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REVIEW



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Agricultural History Review

Keen-eyed readers of the inside cover text of this issue of the *Review* will notice some important changes. The first is that Dr John Walton, Books Reviews Editor from 1998, has taken a well-earned retirement from the post. It should not be doubted that the reviews editor's task is a far from easy one. Other than a love of parcel tape and padded bags, a reviews editor must also be adept at keeping multiple balls in the air, jolly along the recalcitrant authors of overdue reviews (and do not reviews editors keep the words of Luke 15:7 above their desks?) and taming the occasionally mildly libellous comments and lapses of taste of the overenthusiastic. The Society is grateful to John for doing all of this and much more for nearly a decade. His successor with the parcel tape is Dr Henry French of the University of Exeter, and it is to him that books for review, suggestions of books we ought to review and completed reviews should be sent with immediate effect.

The second change is that for the first time we publish the names of an Editorial Advisory Board. The Executive Committee of the British Agricultural History Society acts as an Editorial Board for the *Review* and it is to them that the editors are responsible. The *Review* has never doubted the considerable support and standing which it has internationally, but it now feels that the time has come to form some of its most prominent supporters into an advisory board. It is a matter of great pleasure that all those asked readily agreed, and that many more might have been asked. This does not mark any change of editorial emphasis on the part of the *Review*. Our remit remains the publication of the best research in British and Irish, European and North American agricultural and rural history.

Forthcoming Conferences

Land, Landscape and Environment, 1500–1750

Centre for Early Modern Studies, University of Reading, 14–16 July 2008

Plenary speakers are

Prof. Toby Barnard (Hertford College Oxford), 'Attitudes towards the Irish Landscape: Ideals and Actuality, 1650–1750' * Prof. Richard Hoyle (University of Reading), 'Brenner in the Atlantic World' * Prof. Andrew McRae (University of Exeter), 'On the Road: Networks and Nationhood in Early Modern England'

Further details may be found at http://www.reading.ac.uk/EMRC/Land_Conference.htm or from j.f.cox@reading.ac.uk

British Agricultural History Society: Winter Conference 2008

The Society's Winter Conference will be held on Saturday 6 December at the Institute of Historical Research. The theme will be the role of the weather in the history of farming, and papers will cover a range of periods from the medieval to contemporary. The speakers arranged include Bruce Campbell on the early fourteenth century and John Martin on the winter of 1947. Further details and a registration form will be available in due course on the Society's web pages, and will be circulated with the next number of *Rural History Today*.

First announcement: Rural History 2010

The British Agricultural History Society proposes to convene an international conference on agricultural and rural history in September 2010 at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK. The aim of this meeting will be to bring together individuals working in all aspects of the history of agriculture, rural society and countryside, and it is the Society's hope that this meeting will be the first of a series of biennial meetings of the broad community. It is expected that the focus of the meeting will be on the agricultural and rural history of the last millennium in Europe and North America, but as befits an international occasion, no restrictions will be placed on the temporal, geographical or methodological approaches of papers. The Society has nominated Professor Richard Hoyle as chairman of the conference's scientific committee and Dr Nicola Verdon as chairman of its conference and arrangements committee.

Invitations for nominations for members of the scientific committee will be circulated to national societies in July 2009. A call for sessions will be issued later in 2008 and for single papers in the summer of 2009. In the first instance, expressions of interest can be sent to Professor Richard Hoyle, r.w.hoyle@reading.ac.uk.

The availability of credit in the English countryside, 1400–1480^{*}

by Chris Briggs

Abstract

Credit was central to the peasant economy, but its supply varied over time. Using information from the records of three Cambridgeshire manorial courts and a church court, this article charts changes in the number of rural credit transactions initiated in the fifteenth century, and seeks explanations for them. It argues that new credit transactions declined in number in the period studied, though caution is required concerning the real extent of the decline. Legal and institutional changes arising from the decline of the manor courts and the rise of the church courts' debt jurisdiction were key. It is argued that these changes were as important as monetary difficulties in shaping the willingness of rural lenders to give credit.

Credit played a fundamental role in the agrarian economy of medieval England. In an era in which the supply of coined money was never sufficient to meet all the demands placed upon it, and in which the cash income of most rural households was concentrated at particular times of the year, the ability to obtain credit was essential. Most medieval English rural credit was extended by individuals rather than institutions or landlords, and usually flowed between villagers. In the countryside and more generally, later medieval credit took two main forms. The first was the straightforward loan of cash, grain or goods, while the second consisted of credit given in the form of a sale, most commonly in a deferred payment for goods or services. Such credit transactions served a variety of purposes, allowing villagers to buy or hire a range of commodities and to procure labour and services with a greater flexibility than would have been possible had an immediate cash transfer in full been the only way of making a payment.¹

^{*} Earlier versions of this article were presented the Economic History Society's annual conference 2006, and at meetings of the Seminar in Medieval Economic and Social History, University of Cambridge, and the Late Medieval Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, London. I am grateful to participants for suggestions and criticisms. I am grateful to Philip Stickler, of the Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, for drawing the map. This article has benefited from discussions with Martin Allen, Matt Tompkins and Paul Warde, and from the comments of the *Review's* anonymous referees. The author bears sole responsibility for the arguments expressed, and for any errors.

¹ On the general importance of credit, see, for example, P. Nightingale, 'Money and credit in the economy of late medieval England', in D. Wood (ed.), *Medieval money matters* (2004), pp. 51–71; on rural credit, see P. R. Schofield, 'L'Endettement et le crédit dans la campagne anglaise au moyen âge', in M. Berthe (ed.), *Endettement paysan et crédit rural dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne: actes des XVIIes journées internationales d'histoire de l'abbaye de Flaran, Septembre 1995* (1998), pp. 69–97; C. Briggs, *Credit and village society in fourteenth-century England* (forthcoming).

Although it was crucial to the peasant economy, the supply of credit was not constant over time, and it depended in large part on the capacities and attitudes of individual peasant creditors. This article's first aim is to place our knowledge of changes in the number of credit transactions entered into in the fifteenth-century countryside on a firmer footing. Its second aim is to consider possible reasons for those changes. Over the very short term, the extension of new credit was likely to be interrupted by events such as harvest failure and exceptional mortality. Over the somewhat longer term, other factors are likely to have significantly influenced the numbers of credit transactions initiated. Three of the most potentially important factors shaping the longer-term availability of credit — demographic changes, monetary changes, and legal or institutional changes — are outlined later. Much of the remainder of the article is concerned with assessing the relative importance these three factors, especially the latter two.

Shifts in the quantity of new credit extended in the later middle ages are difficult to measure, owing to the problems posed by the available sources. Whether rural, urban, or mercantile, the majority of our evidence for credit describes unpaid debts, rather than the registration of new credit transactions. As will be described below, there are dangers in simply assuming that shifts in totals of defaulted debts can be regarded as a reliable indicator of changes in the amount of new credit extended. However, if for the moment we adopt the assumption that chronological shifts in defaulted debt and in the total amount of new credit followed roughly the same pattern, then it is clear from existing research that, in general, the fifteenth century, in comparison with the preceding century, saw a marked decline in the quantity of credit transactions. This point is made most explicitly in work on urban and mercantile credit.² However, a similar situation in the countryside is implied in studies of fifteenth-century manorial court records, which tend to reveal a substantial decline by the middle of the century in the number of suits for debt heard by those courts.³

If, as existing work suggests, the totals of new credit relationships begun in the countryside were much smaller in the fifteenth century than they had been in the previous century, what were the main reasons for this change? There is no one single explanation, and at least three main answers to this question may be suggested.

First, the decline in credit may have been a reflection of the demographic losses that had begun with the Black Death of 1348–9 and continued with subsequent outbreaks of epidemic disease. This would mean that the drop in the total of credit transactions witnessed in the fifteenth century was primarily the result of a collapse in the demand for credit. For example,

² P. Nightingale, 'Monetary contraction and mercantile credit in later medieval England', *EcHR* 43 (1990), pp. 567–74; P. Nightingale, *A medieval mercantile community. The Grocers' company and the politics and trade of London, 1000–1485* (1995), p. 572; R. H. Britnell, *Growth and decline in Colchester, 1300–1525* (1986), pp. 206–8.

³ C. Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a changing society. The estates of the bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540* (1980), pp. 264–9; E. Clark, 'Debt litigation in a late

medieval English vill', in J. A. Raftis (ed.), *Pathways to medieval peasants* (1981), pp. 247–79 (Writtle, Essex); M. K. McIntosh, *Autonomy and community. The royal manor of Havering, 1200–1500* (1986), pp. 191–200. J. Whittle, *The development of agrarian capitalism. Land and labour in Norfolk, 1440–1580* (2000), p. 52, notes that debt pleas in the manor court of Hevingham Bishops (Norfolk) declined between 1485 and 1558.

the existence of fewer people meant a reduction in the quantity of trade, and hence a smaller number of credit-based sales.⁴

A second possible explanation for a persistent fifteenth-century fall in levels of new credit, and one that is more fully articulated in the existing literature, lies in changes in the availability of coined money. The later medieval decline in mint output contributed to a coin shortage, reflected in contemporary petitions and legislation. There was also a growing preponderance of large denomination gold coins over the more useful small denomination silver ones. Together, this is widely taken as evidence that the money supply struggled to meet the demands placed upon it by the fifteenth-century population.⁵ According to some historians, there was a strong causal link between this shrinking money supply and the stagnation in prices and contraction in most aspects of trade which, while present from the last quarter of the fourteenth century onwards, was at its most intense in the middle decades of the fifteenth century.⁶ Some of those historians have also argued that it was not possible over the longer term to compensate for the late medieval contraction in money supply — that is, the shortage of gold and silver coins — through greater use of credit. Although credit transactions allowed a limited money supply to work harder, resort to credit was governed by the quantity of coined money available, since debt repayment would ultimately be made with coin. Credit use thus tended to expand and contract in line with the availability of coin, which was in turn determined by the supply of precious metals and the balance of overseas trade. Credit could not indefinitely ‘come to the rescue’ of a failing money supply.⁷

As well as explaining why the quantity of new credit transactions was smaller in the fifteenth

⁴ For the possibility that reduced trade explains the contraction in credit, see J. Kermode, ‘Money and credit in the fifteenth century: some lessons from Yorkshire’, *Business History Rev.* 65 (1991), pp. 481, 500; P. Nightingale, ‘England and the European depression of the mid-fifteenth century’, *J. European Economic History* 26 (1997), p. 639.

⁵ For mint output, see C. E. Challis (ed.), *A new history of the Royal Mint* (1992), pp. 680–5; on the increasing ratio of gold to silver in the later medieval money supply, see M. Allen, ‘The volume of the English currency, 1158–1470’, *EcHR* 54 (2001), pp. 607–8, and N. J. Mayhew, ‘Coinage and money in England, 1086–c.1500’, in D. Wood (ed.), *Medieval money matters* (2004), pp. 81–2.

⁶ See, most recently, Nightingale, *Medieval mercantile community*, pp. 482–3; Nightingale, ‘England and the European depression’, pp. 631–51; J. H. Munro, ‘Wage-stickiness, monetary changes, and real incomes in late medieval England and the Low Countries, 1300–1500: did money matter?’, *Research in Economic History* 21 (2003), pp. 214–16. Older influential statements concerning the importance of monetary factors in the late medieval depression include H. A. Miskimin, ‘Monetary movements and market structure – forces

for contraction in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England’, *JEcH* 24 (1964), pp. 470–90; J. Day, ‘The great bullion famine of the fifteenth century’, *Past and Present* 79 (1978), pp. 3–54; M. Mate, ‘The role of gold coinage in the English economy, 1338–1400’, *Numismatic Chronicle* 18 (1978), pp. 126–41; P. Spufford, *Money and its uses in medieval Europe* (1988), pp. 358–62. On the ‘great depression’ of the later middle ages more generally, and its impact on the rural economy, see R. Britnell, ‘The economic context’, in A. J. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (1995), pp. 41–64; J. Hatcher, ‘The great slump of the mid-fifteenth century’, in R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (eds), *Progress and problems in medieval England* (1996), pp. 237–72; B. Dodds, *Peasants and production in the medieval north-east: the evidence from tithes, 1270–1536* (2007), pp. 103–10.

⁷ Nightingale, ‘Monetary contraction and mercantile credit’, pp. 560–75 and her ‘Money and credit’, pp. 59–62; N. J. Mayhew, ‘Money and prices in England from Henry III to Edward III’, *AgHR* 35 (1987), p. 121; id., ‘Population, money supply, and the velocity of circulation in England, 1300–1700’, *EcHR* 48 (1995), p. 254. For the limited capacity of credit instruments to add to the effective money supply, see Munro, ‘Wage-stickiness’, pp. 216–17.

century than in its predecessor, this monetarist theory of movements in credit has also been used to help explain shorter-term shifts in the credit supply after 1400.⁸ Most importantly, Nightingale has argued that lenders' concerns about their own future need for coin meant that in years of inadequate money supply they reduced the credit they offered, and were more likely to hoard bullion instead. Similarly, in periods of better money supply, lenders were less doubtful about their chances of future repayment, and accordingly increased their credit-based trade. A crucial part of this argument is that creditors did not usually respond to general shifts in the money supply, which was something about which they could not have had reliable knowledge. Rather, an especially significant stimulus was change in mint output, a factor on which lenders had reliable information.⁹ Much of the evidence that has been adduced to support this argument comes from the Statute Merchant certificates, and thus concerns credit that was largely mercantile, urban and relatively large-scale in character. However, a tentative attempt has also been made to extend the monetarist theory of money and credit to the rural world, albeit with the caveat that it generally took somewhat longer for shortages of money to affect the rural economy.¹⁰ Indeed it is reasonable to make such an attempt, since the uniformly high level of monetization that had been achieved by the fifteenth century, as revealed by data on rural coin hoards and single finds, suggests that changes in the money supply ought to have had similar effects upon credit availability in both town and countryside.¹¹

A third explanation for the late medieval pattern of new credit creation lies in the nature of the institutions and instruments used for recording, organizing and enforcing credit agreements, the most important of which was the system of law courts. Even commentators who have given particular emphasis to the importance of monetary factors in the movement of credit point to the need to establish the extent to which 'institutional changes in the organization of credit could offset the tightening of the money supply.'¹² By implication, it is equally possible that unfavourable alterations in legal structures could have made people increasingly unwilling to make use of credit mechanisms, even in the absence of variation in other factors like money supply. Can changes in the institutions governing the organization of credit and the recovery of debts explain the apparent fifteenth-century downturn in lending? Few have addressed this question directly. However, existing work does show that the institutional arrangements for enforcing rural debt obligations were in a state of flux as a result of the decline of the manor courts, which in this period were losing much of the authority and importance in village life that they had enjoyed in their early fourteenth-century heyday.¹³ The effect of this situation on the provision of credit was potentially significant.

⁸ Nightingale, 'England and the European depression.'

⁹ Ibid., pp. 637–9; Nightingale, 'Money and credit', pp. 60–7.

¹⁰ Nightingale, 'Monetary contraction and mercantile credit', p. 574; Nightingale, 'England and the European depression', pp. 639, 642–3; Nightingale, *Medieval mercantile community*, pp. 364–5, 483.

¹¹ On the monetization of the countryside, see C. Dyer, 'Peasants and coins: the uses of money in the middle ages', *British Numismatic J.* 67 (1997), pp. 30–47, and N. Mayhew, 'Money in the late medieval countryside:

Britain', in P. Delogu and S. Sorda (eds), *La moneta in ambiente rurale nell'Italia tardomedioevale. Atti dell'incontro di studio Roma 21–22 Settembre 2000* (Istituto Italiano di Numismatica, 2002), pp. 5–26.

¹² Mayhew, 'Population, money supply, and the velocity of circulation', p. 254, n. 61.

¹³ On the fifteenth-century decline in the manor courts, in terms of their authority, frequency, income and quantity of business, see J. S. Beckerman, 'Procedural innovation and institutional change in medieval English manorial courts', *Law and History Rev.* 10

The first section of this paper introduces the manor court records used here, and the debt and credit material they contain. Section II uses the manorial debt litigation in an effort to chart trends in the extension of credit, both by comparing the later fourteenth century with the fifteenth century, and by looking at decadal trends after 1400. Section II also assesses the extent to which the chronology of credit displays a pattern anticipated by the monetarist model. Section III then considers an alternative explanation for the trends in new credit, namely that they were influenced primarily by changes in the manor courts themselves as legal institutions. In Section IV, the consideration of the possible effects of changing legal structures upon credit activity is extended by examining the proceedings of a church court, and investigating the hypothesis that such courts were increasingly taking on the business of rural debt recovery as the fifteenth century progressed.

I

The core evidence used here comes from private lawsuits for debt brought in manor courts.¹⁴ The rolls of three courts have been studied in detail: Willingham, Oakington, and Swaffham Prior, all in Cambridgeshire (Figure 1).¹⁵ The lords of these manors were, respectively, the Bishop of Ely, Crowland Abbey, and Ely Cathedral Priory. They are all jurisdictions which in the second half of the fourteenth century heard substantial quantities of debt litigation. The Oakington court also dealt with business concerning residents of nearby Cottenham and Dry Drayton, villages in which the abbot of Crowland held further manors. All five villages were dominated by peasant proprietors of middling wealth. Many of the inhabitants of Willingham, Cottenham and Swaffham were involved in a pastoral economy based on the extensive grazing available to families living on the edge of the fenland.¹⁶ All five contained many households who made part of their living by selling their surplus produce on credit, and relied on credit for the purchase of equipment, livestock and labour.

Not all of the manorial debt cases contained in the court rolls reveal the nature of the disputed obligation. However, the more detailed cases reveal the characteristic mix of straightforward loans and sales credit. Of the total of 214 separate recorded debts claimed in the three manor courts from 1400 to 1480, 177 (82.7 per cent) are expressed as a sum of money, while

Note 13 continued

(1992), pp. 242–50; C. Dyer, ‘The political life of the fifteenth-century English village’, *The Fifteenth Century* 4 (2004), pp. 146–7; Whittle, *Agrarian capitalism*, 47–56, 83 (though Whittle notes that several important functions of the Hevingham manor court remained robust into the sixteenth century); M. Tompkins, ‘Peasant society in a Midlands manor, Great Horwood, 1400–1600’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2006), pp. 206–7.

¹⁴ The phrases ‘plaint’, ‘plea’, ‘case’, and ‘action’ are used interchangeably here for ‘civil lawsuit’.

¹⁵ Cambridgeshire Record Office [hereafter CRO], L1/177–9 (Willingham court rolls 1377–1458); Cam-

bridgeshire University Library [hereafter CUL], Queens’ College [hereafter Q] boxes 3–5, rolls 5–20, 24 (Oakington with Cottenham and Dry Drayton court rolls); CUL, EDC 7/13/5–6 (Swaffham Prior court rolls). There is a gap in the Swaffham rolls between 1377 and 1422.

¹⁶ For the economic characteristics of these villages, see VCH *Cambs*, IX, pp. 58–9 (Cottenham), 404–6 (Willingham); VCH *Cambs*, X, pp. 285–7 (Swaffham). For Cambridgeshire fen-edge communities, see J. R. Ravensdale, *Liable to floods. Village landscape on the edge of the fens, AD 450–1850* (1974); for a classic study of Willingham in a slightly later period, see M. Spufford, *Contrasting communities. English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (1974).

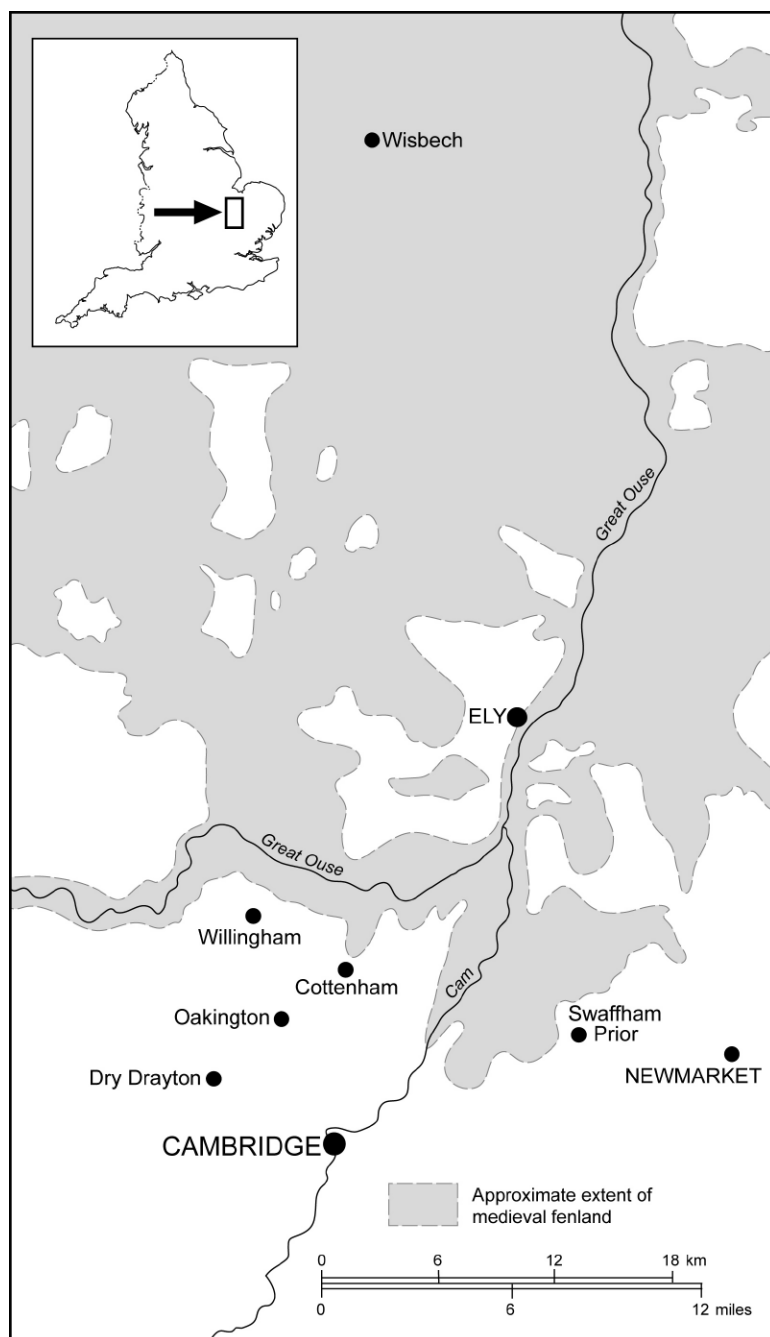


FIGURE 1. Cambridgeshire villages mentioned in this study

the remainder are a mixture of debts of grain, livestock and other goods. As far as one can determine, the debts expressed in money were expected to have been discharged with actual coin. Given this predominance of arrangements requiring repayment in money, it is likely that if change in the money supply was indeed a key determinant of the quantity of credit extended, then credit in these villages is liable to have been substantially affected by such change.

Some of the claims of money debts provide enough detail to allow one to determine whether a sales credit or a loan was involved. For a typical example of a sales credit, at Willingham in 1409 William Turrell senior was found to owe William Schetere 3s. 4d., which was part of the price of one ox purchased by the debtor from the creditor.¹⁷ The creditors and debtors were usually fellow residents of the case study village in question, though inhabitants of nearby villages, and of towns such as Ely and Cambridge, are occasionally found in one or other of those roles.

II

How do the number of debt actions brought in the three courts relate to changes in the volume of the currency? Here, we particularly compare the decades following the Black Death, when per capita coin supply was still relatively high, with the era of severe monetary contraction from c.1395. It is not possible to chart short-term changes in the total money supply of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century reliably or exactly.¹⁸ In the absence of such information, we have to adopt Nightingale's assumption that those providing credit responded to changes in mint activity rather than the more abstract concept of the size of the money supply. Like their mercantile and metropolitan counterparts, the rural lenders of the Cambridge hinterland studied here had no obvious means of ascertaining aggregate money supply, either at a local or a national level. Like them, therefore, they are probably much more likely to have relied on news about activity at the mints when seeking to gauge the future availability of coin. For the purposes of the subsequent analysis, it is particularly important to note that the collapse in the output of the English mints was most marked in the years of 'bullion famine' which occurred between the mid-1390s and about 1412, and again in the 1430s and 1440s, but that the intervening years witnessed a notable rise in mint output (as may be seen in Table 1).

Unfortunately, manorial debt litigation does not provide a convenient chronological index of new credit contracts. Debts that came to court as litigation represent a minority of all credit. Instead, changes over time in the number of new debt plaintiffs entering a court reflect a combination of three factors, which themselves shifted over time: the number of extant credit relationships; the rate of default by debtors; and the propensity of creditors to sue upon default. In principle, it is possible for there to have been a rise in new credit at a time when debt litigation was falling. Likewise, new credit could in theory have been entirely withdrawn at a time when litigation was going up. When there are a lot of short-term shocks to the economy, the problems in identifying the underlying trend in the extension of credit are acute. This is the case for the early fourteenth century. At that time, periodic subsistence crises and phases of heavy taxation frequently produced a pattern of litigation which fluctuated from year to year. This pattern masks the underlying trend in new credit creation.¹⁹ However, such shocks are less common for the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the whole, therefore, the data presented here will, to begin with at least, be treated as a relatively unproblematic picture of

¹⁷ CRO, L1/178 (11 Mar. 1409).

¹⁸ Allen, 'Volume of the English currency' estimates the size of the currency at particular dates in this period

(1351, 1422, 1470) and earlier.

¹⁹ For methods to deal with this problem, see Briggs, *Credit and village society*, ch. 6.

TABLE 1. Recorded English mint output, 1351–1480

	<i>Gold £</i>	<i>Silver £</i>	<i>Total output</i>	<i>Per cent silver</i>
1351–61	996,253	419,792	1,416,045	29.6
1361–69	612,627	29,201	641,828	4.5
1369–77	255,452	11,147	266,599	4.2
1377–99 ^a	389,770	21,567	411,337	5.2
1399–1408	60,744	1,748	62,492	2.8
1412–22	791,762	45,150	836,912	5.4
1422–31	670,783	275,443	946,226	29.1
1431–41	71,497	61,790	133,287	46.4
1441–50	33,686	13,328	47,014	28.3
1450–64	26,494	84,463	110,957	76.1
1464–1470	381,468	138,566	520,034	26.6
1471–1475	174,094	70,171	244,265	28.7
1475–1480	130,730	24,176	154,906	15.6

Note: ^a Includes Calais gold output, 4 Nov. 1375 to 7 Jan. 1384.

Source: Challis (ed.), *New history of the Royal Mint*, pp. 680–5.

changes in numbers of credit transactions. This is because, in the period under scrutiny, there is a relatively small risk of mistaking responses among litigants to dearth or heavy taxation for real changes in credit levels. That said, dearth did occur in the period under discussion, and it is referred to again briefly below.

The decadal totals of debt complaints after 1400 may now be compared with those prevailing beforehand. In general terms, the evidence collected here is like that presented in those earlier studies that discuss debt actions, in that it shows fifteenth-century levels of debt litigation that were low (and declining) by comparison with those of the fourteenth century. For Willingham, there is a massive drop between the 1380s and the 1450s in the decadal totals of suits from over 300 to less than 30 (Table 2a). After 1420, debt litigation is a negligible feature of the court record. This remains clear even if one adjusts the totals of suits upwards to allow for missing court sessions. Some phases of decline, such as the first decade of the fifteenth century, fit well with the monetarist theory of credit, because this was a period of low mint activity. However, the decline in suits — and hence in the amount of credit — intensified over the next two decades, even though there was a boom in mint output between 1412 and the late 1420s (Table 1). Importantly, that boom included a significant output of the smaller denomination silver coins: the farthings, halfpennies, pennies, groats (face value 4*d.*) and half-groats which are probably the coins most likely to have been used in village debt repayment.

The pattern for Oakington is not dissimilar (Table 2b). Here, closest attention should be given to the adjusted total of suits, in order to allow for loss of court records in the fifteenth century. As at Willingham, the zenith for debt actions came at the start of the final quarter of the fourteenth century. There are then two key periods of decline. The first is 1401–10 when suits roughly halved. This level was then more or less maintained until 1440. Thereafter, debt

TABLE 2. New debt complaints initiated in the manor courts of Willingham, Oakington (with Cottenham and Dry Drayton), and Swaffham Prior, 1351–1480

	<i>Court sessions with surviving records</i>	<i>New debt complaints^a</i>	<i>New debt complaints adjusted for missing court sessions^b</i>
a. Willingham			
1377–80	11	45.0	65.5
1381–90	37	363.0	392.5
1391–1400	34	295.0	347.0
1401–10	39	194.5	199.5
1411–20	35	102.5	117.0
1421–30	27	26.5	29.5
1431–40	19	15.5	24.5
1441–50	20	17.0	25.5
1451–58	10	6.0	14.5
b. Oakington			
1351–60	43	83.0	83.0
1361–70	52	117.5	117.5
1371–80	47	129.0	129.0
1381–90	48	101.0	101.0
1391–1400	40	92.5	92.5
1401–10	49	44.0	44.0
1411–20	40	45.0	45.0
1421–30	12	9.0	30.0
1431–40	39	44.0	45.0
1441–50	12	2.0	6.5
1451–60	17	1.0	2.5
1461–70	31	5.0	6.5
1471–80	25	3.0	5.0
c. Swaffham			
1351–60	28	48.0	51.5
1361–70	29	62.5	64.5
1422–1430	22	59.5	73.0
1431–40	24	97.0	121.0
1441–50	22	41.5	56.5
1451–60	21	17.0	24.5

Notes: ^a Totals include half of all ‘unknown’ complaints.

^b Totals reached by multiplying the average of complaints per session with surviving records by the estimated ‘complete’ total of sessions in a decade. Assumed minima of sessions held are as follows: Willingham, four sessions per annum to 1420, three sessions per annum thereafter; Oakington, four sessions per annum throughout; Swaffham, three sessions per annum throughout.

Sources: CRO, L1/177–9; CUL, Q boxes 3–5, rolls 5–20, 24; CUL, EDC 7/13/5–6.

litigation all but disappeared. As at Willingham, the increased mint output of 1412 to the later 1420s brought no upturn in credit, as indicated by debt litigation. Nor at either Oakington or Willingham is there any sign of an upturn in credit in the 1450s of the kind Nightingale found in the staple certificates and pardons for debt on the Patent Rolls. In accordance with monetarist theory, Nightingale attributed this upturn to the modest expansion of output at the London mint from 1449.²⁰ It is also generally recognized that in England the worst of the 'great bullion famine' was over by the 1460s, when there was high mint output associated with the recoinage of 1464–71.²¹ However, no upturn in the quantity of credit is reflected in the debt plaints of Oakington, the only one of our courts with surviving records for the 1460s and 1470s.

Finally, we turn to Swaffham Prior (Table 2c). Here the pattern is different from those of the other two courts. Absolute quantities of new suits were greater there between 1422 and 1440 than in the two decades following the Black Death. This is not necessarily a sign that for some reason credit in Swaffham Prior expanded to 'fill the gap' left by a depleted money supply. However, there does at least seem to have been some positive response among Swaffham lenders to the greater amount of money presumably in circulation following the heightened mint activity of the 1410s and 1420s. In the 1440s, however, when mint output slumped again, quantities of credit at Swaffham Prior, as indicated by litigation, fell as monetarist theory would predict.

For two of the three courts, therefore, there is a picture of massive decline in the quantities of debt litigation and, correspondingly, the amount of credit underlying it. Decline of some sort in this period is what the monetarist theory of medieval money and credit would predict. Yet the most notable aspect of the Willingham and Oakington patterns of debt litigation is the relentless downward direction of the decline. It occurred in spite of the fact that mint output increased as well as fell in this period. Much of the coin issuing from the mints in these decades was minted at Calais, but it should be stressed that such coin circulated within England and thereby contributed fully to the kingdom's money supply, as hoard evidence demonstrates.²²

It should also be emphasized that it was not only the output of silver coin that mattered to would-be lenders within these Cambridgeshire villages when they were deciding whether or not to offer credit. Commentators have frequently drawn attention to the increasingly 'top-heavy' nature of the English coinage in the fifteenth century which arose because circumstances were much more favourable to the production and circulation of gold rather than silver coins. Allen has estimated that the per capita stock of the smaller denomination silver coins declined from

²⁰ Nightingale, 'England and the European depression', pp. 644–5.

²¹ N. J. Mayhew, 'The monetary background to the Yorkist recoinage of 1464–1471', *British Numismatic J.* 44 (1974), pp. 62–73; C. E. Challis, 'Lord Hastings to the great silver recoinage, 1464–1699', in Challis (ed.), *New history of the Royal Mint*, p. 190. For the Europe-wide end in the 1460s of the worst effects of the dearth of coin, see Spufford, *Money and its uses*, pp. 363–71.

²² See the proportions of Calais and London coins in the Fishpool (Nottinghamshire) and Reigate (Wray Lane)

(Surrey) hoards, which closely matched their relative proportions in the mint output of 1422–31, M. M. Archibald, 'Fishpool, Blidworth (Notts.), 1966 hoard', *Numismatic Chronicle* seventh ser., 7 (1967), pp. 133–46; ead., 'The Reigate hoard', *British Numismatic J.* 48 (1978), pp. 80–1; I am grateful to Martin Allen for information on this point. See also P. Spufford, 'Calais and its mint: part one', in N. J. Mayhew (ed.), *Coinage in the Low Countries (800–1500)* (BAR International Ser. 54, 1979), pp. 171–83.

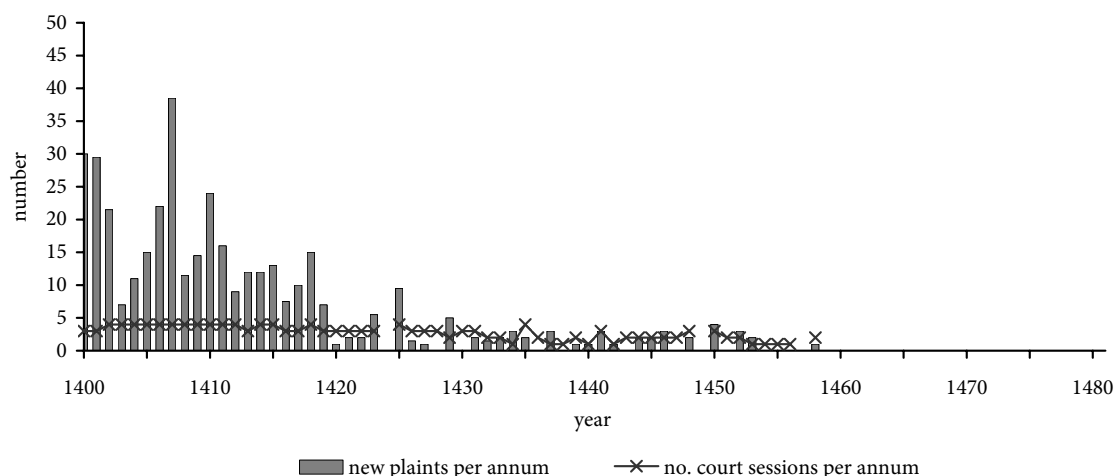


FIGURE 2. Willingham: new debt complaints per annum, 1400–1460

Note: Includes half 'unknown' plaintiffs.

Source: CRO, L1/177–9.

about 5s.–7s. in 1351 to 1s.–2s. in 1422.²³ With many everyday payments requiring the outlay of just a few pence at most, the shortage of silver had a potentially debilitating effect on retail trade, especially in the towns. The gold denominations comprised the noble with a face value of 6s. 8d. (80d.), and its divisions, the half-noble and quarter-noble, coins which are assumed to have been inconveniently large for many routine peasant payments.²⁴

It is significant, therefore, that 142 of the 177 money debts (80.2 per cent) claimed in the three manor courts from 1400 were of sums of 20d. or over. These were debts that could have been repaid partly or wholly in gold. In fact, 33.9 per cent of all money debts claimed could have been repaid entirely in gold coins because they involved sums of 20d., or multiples thereof. In other words, according to the monetarist theory of medieval credit, the extension of credit in these villages ought to have been stimulated at various points between 1400 and 1460 not only by upturns in the mint output of silver, but also by upturns in gold output. Given all this, why, then, did debt litigation not move consistently in an upwards direction at any point after 1400, apart from at Swaffham Prior?

Before addressing that question, we may note the annual totals of debt suits in the three courts from 1400 (Figures 2–4). Of particular interest are the years 1437–40, a time of severe dearth and high prices.²⁵ However, in those years there is no upturn in totals of Oakington or Willingham suits. Higher than average totals of suits might be expected in such years, because of increased default by debtors, and the fact that creditors would be especially likely to wish to recover outstanding debts at such times because they themselves were suffering the

²³ Allen, 'Volume of the English currency', pp. 607–8.

²⁴ Mayhew, 'Money in the late medieval countryside', pp. 21–2; see, however, Dyer, 'Peasants and coins', p. 40.

²⁵ D. L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages, 1350–1400', in

E. Miller (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, III, 1348–1500 (1991), pp. 445, 504; Dodds, *Peasants and production*, pp. 98–100.

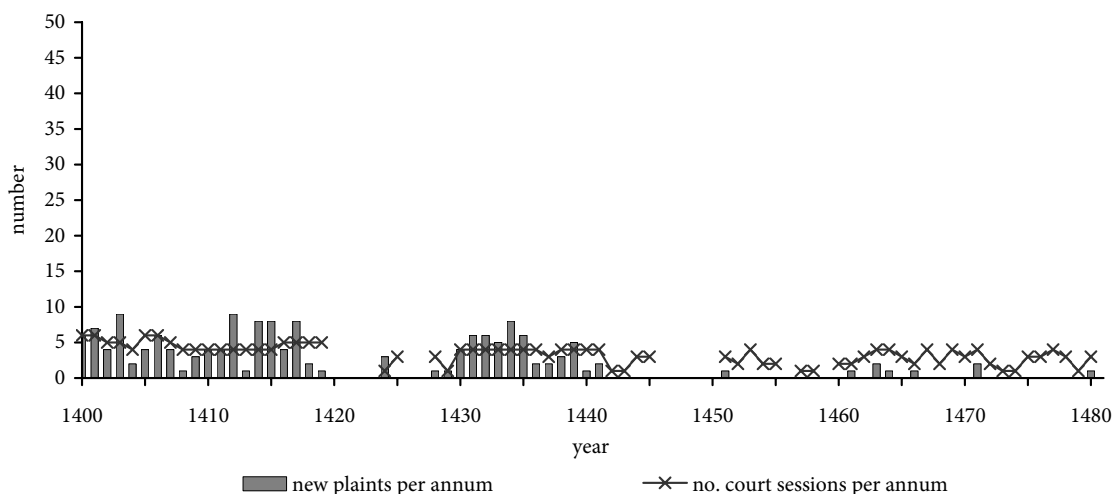


FIGURE 3. Oakington: new debt complaints per annum, 1400–1480

Note: Includes half 'unknown' complaints.

Source: CUL, Q boxes 3–5, rolls 10–20, 24.

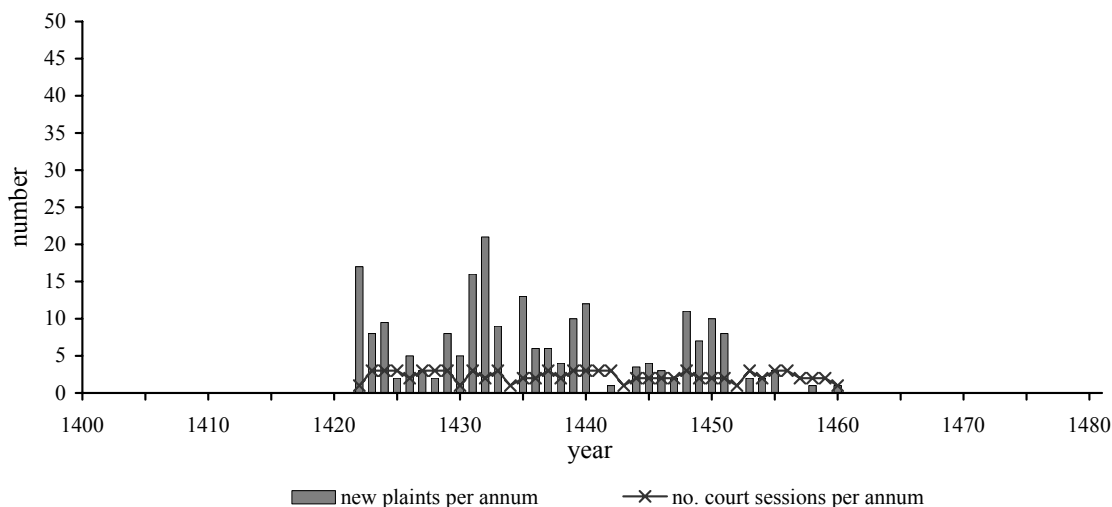


FIGURE 4. Swaffham Prior: new debt complaints per annum, 1422–1480

Note: Includes half 'unknown' complaints.

