionisation was encouraging labourers to make excessive demands and, if they increased wages under union pressure, they would be setting a dangerous precedent.

The Brington union did not strike in the summer of 1872. Instead its leaders tried to negotiate a wage increase. After that was temporarily introduced during harvest and then withdrawn,

[41] *Northampton Radical*, 11 Nov. 1874.

[42] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 393, *The farm labourers' catechism – prepared for the special use of those agricultural labourers who are not in a union by the chairman of the north Essex district of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, price one penny* (undated).

[43] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, Beasley to Spencer, 8 Apr. 1872.

they petitioned Spencer directly during March 1873.[44] They asked him for 'an advance of wages of 2*s*. per week, owing to the price of bread and all other commodities'. Farmers in the area had offered a permanent 'extra 1*s*. per week', but the labourers rejected their offer because they wanted 'a fair days pay, for a fair days work'. They explained that if they could not earn a living wage of 16*s*. per week they could not raise their families 'respectfully', that is it would be impossible to remain outside the workhouse without wage increases to replace medical out-relief and charitable supplements. If guardians withdrew all out-relief provision, then farmers would have to introduce a commensurate rise in wages, otherwise more labouring families would be impoverished. The petitioners explained that labourers could 'leave their employ to seek work at a better market' in town but that would have meant giving up their homes in tied estate cottages too, which families could not afford to do. Many young men were willing to migrate elsewhere, but married labourers with young families and older labourers were reluctant to relocate.

Eight Althorp estate workers who lived in tied cottages established the Brington union. They risked losing their homes and jobs to fight for a much-needed wage increase. Spencer's land agent's records reveal that the union's committee members earned on average 12*s*. per week.[45] The highest paid man was a blacksmith, John Manning, aged 41, who earned 16*s*. per week. However, although he had only a wife and daughter to support, because he was an artisan/tradesman on the Althorp estate he was paid piecework rates, and so his wages probably fluctuated considerably. One of the lowest paid men was an elderly labourer, John Anderson, aged 74, who earned just 10*s*. per week. He lived with his middle-aged son (a common day labourer on the Althorp estate), his daughter-in-law and their five children all aged under nine. A labourer who lived in Pitsford village in the early 1870s recalled that 12*s*. per week was the average wage in most villages in the Brixworth Union, a reduction from the wage levels of the 1860s, and most labouring families could barely make ends meet.[46] It seems likely that many agricultural workers in the Brixworth Union who hoped to avoid compulsory workhouse admittance felt that they had no option but to combine into trade unions. For this reason the Brington union later joined the NALU officially in 1874 to try to increase its bargaining power.[47]

The Brington petitioners asked Spencer for the use of a schoolroom on his estate for their union activities in 1873. Spencer reacted angrily, telling his land agent to 'reply to the memorialists that I am unable to alter my position, decision as to the school-room.' He felt that 'it would be inconvenient to have the school-room used for meetings of various grouches'.[48] Spencer, like his tenant farmers, believed unionisation upset the traditional social order and might have far-reaching repercussions. Therefore, he stressed the apolitical nature of his decision, hoping this would dispel any class tensions, but his tenant farmers took the opposite view.

[44] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 393, 'Brington, Harlestone, Brampton and Whilton National Agricultural Labourer's Union branch petition to the fifth Earl Spencer', 27 Mar. 1873.

[45] NRO, Spencer Mss, Misc. vol. 75f., 'Number of poor and working class people of Brington parish taken in December 1871'.

[46] T. G. Tucker, 'Memories of Pitsford one hundred years ago', *Northants. Past and Present* 1 (1978), pp. 50–1.

[47] *Royal Leamington Chronicle*, 13 June 1874, records NALU unionization by county.

[48] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 393, Spencer's reply to the Brington NALU petition, 3 Apr. 1873. The reply was written across the top of the petition as a memo; this was Spencer's characteristic means of instruction to his secretary on how to deal with correspondence.

Spencer's land agent revealed that the farmers supported a full-scale crusade against out-relief in order to penalize labourers for union combination.[49]

> The labourers have no doubt a right to form unions, but they are doing an immense amount of mischief, and causing great disorganisation. The farmers in several parishes have met and resolved not to increase wages at the dictation of any union. I regret this ... I think it is best for employers to be passive ... The farmers would be willing to meet the labourers upon the question, but they will not meet the union agents. It is intolerable that they should dictate terms ... and that all men, skilled and unskilled, old and young, able or partly disabled, should have the same wages, is a condition to which I am sure the farmers will never submit ... One of the effects of the unions is that many of the members have left off going to Church, and that the Poor Law Guardians have become very stringent, I think too stringent in administration of relief ... the farmers have left off subscribing to clothing and sick clubs, to coal clubs, etc. All this is creating bad feeling.[50]

Farmers retaliated against the growth of the NALU in the Brixworth Union in three significant ways. First, they refused to negotiate with union agents and this refusal meant that wage grievances were not resolved quickly, accentuating local tensions. This reaction was common, as Dunbabin observes, because 'there was an element of double-think in the farmers' response to unionism'.[51] They would negotiate with labourers but not intermediaries, stressing that the latter were outside agitators. Farmers believed they were entitled to act defensively because they, not union agents, were labourers' true friends. Unsurprisingly, agricultural workers took the opposite view. Secondly, customary charitable payments, which were indispensable parts of labouring families' subsistence calculations, were being withheld to penalize labourers. Dunbabin notes that 'it was common to threaten to abandon paternalism for a rigid adherence to the dictates of economics'.[52] Most farmers in the Brixworth Union decided to take harsh retaliatory action, regardless of the social cost. Third, farmers changed allegiance on the poor law union board and supported a crusade against out-relief. Although this was a rather short-sighted response, they were determined to take pre-emptive action against union combination.

Regional studies, such as those by Brown in Essex and Horn in Oxfordshire, have shown that many farmer guardians reacted in this manner. For example, similar poor relief discrimination was so rife in Oxfordshire that boards of guardians in the area passed a motion at their annual conference in 1873 deploring this type of retaliatory behaviour.[53] In Essex boards of guardians acted like the farmer guardians in the Brixworth Union, refusing all out-relief applications until the NALU left the area and local branches were disbanded. One NALU Essex leader explained that this retaliatory poor law policy was an effective weapon. 'There lingers in their minds the cursed fear that they might be punished if they join'.[54] However, this was a very dangerous political strategy. On the one hand this parsimonious reaction enabled farmer

[49] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, e.g. extensive letters from Calverley to Beasley on this subject in early 1870s.

[50] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 571, Beasley to Spencer, 1 Apr. 1873.

[51] Dunbabin, 'Revolt', p. 87.

[52] Ibid., p. 81.

[53] *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 8 Jan. 1873 reported on discrimination at Oxford; *Royal Leamington Chronicle*, 13 Jun. 1874; J. Dunlop, *The Farm Labourer* (1913), p. 154, recounts instances of similar discrimination in Warwickshire; Brown, *Meagre Harvest*, pp. 86–7, details Essex cases.

[54] Brown, *Meagre Harvest*, p. 86.

guardians to reassert their authority in the labouring community, but on the other it also accentuated the pace of unionisation. Beasley noted that Church of England attendance had fallen sharply, as non-attendance was one way of registering a protest against the traditional sources of authority in the area. He also observed that labourers refused to compromise their demands when farmers acted harshly. It was probably unrealistic to demand one wage rate for every labourer regardless of their productivity, but the problem with farmers' stubborn attitude was that it made labourers' intransigence seem reasonable. Growing wage disputes and the out-relief controversy created tense social relations in the Brixworth Union by 1872/3, but farmers would not relent. In Ravensthorpe parish, on the Holdenby estate owned by Spencer's brother-in-law, farmers 'met and bound themselves in a £50 penalty not to employ any union man'.[55] Paradoxically, that sort of action created further resentment and made labourers even more determined to form local trade unions.

The growth of unionisation in the Brixworth Union was both a problem and an opportunity for guardians who wanted to introduce a crusade against out-relief. Farmers feared that unionisation threatened their oligarchy and so their action was extreme. However, even though Spencer worried about the deepening social tensions, Pell was delighted by this turn of events. Suddenly, he had won the support of disgruntled tenant farmers who held the largest block of votes on the Brixworth Union board of guardians, around two-thirds of the available seats.[56] He could now forge ahead with his retrenchment experiment by inflaming the farmers' worst anxieties about NALU. If he could retain that support until his new anti-out-relief policy was in place, it would be very difficult to overturn the revised regulations in the future. Pell had a window of opportunity to consolidate his position and he acted decisively.

Pell gave notice at a Brixworth Union board meeting on 2 January 1873 that he intended 'to ask for a committee of the Guardians to consider the mode of administration of out-door relief in this and other unions'.[57] He expanded his enquiries across the whole of the district. A committee was set up chaired by Pell, Bury and three large farmers in the area. They visited every pauper on the relieving officers' outdoor lists to test whether they should be entitled to parish funding. Two hundred and forty one cases were struck off the lists immediately.[58] This delighted central government because at the end of 1872 out-relief claimants in the Brixworth Union had risen to an unprecedented 1,062 out of a total population of just under 14,000, at an annual cost of £5899.[59] The Poor Law inspector for the district drew up a map of the union and coloured it according to the scales of pauperism in each parish. One senior Poor Law inspector, Courtney Boyle (Spencer's former private secretary), told Spencer that out-relief funding levels were highest in his Althorp estate parishes and his villages had all been marked in 'black'. Boyle informed Spencer that, 'Brington is the highest of all, an inevitable result of

[55] *Northampton Guardian*, 25 Nov. 1876, report of a speech by Joseph Arch to labourers at Ravensthorpe where Arch recalled how farmers had made a £50 pact in 1872/3.

[56] Unfortunately votes were not recorded in the guardians' minute books, so it is impossible to analyse political allegiances accurately in this period.

[57] NRO, P/L 2/17, Vol. 14, 20 Jan. 1873.

[58] BPP, Bury, 'Outdoor', p. 125.

[59] NRO, Spencer Mss, Sox 393, 'Outdoor relief committee report of the Brixworth Union' (1873).

where there is charity ... the less the poor depend on relief, the more valuable they are to the nation; Ergo: do all one can to diminish out-relief'.[60]

The report of Pell's committee, published in early 1874, confirmed the Local Government Board's findings. The ratio of average outdoor to indoor paupers in England and Wales was 5:1, at a cost of 6*s.* 11*d.* per head. In the Brixworth Union that ratio was much higher, 17:1 at a cost of 12*s.* 1½d. per head. Pell claimed that in 'no other union is the disproportion so great'.[61] Pell's committee recommended that the guardians adopt the government's anti-out-relief guidelines, as outlined in the Longley Strategy which stated that outdoor relief should be totally abolished. Consequently, the guardians published an anti-out-relief charter, which was placed in the Brixworth Union workhouse boardroom and on local church doors. The guidelines aimed to deter the poor, even the 'deserving' poor, from applying for out-relief funding. If the elderly, infirm, disabled and widowed wanted to avoid indoor relief, they had to rely upon their friendship and kinship networks. Medical relief was now only to be given in the form of indoor care and medical extras were only to be given to very ill workhouse inmates or members of sick clubs. In practice, most paupers gave up applying for medical aid, which had a profound impact locally. Brixworth Union's expenditure on 'fevers and epidemics' rose in 1873–4. Reformers would not concede that this was related to the sudden withdrawal of medical relief but there must have been a correlation between changes in funding and increased illness.[62] Paradoxically, the withdrawal of medical extras contravened poor relief *laissez-faire* economics. Paupers were ill for longer and more had to be admitted to the workhouse infirmary, increasing indoor relief bills, which were more costly. Therefore, in practice, as Williams explains, the new regulations were a form of 'brutal dispauperisation'.[63] They allowed guardians to purge out-relief recipients from their lists ruthlessly, whatever the social cost. However, after initial reductions had been achieved, some guardians began to advocate a moderate policy.

III

Once an anti-out-relief crusade was underway in the Brixworth Union, many guardians felt uneasy about making further reductions. Membership of the NALU had begun to level off and farmers realised that union combination was not as great a threat as they first feared. They also calculated that abolishing out-relief was damaging the local economy because it forced the labouring poor to migrate, creating labour shortages during harvest. The chaplain of the Brixworth Union workhouse, Rev. J. L. Roberts, became a spokesman for guardians who wanted to revert to a more moderate out-relief policy. He wrote to Spencer in March 1875 outlining

[60] Regrettably it has not been possible to discover these maps. They were probably destroyed in the early twentieth century. Boyle was Spencer's private secretary during his first period in Ireland (1868–1874). Spencer recommended him for a senior poor law appointment at the Local Government Board and became senior inspector for the east Midlands district. He corresponded regularly with Spencer and Dasent (his predecessor as private secretary who also later joined the Local Government Board) on poor law matters and the problems of inspection, which give a fascinating insight into the tedious bureaucratic nature of the job. e.g. BL, Althorp Mss, K398, Boyle to Spencer, 1 May, 20 June, 2 July, 21 Aug. 28 Nov. 1873, etc; Dasent to Boyle 25 June 1884; PRO, MH19/86, 1874 volume, inspectors at the Local Government Board.

[61] Pell and MacKay, *Reminiscences*, p. 291.

[62] *BPP*, XXIX, 1872–3, App. 32, Bury, *Second annual report of the Local Government Board* (c. 748), p. 74.

[63] Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, p. 107.

his fellow guardians' concerns. He stated that whilst a majority of guardians were in favour of the 'application of the house tests in proved cases of improvidence or of notorious bad conduct', most did not believe that 'the aged or infirm labourer, & of his widow' should be treated like able-bodied applicants. He argued that the law made provision for elderly paupers because legislators recognized that they had not the opportunity to earn enough money to save for their old age:

> at least for the closing generation, there has been an implied contract upon which the agricultural labourer has given his life's work ... And, at the end of their days for the employer, who has received his consideration to the full, to withhold from the poor man his equivalent, appears to me a most oppressive, if not actually dishonest course. In addition to this, the workhouse is not *and cannot be made*, a substitute home for the declining years of the labourers and their widows, who have a right to be considered, and in many cases are, to the full as respectable as the classes above them ... The widow of the respectable cottager should not be compelled to eat, live, sleep and die in the same room of society, *unreformed.*

The chaplain stated that although he met 'some of the roughest specimens' of the agricultural labouring class in the course of his poor law duties, he also encountered 'men and women whose honesty of principle and frugality of life and deep piety of character' filled him with 'admiration'. He insisted that 'the more intelligent Guardians know perfectly well' that most could not avoid the workhouse and that a retrenchment policy accentuated impoverishment. Many farmer guardians had started to recognize that the sudden withdrawal of out-relief had created a 'bitterness among the suffering class which may change them into dangerous classes'. One effect of the farmer's parsimonious action was that it encouraged 'the most violent agitators of the labourer's union ... from the apprehension of extreme measures on the part of the Guardians'.[64] Regrettably no record of Spencer's reply has survived but the guardians' minute books indicate that a number of farmer guardians were expressing similar concerns about the severity of the anti-out-relief policy.[65] They may have been influenced by the bad publicity they were receiving in local newspapers. One outspoken letter gives us a flavour of the criticism.

> Sir, I was glad to see the account of the Brixworth board of guardians in your paper on Saturday last and feel quite certain the ratepayers of the Union cannot wish the poor to be oppressed in the way they are now. The letter contained several cases of oppression, but from what one hears and knows, it is not a tenth of a tithe of hard cases. Every one must regret to see one class set against another but what the guardians are now doing so most effects. Why could their alterations not be made in the same way as other Unions? ... One thing is quite certain: ratepayers should be very careful whom they entrust to administer the rates; some Guardians know how to deal with the poor justly and firmly; whilst others don't care how the poor suffer so long as they can save their pockets ... I remain – PAUPER on 1*s.* 6*d.* and LOAF.[66]

As the *Northampton Mercury*, which carried this letter, had a Liberal bias, such criticisms

[64] BL, Althorp Mss, K157, Roberts to Spencer, 20 Mar. 1875.

[65] NRO, PL2/15. The issue was raised in the board throughout 1875.

[66] *Northampton Mercury*, 10 May 1873.

were not unexpected. The peculiar brand of radicalism in this part of Northamptonshire, influenced by 'Old Dissent and even older strains of Puritanism' and allied to Chartism and later to Braudlaughism, seems to have been determined to oppose Pell's policies from the outset.[67] Consequently, an editorial in the same newspaper issue noted wryly that 'Guardians are going Pell-mell for economy' and it hoped that moderates would win the day in the Brixworth Union. Unfortunately, the timing of this criticism coincided with a workhouse scandal, which seems to have persuaded moderate guardians to close ranks and continue to support Pell's policy changes.

In December 1874 local newspapers reported that two elderly paupers, Thomas Hanson and Thomas Cooper, had died in the Brixworth Union workhouse in suspicious circumstances.[68] An editorial explained that it was difficult to ascertain the facts of the cases because the guardians were acting in a furtive manner, but it was reported that the two men had died from medical neglect. This created a furore in the district because the paupers had been forced to accept indoor relief after being denied out-relief in 1873. Local newspapers were unable to uncover any more details and were forced to wait for the subsequent inquest. Only the bare facts of the deaths were recorded in guardians' minute books. However, as the deaths were as a result of medical negligence, central government demanded a full report, which although never published, has survived.[69] The report confirms the truth of local rumours. The facts of the case were these. In the winter of 1874 Hanson, aged 60 and Cooper, aged 78, were admitted to the workhouse. On 1 December, a Sunday evening, the two men fell ill and the master of the workhouse asked the Brixworth Union surgeon, a Dr Harpur, to make a visit. The doctor examined both men that evening and injected them with '8 minims [milligrams] of morphine' each. At 7 a.m. on Monday morning, a workhouse nurse checked both patients and reported that they were 'fast asleep'. The master asked her to keep checking the patients at two hourly intervals. At 9 o'clock she reported that the patients were 'thought queer'. The master sent for the doctor immediately. Meanwhile, at about 10 o'clock, he tried to revive the patients with cold water but failed. There were no further attempts to waken the patients. The doctor did not return to the workhouse until 5.30 p. m. on Monday evening when he found that one patient had died at 5 o'clock and the other had sunk into a deep coma, dying at 7 o'clock that evening.

At the inquest into the deaths of Hanson and Cooper held on 4 December, the coroner cross-examined the union doctor about his treatment of the two men. As local newspaper reporters were denied full access to the proceedings, only the central government files detail the cross-examination. The coroner asked the doctor why he did not attend the patients immediately when called upon to do so. Harpur explained that he called at the union workhouse at 2 o'clock on Monday afternoon, but no one answered the bell, so he completed his rounds and returned in the evening. This rather feeble excuse did not persuade the coroner. The autopsies had shown that both the deceased had been suffering from kidney disease, a common

[67] R. Greenall, *A History of Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough* (1979), p. 78.

[68] The following account is based on the widespread coverage given the case throughout Dec. 1874 in the *Northampton Herald*, *Northampton Mercury*, and *Northampton Guardian*, and the Local Government Board file, PRO, MH12/8700.

[69] PRO, MH 12/8700, dated 'Dec. 1874', letter from 'RJP' marked 'private' to Local Government Board; internal memos discussing the facts of the case dated 4 Dec. 1874, and note of a decision 'to let guardians resolve the matter themselves'.

compliant in elderly, worn-out, labourers. Yet, current medical opinion held that morphine aggravated kidney disease. And the doctor had injected the patients with '8 minims', instead of the proscribed maximum of '6 minims' of morphine. The coroner concluded that the doctor's misdiagnosis and overdose of morphine killed the paupers. Harpur denied knowing that Cooper suffered from kidney disease and defended himself by saying that he 'thought 8 minims would revive better'.