Source: CUL, EDC 7/13/6.

consequences of harvest failure. The absence of such an upturn for two of our three courts obliges one to reject any suggestion that in those locations the underlying level of credit was actually quite high after 1400, but remains hidden to the historian because the circumstances encouraging manorial litigation were generally low.

III

As noted in the introduction, existing studies have already drawn attention to a mid-fifteenth century decline in manorial debt litigation.²⁶ A particularly full consideration of this decline appears in McIntosh's study of Havering (Essex), in which the author showed that the number of personal lawsuits, including debt, dropped sharply between 1405–6 and the 1440s. McIntosh did not associate this pattern with monetary problems. She wrote instead that is likely that 'the reduction in private suits was caused primarily by changes within the court itself. By the 1430s and 1440s the court's ability to handle suits had weakened greatly. It was no longer able to enforce the appearance of defendants and jurors or to keep track of the progress of a case'. She also notes that in these years instructions to manorial officials to carry out court orders were repeated over and over to no avail. The officials ceased to be amerced (fined) by the court for their failures. By the 1440s suits usually took eight or more sessions before completion, by contrast with just one session in earlier periods. McIntosh concluded that 'because the court was unsuccessful in processing suits, fewer tenants bothered to bring their problems before it'.²⁷

Did something similar happen at Willingham, Oakington, and (perhaps) Swaffham? Did the pattern of debt litigation decline reflect in some way changes that were occurring in the manor courts? As a first step, one may reject any suggestion that changes in manor court recording practices might explain the mid-fifteenth century drop in debt litigation. It is true that in her study of Havering in a later period, McIntosh found that between 1500 and 1589 there was an increasing tendency for certain stages in the progress of a private lawsuit to be omitted from the final fair copy of the manor court roll and cases which reached a rapid termination without requiring a jury trial were not recorded at all. McIntosh also implies that at this date the preliminary stages of a case were also often not written up in the court roll. Instead, fuller records of private suits were kept by the court clerk in the form of loose notes, many of which were not carried onto the fair copy of the roll.²⁸ However, there is little to indicate that private suits were being entirely omitted from the formal record in the three court roll series studied here. For example, the Willingham rolls of the 1440s and 1450s and the Oakington rolls of the 1460s and 1470s continue to feature short memoranda recording the preliminary stages of suits, as well as cases that were terminated rapidly through the defendant's admission of liability. It is true that in the rolls of one of the courts — Willingham — there are 10 debt cases that indicate the presence of ancillary documentation through references to court 'papers'. However, the aim of these entries was clearly to refer the clerk to his papers for fuller details of each case, and there is no suggestion that cases would be detailed in the court papers but not noted, even in brief, in the formal roll.²⁹

A more fruitful course is to look at the functioning of the courts themselves. Although later medieval village credit networks featured many lenders and borrowers presumably well known

²⁶ Above, n. 3.

²⁷ McIntosh, *Autonomy and community*, pp. 199–200.

²⁸ M. K. McIntosh, *A community transformed. The manor and liberty of Havering-Atte-Bower, 1500–1620*

(1991), pp. 301–04.

²⁹ CRO, L1/178, 5 Feb. 1411 (three cases), 2 Dec. 1415, 24 Sept. 1417 (two cases), 11 Jan. 1419 (three cases); CRO, L1/179, 15 Jan. 1425.

to one another, it is clear that many rural creditors in this period had to contend with the economists' classic obstacles of adverse selection and moral hazard when deciding whether or not to give credit to a particular individual. In other words, a lender faced the dangers that his or her estimate of the borrower's capacity to repay would be inaccurate, or that the borrower would attempt to avoid repaying the debt. In order to deal with these problems of 'asymmetric information', contemporaries needed inexpensive and efficient local legal institutions, which had the power to force debtors to court, to reach authoritative and transparent judgements as to whether or not an obligation was outstanding, and to seize debtors' goods as payment if they did not meet an outstanding obligation. If such mechanisms were not readily available locally, potential lenders would probably have been less likely to lend. Any evidence of collapse in the machinery of our case study manor courts could thus explain the lack of any upturn in new credit extension across the period 1400–1480.

It should be stressed that the principal function of the medieval manor court was never to provide peasants with a jurisdiction for civil litigation. That function was always secondary to the control the court gave a lord over his villein (unfree) tenants and their land and obligations, and over the administration of his manor as an economic unit. Therefore, as villeinage disappeared during the fifteenth century, seigniorial demesne lands were leased, and manorial institutions declined, there was in general less business to be transacted by manor courts.³⁰ Also, juries of leading villagers came to dominate ever more aspects of court business through the spread of the process of presentment, whereby almost all matters other than debt and other forms of private litigation were reported and punished in highly summary fashion. The rise of presentment meant that the court's core business was dispatched increasingly quickly. Together, these factors meant that fewer manor court sessions needed to be held each year. The decline of manorial authority also affected the manorial officials who, in addition to their primary role of collecting revenues and enforcing services on behalf of the lord, were also crucial to the process of private litigation. These officials made the seizures of movable property — the attachments and distrains — that compelled litigants' appearances; they arranged the appointment of pledges (personal sureties) who were also used to secure litigants' appearances; they enforced the court judgements, again through seizures of property; and they also collected the amercements from debtors who did not turn up in court. From the later fourteenth century, manorial tenants were less willing than before to serve as officials, and became less inclined to perform effectively all aspects of their work.³¹ It was a standard rule of private litigation in manor courts that a judgement could not be reached in the absence of the defendant. The ability of a court to get defendants to appear was therefore crucial from the creditor's point of view, and consequently the fifteenth-century developments mentioned above, many of which lengthened the time taken to secure the presence of defendants, were

³⁰ For the developments described in the remainder of this paragraph, see Beckerman, 'Procedural innovation', pp. 242–50; M. Bailey (ed.), *The English manor, c.1200–c.1500* (2002), pp. 184–6.

³¹ See, for example, F. M. Page, *The estates of Crowland Abbey: a study in manorial organisation* (1934), p. 70; C. Dyer, 'The social and economic background to the

rural revolt of 1381', in Dyer, *Everyday life in medieval England* (1994), pp. 211–12. In Durham, men elected as officials rarely refused to serve, but this did not necessarily mean that their duties were carried out properly: P. L. Larson, *Conflict and compromise in the late medieval countryside. Lords and peasants in Durham, 1349–1400* (2006), pp. 137–9.

all obviously unwelcome for individuals who wished to use manor courts to recover unpaid debts.

There are various matters one can explore in order to reconstruct the speed and effectiveness of a manor court's civil litigation procedure.³² These include, the number of court sessions held annually; the number of court sessions for which a plaintiff ran before it was resolved; the court's policy on amercing defendants who failed to turn up in court, or the pledges who had promised to guarantee the defendant's appearance; and the monitoring and punishment of the manorial officials responsible for carrying out the orders issued by the court in private litigation. Only by looking closely at these and connected matters can one evaluate the extent to which a specific court was a speedy or efficient place in which to sue.

By exploring such issues it is possible to establish that many of the signs of degeneration of the court machinery highlighted by McIntosh are also evident in the three case study courts, especially Willingham and Oakington. Such degeneration was not primarily a consequence of reductions in the annual totals of court sessions. Only Willingham began routinely to hold fewer court sessions per annum in this period, when it shifted from four to three around 1420. At Oakington and Swaffham, it is clear that, respectively, four and three sessions per annum continued to be held throughout, though records do not survive for many of these. It is also clear that after 1400, all three courts continued to record amercements against parties who failed to turn up in court, just as they had done between 1350 and 1400, though one cannot be certain that such amercements were always successfully collected. Finally, no change can be found in the enforcement of debts and damages payments which had been awarded to the creditor in a court judgement. After 1400, as before, all three courts recorded in the court roll their undertaking to enforce repayment if necessary by levying these sums through seizure of the debtor's goods.

Some sense of the declining efficiency of the court is gained, however, through examination of changes in the number of debt claims which were pending before the court for more than two sessions (Table 3). In most decades after 1400, a greater proportion of claims were before the court for three or more sessions than had been the case before 1400, in all three courts. This speaks of a deteriorating performance of court machinery, at least with respect to its success in getting defendants to court in order to effect rapid termination of debt cases. Clearly, there are exceptions to this trend, such as the decade 1401-10 at Oakington, and the decade 1441-50 at Swaffham Prior, decades in which the courts appear to have had more success in getting debtors to appear. At Willingham and Oakington there are also several decades after 1400 when no case appears to have lasted for more than two sessions. This feature, however, is primarily a function of record loss. The figures in Table 3 simply show the number of different court sessions in which a case appears in the surviving records. Where a substantial number of court rolls do not survive, which is frequently the case at Oakington and Willingham after 1420, it can appear as if particular cases were dispatched more quickly than they were.

However, it is really only by looking in more detail at the progress of the debt cases that

³² C. Briggs, 'Manor court procedures, debt litigation levels, and rural credit provision in England, c.1290-c.1380', *Law and History Rev.* 24 (2006), pp. 519-58.

TABLE 3. The percentage of debt complaints of duration in excess of two court sessions in the manor courts of Willingham, Oakington (with Cottenham and Dry Drayton), and Swaffham Prior

	Willingham			Oakington etc.			Swaffham Prior		
	<i>Total new plaints</i>	<i>Plaints lasting >2 court sessions</i>	<i>% of plaints lasting >2 sessions</i>	<i>Total new plaints</i>	<i>Plaints lasting >2 court sessions</i>	<i>% of plaints lasting >2 sessions</i>	<i>Total new plaints</i>	<i>Plaints lasting >2 court sessions</i>	<i>% of plaints lasting >2 sessions</i>
1351–1360	–	–	–	82	16	19.5	44	3	6.8
1361–1370	–	–	–	117	12	10.3	62	9	14.5
1371–1380	45	0	0.0	127	22	17.3	–	–	–
1381–1390	361	25	6.9	100	27	27.0	–	–	–
1391–1400	294	40	13.6	92	22	23.9	–	–	–
1401–1410	191	54	28.3	44	4	9.1	–	–	–
1411–1420	101	35	34.7	45	13	28.9	–	–	–
1421–1430	25	5	20.0	9	5	55.6	59	14	23.7
1431–1440	15	0	0.0	44	19	43.2	97	30	30.9
1441–1450	17	3	17.6	2	0	0.0	41	5	12.2
1451–1460	6	0	0.0	1	0	0.0	17	7	41.2
1461–1470	–	–	–	5	0	0.0	–	–	–
1471–1480	–	–	–	3	0	0.0	–	–	–
Total	1055	162	15.4	671	140	20.9	320	68	21.3

Note: Excludes 'unknown' actions.

Sources: See Table 2.

one can confirm that there were major changes afoot in these courts. At Willingham, in the period between 1395 and 1421, the court appears to have been under strain, less capable than before of handling the litigation coming before it. Thirty-eight of the total of 53 cases of the years 1377 to 1458 that lasted for five or more court sessions were begun between 1395 and 1421. There are also other telling signs of deterioration, this time concerning the performance of manorial officials. In 1402, in a debt complaint between William Bolle and John Bocher, it is noted that 'at the preceding court, order was made to the lord's hayward to attach John Bocher to respond to William Bolle, but he did not attach him, therefore he [the hayward] is in mercy [i.e. amerced]'.³³ This was the first occasion on which the amercement of an official for failing to attach in a debt case is recorded. The 1402 amercement is followed in 1407 by two further amercements of the hayward for the same offence — failing to obey an order to attach — in two separate debt complaints.³⁴ But there are no further proceedings against Willingham manorial officials.

³³ CRO, L1/178 (27 Feb. 1402).

³⁴ CRO, L1/178 (20 June 1407). The cases are Thomas Atte Persounes v. William Bolle, and Thomas Massy v.

William Bolle. The hayward who failed to attach was named in the latter case as Thomas Syward.

At Oakington, there is even stronger anecdotal evidence of the failure of the court machinery. There are five cases notable in this respect – all begun between 1415 and 1428 – all of which contain repeated failed orders to distrain, session after session. These cases were before the court from eight to a maximum of 25 sessions. Where a resolution is known, it is, in all cases, a failure by the plaintiff to prosecute further.³⁵ These are followed by eight very similar actions begun after 1430. These again all involve repeated orders to distrain which were not implemented. They lasted from a minimum of eight to a maximum of 13 sessions.³⁶ Local people would have been well aware of such ineffectiveness on the part of the court and its officials, and it would have been a strong disincentive to sue. Cases pending for such long periods involving repeated orders not acted upon were very rare in the Oakington court in the fourteenth century. It has been argued elsewhere that between c.1325 and c.1350 the Oakington manor court overhauled its procedures with seigniorial backing in order to improve the speed and efficiency of its litigation facilities, and thereby attract litigation.³⁷ What is evident after 1400 is almost exactly the reverse process, or an undoing of the earlier ‘reforms’. Finally, Crowland manorial officials ceased to be amerced after 1400 for failure to attach or distrain defendants in debt complaints. They had, however, been amerced for this reason at least twice between 1350 and 1380.³⁸ One very plausible implication is that the court steward, jurors and suitors were resigned to such official failings after 1400. In a period when litigation was rare, the absence of complaint against the performance of a court’s officials is probably best seen not as evidence of ‘customer satisfaction’, but as indicative of general apathy about the functioning of the court flowing from the fact that very few villagers were using it to bring lawsuits. Similar apathy in an era of declining litigation may also partly explain the absence, noted earlier, of complaints against the ineffectiveness of Willingham manorial officials after 1407.

At Swaffham Prior, there was also a general increase after 1400 in the proportion of suits pending for more than two court sessions (Table 3). However, it must be conceded that the time taken to settle a suit is not in itself an entirely satisfactory indicator of the effectiveness of a court’s procedure. A fifteenth-century court could have been fully exerting itself to secure a defendant’s appearance, without necessarily being successful in doing so quickly. As with Oakington and Willingham, a clearer sense of the Swaffham court’s performance is obtained by supplementing the statistics on delay in suit resolution times with the detail of particular suits. There is telling evidence which suggests that, even towards the end of the period, the Swaffham court was trying to modify the civil litigation process with the aim of improving conditions for creditors. The court roll for 31 October 1459 notes how at the previous court session Thomas

³⁵ CUL, Q roll 14, 25 Apr. 1415 (John Symond v. Simon Cole); 15 Feb. 1417 (Thomas Boydene v. Thomas Stanard smith); 29 July 1417 (Robert in the Field v. William Mas-sanger); roll 16, 27 Nov. 1424 (John Symound v. Simon Cole); roll 15, 12 Feb. 1428 (Robert Aylewene v. Simon Sperner). For all cases, only the date of first appearance is given.

³⁶ CUL, Q roll 16, 4 May 1431 (Robert Aylewene v. John Gleyve thresher); 13 Nov. 1431 (William Martyn v. John Roger); 15 Nov. 1435 (Simon Gylberd v. Henry

Martyn); roll 17, 19 Nov. 1437 (Simon Wryghte v. Thomas Warlok); 11 Feb. 1438 (John Haldene v. John Smyth); 5 May 1438 (Richard Katellene v. John Bevere, John Cosyn junior v. John Botown junior); 20 Apr. 1439 (John Cole v. Richard Porter). Again, only the date of first appearance is given.

³⁷ Briggs, ‘Manor court procedures’.

³⁸ CUL, Q roll 6, 9 Oct. 1364 (Robert Harger v. William Veysy); roll 8, 17 Sept. 1380 (Andrew Phipson v. Robert Cademan).

Rede of Bottisham had been ordered to respond to Henry Terry in a plea of debt, but had not come to the present session. 'Therefore', it is stated, that since Thomas had made his fourth default, or had failed to appear to answer the plaintiff for a fourth time, 'according to the ancient custom of this manor it is adjudged by the lord's steward and the lord's tenants that the said Henry shall recover his debt together with 12*d.* damages, and the defendant amerced'.³⁹ In other words, in a move virtually unparalleled in medieval manor court evidence from any other location, judgement in the absence of the defendant was allowed. It appears that the court was reviving a pre-existing curial practice to deal with the problem of contumacious defendants. The surviving rolls show that this custom was invoked on at least one previous occasion, when in July 1436 judgement following a fourth default was given against Stephen Bacon in favour of John Atte Chaumbre with respect to a debt claim of 10*s.*⁴⁰ Given that in 1436 the Swaffham 'four defaults' rule was not described as the 'ancient custom' of the manor as it was in 1459, it is worth speculating that that rule was in fact introduced in the 1430s in order to shore up the confidence of litigants in the manor court machinery at a time when such confidence was decreasing here and more generally. Local awareness of such proactive curial policies may well have encouraged lenders to believe that they could continue to rely on the Swaffham manor court to assist in recovery of their debts.

Having investigated the functioning of the three courts, one may advance the following argument. Debt litigation declined dramatically between 1400 and 1460 in two of the three manor courts studied. This is interpreted as reflecting a corresponding decline in credit in the relevant localities. This credit contraction is, in general terms, what one would expect following the monetarist model of medieval money and credit. However, the failure of the quantity of credit transactions to increase as well as decrease in this period, in spite of booms in mint output, confounds the monetarist theory, and requires further explanation. It seems probable that a deterioration in the powers of the Willingham and Oakington manor courts as debt recovery institutions exacerbated other factors leading to credit contraction. It did this by making potential creditors fearful of getting their money back, because they would not be able to harness the powers of the manor courts to force their debtors to stand by their obligations. At Swaffham Prior, by contrast with the other two courts, debt litigation and underlying credit creation remained at a higher level after 1400 relative to the immediate post-Black Death decades. There are signs that this continued credit extension at Swaffham in the 1430s and 1440s was also influenced by changes within the manor court, since there are highly significant indications in its rolls that that jurisdiction continued to exert itself to secure rapid and enforceable court decisions well into the 1450s.

It is not at all clear which of the two principal factors under consideration — coin shortage, and deterioration in manorial justice — should be given primacy as a cause of rural credit withdrawal. One should of course not forget other forces which were also almost certainly of importance in bringing about shrinkage in the number of credit arrangements. Significant among these, naturally, is the possibility of continued demographic decline in the decades around 1400. Yet although the effects of population change on numbers of credit ties are not easily charted in the records, it seems unlikely that any demographic effect could by itself account for the large

³⁹ CUL, EDC 7/13/6 (31 Oct. 1459).

⁴⁰ CUL, EDC 7/13/6 (5 July 1436).

reduction in credit reflected in the debt litigation figures in Table 2. Where the respective roles of monetary developments and deterioration in manorial justice are concerned, it can certainly be argued that the initial drop in credit extension and consequent debt litigation was a result of severe coin shortage in the first decade of the fifteenth century. Subsequent developments within two of the three manor courts may then have intensified the tendency to withhold credit in the relevant locations. This would have happened because, in spite of an upturn in mint output and perhaps also in coin supply around 1420, it would still have seemed excessively risky to extend credit owing to the removal of a reliable local debt recovery mechanism. At the very least, however, it is clear that the absence at Oakington and Willingham of upward movement in the number of credit arrangements can only be understood in the light of failure in the institutions that traditionally had enforced peasant debt contracts, even if the initial crisis of credit was not caused by that failure.

IV

This section raises a further question. If manorial courts were increasingly slow and unreliable locales for debt recovery, were they replaced by other institutions?⁴¹ If they were, then the manorial evidence could be giving us a misleading impression of the pattern of fifteenth-century change both in debt disputes, and in the underlying level of rural credit. Were there such alternative institutional means for recovering unpaid debts?

There are several potential candidates. Debt claims could be initiated in the 'communal' courts of county and hundred in the later middle ages. However, the lack of surviving records for these jurisdictions prevents any investigation of the possibility that the villages studied here were affected by a shift in debt jurisdiction from the manor courts to the county or hundred courts.⁴² Another potential alternative to the manor court was the religious gild, or fraternity. Gilds became increasingly common in rural parishes during the fifteenth century, and played a role in the settlement of disputes through arbitration.⁴³ The existence of at least one gild at a date after 1389 is documented for each of the five Cambridgeshire villages studied here.⁴⁴ However, although it is possible that these gilds assumed a role in enforcing debt repayment that had previously belonged to the manor courts, we are prevented from checking this because we cannot be certain exactly when each gild came into existence and by the lack of extant gild records. One explanation for the continued vitality of the Swaffham manor court as a forum in which to recover debts in the first half of the fifteenth century may lie in the absence of

⁴¹ For this possibility, see Dyer, 'Political life', p. 148.

⁴² No relevant fifteenth-century plea rolls relating to Cambridgeshire hundred or county courts appear to survive. For a discussion of debt and other personal actions in county courts, and an indication of the relatively sparse survival of records of their proceedings, see R. C. Palmer, *The county courts of medieval England, 1150–1350* (1982), pp. 220–62.

⁴³ Dyer, 'Political life', pp. 150–3. It is probable however, that gilds settled disputes and enforced judgements only among their members. For a discussion, albeit

in an urban context, see B. R. McRee, 'Religious gilds and regulation of behaviour in late medieval towns', in J. Rosenthal and C. Richmond (eds), *People, politics and community in the later middle ages* (1987), pp. 108–22.

⁴⁴ V. R. Bainbridge, *Gilds in the medieval countryside. Social and religious change in Cambridgeshire, c.1350–1558* (1996), pp. 30–1. Gilds are recorded at Dry Drayton, Oakington and Willingham in the early sixteenth century: VCH *Cambs*, IX, pp. 86, 206, 409. None of the manorial court roll series studied mentions gilds.

competition in the shape of a contemporary gild, but it is difficult to do more than speculate on this point.⁴⁵

The possibility also exists that litigants increasingly sought the royal courts of common law at Westminster in preference to the manor courts as a setting for debt proceedings. The most important of the royal courts in this context was the court of Common Pleas. 'Peasant' litigants are certainly known to have brought litigation in Common Pleas in the fifteenth century.⁴⁶ No search for Cambridgeshire peasant plaintiffs in the voluminous Common Pleas records has yet been undertaken. In spite of this, one may still argue that it is unlikely that village debt disputes formerly destined for the Cambridgeshire manor courts studied here shifted to Common Pleas to any significant degree in this period. The manor courts and Common Pleas did not compete directly with one another in a single pool of debt disputes. Instead, a division of jurisdiction existed which meant that the manor courts could only hear debt claims under 40s., while suits in Common Pleas were limited to debt claims of 40s. or more.⁴⁷ Common Pleas therefore did not constitute a genuine alternative to the manor court as a setting for disputes concerning the relatively small obligations that were typical of most peasant credit transactions. Nor is it clear that civil litigation in the royal courts was increasing at the time when it was falling into abeyance in manorial jurisdictions. Although litigation in the royal courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas appears to have experienced a significant upturn in the later fourteenth century, a sustained decrease, coinciding with the most notable period of litigation decline in the manorial courts, set in from the 1430s and lasted for up to a century. Thus the wider picture of litigation patterns does little to advance the claim that the fifteenth-century royal courts were taking debt business away from the manor courts on any significant scale.⁴⁸

A more likely alternative to the manor court as a tribunal in which to bring rural debt disputes in this period was the church court, and it is upon that institution that most attention focuses here. The church courts had the power to hear petty debt disputes in the form of private suits brought under the rubric *fidei lesio*, or 'breach of faith'. Helmholz has written of an 'explosion' in *fidei lesio* actions in the fifteenth-century church courts.⁴⁹ He has identified relatively large numbers of such suits in the courts of the dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield at various dates in the fifteenth century, and for numerous dioceses by the early sixteenth century.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ No gild explicitly connected with Swaffham itself is recorded, but a gild of St John associated with a chapel in the hamlet of Reach (partly within Swaffham Prior parish) is known from a will to have existed c.1490–1525: VCH *Cambs*, X, pp. 228, 297, and references therein. (This, presumably, is the gild counted as belonging to Swaffham Prior in Bainbridge, *Gilds*, pp. 30–1.)

⁴⁶ R. C. Palmer, 'England: law, society and the state', in S. H. Rigby (ed.), *A companion to Britain in the later middle ages* (2003), pp. 256–7 (in Trinity term 1465, plaintiffs were explicitly described as 'husbandmen' or 'yeomen' in one per cent of instances).

⁴⁷ S. F. C. Milsom, *Historical foundations of the common law* (sec. edn., 1981), pp. 244–5; J. A. Galloway, 'Urban hinterlands in later medieval England', in K. Giles

and C. Dyer (eds), *Town and country in the middle ages: contrasts, contacts and interconnections, 1100–1500* (2005), p. 121.

⁴⁸ C. W. Brooks, 'Litigation and society in England, 1200–1996', in Brooks, *Lawyers, litigation and English society since 1450* (1998), pp. 66–70. McIntosh found that suits in Common Pleas involving Havering residents were extremely rare in the first half of the fifteenth century: *Autonomy and community*, pp. 69–70, 200.

⁴⁹ R. H. Helmholz, *The Oxford history of the laws of England*, I, *The canon law and ecclesiastical jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s* (2004), pp. 229–30, 359–60.

⁵⁰ *id.*, 'Assumpsit and *fidei laesio*', in Helmholz, *Canon law and the law of England* (1987), pp. 263–4.

TABLE 4. Debt (*fidei lesio*) actions in the court of Wisbech deanery, 1460–72

	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Inter vivos</i> actions	418	79.2
Testamentary actions:		
Decedent is 'creditor'	74	14.0
Decedent is 'debtor'	30	5.7
Not known whether decedent 'creditor' or 'debtor'	6	1.1
Total	528	100.0

Source: Calculated from Poos (ed.), *Lower ecclesiastical jurisdiction*, pp. 271–592.

Woodcock also noted a large increase in breach of faith actions in the fifteenth-century courts of Canterbury diocese.⁵¹ In several Cambridgeshire manor courts of the 1430s to 1460s one finds a heightened frequency of bylaws and presentments on the problem of manorial tenants suing one another in civil actions in a jurisdiction other than their own manor court, often specifically in an ecclesiastical court.⁵² Is it then possible that there was some sort of transfer of jurisdiction over rural debt disputes from manor court to church court in the middle decades of the fifteenth century?

To test this one needs contemporary church court material covering the case study villages discussed here. None survives, which is unsurprising given the generally patchy survival of the records of pre-1500 church courts. However, material is available from a location reasonably close in spatial terms to the villages studied. This is the record of sessions of the court of Wisbech deanery from 1460. This court heard debt and other matters subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction arising in the seven rural parishes of the deanery.⁵³

In turning from the manorial courts rolls of the 1450s to the deanery court book of the 1460s, one moves from a world of almost no rural credit to one in which it appears to have been very common. Most of the church court disputes were of the type familiar from the manor courts, namely sums of money usually of less than 10s. arising from loans or credit sales. There were at least 528 debt actions brought before the deanery court between 1460 and 1472 (Table 4). For proper comparison with the manor courts, the figures are restricted to cases between individuals. A much smaller number of debts owed by and to institutions, primarily the guilds and parish churches, are excluded. Of the 528 actions, four-fifths are pleadings between living persons (the remainder relate to the settlement of testator's estates) and they represent an average of over 75 disputes from each parish in the deanery in just over a decade. That is a much higher total than came before any of the three manor courts in the 1450s, which is the latest decade for which data from all three manor courts is available. It must also be remembered that these 528 *fidei lesio* actions were just the suits begun at the deanery level. Additional debt disputes from the

⁵¹ B. L. Woodcock, *Medieval ecclesiastical courts in the diocese of Canterbury* (1952), pp. 90–1.

⁵² C. Briggs, 'Seigniorial control of villagers' litigation beyond the manor in later medieval England', *Historical Research*, forthcoming.

⁵³ L. R. Poos (ed.), *Lower ecclesiastical jurisdiction in late-medieval England. The courts of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, 1336–1349 and the Deanery of Wisbech, 1458–1484* (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, new ser. 32, 2001).

seven parishes could also have been begun in jurisdictions at the archdeaconry and diocesan level, courts whose contemporary records are now lost.

The Wisbech court book dates from after 1460, when mint output had risen and the general monetary situation improved. One could therefore argue that the substantial quantities of debt revealed by the deanery court book might also be evident in local manor court records from the 1460s, and that what one therefore sees is not a transfer of jurisdiction, but a general upturn in credit of a kind that the monetarist model would anticipate. However, Poos searched the available Wisbech manorial court rolls from the same period as the deanery court book and found little debt litigation there. He concluded that the deanery court had become the normal place for such lawsuits by the 1460s.⁵⁴ It is clear that this was not the case in the fourteenth century, as debt litigation was at that period a significant component of Wisbech manor court business.⁵⁵ The Oakington evidence in Table 2b also shows that only a tiny quantity of debt litigation was initiated in the 1460s and 1470s. There is therefore sufficient evidence to suggest that some time between 1400 and 1460, as the manor courts failed as civil jurisdictions, creditors started increasingly to look to the potential of the church courts as a forum in which to sue non-paying debtors. The church courts may perhaps have adapted their procedures in response to attract litigants. It is notable that the Wisbech court used the relatively quick *ex officio* procedure, rather than the more convoluted 'instance' procedure that was more usual in civil suits in medieval church courts.⁵⁶ This is analogous to the practice in the courts of mid-fifteenth century Canterbury diocese, where most of the *fidei lesio* actions were heard by a rapid summary procedure, not 'instance' procedure.⁵⁷

If fifteenth-century would-be creditors did indeed come to believe that the church courts represented a viable alternative to the failing manor courts as effective debt recovery institutions, then their propensity to lend would presumably have increased accordingly. Of course, caution is required when making the argument that by the mid-fifteenth century the ecclesiastical jurisdictions had gone a considerable way towards supplanting the manor courts as the courts of first resort for rural lenders. The medieval church courts could suspend a contumacious defendant's right to enter the parish church, and could excommunicate anyone who refused to obey an order to repay a debt. Crucially, however, they do not appear to have ever shared the manor court's power to seize the property of debtors in order to effect repayment once a judgement in the creditor's favour had been made.⁵⁸ In practical terms, indeed, in terms of the speed and effectiveness of its debt recovery procedures, the services that the church courts offered to creditors were almost certainly not as good as those offered by a fully-functioning manor court. On the other hand, as the manor courts increasingly failed to enforce their procedures, the ecclesiastical jurisdictions may have appeared relatively attractive as a setting in which to initiate proceedings in spite of their lack of powers of compulsion. Further detailed

⁵⁴ Poos (ed.), *Lower ecclesiastical jurisdiction*, p. lvi.

⁵⁵ K. Parkin, 'Courts and the community: reconstructing the fourteenth-century peasant society of Wisbech Hundred, Cambridgeshire, from manor court rolls' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1998), pp. 49, 80–6.

⁵⁶ Poos (ed.), *Lower ecclesiastical jurisdiction*, pp. xlv–l;

for 'instance' procedure, see Helmholz, *Oxford history of the laws of England*, I, pp. 312–43.

⁵⁷ Woodcock, *Medieval ecclesiastical courts*, pp. 53, 89.

⁵⁸ R. N. Swanson, *Church and society in late medieval England* (1989), pp. 179–80; Helmholz, *Oxford history of the laws of England*, I, pp. 345–8.

research is necessary in order to determine how the two types of jurisdiction compared in this regard by the middle of the fifteenth century.⁵⁹ At any rate, it is clear that between 1400 and 1460, responses to coin shortage were taking place against a background of fundamental changes in the landscape of rural legal institutions.

V

This article has brought new local evidence to bear on the question of changes in the availability of rural credit in fifteenth-century England. The debt litigation data from the three manor courts studied suggests that the numbers of new credit transactions underlying the litigation were much lower by the mid-fifteenth century than they had been a century earlier, though it is important to note that lending activity in Swaffham Prior did rally in the 1430s. This new manorial evidence therefore concurs with existing studies of manor courts, in pointing to a substantial late medieval decline in debt litigation, and hence in real levels of credit.

Caution is required, however, since for this period it is not sufficient simply to examine the pattern of manorial debt litigation relating to a particular village, and then to conclude that that pattern is equivalent to trends in the extension of credit within that village. This is because, almost as a by-product of the wider decline in the importance of villeinage and the manor, the fifteenth-century manor courts were losing their previous near-monopoly on the resolution of peasant debt disputes. Other institutions, most importantly the church courts, were taking an indeterminate but increasing share of the debt litigation business of the countryside. As a result, the dramatic drop in debt suits and in the corresponding level of credit revealed by the records of at least two of the three manor courts studied here does not necessarily tell the whole story, since in theory a growth in the church courts' debt jurisdiction could to some extent have compensated for the decline in manorial suits. Unfortunately, the surviving sources are such that they rarely, if ever, allow one to study simultaneously all the records of contemporary debt disputes arising within a particular village. For the villages studied here, for example, the lack of church court material is especially problematic. Because the records of debt dispute are incomplete, it is difficult to comment with complete confidence on the direction taken by quantities of new credit in such villages. One must also consider the possibility that there was an increase in the fifteenth century in the number of debt disputes that escaped the written record entirely, because they were settled informally, for example by arbitration.⁶⁰ Had there been such an increase, one could in principle argue that fifteenth-century credit networks remained very active, even if documentary references to debt become increasingly rare. Given all these uncertainties, it is perhaps safest to conclude that rural credit transactions became less numerous in the fifteenth century by comparison with the latter half of the fourteenth century, but that the decline was probably not as a precipitous as is suggested by looking solely at the figures on manorial debt litigation.

Although uncertainty therefore remains about the direction and degree of chronological change in numbers of new rural credit transactions, this by no means prevents a conclusion

⁵⁹ I intend to publish a more detailed study of this issue.

⁶⁰ Dyer, 'Political life', p. 154.

being reached on the second concern of this article, which is to establish the reasons for those changes. A number of interconnected factors evidently shaped the frequency with which villagers came together to form credit contracts. An important part of the reason for the fifteenth-century fall in the extension of credit is surely demographic. Thus to some extent, demand for credit simply lessened as a consequence of population decline. However, variations in monetary and institutional conditions also played a major role in governing the amount of credit given, by persuading creditors to rein in their lending activity at certain times, even when demand for credit remained strong, while at others encouraging those creditors to step up their lending activity once more.

The evidence presented in this article confirms the findings of previous studies in showing that in the first half of the fifteenth century, the institutions which for over a century had been primarily responsible for enforcing rural debt contracts — the manor courts — began to fail as tribunals of civil justice. As the evidence from Willingham and Oakington shows most dramatically, by the middle of the century, people had almost completely ceased to take their private suits to the manor courts. This failure of manorial justice intensified the problems posed by an inadequate money supply, providing a further reason for individuals to withhold credit on the basis of doubts about their prospects of repayment. The effect of institutional changes like the decline of the manor courts was therefore to restrict economic activity, since where few were willing to offer credit, either in the context of a sale or via a loan, trade in agricultural commodities was unlikely to flourish. However, this article has also suggested the possibility that by the second half of the century the church courts had taken over a growing share of the work of enforcing rural debt contracts. The most difficult further questions raised by this article are therefore as follows: to what extent did any transfer of jurisdiction over rural debt business to the church courts compensate for the demise of the system of civil justice that had previously been provided by the manor courts? Did this institutional change boost lenders' confidence, stimulate the availability of credit, and help to bring its supply back into line with demand? However, to address such issues fully requires a broad-based study which integrates the analysis of mint output, prices, and evidence of rural trade into a more comprehensive examination of the manorial records and surviving church court material than has so far been attempted.

Seasonality and sheep-stealing: Wales, 1730–1830^{*}

by Nicholas Woodward

Abstract

In an earlier article in this *Review*, Osborne challenged the traditional assumption that seasonal fluctuations in sheep-stealing and other rural crimes simply reflected changes in economic activity and the employment opportunities of the labouring classes, arguing that other influences should be recognised. The aim of this paper is to examine these ideas in more depth. Drawing on the records of the Welsh Court of Great Sessions, the study considers how the nature of sheep-stealing changed with the seasons and the reasons for this. It shows that, although the pattern varied by occupational group, in aggregate there were three main seasonal peaks: during the winter, early-summer and mid-autumn. It is argued that, although these peaks were, indeed, influenced by employment opportunities, other factors, such as the ability to market stolen sheep and the intensity of shepherding, played a role too.

One of the characteristics of many, although not all, contemporary crimes is that they display considerable seasonality.¹ For example, the numbers of most crimes of violence tend to be low in the first quarter of the year; they then rise, peaking in the third quarter, before falling back in the fourth.² By contrast, property crimes tend to rise in the early part of the year reaching a high in the summer months, before declining in the third quarter and rising again towards the end of the year. However, not all property crimes conform to this pattern. Burglary tends to be high in the first and particularly the fourth quarters. Robbery tends to be low in the first quarter and to rise in the third and particularly the fourth quarters.³

The interpretation of such patterns is not always straightforward. One useful paradigm, associated with the names of Cohen and Felson, is the routine activities theory.⁴ At the heart of the theory is the idea that crime patterns are strongly conditioned by the nature of everyday life. Property crime, we are reminded, can only occur when three conditions coexist. First,

^{*} Subject to the usual disclaimer, the author would like to thank David Howell for his comments on an earlier draft of the paper and the staff of the National Library of Wales for their assistance in compiling the database on which the study is based.

¹ See, for example, S. Hurwitz and K. O. Christiansen, *Criminology* (1983), pp. 140–3; G. Farrell and K. Pease, 'Crime seasonality: domestic disputes and residential burglary in Merseyside, 1988–90', *British J. Criminology* 34 (1994), pp. 487–98. Forgery and motor vehicle theft are crimes that display little seasonality.

² GB, *Monthly Digest Statistics*, various. The figures relate to the 1990s.

³ S. P. Arnold, *Patterns of seasonal variation in*

property crime (University of Leicester, Discussion Papers in Economics, 96/8, 1996).

⁴ L. E. Cohen and M. Felson, 'Social change and crime rate trends: a routine activity approach', *American Sociological Rev.* 44 (1979), pp. 588–68; for an application of the theory, S. F. Landau and D. Fridman, 'The seasonality of crime. The case of robbery and homicide in Israel', *J. Research in Crime and Delinquency* 30 (1993), pp. 163–91.

there must be motivated offenders. Their supply, of course, may fluctuate over the course of the year in response to changes in both economic conditions and the risks of detection.⁵ But one of the advantages of the routine activities approach is that the focus of analysis is shifted away from the criminal towards the victim and his or her possessions. Thus, a second condition for crime is that suitable targets must be available. Whether an item is a suitable target for theft will depend on its characteristics, such as its value, portability and disposability. However, the supply of targets, like the supply of potential offenders, may change with the seasons as people's daily habits adjust. Thus, it is no coincidence that consumer durable theft is high over the Christmas period or that bicycle-theft peaks during the summer. But whether a suitable target is stolen, however, will also depend on a final condition – whether it is protected. Again, the degree of protection may vary over the course of the year as people's lifestyles change. Thus, some property crimes tend to increase in the summer because less time is spent in the home.⁶

It would be disingenuous to claim that rural historians have neglected seasonal fluctuations in crime. Archer has shown that incendiarism in nineteenth-century East Anglia was concentrated into the late autumn and winter months, a seasonality which he links to wage movements and employment conditions.⁷ Shakesheff has examined wood and crop theft in nineteenth-century Herefordshire. He found that the former peaked in the early winter, coinciding with lower temperatures and a relatively high incidence of seasonal unemployment, while the latter peaked in the autumn months following the harvest.⁸ There have also been a couple of studies of poaching. Howkins found that in Oxfordshire in the mid-nineteenth century, convictions peaked twice during the course of the year – in January and again in October.⁹ In a more detailed study, Harvey Osborne discovered, again for the nineteenth-century, that not only did poaching display considerable seasonality but that the pattern varied according to the item of game and the region under consideration.¹⁰ His central message, however, was that we cannot hope to understand seasonal fluctuations simply by considering levels of need. Not only was the seasonal correlation between economic activity and poaching weak, but existing accounts paid little attention to other influences, especially the role of natural forces. Now, in a routine activities framework, seasonal variations in the pace of economic activity might influence the potential supply of offenders, but before poaching took place suitable targets had to be available and these depended on natural forces.

Osborne argued, moreover, that poaching was not peculiar; the seasonality of many rural crimes was a multi-causal phenomenon. Food-stealing, for example, was affected by harvest patterns as well as hardship, and he speculated that not only was sheep-stealing subject to considerable seasonal fluctuations but these were the result of the interplay of a number of

⁵ S. Field, *Trends in crime and their interpretation* (Home Office Research Study, 119, 1990).

⁶ Such influences are evident for the period under consideration. The National Library of Wales (NLW) database (to be discussed later) shows that horse-theft and burglary, for example, sometimes took place when the victims were at church or at market.

⁷ J. E. Archer, *By a flash and a scare. Incendiarism, animal maiming and poaching in East Anglia, 1815–1870*

(1990), pp. 131–4.

⁸ T. Shakesheff, 'Wood and crop theft in rural Herefordshire, 1800–60', *Rural Hist.* 13 (2002), pp. 1–17.