Even though local newspapers could only report a fraction of the proceedings because of their limited access to the court, nevertheless what little they could discover caused an outcry in the area. A leading editorial in the *Northampton Mercury* noted that it seemed to have been pre-arranged by leading magistrates in the Brixworth Union that the vice-chairman of the Brixworth Union board of guardians, a large farmer who supported Pell, should chair the inquest jury. The newspaper alleged that he instructed his fellow jurors to record a verdict of 'death from natural causes' in the face of evidence as seen by the coroner.[70] Editorials in all the local newspapers were unanimous in their condemnation of this action: they did not divide along traditional radical/Liberal/Conservative lines. They agreed that at the very least the doctor should have been reprimanded for his medical neglect in a public statement by the chairman of the Brixworth Union. Newspaper reporters complained about the guardians' silence on the matter, commenting that their exclusion from the coroner's court seemed to indicate foul play. Only central government and Brixworth Union guardians knew the full facts of the cases, but these were not recorded in the local official records to ensure confidentiality because the case was so sensitive. However, correspondence from a relative of a local clergy guardian was placed in central government files alongside the rather mundane official report on the matter and it reveals what really happened.

> My brother-in-law (who tells me that the enquiry made the case blacker than ever) has sent you the resolution which he and Lord Spencer and Mr Pell ... proposed ... The doctor's friends back him well; though there can be no earthly doubt that the paupers were killed by the Opium & might (in my opinion) have been saved had proper attempts to save them been made. My reason for believing they would have been saved under the treatment is: that they lived for some 20 hours after the morphine was given. The Master at 10 am finding they would not wake up put some cold water on their faces and sent for the Doctor and this was the sum of their treatment. I have no doubt the 12 [guardians who supported the doctor] take an economical view and philosophical view of the matter – holding that paupers are relieved of their woes and the rates relieved from the Paupers ... and [they] join classes/chums.[71]

This letter gives us a rare insight into the social cost of the medical out-relief changes and the true attitudes of Pell and his supporters. It suggests that Pell's party covered up the scandal and supported the crusade against out-relief for primarily economic reasons. Harpur was evidently responsible for the pauper's deaths. This was the view of two of his medical colleagues who, in a letter to the Local Government Board accused him of both misdiagnosing the two

[70] *Northampton Mercury* and *Northampton Herald*, 6 Dec. 1874 carried details of the case and editorials condemning the jury's action. Also PRO, MH 12/8700, internal memos during December.

[71] PRO, MH12/8700.

deceased men and neglecting them for business reasons.[72] Harpur himself admitted to the Local Government Board that having gone to the workhouse at about 3 o'clock and receiving no reply at the door, he went onto a neighbouring village to make a house call there, returning to the workhouse at the end of the afternoon. In his defence he held that the workhouse master's note did not alert him to the seriousness of the problem and that even if he had attended immediately in response to the note, the men were beyond help. He was censured by the Local Government Board who felt that his conduct was not satisfactory.[73] The medical regime within the workhouse also failed the paupers. A poorly paid nurse and a busy workhouse master tried to revive the patients but failed.

The evidence indicates that the charge of negligence against the doctor was not pursued for two reasons. First, Pell needed to retain the support of the poor law medical officers in the area to implement his retrenchment experiment. Therefore, he, and his supporters who sat on the jury, appear to have agreed before the inquest to exonerate the doctor. Secondly, moderate farmers seem to have judged that to protect their standing in the community, they should close ranks by putting on a united front in public, despite their reservations, otherwise they would have to accept a degree of culpability for the paupers' deaths. However critical they were in private, it was imperative that they did not criticize the guardians' regime in public.

It is very difficult to assess what impact these two deaths had on the psyche of the elderly labouring poor because no record has survived of their individual reactions. Local newspapers, however, reported that the deaths and subsequent inquest heightened labourers' fears of workhouse incarceration. This was expressed in the radical biblical sentiments of local non-conformity in an editorial in the *Northampton Guardian*, which warned guardians in the Brixworth Union that,

> He that oppresseth the Poor reproacheth his Maker, but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the Poor (Proverbs Chp. 14, v. 31) ... Rob not the poor because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate, for the Lord will plead their cause and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them (Proverbs Chp. 22, v. 23).[74]

This was a sensitive case and it seems unlikely that guardians would have closed ranks so completely unless they feared its local impact. It was visible proof of the power of the retrenchment party and the powerlessness of the labouring poor. Uncharacteristically, neither Pell, Spencer nor Bury ever made any public statement about the scandal and any private correspondence on the matter between them has not survived. Bury supported Pell in public, but he confined his comments to statements about the national anti-out-relief policy, probably to deflect attention from the local controversy. It is interesting that he did not chair the inquest jury, but left the vice-chairman of the Brixworth Union to pre-arrange matters, which suggests he may have been critical of the cover up in private. We can only speculate about the extent of his involvement in the aftermath of the medical scandal, but he seems to have been careful to distance himself from the controversy.

[72] Ibid., Mortimor and Wilson to the Local Government Board, 4 Dec. 1874.

[73] Ibid., Harpur to Local Government Board, 22 Dec. 1874.

[74] *Northampton Guardian*, 12 Dec. 1874.

Although few sources have survived that comment on these controversial deaths, letters did flood into the Local Government Board from guardians, rate-payers and paupers complaining about the dehumanising implications of the retrenchment experiment, but most were ignored.[75] Other poor law unions also began to complain about both the radical harsh policies of the Brixworth Union and their promotion by the Local Government Board in its annual reports. For example, the chairman of the Sheffield Union sent an extensive petition to the Board complaining that 'by publishing the resolutions of the Brixworth Board of guardians not to give outdoor relief', civil servants were 'giving encouragement to resolutions, which are contrary to the spirit of the law'.[76] The relieving officer for the same union later stated that,

> Hundreds of thousands of our aged and infirm poor are in a most miserable condition; that the small [out-relief] allowance, which we make to them is not sufficient to sustain nature, and that the horses, nay the very dogs of our aristocracy, are better stabled, kennelled, and fed than our deserving poor are housed, clothed and fed.[77]

He concluded by complaining about the extreme policies of the Brixworth Union, which were 'painful to contemplate' in the light of recent rumours about the fatal consequences of such radical out-relief changes. An internal Local Government Board review concluded that the complaints did 'not ... merit the special attention of the Board' and a standard reply was sent outlining that civil servants were not authorized to intervene in specific out-relief cases. It was not in government's interest to criticize the Brixworth Union in public, since it wanted to uphold this 'model' rural poor law union as an exemplar of anti-out-relief management.

The attitude of the central government authorities and the closing of ranks by the moderate guardians on the Brixworth Union board after the paupers' deaths gave Pell a unique opportunity to consolidate his power. He knew some of his supporters were wavering, but the workhouse deaths gave him more time to introduce a number of administrative changes that would make it very difficult to reverse his policies. Thus, he created finance and out-relief sub-committees to deal with all expenditure matters. These committees dealt with all out-relief applications; their members were all committed retrenchment supporters. They ensured that very few out-relief applications came before a full board meeting of guardians, at which Pell's supporters might be out voted. Some farmer guardians argued that medical procedures should be reviewed after the workhouse deaths. Pell pre-empted this proposal by having Spencer establish sick and burial clubs to compel the poor to save for illness and funeral expenses. He also enhanced the role of the workhouse medical dispensary by reforming internal procedures. However, as Pell refused to increase indoor medical expenditure, this created more bureaucracy for the master and nurses who did not have the time to introduce substantial procedural changes.[78] Finally, Pell persuaded the chairman of the board of guardians, Rev. Robert Isham, who had administered poor relief liberally, to resign from office. He had been ill for some time and Pell argued that it was an opportune moment to appoint a successor.[79] Unsurprisingly, his

[75] For instance PRO, MH12/8699, 7 Mar. 1871, 13 May, 2 June 1873; NRO, PL2/15, 31 Dec. 1874.

[76] PRO, MH25/25, Searle, chairman of Sheffield Union to Local Government Board, 14 Jan. 1874.

[77] PRO, MH25/24, Jos. Turnell, pamphlet on outrelief.

[78] NRO, PL2/15 *passim*.

[79] BL, Althorp Mss, K154, Pell to Spencer 10 Apr. 1874 (discusses chairmanship); Morton to Spencer, 15 Aug. 1874 (discusses chairman's ill health).

supporters elected the Rev. Bury. Pell was now in power and the stage was set for a very bitter and protracted contest over the out-relief issue for the next twenty years.

It soon became apparent that the dominance of Pell's party on the Brixworth Union board would have far-reaching repercussions, straining social relations and impoverishing the local community. Once Pell was in power he introduced a series of anti-out-relief measures that were deeply unpopular amongst labouring people. For example, Pell introduced a number of devices to deter applicants for out-relief in 1875–85.[80] Guardians decided to prosecute the adult children of elderly paupers to compel them to pay the maintenance costs of their parents. Pell adjudicated that anyone in receipt of charitable provision, such as elderly almshouse residents, had to support themselves independently or accept compulsory admittance into the workhouse. He also persuaded central government to reduce the number of relieving officers in the Brixworth Union to just one to give his party greater control of the poor law decision-making process. These changes reduced the number of out-relief claimants in the Brixworth Union from 2017 in 1870 to 494 by 1880, and the total cost of poor relief expenditure decreased from a high of just under £6000 to around £1600 in the same period. Thereafter, it proved more difficult to make further reductions in out-relief expenditure, especially after the onset of an agricultural crisis in the area around 1879. Consequently, Pell's party implemented some rather unorthodox out-relief deterrent policies to maintain their rate of reduction of out-relief expenditure to meet central government targets. For instance, Pell, Spencer and Bury set up a private charity, dubbed the 'Secret Service Fund', to support elderly deserving paupers who should have been given out-relief. Every time a legitimate out-relief applicant applied to the board of guardians for parish funding, they were directed to the private charitable scheme and given a temporary allowance for a maximum of four weeks on the strict understanding that they could not reapply for further out-relief support. In addition, during the agricultural crisis, guardians refused to reintroduce out-relief funding, preferring instead to set up privately funded small-scale welfare to work schemes, which were portrayed as benevolent gestures to alleviate unemployment. In reality, they were too small-scale to resolve the problem of endemic unemployment and in fact were designed to persuade labourers to migrate, allowing the Brixworth Union to export its social problems elsewhere. This meant that guardians continued to achieve their central government targets at the expense of others.[81] Further out-relief medical changes were implemented in the late 1880s when guardians refused to pay the funeral costs of paupers who died outside the workhouse. Finally, Pell's party used sanitation funds, which should have been spent on providing clean drinking water supplies and sewerage farms in the Brixworth Union district, to balance over-expenditure on costly anti-out-relief administrative schemes and to improve the expenditure performance indicators that were sent to central government. They showed that out-relief numbers in the Brixworth Union fell to just 97 pauper claimants by 1895, out of a total population of 12,186. Out-relief expenditure had fallen from just over

[80] Elizabeth T. Hurren, 'Labourers are revolting: penalising the poor and a political reaction in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire, 1875–1885', *Rural History* 11 (2000), pp. 37–55, gives full details of this period's anti-outrelief measures.

[81] These points are developed further in Elizabeth T. Hurren, 'Welfare to work schemes and a crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire, 1880s', *Family and Community History* (forthcoming, 2001).

£6000 in the late 1860s to around £140 in 1895, with only one in every 126 residents claiming poor relief assistance.[82]

All of these measures disguised the profound social cost of the crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union. When the process of poor law democratisation began to unfold in the 1890s, the labouring poor united to oust Pell's party from office. Many of the original trade union leaders in the district came forward to organize opposition after the annual rateable property qualification in guardians' elections was reduced from £25 to £5 per annum in 1893. These men formed a political pressure group, the Brixworth District Outdoor Relief Association (BDODRA) in March 1893 to secure the election of working men who promised to reintroduce out-relief. By 1895–6 over 60 per cent of the adult population in the district were paid up members of the pressure group. When, following the Local Government Act of 1894, property qualifications were abolished in guardians' elections, BDODRA members ousted Pell's party from office. In the April 1896 guardians' election they won 55 per cent of the available seats on the board of guardians, which gave them a large enough majority to bring in their own chairman of the board and to reintroduce out-relief provision permanently. This process of political change was the culmination of working peoples' determination to oppose the crusade against out-relief, which had begun with agricultural trade union combination in the early 1870s.

IV

In the period 1870–75, residents of the Brixworth Poor Law Union principally 'inhabited a world structured by their relationship to economic and social power'.[83] The poor needed customary supplements to their wages to avoid the workhouse: farmers exploited labour to make higher profits. There was a triangular matrix of social relations in this locality – landowners, farmers and labourers – with customary expectations governing everyday wage patterns, farming practices, charitable provision and poor relief expenditure in the mid-Victorian period.[84] Two vectors of change upset these traditional relationships. First, a crusade against out-relief was instigated by Pell, with the support of Spencer and his tenant farmers who sat as guardians and who dominated the Board, because of the impact of the Union Chargeability Act of 1865 and poorer farming profits in 1870–1. This policy change anticipated central government's official campaign to eradicate out-relief spending and destroyed a whole range of customary expectations. Second, the process of poor law change contributed to the advent of agricultural trade unionism because most labourers feared the financial constraints of such a radical retrenchment policy. It was unfortunate that they asked for wage increases at the end of an era of prosperity, as Dunbabin observes, because their demands seemed unreasonable in a hostile economic climate.[85] This convinced farmer guardians that their position as leaders of rural society was under threat and they took pre-emptive action, withdrawing out-relief funding to penalize paupers for union

[82] Pell and MacKay, *Reminiscences*, pp. 356–7.

[83] S. Banks, 'Open and closed parishes in nineteenth-century England' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading 1982), p. 426, quoted in Alun Howkins, *Reshaping rural England. A social history, 1850–1925* (1991), p. 28.

[84] The notion of a triangular matrix of social relations was first discussed by Peter King in the introduction to Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling poverty. The voices and strategies of the English poor* (1997).

[85] Dunbabin, 'Revolt', pp. 68–96.

combination. This drove them into alliance with COS zealots, like Pell, Spencer and Bury who needed farmers' support for their retrenchment policy.

Few poor law historians have analysed the link between agricultural trade unionism and the crusade against out-relief. Brown and Horn's studies indicated that many guardians penalized labourers for NALU membership by withdrawing out-relief provision.[86] Farmers in the Brixworth Union were pragmatists, not ideologues, and Pell exploited their conservatism in three ways. At first he appealed to their economic interests by offering to introduce out-relief cost-saving measures at a time of falling profit margins. Then he inflamed their fears that their social position was under threat, by pointing out that union combination threatened their oligarchy. Finally, he convinced them to close ranks after the workhouse medical scandal to protect their reputations, even though some guardians were starting to favour a more moderate out-relief policy. This gave Pell enough time to assert his authority over the Brixworth Union board of guardians by creating a complex administrative structure to deter out-relief applications. For although Pell came to office in the early 1870s, farmer guardians let him consolidate his power, which paradoxically reduced their influence further. Pell used Spencer's reputation to convince guardians that out-relief levels should be reduced in 1870–1, but it was farmers' short-sighted action that gave him *de facto* power over the next twenty years or so. That process of poor law change was completed after guardians agreed to vindicate the doctor who was guilty of medical negligence and then voted in Bury as chairman of the Brixworth Union.

The growth of agricultural trade unionism and the two pauper deaths in the workhouse were important events in the formative process of the crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union. The pauper deaths, though unintended, were themselves one of a number of deterrents, which would later motivate the labouring poor to unite and overthrow Pell's retrenchment party once the poor law was democratized in the 1890s. Undoubtedly, the out-relief controversy contributed to the success of the NALU in the Brixworth Union and that, in turn, created an unprecedented climate of distrust. Class relations were tense, as farmers' reaction to union combination forced labourers to cross an important political threshold in this locality. Rural trade unionism seems to have heralded the start of more overt forms of political activity amongst the labouring poor, probably because by the close of the high farming era, as John Archer so aptly summarizes, 'illusion gave way to a pragmatic experience of pauperism'.[87] Once that political threshold was crossed there seems to have been no turning back because Pell's party refused to reintroduce out-relief, even after the onset of the agricultural crisis. In the 1870s many traditional poor relief claimants who joined local and national agricultural trade unions were not simply bargaining for 'a stake in the soil', but their very existence outside the workhouse. Consequently, agricultural trade unionism was a catalyst that accelerated the crusade against out-relief in the Brixworth Union and it politicized labourers to seek office, in order to control the poor relief system. In time democratisation would empower them to claim back their right to parish funding, which central government policy and the guardians' selfish economic and political motivations had tried to remove.

[86] Brown, *Meagre Harvest*, Horn, 'Agricultural labourers'.

[87] Archer, *"By a Flash and a scare"*, p. 252.

The administration of the livestock census of 1866

by Stephen Matthews

Abstract

This paper examines the administration of the 1866 livestock census, drawing upon a newly discovered collection of Inland Revenue circulars. Using these it amplifies and corrects our previous accounts of the exercise, showing how procedures developed as practical problems were identified. The key figures in the census were the Surveyors of Inland Revenue. The occupiers to whom the census forms were to be sent were identified by the Surveyors from the Schedule A and B books maintained by them and it was they who collated the returns locally. It seems that the census was successful, but for reasons which are unclear, future censuses were undertaken by the Revenue's excise officers.

The cattle plague of 1865–6 provided the context within which the British government undertook the first successful census of livestock, of cattle, sheep and pigs (though not horses) in England and Wales. Whilst population censuses had been held in England and Wales since 1801, attempts to establish the numbers of animals owned or the sown acreages of crops had all been defeated by simple but stubborn non-cooperation. These efforts have been reviewed by Coppock and there is no need to re-examine them here, save to note that landowners in Scotland and Ireland had proved to be far more compliant.[1] By the 1850s reasonable statistics were available for those countries, which made the failure in England and Wales even more undesirable. Various estimates were made by a number of economists which were summarized by James Lewis in a paper published following the completion of the cattle census.[2] They ranged from 3.4 million to 5.5 million for cattle and from 18.6 million to 26.1 million for sheep. None had any statistical validity and were frequently arbitrary adjustments to the totals proposed by Arthur Young in 1770. Pressure to remedy this ignorance of the scale of national resources came not only from within the Board of Trade but the Royal Statistical Society (founded in 1832) and parliamentary lobbyists.

Although the 1866 census is closely associated with the cattle plague, Milner Gibson, President of the Board of Trade had already determined upon a count of crops before the infection started. On 31 March 1865 he announced in the House of Commons his intention to ask for a sum of money to pay for the obtaining of agricultural statistics and £10,000 was voted in June.

The outbreak of cattle plague, specifically Rinderpest, had first been reported in July 1865 after diseased cattle were imported into Hull from the Baltic port of Revel. These animals were dispersed on arrival and the infection spread quickly. By the end of July there were 82 known centres of infection.[3] Initial measures were ineffective, for, although JPs were empowered to

[1] J. T. Coppock, 'The statistical assessment of British Agriculture', *AgHR* 4 (1956), pp. 4 – 21.

[2] J. Lewis, 'On agricultural statistics', *JRASE*, sec. ser. 2 (1866), pp. 393–429.

[3] Richard Perren, *The meat trade in Britain, 1840–1914* (1978), p. 108.

appoint inspectors who could seize cattle, their indifference and procrastination, the ignorance of the inspectors, and deceit by farmers often defeated the purpose. Most counties suffered terribly but a rigorous policy of slaughter from February 1866 gradually brought the epidemic under control by the end of the year, albeit at a loss of 209,332 beasts.[4] The onset of the plague in the summer of 1865 enabled Gibson to proceed faster than might otherwise have been possible. In September the Cattle Plague Commission was established, and on 3 November 1865 it announced its determination to hold a livestock census in advance of that already announced for crops.

Previous attempts to hold a national census had failed for the lack of any organisation capable of mounting a consistent national programme. It was expecting too much of local clergy or poor law guardians to undertake the task. In late 1865 the chosen executives were the Surveyors of the Inland Revenue. The Surveyors were the predecessors of the modern Inspector of Taxes, their name being changed after the First World War: they were locally based with responsibility for a defined area. Their selection to undertake the task was probably inevitable for no other organization had a comparable body of trained and professional officers spread across the country. In 1845, when an agricultural census had been considered, Gladstone had reviewed a number of ways by which it could be conducted, using 'every class of officer who was prima facie capable of undertaking the task – the tax-collector, parochial officer, overseer, church-warden, excise officer, in fact every class of public functionary' but had rejected them all as inadequate.[5] By 1866 much had changed. In 1845 the recently re-introduced Property and Income Tax was in its infancy and was administered by a body of surveyors who had been reduced in number after the earlier abolition of the charge. By 1866 they were not only more numerous than in 1845, but were more professional, organised and supervised. The Revenue could offer the Board of Trade a facility that no other department could match.

At the time, the conduct of the census and presentation of its findings were criticized by Lewis in terms which are unfortunately far too lengthy to be reproduced in full here.[6] His chief complaints were that no one knew how many returns were issued or how many were received back; how estimates of cattle had been made when returns had not been made or who made them; and 'In the Welsh districts varying patois in dialects of the Celtic tongue are still the language of the people, and one would especially like to know how such a formidable obstacle as this was overcome'. In addition, he complained that the statistics had been presented without any commentary or explanation. The purpose of this paper is use a newly discovered archive to try to answer some of Lewis's criticisms and, in doing so, to add to and in some respects correct the narrative in Coppock's paper.

I

The new evidence lies in an archive of about 250 internal Inland Revenue circulars addressed to a Surveyor of Taxes, a Mr Henzell, between 1839 and 1866. At the time of the census, Henzell was surveyor for Stockport and Bucklow hundred in Cheshire. The eight circulars setting out

[4] W. H. R. Curtler, *A short history of English agriculture* (1909), p. 289.

[5] Coppock, 'Statistical assessment', pp. 7–8, citing *Parliamentary Debates* LXXIV, (1844), p. 91.

[6] Lewis, 'On agricultural statistics'.

how the census was to be conducted are included in sequence at the end.[7] The instructions were only specific to Cheshire in such details as the number of copies Mr Henzell was due to receive, and there is no reason to think that different instructions were issued for other counties. The archives seems to be unique, for there is no evidence that any other copies of the circulars have survived. It ends with the circular announcing the crop census of June 1866, which was to be conducted by the excise officers of the Revenue and not the Surveyors.[8]

Instructions began to be issued to Surveyors shortly after the announcement that there would be a census. Within the Revenue the exercise was co-ordinated by a Mr Robinson, who ultimately presented the returns to the Board of Trade with a covering report.[9] The first circular was issued on the 2 December 1865, informing the Surveyors that there was to be a census and they were to organize it. Initially it was envisaged that returns were only to be issued to people occupying more than five acres. Returns would be issued through the post and return postage would be prepaid to reduce the failure rate. Those who were to receive returns would be selected from the Schedule A and B assessment books, supported, if need be, by local knowledge and the poor rate books.[10] Each surveyor received a specimen of the proposed return and was asked to report to Somerset House by 11 December how many forms he would need. At the end of the circular, Surveyors were asked whether they thought that limiting the issue to occupiers of more than five acres would seriously reduce the value of the census. They must have thought that it would, for on 26 December another circular was issued, extending the census to all occupiers of land and asking the Surveyors for a revised estimate of the number of forms they required. This was to be supplied at the 'earliest period practicable'.

The forms were sent to the Surveyors on 18 January 1866, Mr Henzell receiving 3250 together with instructions for their completion. Census day was to be 5 March, and the Board of Trade was anxious that the returns should be completed as close to that day as possible, and not prematurely. To help in this, Surveyors were asked to have them posted so as to arrive no earlier than four days in advance. The issue of each return was to be ticked off against the entry in the assessment book and cross-ticked when the completed return was received back so that complete accuracy of issue and receipt could be assured. The details supplied were to be kept strictly confidential. Unfortunately, that rule was applied so rigorously that none of the completed forms are known to have survived.

Although they were asked to send the forms back immediately, in practice occupiers were to

[7] The archive was discovered by the author and is in his possession. References to it and quotations from it are made by permission of the Inland Revenue. The views expressed are those of the author and not the Inland Revenue.

[8] Coppock stated that both the cattle and the later crop censuses were conducted by the Excise officers employed by the Board of Inland Revenue but this is not the case. Coppock, 'Statistical assessment', p. 17. The first exercise, the livestock census, was conducted by the surveyors of taxes, and the excise officers undertook the second. The excise officers' duties, then as now, involved the collection of duties on wines, spirits, tobacco and other commodities, as opposed to income or other 'assessed' taxes.

[9] Revealed by a letter of 15 May 1866 from the Board of Trade to the commissioners of Inland Revenue, printed as App. IV to *Tenth Report of the Board of the Inland Revenue* (1866) (Sessions Papers 1866, 3724).

[10] Income tax was charged under Schedules A and B on the notional value of the occupation or use of land and property, a system which survived in a modified form until recent years in the system of domestic rates. The assessment books identified each property and recorded a value for it. The poor rate books operated in a similar way, with each property and its value identified for the purpose of levying the parish poor rate.

be given ten days before any action was to be taken. Immediately after that deadline, Surveyors were to give the 'parochial assessors' (locally appointed officers who assisted the Surveyor in determining or agreeing the amount of an assessment) lists of those who had failed to respond 'with a view to those Officers calling personally for the returns'. Surveyors were to be provided at a later date with a few unstamped forms 'in case there should have been any miscarriage in the delivery of the forms by post' and a reasonable remuneration was to be allowed for the assessors' services. If the assessors were unable to obtain the return of the form from anyone, they should report the fact and say why. They were also, it turns out from a later circular, to supply an estimate when a return could not be obtained. Once the returns were received back, the Surveyor was to prepare an abstract on another form to be forwarded to Somerset House, but keep the original returns 'until further orders'.

Two groups would not be covered by the general issue. The first was milch cows 'kept in towns by persons following the calling of Dairymen.' Surveyors were to ask the assessors of the relevant towns for their assistance in delivering returns to these people and collecting them again later, identifying them from their local knowledge. Their numbers could be significant; Bagshaw's *Gazetteer of Cheshire* for 1850 lists 41 in Chester alone and that would almost certainly be incomplete, reflecting only the better established among them. The urban assessors would be repaid postage but nothing was said specifically about payment for their time. The second omission, but one which shows how thoroughly the exercise was undertaken, covered rights of pasturage. There would be no single occupier, so the Surveyors were to consult with the assessors, to form an estimate of the numbers of cattle involved. Surveyors might need help in the preparation and examination of the returns and they were told that 'an allowance at the rate of 10*s.* 6*d.* per thousand (returns) will be granted for the extra assistance which may be requisite for the purpose'.

The plan was further modified by a circular dated 13 February, probably following representations from the Post Office, for it was realised that it would be inconvenient for the local postmasters to receive for posting more than 1000 of the returns on any one day. Surveyors were therefore to phase the issue of the forms, presumably at the 1000 a day maximum, inform the Postmasters when they would start, and 'take care that the Schedules (returns) are sent to the Post Office in the early part of each day'. Surveyors were also to inform Somerset House when they were all ready. This circular also clarified another matter, for it made clear that pigs kept by cottagers were not to be included. It is not clear why these pigs were to be excluded when others were to be counted, but it was perhaps thought that they were 'domestic' in character and therefore outside the scope of a review which was intended to measure the commercial resources of the country.

On 27 February another circular accompanied a bundle of 69 copies of the promised stock letter to parochial assessors, asking for their assistance, with 'several sheets of the form' on which the abstract was to be prepared. The abstracts, with entries in alphabetical order of parish, were to be sent to Somerset House by the end of March at the latest and an allowance was to be made for assistance in preparation at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* for every hundred returns. With due regard for economy, all surplus forms were to be returned to the Revenue's warehouse keeper. The procedure was again changed on 15 March when Surveyors were instructed to send in the abstracts when ready and not save them up until all were complete.

Finally, a circular of 19 May instructed the Surveyors to draw up lists, in duplicate, for each division, of the amounts paid or due to assessors for their allowance of 3*d.* per return, whether they had successfully recovered it or not, and for making estimates. They were to submit any outstanding claims for their own expenses to establish the total cost of the exercise.

The results were published on 7 May by the Cattle Plague commissioners in a form that was rightly criticized. All that was provided was a breakdown into England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and offshore islands, with columns for cattle (showing cows, other cattle and a total for cattle); sheep; pigs and finally a figure for total stock, of, incidentally, 37,912,057 animals. Ages of livestock were reproduced but no other background information. They made no mention of the size of land holding included, how the information had been gathered or how complete it was felt to be. Although Surveyors had not been asked to report the numbers of occupiers who failed to respond, they were required to state the estimated numbers of cattle, but this detail was omitted from the first published version. It is not clear whether the first publication was an interim attempt to present figures quickly or whether it was just inadequate but, faced with criticism, the commissioners quickly published a fuller version, which supplied these details, to satisfy their critics.[11]

II

There is no statistical evidence in any of the papers or reports to establish how accurate the figures were, but there was a general feeling that the livestock census was more successful than the crop census that followed it. It may well be that the participation of the Revenue in issuing the returns introduced an element of non-compliance and inaccuracy, but against that, it is equally likely that the local knowledge possessed by Surveyors (and particularly the assessors) could ensure that gross errors or lies were detected and corrected. Overall it seems most likely that the returns were substantially accurate for the Surveyors were 'generally of opinion that the accuracy of the returns may be depended upon'.[12]

There is a little supporting evidence in a speech by the sheriff of Cheshire, Robert Barbour, who claimed that out of the 4000 returns issued in Broxton Hundred, only about 100 were 'deficient'.[13] If that held good for the country as a whole it was a significant victory. It is nevertheless frustrating that although the numbers of cattle estimated have been preserved in the commissioners' reports, we do not know how many occupiers they represent. The figure must have been available but was never published.

The success of the census does not seem to reflect a complete change of attitude in the farming community. The contrast between the success of the livestock census and the less successful crop returns a little later is summarized by two letters written to the Commissioners

[11] *Returns relating to Livestock in the United Kingdom* (House of Commons, Sessional Papers, 1866, LX), pp. 1–6) and *Return of the Total Number of Cattle, Sheep and Pigs, Returned by Occupiers of Land, and Estimated by Collecting Officers.* (House of Commons, Sessional Papers 1866, LIX), pp. 1–4).

[12] Letter of 15 May, printed as App. IV to *Tenth Report of the Board of the Inland Revenue.*

[13] Quoted in the *Chester Courant*, 14 Mar. 1866, p. 6. The cutting is held in the cattle plague box in the archive at Arley Hall, Cheshire. The Cheshire Record Office does not hold microfilm of the *Courant* for that date.

of Inland Revenue on behalf of the Board of Trade.[14] The first, written in May, apropos the first census, stated

> ... the successful accomplishment of the present enquiry is considered by my Lords to be a complete refutation of the opinion that there is a disinclination upon the part of the farmers to give such information as may be requisite to exhibit the condition and capabilities of British agriculture.

By contrast the second letter, of 14 November 1866, written after the crop census complained

> My Lords of course regret that there has been so much indisposition upon the part of the occupiers of land in some counties to fill up the Schedules forwarded from the Board of Trade, and that consequently it has been necessary to form estimates for some portion of the Acreage returned as under the several crops.

It appears that the reason for the better cattle returns was the devastation of the plague rather than any deep felt conversion on the principle of supplying information.

Mr Henzell's archive enables us to answer many of Lewis's criticisms. We know in detail how the census was conducted, who was issued with returns, and how his concern over the Welsh patois was overcome, for the parochial assessors, chosen from the parishes, were either bilingual or otherwise accustomed to communicating effectively with the occupiers of land at all levels. We also know how the estimates were obtained.

Once the two censuses had been conducted, they were repeated annually. In 1866 they had been held on different dates, in March for cattle and June for crops, but later exercises were held together, on 25 June until 1877, when the date was advanced to 4 June. The crop census was extended to all land holdings to remove the anomaly of 1866, though after some years of experiment, a minimum of one acre was adopted in 1892.[15] Since Mr Henzell's archive comes to an end in May 1866, we cannot glean any more from it about the respective roles of the Surveyors as opposed to the excise officers in future censuses.

The census was most useful in showing how an economic map of England and Wales could be derived from the still young Income Tax system through the simple means of the Schedule A and B assessment books. These volumes, for perhaps the first time, enabled economic data not only to be brought together but put in the hands of central government. In obtaining the information, the Surveyors exploited a novel, if crude, national database linking person, property and value. By doing so, they enabled the Board of Trade to begin the series of annual counts that finally revealed the wealth of the British landscape. It is a pity that Mr Henzell's archive ends here and does not enable us to study their operation for later years.

[14] The two letters were written by J. Emerson Tennent to the secretary to the Board of Inland Revenue on 15 May and 14 Nov. 1866, and are printed as App. IV to *Tenth Report of the Board of the Inland Revenue.*

[15] Coppock, 'Statistical assessment', p. 19.

Book Reviews

The British Isles

DAVID DYMOND AND EDWARD MARTIN (eds), *An historical atlas of Suffolk* (Suffolk County Council / Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, Third edition, 1999). 224 pp. £15 (hbk); £10 (pbk).

The first edition of this *Historical atlas of Suffolk* (1988) has deservedly proved a trend-setter in both concept and format. Durham, Norfolk, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Berkshire and Sussex also now have atlases based on the administrative unit of the county. There are more county atlases to come, but to date, only south-west England has a regional atlas. The county is at once both a sensible and a somewhat perverse basis for mapping. It is sensible because in so many arenas of political and administrative history the county has a real meaning. Many of the datasets quarried for the compilation of such an atlas, for example sites and monuments registers, are constructed on a county basis. Many of the manuscript sources used were collected in the past, and are curated now, on a county basis. However, no variety of historian is as aware of the limitations of the county as a basis of analysis as the agricultural historian. Probably no-one has argued for the illegitimacy of county-based economic description as fervently or pointedly as did William Marshall in his critique of the Board of Agriculture's late eighteenth-century *General Views* of the agriculture of each county.

Suffolk's formula for communicating history by maps has stood the test of time well and has been widely adopted. A map, or a series of small maps, face text enlivened with occasional illustrations. The texts are written in a clear, jargon-free and straightforward manner and extend the map-promoted message. There are also notes on sources and ideas for further reading gathered chapter-by-chapter at the end of the book.

Eighty-six topics are mapped by the 39 contributors. A majority of the contributions are structured into three main sections on a chronological basis and these are supplemented by six smaller thematic sections: communications, industry (in which is included agriculture), leisure, urban growth, architecture, and post-medieval foundations. The mapped topics vary hugely in scope. There are those which are the fundamental underpinnings of any local or regional history, such as maps of population reconstructed from the lay subsidies of 1327 and 1524. At the other extreme are maps of camping closes (places where an early hybrid between football and handball was played) – fascinating and of particular East-Anglian relevance. There are also in a Suffolk sense some unashamedly quirky maps, as, for example, a map of theatres and cinemas (unsurprisingly rather empty for this county). Agriculture does not have a section to itself, as might have been expected in such a rural county, but there is much throughout the atlas that is of interest to agricultural historians. There are maps of rabbit warrens and deer parks in the middle ages, of markets and fairs, parks, enclosure and land reclamation and rural settlement in addition to studies of agrarian change proper (in High Suffolk) and a cross-section compiled from the 1854 crop return.

There is a great deal in the 224 pages of this atlas for historians of all persuasions – data to be quarried and ideas which can be tested elsewhere. The authors and editors have also provided a wealth of contexts within which local historians, historical geographers and school pupils can set their own locally-based projects. This *Historical atlas of Suffolk* is also extraordinarily good value. There are a great many new authors, sections and maps in this third edition. Those who own earlier versions really should go out and buy this new one. In so doing they will support the editors, Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, which together had the foresight and strength of commitment to support this atlas project twenty years or so ago. It was a shot in the dark at that time but one that has paid off handsomely.

ROGER KAIN

G. C. BAUGH (ed.), *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of Shropshire*, X, *Wenlock, Upper Corvedale and the Stretton hills* (OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 1998). xxiii + 518 pp. £70.

This unusually lengthy volume of the Victoria County History describes a remarkably varied area of south Shropshire. The first 186 pages deal with eleven parishes in Munslow Hundred, while the remainder are devoted to 16 parishes in the liberties and borough of Wenlock.

The borough was in essence the estate of the monastic house at Much Wenlock, which even before the Norman conquest was administered under privilege. It survived until 1964 as a largely rural municipality of some 92 sq. km. This volume is a valiant and largely successful attempt to make sense of an area with an unusually disordered administrative inheritance. It is bounded to the north by the hundred of Condover, described in vol. VIII of the History. To the north-east, the parishes of Little Wenlock and Madeley, historically part of the borough of Wenlock, are described in vol. XI, which covers parishes wholly or partially incorporated in the new town of Telford. The new volume includes such varied parishes as Badger and Beckbury, in the sheep-and-corn country on the Staffordshire border, Stoke St. Milburgh whose extremities rise to the summits of Clee Burf and Titterstone Clee, and Broseley on the banks of the Severn, one of the most industrialized parishes in England. It would be easy to suggest other ways of arranging the history of these parishes but this is, in most respects, an effective compromise.

Many readers of this journal will be aware that vol. IV of the Shropshire Victoria History describes the agricultural history of the whole county from earliest times. This topographical volume can devoted only limited space to economic history, but it reveals much valuable detail that may be lost in the broad sweep of the general volume. Effective and consistent use has been made of probate inventories for examining the detail of seventeenth and eighteenth century farming, of tithe maps for assessing the balance of pastoral and arable activities in the 1840s, and of land use returns for showing the changing face of agriculture over the past 130 years. Some large and interesting farms are identified, such as Bockleton Court in Stoke St. Milburgh, where there was a dairy herd of 45 beasts and a flock of over 400 sheep in 1708. A complex pattern of gradual enclosure of open fields is depicted, together with some instances of large-scale parliamentary enclosure, chiefly in the nineteenth century. The account of farming on the great commons of the Long Mynd in Church Stretton parish is particularly revealing. The commons extended over more than 5000 acres in 1840 when they provided sustenance for nearly 8000 sheep, a total which steadily increased to reach about 18,000 in the early 1990s, leading in 1994 to an agreement to reduce numbers.

The accounts of the two small market towns in the region, Much Wenlock and Church Stretton, are commendably thorough. The development of the latter as a place of resort in the late nineteenth century is described in detail, effective use having been made of the files of the local newspaper. There is an excellent account of the revitalization (or perhaps the vitalization) of Much Wenlock in the mid-nineteenth century under the leadership of Dr William Penny Brookes. The Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society was established in 1841, and from it emerged a library, a museum, a philharmonic class and the Wenlock Olympian Society, whose annual events between 1850 and 1930 influenced the development of the modern Olympic movement. The society's reading room building of 1852 subsequently became the town's corn exchange.

Anyone studying aspects of the history of this region of Shropshire will have cause to be grateful to the editors of this volume for providing keys to the understanding of some particularly vexing questions of administrative history. The clarity of the maps which illustrate some of these questions is especially commendable. The volume does rather more than this however. It succeeds in raising questions and sometimes in providing data for answering them, about a part of England whose landscape is not only beautiful but rich in evidence of many periods of man's activity. It is an area where fieldwork is especially rewarding, and the volume is a compelling invitation to the historian to get mud on his or her boots.

BARRIE TRINDER

D. A. CROWLEY (ed.), *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of Wiltshire*, XVI, *Kinwardstone hundred* (OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 1999). xxi + 263 pp. 45 illus; 18 maps. £70.