⁹ A. Howkins, 'Economic crime and class law: poaching and the game laws, 1840–1880', in S. Burman and B. E. Harrell-Bond (eds), *The Imposition of Law* (1979), pp. 273–87.

¹⁰ H. Osborne, 'The seasonality of nineteenth-century poaching', *AgHR* 48 (2000), pp. 27–41.

influences. Unfortunately, he did not specify what these were, although a number of possibilities – the buoyancy of sheep sales, the condition of the sheep, the intensity of shepherding, and the opportunities for theft provided by the hours of daylight – spring to mind.

It is the main aim of this paper to consider these possibilities in more detail by examining the Welsh experience in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries. The paper begins with a discussion of sheep-stealing in Wales and the characteristics and motives of the thieves. We then examine the pattern of seasonality. The remainder of the analysis is concerned with the possible reasons for the seasonal peaks. The main source of information for the study has been the Gaol Files of the Court of Great Sessions. The Court, which existed between 1538 and 1830, was equivalent to the English assize courts. It had four circuits: Brecon (incorporating the counties of Brecon, Glamorgan and Radnor), Carmarthen (Carmarthen, Cardigan and Pembroke), Chester (Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery) and North Wales (Anglesey, Caernarvon and Merioneth). The Gaol Files include a range of materials, such as examinations, witness depositions and jury lists, all of which can be used for qualitative analysis. The National Library of Wales (NLW), however, has recently used the Files to compile a crime database for the years between 1730 and 1830, and this has been used to identify the seasonal patterns, as well as to provide other quantitative evidence about the crime.¹¹

As with all court records, the Gaol Files need to be used with care. Most obviously, some of the records are missing, and information about many of the cases is sparse. It is possible to reconstruct detailed histories for only a small proportion of thefts. Another problem is that the court officials did not always collect the information with as much accuracy as historians would regard as desirable. Some of the occupational descriptions, for instance, lack precision. Thus, following convention, women were invariably described by their marital status, while the court officials may have eschewed accurate descriptions in favour of convenient labels, such as 'labourer' or 'yeoman'. In addition, the level of indictments may not always accurately reflect real movements in crime rates. It has been argued, for example, that changes in prosecution practices reduce the value of indictments as an indicator of both long-run trends and cyclical fluctuations.¹² In similar vein, it is possible that indictments may not always capture seasonal movements in criminal activity. We would expect prosecution rates to be inversely related to the costs incurred. These, in turn, will depend on both the legal expenditures and costs arising from a loss of working-time. The latter, moreover, might have been considerable for a hill farmer at a busy time of the year, such as during lambing or haymaking.¹³ As a result, it is possible that prosecution rates may have fluctuated over the course of the year to such an extent that indictments do not mirror changes in theft. However, as there is no accurate means of measuring seasonal prosecution rates, we are obliged to take the indictment figures on trust.

With Wales, we are dealing with a major sheep-producing area. It supported many types of

¹¹ The database can be used both in the Library and on-line (at <http://www.llgc.org.uk/sesiwn-fawr/index-s.htm>). The library version was used in this study.

¹² J. Innes and J. Styles, 'The crime wave. Recent writing on crime and criminal justice in eighteenth-century England', *J. British Studies* 25 (1986), pp. 380–435; P. King, *Crime, justice and discretion in England, 1740–1820*

(2000), especially pp. 1–220.

¹³ This problem should not be exaggerated. As argued in the text, sheep were intensively protected during lambing. With farmers spending a high proportion of the day outside, the same may also have been true during the harvest and haymaking.

TABLE 1. Livestock holding patterns from Welsh probate inventories

	<i>Farmers/Yeomen</i>				<i>Labourers – Brecon Diocese</i>
	1730–1754	1775–1779	1780–1804	1805–1830	1730–1830
Number of Cases	41	59	81	49	83
Sheep Mentioned (%)	78.0	84.7	82.7	81.6	38.6
Horses Mentioned (%)	92.7	93.2	100.0	94.1	41.0
Cattle Mentioned (%)	100.0	94.9	97.4	97.9	34.9
Sheep-Stock Ratio (%)	11.9	14.8	26.3	44.3	22.5

Note: Sheep-stock ratio is measured in value terms. The stock figure included all stock including pigs and poultry. No Monmouthshire inventories were included.

Source: NLW, wills and probate inventory files.

sheep in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although the dominant animal was the small, hardy, coarse-wool ‘mountaineer’.¹⁴ There are no accurate returns for the numbers of sheep in Wales until the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ These suggest that, although they were not farmed very intensively, per capita sheep holdings were high. Thus, in 1871 Wales accounted for thirteen per cent of both the national flock and land area of England and Wales, yet only five per cent of its population. Obviously, the importance of sheep to the economy varied from county to county. The topography of mid-Wales, in particular, encouraged farmers to stock large numbers.¹⁶ Thus, in order of importance, Breconshire, Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire and Merioneth accounted for at least half of the Welsh sheep. Judging from the Board of Agriculture Reports of the 1790s, we can be fairly confident that the pattern was similar eighty years earlier.¹⁷ Harder evidence on the importance of sheep comes from a sample of probate inventories (Table 1). These imply that most farmers kept some sheep, and that they became increasingly important over the period. This, in turn, reflected the expansion of the Welsh woollen trades and, given that a considerable number of stores were exported, the growth of the English meat market too.¹⁸ It is also evident that ownership was fairly dispersed. Almost forty per cent of labourers who left probate inventories owned sheep.¹⁹ This view is strengthened

¹⁴ See Walter Davies, *General view of the agriculture and domestic economy of North Wales* (1810); id., *General view of the agriculture and domestic economy of South Wales* (1815); R. Trow-Smith, *A history of British livestock husbandry, 1700–1900* (1959); R. J. Moore-Colyer, ‘Sheep’, in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, VI, 1750–1850 (1989), pp. 313–35.

¹⁵ Unlike some of the English counties, no livestock returns were collected for Wales during the French Wars. M. Turner, ‘Counting sheep: waking up to new estimates of livestock numbers in England, c.1800’, *AgHR* 46 (1998), pp. 142–61.

¹⁶ F. V. Emery, ‘Wales’, in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, V, 1640–1750 (2 vols, 1985),

I, pp. 393–426.

¹⁷ These were all entitled *General view of the agriculture of (county name)*. The authors were: J. Clark, *Brecknock and Radnor* (1794); J. Fox, *Glamorgan* (1796); C. Hassall, *Carmarthen and Pembroke* (1794); G. Kay, *Caernarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Merioneth and Montgomery* (1794); T. Lloyd and D. Turnor, *Cardigan* (1794).

¹⁸ Trow-Smith, *British livestock husbandry*, p. 8.

¹⁹ No claim is made that this is an accurate reflection of the sheep-holdings of Welsh labourers. Indeed, the figures are likely to exaggerate their ownership, because many labourers, particularly the least affluent, escaped the probate system. Nevertheless, the table makes it clear that ownership was quite widely dispersed.

by the occupational and status descriptions of those who were listed as prosecutors in sheep-stealing cases. Of these, almost eight per cent were women; four per cent were labourers; and ten per cent were artisans, tradesmen and professionals. The remaining 78 per cent were mainly farmers and yeomen, although a few gentlemen, shepherds and husbandmen were listed too.

I

It should come as no surprise to discover, therefore, that sheep figured prominently in the crime of the Principality. Some of the crimes were fairly mundane. There were, for example, a number of cases of pound-breaching, sheep-worrying, changing earmarks and the theft of sheep skins. There were also some cases of unlawfully shearing sheep, a little surprising perhaps in view of the relatively low price of Welsh wool. Nevertheless, on some occasions the crimes were more dramatic with sheep playing a central role in both riots and murder.²⁰ Yet, sheep-stealing was the most common cause of a prosecution.²¹ Overall, there are over 1500 suspected sheep-stealers in the Gaol Files database. However, as some crimes were committed in groups of two or more, there were just under 1300 suspected cases of theft. As Figure 1 shows, in the 1730s on average slightly under ten cases came before a grand jury each year. By the 1820s the figure had fallen a little to just under nine. However, in view of the large element of hidden theft, the use of informal sanctions and the possibility of changing prosecution rates, it would be unwise to assume that the actual number of sheep stolen was on a downward trend. Nevertheless, we can be fairly sure that sheep-stealing exceeded both horse and cattle-theft by a considerable margin, although, given the size of the Welsh flock, this is hardly surprising. Overall, sheep-stealing accounted for 57 per cent of all agricultural crimes in the NLW database.²² If anything, this figure, which make no allowance for hidden crime, understates the relative importance of sheep-stealing, because, unlike horses and cattle, sheep commanded relatively low prices so that the incentives to both recover them and prosecute suspects were weak.²³

Sheep-stealing, of course, was important in other areas of Britain too, although it seems to have particularly thrived in Wales.²⁴ The reasons for this are fairly predictable. Relatively low

²⁰ NLW, 4/616/3, 4/388/6.

²¹ For further evidence on sheep-stealing see BPP, 1844, V, *Report from the Select Committee on Commons' Inclosure*, especially the evidence of Thomas Williams, Frankland Lewis, John Iveson and W. Edwards.

²² There were also cases of hay, poultry and pig theft in the database, although these usually came under the jurisdiction of the lower courts.

²³ This is not to imply that sheep-owners never tried to recover their stolen animals or prosecute thieves. Like horse-owners, occasionally they used to carry-out person-to-person inquiries and issue handbills. They used to advertise in the newspapers too. Thus Charles Williams and Priscilla David from Panteage, Monmouthshire, placed an advert in the *Hereford J.*, 4 Jan. 1787, offering a two guinea reward for the capture of John Willams, a butcher, who had been apprehended for

sheep-stealing but had escaped. The advert included a physical description of Williams.

²⁴ See B. J. Davey, *Rural crime in the eighteenth-century: north Lincolnshire, 1740–80* (1994), pp. 9–13; Beatrice, *Crime and the courts in England, 1660–1800* (1986), p. 147; King, *Crime, justice and discretion*, p. 137. BPP, 1819, VIII, *Report of Select Committee on criminal law relating to the capital punishment in felonies*, Appendix, which also includes a range of interesting tables. These show, amongst other things, that sheep-stealing was more important than either horse or cattle theft, although its relative importance varied considerably from area to area. In general, it was higher in the rearing than the fattening areas. For some brief comments on the extent of sheep-theft and its geographical distribution see D. Howell, *The rural poor in eighteenth-century Wales* (2000), p. 235.

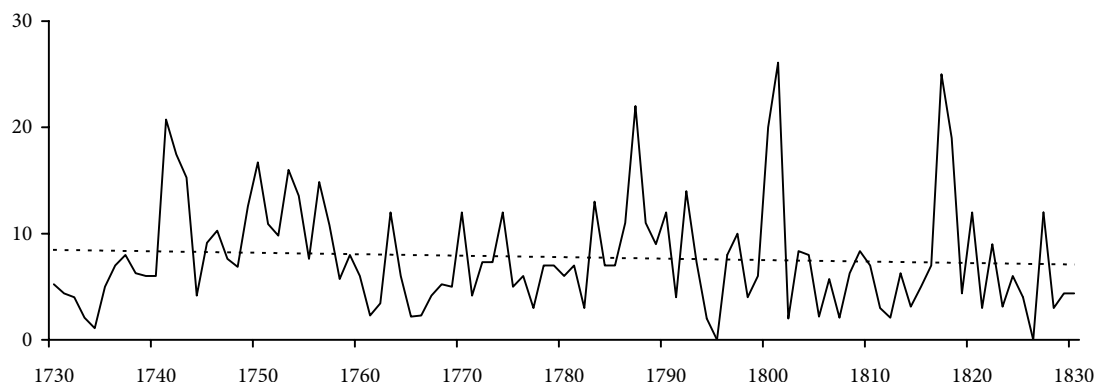


FIGURE 1. Number of indictments for sheep-stealing: Wales

Source: National Library of Wales (NLW), Gaol Files database.

living standards in conjunction with relatively small, impoverished farms ensured that there was an elastic supply of potential offenders.²⁵ At the same time, the importance of sheep in local agriculture and their size ensured that there was a plentiful supply of suitable targets, while the topography, the tendency to graze sheep on the wastes and a relatively low intensity of shepherding ensured that sheep enjoyed little protection from theft.²⁶ As one of the Board of Agriculture authors put it:

Every member of the community, who is not employed in the performance of some useful or good action, is generally busy in the accomplishment of some wicked deed. That immense loss which many of the honest part of the community have, in the vicinity of the commons, sustained from the numerous depredations of numerous gangs of sheep-stealers that infect these hills are too numerous to be questioned, and they justify the truth of that remark.²⁷

Furthermore, sheep-stealing was a low-risk crime. As the sheep were pastured on the hills, it was difficult to monitor the flocks on a day-to-day basis, so that farmers would not always have been immediately aware that some of their sheep had disappeared.²⁸ When losses were discovered, it could not always be assumed that they were due to theft: straying was common and sheep were subject to relatively high mortality rates. For example, one of the agents for the Powis estate worked on the basis of an annual loss rate of ten per cent.²⁹ Harder estimates come from the Edwinsford farm in Talley, Carmarthenshire, which, in 1822, lost almost seven

²⁵ M. Humphreys, *The crisis of community. Montgomeryshire, 1680–1815* (1996); Howell, *Rural Poor*.

²⁶ Lloyd and Turner, *General view ... Cardigan*, p. 22. In the early-modern period and before, protection had been enhanced by the practice of *hafod* – the summer farming of the uplands. However, this seems to have gone into decline during the eighteenth century. E. Davies, 'Hafod and Lluest. The summering of cattle and upland settlement in Wales', *Folk Life* 23 (1984–5),

pp. 76–96.

²⁷ Clark, *General view ... Brecknock*, p. 40

²⁸ We should not exaggerate this problem. Low labour costs encouraged farmers to employ shepherds. Furthermore, on the open hills the sheep from a particular farm would tend to congregate together. Monitoring was also eased by the tendency of sheep to congregate in groups of twenty or so.

²⁹ Shropshire Archives, 552/15/2177/1.

per cent of its flock outside the lambing season.³⁰ But, even when theft was suspected, it cannot always have been possible to identify a culprit, and, when one was, successful prosecution could not be guaranteed.³¹ Grand juries, it seems, were reluctant to find a true bill when suspected sheep-stealers came before them, with the result that only 63 per cent of those indicted appeared before a trial jury. It is likely that the Act of 1741, which made sheep-stealing a capital crime, in conjunction with a growing reluctance on the part of juries to convict for hanging offences, was responsible for this.³²

It was evident too that when a suspect did appear before a trial jury he was unlikely to be convicted. The Welsh data suggest that only 37 per cent were found guilty. This is quite similar to King's estimates for Essex over a broadly comparable period and Beattie's for Surrey and Sussex for the eighteenth century. Moreover, when a guilty verdict was returned, only a small proportion of defendants were executed. The official returns for England and Wales for the years between 1826 and 1831 suggest that only 1.5 per cent of those convicted were executed; six per cent were transported for life; nineteen per cent transported for shorter periods, while the remainder were imprisoned for relatively short periods. Whether someone was executed probably reflected a variety of considerations. Those unable to secure decent character references, recidivists and those suspected of previous offences were particularly at risk.³³ However, the discretionary nature of the legal system is evident from the fact that occasionally executions were recommended for their deterrent value. Thus, in his report on John Edward, a yeoman from Brecon who was indicted on a number of charges of sheep-stealing in 1784, John Wilson argued that not only was Edward a bad character but that, as there had been no executions over the previous 20 to 30 years, his death would deter future crime.³⁴

Before we consider the seasonal pattern, we need to examine the characteristics of the suspects and their possible motives. The latter have important implications for seasonal patterns. If sheep were stolen because of hunger or hardship, we would expect the seasonal supply of offenders to be influenced by employment conditions and the availability of alternative means of supplementing the diet. If, by contrast, sheep were stolen for profit, then market conditions and the condition of the sheep would have been important. Yet, it is impossible to be precise. Legal records rarely provide direct evidence about a criminal's motives, which have to be inferred. In any case, these may have been both complex and mixed. Some thieves, for example, may have stolen sheep for resale in order to repay a debt that had been incurred in hard times. Nevertheless, the issue of motivation has been explored in some depth by both Rule and Wells.³⁵ They approach the question by relying on depositions, and from the inferences that

³⁰ NLW, Edwinstord Papers, 4654.

³¹ Farmers, of course, protected their sheep against theft through ear and pitchmarking. At this time, moreover, they also used to nose-burn. Nevertheless, this was not always a deterrent. One Hereford official attributed the low detection and conviction rates to the tendency of sheep-stealers to work in gangs of five or six, in which some acted as thieves and others as guards. He also pointed to the tendency to slaughter the sheep at the place of theft and carry away the flesh. Hereford RO, BF16/49.

³² For some evidence see *Report of Select Committee on the criminal law*.

³³ King, *Crime, justice and discretion*, pp. 222–58.

³⁴ TNA, HO 47/8/15.

³⁵ R. A. E. Wells, 'Sheep-rustling in Yorkshire in the age of the industrial and agricultural revolutions', *North-east Hist.* 20 (1984), pp. 127–45; J. G. Rule, 'The manifold causes of rural crime: sheep-stealing in England, c.1740–1840', in J. G. Rule (ed.), *Outside the law. Studies in crime and order, 1650–1850* (Exeter Papers in Economic History, 15, 1982).

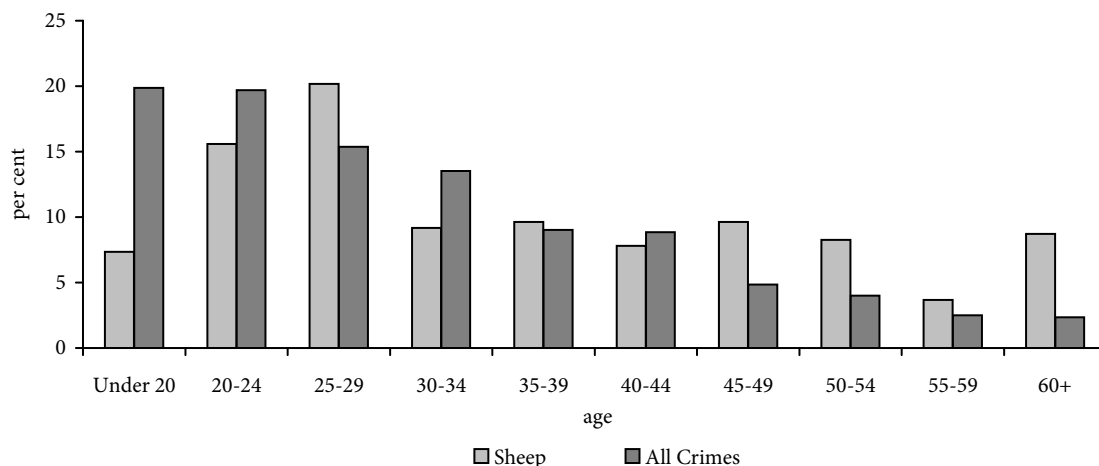


FIGURE 2. Age distribution of criminals: sheep-thefts and all crimes

Note: Number of cases (N) = 221.

Source: NLW Goal Files database.

can be drawn from the age and occupation of the thieves, their strategies, the number of sheep stolen and whether there was evidence of gang activity, recidivism and professionalism. They drew the conclusion that sheep-stealing was driven by a range of motives, although their discussion implies that economic hardship and, to a lesser extent, profit were amongst the most important.³⁶ Does this conclusion hold for Wales too?

To some extent the characteristics of the thieves are fairly predictable. Only a small proportion (ten per cent) of those in the Gaol File database are women (Table 2). No doubt this figure understates their importance; women were less likely to be suspected of crime, and more likely to receive informal justice.³⁷ Nevertheless, we can be fairly sure that women stole sheep infrequently, and, when they did, it was often in the company of another thief. Thus, 75 per cent of suspected females, compared with only 20 per cent of men, are known to have had an accomplice. Usually the accomplice was a man, although occasionally it was another woman. Thus, Catherine Evan from Llangelynnin, Merionethshire, stole four sheep with her two daughters in November 1792.³⁸ For this she received a prison sentence, although one of her daughters, Mary, was transported for life.

Rule has suggested that we can presume the hardship motive was important if a high proportion of thieves were in their late twenties and thirties, an age when family dependency rates were

³⁶ One set of documents which they did not consult was the letters of recommendation of the circuit judges. Although only a few of these have survived, they tend to strengthen the conclusion that poverty and extreme hardship occasionally influenced theft. (See TNA, HO 47/2/31 and HO 47/6/31). Due to limitations of space, no discussion of professionalism or gang activity has been

included. Nevertheless, the Great Session records do not suggest that this was very important, a conclusion that was drawn by Rule too.

³⁷ King, *Crime, justice and discretion*, pp. 196–216.

³⁸ E. V. Jones, 'Sheep-Stealing at Llangelynnin', *J. Merioneth Historical and Record Society* 7 (1973–6), pp. 384–403.

TABLE 2. Occupational/status descriptions of sheep-stealers (per cent)

Land	43.3	Tradesmen/Artisans	10.7
of which: Yeoman	37.0	of which: Butcher	3.8
Farmer	2.3	Tailor/Breechmaker	1.2
Husbandman	1.7	Cobbler/Shoemaker	0.8
Shepherd	1.3	Blacksmith	0.7
Other	1.0	Tiler/Slater	0.6
Labourer	35.9	Weaver	0.6
Women	10.1	Other	2.3
of which: Spinster	4.6		
Widow	1.7		
Married	3.8		

Note: N = 1555.

Source: NLW, Gaol Files database.

high.³⁹ Judging from the database, it emerges that there was considerable dispersion in the age of sheep-stealers. At one end of the age-distribution there were two octogenarians, while at the other extreme there were boys of eleven and twelve.⁴⁰ It is evident, however, that sheep-stealers were on average quite old. We usually find that age-specific crime rates rise with age up to the late teens or early twenties, after which they decline. This may reflect the circumstances in which young people find themselves, although they may also exercise less caution than their elders. Whatever the reason, this pattern is replicated amongst the criminals in the Gaol Files database (Figure 2). Nevertheless, it is evident that the peak-age of sheep-stealers occurred considerably later than for most criminals, sometimes persisting well into old-age. Thus, the median age of sheep-stealers was 36 years compared with an overall average of 32 in the database.

To examine their occupational status, the suspects were divided into three groups. First, there were those designated as 'land', which incorporated those described as farmer, yeoman, husbandman, waggoner and shepherd. A second group were labourers. Finally, a residual group – mainly artisans and tradesmen – were included. As a result of this exercise, it was less obvious that hardship was the driving force behind the crime. As Table 2 shows, many propertied criminals stole sheep. Indeed, it emerges that the land group were particularly important, although this should not be a source of surprise. As already mentioned, small farms occupied a particularly prominent role in Welsh agriculture, and yeoman farmers would often supplement their incomes through labouring, shepherding and other work, although occasionally, it seems, they resorted to sheep-theft too. Only slightly less important than the land group were labourers. No doubt, many of these worked in agriculture and would have had plenty of opportunities to steal sheep, although in Wales the same seems to have been true of some miners and ironworkers.⁴¹ Rather less important were the artisans and tradesmen. This group included a large number of

³⁹ Rule, 'Manifold causes', pp. 110–11.

⁴⁰ See NLW, 4/395/4; 4/630/7; 4/632/6; 4/398/3.

⁴¹ The main centres of coal and iron production were the central and eastern valleys of south Wales. These were in close proximity to Brecon Beacons and Black

Mountains, important centres of sheep production. J. E. Archer, 'Poaching gangs and violence: the urban-rural divide in nineteenth-century Lancashire', *British J. Criminology* 39 (1999), pp. 25–38, has noted the importance of industrial workers in rural crime.

TABLE 3. Means of disposal of stolen sheep

<i>Quarter</i>		<i>Killed</i>	<i>Killed and either meat or skin sold</i>	<i>Sold whole sheep</i>	<i>Added to flock</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jan – Mar	Number	6	3	6	3	18
	Row per cent	33.3	16.7	33.3	16.7	100.0
	Column per cent	30.0	50.0	31.6	50.0	35.3
Apr – Jun	Number	2	1	7	1	11
	Row per cent	18.2	9.1	63.6	9.1	100.0
	Column per cent	10.0	16.7	36.8	16.7	21.6
Jul – Sep	Number	5	1	4	2	12
	Row per cent	41.7	8.3	33.3	16.7	100.0
	Column per cent	25.0	16.7	21.1	33.3	23.5
Oct – Dec	Number	7	1	2	0	10
	Row per cent	70.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	100.0
	Column per cent	35.0	16.7	10.5	0.0	19.6
Jan-Dec	Number	20	6	19	6	51
	Row per cent	39.2	11.8	37.3	11.8	100.0
	Column per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NLW, Gaol Files database.

butchers, although a number in traditional crafts, such as tailoring and shoemaking, played a role too. These were men who were heavily dependent on local markets, although they often maintained agricultural interests as a means of supplementing their incomes.⁴²

Another possible source of inference is the fate of the stolen sheep. If the sheep were killed or if, perhaps, their skins were sold, that might be indicative of hardship. Alternatively, if they were sold as live stock, that is more likely to point to an acquisitive motive. Unfortunately, it was possible to recover information for only 51 cases (Table 3). These seem to reinforce the view that many sheep were stolen because of hardship or hunger.⁴³ But, it is interesting to note that a considerable proportion of stolen sheep were sold, and some were incorporated into other flocks, possibly to be sold later. It also evident that the majority of sheep stolen in the first, third and fourth quarters of the year were more likely to be killed, while those stolen in the second were more likely to be sold. This suggests that the motives for sheep-stealing may have changed with the seasons.

To gauge the importance of the acquisitive crime, we might also raise the question whether sheep theft was highly lucrative. In fact, this is unlikely to have been the case because Welsh

⁴² J. Stobart, 'The economic and social worlds of rural craftsmen-retailers in eighteenth-century Cheshire', *AgHR* 52 (2004), pp. 141–60.

⁴³ Archer, 'By a flash and a scare', p. 201, argues that some incidents of alleged sheep-killing may have been cases of animal maiming.

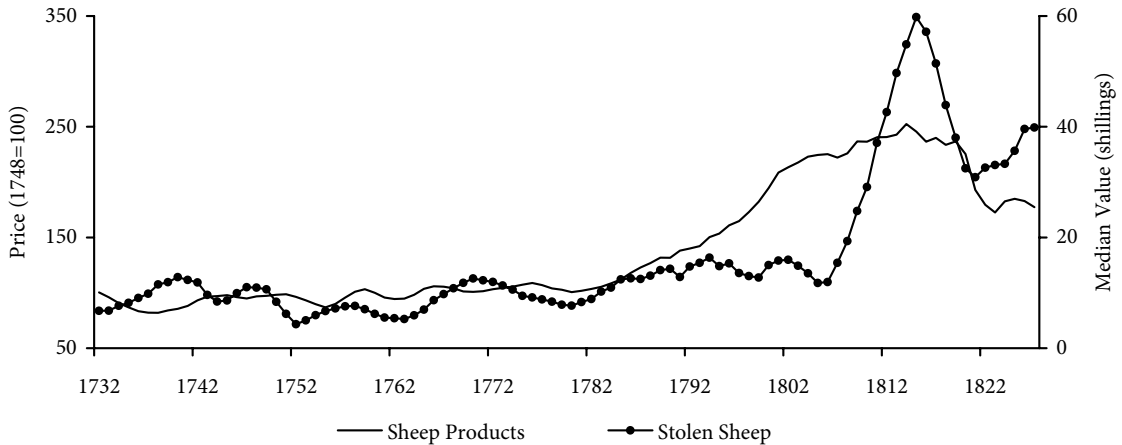


FIGURE 3. Average value of sheep stolen and price of sheep products (five year moving average)

Source: Price of sheep products see Table 5; value of stolen sheep, NLW Gaol Files database.

sheep commanded relatively low prices. An inventory carried out for Chirk Castle in 1788, for example, valued their 'large' sheep at 16s. each, their Shropshires at 14s., their wethers at 11s. but their Welsh lowland and hill sheep at only 5s. and 6s. respectively.⁴⁴ The payoffs from theft, therefore, would have been greater if the thieves had opted for English breeds. This, however, was not an effective option for those who intended to sell the stolen sheep or their carcasses, because the size of the animals would have aroused the suspicion of potential purchasers.⁴⁵ The median value of the sheep stolen over the period is shown in Figure 3. In the 1730s and 1740s the average was 4s. By the 1770s it had risen to 5s. and by the first decade of the nineteenth century to 10s. Such movements, of course, largely reflect the creeping inflation of the period and changes in the price of sheep products.

Yet, to determine the profitability of sheep-stealing we need to compare prices with local wages, and these were relatively low in Wales too.⁴⁶ In fact, available wage data suggest that sheep-theft could make a modest contribution to the income of a labourer. Table 4 compares the average wage of a labourer, as quoted in the 1790s Board of Agriculture surveys, with the median value of sheep stolen in that decade. It shows, for example, that a sheep stolen in Radnorshire was equivalent to over a month's wages. In Montgomeryshire it was between seven and ten weeks, depending on the time of year. However, it is also evident that, although the average value of sheep stolen was quite low, a few thieves were exceptionally well-rewarded from their crimes. Thus, in the 1730s those 60 per cent of the thieves with the lowest returns accounted for only 20 per cent of the money raised from sheep-stealing, implying that the remaining 40 per cent accounted for 80 per cent of the income earned. The pattern was little different in the other decades.

⁴⁴ NLW, Chirk Collection, F12510.

⁴⁵ A number of thieves were apprehended for this reason. For example, NLW, 4/48/4 and 4/390/9.

⁴⁶ D. W. Howell, 'The agricultural labourer in nineteenth-century Wales', *Welsh History Rev.* 6 (1973), pp. 262–87.

TABLE 4. Labourer's day wages (without diet) and value of sheep stolen: 1790s (in pence)

County	Winter	Summer	Harvest	Median value of sheep stolen 1790s	Number of Indictments for Sheep-Stealing
Anglesey	10–14	16	14–18	60	1
Breconshire		Average 14		60	27
Caernarvonshire	10	12	13–14	60	2
Cardiganshire	Lower	7	8	NI	
	Upper	6	8	NI	12
Carmarthenshire	South	8	10	NI	
	North	6–8	10–12	NI	21
Denbighshire	14	16	21	NI	0
Glamorgan	12	18	20	60	15
Merionethshire	8	12	NI	240	5
Montgomeryshire	12	14	17	120	20
Pembrokeshire	8	10		60	2
Radnorshire		Average 14		60	15

Notes: There were no wage figures for Flintshire and no indictments for sheep-stealing in either Flintshire or Denbighshire in the 1790s. Sometimes a range of wages figures was quoted when there were intra-county differences owing perhaps to the presence of industry or mining.

Source: Wage figures come from the Board of Agriculture *General views*; value of stolen sheep from NLW, Gaol Files database.

Finally, we may be able to draw some further inferences about the determinants of sheep-stealing from the annual number of recorded indictments. Figure 1 suggests that theft was high at times of harvest failure. For example, sheep-stealing indictments were well above trend in the early 1740s, in 1800/01, and in 1817, all notable periods of distress.⁴⁷ We might expect sheep-stealing, therefore, to be correlated with grain prices.⁴⁸ As Table 5 shows, there was a positive, if weak, association with lagged grain prices.⁴⁹ However, although grain prices may be

⁴⁷ On the 1740s crisis, see D. Dickson, *Arctic Ireland* (1998), J. D. Post, 'Climatic variability and the European mortality wave of the 1740s', *J. Interdisciplinary History* XV (1984), pp. 1–30; on 1801, see D. J. V. Jones, 'The corn riots in Wales, 1793–1801', *Welsh History Rev.* 2 (1964–5), pp. 323–50, R. Wells, *Wretched Faces. Famine in wartime England, 1793–1801* (1988), and on 1816/17, see J. D. Post, 'The economic crisis of 1816–1817 and its social and political consequences', *JECH* 30 (1970), pp. 248–50 and id., 'A study in meteorological and trade-cycle history. The economic crisis following the Napoleonic wars', *JECH* 34 (1974), pp. 315–49.

⁴⁸ For some discussion of this possible relationship, see Beattie, *Crime and courts*, pp. 202–12; D. Hay, 'War,

dearth and theft in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present*, 95 (1982), pp. 117–60; King, *Crime, justice and discretion*, pp. 145–53.

⁴⁹ The earliest consistent run of grain prices dates from only the 1770s. As an alternative, therefore, southern prices were used. These should act as a reasonable proxy for local prices because by this time grain markets were fairly well integrated. See C. W. J. Granger and C. M. Elliott, 'A fresh look at wheat prices', *EcHR* 20 (1967), pp. 257–65; A. J. S. Gibson and T. C. Smout, 'Regional prices and market regions: the evolution of the early modern Scottish grain market', *EcHR* 48 (1995), pp. 258–82.

TABLE 5. Correlation Matrix: annual data, 1730–1830

	<i>Sheep theft</i>	<i>Grain prices</i>	<i>Grain prices lagged</i>	<i>Food theft</i>	<i>Wool prices</i>	<i>Mutton prices</i>	<i>Sheep product prices</i>
<i>Sheep Theft</i>	1.00						
<i>Grain prices</i>	-0.16	1.00					
<i>Grain prices lagged</i>	0.18***	0.01	1.00				
<i>Food theft</i>	0.53*	-0.27*	0.26*	1.00			
<i>Wool prices</i>	0.24**	0.06	0.02	0.10	1.00		
<i>Mutton prices</i>	0.15	0.33*	0.34*	0.24**	0.25**	1.00	
<i>Sheep product prices</i>	0.26*	0.16	0.15	0.17***	0.93*	0.58**	1.00

Note: * denotes significant at 0.01 level, ** at the 0.05 level, *** at the 0.100 level. The price of grain and sheep products have been measured as rates of change. Sheep products are a weighted average of wool and mutton prices. The weights were those suggested by P. O'Brien, 'Agriculture and the home market for English industry, 1660–1820', *English Historical Rev.*, 100 (1985), pp. 773–800.

Sources: Price of grainstuffs is taken from B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *An abstract of British historical statistics* (1962), Tables 9 and 10; mutton prices from W. Beveridge, *Prices and wages in England from the twelfth to nineteenth centuries* (1939), pp. 709–11; wool prices from Bowden in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian Hist.*, V (ii), pp. 843–4; and Mitchell and Deane, *Abstract*, pp. 494–5.

a good indicator of distress in urban communities, they are a more equivocal guide for rural ones.⁵⁰ A better indicator of distress may be the level of food theft. It is interesting to note, therefore, that there was a fairly strong correlation between sheep- and food-theft, although the latter was partially correlated with lagged food prices.

Rule has also suggested that we can gauge the importance of the acquisitive motive from the strength of the correlation between theft and sheep prices. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive run of Welsh sheep prices over the study period, so that it was necessary to use southern wool and mutton prices. These suggest that sheep-stealing was positively correlated with the rate of change of both wool and mutton prices, although the latter was statistically insignificant. There was also a positive correlation between sheep-theft and a weighted sheep-products index.

⁵⁰ T. S. Ashton, *Economic fluctuations in England, 1700–1800* (1959), pp. 34–48.

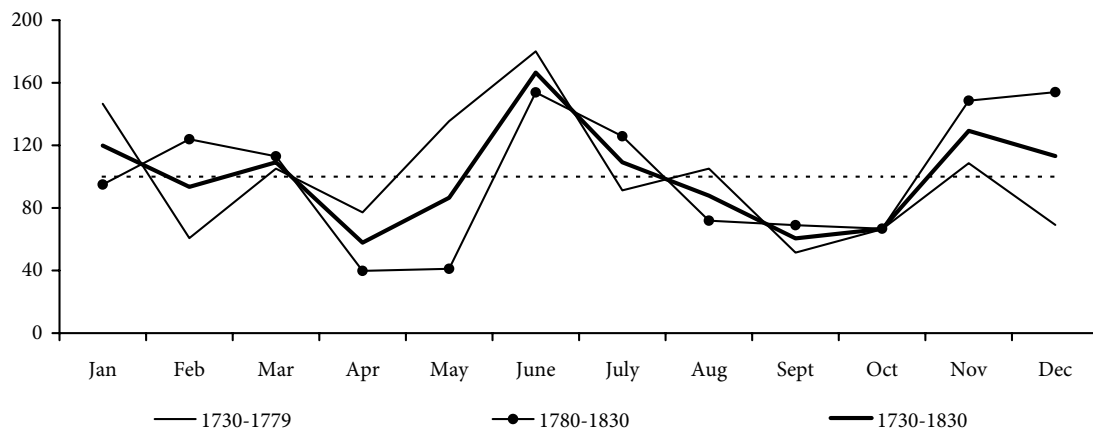


FIGURE 4. Sheep-stealing seasonal index: all Wales

Note: N = 1559.

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

III

Sheep-stealing, therefore, was subject to a number of influences. Hardship seems to have played an important role, although there is evidence that sheep-theft was frequently an acquisitive crime too. But did it fluctuate over the course of the year? Our evidence suggests that it did, and that it displayed considerable amplitude, peaking on at least three occasions (Figure 4). It was fairly high at the beginning of the year, peaking in January. It then tended to decline until April, before rising to a second peak in June. This was followed by another decline which lasted until the late summer. During the autumn months theft increased again,

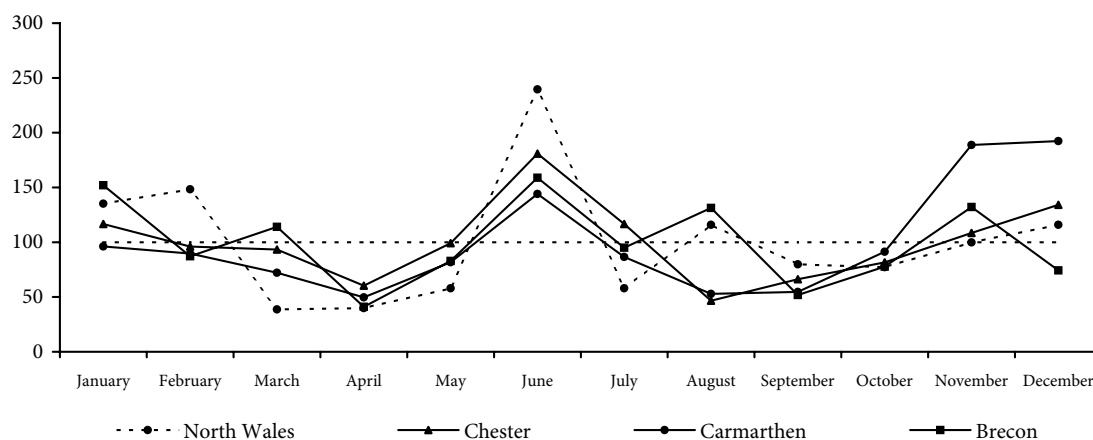


FIGURE 5. Sheep-stealing seasonal index: Welsh legal circuits

Note: North Wales, N = 74; Chester, N = 250; Carmarthen, N = 312; Brecon, N = 908.

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

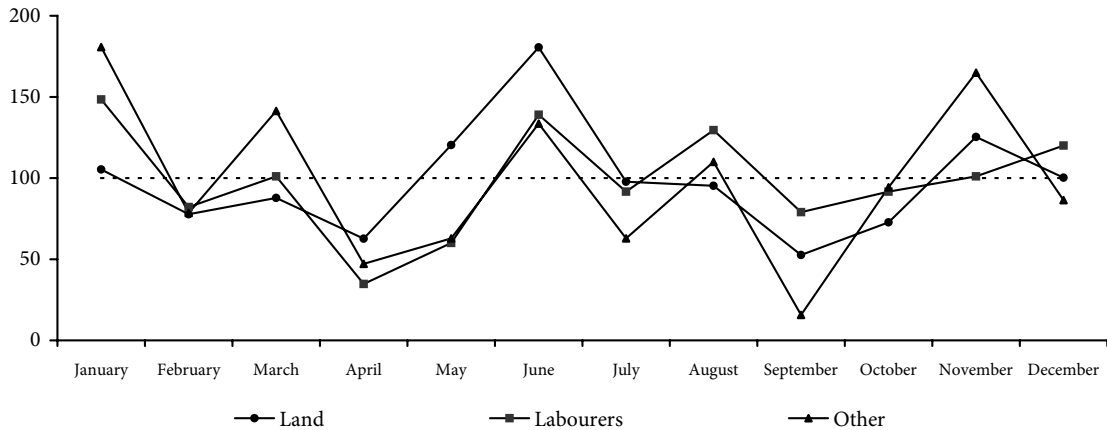


FIGURE 6. Sheep-stealing seasonal index: occupational groups

Note: Land, N = 682; Labourers, N = 543; Other, N = 330.

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

peaking in November before falling slightly in December. To examine whether this pattern was stable over time, the period has been divided into two equal parts. In both half-centuries January and June were peak months. However, in the first period there was no decline in theft in December.