The editors of the Wiltshire volumes of the Victoria County History maintain a remarkable and commendable rate of publication. This latest volume is concerned with the fifteen parishes in the Kinwardstone hundred which covers the chalk downland of east Wiltshire from the Pewsey vale to the Hampshire border and includes the former royal forests of Savernake and Chute. This is an area without towns or notable industries and where agriculture and forestry have remained the major activities. Like much of Wiltshire, it has also been traditionally dominated by great estates and major landowners. The natural beauty of the downland landscape and the excellence of its agriculture were recognised by William Cobbett in 1820 and it was of this district that he wrote his classic, brief description of downland farming. Surveying the early morning view from the downs above Milton Lilbourne, he exclaimed 'I delight in this sort of country. I sat upon my horse and looked over Milton, Easton and Pewsey for half an hour, though I had not breakfasted'. Cobbett's enthusiasm is not mentioned in the sober pages of this VCH volume, although reference is made to his remarks on the cultivation of swede turnips. Instead we are provided with a wealth of information and detailed references to the sources for each parish, and a masterly account of manorial, religious and

economic history. For the agricultural historian there is much of interest. Parishes such as Pewsey, Milton Lilbourne and Great Bedwyn provide classic examples of the complex arrangement of common fields, meadows and downland grazing, and of the gradual process of enclosure and amalgamation of farms. All the parishes provide evidence of the typical downland farming pattern of 'sheep and corn' husbandry, eventually giving way to the enclosure of common fields, the extension of arable and the steep decline in sheep numbers, followed by the amalgamation of farms and a widespread change to dairy farming and the sale of liquid milk during the later nineteenth century. From 1885, for example, the Stratton-Farmer partnership at Little Bedwyn was milking 2000 cows on what had previously been sheep and corn downland farms. It was at Wexcombe in Great Bedwyn parish that A. J. Hosier and his brother, Joshua, developed their large-scale dairy farming and poultry keeping. They also manufactured prefabricated and easily-transportable bails or milking parlours for sale to farmers across the chalk downlands.

The complex details of the descent of each manor, the dominance of the great estates and the fortunes of the landowners are described in detail. Notable was the rapid rise of the Seymours of Wolf Hall after Jane Seymour became Henry VIII's third wife in 1536. The wealth and influence of the local estate owners is evident from their surviving mansions and parks, as well as from their memorials in the parish churches. They were also responsible for numerous charities. The most dramatic example is the large almshouse founded in 1692 at Froxfield by Sarah, Duchess of Somerset. This provided accommodation for thirty widows, later increased to fifty, and it remains as a remarkable example of a major almshouse building. Some account might also have been included concerning the charitable work of Mary Caroline, Marchioness of Ailesbury, who was responsible for the building or rebuilding of many churches in the district during the mid-nineteenth century. This included the building of the large, ornate church of St Katherine deep in Savernake forest in 1861, a fine example of an estate church. The church was badly damaged during the Second World War when a nearby ammunition dump hidden in the forest accidentally exploded, but this episode is not mentioned in the volume.

One development which could have been treated in greater detail was the rapid decline of the Brudenell-Bruce estate during the later nineteenth century. Charles Brudenell-Bruce was created Marquess of Ailesbury in 1821 and from his greatly enlarged mansion, Tottenham House, he dominated the political and economic life of the district, holding the second largest estate in Wiltshire. Agricultural depression, lavish building work, jointures to several dowagers, protracted litigation and the extraordinarily profligate life-style of the fourth marquess, William Brudenell-Bruce (d. 1894), combined to bring about the ruin of the estate. The terse VCH style hardly does justice to the dramatic nature of this spectacular collapse.

Nonetheless, this volume maintains the high standard and meticulous research of its predecessors. It provides a treasury of information on this area of chalk downland and royal forest. The maps which accompany each parish history in this volume are a useful addition, and the numerous illustrations of churches, houses, and landscape views are excellent.

J. H. BETTEY

N. J. G. POUNDS, *A history of the English parish: the culture of religion from Augustine to Victoria* (CUP, 2000). xxv + 593 pp. 151 illus. £60.

This ambitious book deserves to stand alongside Richard Morris, *Churches in the landscape* (1989) as a basic text for all those who care to explore our rich heritage of ancient ecclesiastical buildings and who seek to understand the role of the parish in the history of settlements and in the social history of the communities that they served. It provides a framework of understanding from the origins of the parochial system, when the old minster territories disintegrated in the late Anglo-Saxon era, through to Victorian times, when large numbers of new parishes were created in the burgeoning industrial towns.

This is essentially a work of synthesis. Professor Pounds appears to have read everything that has been published on the subject in the transactions of county record societies, learned journals and printed calendars. He has apparently also visited all the numerous parishes that he writes about. The book is clearly a product of a lifetimes interest in and fascination with historic churches and their parishes. He writes crisply and his arguments are well-illustrated with maps and photographs. The book can be read throughout with pleasure and profit and can also be used for reference on particular points and topics.

Professor Pounds starts with a succinct account of early Christianity and the minster churches that were often associated with royal estates, tracing broad patterns and providing telling illustrations. He emphasizes the inconsistency of the minster system in terms of size, organization, wealth and personnel. The patronal churches of lay landowners from the eighth century onwards were the forerunners of the parish churches that were found throughout the country by the twelfth century as royal estates were broken up and manors were formed. The process was a gradual one that was inconsistent and never complete. Anomalies in parochial structures abounded until the late nineteenth century.

A theme of the book is the secular overtones of the ecclesiastical parish from its beginning as a lay estate. Parishes were 'the religious expression of the manor'. When manors became fragmented or fell into disuse, the parish took on more and more secular functions. The role of the rural parish in keeping order, relieving distress, settling disputes, etc. was at its most important from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In contrast, the role of the urban parish declined as towns or boroughs received charters of incorporation. In a work of this scope points of disagreement are to be expected. Northern historians will emphasize the township rather than the parish as 'the basic territorial unit in the organisation of this country'. They will argue that the sections on urban parishes fail to mention that the great industrial towns of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire were not divided into small parishes like the ancient cities but arose as townships within huge parishes covering thousands of acres. The parishes of the Pennines were very different from those in much of lowland England.

Professor Pounds shows how the parish 'became a little community, bound together by mutual obligations and common trust and mistrust'. The great strength of his book is the way that he develops this theme. His comments on parish life in the late middle ages and the early-modern period follow naturally from his use of archaeological, architectural, topographical and documentary evidence to establish the origins and growth of the parochial system. It is rare to find a historian with the encyclopaedic knowledge that is necessary to combine all these approaches with those of the social historian who is interested in popular culture, calendar customs and church art. The book is an admirable survey of church history viewed from the local level. Doctrinal differences, liturgy and church hierarchies are given due weight, but the emphasis is on the role of the parish church in the local community, in all its manifestations and inconsistencies.

DAVID HEY

JANICE BROOKER AND SUSAN FLOOD (eds, with an introduction by MARK BAILEY), 'Hertfordshire lay subsidy rolls, 1307 and 1334' (Hertfordshire Record Society, *Hertfordshire Record Publications* 14, 1998). xxix + 204 pp. 1 illus; 1 map. £20.30 incl. p&p, from 14 Westbury Close, Hitchin, Herts., SG5 2NE.

Two basic kinds of lay subsidy roll were compiled for counties in the decades before the Black Death, and this volume is unusual in that it includes the texts of one of each. The 1307 Hertfordshire roll is effectively a list of *c.* 4850 names of taxpayers and their assessments grouped under each vill: this is the first time that such a roll has been published for this county, and its appearance in print is much to be welcomed. The 1334 roll is one of those in which only the names of vills were recorded, and its much shorter text has been reproduced from R. E. Glasscock's well-known work, presumably for purposes of comparison.

The book is a fine example of team-work. Janice Brooker and Susan Flood have turned the 1307 clerks' mixture of languages into a good English text, using a sound editorial method. They have modernized the names of vills but retained the original forms in brackets, and also given the Latin forms of surnames. They have provided separate indexes of personal names and of places and subjects. Mark Bailey's introduction takes us through the technicalities of late medieval taxation, Hertfordshire boundaries, and the raising of these two taxes, but its highlight is his description of early-fourteenth century Hertfordshire at the highpoint of its medieval development.

My only real reservation is that Bailey has not made more of the problems which these sources present for economic and social historians. The use made of the 1334 rolls is too well known to need any comment here. The earlier rolls' lists of thousands of named taxpayers and their assessments would seem to offer invaluable detailed insights into rural conditions in almost every English county at a period when peasant agriculture had to support a population of a size which may not have been seen again until the late eighteenth century. It would be particularly interesting to know how the peasants of a county so close to the London market were coping.

The problem is that lay subsidy rolls are by no means the straightforward records their simple form might suggest, for behind them lies a process of assessment which is still understood only imperfectly. It is not just the old difficulty that an unknown (but substantial) proportion of local heads of households did not pay these taxes and so were not listed. It is by no means easy to relate the sums assessed to the real wealth of taxpayers, even to the point of being able to tell whether a rural taxpayer was a rich, a middle or a poor peasant. In the light of this, Bailey's statement that, 'Essentially, the returns detail the wealth stratification among the middling and upper ranks of the peasantry, and the urban merchants and wealthier artisans' (p. xix), makes rather a bold claim. But fortunately this does not prevent their use for many other purposes.

In many ways this is a model record publication. The well-produced text is complemented by a reduced, but clear, illustration of part of the 1307 roll, real footnotes at the foot of the page and admirably clear maps of the county's administrative divisions in the end-papers. All those involved are to be congratulated, and future editors of lay subsidy rolls – and of other kinds of listing – would

do well to look carefully at this book before deciding how to produce their own.

PETER FRANKLIN

CLAIRE BREAY (ed.), *The cartulary of Chatteris Abbey* (Boydell Press, 1999). xiii + 479 pp. 8 illus. £50.

In the past the exclusion of religious women from the history of the monastic orders has sometimes been justified by the paucity of records surviving from medieval nunneries. While recent studies have demonstrated that this assumption has to be modified, it remains true to say that few women's houses have left cartularies, and Claire Breay's edition of the fifteenth-century cartulary of Chatteris is therefore very welcome. Chatteris, founded between 1007 and 1016, was the last nunnery to be established in Anglo-Saxon England. Unlike earlier tenth- and eleventh-century foundations for women, it owed its origins to a bishop (Eadnoth, bishop of Dorchester) rather than a king; another difference was that Chatteris, located in the Fens, was geographically remote from other similar institutions. Given the small number of cartularies which have survived from nunneries, it is surprising that the Chatteris cartulary has remained neglected for so long. This Claire Breay attributes less to the illegible state of part of the manuscript, which sustained some damage in the Cottonian fire of 1731, and more to the concentration by historians either on the earlier and richer West Saxon nunneries – besides which Chatteris was a poor, low-status sister – or on the new foundations which multiplied rapidly from the early twelfth century: Chatteris has been squeezed between the two.

Claire Breay's edition of the fifteenth-century cartulary is preceded by a long and detailed excursion into the history of the abbey which makes full use of the documents presented in this edition and of a range of other sources, especially episcopal and manorial. Breay provides a detailed discussion of the endowment of the abbey, both in temporalities and spiritualities, and demonstrates that before 1086 most of the abbey property lay in Cambridgeshire and that even after that, when the abbey had passed into the patronage of the bishops of Ely, the pattern changed very little. This was, in part, a product of the intensely local and low level patronage which the nuns received: only three benefactors appear to have been drawn from the class of tenants in chief, the rest from the class of gentry and below. This has made the editor's task of identifying benefactors and dating charters a very difficult one. Dr Breay manages to tease out of the charters, backed by other sources such as manorial court rolls, a pattern of what can be known of the management of the estate: the abbey's activities in the land market, the methods of exploitation, and the officials. Attention is given to the question of the social and geographical origins of the nuns (and appendix 1 is an annotated list of all known abbesses, prioresses and nuns of Chatteris), and the evidence for chaplains and other members of the community. Finally Dr Breay illustrates her enviable expertise in manuscript studies with a meticulous description of the physical state of the cartulary and its compilation and arrangement.

The cartulary itself (pp. 138–388) contains 280 documents. The Latin texts are presented in full, preceded by a brief English summary, with variant readings from other copies, and notes on dating and other relevant matters. The editing is of a high scholarly standard, and the whole volume is handsomely presented. Dr Breay is to be congratulated on the production of this study. It is a valuable addition to the corpus of printed sources available to historians of the religious orders, and especially those interested in the history of religious women, illuminating as it does the workings of a modestly endowed religious house from the eleventh through to the sixteenth century. Those whose interests lie in agrarian or economic history will welcome a case study of a small landowning institution and its impact on its region.

JANET BURTON

JOHN MCCANN, *The dovecotes of Suffolk* (Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 1998). 128 pp. 12 plates; 43 figs. £8.50 incl. p&p from Oak Tree Farm, Finborough Road, Hitcham, Ipswich, IP7 7LS.

Although dedicated to Suffolk, this fascinating book sets out to retell the story of dovecotes. It is John McCann's contention that our understanding of these charming structures has been distorted by the suspect methodology employed by Arthur O. Cooke in his popular work *A book of dovecotes* (1920). To supplement his knowledge, he advertized for information in local newspapers and magazines and relied heavily on these random replies. Moreover, he wrote about buildings he had never visited but for which McCann has evidence. Unfortunately Cooke's book proved very influential; it 'permeates the whole dovecote literature'. McCann takes a different approach, studying the dovecotes on the ground and relating them to descriptions of contemporary working practice. Using this technique he is able to challenge long held assumptions.

A traditional theory is that pigeons (never referred to as doves) provided a source of fresh meat in winter. Not the case. Household accounts show that the young squabs – taken from the nest boxes before fledging – were eaten from early April to November when other supplies of fresh meat were readily available. Winter squabs were a rare delicacy and cost four times as much in February as in October. On the medieval menu, tender

squabs were always a treat and never simply a substitute for roast beef! This casts a different light on the social significance of dovecotes and undermines the idea that the decline of pigeon keeping was merely a response to the increased availability of overwintered animals in the eighteenth century. In fact the most ornate dovecotes date from that period and eight out of the 28 surveyed were built between 1800 and 1846.

Apart from its serious historical message, the book is well laid out with beautiful photographs and helpful diagrams. Introductory chapters provide a handy manual on how dovecotes were used and designed. Pigeons had to be wooed back to the nesting boxes each night and theories abounded on the most favoured size, shape, materials and colour; ingenious methods were devised to exclude predators. The survey, providing the most intricate detail, explains how each structure fulfilled these requirements. The work on Suffolk dovecotes is still in progress; the intention is to map their distribution throughout the county. Like the dovecotes it describes, this book is a gem, functional in its design and purpose and pleasing to look upon.

ELIZABETH GRIFFITHS

ANDY WOOD, *The politics of social conflict: the Peak country, 1520–1770* (CUP, 1999). xvi + 354 pp. 12 tables; 3 figs; 14 maps. £45.

Based on a prodigious amount of research, wide-ranging in its engagements and enthusiasms, this ambitious study of the inhabitants of the lead mining district of north-west Derbyshire successfully combines the economic, social, and political, and the local and national, all notoriously separated in early modern historiography. It also – together with Tim Stretton's volume in the same stable – considerably strengthens the range of *Cambridge studies in early modern British history*, the prestigious series in which it appears. Quite simply, *The politics of social conflict* is an example of the real potential of local history.

Some readers may find the author's Thompsonianism a trifle out of step with current intellectual fashion, and will be struck by a sense of irony that the importance of class in the early modern period is being claimed almost at the very moment it has been banished from the modern! Some may be unsettled by the unevenness of pitch as Wood attempts to combine broad (not always relevant) historiographical excursis with detailed economic analysis and (sometimes too thick) local political narrative. The author also seems a little unclear about the essential contribution of his work. Can it really be said to demonstrate that 'early modern plebeian cultures bequeathed important habits and traditions to the working-class culture of the early nineteenth century' (p. 9)? Does it bear substantially on all of the following:- 'historical understandings of economics and social structure, industrialization and early capitalism, gender and class identities, literacy and popular culture, magic and official belief, state formation, law and custom, subordination, contestation and rebellion' (p. 27)? In this respect, *The politics of social conflict* lacks the focus of comparable work by Clive Holmes, Keith Lindley, and Buchanan Sharp.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, 'Structures of inequality', deals with the social and economic structures of the Peak lead-mining-based communities: social/occupational divisions (smelters, merchants, ore-buyers, free miners, and the ordinary labourers or 'cavers'); distributions of wealth and land; population dynamics; the rise and fall in lead prices. Wood's insistence upon the uniformly plebeian nature of Peak society and the inapplicability of middling-sort divisions sits oddly with his demonstration of the (albeit muted) hierarchies of the mining workers – the free miners were, after all, a local elite – but it would be difficult to challenge his nuanced picture of the local workforce and social economy. He certainly provides an alternative to the south-eastern view of early modern rural England. Section two, 'Conditions of community', describes, as indeed Wood has in other influential published work, the vital importance of continually contested, negotiated, and re-invented custom in local and local-national political interactions and dynamics. Part three, 'Politics of social conflict', provides a first-rate analysis of popular protest in the Peak, demonstrating the longevity of social conflict in the mining districts, the incursion of Caroline politics and powerful individuals into local conflict and custom, and the complicated formation of allegiances during England's civil wars.

Throughout, Wood weaves a fascinating story of popular employment of the law as a means of resistance. His book is as much a new legal history as it is a new political or local history, providing convincing and sophisticated elaboration of the centrality of the law and legal awareness to early modern popular political protest and consciousness. It is an enviable first work.

BARRY REAY

LYNN HOLLEN LEES, *The solidarities of strangers: the English poor laws and the people, 1700–1948* (CUP, 1998). xii + 373 pp. 7 tables; 21 figs. £45.

Although the study of English poor laws has constantly fascinated historians, much of the research has focused on particular aspects of the institution in particular regions during particular periods. Lees's book is, in this regard, a welcome contribution to the field, not least because it attempts to incorporate social, economic and

cultural aspects of the practices of welfare provision in different regions of England during a considerably long time span. Given the enormous spatial and temporal variations of welfare practices, her book is indeed an ambitious attempt, and she certainly deserves credit for the courage to write it.

From a residualist perspective, the book periodizes the poor law history into three phases: the era of the old poor law is characterized as 'residualism taken for granted', where receiving poor relief is widely accepted and generally legitimated; the period from 1834 to 1860 as 'residualism refined and restricted', where class and culture separate the poor within certain categories (especially the able-bodied male) from those outside; and the years between 1860 and 1948 as 'residualism re-evaluated and rejected', where broadening civic rights eventually lead to universal welfare policies. In the form of a short epilogue, she adds further discussions on the post-1948 period under the heading of 'residualism redux'. As the book title hints, the author rejects Alan Macfarlane's notion of English Individualism and argues instead for the importance of collective ties in defining community boundaries. She thus traces changes in the public attitudes towards poverty and pauperism, stressing among others gender and age differentials. In so doing, she clearly displays her intention to interpret the history of English welfare provision not as a unilinear evolutionary process with the birth of the welfare state as its apogee, but as a somewhat contingent process as exemplified by the recent revival of residualism. That she deals with the period of the Thatcherite policy shift only within the limited space of the epilogue is rather disappointing.

Another intention of the author is to see welfare provision not as a policy made primarily by the ruling class but as a transaction between the rulers and the ruled. To understand welfare practices as a negotiated process, and therefore to stress the often neglected role of the recipients, is a very worthwhile perspective and such an approach is likely to go on thriving as it does already to some extent. What is puzzling here is the author's neglect of the popular protest to the introduction of the New Poor Law. This is undoubtedly a most prominent example of working class participation in the process of shaping local policies. For some unknown reason, however, she pays little attention to this important subject. A sense of unbalance is also found in the treatment of the social, economic and cultural aspects of the history of public assistance. For example, discussions of statistics rarely appear in the earlier part of the book. The fact that she only consults the visual materials deposited in the US inevitably set some limitation for an English history book. Had she had opportunities to explore English materials, her book would have been much richer.

Despite these limitations, the book provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of the history of English welfare system with considerable skill. It encompasses a great body of recent literature, including research in the social sciences in its introduction. The combination of visual and statistical materials is unique and would appear quite useful, if not entirely convincing, to researchers who are not familiar with both. The book will therefore make a good guide for the specialist researchers who want to learn about periods and approaches other than their own, as well as more general readers who want to have a long historical perspective.

BYUNG KHUN SONG

JOHN ATKINS, BOB HAMMOND AND PETER ROPER, *A village transformed: Keyworth 1750–1850* (Keyworth and District Local History Society, c/o Keyworth Library, Church Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5FF, 1999). 190 pp. 2 plates; 25 figs. £7.50.

Local histories tend to fall into two camps, those which concentrate exclusively on the minutiae of their particular locality and those which make a serious attempt to fit their study into a more general context. This book falls clearly into the latter category. It is divided into three parts, examining, respectively, the 'old village' (prior to enclosure), the parliamentary enclosure itself, and the 'village transformed' (as it was after enclosure). Within the first and third sections, there is an extensive review of the background to the economic and social history of the country as a whole during the relevant period; the second contains a thorough coverage of the parliamentary enclosure movement nationally. The work also places the study firmly in the more local context of the north Midlands and, specifically, in that of Nottinghamshire. This general background is well-written and authoritative, and will provide the general reader, or even the undergraduate, with a good grounding in the topic.

Embedded in each of these sections are the details of Keyworth itself. The workings of the village prior to enclosure are carefully detailed, as is the actual process by which the enclosure was carried out. There is extensive coverage of the principal figures involved, and an attempt to assess the impact on the less prominent individuals, many of whom escape unnamed in the formal proceedings. The activities of the commissioners, the surveyor, and the principal landowners are, again, placed in context. The parts they played in other enclosures are covered, though, as is inevitable in any local study, these are not always complete. Joseph Boultbee, for example, had already begun his career as a commissioner in Buckinghamshire, prior to his move north to Bunny.

In many ways the most disappointing part of the work is that dealing with the Keyworth enclosure itself. As with

so many enclosures, the surviving documentation is limited and, in attempting to provide a comprehensive picture of the process, the authors have had to proceed by analogy with near-by parishes for which the documentation is more extensive. While this undoubtedly helps to complete and explain matters for the more general reader, it somewhat diminishes its value for those with a special interest in enclosure in all its variety. There is a need to read the text with some care in order to be sure whether one is learning real detail of events in Keyworth, or suppositions based on projections from elsewhere. The calculations of the costs borne by each proprietor, for example, are based entirely upon what happened at East Leake, and may or may not bear much resemblance to what the inhabitants of Keyworth really faced.

This is not to imply that this is in any way a bad book, far from it. The authors could argue, with justification, that if we restricted our studies to those places which had a complete documentation we would have a very thin selection, and almost certainly one which was far from representative. Having made the decision to study one of the less-favoured localities, they had little option but to fill in the gaps with evidence from elsewhere, in order to make the story comprehensible to non-specialist readers, at whom it is primarily aimed. By doing so, they have produced a book which, as John Beckett says in his Foreword, is both scholarly and readable. This is a verdict with which I would concur. It might serve as a very useful model to others contemplating a similar study of their own village elsewhere in England.

J. CHAPMAN

SUSANNA WADE MARTINS AND TOM WILLIAMSON, 'Roots of change. Farming and the landscape in East Anglia, *c.* 1700–1870' (*Agricultural History Review Supplement Series*, 2, 1999). x + 214 pp. 8 tables; 19 figs. £17.50.

Historians of British agriculture were surprised when volume 6 of the *Cambridge Agrarian History* (1750–1850), published in 1989, lacked the regional sections which had featured prominently in volumes 4 and 5 (covering 1500–1750). This seemed particularly unfortunate in the case of East Anglia, the cradle of the agricultural revolution. Lord Ernle, Naomi Riches and R. A. C. Parker had previously studied the region, but much more remained to be done. During the 1990s articles by Bruce Campbell and Mark Overton helped to develop our understanding of the long-term process of change in East Anglia. Wade Martins and Williamson have now produced an excellent account of East Anglian agriculture, which draws heavily on their expertise relating to landscape and to farm buildings.

What was the nature of the agricultural revolution in East Anglia? Wade Martins and Williamson show that perhaps two-thirds of the land area was already technically enclosed in the late seventeenth century, and in stark contrast to today much of the region was under grass, although subsequently the general trend was towards the expansion of tillage at the expense of pasture. Profitable arable production was made possible by marling the lighter, acid soils, by under-draining the claylands, by rationalizing the fields, by improving the grassland, by increasing the size of farms (something like one-third of East Anglia was farmed in units of 300 acres or more by 1850), and by improving and rationalizing farm buildings. The famous 'Norfolk four-course', already well known in the early eighteenth century, was adopted through the region in the years around 1800.

Although by the 1830s East Anglia was predominantly a grain producing area, the widespread use of oil cake, much of it shipped in through Great Yarmouth, enabled farmers to raise their output of meat. Many of their animals went by rail to the London market. Artificial fertilizers were introduced from the 1830s, and machines, particularly threshing machines, were in widespread use by the 1840s. All this cost both landlord and tenant a great deal of money, and investment in drainage, reclamation and buildings, peaked in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. 'There was hardly a farm within East Anglia which was not affected in some way by rebuilding in this period' (p. 147).

Who was responsible for East Anglia's success? Was it the Townshends and Cokes, those great heroes of an earlier generation lionized by Ernle, Naomi Riches and even, to a lesser extent, Chambers and Mingay? Ours is not an age of heroes. Twenty-five years ago Parker toppled Coke from his self-created pedestal, and Wade Martins and Williamson take us in the same direction. Raynham and Holkham did not 'pioneer long leases with detailed husbandry clauses' (p. 186), and in any case leases were not necessarily of great importance in moulding the practices of East Anglian farmers. They were abandoned here in the early nineteenth century just as they were abandoned everywhere else. Nor was land reclamation the panacea usually assumed. Landlords, tenants and labourers all played their part in transforming the region.

What did the transformation amount to? As all agricultural historians are only too well aware, in the absence of annual agricultural returns before the 1860s, there are considerable problems in translating observable changes in practice into yields per acre on the ground. Labour productivity may be, as Wade Martins and Williamson point out, a significant way of measuring change, but the data for testing the assumption is remarkably elusive. Nor do they have much luck with wheat yields. Contemporary

guesses, including those of Arthur Young, are likely to be too generous, but beyond his research there turned out to be 'relatively little evidence which can be used to chart the development of yields' (p. 157). They are forced to rely on 'a scatter of evidence' derived from letters, memoranda books, diaries, and tithe accounts, from which the most they can achieve is not 'the absolute yields', but the relative differences between the different regions of East Anglia. Even then the figures 'pose considerable problems of interpretation' (p. 160), and are 'too few to be treated in a statistically rigorous way' (p. 170). Fair enough, but such disclaimers must raise questions about their claims that post-1840 'the main increases in production were achieved by raising yields per acre' (p. 180). This is, after all, a conclusion about quantification which is supported chiefly by qualitative evidence relating to drainage, external inputs and artificial fertilizers.

East Anglia will forever be associated with the agricultural revolution, but it may never be clear as to entirely why. Wade Martins and Williamson have revisited the evidence and produced a great deal of new material, perhaps most importantly on farm buildings, but they have shifted the goal posts only marginally, arguing that the agricultural revolution was not about a culture of innovation percolating from landowners to farmers and then the rest of the farming community, but the widespread adoption of new techniques by farmers of all kinds. In this respect that have filled a gap, and they have happily questioned old myths (especially those of Ernle) and queried modern assumptions (including those of Overton). They have emphasized the regional variety within East Anglia, and they have tried to locate East Anglia within a shifting agrarian geography. But because it is so difficult to measure the changes which they have documented we still do not really know the precise timing and mechanism for the agricultural revolution in East Anglia – and since this meticulous study has shown us how difficult it is to measure, we may perhaps never know.

J. V. BECKETT

MICHAEL LEEDER, *Fire over East Anglia: Rural Luddism and the lives, times and deaths of George Fortis and Noah Peake of Bressingham* (Mousepress, Peony Cottage, 7 Hunstead Lanes, Brooke, Norwich, NR15 1JP, 1999). viii + 105 pp. 14 figs. £7.50.

A letter written in the condemned cell of Norwich Castle in April 1822 by George Fortis to his wife has been handed down from one generation to the next. Its present custodian, Norfolk-born geologist, Michael Leeder, was so intrigued that he set about trying to reconstruct his family history, particularly that of Fortis, and his neighbour Noah Peake. Both men were executed for their part in an incendiary attack during the troubles of 1822.

This letter is one of five items which make up the 'Fortis file'. The other surviving documents are a letter to his parents, a copy of a hymn sung over his body at his cottage, an account of his final meeting with relatives and a brief biographical sketch of his 'Life and Last Moments'. The language of the letters is both powerful and moving and unusually eloquent. Less surprisingly, they are imbued with deep religious faith which the prospect of execution undoubtedly intensified. The literate and complex tone of the letters may suggest to some that they are not genuine, but given that Fortis came from a family who could read and write and that he reportedly gave a powerful final speech on the scaffold, he was probably not some 'simple' farm labourer. Both he and Peake, as Leeder shows, had lived life to full, fighting in the Peninsular Wars and then later at Waterloo. Their final campaign was the anti-machine riots of south Norfolk. The story of these two men should warn historians against the dangers of generalizing about farm labourers and placing them under the umbrella-term – unskilled labour – and presuming that they rarely set foot outside their parish boundaries. Each worker has a story, and in this case Fortis and Peake have a tragic tale in which Leeder describes how the actual firesetter, a man called Baker, turned king's evidence and thus saved his own neck at the expense of the two others. At no point does Leeder suggest they were entirely innocent; both had been involved in anti-machinery demonstrations and possibly the sending of threatening letters. Peake, moreover, is remembered for his phrase 'by a flash and a scare' when he threatened local farmers. But the author argues that his relative, Fortis, was not in the stackyard when it was fired. This allows him to conclude that his ancestor was 'judicially murdered.'

Fire over East Anglia is an attractively and privately produced book which, it should be emphasized, has been written for the general reader rather than the academic historian and consequently it should not be judged on academic standards. The chapters take the reader through the lifestories of the two main protagonists, the 1822 riots, the actual firing and the subsequent trial, and most intriguingly the detail of the overseer's accounts both before and after the executions. In some ways this short book does attempt to answer Cobb's now famous cry, 'and now to Lower Hardres', when he called for micro-histories to fill in the detail of Hobsbawm and Rudé's *Captain Swing*. However Leeder could have made many improvements in both editing the book and tightening up its structure, punctuation and content. Despite these criticisms his family papers contain a tragic tale worth recounting.

JOHN ARCHER

LÍAM KENNEDY, PAUL S. ELL, E. M. CRAWFORD AND L. A. CLARKSON, *Mapping the Great Irish Famine: a survey of the famine decades* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999). 220 pp. 18 tables; 7 illus; 46 figs; 106 maps. £40 (hbk): £19.95 (pbk).

The richness of nineteenth-century sources covering Irish economic and social history has long been well known and plundered by the profession. Yet it took a group of scholars with a particular kind of vision to mount a research project to bring all of the disparate data together. In today's professional academic world, and in the light of the technological changes that have taken place in computing that vision would not be so daunting. But even as recently as 1990, when the ESRC began funding the project out of which the present volume has emerged, the state-of-the-art technology was much less adaptable. If my own experience on nineteenth-century Ireland is anything to go by, the technological revolution of the 1990s certainly unlocked the treasures of the past with greater speed and ease, but it was always a race against the pressures of redundancy in the available software and hardware. Data entry alone has gone through a revolution, from the initial keyboard entry, to the latest in optical character recognition (scanning in shorthand). The team that produced this volume, seemingly, has coped marvellously well with the adjustments.

The fruits of the original project have been deposited for wider use in the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex. What is presented in this book is an *hors d'oeuvre* to a banquet of data. Given the centrality of the Famine in Irish history it is fitting that this book should be the first output of the project to become more generally available. To call it an atlas would be to mislead, but to call it a research monograph would equally mislead. It contains elements of both – the visual presentation glued together with insight and historical interpretation. The mapping takes place at three spatial levels – the county level, of which there were 32, the barony level, of which there were over 330, and at the level of the poor law unions of which there were about 160. Therefore at times what is produced is a greatly detailed spatial analysis of the changing dimensions of Irish economic and social life across the decade of the Famine (for example across the 1841 and 1851 population censuses at the barony level), and for two decades beyond the Famine at the appropriate level of detail. The subjects covered include demographic indicators, migration statistics, health and nutrition statistics, statistics on the condition of life (the state of housing for example), religion, literacy, the resort to poor relief, income and employment in town and country, the distribution of agricultural holdings, and the main crop and livestock statistics. For agriculture, famously, the Irish data are richer sources than those available for the rest of the UK. The annual June returns which began in 1866 for Great Britain were, in a sense, foreshadowed in Ireland, firstly by the details on agricultural matters contained in the 1841 population census, and secondly by the annual agricultural returns that began in 1847. These data are mapped for the three years 1852 (a year when holdings size categories changed compared with 1847–51), 1861 and 1871. A number of the maps will be familiar to readers of my own work, but let us be honest. Although my maps were constructed by computer, they are now shown up by the greatly enhanced technological improvements developed in the 1990s. In addition, my maps were at the county level only, while many of the ones in this book take the detail down to the poor law union level.

There is a brief genuflection in the short concluding chapter to the great question of whether the Famine was a watershed in Irish history. It is more by way of paying lip service than suggesting that the mapping of the events and the post Famine history provides answers. In truth there is nothing particularly new or startling by way of interpretation in this volume. And neither should we expect there to be because Irish history, based on the same Irish data sources, has been worked over more often than the average cottier's potato plot. Yet the value of this book should not be underestimated. For this reader it lies in the greater clarity and exposition of those data than it does in any new interpretations.

MICHAEL TURNER

DAVID LLEWELYN DAVIES, *Watermill: life story of a Welsh cornmill* (Llangollen: Ceiriog Press, 1997). 192 pp. Illus; maps. £10 incl. p&p.

An uninspired title and a plain dust-jacket may discourage the purchase of a book whose contents give the lie to their austere exterior. There have been various short studies of individual Welsh country mills, published in *Melin*, the journal of the Welsh Mills Society, but this book, twenty times their usual length, sets one such mill in its local contexts – social, economic and agricultural – during its working life, *c.* 1790–1936. All single-mill studies are testimony to their author's affection for their subject, but seldom does that commitment extend to a detailed examination of the characters and countryside, the daily routine and the minutiae of making a livelihood, that distinguished one particular mill. We are not fobbed off here with general statements; rather the author draws from his research an anecdote, a comment or a set of figures that illuminates a point at issue.

Felin Lyn, three miles south of Llangollen in North Wales, was built shortly before 1800, with an overshot waterwheel driving three pairs of stones that ground

flour and feed for the *c.* 550 inhabitants of the Ceiriog valley and their beasts. For part of its life the wheel also powered a sawmill. The author spent his childhood nearby in the 1930s, when the mill was reaching the end of its working life. His family owned the mill from 1905 to 1962, and when it was demolished in 1981 he resolved to perpetuate its memory in print. By then he was living in Canada, so the research had to be conducted over a distance of several thousand miles, much of it through a network of friends and assistants. Weaving all this information into a coherent whole occupied seventeen years, an undertaking that led the jaded author to declare to his readers that this is his 'first and last book'.

The text is divided into five chapters: The Basics, Doing Business, People (and Animals), Inside the Mill and Siprys and Maslin or Miscellany. The first chapter covers familiar territory: site, buildings, history, rents and rates, responsibilities of landlord and tenant. However, David Davies breaks new ground with his detailed examination of the water supply to Felin Lyn – its reliability and volume, the weir and the headrace, the delivery to the wheel – a subject that requires specific research and cautious interpretation. The pattern is set here for the rest of the book: the documentation is both integral to the text and expanded in informative notes at the end of each chapter. These scholarly citations are reassuring when the author poses questions whose answers depend upon both straightforward interpretation of the research and what might be charitably termed 'imaginative leaps', with one or more factors unknown. This approach is apparent in the second chapter, where the author contrasts imaginary scenes at the mill in 1809 and 1909 (p. 48) and refers to a hypothetical account of income and expenditure for 1912. Frustratingly, the author believes that a nineteenth-century ledger from Felin Lyn that would replace guesswork by fact probably still exists, but his best attempts failed to locate it. Hard, recorded fact about the production of individual mills has so often vanished soon after their closure. One justification for this hypothetical method is the desire to stimulate others to investigate unregarded themes, such as the transport of corn and flour, which were features of the rapid decline of British wind and watermills in the years between the wars.

Over 150 years, just two families worked this mill. They are described in the third chapter, as are their customers. The detailed consideration of one mill's potential custom is an unusual and valuable addition to the evidence of its role in the locality. Estimates of local cereal production and numbers of animals requiring feed assist in quantifying the work undertaken there. This matter is continued in the fourth chapter, where the machinery and the milling processes are used as a means of assessing the likely output. Ailments afflicting millers and the routine in the mill are treated, in part on the basis of oral testimony. One of the great strengths of *Watermill* are the revelations by older members of the community, like Mrs Gladys Jones, daughter of the last miller.

The fifth chapter concentrates on cereal farming and markets in this valley. The pages devoted to the evolution of the Ceiriog watermills would have benefited from diagrams. An informative section deals with 'country beer', malt processing by country mills being a hitherto neglected aspect of their activities.

The appendices that round off the book are welcome for their wealth of information on unfamiliar subjects like corn measures, grain types, water-driven machinery in the Ceiriog since 1700, and medieval references to the cultivation and grinding of corn in the area. All the dwellings in the mill's 'territory' in 1851/2, the mill's customers *c.* 1919 and grain prices 1770–1940 are also listed. We also have tax valuations of Felin Lyn in 1838, 1867 and 1916, and running costs *c.* 1870. Such matters are seldom treated in one volume. Instead of the usual glossary of mechanical parts, we are presented with one of cereal terms. David Davies itemizes his sources and includes a bibliography to assist others researching upland mills. The excellent index offers much more than the usual bald alphabetical list of proper names.

This leisurely and wide-ranging treatment of one vanished Welsh country mill is attractively presented, with good maps and other illustrative material. The price is very reasonable. The impressive array of documentation resulting from interviews with local people should add to its appeal to students of oral history. The author's readiness to 'fly kites' in pursuit of a better understanding of issues conveniently dodged in most mill literature makes his book a stimulating one for molinologists. Social historians of Welsh country life will study it with profit. David Davies set out to write about 'what lay behind the loaf on the table' by examining in depth an ordinary and therefore representative mill. His committed research and the individuality of his approach make *Watermill* a refreshing and valuable addition to the literature that links local studies with the wider concerns of economic history.

MICHAEL HARVERSON

ANNA GAMBLES, *Protection and politics: Conservative economic discourse, 1815–1852* (Royal Historical Society / Boydell Press, 1999). xi + 291 pp. £40.

Early nineteenth-century British protectionism has long been misunderstood. Associated with aggrieved farmers and lumbering country gentry, protectionism has been depicted as an ill-informed and aberrant rural movement, imbued with hopelessly retrograde economic and

social ideas. Protectionists were also, it was thought, unlucky in leadership. The obscure Lord George Bentinck was better known for his racehorses than for his parliamentary accomplishments. When Bentinck died, worn out by his effort in mastering trade statistics, naive protectionists fell into the hands of an opportunistic Disraeli who later betrayed them, abandoning their programme in his attempt to gain office.