The pattern of sheep-theft was also quite similar across Wales, although not all areas conform exactly to the above description. Figure 5, which compares the pattern for the various legal circuits, shows that all four experienced a decline in indictments between the winter and the spring, followed by an increase during the spring and early summer and a June peak. But the decline in the summer months was less pronounced on the Brecon circuit and two of the circuits did not experience a November peak. Subject to qualifications, there are also some similarities in the seasonal pattern for the three broad occupational groups (Figure 6). All three experienced peaks in June. For the land group, however, there was no January peak, while sheep-stealing amongst labourers rose continuously during the autumn and early-winter months. Sub-peaks in March and August are also evident for all three groups (Figure 6).

How did the seasonal pattern compare with that for other items of livestock? There were some similarities between sheep- and cattle-theft (Figure 7). They both peaked in June and in the autumn, although cattle-stealing hit its autumn peak a month earlier. The main difference is that there was very little cattle-theft in the early part of the year. The contrasts between sheep- and horse-stealing are greater. Indeed, horse-stealing, unlike sheep-theft, experienced no well-defined winter or autumn peaks, being confined largely to the spring and summer months.

For obvious reasons, comparisons with food theft may be of interest. In fact, some of those indicted for food theft in Wales were food-rioters, and a slightly different pattern emerges if they are included in the figures (Figure 8). Nevertheless, it seems that whereas sheep-stealing experienced three seasonal peaks, food theft peaked only once – during the

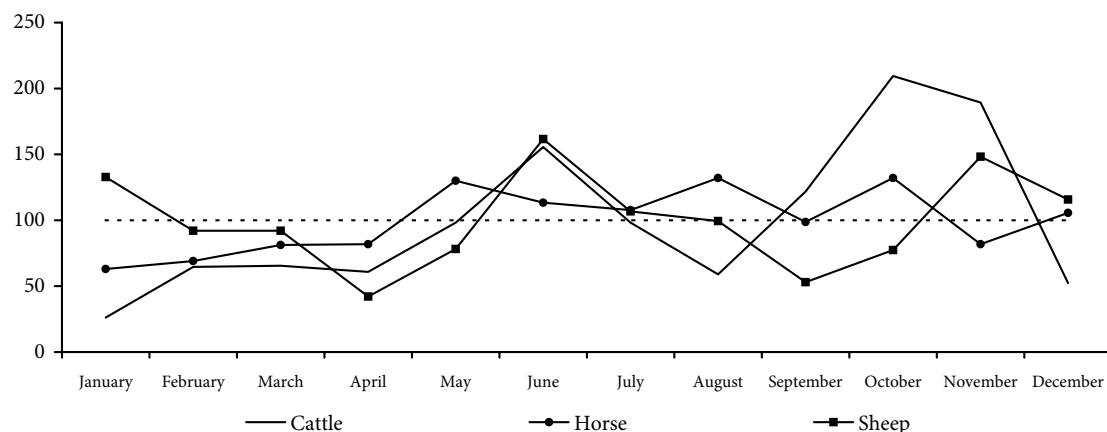


FIGURE 7. Livestock seasonal indexes: Wales, 1730-1830

Note: Sheep, N = 1559; Cattle, N = 201; Horses, N = 594.

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

winter months. No doubt a number of factors account for this winter peak. The main items targeted at this time were grain, meal and flour, which were still in plentiful supply during the winter months. Moreover, the long hours of darkness offered the thief some protection against detection. Finally, of course, it is likely that winter hardship increased the supply of potential offenders. Some support for this hypothesis comes from an occupational analysis of the suspects. This shows that during February and March labourers accounted for forty per cent of those indicted for food-theft, while in the non-peak months they accounted for a third. We shall examine winter hardship in more detail in the next section. It is worth noting at this stage, however, that any hardship was not a consequence of exceptional

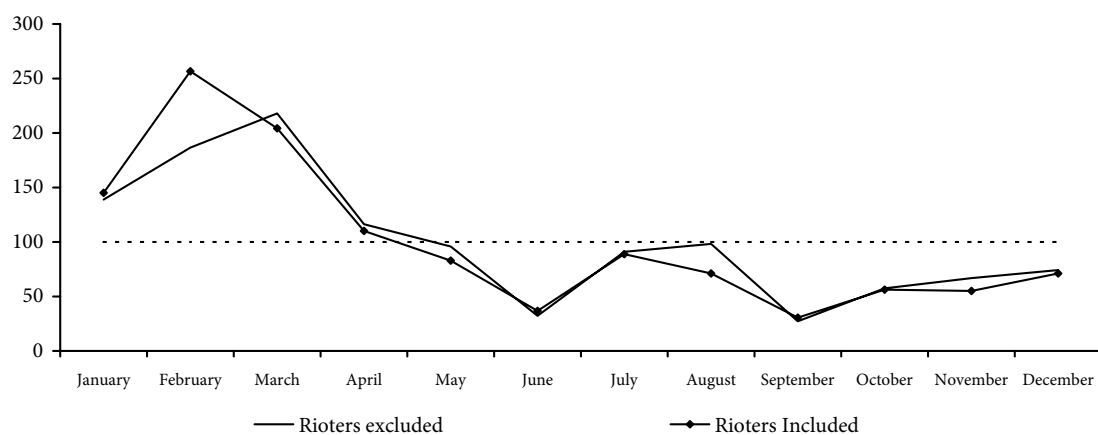


FIGURE 8. Food theft seasonal index: Wales, 1730-1830

Note: N = 707.

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

grain prices at this time of the year. Indeed, if anything, grain prices were relatively low during the winter.⁵¹

IV

Turning to possible explanations for the seasonality, the first question we need to address is: why did sheep-stealing experience a January peak? Following the previous discussion, a possible explanation may be that it was linked to the long hours of darkness. There are, however, good reasons to doubt whether this was a crucial influence. Whilst it is true that a thief would be less conspicuous in the dark and that it is relatively easy to catch sheep at such times, there is no reason to suppose that daylight thieves were particularly disadvantaged.⁵² Indeed, a common practice seems to have been to catch a sheep during the day and hide it, before recovering it at night. Thus, one suspect tied the legs of his quarry and hid it in some rushes; another hid his in a cave.⁵³ There were, in any case, circumstances under which daylight was a positive advantage. This was particularly the case when the thief intended to drive the sheep away.

There is a stronger case for arguing that the peak was linked to economic hardship amongst the labouring classes. The problem of winter distress has been highlighted by a number of authors for the southern and eastern counties.⁵⁴ But it was a feature of life in the western pastoral counties too. There were a number of reasons for this. First, during the winter months there was invariably a reduction in the daily wage. The Chirk Castle records for the 1760s, for example, show that in the first week of November the daily wage was reduced from 1s. to 10d.⁵⁵ This, of course, was a response to a decline in the number of daylight hours (Figure 9). Thus, the usual length of the working day in Wales during the summer (outside the harvest period) was from six am to six pm, a twelve hour day.⁵⁶ During the winter, however, it was from daylight to dusk which at the beginning of January was roughly eight hours. A second reason was that task-work, which generally offered the prospect of earning relatively high wages, was discontinued during the winter months. Finally, adverse weather conditions and a decline in farming activity frequently curtailed the number of days which day-labourers could work.⁵⁷

Thus, the winter months were associated with a decline in the income and employment

⁵¹ P. J. Bowden, 'Agricultural prices, wages, farm profits and rents', in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian History V* (ii), pp. 37–41. The Beveridge Winchester wheat series for 1730 to 1816 seems to confirm this. The quarterly indicators were: Sept.-Dec., 103, Dec.-Mar., 97, Mar.-June, 100, June to Sept., 99. The respective figures for Westminster bread prices for the years 1730–84 were: 99, 99, 101, 101 respectively.

⁵² It has been alleged that on the Herefordshire hills thieves used to construct well-hidden holes, roughly four foot deep, which were used to hide sheep that had been stolen in daylight. Hereford RO, K12/46.

⁵³ NLW, 4/522/5, 4/281/5.

⁵⁴ K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor* (1985), pp. 15–66; G. R. Boyer, *An economic history of the English*

poor law, 1750–1850 (1990), pp. 88–93.

⁵⁵ The data refers to the 1760s. NLW, Chirk Collection, F12458.

⁵⁶ The figure of twelve hours was quoted in a number of the contributions to Board of Agriculture surveys of the 1790s. However, Davies in *General View... North Wales*, p. 355, quotes a figure of between 13 and 14 hours.

⁵⁷ In their responses to the Rural Queries of the 1832 Poor Law report, a number of Welsh parishes reported that unemployment was highest during the winter months and that this was accompanied by a decline in weekly wages. Comparisons with Boyer's figures for the east and south-east suggest, however, that the incidence of winter unemployment was relatively low.

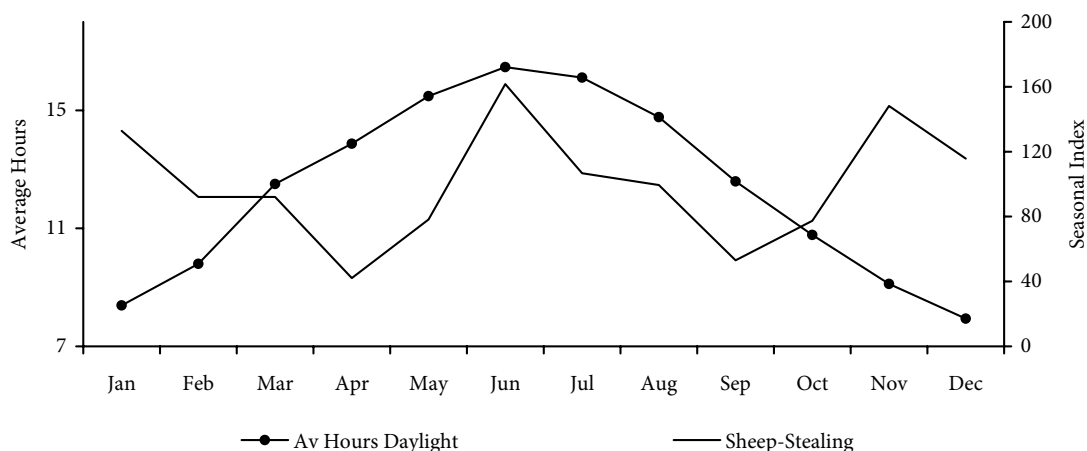


FIGURE 9. Average hours of daylight and sheep-theft

Source: NLW Gaol Files database.

prospects for many poor families,⁵⁸ and this provided them with both the incentive and the opportunity to resort to illegal activities. This claim is supported by the occupational data which show that labourers were strongly over-represented amongst the sheep-thieves in January. The same was also true of women. Over the year as a whole they accounted for ten per cent of the suspects, but in January that figure rose to 17 per cent. Indeed, January accounted for just under one-fifth of all the sheep they stole.

It seems, therefore, that for many labouring households the driving force in the early winter was economic need. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to identify this as the sole reason for the January peak. Such high levels of theft were possible only because sheep were readily accessible and enjoyed only modest protection from thieves. In the Wales at this time, sheep were invariably over-wintered on the hills, in contrast to cattle and horses which were usually grazed on the hillsides. Furthermore, eighteenth-century Welsh farmers did not usually feed-out unless the winter was very severe, and shepherding was less intensive during in the winter than at certain other times of the year. As a result, hill sheep were probably relatively soft targets for the thief in the winter.

Indeed, given the state of the rural economy during the winter months, it is perhaps surprising that the peak was not more pronounced. Part of the reason for this may be that the degree of hidden sheep-theft was particularly marked at this time. There is evidence from the south-east of England that the victims of property crime were reluctant to prosecute those who were either in poverty or had a large number of dependants.⁵⁹ If, as the evidence suggests, hardship-related theft was high at this time of the year, prosecution and indictment rates would have been low.⁶⁰ But there may have been other reasons. For one thing, the

⁵⁸ For some further empirical evidence (from estate wage books) on the decline in wage incomes in the early part of the year, see C. Thomas, 'Agricultural employment in nineteenth-century Wales: a new approach', *Welsh History Rev.* 6 (1972), pp. 143–60. F. M. Eden, *The*

state of the poor (1928 edn), esp. pp. 245–8, 293–301, 368–74, includes some evidence on seasonal income and expenditure patterns for Wales.

⁵⁹ King, *Crime, justice and discretion*, pp. 22–46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

incentive to steal for resale was weak during the winter months. At this time of year sheep sales were flat, reflecting the condition of the sheep and the length of the day, which precluded moving sheep long distances. In any case, we probably should not exaggerate the severity of the winter months or the capacity of the rural poor to deal with it; rural families were often resourceful when dealing with the seasons.⁶¹ Furthermore, there was the safety net of the Poor Law and possibly local charity. It was, for example, quite a common practice for some Welsh landowners to slaughter a beast for the poor in the winter months.⁶² Occasionally, there were also opportunities to borrow during the winter, although no doubt many families would have saved part of their income during the more prosperous summer months.⁶³ The potato also came to Wales relatively early, and was a supplementary source of sustenance for the rural poor in the winter months.⁶⁴ Finally, it is worth noting that Welsh agriculture had a relatively high dependence on farm servants, who were more likely to be cushioned from the vagaries of the seasons than local labourers.⁶⁵

V

Following the January peak, sheep-stealing theft declined between February and April. In part this reflected an improvement in the income prospects of the poor. With the increase in daylight there was an increase in the length of the working day and hence in the daily wage. At Chirk Castle, for example, the summer wage rate was restored at the beginning of February. At the same time an agricultural labourer could, on average, expect to find work for a considerable number of days each week. These were, after all, the months of lambing and calving, and when peas, barley and oats were sown.⁶⁶ As a result, there were both fewer incentives and opportunities to steal sheep. As sheep markets remained relatively depressed, it was also a relatively inopportune time to steal sheep for resale. Sheep also tended to enjoy more protection against theft; during lambing sheep were sometimes, although not always, brought down to the lower ground, and were shepherded more intensively.

The turnaround in May and June, therefore, was partly due to a return of the sheep to the hills and to less intensive shepherding. But the high levels of theft also probably owed much to lengthening of the days. Obviously, sheep could only be stolen when people were outside, so the supply of potential offenders was highest when the days were longest and warmest. As Figure 9 shows, spring and summer sheep-stealing was positively correlated with the number of hours of daylight.

However, other influences may have been at work at this time. First, it is possible that the

⁶¹ F. Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1973), pp. 17–27.

⁶² This practice was not peculiar to Wales. See *Hereford J.*, 4 Jan. 1787.

⁶³ Howell, *Rural Poor*, pp. 66–115.

⁶⁴ R. Salaman, *The history and social influence of the potato* (1949), pp. 409–23; A. Armstrong, 'Labour, II, food, shelter and self-help', in Mingay (ed.), *Agrarian Hist.*, VI, pp. 733–4.

⁶⁵ Service declined later in Wales too. See Howell, *Rural poor*, pp. 66–92; Snell, *Annals*, pp. 67–103.

⁶⁶ D. Howell, *Land and people in nineteenth-century Wales* (1986), p. 139, has noted that often lambing in the mountainous areas in Wales took place fairly early in the year as the absence of fences allowed the rams to come early to the flocks. This would help account for the relatively high mortality rates noted above.

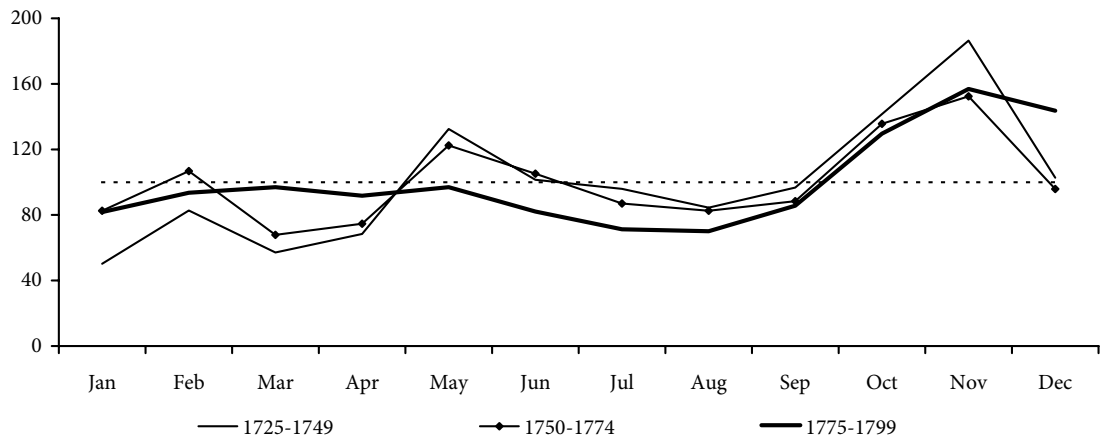


FIGURE 10. Marriage seasonal index: Carmarthen, 1725-1799

Source: See text.

opportunities to steal sheep may have been affected by the re-emergence of some slack to the labour market following the end of lambing and sowing. Some support for this hypothesis comes from the marriage registers.⁶⁷ If there was a decline in the level of economic activity in the late spring and early summer, there should have been an increase in marriage. Unfortunately, the Welsh parish registers are of poor quality and have attracted relatively little research. Nevertheless, evidence from one parish – Carmarthen – suggests that in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth-century there was a marked increase in marriage in the late spring and early summer, although, as south-west Carmarthenshire also supported a fairly large arable sector, there was a more pronounced peak between September and November (Figure 10).⁶⁸ To approximate conditions in the pastoral parishes, evidence has been taken from the relevant Shropshire parishes in Wrigley and Schofield's sample.⁶⁹ As Figure 11 shows, in these parishes there was a very marked increase in marriages in May, consistent with a slackening in the pace of activity.⁷⁰

The other possible influence at this time of year is that sheep became more marketable, increasing the attractions of theft for resale. May and June were months when farmers needed to dispose of various types of sheep to accommodate the new lambs.⁷¹ As a result, sheep sales tended to be high. Unfortunately, we have no hard information on the volume of sheep sales. However, as Chartres has shown for England and Wales as a whole, the incidence of sheep

⁶⁷ D. Cressy, 'The seasonality of marriage in Old and New England', *J. Interdisciplinary History* 16 (1985), pp. 1-21; A. Kussmaul, 'Time and Space, Hoofs and Grain: The seasonality of marriage in England', *J. Interdisciplinary History* 15 (1985), pp. 755-79.

⁶⁸ N. Woodward, 'Crisis mortality in a Welsh market town: Carmarthen, 1675-1799', *Welsh History Rev.* 22 (2005), pp. 432-62.

⁶⁹ For some discussion see E. A. Wrigley and

R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (1981), pp. 298-305. The data is available on a CD-ROM issued by *Local Population Studies*.

⁷⁰ This may also explain why, in Wales, June was often the preferred month for shearing and why it was treated as a holiday month.

⁷¹ Davies, *General view ... South Wales*, p. 413.

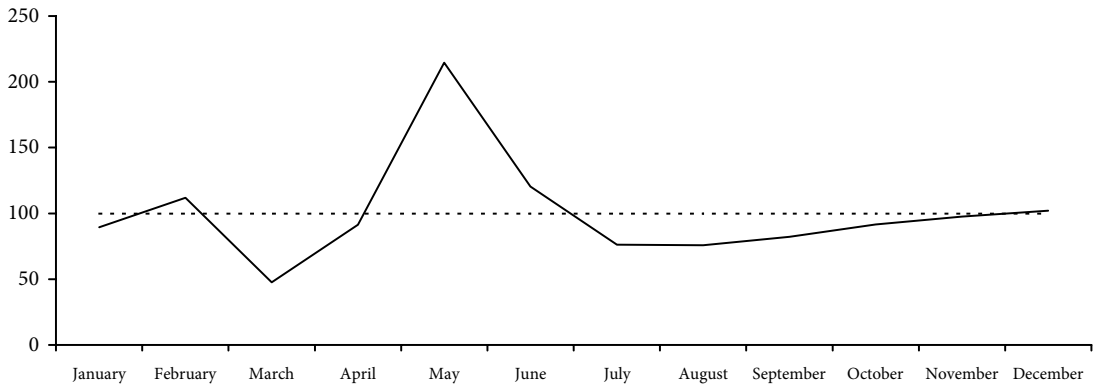


FIGURE 11. Marriage seasonal index, Shropshire pastoral parishes, 1730–1830

Note: Includes the parishes of Alderbury, Baschurch, Onibury and Oswestry

Source: Local Population Studies, CD

fairs peaked in May and June, and, as Figure 12 shows, this pattern was replicated for Wales and the English border counties.⁷² Further support for this claim comes from the finding that those in land occupations were over-represented at this time of the year. Thus, taking the year as a whole, they accounted for 43 per cent of all thefts, but between April and June the figure rose to 57 per cent.

VI

Following the June peak, sheep-stealing fell-back in July, August and September. Given the tenor of the discussion so far, the reasons for this are fairly predictable. It is true that in some respects conditions favoured high levels of theft. Sheep, which often grazed the wastes with little protection, were still soft-targets for thieves. Moreover, judging from the incidence of sheep fairs, sales remained fairly high at this time, so stolen sheep could be disposed of relatively easily (Figure 11). Nevertheless, the days were becoming shorter, and, with haymaking and the harvest, there was less slack in the rural labour market. Consequently, both the incentives and opportunities to steal sheep were more limited.

Nevertheless, the late autumn witnessed another increase in theft. It is true that theft was low in October, a month when the level of rural activity remained quite high. But it then increased in November before falling back slightly in December. Again, given the previous discussion, we can link this to sheep sales and changes in the pace of economic activity. As usual it was difficult to protect hill-sheep from theft, but November and December were months when both employment prospects and living standards declined again. Thus, the daily wage declined in response to the shorter days, while a deterioration in weather conditions left labourers with fewer opportunities to work a full week. November was also a month in when many households made their preparations for the winter, and some sheep-theft may have been

⁷² J. A. Chartres, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian Hist.*, V (ii), pp. 406–502.

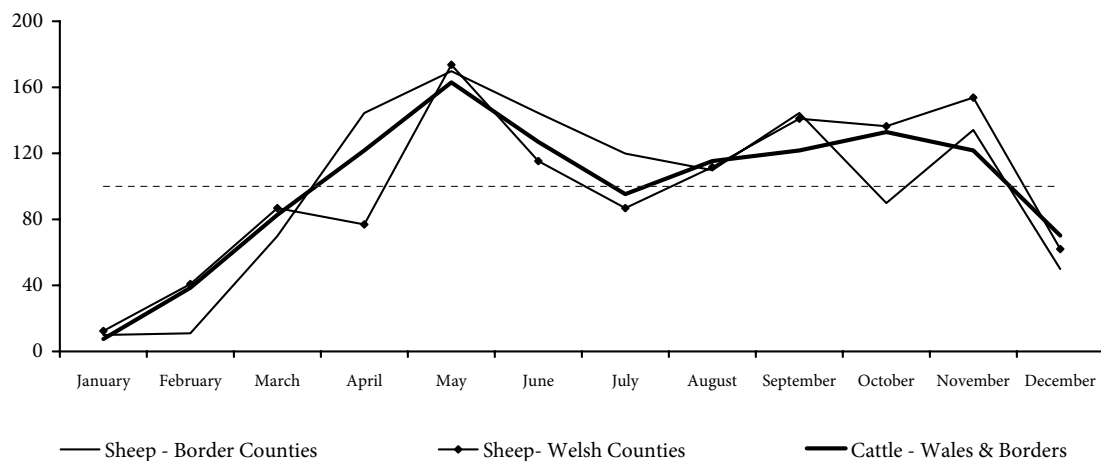


FIGURE 12. Seasonal Index of the incidence of sheep and cattle fairs, 1776

Source: Pocket Book of John Bennett, farm bailiff, 1776, Shropshire Archives, 522/10/851.

a response to this. Indeed, the Welsh for November is *tachwedd*, which is also the old word for slaughter.⁷³

However, it is also possible that the high level of theft at this time was due to an exceptional level of sheep sales. Indeed, Jones has suggested that it was at this time of the year that the main transfer of store sheep from the western counties to the fatteners in the east and south took place, although the extent of the demand was dependent on a number of influences, not least the supply of fodder in the receiving counties which, in turn, was influenced by weather conditions during the summer.⁷⁴ If this was the case, it would have provided thieves with an opportunity to dispose of stolen sheep. It is interesting to note, therefore, that the number of sheep fairs peaked in November, the same month as sheep-stealing. November was also the second most frequent month for sheep-stealing by those in land occupations. Finally, support for the role of marketing opportunities comes from the association between cattle-theft and the incidence of cattle fairs, both of which peaked at this time of the year, albeit in the previous month, October (Figures 7 and 12).

One other feature of the November peak is that it coincided with an increase in theft amongst craftsmen and tradesmen, especially butchers. The database suggests that 64 per cent of the sheep taken by butchers occurred between October and December. This figure rises to 76 per cent if January is included. This may reflect their dependency on local markets which, with the exception of the Christmas lamb trade, were relatively depressed from the late autumn. It is likely, therefore, that their incomes were low at this time. It is possible, moreover, that their problems partly stemmed from an increase in meat prices in the autumn months as fewer carcass sheep came onto the market.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, we do not have any monthly series on

⁷³ P. Jenkins, 'Times and seasons: the cycles of the year in early-modern Glamorgan', *Morgannwg*, 20 (1986), p. 26.

⁷⁴ E. L. Jones, *Seasons and prices. The role of the weather in English agricultural history* (1964), pp. 78–98.

⁷⁵ Ashton, *Economic fluctuations*, p. 11.

Welsh meat prices, although a couple of contributors to the Board of Agriculture Surveys suggested that they were high during the autumn and winter months.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, evidence from the south of England suggests that both beef and mutton prices rose at this time of the year.⁷⁷ Assuming this was the case in Wales too, it would have provided butchers with a price incentive to steal sheep, and, if, as modern estimates suggest, the demand for meat was price elastic, it would have depressed their sales and revenues too.⁷⁸

VII

According to the explanation advanced here, therefore, there is a good deal of support for Osborne's contention that seasonal fluctuations in sheep-stealing were a multi-causal phenomenon. Traditional interpretations of seasonality, which tend to stress the impact of fluctuations in economic activity and hardship on the supply of motivated offenders, gain considerable support. When the level of activity was low, as in the early part of the year, the early summer and the autumn, theft was high. Alternatively, when economic activity was high, as in the spring and late summer, theft was relatively low. But, it is evident that other influences were at work too. The supply of offenders was probably positively related to the hours of daylight and, with the changes in both the condition of the sheep and their marketability, there were changes in the effective supply of targets over the course of the year. It is probably more than coincidence, therefore, that the high peak in sheep-stealing occurred in the early summer when sheep were in good condition and readily marketable. It is also the case that high levels of theft are only possible when the sheep were poorly protected. When they were closely watched-over, as during lambing, theft tended to be low, and it is a moot point whether this was primarily due to high levels of economic activity or intensive shepherding.

The case for arguing that seasonality was subject to a range of influences is further strengthened when the criminals are disaggregated by occupational group. Traditional need explanations are most convincing when trying to account for the crime patterns of labourers, although, even for this group, some qualification is necessary. A disproportionate number of labourers, it is true, stole sheep in the early part of the year, when their incomes were lowest. But they also stole large numbers of sheep during the early summer and in the autumn, when it would be more difficult to invoke such an explanation. This implies, perhaps, that sometimes labourers stole sheep for acquisitive reasons. Such motives were more evident amongst farmers and yeomen, who rarely stole sheep during the winter, confining themselves to those times of the year when sheep were most marketable. Marketability might also explain why theft amongst butchers was exceptional during the autumn, although the incentives to steal sheep at this time of the year were enhanced by high sheep prices and relatively low earnings.

⁷⁶ Hassel, *General view ... Pembroke*, p. 48; Lloyd, *General view ... Cardigan*, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Bowden in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian Hist.*, V (ii), p. 40.

⁷⁸ Modern estimates suggest a price elasticity of

demand for carcass meat of roughly 1.5. See, for example, B. Hill and D. Ray, *Economics for agriculture* (1987). Presumably, in a low or medium income country the elasticity would be even higher.

A catalyst for modern agriculture? The importance of peatland cultivation in the adoption of inorganic fertilizers in Sweden, 1880–1920*

by Erland Mårald

Abstract

This article shows that peatland cultivation was, in an initial phase from the 1880s to the 1930s, an important catalyst for the adoption of fertilizers in Sweden. The most important agency promoting this development was the Mosskulturföreningen, the Swedish Peatland Cultivation Association, established in 1886. Through its scientific work, sponsorship of field trials, and dissemination of knowledge, the Mosskulturföreningen resulted in fertilizers being made available over a large geographical area and gaining acceptance amongst farmers. The take up of fertilizers involved not only the adoption of new techniques but also new ways of thinking.

The formation of the Swedish Peatland Cultivation Association, Svenska Mosskulturföreningen, in 1886, is closely tied to the introduction of inorganic fertilizers to Swedish agriculture. Peatland cultivation was not a new phenomenon in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. From the eighteenth century, public debate in Sweden had looked to the time when the country's vast peatlands could be cultivated and used to the advantage of the nation's economy and society. These hopes were especially focused on the peatlands in the central highlands of southern Sweden and in the northern part of the country, the Norrland, where peatlands covered 20 and 25 per cent of the total land area respectively. It was only after the introduction of inorganic fertilizers that these ambitions became realizable. Advances in soil chemistry showed that the peatland soil lacked several essential plant nutrients, which at about the same time, became available for purchase on the market. It was on the basis of these optimistic scenarios that the Mosskulturföreningen was founded.

Peatland cultivation in the form that the Mosskulturföreningen promoted was, in its own time, an extremely modern project, conducted with knowledge of the latest scientific findings and with innovative technology. A peatland farmer was to be an entrepreneur who acted

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rationally by constantly seeking information, making efficient use of all available resources, and planning and recording his activities. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Mosskulturföreningen had established itself as one of the country's most prominent institutions for agricultural research, with advanced laboratories, experimental fields and trial bogs.

In this article it will be argued that Mosskulturföreningen's work for peatland cultivation was not only a modern project but also that its activities were of importance for the more general modernization of Swedish agriculture during a formative period. This took place on several planes, through scientific work, practical experiments, and the dissemination of technology and knowledge. The Mosskulturföreningen was an organization with many tentacles, and it had an impact throughout the country on farmers' ideas and practices. This paper will show the association between the advocacy of peatland cultivation by the Mosskulturföreningen and the widespread adoption of artificial fertilizers by Swedish farming in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth century.

I

The consumption of fertilizers increased dramatically after the Second World War. Both before and immediately after the war, global annual consumption was about seven or eight million tons, which may be compared with the first few years of the century, when about two million tons were used. By the mid-1960s, consumption had rocketed to nearly 45 million tons. For Sweden, the rate of increase in the consumption of artificials is at least as great in the last decades of the nineteenth century as after the Second World War. In the early 1870s, the import of fertilizers and crude rock phosphate amounted to 17,000 tons per year, but by 1910 it had increased to nearly 200,000 tons, that is, it increased more than tenfold over 30 years, as may be seen from Figure 1.¹ This happened at the same time as Swedish agriculture was responding to increasing competition on the international corn market by changing from being predominantly a corn-producing economy to one based on animal production. As a consequence, a great deal of farmland, including peatland, was converted to producing animal feedstuffs, which enabled a larger number of livestock to be kept and more manure produced. In the same period the import of oil cakes for animal fodder increased just as rapidly as the import of fertilizers, which further increased the number of livestock and the supply of natural manure.² In addition, agricultural advisors made great efforts to improve the handling of manure by advocating concrete dunghill bottoms and cesspools for manure.

Thus, the amount of farmyard manure (as well as its quality) must have increased considerably in this period, and this, to a great extent, should have covered the increased demand for plant nutrients, although there was an expansion of the cultivated area about the same time. In addition, green manuring was adopted, a consequence of the discovery that the interplay between bacteria and leguminous plants binds atmospheric nitrogen in the soil. The nitrogen balance could thereby be improved on many arable lands. These Swedish developments are not unique. In the Netherlands, for instance, where the use of fertilizers also increased rapidly and

¹ *Historisk statistik för Sverige*, III, *Utrikeshandel*, 1732–1970 (1972), pp. 200, 223.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 199, 223.

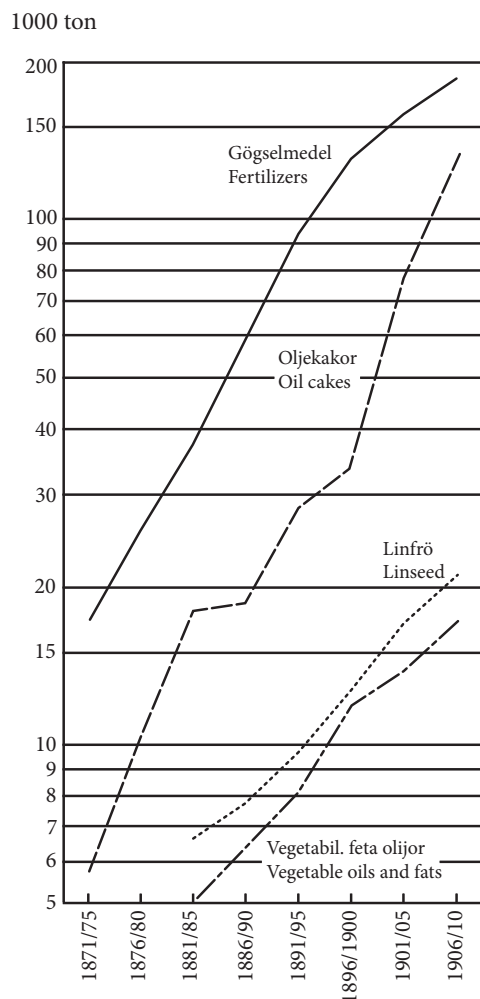


FIGURE 1. Imports of fertilizers, oil cakes, linseeds and vegetable fats and oils to Sweden, 1871/75 to 1906–10.

Source: *Historisk statistik för Sverige III, Utrikeshandel, 1732–1970* (1972), p. 223.

where the consumption per cultivated hectare was the largest in the world at the end of the nineteenth century, the consumption of farmyard manure was four to five times greater than that of fertilizers. Merijn Knibbe has argued that, despite the rapidly increasing imports of artificials, it was the growing supply of farmyard manure that accounted for the larger part of the increased consumption of nutrients by Dutch agriculture up to the 1920s.³

Where were the fertilizers used? One important large-scale consumer was sugar beet cultivation, whose breakthrough in Sweden proceeded in parallel with the introduction of industrially-produced fertilizers. In Skåne in southern Sweden, where the sugar-beet cultivation was most extensive, the average use of fertilizer was 131 kilos per hectare of cultivated land

³ Merijn T. Knibbe, 'Feed, Fertilizer, and Agricultural Productivity in the Netherlands, 1880–1930', *Agricultural Hist.* 74 (2000), p. 51. Paul Brassley has drawn roughly the same conclusion for England and Wales. Only in the supply of phosphate were artificial fertilizers more important than farmyard manure. Paul Brassley, 'Plant Nutrition', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, VII (i), 1850–1914 (2000), pp. 531–47.

in 1911, some 75 per cent higher than the average for the whole country.⁴ Another form of agriculture that required fertilizers – and the one which concerns us here – was peatland cultivation. Here the demand was mainly for phosphate fertilizer and potash salts. As a result, Sweden was a disproportionately large importer of potash when compared to other countries. In a statistical survey made by the German potash industry and published in the Journal of the Swedish Peatland Cultivation Association, *Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, in 1891, it was stated that Sweden was the fourth largest importer of potassium in the world after Germany, USA and Great Britain and it explained this by saying that the country had a lot of peatland soil.⁵ When the secretary to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture, Herman Juhlin Dannfelt looked back at the introduction of fertilizers to Sweden in 1925, he emphasized the importance of peatland cultivation:

This adaptation of fertilization to the type of soil and plants was made possible through the use of fertilizers as a complement to farmyard manure or instead of it, which in particular became common on marshes and bogs, for which reason the strongly increasing peatland cultivation from the 1880s also resulted in a considerable increase in the consumption of fertilizers.⁶

There is thus a great deal of evidence that, after sugar-beet cultivation, peatland cultivation was a prime stimulus to the rapidly increasing consumption of fertilizers in Sweden in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first few decades of the twentieth century. A circular of 1897, stated that fertilizers, ‘for some types of cultivation, namely for peatland cultivation and for the intensive cultivation of root vegetables, in particular sugar beets, they are without doubt a *conditio sine qua non*’.⁷ This is also the conclusion Mats Morell came to in the fourth volume of the Swedish agricultural history, *Jordbruket i industrisamhället, 1870–1945*, where he shows that that acid peatland soil was capable of dissolving and using fertilizers that could not be used successfully elsewhere.⁸

Unlike sugar beet, the cultivation of marsh and bog soil was conducted over the whole of Sweden – from Skåne to Lapland. It was also undertaken by large-scale as well as middle-sized farmers and smallholders. The Mosskulturföreningen played an important role by spreading the usage of artificial fertilizers to farmers throughout the country, trialling new fertilizers to distinguish between the effective, the ineffective and the merely fraudulent, and publishing recommendations for the use of fertilizers on improved peatland. The association must be seen as one of a number of national agricultural science research organisations established in Europe and North America, with Germany as a model, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Besides scientific

⁴ Fredrik Björk, ‘Ett energimedel av största värde: Betsockrets genombrott i Sverige’, in E. Måråld and C. Nordlund (eds), *Värna, vårda, värdera: Miljöhistoriska aspekter och aspekter på miljöhistoriska* (Umeå: Skrifter från forskningsprogrammet Landskapet som arena 5, 2003), p. 59.

⁵ ‘De enskilda ländernas andel i kaliförbrukningen under 1888 och 89, beräknadt i kilogram’, *Svenska mosskulturföreningens tidskrift* 1891, pp. 124–5.

⁶ Juhlin Dannfelt Herman, ‘Sveriges lantbruk, 1875–1925’, in *Lantbruket i Norden, 1875–1925: Under senaste halvsekle* (1926), p. 45.

⁷ id., ‘Hvilka konstgödselmedel åtnjuta numera det största förtroendet, och på hvilken jordmån böra dessa lämpligen användas?’, *Kongliga Landtbruks-akademiens handlingar och tidskrift* 1897, p. 204.

⁸ Mats Morell, *Jordbruket i industrisamhället, 1870–1945* (Det svenska jordbrukets historia, 4, 2001), p. 225.

experiments, their task was to control different products and analyse soil samples on behalf of farmers. In addition to the laboratory assignments, the stations functioned as disseminators of scientific findings, and farmers could turn to them for advice and information.⁹

II

The use of chemical assistance to agriculture began to be discussed in Sweden as early as the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰ Initially, chemical analyses of soil samples and fertilizers were made for a fee by the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture's chemist, by the Institutes of Agricultural Sciences at Ultuna and Alnarp and by private chemists. In the early 1870s, it began to be suggested that the government should take the responsibility for making this service available in the whole country. The first four government research stations were established in 1876 and their number increased to eleven by the end of the century.

The first manager of Mosskulturföreningen, Carl von Feilitzen, started his transition from industrialist to agricultural zealot in the early 1880s by setting up a private research station in Jönköping in middle of the southern part of Sweden. After a couple of years, this station became one of the government-financed centres with von Feilitzen as its manager. It was from this platform that von Feilitzen could act when taking the initiative to found the Mosskulturföreningen. Until 1903, when the Mosskulturföreningen secured its own buildings (which included a chemical laboratory), the government laboratory at Jönköping conducted the association's chemical analyses. The boundary between the government-funded station and Mosskulturföreningen was therefore permeable.

One of the Mosskulturföreningen's tasks was the evaluation of the quality of the new products that were constantly appearing on the growing fertilizer market. Some were fraudulent: others were simply substandard. There were also some miracle substances which claimed the support of bogus science and which agricultural science tried to suppress. Via *Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, results from the station's analytical and experimental activities were circulated widely, and a large number of articles and news items about new products and their potency were published. One reason why the Mosskulturföreningen disseminated such information was that many of the fertilizer frauds could only be detected by means of chemical analyses. Carl von Feilitzen wrote:

The farmer is however exposed enough to deceit when making these purchases. And this in a way that he cannot possibly control himself, namely by receiving a product inferior to what he is asking for, or even a counterfeit product.¹¹

⁹ David B. Danbom, 'The agricultural experimental station and professionalization', *Agricultural Hist.* 60 (1986); Mark R. Finley, 'The German agricultural experimental stations and the beginnings of American agricultural research', *Agricultural Hist.* 62 (1988); Margaret Rossiter, *The emergence of agricultural science. Justus Liebig and the Americans, 1840-1880* (1975), and Ursula Schling-Brodersen, *Entwicklung und institutionalisierung*

der agrarchemie in 19. Jahrhundert: Liebig und Die Landwirtschaftlichen Versuchstationen (1989).

¹⁰ E. Mårald, 'Jordens kretslopp: Lantbruket, staden och den kemiska vetenskapen, 1840-1910' (Ph.D. Diss. Umeå University, 2000), pp. 66ff, 112-17.