Anna Gambles quickly dispels these popular myths. By taking protectionism seriously, she demonstrates its appeal to a substantial school of economic thinkers who, if less well known than Smith and Ricardo, were nevertheless influential in their own time. Solidly based upon parliamentary debates, pamphlet literature, and journals of that day as well as current works on economic history, her book is thoroughly persuasive in revealing a considered protectionist discourse. As Gambles clearly demonstrates, protectionism was not merely a quirky rear-guard response to the pressures of a modernizing industrial society: it was a worthy opponent to the dominant free trade orthodoxy.

Like the Conservatives (with whom they were often allied), protectionists were motivated not merely by a narrow economic self-interest. They believed in a grounded human experience; emphasized national sovereignty and self-sufficiency; and were eager to use the state to regulate trade. From protectionist beliefs emerged consistent policies: corn laws which would assure sufficient food for Britain's population and preferential tariffs for colonial agricultural products. Domestic consumer and imperial producers would both benefit. Protectionists warned that throwing open markets to a free trade in corn would have a number of deleterious effects. It would destabilize economic conditions for the working class; deprive Britain of the opportunity to negotiate favourable bilateral trade treaties; and diminish the empire by substituting foreign for imperial corn.

The appeal of protection was not limited to abstruse economic and social theorists. In its most popular form, protectionism was at heart a patriotic principle. By encouraging domestic production in agriculture and manufacturing, protectionism would maintain and extend Britain's economic dominance in Europe and the world at large. More importantly, protectionism would allow Britain to fulfil its imperial destiny. As one protectionist pamphleteer put it, the bonds of empire could be strengthened by uniting different classes and interests 'in mutual consumption' (p. 179).

Gambles' contribution to our understanding of the importance of protectionist sentiment is especially significant in its political dimension. Indeed, without recognizing the importance of protectionism, it is difficult to understand the fortunes of the Conservative party at crucial junctures in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When Sir Robert Peel snubbed protectionism and abolished the corn laws in 1846, he divided and disrupted the Conservatives for two decades. The ensuing Liberal political domination led historians to proclaim the death of protectionism. But it not only survived; it broadened its appeal. At the turn of the century, Joseph Chamberlain joined 'fair trade' provincial businessmen and traditional agricultural protectionists to inaugurate his campaign for tariff reform. Unlike Peel, Chamberlain courted protectionists: but like Peel, he failed, splitting the Conservative and Unionist Party and contributing to its massive defeat in the Liberal landslide of 1906. Perhaps, after all, protectionist leadership has been ill-fated.

In providing an intellectual history of protectionism, Gambles succeeds admirably. She is less clear, however, about the appeal of protectionism to the man in the street or the farmer in the field. Gambles suggests that apart from an inherent appeal to patriotism, popular protectionist sentiment may best be understood within a constitutional framework. That is, a vigorous protectionist agenda would not only alleviate economic depression: it would also dampen social disruption and political turmoil. In short, for the electorate at large, protection could engender stability and an ordered state by providing a mechanism for reconciling economic interests and social classes (as Gambles puts it in an earlier article in *English Historical Rev.* 113 (1998), p. 949). Whether or not the public thought in such subtle terms is difficult to know.

Even if Gambles does not dig deeply into the minds and motivation of the protectionist rank and file, she cannot be readily faulted. After all, her main interest lies in giving protectionism a fair hearing. In this, her arguments are carefully framed and clearly expressed. Adding to her task of making accessible an unduly neglected topic are a thorough index and an informative biographical appendix – many entries of which are now long-forgotten protectionist writers and members of parliament.

TRAVIS L. CROSBY

DOROTHY CALCUTT, *The salt of the earth: the diary of a poor family in Woodstock, 1900* (Charlbury: The Wychwood Press, 1999). x + 109 pp. Illus. £7.50; ERIC R. MOSS, *'Walk humble, my son'. Growing up in Ascott-under-Wychwood, 1918–1939, including My personal memories by Doris May Warner* (The Wychwood Press, 1999). ii + 137 pp. Illus. £8.

The growth in number of small presses over the last fifteen years has been considerable, facilitating the publication of biographical and autobiographical local histories that otherwise would be unlikely, due to their

limited market, to find a publisher. The above two titles both stem from the Wychwood Press, which specializes in works of relevance to the area of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds.

Walk humble, my son is a rich and varied account of life between the wars in the Cotswold village of Ascott-under-Wychwood. There is a wealth of detail packed into the text, ranging from the comparative heights of pre- and post-war radio masts and the organization of shifts in the signal box of the local railway, to the introduction of herbicides and the NHS, suggesting considerable research into both local and wider history in addition to the author's personal remembrances. The resultant, skilful inter-weaving of personal, intimate experiences with wider accounts of village life and the world outside makes this far more than just straight autobiography.

The book is organized not chronologically, but into short, themed sections, their titles largely self-explanatory: 'Power for a pound', 'The village pub', 'Changes at school', etc. The narrative habitually contrasts past with present, and is an often self-conscious examination of change: the disappearance, for better or worse, of the enforced, enclosed intimacy of village-bound social interaction. The author's fondness for the times is evident, evinced for example by discussion of the introduction of oxyacetylene welding to the local blacksmith; but this is explicitly not a romanticised trip down memory lane. Rather, *Walk humble* is a self-reflective, informed and frequently highly critical exploration of dominant themes of the time and place. These themes include the paternalistic power structure of the village, and the minor but heavily symbolic small rebellions against it; the political consciousness of the author's family and fellow villagers; bribery and intimidation at election time; and the tensions between agricultural workers and railwaymen that occasionally erupted into violence. It is all too uncommon to find an account exploring such material in this multi-layered way. As simultaneously biography, history and contemporary sociology, *Walk humble* deserves to find more than the small audience it is likely to receive.

In contrast, *The salt of the earth*, is a far more personal account of life, throughout the year 1900, for a poor family located close to the Blenheim estate, Woodstock. Its strengths lie in the detail it brings out and, associatively, its unsentimental but emotive description, of immediate family life. It starkly portrays an ongoing struggle for simple survival: quiet, life-sapping fights against illness and poverty, including the death of six out of eleven children. With this steady attrition comes occasional glimpses of small but celebrated triumphs: first prize at the flower show; a reward for a successful whelping in the stables of Blenheim palace. Overall however, the story is one where, as the author unsparingly notes, 'Not everyone "lived happily ever after"' (p. 106).

It is pertinent to note, without giving too much away, that a not inconsiderable shock awaits the reader in the author's endnote, in the form of a revelation which forces a wholesale reconsideration of the authenticity of many recounted events. There has been considerable recent discussion regarding what can be considered legitimate strategy on the part of the biographer. Whether or not the device employed here detracts from the worth of what is subtitled the *diary* 'of a poor family in Woodstock' is a judgement that ultimately must remain the prerogative of each reader.

GRAHAM GARDNER

DAVID W. HOWELL AND KENNETH O. MORGAN (eds), *Crime, protest and police in modern British society: essays in memory of David J. V. Jones* (University of Wales Press, 1999). x + 245 pp. 1 illus; 1 map. £35.

David Jones, who died tragically young in 1994, was a historian of Wales, of rural Britain, of crime, and sometimes, as in his work on poaching, Rebecca or rick burning, all three. He brought to his subject the enthusiasm and commitment of the social history inspired by E. P. Thompson, but represented first for him, as for many Welsh historians of his generation, by Gwyn A. Williams and Glanmor Williams. The essays in this collection, produced by friends, students and colleagues of David Jones represent his diversity of research interests, moving from eighteenth-century riot, through crime and justice in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the marches against the means test of the 1930s, and twentieth-century policing.

Every essay in this volume could be read with profit by any historian, and many outside the trade, yet three seem of particular concern to the rural historian: David W. Howell's essay on public disorder in eighteenth century Wales; John Archer's on game-preserving and poaching in nineteenth century Lancashire and, very interestingly Kenneth O. Morgan's on conflict and consensus in modern Welsh history.

Morgan's essay is the product of a lifetime's work on the history of Wales, and although it has little direct reference to the 'rural' it is endlessly enlightening on the debates which have shaped modern Welsh (and indeed British) historiography. Morgan looks at the dichotomy between a Welsh history dominated by conflict, Gwyn A. Williams's 'brutal ruptures', and a more consensual view which sees the history of Wales as 'calm', especially compared with that of Ireland and even perhaps Scotland. In the former view we have the stories of Owain Glyndwr, Iolo Morganwg, Dic Penderyn and the daughters of Rebecca; in the latter that of gradualism, whose

'representative folk symbol is not the nation in arms but the committee man in the council chamber, armed not with an Armalite but with his Bangor or Aberystwyth BA' (pp. 30–1). Morgan places both these histories in the context of Welsh culture and social change, especially in the period of rapid growth in Welsh historical studies since the 1960s, to produce an essay which should serve as an introduction both to recent Welsh scholarship and as an historical background to current Welsh politics, which are never far beneath the essay's surface.

If Morgan's essay addresses the generality of Wales, David Howell's moves to the specific. Working within the paradigm of a generation of historians who have looked at the history of the poor through their conflicts with the law and their betters, he presents a detailed account of the 'problem' of order in eighteenth-century Wales. Through careful use of an impressive range of sources both Welsh and English, Howell charts a Wales which was a 'violent, unsqueamish, brutal society easily given to lawlessness and physical affray' (p. 42). This is an account firmly within Morgan's 'conflict' school of Welsh historiography. We see a society riven with conflict over corn prices, manorial rights, the raising of the militia, wrecking, smuggling and elections. Interestingly Howell also points to the racial undertones of some conflict as when, in 1754, a serious affray took place in Henllan near Denbigh between English and Welsh workers. As was often the case the occasion was a day's drinking at a local wake, but the resentment at is core was the employment of 'strangers' in Denbigh's proto-industrial 'factories'.

As with other writers in this tradition, Howell points to the traditional nature of these disturbances, placing them within a system of 'popular rights sanctioned by custom' (p. 67). The same could not be said, according to John Archer, of the poachers of early nineteenth-century Lancashire. The poacher has been widely seen as the archetypal rural 'social criminal'. Driven by want, a belief in customary rights and even, on occasions, by what Richard Jefferies called 'advanced views upon the rights of labour', he has been fitted into the minor levels of the panoply of social bandits. This indeed was implicit in David Jones's own work on the poacher published in 1979. Against this Archer present a powerful argument that in the rural areas of Lancashire, surrounding the cities of the industrial revolution, the poacher was less a social criminal than an anti-social one. His account of the activities of poaching gangs, based largely in the urban areas, carrying out well ordered raids for profit, and often with considerable violence, is a stark contrast to earlier views of the poacher. Archer suggests, comparing Lancashire with his earlier work on East Anglia, that these gangs maybe regionally distinctive, a product of urbanization and game preserving. However, it is possible to see similar gangs in the south midlands where, in the period from the 1820s until the 1850s, groups from Coventry and Birmingham carried out raids on estates in Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. Yet I do have a problem with this. In the south midlands although there certainly were 'affrays' and criminal gangs, these were hugely swamped in terms of convictions by cases which look much more like the 'social' criminals of earlier work. Perhaps by concentrating on the 'reckless spirit of enterprise' of his essay's title, Archer maybe underplaying the similarities between Lancashire and other counties.

Other essays in the book touch less centrally on the interests of rural and agricultural historians but all are well worth reading. Two essays on 'representing' the policemen and policing by Clive Emsley, comparing the English and continental police and by Peter Stead on dramatizing the police, especially on television, present challenging and eye-opening ideas on an area in which David Jones made important contributions. Owen R. Ashton's essay on the old Cheltenham Chartist and Republican, W. E. Adams, adds to our knowledge of the continuities of British radicalism after 1848; while that by Hugh Dunthorne on the influence of the eighteenth century legal theorist Beccaria opens a new page on the intellectual history of English law. We return to Wales in Neil Evans's careful study of the marches in South Wales against the Means Test in 1934–6.

In her essay in the collection, 'David Jones: an appreciation', Dorothy Thompson, writes, 'the greater understanding of the Welsh quality in popular history has helped to throw light on the nature of other ethnic and regional aspects of British history in the period. David Jones's work has been in the fore both in the delineation of Welsh history and in relating it to that of the rest of the British Isles' (p. 15). This collection reinforces that view and is a fitting memorial to a fine historian.

ALUN HOWKINS

MONA SKEHEL, *Tales from the showyard: two hundred years of agricultural shows in Lincolnshire* (Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, 1999). 152 pp. Illus. £20 (hbk); £12.99 (pbk).

A number of different societies have held agricultural shows in Lincolnshire, beginning with the Lincolnshire Division of the Lindsey Agricultural Society in 1799, and continuing to the present with the (third) Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, whose first show was held at Lincoln in 1869. The show was then itinerant until 1959, since when it has been held at Lincoln. Mona Skehel, whose husband was secretary and chief executive of the LAS for many years, has trawled its archives, and many other

local and national sources, to reconstruct the history of these shows.

The shows have always been concerned with exhibiting farm animals, although the early meetings also offered prizes to farm servants for skill and long service. The initial emphasis on showing animals was followed by a growing interest in farm implements and machinery. In 1821 a premium was offered 'for the best new-invented implement for the purpose of agriculture, taking into consideration the simplicity of construction and smallness of price'. In 1855 the Boston show had a 'vast array of first class agricultural implements amounting to 400 entries that might vie with any local exhibition in the kingdom'. At the Louth show in 1878 there were 111 exhibitors of implements and machines, and 17 drivers of steam engines competed for prizes. The shows were always events which involved the whole town, and shops were frequently decorated elaborately to mark the occasion.

Along the way, there were all sorts of disasters waiting to befall the organizers. The first post-1918 show, at Grimsby, turned in a large loss when, following the payment to the band of the Coldstream Guards, Customs and Excise ruled that the event was an entertainment, not an educational event, and mulcted the Society of the huge sum of £1,374 in Entertainment Tax. At Belton in 1948 the show jumpers threatened to strike, pointing out that the rates of prize money had not been raised since 1914. Flooding was a constant hazard, until the acquisition of a permanent showground at Lincoln in 1962 allowed the Society to provide a properly drained site. Since then the Society has invested much in improving the quality of the site and providing it with necessary permanent buildings. The shows have gone from strength to strength, and now attract upwards of 70,000 visitors. Recent social and recreational changes have meant the offering of a host of entertainments, such as military bands, motor cycle displays, hot air balloons, fly fishing, and food and flower shows, but the main agricultural attractions remain the animals and the machines and implements.

Mona Skehel has written an excellent account of the history, activities and personalities of the Society. In addition, she has trawled the local sources to provide a listing and brief description of the dozens of other societies concerned with agricultural life and work in Lincolnshire over the last two centuries. The many illustrations are excellent, and the book is a contribution to the wider history of English agriculture as well as providing much information on the activities of the LAS and other county societies.

PETER DEWEY

BARRY STAPLETON AND JAMES H. THOMAS, *Gales. A study in brewing, business and family history* (Ashgate, 2000). xvi + 192 pp. 34 tables; 25 figs. £49.95.

Gales of Horndean, situated ten miles north of Portsmouth on the main road to London, is the archetypal small country brewery in every respect save one. It has survived. There are therefore two points of great interest in this account of its first 150 years. The first, more intriguing to the agricultural historian, is the firm's foundation in 1847 and its mounting prosperity in the first half-century of its existence. The second, of greater curiosity to the business historian, is its surprising survival over the past four decades.

No brewery better underlines the multifarious connections between brewing, farming and rural enterprise in the Victorian period than that of Gales. Richard Gale (1802–1886) achieved an early, modest prosperity as a Horndean shopkeeper and baker, corn and coal merchant. By the late 1840s he was on the look-out for further opportunities in the neighbourhood to sustain this prosperity for his four sons. He leased a farm for the eldest and, in 1847, bought the Ship and Bell inn in the village. The youngest son ran it and by the mid-1850s had established a small brewery there. At first its scale must have been no different from that of thousands of other brewing victuallers. From then on its trajectory was classic. Nine public houses had been acquired by 1869; a small steam engine was installed; the 1871 census revealed George Gale employing 20 men and two boys. The 1860s and '70s were immensely favourable ones for brewers, large and small-scale alike. When Gales was incorporated in 1886 it was valued at £100,000. Brewing, so closely allied to farming, was a far more profitable and prestigious occupation. George Gale had latterly made profits averaging £8000 a year. He was a Hampshire magistrate and chairman of the local Board of Poor Law Guardians, enjoying the ministrations of five servants. In 1896, at the outset of the great speculative boom in the brewing industry, he sold the firm for a sum close to its valuation of a decade earlier.

The next sixty years of the firm's history in large degree mirrored those of the brewing industry generally. The new owners, connections by marriage of a Barclay Perkins director and borrowing heavily for their purchase of the brewery, saw dividends slump between 1900 and 1914; the bottling of beer prospered; the firm won notable prizes for their beers at the Brewer's Society Exhibitions; profits rose sharply in the inter-war years; more public houses were acquired (the firm owned 67 and six off-licences in the early 1930s) and a few modernized. But generally the firm rode something of a roller-coaster in these years in spite of largely relying upon its tied trade. Several times there were negotiations

about its sale. They never materialized, but by the late 1950s, when production slumped to an all-time low of an average annual barrelage of 7700, the writing seemed to be on the wall for Gales. How did it survive? We are never convincingly told, at least in a way which reveals the determination of the firm's directors to continue. Stapleton and Thomas suggest its small size was unattractive to predators. But pocket size was no guarantee of survival in the late 1950s and 1960s as brewery companies large and small were acquired by the half-dozen leading firms forcing the pace of overdue modernization in the industry. Certainly, the management picked itself up after a poor showing in the 1950s; the firm diversified and did well, with CAMRA's blessing, in the cask beer trade; more public houses were acquired (the firm owned 116 in 1998); Gales' trading area in the early 1980s did not suffer from the effects of collapse of manufacturing experienced in the midlands and North.

The book is a product of almost twenty years research. The authors' account of the firm, reflecting the survival of its records, deals more fully with the last hundred years of its existence than the first half-century. The latter is painstakingly reconstructed from censuses, newspapers and local records. Their imprint is evident as, when dealing with family bereavements, their account takes on the sepulchral tones of the Victorian provincial press. Moreover, the first two chapters provide a circuitous introduction. The first, a brief outline of the British brewing industry over two centuries, is inevitably little more than a listing of figures and firms. Much of the material is repeated later when the fortunes of the firm are fully discussed in their national context. The second, on Horndean and the Gale family before 1847, might easily have been condensed. In the later chapters they come too close to the firm's record. The figures and facts are revealed and a commendable effort is made to take the history up to the late 1990s. Too often, however, the account is uncritical. Perhaps this is inevitable for the authors have clearly enjoyed the complete confidence of the firm. A few more interviews (only one is mentioned) would have helped to obtain a more rounded view. Nevertheless, this is a serious and sustained academic study in a field where good histories of firms are rare. That it records in detail the history of a small county brewery – of which there were hundreds in the late-nineteenth century – and one which remarkably still exists is especially valuable.

R. G. WILSON

BRIAN SHORT, CHARLES WATKINS, WILLIAM FOOT AND PHIL KINSMAN, *The National Farm Survey, 1941–1943: state surveillance and the countryside in England and Wales in the Second World War* (CABI Publishing, 1999). viii + 262 pp. 25 tables; 30 figs. £37.50.