¹¹ Carl von Feilitzen, 'Iakttagelser vid inköp af artificiella gödselämnen', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1890, p. 395.

It was thus in the best interest of farmers that the chemical stations and the Mosskulturföreningen offered their services. A underlying aim was to build confidence in fertilizers, which were essential to modern agriculture, and thereby encourage the transformation of Swedish agriculture. If individual brands of artificial fertilizers were found to be useless or counterfeit, then they jeopardized the take up of artificials generally.

III

The Mosskulturföreningen's principal work for promoting greater use of artificial plant nutrients consisted, however, of comparative fertilizer field trials. The aim of these activities was to convert the competing theories of agricultural science into practical applications and reliable recommendations through long-term trials. In this way the individual farmers were spared the need to experiment and it allowed them to avoid unnecessary mistakes. In order to attain well-founded and generalizable results, great scientific accuracy was needed, which individual farmers could not attain. Research and advisory work was essential to the Mosskulturföreningen's whole purpose. Without the experimental work, there was no knowledge or advice to spread to the farmers, nor any justification for the government or others to support the association.

The trials were principally conducted at the association's experimental station situated on peatland at Flahult in Småland (Figure 2). This was an area in the highlands of southern Sweden, of vast and unexploited peatland. A large vegetation experimental farm was also built in Jönköping in 1890 for exact experiments to be conducted in concrete-lined test beds (Figure 3). It was close to this facility that the Association's new headquarters building was erected in 1903. Trials were also conducted at the association's branches at Torestorp and Gisselås, the latter in Jämtland in the forest region of northern Sweden. In addition, the association successively established a nationwide network of local trial and demonstration fields. The Mosskulturföreningen's experimental work thus became extensive over time. In 1909 the vegetation farm consisted of 851 experimental containers, 173 experimental vessels and 67 plots on outdoor soil. At Flahult there were 36 cultivated hectares with 1360 plots, among other things; at Torestorp a little more than seven hectares were cultivated, and round the country there were 226 trial fields on an area of 62 hectares divided into 4010 plots.¹² This experimental work continued expanding until it reached its peak in the 1930s, with new experimental farms on peatland at Svartökärr close to Flahult and at Sörbyn in Västerbotten (in northern Sweden), and with more than 400 smaller local trials round the country.¹³

The fertilizer trials made up a considerable part of the experimental work. Different fertilizers were tested to discover the soils to which they were best suited, the optimum requirements of each crops, how different fertilizers should be combined and when, and in what amounts they should

¹² Hjalmar von Feilitzen, 'Hvilka erfarenheter hafva under senare tider vunnits på mosskulturens område?', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift* 1911, p. 623; Hjalmar von Feilitzen, *Några praktiska erfarenheter i mosskultur vunna under Svenska Mosskulturföreningens 23-åriga försöksverksamhet (1887-1909)* (1911), pp. 4-9, and Hugo

Osvald, 'Svenska mosskulturföreningens verksamhet, 1886-1926', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1926, pp. 245ff.

¹³ Gerhard Rappe, 'Svenska mosskulturföreningens verksamhet, 1886-1936', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1936, pp. 291-303, 305.



FIGURE 2. The experimental farm at Fluhult. Photo: Hjalmar von Feilitzen.

Source: Mosskulturföreningen archive, Swedish National Archive, Stockholm.

be used. Although there was a very positive attitude to fertilizers, the Mosskulturföreningen did not advocate the inappropriate or uncritical use of artificials. The experimental work was aimed instead at creating scientifically-informed and economically-rational consumption, where the farmers themselves learned how (and how not) not to fertilize. There was a revision of the optimistic view of cultivation that existed when the association was founded. It was realised that even with fertilizers, not all peatlands could be cultivated profitably. This was especially true of sphagnum bogs, which were only profitable to cultivate as pastures. The trials at Flahult showed that it was possible to transform a sphagnum bog into fertile farmland, but this was too expensive for the individual farmer, and where there were unexploited but fertile marshlands, it was judged to be better to exploit these first.¹⁴

What practical results did the experimental work produce? The plant nutrients lacking in most peatland soils were phosphorus and potassium. Large amounts of lime also had to be used as a soil improver in order to neutralize its acidity. Phosphorus could be added primarily in the form of bone manure, superphosphate or basic slag. Which of these substances was preferable depended on its price and the particular circumstances in which they were to be used. The use of bone manure had been questioned in the 1890s because it was held to be difficult to dissolve. Later results from the Mosskulturföreningen's trials showed that in acid peatland soil the phosphorus became available to be taken up by plants. Superphosphate and basic slag were, however, found to be the best substances. There was some predilection for basic slag in the advice given, as this type of phosphate was held in the soil longer and

¹⁴ Hjalmar von Feilitzen, 'Hvad har Svenska Mosskulturföreningen uträttat under de gångna 25 åren?', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1905, pp. 373–4.



FIGURE 3. The vegetation experimental farm in Jönköping. Photo: Hjalmar von Feilitzen.

Source: Mosskulturföreningen archive, Swedish National Archive, Stockholm.

basic slag also contained lime. Moreover, potassium had to be imported as there was no local source. Only German Stassfurter potash salts were on the whole recommended, irrespective of type. Although there was nitrogen in most peatland soils, the application of Chilean saltpetre, lime saltpetre or calcium carbide could be used to get quick harvest results or to maintain the quality of grazing grounds. After the First World War, the attitude to nitrogen fertilizers changed. This coincided with their becoming cheaper, and their regular application to peatland soils began to be recommended.¹⁵

Fertilizers were not the only means of improving peatland. Initially there had been hopes that peat soils could be cultivated entirely without using farmyard manure, since the peatlands were rich in nitrogen and humus. The rapid development of the understanding of soil bacteriology in the late nineteenth century changed the picture. It led to the insight that soil bacteria played a decisive role in fertility, even though there was no understanding at that time of how this worked. Through a large number of practical cultivation experiments, the Mosskulturföreningen showed that these organisms had an important role in allowing plants

¹⁵ Hjalmar von Feilitzen, 'Hvad har Svenska Mosskulturföreningen uträttat under de gångna 25 åren?'; id., 'Hvilke erfaringer hafva under senare tider vunnits på mosskulturens område?'; id., *Några praktiska*, and Hugo Osvald, *Myrar och myrödling* (1937), pp. 267–307.

to assimilate the nutrients in the soil. The chemist Hjalmar von Feilitzen, who had succeeded to the position of manager after his father, wrote,

... newly cultivated peat soil is on the other hand rather poor in bacteria, and it is only when these are present in large numbers that the transformation in the soil can proceed undisturbedly, and the organic plant nutrients be released.¹⁶

By experimentation, von Feilitzen was able to demonstrate that the addition of even a small amount of farmyard manure, rich in micro-organisms, put 'life in the soil'. In order to be able to carry out 'green manuring', in which nitrogen-fixing leguminous plants that were first sown and then ploughed in, the peatlands needed enriching with the essential nitrogen bacteria. Hjalmar von Feilitzen was able to prove that the so-called soil grafting, when soil from land on which clover and vetch were already established was spread on peatlands, was an effective method in improving the bacteriological content of the peat soils.¹⁷

The changes in Swedish agriculture with the transition to livestock production also affected the advice given to farmers. Before the Mosskulturföreningen had been founded, a great deal of newly exploited peatland soil and land produced by the drainage of lakes had been used for cultivation of oats, for which there was then a ready export market to Britain. Oats were grown on the same ground year after year, which led to the harvests decreasing because weeds progressively took hold. To counteract the problem with weeds, the Mosskulturföreningen advocated a crop rotation consisting of grain, root vegetables, pasture grass and fallow. Pasture cultivation of grass and clover came, however, more and more to be described as the most important form of cultivation on the peatlands. As regards feedstuff production on peatlands, fertilizers also played a decisive role. A clear connection was seen between fertilizers and farmyard manure, peatland and conventional soils, and between the cultivation of land and livestock breeding. A translated German article in *Svenska mosskulturföreningens tidskrift* in 1891 about the importance of basic slag in agriculture, stated, for example:

The basic slag thus starts a beneficial cycle running through all phases of agriculture, because it makes it possible to introduce more cultivation of feedstuff, green manuring, a larger stock of cattle, hence a larger amount of manure, and at the same time further improvement of the manuring.¹⁸

So, the fertilized peatland soil came to be used for production of feedstuffs for an increasingly large stock of cattle, which in turn could increase the supply of farmyard manure. Mats Morell has summarised the changes that this brought about. 'The cultivation of peatlands and waterlogged meadow contributed to larger crops on firm-ground arable, and the fertilizers contributed to more farmyard manure to the crops that could utilize them the best.'¹⁹ The use of fertilizers on peatlands was seen as a way of generating more resources which could be deployed on land which could not otherwise be utilized at its optimum efficiency. In this way the farmers

¹⁶ Hjalmar von Feilitzen, 'Hvad har Svenska Mosskulturföreningen uträttat under de gångna 25 åren?', p. 376. See also id., *Några praktiska*, p. 35.

¹⁷ id., *Några praktiska*, pp. 24–35, 45f.

¹⁸ 'Meddelanden från 1891 års konstgödselmarknad', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1892, p. 145.

¹⁹ Morell, *Jordbruket i industrisamhället*, p. 225.

could accelerate the turnover of the whole system, in the soil as well as economically, in order to get a larger, safer and quicker yield.

IV

Even if the Mosskulturföreningen, like the other institutes for agricultural science, strived to be objective and impartial, there were close connections between its scientific and external activities, commercial interests and the government. The boundaries between these spheres were maintained, but there were unifying interests and a shared view of many issues. This was a prerequisite for the Mosskulturföreningen's existence. Its membership never exceeded about three thousand and their subscriptions were insufficient to support the whole range of the association's activities. It was therefore dependent on government financial support and the subventions of supporters in order to be able to function and expand. Conversely, the association's organization and activities could be used to promote commercial or government interests. Mosskulturföreningen's work aimed at modernizing agriculture, decreasing social problems and involving farmers in economic and scientific exchange in order to strengthen the nation.

The Mosskulturföreningen was given public grants at an early stage, but it was not until 1906 that the government became its major funder.²⁰ There was a constant struggle to secure increases in grant aid and induce the government to support peatland cultivation. It is far from self-evident that there was a consensus amongst politicians and agricultural specialists that peatland cultivation was a solution to the country's future needs. This controversy was particularly evident in the debate about the so-called Norrland issue, about whether the northern half of Sweden was best developed for agriculture or industry.²¹ The debate between the advocates of industrial and agricultural development existed within all the political parties. The advocates of an agrarian future for the country held the upper hand for a long period in the twentieth century. Support for the Mosskulturföreningen was thus to be found among the agricultural zealots, and peatland cultivation can be placed in a political context, in which the modernization of agriculture was seen as the way to improve living standards.

The Mosskulturföreningen persistently lobbied the government over a variety of issues including its support for facilitating the use and dissemination of soil improvers. As early as 1886 the Association wrote to the Crown urging a reduction in freight charges for lime and fertilizers on the state-owned railways. This was an issue that the association pursued with support from the regional agricultural societies. At length its lobbying was successful, and in 1907 a 40 per cent reduction in the freight charge for lime was conceded. In the words of the Ministry of Agriculture, the facilitation of the supply of lime was seen as 'an important governmental interest', in particular for those parts of the country that were deficient in lime and where there was much peatland that had been improved.²² The First World War also caused problems for the supply of fertilizers and forced the implementation of a policy of strict rationing. According to

²⁰ Rappe, 'Svenska mosskulturföreningens verksamhet, 1886–1936', p. 325

²¹ Sverker Sörlin, *Framtidslandet: Debatten om Norrland och naturresurserna under det industriella genombrottet* (1988), pp. 156–253.

²² von Feilitzen, 'Hvilka erfarenheter hafva under senare tider vunnits på mosskulturens område?', pp. 619ff, and 'Fraktlindringarna å kalk för jordbrukets behof', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1917, pp. 202–05.

the Mosskulturföreningen, this was particularly hard on the peatland plantations, which were completely dependent on the supply of imported phosphorus and potassium. The association maintained that the peatland farmers ought to get a larger allocation than other farmers and that its distribution needed to be expedited so that the fertilizers would reach the farmers in time to be of benefit. To some extent, the Mosskulturföreningen had their demands implemented.²³

The Mosskulturföreningen's advocacy for greater use of fertilizers also involved making direct or indirect propaganda for various commercial products. Particular companies or brands were seldom mentioned, but a recurring piece of advice to farmers was that fertilizers should be purchased from reputable firms. Swedish products were preferred, for example, basic slag under the brand names Wiborghsfosfat and Palmaerfosfat from the ironworks in Domnarvet and Norrbotten, which were in operation around 1900. Hjalmar von Feilitzen wrote two booklets on the potash mines in Stassfurt, Germany, and the phosphate industry in Sweden respectively, in which the Swedish suppliers were described.²⁴

Mosskulturföreningen had a particularly long and close connection to the fertilizer importer Moritz Fraenckel and his eponymous company.²⁵ Fraenckel belonged to a German merchant family and came from Saxony, not far from the centre of the potash industry. Early in life he moved to Sweden, and in 1876 he started Moritz Fraenckel & Co in Gothenburg. In the early 1880s he imported the first consignment of Stassfurter potash salts, and shortly afterwards his firm became the general sales agent in the Nordic countries for the newly established German Potash Syndicate.

When the Mosskulturföreningen started its cultivation experiments, it was Fraenckel who provided all the fertilizers that were used. For many years the Association also received from him 'a not insignificant sum' in support of its experimental work. Furthermore, the firm purchased and gave to the Mosskulturföreningen the land on the outskirts of Jönköping where its new headquarters were erected and partially funded the buildings there. Fraenckel also carried the largest part of the cost of the buildings at the experimental field at Torestorp (Figure 4). If there was a shortfall in funding for wall charts, special editions or leaflets, the association could also always rely on him to help out. In addition to its patronage of the Mosskulturföreningen, which, according to the Association itself, was Fraenckel's most important commitment, the firm also assisted nearly all the institutes of agricultural sciences in Sweden. From 1891 up to his death, Fraenckel was also an active member of the association's board. A proposal partly made on Fraenckel's initiative was the introduction of a new sack marking system for fertilizers, which brought some order to the trade.²⁶

²³ 'Skrifvelse till Kungl. Maj:t rörande tillgodoseende af mossodlingarnes behof af konstgödsel', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1917, pp. 513–5; 'Skrifvelse till Kungl. Maj:t rörande import af konstgödsel för mossodlingar och möjligast snabb distribution af inkomna partier', and 'Frågan om import och distribution af konstgödsel', both *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift* 1919, pp. 80–1, 154–5.

²⁴ Hjalmar von Feilitzen, *Ett besök vid kaligrufvorna i Stassfurt: Föredrag vid Tekniska föreningens i Jönköping-*

sammanträde den 16 maj 1903 (1904), 29 pp., and Hjalmar von Feilitzen, *Några ord om fosfatindustrien och dess nuvarande ståndpunkt i vårt land: Föredrag vid Tekniska föreningens i Jönköping sammanträde den 27 april 1912* (1912), 40 pp.

²⁵ 'Moritz Fraenckel', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1911, pp. 107–10.

²⁶ Hjalmar von Feilitzen, 'Hvilka erfarenheter hafva under senare tider vunnits på mosskulturens område?', p. 620.

good return, and Fraenckel's firm had a virtual monopoly on the sale of potassium fertilizers in Scandinavia. Disseminating information to farmers about the importance of fertilizers via the Mosskulturföreningen's organization and contacts increased the sales and trust in the firm as well as its scientific legitimacy. At the time of the firm's fiftieth anniversary, the Mosskulturföreningen wrote about Moritz Fraenckel's ability to combine idealism and financial activities. '[He] ... succeeded, to an exceptional degree, in combining a far-sighted business principle with an idealistic interest in agriculture in the Nordic countries.'²⁷ Hence, representatives of the Association did not regard the close contacts they had with the firm as producing any conflict of interest between them. The Mosskulturföreningen and Fraenckel had a shared interest in the growth of fertilizer usage. The close connection between the Association and the company guaranteed such a development. After Moritz Fraenckel's death in 1911, his son Gösta took over the firm and continued his father's membership of the board of Mosskulturföreningen: thus the close co-operation was continued into a second generation.

V

The Mosskulturföreningen's attribute *Svenska* (Swedish), as well as the government's support and the backing of the country's agricultural societies and county councils all reflected a national ambition and endeavour to bring Sweden's peatlands into profitable cultivation. Peatland cultivation and the utilization of fertilizers did not, however, disseminate by themselves – at least not at the rate that the association sought. In order to induce farmers to undertake peatland cultivation in accordance with the latest scientific findings, the association had to develop an organization and establish information channels and contacts, in which an increasing number of people, institutions and resources became involved. As we described earlier, the Mosskulturföreningen was in this way linked to the government, and to commercial interests and other agrarian organizations. Through its external activities, farmers were also directly included in the network. This contact with the local level was important for the dissemination of the findings of agricultural science but also for the gathering of the experiences of individual farmers as a part of the association's acquisition of knowledge.

The Mosskulturföreningen was not alone in disseminating the benefits of peatland cultivation and fertilizers. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, an 'agricultural science infrastructure' was developed which encompassed the institutes of agricultural science and their branches throughout the country, farm schools, agricultural associations and their experimental sites.²⁸ The regional agricultural societies played an important role in this network. Through their hierarchical organization, with both nationwide links and regional and local responsibilities, they were the ideal means by which information and new technology could be disseminated. In order to publicise these innovations, an increasing number of agrarian experts were employed with the aid of governmental funding, as agricultural consultants, local advisors, county agronomists, drainage foremen, etc. In 1925 the agricultural societies employed about 350 advisors, and by the late 1930s this number had risen to

²⁷ 'Firman Moritz Fraenckel & C:o 50 år', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1926, pp. 168–9.

²⁸ Mårald, 'Jordens kretslopp', pp. 139–45.

about 700.²⁹ It is therefore difficult to distinguish the Mosskulturföreningen's contribution from that of other participants in the agricultural science infrastructure, but it was far from insignificant. In addition, the association's perspective and knowledge came to be taught and conveyed by the other actors.³⁰

The Mosskulturföreningen's external activities, performed for the most part by its advisory officers, took several forms. Its first advisory officer was employed in 1888; it was not until 1904 that the second was appointed, and a third in 1910. Their duties were to offer practical advice to the peatland farmers, give public lectures and manage the experimental trials. The sources indicate that there was a shift in the character of those who drew on the advisors. Initially they were consulted by the more well-to-do farmers, but after the turn of the century, smallholders came to predominate and they were encouraged to seek advice by the offer of free consultations. The association also distributed its message through its journal, booklets and leaflets. It compiled demonstration materials for agricultural training and education and participated regularly in exhibitions. Every year a summer meeting was arranged, which moved around the country. In this way the Mosskulturföreningen could develop its contacts with the regional agricultural society that had assisted in the arrangements and its members could make excursions to interesting peatland enterprises in the vicinity. From 1906 onwards a peatland course was held annually in Jönköping which attracted several hundred participants and from 1924 onwards, courses were also arranged at Gisselås in order to explore conditions in the north.³¹ In addition, the Association's manager and its botanist gave lectures at the agricultural institutes to impart knowledge of peatland cultivation to the next generation of agronomists.

The most effective method of reaching the farming community was the local trial and experimental fields (Figure 5). These were carefully located so as to be easily accessible and readily visible to the largest number of people. The regional advisory officer organised the trials and took charge of the demonstrations, which were attended by anything from ten to a couple of hundred spectators. The day-to-day supervision of the trials was conducted by slightly more than a hundred trial hosts who were selected as competent and careful farmers capable of acting as local ambassadors for peatland cultivation. All the other institutes of agricultural science and agricultural societies conducted similar trials, often in collaboration. For example in Norrbotten, the northernmost part of Sweden, the Kemisk-växtbiologiska anstalten (Chemical and Plant Biological Institute) carried out about 150 fertilizing trials annually, both on farmland and on peatland plantations. Each field consisted of 15 to 20 meter square seed plots, where completely unfertilized plots were compared with fully fertilized (nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and lime) ones, and with plots where one of the plant nutrients was omitted. The idea was the fields would speak for themselves and prove that the use of different types of fertilizer yielded

²⁹ *Betänkande med förslag angående hushållningssällskapens organisation och verksamhet m.m.* SOU 1942:32, p. 13, and Kirsti Niskanen, 'Godsägare, småbrukare och jordbrukets modernisering: Södermanlands län 1875–1935' (Ph.D. Diss. Stockholm University, 1995), pp. 121–55.

³⁰ See also Nicholas Goddard, 'Information and

innovation in early-Victorian farming systems', in B. A. Holderness and M. Turner (eds), *Land, labour and agriculture, 1700–1920. Essays for Gordon Mingay* (1990), pp. 165–90.

³¹ Hernfrid Witte, 'Svenska mosskulturföreningens första norrländska mosskurs', *Svenska Mosskulturföreningens tidskrift*, 1924, pp. 372–81.

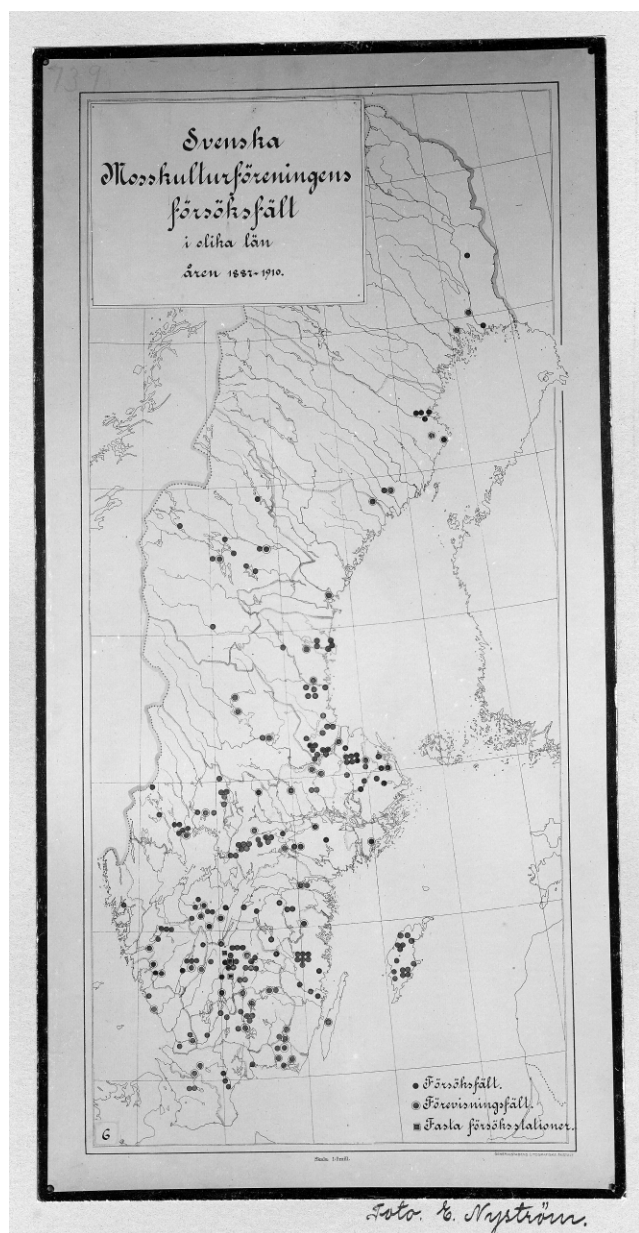


FIGURE 5. Map over Mosskulturföreningens local trail and demonstration fields, 1887–1910.

Source: Mosskulturföreningen archive, Swedish National Archive, Stockholm.

a greater return and was economically profitable. The association's manager, Paul Hellström, noted that the external work produced positive results:

Many a farmer, who some years ago with badly concealed doubt and almost contemptuous ridicule, saw how the Institute's officers strewed fertilizers on the small trial field on his peatland plantation, is now using considerable amounts of fertilizer annually on his bog.³²

³² Paul Hellström, 'Sveriges nordligaste försöksanstalt: En 10-års översikt', *Landtmannen* 1905, p. 598.

The importance placed on the field trial, both as a demonstration of the power of fertilizers but also as a scientific experiment, confirms Henke's assessment that the trial field as a 'place' has a central function in agricultural science research.³³ It combined the laboratory's ambition to attain abstract results with the objective of field research to elucidate the special properties of places. Moreover, the trial field had a twofold aim. Trials were conducted not only to produce facts but also to change the landscape itself and the attitude of farmers in its surroundings. With its clear demonstrative pedagogy and numerical presentations, the trial field had the capacity to persuade.³⁴ Everybody could see with their own eyes that modern agricultural methods were superior. If the farmers could not see this, the demonstrations could still teach them to see what they were expected to achieve. Henke criticizes the idea that the field trial was merely a matter of disseminating information from the centre to the periphery. It was, instead, a place for the exchange of knowledge and for negotiation. In order to be successful, the trials must be adapted to local conditions and the farmers' own interests. They were often conducted on the farmers' own land and utilised their practical skills. Without the trial hosts' practical know-how, it would have been very difficult to produce the amount of standardized data that was needed for the rigorous assessment of new products. In other words, farmers participated in the scientific gathering of knowledge via the trial fields.

Finally, one explanation of the Mosskulturföreningen's impact and the rapid dissemination of fertilizers was that society's political objectives coincided with those of the association up to the 1930s. Expansion of the cultivated area, the improvement of peatlands, the creation of new smallholdings and proliferation of smallholders were seen by many as a solution to the social problems of emigration, rural unemployment and the flight from the countryside. In order to stimulate improvement projects, a large number of different loans and grants were established, including loans for improvement, grants for frost reduction, drainage grants, premium bond loans, grants for the handling of manure and fertilizers, drainage grants and state mortgages for the purchase of holdings.³⁵ The Mosskulturföreningen advocated the establishment of such grants and through its advisory service showed farmers how they could be used to bring the greatest benefit. In order for a farmer to secure a loan or a grant, he had to manage his newly cultivated peatland or smallholding with modern methods and with approved cultivation plans, in which the use of fertilizers was a necessary part. The loans and grants functioned both as a kind of educational tool but also served to enforce compliance with the new agricultural thinking and methods.

The improvement of peatlands was not merely a matter of compulsion and control. Many farmers took initiatives of their own to cultivate them, to purchase fertilizers or seek help from the agrarian experts. Farmers also united in co-operative societies in order to lower the costs of fertilizers and other goods or to pay consultants to examine the quality of their products and suggest improvements. Some of the farmers' reasons for adopting modern agricultural methods were certainly different from the aims of the government

³³ C. R. Henke, 'Making place for science: The Field Trial', *Social Studies of Science* 30 (2000), pp. 483–511.

³⁴ See also Mårald, 'Jordens kretslopp', pp. 88–91.

³⁵ Herman Juhlin Dannfelt, 'Sveriges lantbruk, 1875–1925', pp. 38–48.

and the Mosskulturföreningen.³⁶ While the government held the overall responsibility and Mosskulturföreningen disseminated knowledge of the new agricultural methodologies, the farmers acted out of self-interest. For them, the introduction of new technology was a means by which heavy and never-ending toil could be reduced. Modern agricultural methods also promised a safer yield and a more secure existence. Farmers were also interested in gaining access to cash, which gave them an entry to the world of consumer goods and a more modern lifestyle. Hence, the farmers themselves were a driving force behind the increasing use of fertilizers. In this way peatland cultivation was an area where several different actors could meet in order to attain their respective goals.

VI

As this article has tried to show, peatland cultivation, in an initial phase from the 1880s to the 1930s, played an important role in the adoption of fertilizers by Swedish agriculture. However, there are no direct figures showing the proportion of total fertilizer consumption that was devoted to peatlands. There is, nevertheless, a great deal of evidence that, through its special requirements, the cultivation of peatlands led to a greater use of fertilizers. What is also uncertain is how much importance we should attribute to this increase in consumption. Knibbe, in the article referred to before, thought that artificial fertilizers were of relatively little importance in increasing agricultural production in the Netherlands up to the interwar period. Instead, it was the increasing amount of farmyard manure that had the greatest importance for the growing productivity of farming. But Knibbe also acknowledged that industrially-produced fertilizers had a great influence on the practice of agriculture in the nineteenth century. They allowed the awkward and time-consuming recycling of urban waste to be decreased drastically, the need for labour in agriculture to diminish, and allowed Dutch farmers to specialize. The impact was thus more on an organizational and a social plane.³⁷

Much of this analysis also seems to apply to Sweden. We have noted, for instance, how the use of fertilizers released the innate fertility of the peatland, allowed more fodder to be grown and so generated more manure by allowing larger cattle herds to be maintained. Admittedly, Swedish peatland cultivation can hardly be said to have led to agrarian specialization or increases in the productivity of labour, as in the case of the Netherlands: by allowing the creation of smallholdings, it may even have acted as a drag on overall levels of productivity. On the other hand, the use of fertilizers on peatland plantations resulted in altered practices and allowed farmers to free themselves from regimes of locally-oriented and self-subsistence production. As we have seen, the Mosskulturföreningen had an important function in connecting farmers with commercial interests and new products.

Peatland cultivation and the Mosskulturföreningen's efforts resulted in fertilizers being adopted

³⁶ For a discussion of how science and various groups in society cooperate in order to gain access to facts and resources, see Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, 'Institutional Ecology, "translation", and boundary objects: amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum

of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39', in M. Biagioli (ed.), *The Science Studies Reader* (1999), pp. 505–24.

³⁷ Knibbe, 'Feed, fertilizer, and agricultural productivity', pp. 39–56.

over a large geographical area and gaining acceptance among the broad mass of farmers. This was not only a matter of spreading fertilizer usage and making available knowledge of how to use them. It was also a matter of conveying a way of thinking. In place of the self-sufficient holding, a farm became a production unit drawing on external resources and knowledge in order to increase its turnover and profitability. It was important that the farmer did not rest on his laurels but constantly strove to improve his methods and hence achieve improvements in yields. Agrarian societies, advisors and technical journals all played a part in disseminating this mode of thought. It may be though that they were engaged in a single, gigantic educational project. The Mosskulturföreningen and its sponsorship of peatland cultivation was one of the catalysts that speeded up the modernization of agriculture.

We might end with a glance forwards. By the time new technologies (which involved a much greater consumption of fertilizers), and new thinking about the role of agriculture in the Swedish economy and society coalesced after the Second World War, peatland cultivation and Mosskulturföreningen had disappeared from the scene. In 1939 it merged with the merged with the Svenska betes-och vallföreningen (The Swedish association for fodder and pasture cultivation). At the same time the responsibility for its experimental work was passed to the state-managed agricultural research stations. The new association continued to operate at a low level until 1971 when it was formally dissolved. Rationalization of agricultural practices and a more effective use of land led to the abandonment of cultivation on marginal soils, amongst them the peatland plantations. Instead, it was increasingly felt that the cultivation of peatland, which required high inputs but offered the prospect of poor yields, was mistaken. It was held to be more rational to afforest this land, and so much of it was given up by conventional agriculture. The sponsorship of government was withdrawn, and the economic rationality of farmers, which the Mosskulturföreningen had helped to inculcate, finally and fatally undermined its own project.

The protectionist campaign by the Irish Barley growers, 1919–34^{*}

by Raymond Ryan

Abstract

The post-First World War disruption to agricultural supply and demand heralded a long-term decline in the Irish barley industry. After initial attempts at collective bargaining and negotiations with brewers, the majority of Irish barley growers sought government assistance for their sector, through tariffs and guaranteed prices. However, given the hostility of the Cumann na nGaedheal administration and of the Irish Farmers' Union to Protectionism, the barley growers' persistent campaign had the consequence of increasing support for Fianna Fáil, who introduced protection for the barley sector in 1932.

The years immediately following the First World War witnessed significant turbulence in the demand, supply and price of agricultural produce throughout western Europe. The Irish barley industry was no exception and the post-war disruption heralded a protracted decline in both the Irish barley acreage and in prices. Barley growers responded with a protracted campaign to seek government assistance in the form of guaranteed prices for their sector and tariffs on imported produce.¹ Their efforts have received some attention within the historiography. Dennison and MacDonagh have studied the relationship between Guinness and the barley growers during the 1920s and more briefly during the 1930s as part of their history of the Guinness Brewery, while Daly has briefly considered their demands in the context of the general campaign for protectionist economic policies.²

This article will expand the existing historiography by describing the anatomy of the barley growers' campaign in detail, showing the way it affected the representative farming organizations of the period, and how the demands for the barley sector eased the acceptance of farmers for protectionist economic policies. It will also demonstrate the capacity of Irish farmers to adopt

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¹ For a general overview of Irish agricultural conditions during this period, see C. O'Grada, *Ireland. A new economic history, 1780–1939* (1994), pp. 389–96. On the formation of agricultural policy, see M. Daly, *The First Department. A history of the Department of Agriculture* (2002), pp. 124–6, 144–69 and J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912–85* (1989), pp. 113–17, 184–6. For a similar treatment of the

Irish butter industry, see R. Ryan, 'The Irish butter industry, 1922–39', *Irish Economic and Social History* 28 (2001), pp. 32–47.

² S. R. Dennison and O. McDonagh, *Guinness, 1886–1939. From incorporation to the Second World War* (1998), pp. 207–09; Daly, *First Department*, pp. 148–51.

collective action to resolve difficulties in their sector. The article is based on research carried out on the archives of the Irish Department of Agriculture, and also makes extensive use of contemporary newspaper reports. Newspapers carried verbatim reports of meetings held by groups and organizations, and these have been extensively cited in this article with due caution for the claims made by those contributing to such meetings.

I

Barley cultivation was a well-established sector in Irish agriculture. By 1918, 182,779 acres in the area of the future Irish Free State were devoted to it.³ The area under cultivation then fell sharply over the following fifteen years, reaching a low point of 57 per cent of the 1918 acreage in 1932 (Table 1). Barley cultivation was heavily concentrated in Leinster counties such as Laois, Offaly, Louth and Wexford and these, together with Carlow and Kildare and in addition, the Munster counties of Cork and Tipperary, accounted for 88.4 per cent of the barley acreage in 1919.⁴ Many of these farmers produced barley for sale, primarily to breweries. Guinness was the principal purchaser of home-grown barley, reflecting its dominant position in the Irish brewing industry.⁵

The tillage sector enjoyed favourable conditions in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. The British Government continued to enforce compulsory tillage orders and to fix prices for tillage crops, including barley.⁶ Yet barley growers were dissatisfied with the prices they obtained from brewers and their grievances were initially articulated by the newly formed Irish Farmers' Union (IFU).⁷ In the autumn of 1919, the National Executive of the Union criticized the unilateral setting of barley prices by the Maltsters' Association without the consent of farmers. The National Executive advised County Associations to instruct members not to sell barley at less than 50s. per barrel (a barrel being two cwt), a price significantly greater than the government fixed price of 34s. 5d. per barrel.⁸ In addition to withholding produce, the Cork Farmers' Association threatened to supply British buyers if the local breweries did not pay the stipulated 50s. per barrel price.⁹ These tactics succeeded and barley farmers succeeded in obtaining the 50s. per barrel they sought.¹⁰ The following year, when the Union requested a meeting with the Guinness board to discuss prices, their request was refused.¹¹

Thus the barley growers had already commenced organized action when prices collapsed

³ BPP, 1921, XLI, *Agricultural Statistics, Ireland, 1921*, pp. 18–22.

⁴ D. A. Gilmour, 'Land and people, c.1926', in J. R. Hill (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, VII, 1921–84 (2003), p. 65; BPP, 1921, XLI, *Agricultural Statistics, Ireland, 1921*, pp. 18–20.

⁵ On Guinness' dominance of the Irish brewing industry, see A. Bielenberg, 'The Irish brewing industry and the rise of Guinness, 1790–1914', in T. R. Gourvish and R. G. Wilson (eds), *The dynamics of the international brewing industry since 1800* (1998), p. 115.

⁶ BPP, 1920, IX, *Department of Agriculture and*

Technical Instruction for Ireland, nineteenth General Report, 1918–19, pp. 75, 82.

⁷ For a general overview of the organisational efforts of Irish Farmers during this period, see Raymond Ryan, 'Farmers, agriculture and politics in the Irish Free State area, 1919–36' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College Cork, 2005), pp. 12–50.

⁸ *Irish Farmer*, 27 Sept. 1919.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 Oct. 1919.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8 Oct. 1919.

¹¹ Dennison and McDonagh, *Guinness, 1886–1939*, p. 206.

TABLE 1. Barley acreage in the Irish Free State area (26 counties), 1911–36

<i>Year</i>	<i>Barley acreage</i>	<i>Barley acreage as a % of total tillage acreage</i>	<i>Barley acreage as a % of total acreage</i>
1922	163,173	9.40	0.96
1923	145,813	8.73	0.86
1924	156,239	9.57	0.92
1925	145,626	9.27	0.86
1926	141,009	9.09	0.83
1927	120,796	8.00	0.71
1928	129,092	8.44	0.76
1929	117,591	7.73	0.69
1930	116,195	8.00	0.68
1931	115,735	8.12	0.68
1932	103,453	7.27	0.61
1933	117,422	8.07	0.69
1934	142,725	9.54	0.84
1935	138,650	8.71	0.81

Source: Statistical Abstract, 1937, pp. 32–3.

from 22s. 5d. per cwt in 1920 to 12s. 10d. per cwt in 1921 (Table 2).¹² This collapse was due in part to the cessation of fixed tillage prices,¹³ but also the universal fall in agricultural prices, and industry-specific factors such as increased excise duties and a reduced specific gravity of beer, all of which reduced the demand by brewers for malt.¹⁴ The National Executive of the IFU unsuccessfully lobbied the Guinness Board to introduce graded barley prices and to cease the importation of barley and malt.¹⁵ Barley growers then changed their tactics from lobbying the brewers to seeking financial assistance from the government. In 1921 for example, a delegate to the IFU congress called for a tariff on imported barley.¹⁶

This change of emphasis was also evident in the public statements of the Irish Barley Growers' Association, established under the auspices of the IFU. In addition to improved marketing and grading schemes, the Association called for barley cultivation to be subsidized from duties on grain produce. The barley growers were also adopting a more hostile attitude to the brewers, especially Guinness.¹⁷ Criticisms of the monopoly power of Guinness and of their importation of barley would feature prominently in the following years. Support for barley growers began to emerge as a political issue, one which was especially vexing for the Cumann na nGaedheal administration and which was exploited by opposition deputies.

¹² *Statistical Abstract, 1937–8*, pp. 172–3.

¹³ *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, twenty-first General Report, 1920–21*, p. 78.

¹⁴ *Cork Examiner*, 26 Oct. 1922.

¹⁵ Dennison and McDonagh, *Guinness, 1886–1939*, p. 207.

¹⁶ *Irish Farmer*, 12 Mar. 1921.

¹⁷ *Irish Independent*, 26 Oct. 1922.

TABLE 2. Barley prices, per cwt, and price index, 1918–35

<i>Year</i>	<i>Barley prices, per cwt</i>	<i>Barley price index, 1926=100</i>
1918	17s. 2d.	214.6
1919	23s. 5d.	292.7
1920	22s. 5d.	280.2
1921	12s. 10d.	154.2
1922	8s. 11d.	111.0
1923	9s. 2d.	114.6
1924	13s. 0d.	162.5
1925	9s. 3d.	115.6
1926	8s. 0d.	100.0
1927	9s. 4d.	117.0
1928	8s. 0d.	100.0
1929	7s. 11d.	99.0
1930	7s. 1d.	87.5
1931	6s. 11d.	86.5
1932	7s. 4d.	91.7
1933	6s. 8d.	83.3
1934	7s. 3d.	90.6
1935	7s. 11d.	99.0

Source: Statistical Abstract, 1937, pp. 172–3.

In a Dail debate in July 1923, the Labour Party Deputy for Laois-Offaly, William Davin, whose constituency contained many barley growers, endorsed their demands for a guaranteed price for barley or an embargo on imported barley. Davin also endorsed the hostility of the barley growers towards Guinness by reference to the ‘bad treatment and low prices’ suffered by them. W. T. Cosgrave (President of the Executive Council, 1922–32) was able to utilise the pending report of the Agricultural Commission to defer action to assist barley growers.¹⁸

The free trade instincts of the government were reinforced by the advice they received from the ministry’s civil servants who were consistently hostile to the demands of the barley growers. They maintained that the barley acreage was not price responsive, while any subsidy for barley growers would be regressive, as a majority of farmers would end up subsidizing a small number of wealthy tillage farmers through higher barley prices.¹⁹ The Department also argued that Guinness could easily recoup the additional costs arising from an import duty by reducing the price it offered farmers, whilst the company, contrary to popular belief, actually paid prices

¹⁸ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, IV, col. 1679, 31 July 1923.

¹⁹ National Archives of Ireland (hereafter NAI), A.G.1/

G.3233/28, Mr. Morris to Mr. Meyerick, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 10 Oct. 1923.

above market rates to maintain domestic supply.²⁰ These arguments were further reinforced by the report of the Agricultural Commission, established by the government in 1925 to review the general nature of Irish agriculture and to recommend suitable policies. When its report was published later in that year, it advised against any assistance for commercial barley growers.²¹

Some members of the IFU questioned the necessity of supporting barley growers. Both Sir John Keane and Thomas Linehan, prominent members of the National Executive, opposed any assistance for them. Michael Heffernan, one of the most vocal members of the Farmers' Party, the political wing of the IFU, also opposed a tariff on barley, but supported the subsidization of domestic barley cultivation.²² At the 1924 IFU Congress, Heffernan opposed a motion moved by delegates from Laois and Offaly, and which was supported by the Kildare Deputy John Conlan, calling for a tariff on imported barley. Heffernan argued that granting a tariff would set a precedent for protecting other sectors of agriculture.²³

Despite a significant rise in barley prices from 9s. 2d. per cwt for 1923 to 13s. 0d. per cwt by 1924,²⁴ barley growers escalated their demands. In July 1924 both the Cork Farmers' Association and the County Kilkenny Unpurchased Tenant's Association called for a tariff on imported malt, while the Kilkenny resolution also requested a minimum price for barley.²⁵ The most systematic request by barley growers was submitted by the Laois Farmers' Association. The Association argued that the proceeds from an import duty on malt and barley could be used to subsidize barley growers. This scheme would eliminate the excessive profits made by Guinness and would counter the argument made by the Department of Agriculture that subsidizing barley cultivation would impose extra costs on non-barley growers.²⁶

The barley growers also received parliamentary support. Senator McEvoy argued in July 1924 that barley growers deserved assistance as they were required to cultivate barley, regardless of market price, in order to raise cash. R. A. Butler, then President of the IFU, supported government assistance for barley growers, but opposed a tariff as other tillage sectors would then demand a similar measure of protection.²⁷ This interesting distinction, which had been made previously by Michael Heffernan, reflected the fear among farming leaders that the imposition of tariffs on one commodity would lead to the introduction of a general protectionist economy, which would threaten the essentially export-orientated nature of Irish agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Hogan, was determined to ignore the demands of the barley growers. Hogan correctly suspected that the demands of the barley growers were orchestrated by a small group of Laois-based tillage farmers²⁸ and Hogan presumably believed that the geographic concentration of barley growers, which facilitated their organizational efforts,

²⁰ NAI, A.G.1/G.3233/28, Dr. Hinchcliff to Mr. Meyer- ick, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 22 Feb. 1924.

²¹ The commission believed that the case for subsidized tillage cultivation was justified only for the purposes of agricultural husbandry. *Report of the Commission on Agriculture, Final Report* (1925), R. 25, p. 27.

²² National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI), Irish Farmers' Union Mss, Ms. 19021, summary of meeting held by the National Executive, 20 Sept. 1923.

²³ *Irish Times*, 27 Mar. 1924.

²⁴ *Statistical Abstract*, 1937, pp. 172–3.

²⁵ NAI, A.G.1/G.3233/28, E. J. Cussen, secretary, Cork Farmers' Association to Minister for Agriculture, 22 July 1924 and copy of resolution from County Kilkenny Unpurchased Tenants' Association to Department of Agriculture, 29 July 1924.

²⁶ *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1924.

²⁷ *Seanad Éireann Debates*, III, cols 1022–24, 28 July 1924.

²⁸ NAI, A.G.1/G.3233/28, Patrick Hogan to Mr. Meyer- ick, secretary, Department of Agriculture, 20 Aug. 1924.

resulted in their assuming a disproportionate influence on Irish public life.²⁹ He argued that no action should be taken to aid the barley growers on two grounds. For one, a rise in barley prices was anticipated, and he recognised that the Irish Farmers' Union was divided on the merits of assisting barley growers and could not effectively campaign on their behalf.³⁰ Yet the government later decided that it would be prudent to at least acknowledge the grievances of the barley growers.³¹

A barley growers' deputation met W. T. Cosgrave and Patrick Hogan (Minister of Agriculture 1922–32) in November 1924. Led by Farmers' Party deputy John Conlan, the deputation included figures such as J. W. Young and Richard Hipwell, men who would become synonymous with the demands of the barley growers. However, their arguments for a tariff on imported barley were dismissed by Hogan, who disputed the alleged economic benefit of barley cultivation and who argued that a tariff on imported barley would make Irish stout exports uncompetitive.³² In the following year, Hogan repeated these arguments in the Dáil, accusing the barley growers of being jealous of the success of Guinness, while the proposed system of a tariff and subsidy for barley growers would constitute an unwarranted interference by the Government in the private affairs of farmers. Hogan revived memories of the disastrous regulation of the dairy industry by the then Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction as an argument against the barley growers' demands.³³

Support for barley growers was now proving to be an increasingly divisive issue for the IFU. The Union's 1925 congress was dominated by this issue. Strong opposition to a barley tariff was expressed by leading members of the union such as Sir John Keane and Col. O'Callaghan-Westropp, both of whom were prominent advocates of the livestock export trade and from an Anglo-Irish landed background.³⁴ Farmers' Party deputies John Conlan and Denis Gorey, along with J. W. Young and Brooke Brasier, who represented tillage farmers in East Cork, supported a tariff on barley. An unsatisfactory compromise resolution, which called for the equivalent level of protection for agriculture as that enjoyed by industry, was passed.³⁵

This was insufficient for barley growers who now began to organize independently of the Union in pursuit of their aims. This took the form of members of county committees of agriculture from barley-growing counties establishing a conference on grain prices which convened in August 1925. After discussing a number of proposals, such as the increased usage of barley as an animal feedstuff, the conference recommended a 5s. per cwt tariff on imported

²⁹ A similar argument was made by dairy farmers in West Limerick, *Limerick Leader*, 6 Nov. 1926.

³⁰ NAI, A.G.1/G.3233/28, Patrick Hogan to Joe McGrath, Minister for Industry and Commerce, 17 Sept. 1924.

³¹ *Irish Times*, 23 Sept. 1924.

³² NAI, A.G.1/G.3233/28, minutes of meeting held by President Cosgrave and Minister Hogan with deputation representing County Committees of Agriculture from barley-growing counties, 16 Oct. 1924.

³³ *Dáil Éireann Debates*, XI, cols 299 and 301, 22 Apr. 1925. On the DATI regulation of prices and the export of dairy produce, see Raymond Ryan, 'The butter industry

in Munster, 1884–1939' (unpublished M.Phil thesis, University College Cork, 2000), pp. 120–2.

³⁴ Col. O'Callaghan-Westropp was a prominent county Clare landlord, and was a vocal advocate of the livestock export trade. See *Clare Champion*, 24 Nov. 1923. Sir John Keane was a county Waterford landlord, a doctrinaire free trader and a staunch opponent of trade unionism among agricultural labourers. See NAI, A.G.2./2005/08/218, Commission on Agriculture, cross-examination of Col. O'Callaghan-Westropp; also E. O'Connor, *A labour history of Waterford* (1989), pp. 180–99.

³⁵ *Irish Times*, 28 Mar. 1925.

barley and malt and a minimum price of 30s. per barrel for malting barley.³⁶ Again, the Department of Agriculture rejected these proposals.³⁷

The conference's proposals were launched as barley prices reached their nadir. Malting barley prices fell from 13s. od. to 9s. 3d. a cwt between 1924 and 1925 (Table 2).³⁸ The barley acreage declined from 156,239 to 145,626 acres over the same period, the barley acreage now forming only 79 per cent of that of 1919.³⁹ Barley imports more than doubled, from 357,307 cwt in 1924 to 761,629 cwt in 1925, with 55 per cent of these imports originating from India (Table 3).⁴⁰ Yet such was the price decline that Guinness cancelled the further import of foreign barley in order to support the domestic market.⁴¹ The Department of Agriculture described how prices for malting barley had declined to such an extent that farmers preferred to feed barley to animals than attempt to sell it.⁴²

In the desperate conditions of October 1925, and especially given the recent increase in barley imports, the barley growers supported the proposals made by the Grain Growers Conference. For example, meetings held by barley growers in Tullamore and Portlaoise endorsed the Grain Growers' proposals, while the County Offaly Farmers' Association requested the Minister for Agriculture to implement the Grain Growers' Proposals.⁴³ The Department of Finance was also lobbied on this issue by the Laois County Committee of Agriculture.⁴⁴ However, J. J. MacElligott, Secretary to the Department of Finance, embodied the government's unwillingness to assist barley growers by arguing that the fall in barley prices was due to factors beyond the governments' control, such as a general depression in the brewing industry and the alleged poor quality of Irish barley. MacElligott also warned that an import duty on barley might force Guinness to abandon brewing in Ireland.⁴⁵ The level of crisis expressed by barley growers was such that even those unconnected with the Grain Growers' Conference supported government aid for barley growers. The Wexford Farmers' Association called on the government to lobby Guinness to increase barley prices.⁴⁶ The Kilkenny and Wexford County Committees of Agriculture called for a tariff to be imposed on imported barley.⁴⁷ Some members of the IFU National Executive also supported the imposition of a tariff on barley.⁴⁸

Yet the rush to endorse tariffs was resisted by some farming figures. Col. C. M. Gibbon, a member of the IFU and a leading advocate of improved commercial organization by farmers, had the courage to attend the 1925 Grain Growers Conference and argue that barley farmers would benefit more from increased research and action to reduce the monopoly power of

³⁶ Ibid., 5, 25 Aug. 1925.

³⁷ NAI, A.G.1/ G.322/28, Dr. Hinchcliff to Mr. Meyer- ick, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 29 Sept. 1925.

³⁸ *Statistical Abstract* 1937, pp. 172–3.

³⁹ *Statistical Abstract* 1931, pp. 26–7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 64–5.

⁴¹ Dennison and MacDonagh, *Guinness, 1886–1939*, p. 211.

⁴² *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, twentieth-fourth General Report, 1923–26* (1927), p. 5.

⁴³ *Irish Times*, 13 Oct., 28 Nov. 1925; NAI, A.G.1/

G.323/28, Mr. Fahy, Secretary, Offaly Farmers' Association to the Minister for Agriculture, 12 Oct. 1925.

⁴⁴ NAI, F22/65/25, Mr. O'Neill, secretary, Laois County Committee of Agriculture to the Minister for Finance, 14 Oct. 1925.

⁴⁵ NAI, F22/65/25, J. J. MacElligott to Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, 21 Oct. 1925.

⁴⁶ NAI, A.G.1/G.3288/28, Nicholas Murphy, secretary, Wexford Farmers' Association to the Minister for Agriculture, 28 Sept. 1925.

⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 7 and 19 Oct. 1925.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 16 Oct. 1925.

TABLE 3. Barley imports and exports, by quantity and value, 1924–36

<i>Year</i>	<i>Barley imports (cwt)</i>	<i>Barley exports (cwt.)</i>	<i>Value of Barley imports (£)</i>	<i>Value of Barley exports (£)</i>	<i>Exports-imports (cwt)</i>
1924	357,307	30,818	187,605	17,879	(326,499)
1925	761,629	45,808	447,500	24,315	(715,821)
1926	116,044	388,099	46,701	168,065	272,055
1927	214,694	264,488	110,225	142,223	49,794
1928	233,428	193,266	120,259	93,145	(40,162)
1929	458,149	53,643	220,527	24,136	(404,506)
1930	301,739	17,196	107,722	6939	(284,543)
1931	449,854	20,024	134,584	8506	(429,830)
1932	385,200	5457	125,278	2480	(379,743)
1933	176,899	9240	50,150	3461	(167,659)
1934	131,290	0	34,501	0	(131,290)
1935	228,649	0	78,246	0	(228,649)
1936	404,515	0	117,182	0	(404,515)

Note: No import/export figures exist for barley for the immediate post-war period.

Sources: 1924–1930; *Statistical Abstract*, 1931, pp. 64–65 (imports) and 84–5 (exports); 1931–33, *Statistical Abstract*, 1934, p. 79 (imports) and p. 90 (exports); 1934–35, *Statistical Abstract*, 1936, p. 79 (imports) and p. 88 (exports).

Guinness than from tariffs.⁴⁹ Michael Heffernan argued that barley growers should improve their commercial organization and seek alternate markets to Guinness.⁵⁰ However, with the exception of Cork farmers which will be discussed later, barley growers ignored this advice and continued to look for government assistance.

Arguments were also made publicly in favour of the pricing policy of the breweries. R. Hamilton-Hunter claimed that the prices paid by Guinness for Irish Barley were equivalent to prices made by British breweries for average barley produce. Hamilton-Hunter claimed that the Irish barley growers compared the price for their produce with quotations for light ale barley which exaggerated their case.⁵¹ The Chairman of the Castlebellingham and Drogheda Breweries, William Cairnes, warned that a tariff on barley importation would have an adverse effect on the export trade of breweries.⁵²

The agitation by the barley growers assumed an increasingly political hue. In Portlaoise, barley growers criticized the opposition of a number of Farmers' Party Dáil Deputies to tariffs on barley, while Guinness was accused of having an undue influence over the government.⁵³ Barley growers nominated J. J. Bergin as an independent candidate for a by-election in the Laois-Offaly constituency. However, Bergin later withdrew his candidacy.⁵⁴ As 1926 progressed,

⁴⁹ *Irish Times*, 25 Aug. 1925. For an example of Gibbons' views on agriculture and collective organisation among farmers, see NLI, Irish Farmers' Union, Ms 19021, Memorandum by Col. C. M. Gibbon on organisation of the Farmers' Party, 29 Oct. 1923.

⁵⁰ *Irish Times*, 16 Oct. 1925.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19 Oct. 1925.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 31 Oct. 1925.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 27 Oct. 1925.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2, 6 Feb. 1926.

the majority of barley growers resigned from the IFU. The Union congress of that year passed an explicitly free trade resolution.⁵⁵

The consequences were described by J. W. Young, a Laois barley grower in a letter to the Minister of Finance, Ernest Blythe.

The executive of the Farmers' Union has now been captured by academic free traders and is no longer representative of the bulk of tillage farmers, who have lost all confidence in them. A year ago, the Laois Farmers' Association on this question disowned them and there is no Farmers' Union now in existence in this county.⁵⁶

Free from the restraints of the IFU, many of the barley grower activists now associated with those who supported a general protectionist economic policy. A number of prominent barley growers attended the 1926 conference of delegates from County Committees of Agriculture, convened by Patrick Belton, which endorsed a wide range of protectionist economic policies.⁵⁷ These actions confirmed the earlier fears of Heffernan and Butler that if the barley growers secured tariff protection for their industry, there would be calls for more general protectionist economic policies.

A number of these barley growers then formed their own organization, the Irish Farmers' Protectionist Union, in early 1927. J. J. Bergin, the leading figure in the association, endorsed the levying of tariffs on imported livestock produce as well as imported malt and barley.⁵⁸ Meanwhile a number of figures within the IFU such as John Conlan and Brook Brasier continued to argue in favour of a tariff on imported barley. Brasier expressed his frustration at how the leadership of the Union 'would not have a tariff on barley because it might offend Messrs. Guinness'. Yet, the efforts of both Brasier and Conlan were in vain.⁵⁹

The grievances of barley growers were a significant issue in Leinster constituencies during the June 1927 election. The Irish Farmers' Protectionist Union carried out its earlier threat to nominate candidates. Bergin was nominated as a candidate for the Kildare constituency and was later accompanied by a running mate, George Henderson. Richard Hipwell was nominated as a candidate for Laois-Offaly.⁶⁰ The bitterness caused by the refusal of the IFU to support a tariff on barley was reflected in Bergin's criticism of Farmers' Party TD John Conlan for an incontinent attitude towards protectionism. In reply Conlan 'thought it strange that anyone should charge him with want of sympathy with the barley growers'.⁶¹ None of the Irish Farmers' Protectionist Union candidates were elected. Bergin and Henderson received 9.6 per cent of the vote in Kildare while Hipwell received 6.57 per cent in Laois-Offaly but the Irish Farmers' Protectionist Union's intervention contributed to the defeat of Conlan in Kildare.⁶²

Barley growers also attributed the decline in support for Cumann na nGaedheal in Midland constituencies to the barley issue. J. W. Young informed Ernest Blythe that both Fianna Fáil and Labour gained support from Cumann na nGaedheal in Laois-Offaly due to their support for tariffs on imported barley. Young stated that if the government levied tariffs on barley imports,

⁵⁵ Ibid., 16 Mar. 1926.

⁵⁶ NAI, F22/65/25, J. W. Young to Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, 1 Sept. 1927.

⁵⁷ *Irish Times*, 23 Apr. 1926.

⁵⁸ *Leinster Leader*, 9 Apr., 14 May 1927.

⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 16 Apr. 1927.

⁶⁰ *Leinster Leader*, 7, 14 May 1927.

⁶¹ *Irish Times*, 19 May 1927.

⁶² B. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1918-89* (1992), pp. 121-2.

Cumann na nGaedheal could gain between ten and twelve seats in Midland constituencies.⁶³ However, Cumann na nGaedheal did not adopt this policy for the September 1927 election. The polarized political conditions resulting from the entry of Fianna Fáil into the Dáil led to a surge of support for Cumann na nGaedheal without any recourse to appeasing sectional interests.

II

The latter years of the twenties witnessed the continued decline of barley prices. Barley acreage fell from 145,626 in 1924 to 120,796 by 1927.⁶⁴ The Department of Agriculture reported that barley cultivation was uneconomic during 1928 and 1929, and farmers only marketed barley to earn cash.⁶⁵ Prices declined from 9s. 4d. per cwt in 1927 to 8s. 0d. for 1928 and 7s. 11d. for 1929.⁶⁶ Some barley farmers took action to alleviate their plight rather than rely on the efforts of their self-appointed spokesmen. A few Midlands farmers switched to sugar beet cultivation. Barley producers in Cork followed the earlier advice of Michael Heffernan and exported their produce.⁶⁷ The majority of these exports were consigned to Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, and 1926 and 1927, the Irish Free State became a net exporter of barley (Table 3).⁶⁸ However, this export trade was not maintained and may only have been a means to dispose of unwanted barley stocks rather than an attempt to create a sustainable commercial venture.

The Great Depression further depressed the position of barley farmers, and by 1931 prices reached a low of 6s. 11d. per cwt.⁶⁹ Only 17,196 cwt of barley was exported in 1930, compared to 193,266 cwt in 1928.⁷⁰ The barley acreage continued to decline, reaching a low of 103,453 acres by 1932.⁷¹ The Midland barley growers could take comfort from the tendency of continental European powers to introduce protectionist measures to assist their grain producers. Italy had already waged its famous 'Battle for Grain' in the years after 1925. Both France and Germany imposed tariffs on wheat imports from 1928.⁷²

Midland barley growers unveiled their latest scheme at a conference held in Athy in January 1929. Attended by veteran campaigners such as J. J. Bergin, J. W. Young and Richard Hipwell, the convention called for a 15 per cent compulsory admixture of domestic grain in all grain produce sold in the Irish Free State.⁷³ While the scheme was presented as being of benefit to all tillage farmers, its benefits in allowing barley farmers to dispose of unwanted produce were obvious.⁷⁴ However, both Hipwell and Young continued to support the imposition of a tariff on imported barley, despite opposition from political supporters such as the Labour Party TD Daniel Morrissey, who believed that the admixture scheme would be of greater benefit to barley

⁶³ NAI, F22/65/25, Young to Blythe, 1 Sept. 1927.

⁶⁴ *Statistical Abstract*, 1931, pp. 26–7.

⁶⁵ *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, twentieth-seventh General Report, 1928–29* (1930), p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Statistical Abstract*, 1937, pp. 172–3.

⁶⁷ *Irish Times*, 24 Jan., 14 Sept. 1927.

⁶⁸ *Statistical Abstract*, 1931, p. 85.

⁶⁹ *Statistical Abstract*, 1937, pp. 172–3.

⁷⁰ *Statistical Abstract*, 1931, pp. 84–5.

⁷¹ *Statistical Abstract*, 1937, pp. 32–3.

⁷² P. Morgan, *Italian Fascism, 1919–45* (1995), pp. 98–9; C. P. Kindleberger, 'Commercial policy between the wars', in P. Mathias and S. Pollard (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, III, The Industrial Economies: the development of economic and social policies* (1989), p. 168.

⁷³ *Leinster Leader*, 5 Jan. 1929.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 Aug. 1929.

farmers than relying on a tariff which Guinness could recoup through reducing barley prices.⁷⁵ Barley farmers preferred to seek government aid than to rely on their own efforts, an example being the collective organisation of barley growers to negotiate prices as practiced in Cork and as recommended by the IFU to Midland barley producers.⁷⁶

While the barley growers acquired powerful allies within the Fianna Fail and Labour parties, both parties were unwilling to endorse their demands in full. This was evident at the Mansion House conference convened by both parties in October 1930 to co-ordinate the demands for protectionism from various agricultural sectors. The representatives of the barley growers, J. J. Delaney and J. W. Young, continued to argue for a tariff on imported barley. However, both William Davin and James Ryan, Fianna Fáil spokesperson on agriculture, opposed a tariff, instead arguing for the restriction of barley imports through a licensing scheme. J. J. Bergin played the role of mediator, persuading his fellow barley growers to withdraw their motion, and argued that a tariff could be levied if the licensing scheme failed.⁷⁷ The eventual motion passed by the conference called on the government to estimate the required level of barley and malt imports necessary for the brewing industry and to restrict imports to this amount.⁷⁸ In spite of their apparent support of the barley growers' demands, Fianna Fail did not intend to injure the operations of Guinness.

Barley growers pursued another source of assistance through the Grain Inquiry Tribunal. This had been established in 1929 by the Cumann na nGaedheal administration as a means of defusing the persistent demand for protectionism for the domestic milling industry and the demand that a compulsory percentage of domestic tillage produce to be used in all milling input.⁷⁹ As noted previously, the Grain Growers Association advocated such an admixture in their Athy conference of 1929. The Association provided the bulk of witnesses who favoured the admixture, including J. J. Bergin, J. W. Young and Brook Brasier.⁸⁰ However, the Tribunal's report of 1931 rejected the proposals of the barley growers, citing the bureaucratic nature of the proposed scheme and the consequent increased feedstuff prices for small farmers. It criticized the barley cultivators for advocating the admixture proposal to gain the support of oat and wheat cultivators in order to dispose of their own unwanted barley produce.⁸¹

Cumann na nGaedheal remained hostile to the grievances of the barley growers. Patrick Hogan not only rejected the idea of assisting barley growers, but argued that Midland farmers continued uneconomic barley cultivation, seduced by promises by both Fianna Fail and Labour that their industry would be subsidized.⁸² Another critic of the barley growers, the Cavan independent TD John O'Hanlon, summed up the barley growers' problems as follows: 'As long as men are satisfied to supply Messrs. Guinness' maltsters or anybody else at a tied price and do

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4 Oct. 1929.

⁷⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 23 Mar. 1929.

⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 3 Oct. 1930.

⁷⁸ NAI, S.6081, Irish Grain Growers' Association, copy of motions passed at Mansion House Conference, 2 Oct. 1930, submitted by Deputies Davin, Dwyer, Ryan and Mr. J. J. Bergin to the President of the Executive Council.

⁷⁹ Daly, *First Department*, pp. 150–1.

⁸⁰ Grain Inquiry Tribunal. *Report on proposal that maize meal and maize products for sale in Saorstát Éireann should contain a definite proportion of home-grown grain* (1931), pp. 6–7.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 29, 51.

⁸² *Dáil Éireann Debates*, XXVI, cols 1054–7, 25 Oct. 1929.

not look for competitive markets, there is always going to be a grievance in the barley growing districts.⁸³

The grievances of the barley growers did not feature prominently in the 1932 election campaign, although Daniel Kennedy, one of the leading advocates for the barley growers, contested the Laois-Offaly constituency as an independent farmer, although with little success, polling only 1,553 votes or 3.32 per cent of the constituency vote.⁸⁴ With the formation of a Fianna Fáil minority administration after the election of February 1932, the Grain Growers' Association were swift to urge the Department of Agriculture to introduce an admixture scheme and a barley marketing scheme.⁸⁵

Fianna Fáil fulfilled their expressions of support for the barley growers and on entering government took measures to stabilise the barley sector. A tariff of 7s. 6d. per cwt, or 120 per cent of the 1933 price, was introduced on barley imports, while the introduction of domestic grain admixture offered barley growers an outlet for their produce.⁸⁶ The government policy followed the proposals agreed at the Mansion House conference of 1930. Despite the anticipation among barley growers that barley importation would be prohibited,⁸⁷ the government did permit importation of tariff-free barley under license, demonstrating that the government would not risk interfering in the activities of Guinness. Indeed, Dr Jim Ryan, the new Minister for Agriculture, met the Guinness board in 1932 and reassured them that the Government did not intend to interfere with Guinness' importation of barley and malt.⁸⁸ In practical terms, barley prices, after reaching a low of 6s. 8d. per cwt in 1933, stabilized at 7s. 11d. for both 1935 and 1936. The barley acreage decline was also reversed, with the area under crop increasing to 142,723 acres in 1934, although this figure slightly declined in subsequent years.⁸⁹ While some of this recovery was due to an increase in barley prices generally, for example barley prices in England and Wales increased from 7s. 7d. in 1932 to 8s. 8d. by 1934,⁹⁰ the actions of the government did assist in the stabilization of the barley sector.

One effect of these changes was that the issue of supporting barley cultivation was now politicised. Cumann na nGaedheal deputy and former Farmers' Party Leader, Denis Gorey, who had been supportive of the grievances of the barley growers in the 1920s,⁹¹ now censured the government for supporting those 'whose work consists of a couple of days seeding the field of barley and then shutting the gate, and whose only concern for the following six months is to see that the fences are good.'⁹² J. J. Bergin encouraged his fellow barley growers in Kildare to support the governments' retention of the land annuities, and to shun the opposition parties who had ignored the plight of barley growers in the past, but who now feigned concern for farmers.⁹³

⁸³ Ibid., XXXVI, cols 305-06, 20 Nov. 1930.

⁸⁴ *Midland Tribune*, 23 Jan. 1932; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 135.

⁸⁵ *Midland Tribune*, 3 Apr. 1932.

⁸⁶ *Department of Agriculture, second annual report, 1932-33* (1933), pp. 2-3, 14, 17.

⁸⁷ *Leinster Leader*, 20 Aug. 1932. However, the leadership of the Grain Growers' Association had now accepted that limited barley importation under licence was now acceptable, see *Midland Tribune*, 1 June 1932.

⁸⁸ Dennison and McDonagh, *Guinness, 1886-1939*, p. 213.

⁸⁹ *Statistical Abstract*, 1937, pp. 32-3, 172-3.

⁹⁰ *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom for each of the fifteen years 1913 and 1921 to 1934*, p. 278.

⁹¹ *Kilkenny People*, 19 Feb. 1927.

⁹² *Dáil Éireann Debates*, XLIV, cols 1484-5, 10 Nov. 1932.

⁹³ *Leinster Leader*, 30 July, 27 Aug. 1932.

III

Irish barley growers faced a perilous situation in the 1920s. The cessation of compulsory tillage, the reduced demand for malting barley by brewers and the post-war depression all acted to reduce barley prices and consequently cultivation sharply declined. The barley growers were also disadvantaged by their position of supplying Guinness, who enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the brewing industry. However, the general effort to organize Irish farmers, embodied by the Irish Farmers' Union in conjunction with the geographic concentration of barley cultivators in the Midlands and in East Cork, facilitated the adoption of collective action by barley growers to address their grievances.

At first barley growers employed direct bargaining and trade-union style measures, such as withholding supplies from the brewers, to increase barley prices. However, following the formation of the Irish Free State, the barley growers sought government assistance for their sector. The export drive by the Cork Farmers' Association was a rare example of independent action by barley growers to solve their problems. However, Cumann na nGaedheal ignored the demands of the barley growers, given their support for the livestock sector, whose costs would be increased by tariffs on imported barley. The government was unwilling to intervene in the internal operations of the brewing sector. It also received advice from the officials of the Department of Agriculture who were sceptical of the benefit of assisting barley growers. Eventually the grievances of the barley growers were addressed by Fianna Fáil, who placed tariffs on imported barley and who offered a market to barley producers in the form of the domestic admixture scheme. These measures stabilised the barley sector. The decision of Irish barley growers to seek protectionism and government assistance was not an isolated tendency. Many continental European countries imposed tariffs and import quotas to protect domestic producers and ensure self-sufficiency, as seen in Italy, France and Germany.

The campaign by the barley growers had political effects. Due to the free trade stance of the union's national executive, many barley growers left the IFU and disowned its political affiliate, the Farmers' Party. Given that Cumann na nGaedheal did not address the barley growers' grievances, many of the barley growers came to support Fianna Fáil. Thus, by refusing to engage in voluntary activity to alleviate their difficulties and seeking assistance from a favourably inclined government, the barley farmers contributed to the politicization of the various sectors of Irish agriculture and this, in turn, hindered the development of an effective agricultural policy in the early years of the Irish Free State.

Annual list of publications on Agrarian History, 2006*

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JOURNAL AND BOOK ARTICLES

- AALLEN, F. H. A., 'North-eastern landscapes', in Aalen with O'Brien (eds), *The North East*, pp. 11–16.
- , 'Landscape change, conservation and management', in Aalen with O'Brien (eds), *The North East*, pp. 239–45.
- AALLEN, F. H. A. and MUIR, RICHARD, 'Landscape components', in Aalen with O'Brien (eds), *The North East*, pp. 109–146.
- ABRAMS, LYNN, 'Knitting, autonomy and identity: the role of hand-knitting in the construction of women's sense of self in an island community, Shetland, c.1850–2000', *Textile Hist.*, 37, pp. 149–65.
- ADAMS, CAITLIN, 'Rural education and reform between the wars', in Brassley, Burchardt and Thompson (eds), *The English countryside between the wars*, pp. 36–52.
- ADAMS, JAD, 'Homes in the Country', *Hist. Today*, 56, pp. 37–9.
- ADAMS, JENNY, 'The Old Poor Law in Suffolk, 1727–1834', *Suffolk Rev.*, 47, pp. 2–27.
- ALBARELLA, UMBERTO, 'Pig husbandry and pork consumption in medieval England', in Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron (eds), *Food in medieval England*, pp. 72–87.
- ALCOCK, N. W., 'The origin of crucks: innocence or naïveté? A response', *Vernacular Arch.*, 37, pp. 50–3.
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- ALFREY, JUDITH, 'The language of its builders: stone in the vernacular of rural Wales during the nineteenth century', *Vernacular Arch.*, 37, pp. 54–60.
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- AMOR, NICHOLAS R., 'Late medieval enclosure: a study of Thorney, near Stowmarket, Suffolk', *Proc. Suffolk Institute Arch. and Hist.*, 41, pp. 175–98.
- AMOS, DENISE, 'Child health and school meals: Nottingham, 1906–45', *The Historian*, 92, pp. 12–19.
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- ARVANIGIAN, MARK, 'Regional politics, landed society and the coal industry in north-east England, 1350–1430', in Hamilton (ed.), *Fourteenth century England*, IV, pp. 175–91.
- ASHFORD, PHILIP, 'The rise and fall of the Bristol Channel herring fishery with especial reference to Porlock, Somerset, 1580–1830', *Mariner's Mirror*, 92, pp. 23–30.
- ASLET, CLIVE, 'Gilbert White's house', *Country Life*, 27 July, pp. 57–9.
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- BAILEY, CHRISTOPHER, 'Rural industries and the image of the countryside', in Brassley, Burchardt and Thompson (eds), *The English countryside between the wars*, pp. 132–49.
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* Publications are normally of 2006 unless stated. The following short titles are used: AgHR, *Agricultural History Review*; EcHR, *Economic History Review*.

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PUBLISHED DURING 2006

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- COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND, *A portrait of England*.
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- ENGLISH HERITAGE, *Diary of a Victorian gardener: William Cresswell at Audley End*.
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- GREENWOOD, MARTIN, *Villages of Banburyshire, including Lark Rise to Candleford Green*.
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- RENTON, DAVID, *Crossing occupation borders: migration to the north-east of England.*
- ROPER, M. and KITCHING, C. (eds), *Feet of fines for the county of York from 1314 to 1326* (Yorkshire Archaeological Soc. Rec. Ser., 158)
- ROWLEY, TREVOR, *The English landscape in the twentieth century.*
- ROUD, STEVE, *The English year.*
- ROWE, DOC, *May Day: the coming of spring.*
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- STOCKER, DAVID, *The East Midlands (England's landscape, V)*.
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- TURNER, SAM, *Making a Christian landscape: the countryside in early medieval Cornwall, Devon and Wessex*.
- VINCENT, JULIEN, BOURDEAU, VINCENT and JARRIGE, FRANCOIS, *Les Luddites: bris de machines, économie politique et histoire*.
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- WILKINSON, ROY, *Chronicles of the Newdegates and the three manors*.
- WILLIAMSON, TOM, *The archaeology of rabbit warrens*.
- , *East Anglia (England's landscape, II)*.
- WINCHESTER, ANGUS J. L. and CROSBY, ALAN, *The North West (England's landscape, VIII)*.
- WOOD, M. (ed.), *The unknown Gertrude Jekyll*.
- WOOD-ROBERTS, JOHN, *Shorthorns in the twentieth century*.
- WOODFORD, BRYAN, *Warsash and the Hamble river: a history and guide*.
- YATES, M. (comp.), *Traveller's joy: songs of English and Scottish travellers and gypsies, 1965–2005*.

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

STEPHEN PARRY, *Raunds Area Survey. An archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1985–94* (Oxbow Books, 2006). xx + 292 pp., 101 tables, 117 illus. £30.

The Raunds Area Project was one of the major cutting-edge British landscape research programmes of the later twentieth century. Its objective – to define and contrast changes in the landscape of the area around the small town of Raunds in Northamptonshire from the Neolithic to the end of the medieval period – was intended not only to provide a context for a number of large rescue excavations in the area but, of much wider relevance, to extrapolate from this research and advance more generally knowledge and understanding of the character and process of the development of the English landscape. The project was designed from the outset to be large-scale, interdisciplinary and multi-period, and was intended to be a model of historic landscape investigation, avoiding the pitfalls and limitations of earlier, less formally scoped or holistically planned landscape projects.

This handsomely produced volume presents the results of the resulting six years of fieldwork and subsequent analysis. It begins with an introduction to the project area (40 square kilometres east of the River Nene in east Northamptonshire), and objectives, including three particular themes: the ceremonial landscape of the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age; agricultural expansion in the Iron Age and Roman periods, and the process of village formation in the Saxon period. An extended methodological statement then reviews the aims, scope and methods of the archaeological, environmental and documentary research. Field-walking is discussed in particular detail, reflecting the strategic emphasis of the project on field-walking as widely as possible across the project area. Next 'The Natural Landscape' reviews the geology and topography of the project area, and the environmental evidence for human impact on the natural landscape. This is followed by a detailed chronological review of the character and development of the settlement pattern and agricultural land-use, based on archaeological and documentary evidence, spread over two chapters. A substantial (129-page) 'Settlement and

Land-Use Digest' then presents detailed descriptions of the individual sites, including pottery distribution maps, magnetometer surveys and even some excavation plans. This is followed by a short final section presenting the project's main conclusions, which firstly summarises the inferred development of the landscape, and then considers the implications of the project for similar projects in the future.

The Raunds Area Project succeeded in field-walking more than 70 per cent of the project area (c.3,000 ha), revealing c.70 new sites which, assessed alongside other archaeological, environmental and documentary evidence, provided a solid empirical base for the reconstruction of spatial and chronological patterns of settlement and land-use across a range of land types from sub-alluvial floodplain to boulder clay plateau. Despite some limitations, such as the lack of opportunity for excavation on any of the boulder clay sites, these data allowed the authors of this report to suggest with some confidence that (for example), the Neolithic valley landscape of mixed woodland and open pasture grazing was almost completely cleared of trees during the Bronze Age; that the Iron Age was characterised by increasing numbers of farms, including some on the boulder clay by the fourth century BC; that an increasing intensity of settlement and agriculture in the early Roman period was followed by a decline in both from the second century AD, especially on the boulder clay, and was apparently accompanied by an early period of settlement nucleation in the valley; that settlement in the early/middle Anglo-Saxon period showed a preference for river valley sites but did not altogether withdraw from the clay plateau, of which substantial areas continued to be cultivated; that an infield/outfield system was in operation around the villages in the late Saxon period, but that the open field system was probably instituted at some point during these centuries; that population expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries led to the creation of new minor settlements rather than infilling of open spaces in existing villages; and that widespread desertion of village fringes and complete abandonment of the hamlets in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was accompanied by a reversion to grassland in much of the region. These and more general assertions, all highly pertinent to major

academic debates, such 'there is no simple development from Roman villa to medieval manor' (p.95); 'boulder clay constitutes no hindrance to a champion landscape' (p.129) or 'the Saxon folk movements and subsequent adjustments greatly affected the local landscape' (p.274) can be examined at almost any level of detail in this publication.

Reading the volume from cover to cover, however, does generate considerable frustration over the grindingly long time lapse between the end of fieldwork and final publication (16 years), and even between completion of the written report and its eventual publication (12 years). This is compounded by repeated references to the limitations of the unfinished state of post-excavation analysis which leaves authors to make 'incomplete and interim' statements (e.g. p.31). After such a long wait, it seems unacceptable to be left to wonder whether such work has now been completed, and if so, whether the published statements still stand. The delay has also denied authors and editor the opportunity to consider their observations in the light of other major settlement and landscape projects of the 1990s and 2000s which, ironically, have themselves benefited from the information and ideas generated by the Raunds Area Project. These have, of course (and rightly so), filtered out over the years before this publication, with the consequence that much of the material presented here, which was so novel and exciting a decade and more ago, has since either been challenged, or become the new orthodoxy: its impact, to the informed reader, is therefore somewhat muted.

However, this should not ultimately detract from the tremendous value of this volume. It contains a vast quantity and range of information and ideas which are, and should continue to be, of great interest to anyone studying any aspect of the development of the rural landscape. The volume is extremely well-presented, with only a few errors and inconsistencies, and accompanied by clear, useful illustrations including 12 large foldout maps packaged separately as part of a rather sumptuously presented boxed set. The delay in publication feels frustrating now, but this will become less of an issue over time. This is definitely a volume to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

CARENZA LEWIS
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IAN BAILEY, DAVID CANT, ALAN PETFORD and NIGEL SMITH (eds), *Pennine perspectives. Aspects of the history of Midgley* (Midgley Books, 2007). vi + 346 pp., 149 illus, 2 maps. £18 from Midgley Books, 4 Lane Ends, Midgley, Halifax. HX2 6TU.

Midgley is a Pennine township and part of the parish of Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The village

is situated on a hillside with the township boundary running along the river Calder in the valley below. In terms of the industrial development of the area, much of the action takes place on or near the valley floor. It is suggested that the population of Midgley grew from about 25 in 1332–3 to c.348 in 1545 to 1,209 in 1801 and reached its peak in 1871 at 3,193. As its title suggests, this is not a comprehensive history of Midgley. The stated aims of the book are to increase public awareness of the range and depth of sources in the public domain and to draw attention to the value of such sources for our understanding of the rich heritage of local communities. The publication evolved out of an initial WEA course from which the Midgley History Group was formed. *Pennine perspectives. Aspects of the history of Midgley* comprises the reflections of 25 members of that group on different facets of Midgley's past. The result is an interesting but uneven volume of 23 chapters with some frustratingly short snippets of useful information that are not placed in a broader context. However, once the reader accepts that, at best, s/he is going to get only a tantalizing taster of Midgley, there is much that is of interest both for the mainstream historian and those researching narrower fields. Fascinating chapters range from prehistory, geology, medieval settlement, and early farming to more esoteric topics, such as the uses of water on Midgley Moor, the development of local public houses, radicalism, boundary disputes, and local sports and pastimes including the annual Pace Egg play. Other chapters include self-help, religion, use of child labour, and the Luddenden Valley Railway.

It is difficult to get a sense of continuity. For example, there is a detailed analysis of farming before the nineteenth century, but there is nothing on the topic thereafter. The chapter on 'Population and People' which is the work of three contributors is interesting but very uneven. It provides a useful outline up to the late eighteenth century but also examines in great detail family names for one short period (1538–1624). Some interesting sources are used but are not always fully exploited. For example, the names of people who were part of a levy in 1588 are presented but it would have been helpful if this could have been accompanied by some analysis in terms of population and the distribution of wealth. The period from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century is accorded five lines and part of a graph. A little more information is given on this latter period in the chapter 'Village Trades and Services in the Victorian Era'. Continuity is found within some of the chapters such as the study of Murgatroyd's textile mill which follows the family's involvement in textiles from pre-factory days through the commencement of building the mill in 1846 and onto its final closure in 1982. The

excellent study is based on detailed research using an extensive archive deposited in the local record office. Murgatroyd's mill was the only textile mill constructed in the township and it is argued that it gave stability and economic security to the community for over a hundred years.