Academics and civil servants have an insatiable appetite for information. In the 1920s and 1930s they had added a variety of soil, land utilization and farm management surveys to the data produced each year since 1866 by the annual agricultural census, and still they wanted more. The food production campaign at the beginning of the Second World War provided the circumstances they needed. On 6 June 1940 the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries issued a circular initiating a Farm Survey which contained questions on, for example, drainage methods, labour and fertilizer requirements, and accommodation available for members of the Women's Land Army. This was the information they needed to direct the plough-up campaign and allocate feedstuffs and other inputs. A fortnight later the editorial of the *Farmers Weekly* referred in terms of glowing approval to this 'new Domesday of Britain', the data for which was to be collected by the County War Agricultural Executive Committees (in this book shortened to CWAECs, but perhaps more often known as the 'War Ags'). In the event, the survey was carried out to different standards in different counties. Some appear to have submitted no returns at all.

Then in April 1941 the National Farm Survey was instituted. All farms were visited by CWAEC district committee members who completed a Primary Farm Return form, containing details of the tenurial status of the farm, its condition (soil type, convenience of layout, condition of buildings, roads, fences, ditches, drainage, cottages, weed and pest infestation, and so on), availability of water and electricity, and, most controversially, an assessment of the managerial ability of the farmer. The annual agricultural census (the 'June Returns') form for 1941 was accompanied by two supplementary forms, one requiring additional details on horticultural production, and the other further information on labour, tractors and other engines, rent, and length of occupation of the holding. Finally, large-scale maps containing details of the farm boundaries were produced.

All this information was aggregated to produce several reports, both during the war and shortly afterwards. The detailed original material (some of it, and in particular the assessments of managerial ability, of great sensitivity) lay in the Public Record Office, subject to a fifty year closure period until 1992. Its great value, clearly, lies in the survival of forms relating to individual farms, together with the maps produced at the same time. The purpose of this book is two-fold: to set out the provenance of the

material to researchers who may now wish to use it, and to evaluate the survey, both as a source for historians, and in terms of its usefulness to those who initiated it. The agricultural, social, and political context in which it was carried out, the way in which it was organized, and the use made of it by its contemporaries, are described. The authors have assessed the internal consistency of the data, based on a national sample together with more local samples in Sussex and the midlands, from which they conclude that, despite 'substantial' limitations, it provides 'an extraordinary wealth of data which can be used to answer a wide range of research questions' (p. 142). They devote a chapter to examining some of those questions: landownership change, farm size and structure, mechanization, women in farming, the military use of wartime land, and the plough-up campaign. They also discuss other possible uses, such as environmental, local, and family history.

Whether the book effectively establishes the National Farm Survey's place in 'modernist surveillance culture' (p. 232) is debatable: the fascinating opening section on statistics and state control is long enough to whet but too short to satisfy the appetite. The main emphasis is on explaining the provenance and potential uses of the Survey and in assessing its reliability, and in this the book is much more successful. Indeed, it is indispensable for anyone working on the documents. Only the passage of time will reveal whether historians make as much use of them as they have of the tithe surveys, probate inventories, and other sources with local coverage on a national scale. If they do, many will have cause to be grateful to Professor Short and his colleagues in making straight the way for them.

PAUL BRASSLEY

CHARLES PHYTHIAN-ADAMS, MARGERY TRANTER, KEN HAWKER, JOHN ROWLEY AND MIKE THOMPSON, *English local history: the Leicester approach. A departmental bibliography and history, 1948–1998* (Friends of the Department of English Local History, University of Leicester, 1999). xi +235 pp. £11.50 incl. p&p.

This publication marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Department of English Local History at Leicester University. It lists some three thousand items published by those still or once attached to the Department. The wide scope of the Department's work is clear at every point. The nine sections of the bibliography cover the discipline: scope, methodologies and publishing; landscape and buildings; society and economy; population, family and kinship; culture; local history and museums; beyond England and Wales; miscellaneous; and reviews. Entries in these sections are indexed by author's name, county and place.

The bibliography reflects a formidable achievement, but it is from Charles Phythian-Adams' introduction that the wider influence of the 'Leicester School' emerges fully. His account of the 'golden period' of 1948–1965 conveys the vigour of the founding figures. 'Leicester caught a wave' with 'a zest for the visual exploration of England's history', and an appreciation of 'the continuous evolution of the countryside'. Hoskins, Simmons, Finberg, Thirsk and Everitt defined the Leicester approach, and did so in a way where the best of scholarship was communicated in a popular way to a general public. The outcomes were many, including the 'modern analytical development of the VCH', Finberg's founding of the journal in which this review appears, and the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume IV, which Phythian-Adams judges 'the single most seminal contribution to English Local History this century'.

The subsequent history of the Leicester department has been governed by a different context. Bureaucratic and funding pressures, familiar to those in English higher education, have sometimes made it difficult to maintain momentum. The remorseless trend to increasing academic specialization and the growth of institutionalized local history elsewhere have meant less room for Hoskins' 'general practitioner' approach to the subject, where a holistic local history was the aim. There has been an enforced withdrawal from many of Leicester's more popular activities.

Despite some vicissitudes there is an immense amount to celebrate on Leicester's anniversary. The growth of local history in museums, the many innovatory areas of study, including buildings, surnames, ritual calendars, church dedications, patterns of religious allegiance, and the 'identification of spatial arenas in which social, economic and cultural interaction should be most meaningfully understood' are all areas of local historical enquiry in which Leicester has played a leading role. Charles Phythian-Adams concludes that 'English Local History may at last be seen to have gradually developed over the last half century into a fully-fledged academic subject in its own right and within its own terms of reference', a claim which it is hoped time will prove justified. If so, then the Department for English Local History at Leicester will have played a central role in the achievement, as the pages of this bibliography demonstrate.

KATE TILLER

Elsewhere and General

PAUL FREEDMAN, *Images of the medieval peasant* (Stanford UP, 1999). xix + 459 pp. 14 illus. £37.50 (hbk); £13.95 (pbk).

Books on the medieval peasantry are nowadays two-a-penny. Yet comparative analysis of peasantries, and their image in their own and others' eyes, is still rare. It is a measure of the quality of Paul Freedman's study that it not only surveys a vast body of material – drawn principally from Iberia, France, England, Germany, and Hungary – between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, but that it also identifies how discourse on peasantries reveals both similarities and differences across what otherwise might be taken as emergent national or territorial frontiers. One example: the spread of literature depicting (or caricaturing) peasants as sots, dolts, or louts ('grobianism') flourished from the sixteenth century onwards in Germany and the Netherlands, as well as Spain, but not, it seems, in France. Freedman's point, however, is not merely that there are few 'national' stereotypes, but that chronological shifts in the perception of peasants (especially after the Black Death) are much less significant than the persistence of negative and positive images side-by-side and in apparent contradiction to each other: the peasant as a beast of burden, relegated on account of his lack of reason, alongside the peasant sanctified by his toil, without which society could not be sustained. Or (to continue the contrast): the peasant whose bravery can achieve liberty (the heroic Swiss), opposed to the rustic who will be rewarded in heaven for quiescent suffering on earth. Freedman's essential – and convincing - argument is that these simultaneous juxtapositions are only superficially contradictions, for ambivalence towards peasants and peasant labour was immanent in their function within a society of orders or estates. Indeed, he offers an effective critique of Duby's view of the Three Orders, which had argued that clerical criticism of peasants must always be self-serving and insincere. In a word, Freedman believes that medieval peasants, to borrow a phrase of Martin Luther's, were 'simul justus et peccator'.

This view presupposes, however, a definition of peasants as primarily cultivators, tillers of the soil. Freedman is well aware of the story of Cain and Abel, the evil grower of crops who slays the virtuous shepherd, and indeed the presence of shepherds and fishermen among Christ's apostles makes the search for a single category of peasant baseness that much harder. Can it be accidental that those peasants who most successfully struggled for freedom in the Middle Ages, namely the Swiss, were primarily pastoralists, not husbandmen? Here the omission of any discussion of Scandinavian peasantries uncomfortably obtrudes. Freedman is most secure on the Mediterranean sources, which he knows best, though he gives a first-class account of the genuinely eccentric rising of the Hungarian peasantry in 1514 under György Dósza, clad in the mantle of a crusade and fired by Franciscan preaching. His touch is less assured when it comes to Germany. West German peasants had traditionally indeed been entitled to bear arms; the example of Wilhelm Tell was not invoked by the pilgrims to Niklashausen in 1476, or by the adherents of the later Bundschuh conspiracies on the Upper Rhine (though the slogan of Swiss liberty was heard in the latter); and Thomas Müntzer's theatre of action was Thuringia, not Franconia. Moreover, despite healthy scepticism towards some of Steven Justice's wilder assertions on the English Peasants' Revolt, Freedman seems willing to accept his interpretation that the peasants of the abbey of St Albans broke and distributed mill-stones from the abbot's mill in a conscious imitation of breaking bread in the Eucharist, even though this flight of fancy has been snortingly dismissed by Rosamond Faith.

These cavils should not be allowed to detract from Freedman's masterly achievement, which offers far more than a synthesis. There is much insight and originality within its pages, couched in tones of elegant restraint. Not only medievalists would profit greatly from reflecting on its findings.

TOM SCOTT

KARL GUNNAR PERSSON, *Grain markets in Europe, 1500–1900: integration and deregulation* (CUP, 1999). xx + 173 pp. 18 tables; 31 figs. £35.

The title of Professor Persson's original and useful book is misleading. Unlike most works on the subject, it does not study the politics and institutions of the European grain trade, but deploys modern econometrics to ferret out information from long runs of monthly price observations about the pace of European market integration. The main thesis is that regionally-integrated grain markets could substitute for traditional state-imposed price controls, because pooling independent (positive and negative) harvest shocks from districts connected by a single market dampened the price volatility that price controls were intended to limit. Deregulation therefore became politically more palatable as markets became more integrated, or to put it in the economist's way of speaking, as markets became more efficient, it became socially efficient to deregulate them.

The argument is laid out in six short chapters. The first reviews the eighteenth-century debate on deregulation, with special emphasis on the physiocratic argument that the reduction in price volatility from market integration raised returns to agricultural investment and thus

led to an increased supply in the long run. Chapter two analyzes the welfare effects of price instability, arguing that the poor suffered most from it, and that the short-term deprivation experienced during periods of high prices had long-run effects. It follows that the reduction in the volatility of grain prices resulting from free trade should have made a significant contribution to the standard of living. Chapter three argues from the positive serial correlation in monthly prices that short-term price fluctuations were not eliminated by storing grain from one month to the next. If storage strategies had been truly efficient, only random effects would influence the short-term evolution of prices. Chapter four pursues this line of argument by showing that holding grain for more than one year was also ineffective in stabilizing prices because in general speculative storage was not profitable. This may be considered a 'market failure' to which government regulation and the constitution of public granaries were the response. Chapter five demonstrates econometrically the decline in price variability and the growth in market integration from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Chapter six argues that the increased price stability resulting from market integration was the proximate cause of the free trade movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

This is a work in econometric history, and as such is carried out at a high level of abstraction. It employs comparatively recent innovations in econometric technique to exploit somewhat less recent compilations of monthly (and sometimes intra-monthly) price observations. High-frequency time series econometrics is a specialized sub-discipline of economics whose high level of technical difficulty makes it tough sledding for untrained readers. Professor Persson explains the techniques clearly enough for a resolute layman to follow both the argument and its empirical demonstration. One is nevertheless left with the impression that steam hammers are being used to drive thumbtacks. It is hardly news that price volatility declined in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and that the international grain market was becoming more integrated. This was established long ago by crude, but nevertheless adequate correlations and moving averages. By contrast, the central hypothesis that policies leading to freer trade in grain were encouraged by growing market integration is plausible, but can only be demonstrated by a detailed historical analysis of the politics.

Perhaps the greatest lack in a study that purports to be about the evolution of the European grain trade is the absence of any discussion of the evolution of its industrial organization. Markets became more integrated between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century, but we are not told precisely how this happened. To say that it was due to falling transport costs and improved flows of information is not to say very much unless these processes can be described and analyzed in the concrete rather than in the abstract. A study of the behaviour of prices treats market outcomes but not the economic processes giving rise to them. It would be useful, for example, to know whether it made any difference to the intra-annual distribution of prices that most harvested grain in northern Europe was stored in the sheaf in farmers' barns, where it could be readied for the market only as fast as it could be threshed with the labour force on hand. One would also like to know what were the economies of scale in storage and transport that limited or encouraged market integration, and whether the growth of large cities and urbanized regions had any effect on the evolution of the grain market. These questions are not easily resolved using the techniques of time-series econometrics, which have been designed chiefly to address the question whether short-term price movements can be predicted, an issue of greater importance to financial and macroeconomists than to historians.

The main contribution of Professor Persson's exercises is to validate the belief that price volatility in the market for subsistence foodstuffs declined dramatically between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century, and to show by argument, if not by empirical demonstration, that this decline probably had large positive effects on the standard of living. Further study may reveal that the reduction in the variance of grain prices was one of the factors responsible for the decline in death rates prior to the industrial revolution. The major obstacle to pursuing this line of enquiry is the scarcity of high-frequency price data. This is an imaginative and provocative book whose many hypotheses warrant reflection and further research. Whether it represents a new route to wisdom or a blind alley will only be known when this reflection and research are carried out.

GEORGE GRANTHAM

FRANCIS BRUMONT, *Madiran et Saint-Mont: histoire et devenir des vignobles* (Biarritz: Atlantica, 1999). 359 pp. 48 tables; 65 figs; 31 maps. FFr150.

History is all too often 'grand history'. The rhythms of the everyday, and the lives of the majority are thus frequently sacrificed in historical accounts which focus on the rich and the famous. In this sensitively written and fascinating account, Francis Brumont reminds us of the crucial importance that 'little history' should play in helping us to gain a balanced understanding of past places. He does this, not by focusing on the great names of wine history, such as Bordeaux or Burgundy, but instead on the little known vineyards of Madiran and Saint-Mont in the south-west of France. Interestingly too he

stresses that most histories of viticulture have focused very largely on wines and vines, ignoring the human world of the vignerons (which I like to translate as 'wine growers' to reflect their intimate combination of both grape growing and wine making). Although focusing on economic history, Brumont is thus careful wherever possible to provide us with insights into the social life of the rural world in which these wine growers lived.

The book is divided into two parts, like the history of France itself, of which it is indeed a microcosm, the first focusing on traditional wine growing before the Revolution, and the second addressing changes that have occurred over the last two centuries. In Chapter One Brumont sets the scene through a brief account of the geography and history of the region, before he focuses in more depth on the land and the evolution of property rights in Chapter Two. The next two chapters provide a wide ranging examination of the vineyards of the region between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, detailing, for example, the various cultivation systems used, the types of vine grown, and labour in the vineyard, and then paying specific attention to the geographical variation in vineyard size and type within Madiran and Saint-Mont. The remaining chapters of Part One concentrate on the commercialization of the region's wines, noting that while some wines were exported, the vast majority were sold to the Pyrenees. For Brumont, this culminated in a crisis during the eighteenth century, resulting from the existence of two worlds of grape growing and wine making, the one focusing on quality wine for export, and the other on mass wines for the local market. The second half of the book examines in turn the expansion of grape growing up to the arrival of oïdium and phylloxera in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the marketing of wine during the nineteenth century, the life of the inhabitants of Madiran during the twentieth century, and the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the VDQS appellation 'Côtes de Saint Mont' in 1981.

What Brumont has given us is a fascinating account of the economic history of a region of France in which, during the nineteenth century, wine making took on a primordial role in peasant life, providing most of their income through exports to the Pyrenees. In so doing, he seeks to dispel many myths, both local and also more widespread concerning the history and geography of wine, supporting his arguments with detailed empirical evidence drawn from his extensive archival research. Throughout, the book is infused with his clear love for the region and its wines, and it thus makes an excellent read for anyone interested in French rural society.

TIM UNWIN

DAVID LUDDEN, *An agrarian history of South Asia* (New Cambridge History of India, IV (4); CUP 1999). xiii + 261 pp. £40.

Two caveats may be made about this interesting and worthwhile book, especially for readers of this journal. Firstly, it appears under a series sub-heading, 'The evolution of contemporary South Asia'. But, as one might expect from the author of *Peasant history in South India* (Princeton 1985), it takes a very long view of 'evolution', reaching back to 7500 BC. It leads to some hypotheses about the present-day but provides little coverage of 'contemporary' (that is, recent) South Asia. (As some other Cambridge History volumes have also paid scant regard to the sectional divisions, it is hard to see what purpose these serve). The ostensible justification for the focus of this book is that agricultural landscapes emerge over 'very long periods of time' (p. 19). This justifies, apparently, not only the overall bias of the work towards earlier periods, but also its rather disconcerting use of the continuous present for many of its ecological and geographical descriptions, and its bold claims about (for example) the striking political continuities from the Guptas to the Mughals, or the linkage of recent patterns of kinship to socio-political differences more than a century ago.

Secondly, Ludden's book says remarkably little about agriculture. It begins with two propositions that are worthy of debate rather than axiomatic: that agrarian history has been pushed to the margins by histories of nations and states, and that, in fact, though connected to state structures, it was 'embedded' in the everyday life of agricultural communities which was transformed primarily through 'the activity of farming itself' (pp. 1–3, 6–7 and 18–19). This raises two expectations – that this book will be a history from below, as indeed is explicitly promised, and that it will be much concerned with the daily and seasonal grind of sowing, harvesting, consuming and selling. Despite such preliminaries, however, this is agrarian history mainly concerned with politics and society rather than with the economics of production and exchange. The book is an accomplished transfer on to a broader stage of the insights provided by Ludden's *Peasant history* into the relationships between land control and socio-political structures (kinship, patriarchy, temple, king, state; ritual, myth, law; and so on). Its real subjects are revealed not so much in its enigmatic chapter headings (which conceal rather than explain the text's overlapping, sometimes discursive organization), but in some of the headings of its useful bibliography; namely: 'intellectual history', 'long-term history', 'early modern themes', 'modern issues'. This limitation of the subject has two unanticipated consequences: little consideration of broader economic and non-political forces, and few de-

tails about daily life in field and market-place. Further it follows that some generalizations and conclusions may be open to qualification.

Significantly, in Chapter One, agrarian developments are first discussed historically in regard to data and texts, and in Chapter Two in relation to the rise of Brahmanism and of warrior castes, rather than to the ostensible subject, the 'expansion of agrarian territory' through substantive changes in settlement, irrigation and cultivation. In Chapter Three a further evolution is described, but its origins are scarcely considered and the discussion quickly returns to taxation, social typologies and property, and then to agrarian resistance. Then, after a glance at commodity production and investment, and a quick denial of the role of either technology or demography (despite land competition and commercial opportunities), change is again defined as a transformation of agrarian 'territoriality' – that is, it is attributed to states, elites, and local responses to their demands. Chapter Four, similarly, deals with the modern implication of rural South Asia with centralized colonial and post-colonial administration, as well as with the emergence of capitalist farming; it emphasizes estate and village power, state attempts at economic development, rural resistance, political mobilization, and terminological changes.

Arguably, the largest events of modern times for the South Asian countryside follow the dictionary definition of 'agrarian' in relating to both property *and* cultivation: they are the gradual establishment of standardized property rights in land, and the expansion of commercial cultivation under the influence of long-distance trade. Only the first of these is really discussed here. The book includes a short exposition of colonial revenue policy – as good as one could hope for (pp. 156–66) – and some useful accounts of the nineteenth-century separation and enclosures of land, and of some entrepreneurial landholders' recent success, and their dependants' sufferings. But there is not even an entry for 'trade' in the book's index. Very little is said about changing patterns of production, demand and consumption. Bengal's temporary domination of world jute-growing, to take one example, is considered almost wholly in terms of its impact on agrarian relations (pp. 213–4). Readers will find little here about the nature and means of that expansion.