Other contributory factors in the unevenness of the book are the writing style of authors and the length of chapters. In a conventionally edited book the editors can exercise strong editorial control and standardize the submissions. This control has been kept to the minimum here. Some of the contributions demonstrate a thorough researching of the topic with clear detailed analysis, historiography, references and supporting tables and figures. Other chapters are presented in narrative form, some based on oral sources and others from observations with little or no accompanying academic apparatus. Chapters vary in length from what is little more than a comment of six pages to almost article length of 24 pages. The chapter 'Of Meres and Bounders: Disputes, Maps and Boundaries', is very brief. It is well written and referenced but with fewer than three pages of text and five of maps, it is little more than a comment. In order to give the reader some context and a sense of continuity, more benefit might have been gained if it had been incorporated into the earlier chapters dealing with field boundaries.

The book is published privately. It is beautifully presented on excellent quality paper and all the maps, photographs and graphs are reproduced to a very high standard. Some chapters conclude with a useful select bibliography. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive bibliography at the end of the book, though there is a helpful index. Also included within the back cover are two lovely pullout maps.

Overall, despite its flaws, it is a book to be recommended to anyone interested in the history of a small rural community.

CHRISTINE HALLAS
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TOM BEAUMONT JAMES and CHRISTOPHER GERRARD, *Clarendon. Landscape of kings* (Windgather Press, 2007). xviii + 268 pp., 86 figs. £25.

The site of the royal palace of Clarendon today seems remote and secluded, its upstanding remains are scanty, and it is rarely a target of tourists' itineraries. Yet Clarendon was a favourite retreat of medieval monarchs, and remains rich in historical associations. In its heyday it must have been spectacular: the most sumptuous royal house in the West Country, standing on a prominent bluff near the centre of the largest royal deer park in England. However, royal visits declined in frequency

during the later Middle Ages, the Tudor monarchs preferred residences closer to London, and Clarendon fell into decay. The property was relinquished by Charles II, subsequently a new mansion was built elsewhere in the park, and the old palace became a neglected ruin.

Clarendon is archaeologically important as the only great rural royal palace to retain evidence of its complete medieval ground plan. The site underwent extensive archaeological exploration in the 1930s, with further investigations in the 1950s and 1960s, but much of that work remained largely unpublished until 1988, when one of the present authors co-authored a substantial report based upon the earlier excavation records and finds (T. B. James and A. M. Robinson, 'Clarendon Palace', *Reports of Research Committee of Society of Antiquaries of London*, XLV, 1988).

The volume reviewed here expands the perspective, providing a comprehensive summary of the palace's archaeological, historical and geographical setting, derived from multidisciplinary research over the last three decades. After an introductory chapter discussing aims and approaches, Chapter 2 examines the evidence for land use prior to the park's creation. By about 2000 BC little woodland cover survived, and during the middle Bronze Age extensive rectilinear fields were laid out, not only over the chalk downland, where they are clearly revealed by aerial photographs, but also within many of the now-wooded areas, where they survive as earthworks. Continuity of occupation of prehistoric farming settlements is evident through to the end of the fourth century AD, and the land now within the park supported a larger population in Romano-British times than at any other period. From the beginning of the fifth century, however, settlements and farmland seem to have been abandoned, and some secondary woodland regenerated. A royal hunting ground may have been designated long before the park became formalised within defined boundaries.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to discussion of the medieval palace in relation to its gardens, the 'inner park' within its livestock-excluding pale, the much larger outer park, itself with very distinct zones of open launds with rabbit-warrens, enclosed coppices and wood-pasture, the even more extensive royal forest and the farmland and settlements within and beyond.

Chapters 5 and 6 bring the story forward to the present. Following extensive plundering of timber and deer during and after the Civil War, much of the park was broken up into separate farms with enclosed fields. Clarendon finally passed out of royal hands in 1661; three years later it was acquired by Edward Hyde, who had already been created Earl of Clarendon. The new mansion in the south of the park, ostensibly dated to the

early eighteenth century, is here shown to incorporate fragments of a previously unknown earlier building, probably of Hyde's time. The Bathurst family, who held the estate from 1707 to 1801, added a geometric parterre and a small lake and planted Scots pines and three oak avenues. Further ornamental modifications were undertaken by their successors, the Hervey-Bathursts.

The medieval palace and later mansion were both places of social exclusion and privilege, manifestations of wealth and power, in which the active recreations of hunting and coursing could be enjoyed alongside the more cerebral appreciation of landscape aesthetics. Increasingly, however, the high life could only be sustained by profitable forestry and game management and by sufficient rents from tenant farms on the estate. Although the park landscape is the primary focus of investigation, readers of the *Review* will be pleased to note that its economic support through agriculture is not neglected. The Hervey-Bathursts retained the estate through fluctuating fortunes until the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century dealt a fatal blow, and in 1900 the estate was sold up.

The final chapters explore changing perceptions of the aesthetic, symbolic, economic and recreational significance of the landscape, as viewed by academics, royal and aristocratic owners, estate managers and the public at large. Topics include the practical problems of reconciling the demands of archaeological research with structural conservation and public presentation.

The book is attractively produced, with numerous excellent plans, drawings and photographs, including many colour plates. The text is refreshingly readable. Thirty pages of endnotes are linked to a substantial bibliography, and there is a helpful index. Only a couple of minor slips caught this reviewer's eye: the Cockey Down long barrow, said on p.17 to lie east of the Fussells Lodge long barrow, is shown on figure 8 to the south-west; and a view of the mansion in 1791, referenced to 'Back Cover' on p.134, is actually placed as a frontispiece. Overall the authors have succeeded admirably in their aim of demonstrating the great richness of the Clarendon landscape to a wider readership.

JAMES BOND
Walton-in-Gordano

JOAN THIRSK (ed.), *Hadlow. Life, land and people in a Wealden parish, 1460-1600* (Kent Archaeological Society, 2007). 210 pp., illus. Distributed by Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, Hill Farm, Castle Acre Road, Great Dunham, Norfolk, PE32 2LP. £19.95.

This volume combines a scholarly edition (in English) of the 1460 rental and survey of the manor of Hadlow with

a wide-ranging reconstruction of life in the parish in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Dr Joan Thirsk has assembled a team of local historians – 'local' also in the sense that they know the locale from long residence – who have succeeded in locating and mapping the holdings and houses recorded in the manorial survey, as well as assembling a mass of historical detail on the landholding families of the parish in these centuries. It is an accessible and well-illustrated local study that should prove of interest both to local residents and to social and economic historians more generally.

Although the limitations of the single-parish study are well known, the authors of the present study are at pains to place the parish of Hadlow within a wider, regional context. Throughout, they relate Hadlow to the powerful lordship of Tonbridge and its aristocratic owners, who were the lords of Hadlow until the fall of the Duke of Buckingham in 1521. And they present the details of estate management and manorial courts at Hadlow in a scholarly and comparative fashion: the reader is always aware of how practice in the manor of Hadlow compares to what is known of seigneurial institutions elsewhere. In particular, this is a valuable study of how late medieval estate administration operated in an area of early enclosure. The manor of Hadlow was represented by both a manor court (the court baron) and the lowest level of civil court, the court leet. The authors conclude that, in comparison to a number of manors elsewhere, the Hadlow court 'imposed less on everyday life' and 'represented not only the lord's will but also that of the community'. Their account of what the tenants owed the lords of the manor of Hadlow is also fascinating. The survey reveals a fully differentiated structure of landholding in Hadlow. Holdings varied widely in size, and even the comparatively low customary rents varied from one holding to another. The survey records a bewildering array of dues and services that the tenants of 1460 owed the lord; but it remains uncertain to what extent these had been commuted to money payments, either in 1460 or even in the sixteenth century.

The portrait of daily life in late fifteenth and sixteenth-century Hadlow is equally fascinating: we learn about the importance of the rivers Medway and Bourne to the economic life of the parish; of the changing fortunes of North Frith Park whose woodland covered a large part of the parish of Hadlow at the time of the 1460 survey, but which had been heavily cleared by the late sixteenth century. We learn too that nearly half the land-holding families recorded in the 1460 survey were still resident in Hadlow in the 1580s, when the original survey was copied out and annotated.

This study shows that Hadlow's inhabitants led anything but insular, enclosed lives: their links with

the places and people of the wider region or *pays* were crucial to their everyday lives. This is an intriguing account of a Wealden parish at the end of the middle ages, which wears its scholarship lightly. It is also a fine example of what local historians are always being urged to do: study history on the ground!

MICHAEL ZELL
University of Greenwich

MARGARET THORBURN, *The lower Ouse valley. Lewes to Newhaven – a history of the brookland* (Lewes: Withy Books, 2007). 60pp., 6 illus, 16 plates. £9.99.

This modestly-priced local publication sets out to narrate the history of the lower reaches of one of Sussex's most important rivers, the Ouse, as it cuts through the South Downs at Lewes and runs with some difficulty to the English Channel at Seaford and later at the New Haven (Newhaven today). It traces both the prehistory and history of the lower Ouse valley, demonstrating the complex interactions between human residence and economic activity on the one hand, and the vagaries of this riverine environment on the other. When farms and parishes can first be discerned it is clear that such interactions resulted in the well-known strip pattern whereby downland sheep runs, chalk scarp-foot settlement and open-field farming, and the Ouse meadows, were well integrated into a sheep/corn farming system, reliant on droveways, tracks and hedgerows running at right-angles to the river. Saltings as well as abundant meadowland are recorded in Domesday Book.

The Ouse was rarely, however, entirely compliant. For centuries it proved difficult to harness it to human requirements, and flooding was always a danger. Margaret Thorburn details the schemes to alleviate this danger, beginning with the cooperative efforts of the medieval period which frequently involved the large priory of St. Pancras on the southern edge of Lewes, and which overlooked the brooklands and had proprietary rights there. Ditches had to be kept open, mills controlled, dykes and sluices cared for. Such activities were intensified in the early modern period, with greater attention to repairs to the river embankments and the levying of scots to ensure the cleaning of the tributary sewers. The pattern of drainage channels extended to Lewes itself, or more particularly to its eastern suburb at Cliffe, growing up around the river. Periodic flooding remained a problem however, and engineering reports in the eighteenth century recommended widening and straightening the main channel to allow for a better flow whilst not obstructing the river-based trade between Lewes and the coast. The work to maintain the river defences has been continuous and not always successful.

The book demonstrates how even as recently as 2000 the Cliffe area and the lower brooklands were badly flooded, and in 2002 a Flood Defence Strategy was drawn up. The modern Environment Agency continues to face an issue that has simply not gone away.

This book, by a local author, perhaps assumes too much local knowledge of places around Lewes and there are instances where unfortunate errors have crept in. A reference to coombe formation on the South Downs should place the process in the glacial period before 12,000 BP (p. 2), Ashburnham was not a medieval ecclesiastical estate (p. 12) and Sir William Dugdale was writing in the seventeenth century, not the eighteenth (p. 13). In terms of agricultural history there are some errors too: the integration of arable with animal husbandry was certainly not a 'new formula' in the later eighteenth century but had been a practice since at least the medieval period if not before. And the work of the nineteenth-century improvers certainly ended neither the practice of fallowing nor the existence of permanent pasture on the downland tops (pp. 28–9). These, together with some proof-reading problems, will detract a little from what is otherwise a good synthesis of published material on this fascinating landscape. Primary sources are also deployed, drawing on local archival material from the eighteenth century and the later records of the commission of sewers. There is something in this valuable book for the landscape historian as well as those with interests in agrarian history.

BRIAN SHORT
University of Sussex

PAULA SUNSHINE, *Wattle and daub* (Shire Publications, 2006). 40 pp. £4.99.

Among the voluminous mass of misinformation I absorbed as a small boy at Great Oakley (C of E Controlled) village school, the allegedly miserable and shiftless life of the Anglo-Saxon peasant featured prominently. Our teacher, the otherwise admirable Miss Bowring, a maiden lady of Scots extraction, took a rather jaundiced view of Hengist and Horsa's henchmen whom she portrayed as bloodthirsty villains bent on rape and pillage and destructive of all that lay in their path. They lived, she explained, in dank and fetid houses of wattle and daub, shivering by their open fires and muttering murderously into their mugs of mead. That such people should live in huts of wattle and daub should have come as no surprise; this was a barbarous building material employed by a barbarous people!

For the inimitable Ms Sunshine, though, wattle and daub is the very reverse. As she emphasizes in this valuable addition to the wholly excellent Shire series, wattle and daub is strong, flexible, and of high

insulating value, besides being of foremost importance in the conservation of timber-framed buildings. In forty lavishly-illustrated pages she writes of the role of green coppiced hazel in wattle making, of mortise and tenon work in traditional building, of the distinction between wattle and daub and lath and plaster and concludes with a consideration of the decline of wood and wattle building as brick became more affordable and timber increasingly scarce in the eighteenth century. During the course of the journey Ms Sunshine discourses on the techniques of building timber-framed structures and for good measure offers an explanation of the origins of 'knocking a square peg into a round hole'.

As she laments the destruction of so many traditional buildings in the mid-twentieth century and the spoiling of others as decaying wattle and daub was replaced with inflexible cement and gypsum, she suggests that the older technology might with benefit be used in modern timber-framed structures. And to prove it she includes a detailed section on the construction of wattle and the manufacture of daub from clay, straw and pebbles. This is accompanied by rather fetching pictures of Ms Sunshine as she puddles daub in her Wellingtons and dons her rubber gloves to apply the stuff to hazel wattles. Readers of the *Review* will be pleased to learn that while 'treading can be exhausting work', the craft of wattle and daub walling can offer a satisfying and rewarding experience. It is, moreover, an exercise in applied sustainability and as such deserves the attention of us all.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
University of Wales, Aberystwyth

BRUCE M. S. CAMPBELL, *The medieval antecedents of English agricultural progress* (Ashgate, 2007). xiv + 348 pp. £65.

This volume consists of ten papers published by Bruce Campbell between 1983 and 1998 in journals and edited collections. They appear as they did in their first publication, with original page numbers for ease of reference. Campbell has provided a new introduction and the entire volume is indexed.

All the papers address the issue of the relative importance of supply- and demand-side restraints in the history of English agriculture. In contrast to the work of Postan and Brenner, who emphasized the importance of different supply-side restraints on agricultural development, Campbell demonstrates the responsiveness of medieval cultivators to demand. Two classic early articles on agriculture in Norfolk show the adoption of yield-raising techniques often associated only with later centuries. These include the sowing of legumes, the application of marl and manure and the adoption of mixed farming systems. Later work included in this

collection shows that a positive relationship existed between yields and population, both in the middle ages and later centuries. Agricultural productivity was determined not only by the fertility of land but also by the proximity and size of urban markets. Overall, Campbell's work reflects the 'uneven development' (X. 31) of medieval agriculture: when economic rent was sufficiently high, yield-raising techniques were adopted; the reason such techniques were not more widely adopted was that low levels of economic rent lay 'like a shadow across much of the country' (IX. 853). This interpretation is important in differentiating medieval development from later agricultural change but Campbell also points out that increased productivity in the middle ages occurred at the expense of labour productivity. Only when land and labour productivity rose together was there 'agricultural revolution'.

Some of the innovative methods devised by Campbell to address these questions are reflected in these articles. His studies of manorial accounts are not restricted to those from a single estate. The sheer volume of data involved necessitated the development of methods of categorisation, including cluster analysis, which are described here. Despite the breadth of documentation used, Campbell is at pains to discuss any deficiencies and points, in particular, to the difficulties caused by the weighting of his samples of accounts. Methodological precision is accompanied by valuable discussions of terms such as 'productivity' and 'yield' and the impact of definition on interpretation.

The chronological range of Campbell's work is also impressive. Two studies published with Mark Overton compare medieval seigneurial agriculture with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century farming practices. They reveal the lack of change in arable yields in parts of England in contrast with the significant increase in stocking densities over the same period, demonstrating the relative under-development of the pastoral sector in c.1300. Closer examinations of trends across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reveal the reduced impact of the market after the Black Death and the substitution of land for labour by cultivators facing sudden changes in the structure of supply and demand.

There are many points in the papers in this volume at which Campbell sets the agenda for future research. He has developed many of the avenues himself, including the comparison and mapping of data from all over England in *Seigniorial Agriculture* (2000) and *England on the Eve of the Black Death* (with Ken Bartley, 2006). There are frequent references to and discussion of the peasant sector, which was larger though less well documented than the seigneurial to which most of Campbell's evidence pertains. Campbell is generally

positive about the representativeness of his evidence of agricultural output as a whole, citing the fact that practices on manorial demesnes tended to reflect those in the particular locality in which they were situated rather than those on other manors on the same estate. However, he raises the possibility, on the basis of aggregate calculations, that commercialisation may have been more marked in the non-demesne sector up to 1300 and even questions the assumption that stocking densities were lower on peasant holdings.

Many of the issues discussed in this volume are treated further in Campbell's publications since 1998. Nevertheless, the breadth of Campbell's work and the quantity and range of material he has dealt with in the papers presented here mean the volume is of much more than historiographical interest. The importance of Campbell's assault on the older supply-side models used to understand economic change, his discussion and measurement of commercialisation, and the innovative methods and approaches he has adopted mean the availability of a number of his studies in a single volume is very welcome indeed.

BEN DODDS
University of Durham

BEN DODDS, *Peasants and production in the medieval North-East. The evidence from tithes, 1270–1536* (Boydell, 2007). xix + 205 pp., 25 tables, 20 figs, 3 maps. £50.

This important book reminds us that tithes as indicators of agricultural production were much studied on the continent and especially in France in the 1960s and 1970s, but only now are historians beginning to make sustained use of the English tithe records. The French work was focussed on the early modern period, and the statistical series was interpreted in the light of the prevailing Malthusian view that a period of growth came to an end in the late seventeenth century. Here the period under examination stretches from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and the records are seen as supporting the interpretation that peasants, though buffeted by external changes, were sensitive to the market and adjusted their production accordingly.

Dodds suggests that tithe records for England have been neglected because the wealth of manorial accounts (unique to English estates) have attracted most historical attention. Tithes, however, provide information about aspects of agriculture which are otherwise obscure. The manorial accounts tell us mainly about lords' demesnes in the period 1270–1430 – but as the title of this book shows, tithes reflect peasant production, and sometimes the series continue into the sixteenth century. This book is based on the tithe records of Durham Cathedral

Priory, which have survived in unusual quantity. There are methodological problems to be overcome, as only occasionally do the records itemize the tithe receipts in terms of quantities of grain gathered into the barn. In the records used here, only those for Billingham provide this information over a long period. Instead the monks of Durham recorded sums of money agreed with a purchaser of the tithes, which is taken to reflect the quantity of crops. The calculation is helped by statistical devices such as the use of a deflator as pioneered by the continental scholars. The problem of evasion must also be faced, and we have to put some faith in the vigilance of the collectors, who under the system of cash sales were directly rewarded for diligence. Collection took place in the open and public space of the fields after the harvest, as the tithe buyer's men picked one sheaf in ten from those standing in the stubble. Our trust in the calculations is encouraged by Dodds' open and fair discussion of the problems. It would be difficult to believe that the overall pattern of high tithe receipts around 1300 and low figures after 1430, or indeed the more subtle movements from year to year, simply reflected changes in the honesty of the cultivators and the efficiency of the collectors.

The research is based on the rich archive of Durham, which reminds us that high quality documents are not confined to eastern, midland and southern England. The parishes which belonged to the Durham monks on the low-lying eastern side of the county grew a range of crops not dissimilar from those found further south, including good quantities of wheat. The results of this research are not therefore only applicable to a peculiar northern province, but to a substantial part of lowland, arable England, though Durham did have a special characteristic in its abundant wastes, which meant that the villagers had ample sources of pasture and opportunities to expand their arable fields. This was not a region overshadowed by Malthusian threats.

Much of the book is taken up with presenting the series of tithe records. They show a rising trend in the late thirteenth century, continuing up to about 1310. Then Durham suffered doubly, from bad weather, culminating in the famine of 1315–17, and the Scottish raids of 1312–22. Production plummeted, but then began to recover in the 1330s and 1340s. In the half century after the Black Death of 1349 grain production halved, though this was not a continuous process, as there was a rising trend in the 1360s, and the main period of decline came in the last years of the fourteenth century. After 1430 corn production remained generally low, though with signs of short-term recovery in the late 1450s. Poor returns from arable crops persisted until the end of the series of records in the 1530s. The early sixteenth century appears, as in other works, as a paradoxical period, with signs of

growth, but also suffering from an apparent malaise that held back demographic and economic expansion.

The survey of trends is followed by a useful appraisal of peasant economic behaviour, which identifies peasants' responses to market conditions, and which argues against the view that they were primarily concerned with subsistence. A chapter on the tithe buyers shows that many of them were peasant entrepreneurs.

This book is about local trends in agricultural production based on a single source, but it avoids the traps of narrowness and localism. The analysis of the influences on production brings into the picture towns, trade, rents, taxes, industry, fishing and other features of the regional economy. This inevitably means making use of a variety of sources. The approach is comparative throughout, with constant reference to the findings of other historians in all parts of England. But even more exemplary are the very relevant parallels drawn with continental Europe in the middle ages and early modern period, or the references to peasant societies in the contemporary Third World. At each stage the various influences on trends in production are identified and assessed with imagination and a cool logic. This is a broad-minded book in every respect, and it shows that new sources, new approaches and new insights are opening up avenues of future research in the history of agriculture and rural society of the Middle Ages.

CHRISTOPHER DYER
University of Leicester

JOHN WALTER, *Crowds and popular politics in early modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2006).
xiii + 224 pp., 1 map. £55.

John Walter has long argued that popular protests and rebellions must be understood in the context of political cultures that reveal a popular political awareness. This goes against the wisdom of earlier social historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, who had insisted that such protests were pre-political. This popular awareness is not always easy to discern because individual protests at first glance might appear to be 'spasmodic episodes, discontinuous in time and space' (p.3). However, interdisciplinary approaches and comparative historical studies over the last several decades have allowed social historians to recognize that members of the crowd did possess an informed political consciousness. This was especially true with regard to their knowledge of the law of public order, which made them aware of the legal distinction between protests limited in geographical extent and confined to very specific goals (which lawyers and magistrates would view as no more than the offence of misdemeanour riot if three or more persons used force or the threat of force to accomplish a goal within one

community), and the more serious crime of levying war against the king, or treason, which involved going from place to place to voice their discontent. Thus, the protesters might wish to hide their awareness that their complaints were influenced by more generalized grievances than those peculiar to one community. This knowledge of the law and how to exploit it to enforce administrative orders or laws that the governors had already expounded but were not enforcing is one of the best evidences we possess of the political awareness of the crowd in popular protests. So skilfully was this done that the magistrates were often forced to recognize the legitimacy of popular complaints.

In Professor Walter's excellent essay on the Oxfordshire rising of 1596, he recognizes that the leaders of this aborted protest made a connection between dearth, the demise of common use-rights, and the poverty of persons made homeless by enclosure. The levelling of hedges was the most common form of agrarian protest in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although the Oxfordshire protesters later spoke of 'cutting down gentlemen rather than their hedges' (p.81). It seems that those Oxfordshire landlords who enclosed arable lands did not institute convertible husbandry, as Eric Kerridge insisted was usually the case, but rather pursued the unpopular course of depopulating villages and turning to the more immediately profitable business of sheep- and cattle-raising. These landlords were upstarts, recently arrived in the ranks of the gentry, who were insensitive to the expectations of their tenants concerning employment and nutritional sufficiency.

Seven essays are reprinted in this volume of which four are finely nuanced investigations of dearth and poverty in their regional and local contexts. (Regrettably, three lack endnote citations acknowledging sources). In the 'Social economy of dearth', Walter states that the crises of subsistence would have been worse in other parts of England besides the north-west had not gentry landlords and farmers sold corn to their neighbours at below market prices and even granted them credit for such purchases. Servants and tenants were often paid in kind or allowed to purchase grain and other consumables at below prevailing market prices. These forms of relief or even outright charity reinforced hierarchical relationships and avoided discontent, but were sometimes resorted to only after veiled threats had been made. Such endeavours often occurred in parishes that had not yet worked out systems of poor relief. Similar measures were also taken in urban communities. All of this argues that early modern England was far from being a fully developed market economy as some economic historians have insisted. However, access to the benefits of food-crisis relief required membership in the local

community attested to by substantial householders, and vagrants and masterless persons were given short shrift.

Professor Walter tends to view the gentry as a monolithic class largely made up of magistrates wielding authority and determined to uphold the status quo. This is because the popular protests involving dearth which he discusses occurred most frequently in south-eastern England. Enclosure riots were the more predominant form of popular protest – especially in the Midlands – and these he discusses only tangentially. Some of these disturbances reveal that not all gentlemen possessed seigneurial authority. Especially on large Duchy of Lancaster manors, many lesser gentry were tenants, and therefore frequently shared the complaints of their more humble neighbours concerning enclosure or fiscal seigneurialism. Even when they did not share the grievances of smallholders and cottagers, the lesser gentry and their elder brothers were proficient at manipulating others, and often procured the destruction of enclosures and seigneurial deer and game or used such protests to mask the vindictive violence of their feuds.

ROGER B. MANNING
Cleveland State University

JOAN THIRSK, *Food in early modern England: phases, fads and fashions, 1500–1760* (Hambledon Continuum, 2007). xx + 396 pp. £30.

In this important book, the celebrated agricultural historian Joan Thirsk turns her attention from the fields to the kitchen. Put that way, it seems a short and logical step from how food was grown to how it was eaten; but it would appear that, hitherto, agricultural and food historians have existed in separate academic boxes.

As Thirsk remarks, the printed record of food in early modern England – in other words, the cookery book and its close ally the book of dietary advice – is familiar and well studied: Andrew Boorde and Thomas Elyot in the sixteenth century, through Gervase Markham and Robert May in the seventeenth, to Charles Carter in the eighteenth. Yet Thirsk rightly notes that they were written by people familiar with upper-class food and cookery. There were in fact ‘two food worlds’:

The one was inhabited by food writers who ... pontificated about food and were happy to pronounce authoritatively, though none of them knew as much about food throughout England as they liked to think. The other world was inhabited by women and some men cooking food according to their social, local and family traditions, while adapting them in each generation to suit changing tastes and circumstances. The two worlds interacted all the time, but coexisted and were recognisable different (p.x).

After setting the scene of English food before 1500, Thirsk looks at the printed record for the period 1500–60. Then five further chronological chapters follow, entitled ‘The widening world of food, 1550–1600’, ‘Science and the search for food, 1600–40’, and ‘War and a renewed search for food, 1640–60’, ‘Food in a quickening commercial world, 1660–1700’, and ‘On the edge of the next food world, 1700–60’. The final two chapters before the conclusion are especially novel and fascinating. Chapter 8 discusses ‘Regional and social patterns of diet’, showing a rich pattern of regional diversity in taste. And chapter 9 takes a closer look at various foodstuffs: bread, butcher’s meat and rabbits, eggs and poultry meat, fish, dairy foods, vegetables and herbs, fruit, drinks and condiments.

From a wider historiographical point of view, Thirsk’s most important thesis is that ‘It has become a conventional assertion among historians who have not studied food history in any detail to say that our forebears ate a monotonous and boring diet’ (p.xi), and she sets out to put an end to this mistaken conclusion. As a sociologist who has contributed to food history, I am one of the people who must probably plead guilty as charged. I think I took over that conventional assumption from Marc Bloch, and from Theodore Zeldin who was my mentor when I embarked on my book *All Manners of Food* (1985). In mitigation, I can claim that I was explicitly more concerned with the food and cookery of the upper classes than with that of the urban and rural poor, and more especially my interest was in comparing the development of ‘culinary culture’ – not just the cookery but the attitudes towards eating – of England and France (from the late Middle Ages until around 1980).

Yet although Thirsk convincingly shows that the poorer people ate a large variety of foods, and that what they grew underwent change during the two and half centuries before the conventional beginning of the Industrial Revolution, I don’t think she quite blows Bloch and his perhaps slightly uncritical followers like me out of the water. Bloch was well aware, of course, of the Columbian exchange. More to the point, though, he was arguing that in the field of food as in so much else, differential modes of time were simultaneously in play. The *longue durée* in food was more evidently at work at the lower end of the social scale, while the rapid succession of food fashions (sufficiently rapid to qualify as *histoire des événements*, I think, and increasing in pace over the centuries) could best be observed in the upper reaches. I am not sure that he meant that no change took place at all in the food of the peasantry. So I will admit to not having given sufficient attention to the pace of change in the food of the lower orders, but I am not yet convinced that the traditional model of differential rates

of change can be discarded – even if our measures need to be carefully recalibrated.

STEPHEN MENNELL
University College Dublin

NIGEL GOOSE (ed.), *Women's work in industrial England. Regional and local perspectives* (Local Population Studies Supplement, 2007). xiv + 402 pp., 58 tables, 40 figs. £14.95.

This collection of fifteen papers grew out of a 1996 Local Population Studies conference. It contains seven chapters that have been published elsewhere and eight new ones. All examine women's work in nineteenth-century England, if the nineteenth century is stretched a bit to include the very end of the eighteenth century and the very beginning of the twentieth century. The previously-published chapters are already important papers in the field, and a student of women's history will find it convenient to have these works easily accessible. The new chapters add breadth and depth to our knowledge of women's work in the nineteenth century.

While edited volumes are often difficult to review because the chapters are so varied, in this case my work is easy. The chapters are so closely linked that they meld together into a book that has one clear thesis and two additional themes. The book argues that the nineteenth-century censuses are reasonably accurate and the information they provide about women's work should be trusted and used. In addition, it also examines the labour force participation rate of married women, and the wide variety of work that women engaged in during the nineteenth century.

The book as a whole makes the case that the censuses are generally reliable and should be used. The most strident critic of the census data is Edward Higgs, who argues that the number women counted as domestic servants is seriously over-estimated because some women labelled with terms such as 'housekeeper' were family members who kept house and not servants, and because some women counted as domestic servants were actually farm servants. Higgs's chapter, however, is followed immediately by a chapter in which Michael Anderson refutes his claims. Anderson shows that examining a national sample, rather than a local one, reduces the extent of the problem, and argues that the clerks who calculated the aggregate totals seem to have been aware of the ambiguity in the term 'housekeeper' and did not include all women so designated in the aggregate totals. Leigh Shaw-Taylor also concludes that Higgs's concerns about domestic servants are exaggerated.

The book contains other chapters that criticize the census. Like Higgs, John McKay criticizes the census for

over-stating employment, but for a different reason. He notes that dropping married women with occupations such as 'farmer's wife' or 'shoemaker's wife' from the employed category greatly reduces the measured rate of married women's labour force participation in 1851 and 1861, making the decline in married women's labour force participation in the late nineteenth century appear much less dramatic. Other authors, such as Eilidh Garrett, suggest the censuses under-count rather than over-count women's work.

Other chapters in the book specifically defend the census. Shaw-Taylor argues that census enumerators accurately recorded the regularly-employed women; they did miss casual female labour, 'but largely because the G[eneral] R[egister] O[ffice] did not want to know about such work' (p.40). In addition to the chapter directly critiquing Higgs, the book contains another chapter by Anderson in which he argues that 'many of the concerns about reliable reporting are exaggerated' (p.185), and that work in textile factories in particular was well recorded in the censuses. The high rates of female participation evident in certain industries also argue against the under-recording of female labour. Nigel Goose finds participation rates for married women as high as 74 per cent in Harpenden. Most of the chapters use the census as their source, which by itself suggests confidence in the accuracy of that data. Thus, while the book contains both criticism and defences of the census data, it seems to favour the defences and encourage use of census data.

Reading the various arguments about the accuracy of the census presented in this book, it becomes clear that the debates about how well the censuses measure women's work are in large part debates about the definition of what it means to be 'working'. Shaw-Taylor argues that the censuses did a good job of recording regular employment, and only missed the casual employment that they never intended to record, though he admits that it is not entirely clear what 'regular' means. While it may be true that the censuses were not intended to record casual labour, I am still uncomfortable about the accuracy of a count of female labour that excludes such work. The term 'employment' itself might be ambiguous; Garrett notes that the definition of employment seems to change during the late nineteenth century. The census, 'changes from gathering information on "tasks in which one's time was spent" to "tasks for which one received financial remuneration"' (p.327). This is one example of how changes over time in the instructions to enumerators make it problematic to compare employment totals across censuses.

The employment status of wives is often ambiguous. Both Anderson and Garrett calculate what participation

rates would be if women in households with lodgers were counted as employed. This addition assumes that these women were generating income for the household by providing services for lodgers, and thus should be counted as employed. McKay and Christine Jones both remove from employment wives who were given an occupational title that describes their husband's occupation. However, it may be that a farmer's wife did a great deal of farming work and really should be counted as employed. While such categories disappeared in the late nineteenth century, this disappearance could be the result of changes in women's work patterns. As Higgs notes, 'At the heart of the matter lies the definition of an occupation and work, and the relationship between economic work and the home' (p. 259).

In addition to the accuracy of the censuses, the labour force participation of married women is an important theme in many chapters, and this book provides a valuable resource in this area. As we have already seen, McKay argues that the occupational aggregates from the census overstate married women's labour force participation because they include relational 'occupations' such as 'farmer's wife'. Removing these categories, McKay concludes that married women's labour force participation was only about 13 or 14 per cent in the mid-nineteenth century. Goose, Anderson, Osamu Saito, Jones, and Garrett all measure the participation rates of married women in different populations, and we find that participation rates varied substantially by industry and location. Anderson finds an above-average participation rate of 26 per cent for married women in Preston in 1851. For the late eighteenth century, Saito finds much lower rates of participation for married women in Corfe Castle, Dorset (nine per cent) than in Cardington, Bedfordshire (68 per cent), a difference which was still evidence in 1851. While participation rates were generally low for married women, certain industries seem to have drawn a large number of married women. Nicola Verdon concludes that most of the women employed in agricultural day-labour were married. The straw industry also employed many married women. Goose finds that, among the registration districts of Hertfordshire, the presence of the straw industry increased married women's labour force participation. He finds that, while there was substantial variation, for the county as a whole one-fifth of married women were employed. Jones looks only at women over 45, and finds that ever-married women had participation rates of 22 per cent.

A few chapters examine changes in participation over a married woman's life-cycle and find that children affected married women's labour force participation more through the income they produced than through the demands they put on their time. Instead of reaching

its lowest point when she had young children, a married women's labour force participation declined as her children aged. Anderson, examining Lancashire and Cheshire in 1851, finds that participation rates for married women declined with age, and that wives with working children were less likely to be in the labour force than women with children too young to work. Garrett finds that in 1921 the labour force participation of married women still declined as they aged, just as Anderson found for 1851. Marguerite Dupree shows that female employment in the pottery industry rose when children's employment in the potteries was prohibited, which also suggests that child labour was a substitute for married women's labour.

In the opening chapter Goose notes that

The factory as a locus for female employment dominated contemporary discussion out of all proportion to its significance, and, in consequence, until relatively recently historians of industrial England have also tended to concentrate their attention upon the employment of women in factories (p. 5).

This book helps to correct that tendency by providing information on a wide variety of women's occupations. Goose demonstrates the importance of the straw-plaiting industry in Hertfordshire, and argues that normally the wages in this industry were reasonably good. Owen Davies examines the work of women as healers, which was marginalized but persisted in spite of increased requirements for formal medical credentials. Stana Nenadic examines the businesswomen of Edinburgh and suggests that, while businesswomen did well financially, business ownership did not draw in many women from the middle class because it was not considered feminine. Dupree examines women's work in the pottery industry, and Verdon notes that women were extensively employed in the growing of hops, particularly in shaving poles, and in tying and picking hops. For those interested in agricultural employment the book includes two chapters. Pamela Sharpe's chapter discusses the work and wages of women in agriculture before 1850, while Verdon's chapter on Sussex examines the period after 1850.

There are other links between the chapters as well. Both McKay and Garrett argue that there was little change in female labour force participation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both Dupree and Anderson discuss child care arrangements. The reader is invited to find more connections. Anyone interested in measuring women's work in the nineteenth century will find this book a rich source.

JOYCE BURNETTE
Wabash College

R. W. HOYLE (ed.), *Our hunting fathers. Field sports in England after 1850* (Carnegie Publishing, 2007). xv + 320 pp., 12 tables, 47 figs. £18.99.

At a time when hunting, shooting, and fishing are controversial activities, politically and socially divisive and arousing strong emotions, the history of the sports is not merely of topical interest but also is essential for understanding both participants and opponents. Richard Hoyle is to be congratulated in assembling a team of historians to have a first stab at writing the recent history of a wide selection of these sports. The publisher's hype is perhaps a little over the top in claiming that 'this book is the first attempt to offer a proper historical perspective on the subject of field sports in England,' as hunting and shooting, at least, have not been entirely overlooked by rural historians. For the history of otter hunting, wildfowl shooting, salmon fishing, and hare coursing, however, the book can deservedly claim a first. It is more important that the book succeeds in drawing the attention of agricultural historians to the fact that agriculture is not the only, or necessarily the most important, function of the countryside. This is the underlying message of the volume's eleven essays – three of them by the editor – which present a great variety of approaches, in style and scope as well as in specific subject matter, to the history of how half-a-dozen or more different animals have been chased by our hunting fathers.

Benjamin Britten's 1936 song cycle, 'Our hunting fathers' was by no means the first public critique of the chase. Seventy-odd years later the chief chase had finished, and Richard Hoyle's *reprise* verges on a funeral lament, for almost every essay in this splendid volume records the rise of agitation against cruel sports and the legislative extinction of many of them. Thus five of the eleven essays are concerned with sports that are now outlawed, one with a sport whose field of prey has been narrowed by statutory protection of selective designated species, plus a couple of sparkling essays by the editor ranging over a large number of sports. That leaves three contributions devoted to the two survivors from the traditional trio of hunting, shooting, and fishing which have so far have been left largely alone by the state. Two of these three essays are case studies in shooting history. The third, by Harvey Osborne, describes how the lower orders were squeezed out of salmon fishing as it was successfully appropriated by the upper classes as an elitist sport. Edward Bujak shows how shooting pheasants and partridges in huge numbers became the main support as well as the chief occupation of landed society in late Victorian Suffolk. The Elveden estate, for example, at first in the hands of Duleep Singh and then of the Guinnesses, became simply a very large game preserve.

Poor soils continued to be cultivated only because pheasants did not care to stay on uncultivated land; and in the county as a whole it was reckoned that two-thirds of the country houses were occupied by shooting tenants. Grand battues in which thousands of birds were shot in a season climaxed in Norfolk and Suffolk in the years before 1914, and Bujak reveals that the best shots, who went to shooting parties from estate to estate, were unofficially graded like seeded tennis players. Mark Rothery homes in on the shooting parties on a single estate, that of the Sibthorps on the outskirts of Lincoln, and in a masterly demonstration of record linkage uses the long run of shooting books recording those present to reconstruct the family, social, and patronage networks of the Sibthorps: invitations to shoot, but not to stay in the house, came to include professional men from Lincoln, its leading industrialists, and one or two of the more gentlemanly tenant-farmers.

Farmers, of a reasonably well-heeled sort, were more numerous on the hunting field, making foxhunting easily the least socially exclusive of the sports discussed in this book. That is, if hare coursing, discussed by Ian Roberts, is disregarded: this was essentially a spectator sport, and certainly there were thousands of cloth caps among the crowds drawn to big events, where the betting proved so popular that coursing rapidly morphed into greyhound racing after mechanical hares. Depending, of course, on our ancestry, our fathers are probably more likely to have gone to the dogs than to shooting parties or meets of hounds. They are definitely extremely unlikely to have gone deer stalking and grouse shooting at Balmoral, pheasant shooting at Sandringham, let alone tiger shooting and pig-sticking in India, as recounted in a delightful chapter on royalty and field sports by the editor, which magnificently interprets the book's sub-title of 'field sports in England' in cavalier-imperial spirit. Some of our fathers, if from farming stock, may well have served in county yeomanry regiments, where the close correlation of hunting gentry, farmers, and farmers' sons with yeomanry officers, NCOs, and troopers, is demonstrated by Nicholas Mansfield. Few will have gone otter-hunting, the subject of essays by Daniel Allen and Charles Watkins, notwithstanding Allen's revelation that the ruthless sport was passed off as a mere pretext for a pleasant riverside picnic; while fewer still will have ventured into the solitary, silent, pursuit of punt-gunning for wildfowl, whose rise and fall is evocatively examined by John Martin.

It is irrelevant to the interest and importance of this book whether or not any or all of these sports were literally pursued by our fathers. It marks a serious advance in providing an historical perspective on the priorities of the landed classes for the countryside and

its animals. It also furnishes an entertaining lesson in the pitfalls of dependence on running script through 'spell-check'; for we learn that the anti-field sports folk have always been 'weary of criticizing fishing', and that gamekeepers were on the lookout for 'predatory birds, crowns, magpies, hawks' and others, while the introduction of the 'breach-loading shotgun' must indeed have had remarkable effects!