Nor, more generally, will they find distinctions between crops, or details about the changes in cropping and marketing patterns over the last two or three centuries. Instead there are some few crucial but unsubstantiated generalizations, such as: 'market crops ... are much more labour intensive than subsistence crops, especially millet, which they steadily displaced during the expansion of commercial farming' (p. 207). By contrast, even Shahid Amin's study (*Sugarcane and sugar in Gorakhpur*, Delhi, 1984, p. 115) notes the continuing preponderance of food-crop production, and suggests only 'some substitution' of labour-intensive sugarcane for inferior food crops. By Amin's own figures, which do not quite add up, Gorakhpur's five-year averages of acreage under sugarcane increased markedly between 1911–16 and 1936–41 (by 88 per cent, from 4.3 to 7.9 per cent of the total cropped area), but the average acreage for 'other food crops', including millets, also increased by just under 10 per cent, or from 20 to 22 per cent of the total. (Average acreages for all food crops decreased by just under 3 per cent, from 90 to 85 per cent of the total cropped area, but the reduction was chiefly in barley, maize and gram. The wheat acreage increased. Double-cropping increased by only 4.3 per cent, and total cropped area by 2.3 per cent, but, in terms of acres, the latter increase was equivalent to more than two-thirds of the increase for sugar). Moreover, the labour, water and capital demands of different crops may be very different, whether or not they are intended for the market. And 'commercial' farming not only took varied forms but is a concept demanding to be unpicked, as I among many others have argued (see *Economic History Rev.* 45 1992). A similar view is taken by Ludden when he describes a symbiosis between capitalist agriculture and the subsistence strategies of some semi-landless agricultural labourers.

Ludden's socio-political story is an important one. Much of it will command agreement among specialists. Particularly valuable are his delineations of the regional 'types' of South Asian agrarian society, a major theme throughout the book. Despite the virtues of this study, however, there is room for further works of synthesis that will pay more attention to recent South Asian history and to the details of agricultural production and consumption.

PETER ROBB

MARK RAVINA, *Land and lordship in early modern Japan* (Stanford UP, 1999). 6 tables; 14 figs; 7 maps. £27.50.

In this work Mark Ravina diversifies our standard understanding of Tokugawa Japan by exploring how three daimyo domains adapted their policies in the eighteenth century in response to a number of partly interlocking pressures (demographic realities, financial stress, economic output, protoindustrialization, and shogunal authority) that affected their political economies. They were large 'province-size' domains with various commoner-samurai population ratios that affected the tribute burden shouldered by the commoners. Hirosaki, located in the far north, with a large samurai population and an underdeveloped economy resorted to resettling samurai from the castle town, where they were supposed to reside, into the countryside in order to lessen the finan-

cial strain on the domain budget. (In passing Ravina surprises one with the startling fact that domains maintaining landed fiefs comprised half the territory of Japan by the late seventeenth century – p. 64.) This resettling of the samurai was thus not a survival of medieval practice, or some ideologically driven measure to reform feudal relationships (as Ogyu Sorai was envisioning in the early seventeenth century) but an early modern response to financial stress.

Tokushima domain, on Shikoku island, presents a totally different picture. This domain with a small samurai population developed a highly commercialized economy centred on indigo exports. Typical of large domains engaged in running domain monopolies – 75 per cent of them administered such monopolies from economic development offices after 1830 – Tokushima intervened early on (1673) in quality control of its indigo exports, regulating production methods in order to protect its market. In the eighteenth century it fought oligopsonies by establishing counter-cartels against cartels of urban dyers and dye wholesalers from Osaka and Edo in order to maintain high prices for its products.

Yonezawa in the near north has long been famous in Japan for the model rule of an exemplary daimyo, Uesugi Harunori (1751–1822), whose policies Ravina discusses in detail. Yonezawa was a domain with a large samurai surplus population. Harunori experimented with a domain monopsony in lacquer production, promoted sericulture and put his samurai population to work in the weaving of linen-silk blend textiles, a regional speciality. Harunori demanded quality production from his samurai as a form of loyal service.

The economic experiments in these three domains were often accompanied by fierce political struggles, including an assassination in one case. Ravina introduces some of these as well as local intellectuals, such as Nyui Mitsugi (1712–92) from Hirosaki, who developed detailed proposal for reforms.

A major theme in this study is a re-examination of the political balance between domain autonomy and shogunal authority. Relying on Mizubayashi Takeshi's term of 'compound state', Ravina emphasizes the degree to which Tokugawa Japan was a conglomeration of fairly autonomous states. Much of this part of the book retreads very familiar ground and re-examines yet once more the question of the 'modern' character of early modern Japan. Even the distinctions between the various aspects of daimyo authority (feudal, patrimonial and suzerain) and the discussion of the multiple possible connotations of terms like 'kuni' ('land, country, domain') or 'kokka' ('house, domain, nation') have not produced, at least for this reviewer, new insights into the political landscape of Tokugawa Japan. On the other hand, Ravina's closing argument that reconceptualizes the birth of Japan's modern nation-state not as a natural development out of a Tokugawa proto-form of it, but as a reactionary formation triggered by Japan's confrontation not simply with 'the West' but with a novel form of polity, namely the modern nation-state is very interesting. As Bob Wakabayashi has shown (*Anti-foreignism and western learning in early modern Japan*, 1986), Aizawa Seishisai's construction of the notion of 'kokutai' (national body politic) in 1825 was an attempt to adapt what he had learned about the West's formula for national power to Japan. Ravina lends support from a political economy point of view to Wakabayashi's argument in the field of intellectual history.

Other scholars like Philip Brown, Luke Roberts and David Howell have studied particular domains (Kaga, Tosa, and the Hokkaido region). Ravina's research is a most welcome addition to these monographs which together constitute the emerging field of regional studies of the political economy, mercantilism, and protoindustrial developments in early modern Japan.

HERMAN OOMS

THOMAS R. DUNLAP, *Nature and the English diaspora: environment and history in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand* (CUP, 1999). xv + 350 pp. 13 figs. £35 (hbk); £12.95 (pbk).

'Comparative' lines continue to provide stimulus and direction in highly successful university courses, and it is well recognized that they foment invaluable scholarly interaction. In some circles, however, the production of book-length comparative studies has been considered 'courageous', where the notion may be that an envied guarantee of wide readership brings commensurate exposure, heightened vulnerability and so on. That is an unfortunate attitude, given the proven capacity of such approaches to interrogate, situate and extend current understandings won from narrower sourcings. *Nature and the English diaspora* certainly deserves to be seen in more generous light.

Dunlap's repertoire already includes some 'applied' historical scholarship, notably on DDT and American wildlife policies. Quests for professional adaptability may cut corners, but at minimum teachers and students alike usually benefit from the packaging of scattered information. *Nature and the English diaspora* offers more of the same in effort, style and purpose. North American readers will have to forgive its title – more often seen in the text as less prescriptive Anglo, 'English' is only intended to signal an important but non-exclusive degree of cultural commonality – and Canadians and New Zealanders will baulk at the relatively thin coverage of their respective countries. The traverse encounters changing ver-

nacular and scientific characterizations of the natural environment over the past two centuries, seen against a background of settlement expansion, appraisals of environmental limitations and the influence of diversely aroused ecological consciousness. Towards the end of the journey, 'settlers' whose forebears were 'invaders' seem to be glimpsing a chance to become 'inhabitants' – in each country a protracted coming-to-terms had shown that enduring relationships with nature required a vastly improved sense of reciprocity.

This challenging sketch is based on three overlapping chronological sections. The first, 'Making the Land Familiar', focuses on the role of natural history. That influential preoccupation is suggested to have sharpened the immigrants' resource appraisals, assisting them to connect their peripheral economies more intimately with those of the metropolitan hearth; but it is also noted that the ambiguities of acclimatization and hunting incorporated braking continuities. 'Beyond Conquest' concentrates on the period 1850–1930. It scrutinizes the maintenance of simple frontiering and the rise of the first acknowledged types of conservationism, the harnessing of 'native nature' for national identity, and the development of formal or institutionalized science and concomitant 'expertise'. 'Finding Firm Ground' covers developments between 1920 and 1950. Renewed debates on the positing of human dominion over Nature took optimistic and pessimistic turns in the 1920s and 1930s: before and after World War Two, intensifying scientific and cultural re-evaluations of natural systems included an emergent ecological perspective on environmental management. The final section, 'New Knowledge, New Nature' addresses the growth of modern environmentalism and its multi-faceted relationship with ecological thought. It proposes that the union of knowledge and concern may build a new foundation.

The touch seems surest in the United States encounters and less convincing elsewhere, notwithstanding an unmistakable but as yet unconsummated infatuation with most things Australian. And the occasional gaffe should not have missed editorial sieves – if New Zealanders can complain of a loss of islands, we Australians are entitled to demand the return of a fifth or so of our national population (both on p. 13, much too early for comfort). Similarly, privileged socio-cultural contexts lose clout when so thinly buttressed with interpretative accounts from art and literature; furthermore, each section avoids or misses critical inter-country differences – especially in administrative, economic and political circumstances. Recourse to orthodox refereeing should have left better armouring. Viewed entirely in marketing terms, the clear and growing demand for such brave overviews is perhaps sufficient to over-ride some faults of omission. Even so, the favoured cultural designation disappoints. Timely panoramic surveys never fail to advance the comparative line, but other points of entry may do more for intellectual sustainability. Above all, the interlinked imperatives of economic development and resource appraisal proclaim themselves at every juncture. Why so much on acclimatization and hunting; why so little on the equally complex account of environmental learning and adaptation associated with the development imperative, and hence with the stories of commercial stock breeding, the introduction of new grains and grasses, innovations in soil science, and so on? There are indeed so many options, each of them justifying one or more sizeable survey volumes, whether single- or multiple-authored.

An epilogue, 'The Upshot', injects some late-retrieved restraint and an earnest recall of regional differentiation. But in truth, neither that nor the larger concerns noted here persuade me to resile from welcoming Tom Dunlap's highly accessible overview. The hat is in the ring. Fellow-travellers are now obliged to include *Nature and the English diaspora* in their reckonings for teaching and research. Until other authors deign to show their hands, this book's audacious readability will command no less attention than its obvious relevance to one of the most recently transformed sectors of our shrinking world.

J. M. POWELL

Conference Report: The Society's Spring Conference 2000

by Peter Dewey

The Society's annual Spring Conference was held from 10–12 April at Bretton Hall, a college of the University of Leeds. A total of 51 participants (43 of them in residence) gathered for the stimulating fare which the conference invariably provides.

The first paper, given on the afternoon of arrival, was by Dr. David Brown, on 'New men of wealth and the purchase of land in the United Kingdom, 1780–1880'. This was an old subject given a new impetus. By the use of printed sources, especially the *Return of Owners of Land of 1873*, it was shown that between these dates it was possible to identify 1,435 new wealth buyers, each purchasing an estate of at least 1,000 acres – a turnover of about 20 per cent in the 100 years. The research showed that there was a sufficiency of purchasers to sustain the contemporary belief that Britain had an open elite.

The same evening saw the presentation of a paper by Prof. John Chartres on 'Eighteenth-century distilling, drink, and agriculture.' This explored the interrelationships between the drink trades and farming in the mid-eighteenth century. At that time, the trade probably used the produce of some 130,000 acres of farmland, devoted to growing barley and malt, and providing a useful demand for farmers. However, the distillers' demands represented a diminishing part of the whole market, so it could not be said that the trade was depriving the poor of their bread, as hostile contemporary pamphleteers alleged. But there may have been more truth in the allegations by pig breeders that the trade was depriving them of their pig feed, since a large part of the distillers' and brewers' waste was fed to their own herds, providing competition for farmers in the bacon market.

The first paper on the second day was by John Letts, an agricultural botanist of Reading University, who provided a fascinating account of how medieval thatched roofs can survive, and how this aids our understanding of medieval farming. In medieval Britain (or at least Devon, where most of the evidence came from), thatched roofs were replaced by adding successive layers of straw, without stripping out the previous covering. The underlying layers of straw, with their attached grains (carbonised by the house fires when the house was still of the hall type) could be carbon dated. Medieval wheats tended to have small ears, but long stems (sometimes 6 feet high overall), and were cut high in the stem, providing long straw as an important by-product for fuel and thatching. The finds also included legume straw, and even the peas from the Frobisher expedition in Elizabethan times. The finds were now providing the basis for experimental cereal growing at Reading University, in order to investigate the evolution of cereal varieties over time.

Following coffee, there was a Symposium on *Women in Agriculture*, with papers by Dr. Nicola Verdon, Anne Meredith, and Dr Jane Whittle. Nicola Verdon explored the employment of women in nineteenth-century Britain, and emphasised the need to consider informal as well as formal patterns of womens' work. While womens' regular day labour did decline during the century, there was evidence that they were employed on a variety of piece-work tasks, and that these constituted a useful, although so far largely undocumented source of household income. The paper raised a variety of questions on the degree to which women's work remained widespread, the financial rewards to men and women, and the degree to which the sexual division of labour developed or changed as the century progressed.

Anne Meredith, in discussing the provision of training for women in horticulture, dairying and poultry-keeping from 1890 to 1939, pointed out the growing variety of training possibilities for women in this period, especially in horticulture, which had traditionally been a male preserve. There were colleges supported by government, private agricultural colleges (such as Aldersley Hall, Cheshire), and a pupil system. In horticulture, where training lasted at least two years, students could take a London External degree, or a Royal Horticultural Society qualification. In dairying, more work would be necessary to establish how gender boundaries operated.

Jane Whittle discussed the role of women in the production and marketing of the basic food stuffs of bread, cheese and ale in early modern rural England, deriving from her work on probate inventories. These showed dairy equipment to be more commonly found than that for brewing or baking, but in many cases the peasant household would be too poor to engage in any of these activities. There was better evidence in the case of ale, and it was probable that before the Black Death the majority of brewers were women, although thereafter the trade moved away from the household, became more concentrated regionally, and also more of a male province. This might have been the common experience in each of these trades, although further work would be necessary to investigate this.

Following lunch, there was a walking excursion to explore the extensive park (260 acres) of Bretton Hall, led by Cyril Pearce, a member of the academic staff of the college, and historian of the college and park, who provided an erudite commentary, along with an excellent printed guide to accompany the tour. The estate, which at one time had been in the Wentworth family for almost 400 years, yields copious evidence of grand-scale landscape planning (including two large lakes, formed by damming the River Dearne, and reputedly the remains of a wild animal zoo on one of the islands). The house and grounds stood as an impressive monument to the great age of landownership and servant-keeping (33 of them in 1829).

In the later afternoon, Dr. Simon Davis, of the Portuguese Institute of Archaeology, gave a fascinating paper on the application of zoo-archaeological evidence, and its application to agricultural history. By the use of bone measurements derived from archaeological sites over many centuries, suggestions could be made as to when sheep and cattle increased in size. Although there was evidence from a wide area of England, much of the best evidence came from the site of Launceston Castle, in Cornwall. It could be deduced that the rise in cattle and sheep sizes preceded the traditionally-dated Agricultural Revolution by several centuries, and pointed unmistakably to an increase in the size of cattle and sheep between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus the improvement in animal husbandry should be viewed as a long-term and gradual development originating in the fifteenth century, rather than a evolutionary one which occurred some time after 1760. This was followed by a reception, and the annual dinner of the Society.

On Wednesday, following the AGM of the Society, Prof. Richard Britnell spoke on 'Fields and Moorlands in County Durham before the Black Death.' His talk drew on research on the many (*c.* 1400) extant charters, which describe field and farm boundaries, chiefly the 550 or so lay and ecclesiastical charters for the upland parish of Haswell, which had a population of *c.* 2,000 in the thirteenth century. It was evident that independent farms were being created on the moorland outside the boundaries of vills probably by way of episcopal grants to the bishop's servants. Bishops were able also to dispose of common rights as part of the grants. The charters even allowed individual pieces of pasture to be identified. The field systems could be identified also, the most usual format being runrig. Altogether it was an impressive demonstration of what could be achieved by a careful reading of the charters, in conjunction with a knowledge of the landscape itself.

The final paper given by David Stead was entitled: 'The business of farming, *c.* 1700–1850'. This was a questioning of how far one could measure the rise in productivity brought about by the Agricultural Revolution by looking at rises in the real level of farm rentals. That the one should be implied by the other was implicit in the economic theory of real rent. However, the theory may be a poor guide to the history. The market for farms was fairly uncompetitive, since it depended on enough applicants having the necessary experience and capital, and the adjustment mechanism for rents was too sticky and erratic to make rents reflect changes in farm productivity with the necessary accuracy. There was no guarantee that real rent was an accurate reflection of the productivity of farm land to the tenant.

The conference closed after lunch on Wednesday 12 April, with thanks expressed to the organisers of the conference (Prof. Chartres and Dr. Dewey), and to the conference staff at Bretton Hall for such an excellent few days.

British Agricultural History Society
Annual report to members, 1999–2000

Organisational changes:

At the 1999 AGM, it was reported that the Society's offices had moved to Exeter University, where the accounts and membership lists are supervised by the Society's Treasurer, Professor Mark Overton.

Conferences:

The Society held three successful conferences during 1999. The Spring Conference took place at De Montfort University's campus at Caythorpe College, Grantham, from 29 to 31 March, with a (mostly residential) attendance of 46. The Autumn conference was held at Nene College, Northampton, with an attendance of 28, the theme being 'Poverty, Self-Help and Charities in the Countryside'. The Winter Conference was held at the Institute of Historical Research in London on 4 December, on the theme of 'Commons, Common Rights and Commoners', with the notably large attendance of 80. Conference reports for the Spring and Winter conferences have appeared in the *Review*.

Membership:

Total individual membership in 1999–2000 rose from 519 to 550, *Roots of Change* having attracted some new members.

Publications:

Vol. 47 (parts I and II) of the *Agricultural History Review* was issued during the year and contained 256 pages. This volume of the *Review* published nine articles, three bibliographies, a conference report and 54 book reviews. During the year the Society published its second supplement, the book by Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson, *Roots of Change: Farming and the Landscape in East Anglia, c. 1700–1870* (British Agricultural History Society, Exeter, 1999; pp. ix, 208; illustrations; price £17.50 paperback). It is a study of agricultural change in the region over some two centuries, and is a major contribution to the literature on the Agricultural Revolution. It was been distributed free to society members for the subscription year 1999–2000. It is available via bookshops, or can be ordered directly from the Society's Treasurer, c/o the Department of History, University of Exeter, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ.

Financial position:

The overall financial position is healthy, with the Society's assets as shown in the balance sheet standing at some £69,000. There are no plans to raise the current subscription to the Society, which remains excellent value at £15. The Society's accounts were approved at the AGM held at Bretton Hall, but members who were unable to be there may obtain copies from the Treasurer at the Society's Exeter office.

P. E. DEWEY
Secretary

MARK OVERTON
Treasurer

Agricultural History

The Quarterly Journal of the Agricultural History Society

Since its inception, the Agricultural History Society has recognized the roles of agriculture and rural life in shaping the political, economic, social, cultural, and historical profiles of different countries of the world. This is why *Agricultural History*, the Society's official journal since 1927, is considered the international journal of record for the field. A platform for innovative research in national and international agricultural and rural history, the journal publishes articles on rural life, broadly conceived, as well as on institutions and organizations, and considers a wide range of the politics, science, and technologies that have influenced the development of agriculture and rural life.



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edited by
R. W. HOYLE *and* J. R. WALTON

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A journal of agricultural and rural history

Editors:
Prof. R. W. HOYLE (articles)
and Dr J. R. WALTON (reviews)

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Articles, proposals for supplements or general editorial correspondence should be directed to Professor R. W. Hoyle at the Rural History Centre, University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 229, Reading RG6 6AG, e.mail R.W.Hoyle@Reading.ac.uk.

Books for review and completed reviews should be directed to Dr J. R. Walton, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, SY23 3DB.

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