F. M. L. THOMPSON

Institute of Historical Research, London

PAMELA DEARLOVE, *'Go home you miners!' Fen Drayton and the LSA* (The author, 2007). vi + 137 pp. £10.20 incl. p&p from Pamela Dearlove, 8 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 9AN.

The Land Settlement Association was a unique experiment in the 1930s to give work on smallholdings to unemployed miners and dockworkers from Durham. In 1934 some miners had been out of work for fifteen years. Oldies among us still live with vivid memories of the hunger marches, so it is heart-warming to be reminded of this constructive effort to alleviate their misery. Moreover, we have reached almost the last moment when it is possible to capture relevant living memories. So Pamela Dearlove's book is a historical treasure, giving a sober account of the scheme's vicissitudes from the point of view of the smallholders and the local people who absorbed them, plus a rich store of photographs, posters from the early days, maps and plans. The background depicts what amounted in the end to a horticultural revolution rising out of a whirlpool of ever-changing commercial circumstances.

Yet the story is not well-known; a recent history of agriculture in Lincolnshire which had two Land Settlement estates ignored it entirely. It deserves wider publicity since the function of smallholdings must contribute to current debates on the global future of agriculture, while the story told here is instructive on the way tenants on these LSA estates devised significant labour- and time-saving innovations, and some of us can testify how traces of the whole venture survive in our local landscapes.

Pamela Dearlove's book is focused on one estate, Fen Drayton in Cambridgeshire. When the scheme started in 1934 as the brainchild of Percy Malcolm Stewart, Chairman of the London Brick Company, government support was half-hearted and Stewart himself bought the first estate at Pottton in Bedfordshire. Twenty estates emerged, and they are listed here, each no doubt having its own distinctive history. They occupied nearly 10,000 acres in 1,000 smallholdings, supporting 800 families.

To Fen Drayton came miners and dockworkers from

Sunderland, Newcastle, and West Hartlepool, and later from Wales, from the Rhonda valley. Some returned home, unable to acclimatize; miners did not all like working outdoors in all weathers! The locals had to accustom themselves to speech they did not understand, a camaraderie and singing- and chapel-going tradition that were unfamiliar, and they had to watch houses built for LSA tenants that had far superior facilities to theirs: it is a fascinating account of the meeting of two cultures, most easily enjoyed perhaps by the northern children moving into the countryside, skating in the winter and picnicking by the river in summer. Economically, however, it was a hard, precarious life in the depression of the thirties. But it improved gradually with the wartime demand for home-produced food; the smallholders fed many airbase camps in East Anglia with salad foods. Incomes were positively buoyant in the 1970s. Vegetables, pigs and poultry as basic produce changed their relative importance in course of time, and bulbs and flowers added to the mix. The rules governing the LSA became irksome and constraining, though the government remained paternally supportive. But Margaret Thatcher's policies spelt an abrupt, cruel end to the LSA in 1982, and now in 2007 only three people remain in Fen Drayton from the LSA era. Meanwhile, the South Cambridgeshire District Council plans for the future, looking for 'new forms of sustainable living'.

This book is a thought-provoking survey spanning diverse experiences that agricultural historians need to ponder. In the 1960s and 1970s the LSA attracted visitors to England from countries stretching from Algiers to India, while one FAO report in 1959/60 described it as a lesson 'in developing a prosperous peasant economy, without... destroying incentives for production and profit'. This book, readably and pictorially, admirably blends the economic with the social ingredients in that challenge.

JOAN THIRSK
Hadlow, Kent

JOHN RHODES, *Yeller-belly years. Growing up in Lincolnshire, 1930-50. 'Remember'd with advantages'* (The author, 2007). i + 205 pp., illus. £9.50 incl. p&p from 13 Hill Rise, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 6SP. For agricultural historians the particular interest in this book lies in the chapter entitled 'Potato-picking sixty years ago' (pp.135-42) and the section on Brigg Fair (pp.56-61). These are, of course, recollections of boyhood rather than academic accounts, but nonetheless they record some sharp insights. John Rhodes describes the organization and routines of potato harvesting during the second world war: the carts, the horse-drawn and tractor-drawn machinery, the stints, the osier baskets,

the clothing, keeping hunger at bay when out in the fields all day, the hours kept, the pay, the back-ache, and the gangs of German and Italian POWs and of local 'ladies'. Your reviewer *now* knows why the coarseness of the latter caused his father, as foreman, to prevent him from going out with them, whereas working with the POWs was encouraged (good for the Latin!).

Rhodes lived in the small town of Brigg, made famous for its Fair by Percy Grainger and Delius, still an important event in the 1930s, especially for the horse trade. The latter attracted many 'gyppoes' from afar, who would parade horses and ponies at the trot down the main streets. Rhodes was just old enough to be a little more than an enthralled spectator. At the age of 8–9 he was entrusted by one owner with the task of holding a shire horse for quite a long time in the hustle and bustle, whilst the stranger went 'for a drink'. Even town boys in the 1930s were sometimes able to get to know horses and their feeding and handling, as some horses were still used for haulage work: in Rhodes' case drawing the UDC dust carts and dilly carts (for night soil), in his grandfather's charge.

However, the book has a wider appeal too, because it was written by one of a relatively small, but clearly defined age cohort of boys. We were too young for wartime service, but old enough to remember something about pre-war days and still more about the war. We were old enough to pass through our teens before the term 'teenager' came into vogue, not young enough to agree too readily with the 'Angry Young Men'. We were the cohort born c.1927–35 (Rhodes was born in 1930), when the birth rate was at the lowest levels so far recorded, and we fell into jobs easily in a period of labour shortage – we had 'never had it so good'. Widening access to grammar schools in the inter-war period coincided with the low birth rates, both factors helping us to compete well with returning ex-servicemen for university places in a period of rapid expansion. Our youthful experiences must have coloured our views of the post-war world and may help to explain the effects we had on the rest of the country.

So John Rhodes, one of the first-generation grammar school boys, from his very sharp youthful observations, has painted a remarkably detailed picture of life in a small market town. The topics include his council estate and elementary school, Brigg Grammar School for Boys, 'culture, comics and books', 'church, cubs and the cinema', the war, 'leisure and pleasure', 'teenage angst and the sap rising', as well as the topics mentioned above. The prose is as clear, correct and eloquent as one expects from an Oxford graduate in English, who taught the subject for many years and became the head of a comprehensive school. The price of the book is modest, the production

professional. And, by the way, 'yeller-belly' means 'born in Lincolnshire', one traditional explanation being that the term alludes to the yellow waistcoats of the Lincolnshire Regiment in pre-khaki days.

DENNIS MILLS
Branston, Lincolnshire

PHILIP SHEAIL, *The life and times of a Hampshire blacksmith* (Molewood Hawthorn Publishing, 2007). 81 pp., illus. £12 incl. p&p from Philip Sheail, 41 Cowper Crescent, Hertford, SG14 3DZ.

The blacksmith in question is Walter Murphy, grandfather to the Sheails, Philip and John, who worked in the village smithy at Preston Candover for nearly seventy years until 1983 when old age obliged him to quit. On that level, this is a family portrait painted by a respectful grandson, with happy memories of summer holidays in this Hampshire village in the 1950s, and with illustrations taken from the family album. It is the flesh on the bones of the twentieth-century story. A young widowed mother is forced by circumstance back into domestic service and her son Walter, born in 1900, is brought up by her brother and ultimately follows him into the Candover smithy. There in that small rural community and occasionally buffeted, albeit obliquely, by world events, he makes a living with his hands and his wits, and moves with the passing decades from irresponsible youth into esteemed village elder. Succeeding generations of the family benefit from the education that he never had and progress into middle-class professionalism elsewhere. The smithy is eventually converted into accommodation for the groom of its new owner. It is a common enough script but these are real people living lives in real time.

There is, however, a great deal more to this as well because an almost complete set of accounts survives for the smithy from 1910 through to the 1980s, the exception being the years 1914–25. These figures are closely analyzed by the author to add substance to the story and thereby raise it from a family memoir into a detailed and significant study of change and decline for the village blacksmith. In the years leading up to the First War, for example, an average of 110 horses were being shod annually, with an average tally of 3,713 shoes per year, and this accounted for 63 per cent of the work by value. The two other principal categories of work at the time were service and repair of farm equipment, at 13 per cent, and buildings-related works, such as stoves, guttering and door/window fittings at 11 per cent. Between the Wars, the number of horses did not decline dramatically but the number of times they needed to be shod did fall away sharply as more of the heavy work was taken over by tractors and more tradesmen

acquired delivery vans. Sporting horses kept by the local gentry, including a team of polo ponies, helped to keep things going but even so the number of shoes fitted in 1938 was 38 per cent below the 1910–14 average. New lines of work, such as fitting tractor draw bars to wagons and implements could not compensate for the drop in income that resulted. The Second War brought machinery upgrades, electricity and new welding skills to the smithy and in 1944, for the first time, income from farm work outstripped that from horse shoeing. The boom continued into the post-war years as a host of new machines and trailers appeared on the farms, all needing servicing and repair. Murphy's best year ever for income in real terms was 1951. Thereafter, progressively, this kind of work moved more towards the specialist dealer and the village smithy made do with the supply of accessories and secondary items such as the sledges that were towed behind pick-up balers. This in turn fell away in the 1960s and, with the shoeing now almost completely gone, construction works relating to the improvement of farmsteads and building and restoration of houses featured more prominently.

The text also features at regular intervals biographical vignettes of leading landholding families in and around the Candover valley through the twentieth century. If slightly distracting, they do help to colour in the wider social context of the rural community and show, as in his dealings with the innovative dairy farmer Rex Paterson, the points at which Walter Murphy came into contact with this other world. The distinctive element of the work, though, is embodied in the graphs, figures and other detail that track the passage of this village smithy on its path to oblivion, and for that it is much recommended.

ROY BRIGDEN
University of Reading

BRIAN SHORT, CHARLES WATKINS and JOHN MARTIN (eds), *The front line of freedom. British farming in the Second World War* (British Agricultural History Society, Agricultural History Review Supplement Series 4, 2006). xviii + 238 pp., 41 tables, 29 figs. £17.50.

Here we have a book whose title indicates that its primary concern is with the experience of British agriculture during the Second World War, but behind that lies an interest in the way that the wartime contribution of farming has been portrayed. The contributors therefore regularly address the various stereotypes that have arisen from both the obvious importance of food production in total warfare and the substantial official histories of agriculture written in the immediate aftermath of hostilities. The volumes by Keith Murray,

R. J. Hammond and Laurie Lee are, of course, now very elderly, and inevitably rather celebratory, and to modern thinking their sponsorship by the government and their production so soon after the events they covered may count as intrinsic reasons to doubt their reliability. The tone here is certainly predominantly critical. An aspect of the book that is not so obvious is the special attention paid by many contributors to the war as the setting of what the editors call, in the title of the first chapter, a 'state-led agricultural revolution', which served as a foundation for agriculture's transformation by mechanization, science and state support during the post-war years.

The book's impact is rather weakened by being a loosely organized collection of independent essays which are very different in approach, while the final two contributions, on the use of the National Farm Survey data to study post-war changes, are tangential to the main theme. Some treatments are analytical, notably the chapter by Brassley, but others concentrate on a simple narrative treatment of their chosen theme, most notably that on the Women's Land Army by Clarke which offers few new insights. This can work well, however, as with Sheail's illuminating demonstration of the impact that scientific and determined rodent control could have on wastage after harvest. Others most resemble commentaries on existing views in selected, often very specialized areas, rather than definitive treatments in their own right. There are common themes that appear regularly, but they often do so in a repetitive and overlapping manner, and the lack of overall unity is symbolized by the separate abstracts that preface each contribution. Readers would have been better served by a substantial extension of the Preface to gather together explicitly the major themes as an overall agenda, which contributors could then have worked around. The unevenness and fragmentation militates against the completion of the large tasks the book sets itself, and it mostly lays out a new agenda for research rather than in any sense replacing the existing official histories.

Thus, it may well be that wartime achievements were less spectacular than has generally been believed, but this is never comprehensively demonstrated, and the use of statistics in the analytical chapters do not prove the matter beyond peradventure. Paul Brassley estimates a modest increase of output by volume of about eight per cent between the pre-war and later war years and a thirty per cent decline in total factor productivity over the same period. He attributes the latter to diminishing returns to increased inputs of labour, capital and management. Non-statistically inclined historians may wonder about some of the 'heroic assumptions' (p. 38) required by the econometric approach that produced these estimates,

especially given the author's prefatory reflections on the difficulties of measuring changes that were both quantitative and qualitative. The editorial team do not doubt the heavy reliance on imported food in the inter-war years, or the actual improvement in nutrition seen among the mass of the population and achieved despite virtual siege conditions (p. 6). Self-evidently, the United Kingdom was alone among European belligerents in avoiding a real and lethal wartime food crisis even though it had been the least self-sufficient, certainly among the major nations. To achieve this when this collection shows that large areas of good arable land were taken by the government for defence purposes, that other areas were severely hindered, in the early years at least, by the direct overspill from urban bombing and indirect impact of refugees, while many skilled workers disappeared into the services, still seems remarkable. It must have formed a major contribution to keeping the war going, if not directly to winning it.

The evolution of the new attitude to agriculture's importance and methods of production is often handled as a purely technical exercise, and at times the context of a war on a scale and intensity never seen before somehow seems to fade. Thus, although the urgency and explicit short-termism seen when defeat seemed closest is deprecated, what else could have been done? (pp. 31–4). Sticking to a tried and tested tractor design that many farmers knew how to use, rather than seeking to innovate, may seem an incorrect decision with hindsight, but in a time of crisis it surely had a great deal to recommend it (p. 99). The revisionist case actually seems to defeat itself in the reconsideration of the effectiveness of the management of agricultural production in some of the most thoroughly evidence-based analyses, from Waymark, Short and Rawding. These show that while wartime expedients certainly created some victims, most obviously through disposessions set in train by the WAECs, these were few in number, and in some notorious headline cases at least, those involved largely brought disaster on themselves. Under the conditions of the time, these committees mostly come over as sensible and keen to create a consensus, and no credible proof of routine and inappropriate authoritarianism emerges here.

The chapter on organic farming by Conford is less about farming in wartime than about the impetus through reaction that the wartime drive to maximize output gave the fledgling organic movement. Conford shows that the organicists' proselytizing worried the manufacturers of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and prompted them to mount a counter-attack. While this is interesting, it also serves to draw attention to the volume's biggest lacuna: a direct study of the forces, individuals and

firms who created the sense of inevitability about the productivist vision of the future based upon chemicals. Then we might have learned not only about the specific contributions of the agro-chemical industries to the wartime productivity drive but also why so few limits were placed on these industries for so long, and so few doubts expressed effectively until very recently.

Reading the book, one sometimes has the sense that some of its contributors see the agriculture of the second half of the century as essentially predetermined by what had been put in place by 1945. The material they present is perhaps more conducive to the view that the changes of wartime were a kind of preparation for a future revolution of an indeterminate kind. By 1945, it was generally accepted that the nation could not risk a return to food production regime of the 1930s and that farmers simply deserved better. There was also a strong resolve not to repeat the mistakes of the years after victory in 1918. Implementation of productivist policy was reinforced for several years by the chronic lack of both trade partners and foreign exchange, and then by the rapid transformation of the options for mechanization of mixed British farms in the 1950s, especially after the tractor and three-point linkage implement system pioneered by Ferguson had been refined and universally copied. This long-term, peacetime new deal after 1945 was intensified after Britain's accession to the European common market, despite there being plenty of food available elsewhere by that time. It was indeed the war years that set the nation firmly on the road to productivism, but that first step of a renewed interest in agriculture was all that had been established firmly by 1945 – and the experience of the aftermath of the First World War shows that even this could have been abandoned in the 1950s if costs and problems had mounted up in embarrassing ways.

Overall, then, there is plenty of interest here on particular topics, but taken as a whole the book cannot be counted a definitive reassessment of farming in Britain during the Second World War.

STEPHEN CAUNCE
University of Central Lancashire

IAN WALTHER, *A place in my country. In search of the rural dream* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007). x + 310 pp. £12.99.

This is a very English sort of book falling broadly into the 'good life' genre. Yet it manages to go a little further than most examples of the genre which tend to irritate and exasperate in equal measure. In brief, the author, a high-flying media man, used to the fleshpots of Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris, is posted to London and rather than put up with the horrors of living in that city, he decides

to abandon his job and to buy a cottage in the Cotswolds where he goes to live with his young Australian wife. She becomes pregnant at last (fresh air and wholesome veg. presumably), he is able to confront and come to terms with the earlier loss of his father and elder brother, and the pair of them gradually become integrated into village life. In doing so, they meet the usual *dramatis personae* of earthy characters, loveable rogues, cynical and hypocritical incomers and less than pleasant members of the 'county set'. Despite his own upper-middle class background, the author finds little point of contact with the latter, appears to despise the 'white settlers' (of which he is, of course, a prime example) and prefers to seek the company of the worthy indigenes among whom he learns a great deal of the rhythms of country life. Accompanying the small working farmers, game keepers and tractor drivers about their various tasks, he comes daily into contact with birth, death and decay, causing him to question some of his own values. Meanwhile he glimpses the darkness behind the rural façade as he comes face-to-face with local vandalism and crime and the sheer hypocrisy and moral cowardice of many of the dwellers in Arcady. It is a world of deep social divisions and despite the genuine efforts of the Rector to blur distinctions of class, the orbits of those few working folk still living in the village and those of the barn conversions, former farmhouses and 'artisan' cottages rarely converge.

All this will be familiar to those who know Cirencester and its surrounding villages or who have walked or ridden through Lord Bathurst's great park. The peer himself will be less than delighted by the author's unenlightened criticism of estate farming, given that the 'Marsham' estate is almost certainly modelled on his own, while the authorities at the Royal Agricultural College will deprecate the rather snide descriptions of some of its students. I think I recognize the village in Walthew's account, and am certain I know the pub which features so prominently in his daily life. Indeed, given the number of nights that he staggered home after long hours of beer, cider and tequila, it is quite remarkable that Walthew ever managed to set pen to paper, let alone produce what at one level can be read as a serious and coherent critique of developments in the modern countryside.

In a manner reminiscent of H. J. Massingham (with even a hint of his rhapsodic descriptive writing) the author attacks the supposedly dehumanized face of modern farming, where economic rationalism has driven the people from the fields and labourers from their cottages and where agrochemicals have ushered in a sanitized landscape of cereal monoculture. He contrasts this with the smaller-scale mixed farming system followed by his

friend and mentor, Norman. The author admires this kindly, gentle bachelor who represents an older, less ordered world and we are expected to sympathize with him as he struggles to survive in a tough physical and economic environment. The trouble is that for all his warmth and strength of character, and for all his deep roots in the Cotswold countryside, Norman is the farmer from Hell. He is technically incompetent; his livestock die in the fields for want of a vet, his wheat remains un-harvested in October when all around have already planted next year's crops, his gates hang drunkenly from their hinges, his cattle and sheep wander at will and he is the quintessentially past master of the botched job. His two hundred acres yield little and despite Walthew's unconcealed sympathy, Norman's relative poverty is the product of his own inability to confront the demands of modern farming. It would be nice to think that this island could afford to support a countryside populated with backwoods yeomen of the Norman type with their poppy-infested fields, ancient tractors and homespun 'wisdom'. But this is a notion as absurd as it is impracticable in a desperately overpopulated land. The idyll, if it ever existed, is dead and gone. It gave way long ago to a wholly different world of wholly different values. As America converts its vast acres to producing bio-fuel, India and China absorb ever greater amounts of food from the world market and climatic change exerts its insidious effects, we shall need all the food we can possibly produce. If I am right, the Normans of this world will disappear forever along with the inherently inefficient organic systems so enthusiastically supported by the urban middle classes, and the ridiculous notions of extensification proposed for some of our most fertile acres.

Ian Walthew, of course, would be appalled. Yet towards the end of his charming and arresting book the need to earn a living forces him and his little family back to the metropolitan life and, in a sense, back to reality; the reality of the Britain of graffiti, pierced navels and *Hello* magazine. We are left with the feeling that Walthew's friends including Norman, the folk in the pub and the other Cotswold denizens in his pages would have little alternative but to confront their own reality by awaiting the inevitable change and the tide of 'white settlers' which would finally engulf them.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
University of Wales, Aberystwyth

CLARE V. J. GRIFFITHS, *Labour and the Countryside. The politics of rural Britain, 1918-1939* (OUP, 2007) xv + 404 pp., 10 illus. £60.

The history of the Labour Party in rural areas is not, to any kind of radical, a happy one. In the accepted

accounts, with exceptions of 1945 and 1997, Labour has had virtually no impact in the countryside outside a small number of seats, typically in East Anglia. At one level this is perhaps not surprising. A substantial section of the party nationally regarded the rural areas as politically backward, trapped by some version of Marx's famous phrase – 'the idiocy of rural life'. More moderate voices saw Labour as the party of the urban areas, fostered and protected by a mass trade union movement, conditions which clearly did not exist in the countryside. Finally, there were those who argued that the 'tyranny of the countryside' meant that farm workers, rural craft workers and even tenant farmers were so under the control of the Conservative squirearchy as to make the free expression of political views impossible.

Against this a slightly longer view would suggest a possible different line of argument. In 1910, and especially in 1906, the Liberal Party held a huge number of rural seats, as well as drawing on the more traditional urban areas of radical support. Further, Socialism had a special relationship with the countryside through the radical ruralism of the Chartists, William Morris and Robert Blatchford. However, between 1918 and 1939 most of the old Liberal urban areas went to Labour (though not all) while virtually none of the rural ones did. Seen in this way there was no 'natural' link between the rural and Conservatism, rather Labour in some way failed to address the countryside in such a way as to create a critical mass of voters.

The 'conflict' between these two sets of ideas forms the hub of this extremely important book. However this grossly oversimplifies what is a complex and subtle account. What Griffiths gives us is not only the first study of Labour in the rural areas which is based on detailed academic research but one which will shape the field for years to come.

The first section of the book consists of three fine chapters on what she calls 'political landscapes'. These look essentially at the labour movement's own sense of their history of the countryside. Beginning from the notion of 'dispossession' – that the land was 'stolen from the people' – she moves through a discussion of the idea of the rural voter to a sustained account of the rural idyll and Labour. This is not simply an introduction; rather it is a nuanced, intellectual history, of the shaping of the inter-war labour movement and Labour Party. There then follows a section on the rural labour movement looking at the national campaigns in the rural areas, at rural Labour parties and finally at trades unionism. The final section looks at the development of Labour policy on agriculture and rural areas.

At one level, as Griffiths says, the narrative is one of minor success and even progress. By 1935–9 the Labour

Party had had some real successes in rural areas. For example there were practically no rural constituencies without a Divisional Labour party, in stark contrast to 1918. By 1939 it had nearly doubled its number of rural seats, although it still held less than 20. More striking still, its share of the vote had increased significantly. In a similar way Labour policy towards rural areas although still based around land nationalisation and a living wage in agriculture, had moved, albeit pragmatically, to a real policy for the whole of agriculture and the countryside. As she writes in the conclusion these changes and the work taken to achieve them were not simply about the countryside but 'about establishing a presence across the country as whole ... They helped to bolster Labour's aspirations to be a mature political party, which represented more than sectional interests ...' (p.339) nor should we, she reminds us, forget the real achievements of Labour's brief periods of office. Indeed with hindsight they are of real importance. The 1924 government reinstated the Wages Board, and a national minimum wage, encouraged rural house building, but also introduced the sugar beet subsidy which many historians now see as a key element in the survival of many arable farms in the inter-war period. The 1929–31 government was responsible for the introduction of marketing schemes which are universally recognised as a central part of the 'recovery' of sections of agriculture in the 1930s, for the genesis of the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act, and the recognition of the need to support agricultural prices. Few inter-war Tory governments made such an impact on the countryside.

Yet this kind of narrative, as Griffiths says, is too simple. The 'national policy' for agriculture meant, by the mid 1930s at the latest, looking to the farmers for support, and to the 'defence' of agriculture by subsidy. This was an anathema to most rural trade unionists and many rank-and-file country members. I remember Jack Boddy, the Norfolk-born National Secretary of the NUAAW saying that Labour's 1947 Agriculture Act which made subsidies permanent was the real 'great betrayal' of the farm worker who got nothing from it. Nor was the progress simple. Griffiths documents carefully and with real understanding the huge difficulties involved in building and, above all maintaining Labour Party branches over large geographical areas and among a largely non-unionised workforce.

Above all she stresses the unevenness of the process, and here I will quote at length again from the conclusion.

For all the party's rhetoric about the importance of its new political battleground, there was no such thing as 'The Countryside' to be won over – no stereotypical

landscape, where a model electorate might respond to a magic formula. Instead, there were many distinctive economies and social geographies, where political traditions and contemporary priorities could produce varied political outcomes (p.330).

The whole book is testimony to this complexity – and is full of insight into region, tradition and, dare one say it, mere chance, all of which had a key part in Labour's success or failure between the wars. Two examples will serve. In many areas political Liberalism remained a real force. In the 1920s the Liberals always fielded over 300 candidates, many in rural seats. By 1931 there were 119 and in 1935 161. The presence of a Liberal candidate could work for or against Labour either splitting the radical or the conservative vote depending on local conditions. Also more two-way fights meant Labour had to move to a much broader base of support, rather than relying on a small, sectional group within a rural area, for example miners, to win at the margins.

That takes me to my second point – and one already touched on. Who were countrymen and women? Even in 1921 there were only 141 constituencies (less than a quarter) where more than 20 per cent of the population were employed in agriculture. Even in these areas Labour's appeal to the farm worker or even the small farmer was clearly missing huge numbers of voters. The party recognised that by the late 1930s with an appeal to the 'countryside' as a whole. How successful that was is impossible to determine. Although 1945 saw huge gains in the rural areas we cannot judge, without work like Griffiths' on the post-war period.

As I said earlier, this is a very important book. This is not only because it looks at Labour and agriculture, or is another study of inter-war policy, although it has both those elements. It is important because it presents a history of the politics of inter-war rural Britain in the context of economic, social and cultural change at both national and grass roots levels. It challenges a lot of assumptions and demands that we look at the other parties in the same way. It also cries out for somebody to look at 1945–51 to see what happened next.

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Europe and Elsewhere

ERIK THOEN and LEEN VAN MOLLE (eds), *Rural history in the North Sea area. An overview of recent research (middle ages – twentieth century)* (Brepols, CORN Publication Series 1, 2006). 320 pp. €60.

CORN, for readers unfamiliar with the acronym, is the Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area

research network, financed by the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research from 1995. No one who has been involved in CORN conferences will doubt the considerable contribution the network has made to establishing connections between scholars working in similar fields but within their own national communities. Many of its meetings have been given permanent form by earlier volumes in this series, and with this volume Erik Thoen, the network's mastermind, and Leen van Molle put us further in their debt.

This is the first of the CORN series by number but at least the eighth to appear. It is based on the papers given at one of the earliest CORN conferences but revised in 2004–5 so that they offer an up-to-date and indispensable account of the historiographies of the contributing nations. That said, readers should be warned that there are some important omissions. Most regrettably there is no account of French rural history after 1800. The area adopted is very much the southern North Sea area so there are no essays describing either Scottish agrarian history or that of the Scandinavian countries. Moreover, Drendal takes the whole of France as his remit and Blickle – in one of the shorter chapters – the whole of Germany. The accounts are generally weak on post-1945 developments. This is, in effect, an account of national schools of history writing and an appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses. Some contributions drift towards being annotated bibliographies: others are more ruminative discussions of what has been done and still needs to be done. Most readers will value the book for the individual accounts, but reading the volume all the way through, one cannot but be impressed by just how different the national schools are, and how far we are from an agenda for *European* rural history.

A number of the authors make comments on the recent fortunes of their national schools. There is an element of common experience between England, France and North America (as described by Doug Hurt in a recent paper in the *Review*). The great enthusiasm for agricultural history in the 1960s has ebbed away. Drendal, for instance, comments that the 'Postan-Duby' thesis of economic change within a Malthusian context 'achieved a canonical status so widely accepted that, unlike in Britain, hardly any one discusses it any more' (p.97). Historians turned to the new questions posed by the "linguistic turn". Beaur speaks of the 'thirty glorious years' in French rural history, 1945–75, then 'the wind changed very quickly during the 1980s, rural history suffering a decline in proportion to its previous ascent ... It became fashionable to declare ... that there was nothing much to say any more, nothing to prove and no more discoveries to be made' (p.119). In some countries rural history has never really come to the forefront: this

point is made by the Belgian contributors and Blickle doubts whether there is enough work in nineteenth and twentieth-century German rural history for it to count as a sub-discipline. Overall though, the contributors end on positive notes, a number talking specifically of the reinvention of the discipline in the 1990s, in some cases with new journals or societies taking the place of the moribund. The volume's editors, in their opening chapter, date the turning point to the establishment of *Rural History* in 1990, although whether that that journal has ever achieved its initial aspirations (which are helpfully reprinted in a footnote) must be doubted. (It is odd judgement too given that the three authors writing on England, Campbell, Overton and Collins, are decidedly not *Rural History* people and that journal makes a weak showing in their bibliography.) My own feeling is that agricultural or rural history has probably gained by ceasing to be a tool for the explanation of the big events of history, whether the Industrial Revolution in England or the French Revolution, concentration on which served to focus historian's interests on limited periods and directed them towards certain conclusions.

If this volume often shows that rural history is no longer a *fashionable* discipline, it proves that it is a *mature* discipline. The danger, in a way, is that contained in one of the editor's judgements. Challenging Hurt's assessment that rural history is now 'practiced virtually everywhere [but] it lacks visibility and respect as an autonomous sub-discipline', Van Molle and Thoen point to the 'renaissance in agrarian and rural history within the context of food history and environmental history, which are both in full expansion internationally and comparatively' (p.22). I incline to the view that when a discipline is seen to inform everything, to be so internalized an element in historical thought that everyone is doing it, it has actually disappeared from the agenda. In many respects this has been the fate of economic history. Lots of people claim to be economic historians in some respect or another: fewer of them do anything which is recognisably economic history. There is an important argument to be made for maintaining agricultural or rural history as a distinct discipline. Moreover, it needs to hold its place in the undergraduate curriculum and here perhaps is our greatest present weakness. It is fashionable to speculate about what people thought, but not to discuss what they ate, where it came from and how it was produced, to describe their experience of work, but not the products they made. This is a general problem of the relative standing of the economic against the cultural. It is found as much in twentieth-century history as medieval, and in Geography as much as History. And, one has to say, that there is a deep-seated prejudice in the minds of

many colleagues in favour of the urban (modern, vital, weekday) over the rural (backward, stagnant, weekend). Of course, historians are deeply present-centred in that they take what seems interesting in their own times and investigate it in the past, and so it may be that the increased political interest in food supply may yet divert some into historical enquiry of the same issues. This book, and the CORN network as a whole, makes the case for rural history very thoroughly by mixing evidence of achievement and vitality with an agenda for the future.

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ERNST BRUCKMÜLLER, ERNST LANGTHALER and JOSEF REDL (eds), *Agrargeschichte schreiben. Traditionen und Innovationen im internationalen Vergleich* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag. Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes 2004). €29.90.

This volume announces the emergence of a new annual publication on rural history ('The yearbook of rural history') based in Austria but with editorial input from across central and southern Europe. The publication aims to promote new trends in the study of the agrarian world, especially 'actor-centred' models of rural behaviour and the influence of cultural history (the editors point to the British journal *Rural History* as an inspiration). Now that the series is some three volumes old (beginning in 2004) it is not yet clear that the themes of the new journal are really so far removed from the preoccupations of more 'traditional' publications such as *Agricultural History Review* or the *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* which have been by no means moribund in recent times. But the *Jahrbuch* is certainly to be welcomed.

With the founding of the series, it is entirely appropriate that this first volume is devoted to historiographical reflection on rural history in several European countries, setting out the traditions on which current agrarian history can both draw, and seek to supersede. This is perhaps a particularly germanophone preoccupation, as the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of historical writing tend to be more explicitly addressed in germanophone scholarship than elsewhere. In this and many other areas, a little international comparison draws out strongly the preoccupations of particular nations and regions. The chapters cover east-central Europe (or more accurately, work on regions traditionally seen as being dominated by the manorial and demesne economies called *Gutsherrschaft* in German) by Markus Cerman; the GDR by Arnd Bauernkämper; Austria by Ernst Langthaler; Germany by Robert von Friedeburg; Italy by Margareth Lazinger; the Alps by Jon Mathieu; Switzerland by Peter Moser; France receives two chapters

by Gérard Béaur and Nadine Vivier respectively; and Spain by Gloria Sanz Lafuente. Additional pieces examine the works of Austrian agrarian historians Karl Grünberg and Hermann Wopfner, and there are reviews of the CORN (Comparative history of the North Sea area) book series, and Michael Kearney's 1996 challenge to peasant studies.

While the editors are to be congratulated on pulling together such a diversity of perspective for both this volume, and the editorial oversight of the journal, it seems a shame that England and the Low Countries have not been included. Much scholarship in recent years has challenged the idea of the 'backwardness' of continental agriculture, including some work valorized in this volume. It would have been interesting to involve directly historians from those countries bordering the North Sea who in the CORN series have generally taken the view that this was indeed the core (perhaps a better acronym?) region of agricultural development during and after the early modern period. As it stands two new book series have now emerged in recent years that seem to reflect the pricing zones – one for the European north-west and the Baltic, and one for the central and southern regions of the continent – that were identified by Braudel and Spooner for the early modern period. The *longue durée* indeed! It is to be hoped in the future that more historians than Béaur and Vivier will seek provide a bridge between these zones.

Reading the contributions collectively, it is striking the degree to which the development of agrarian history in each country is perceived as being largely driven by developments within, and peculiar to, that same country. Apart from a few mentions of *Annales*, one would get the impression that cross-border co-operation among historians was only in its infancy. This is less true within the germanophone world itself, where personnel have moved easily between institutions in different countries and language presents no barrier. Yet only the discussion of Alpine historiography by Jon Mathieu brings international comparison in any depth, as part of an argument that the complex linguistic, environmental and political boundaries of this mountain region have both necessitated and facilitated such comparison.

Many of the authors point to specific domestic political constellations as being critical in providing impetus to important phases in conceptualizing national agrarian history. These range from the late nineteenth-century debates over labour-shedding and agrarian crisis in Germany, classically interpreted by the 'Historical School' of national economy around Theodor Knapp; to the resurgence of Marxism in post-war Italy and the response to the land reform of 1950; or debates around agricultural reform in Switzerland in the mid-1980s. In

some cases the influence of these phases has proven enduring, especially the inheritance from late nineteenth-century reformers, who saw agricultural progress as a socio-political question linked to the behaviour of the *Junker* landowning class and state protectionism, that in turn promoted the idea that a dominant legal and political regime, the *Agrarverfassung*, determined agrarian change (or the lack of it). German agrarian history has given a prominent position to the legal status of peasants and land, and social structural analysis, ever since. Yet the balance of themes within germanophone work also represents a particular definition of 'agrarian history' that has been more broadly conceived than in Britain. If social historical themes such as histories of legal status, the village commune, and peasant revolt have predominated over economic concerns, it seems incorrect to claim, as Robert von Friedeburg does in this volume, that agricultural history has been neglected compared to England. From this reviewer's point of view (writing from England, but having conducted research in Germany), this divergence reflects the way sub-disciplines have been categorized rather than actual research.

Yet for all this particularism, there are shared developments that emerge from these texts. The nineteenth-century juridical training of historians across Europe generated a strong preoccupation with tenurial and legal relations as the bedrock of agricultural history. This combined with a view of the peasantry that saw it as fundamentally antithetical to modernity, often linking tenurial and legal forms to rural ethnography. Across a range of countries the rapid dissolution of the old rural world in the early decades of the twentieth century inspired a strong political and historical interest in agrarian studies, which from the 1930s tapped into new serial and quantitative techniques of study epitomized in the work of Labrousse or Abel. By the 1970s, however, dissatisfaction was emerging with sociological models of rural society and regional studies that did not seem to be advancing the discipline. The central economic preoccupation with 'progressive' farming on the English model superseding peasant and feudal inertia began to look increasingly unsatisfactory, in underplaying the capacity to innovate of 'traditional' agriculture, the experience of social differentiation (within and between households) and rural industrialization, and giving insufficient attention to individual choices. By the 1980s, agrarian history was stagnant and unfashionable, a decline particularly precipitate in France, but has recovered from the early 1990s. Multiple new foci have emerged: gender studies, 'alternative agriculture', ecological approaches to modelling rural change, and especially anthropologically-influenced approaches that examine the farmer

as innovator and actor, and the micro-politics of rural communities.

The chapters thus leave many questions unanswered. Did the international exchange of ideas among historians have more influence than is credited here? Or did agricultural history respond to common changes in the economy, society, and intellectual fashion that were exogenous to agricultural history itself? A clearly divergent region is Spain, where the 1980s saw the rise of agrarian history to one of the most prominent themes in history. This anomaly is not addressed, though it seems hard to divorce it from a flourishing of interest in the dynamics of rural society after the Franco era, in a state where the old regime and a large agricultural sector persisted to a very late date.

The volume gives a broad if uneven view of historic and current developments in agrarian history. It is unlikely that anglophone readers will go to a book published in German for a digest of recent developments in Italian, Spanish or French agricultural history (although they are all fine essays). Ernst Langthaler's discussion of Austrian agrarian history and Peter Moser's of Switzerland are particularly worth visiting, however, both indicating how the myth of the soil-bound and virtuous peasant influenced agrarian history throughout the twentieth century. By exploring the paradox of a 'peasant' and rural political discourse purveyed by a state that ruthlessly pursued industrialization both generally and within the agricultural sector, Moser offers a particularly nuanced exposition of recent Swiss work, including his own; and may provide some comparative insights for other countries.

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CORINNE BECK, RENAUD BENARROUS, JEAN-MICHEL DEREX and ALAIN GALLICÉ (eds), *Les zones humides européennes: espaces productifs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Estuarium, 2007). 514 pp., 11 figs, 12 tables, 43 maps, 17 illus. €30.

When I was an undergraduate at University College London in the early 1960s, Professor H. C. Darby stressed the importance of marshland drainage as a contributory process in making the English landscape. He placed particular emphasis on the drainage of the Fens whose 'agricultural improvement' from the seventeenth century onwards he had investigated during the 1930s. After exposure to British examples, we learned about marshland drainage in France, the Netherlands, Germany and Russia, adopting the same perspective of 'improvement' and paying little attention to the needs of local people whose livelihoods linked to fishing, fowling and grazing were destroyed in the name of progress.

Now, problematic marshes have been renamed 'wetlands' whose resources are valued for nature conservation and tourism. As Jean-Michel Derex remarks in the present volume: 'Today, wilderness has become desirable' (p.15). In addition, researchers insist on incorporating palaeological evidence rather than relying on the archival record and surviving landscape features. The thirty papers contained in *Les zones humides* provide a splendid example of interdisciplinary progress and demonstrate how the range of research on wetlands has expanded in recent decades. They were presented at the colloquium organized by the Groupe d'histoire des zones humides and held at Le Blanc (on the margins of the Brenne wetland) in October 2005. Almost all focus on French examples, with a handful considering case studies in Belgium, Spain and northern Italy.

Wetlands as contested spaces form the key theme underlying the first cluster of essays that explore environments as diverse as Flanders, Burgundy and the valley of the Loire. Powerful landowners and monastic houses managed, indeed sometimes created, wetlands in medieval times to implant fishponds and damp pastures, sometimes sweeping away peasant landholdings and erasing traces on previously occupied landscapes. Townsfolk valued the fish, meat and firewood that wetlands provided and struggled with local farmers over their control. A second conflict revolved around the challenge of producing more cereals to feed hungry mouths that could be met by marshland drainage in the Marais Poitevin, Bas-Languedoc and countless other pays. Following the Revolution of 1789, wetlands that survived repeated attempts at 'improvement' were opened to hunting by the rural poor, but, after half a century, legislation was introduced to control the ensuing free-for-all by defining 'open seasons'. This issue remains hotly contested to the present day.

A multiplicity of source materials – palaeological, archaeological and archival – serves to reveal the fluctuating fortunes of French wetlands from the Camargue and the Brière to the coastal marshes of Brittany and Normandy. Not surprisingly, pride of place is given to the environmental history of the Grande Brenne with two lengthy contributions employing palaeological techniques to complement scant written records in order to trace how landowners managed natural wetlands and created more extensive fishponds in medieval times. The reappraisal of wetlands as valued environments to be protected in the name of nature conservation or as an expression of 'green tourism' forms the guiding theme for the final cluster of examples, extending from coastal lagoons on the Mediterranean, through the internal wetlands of the Sologne, Brenne, Bresse, Champagne humide and Armagnac, to damp valleys in the uplands of the Massif

Central where abandoned millponds now form foci for nature reserves. As in the past, the introduction of new uses for wetlands does not pass without opposition, as farmers contest the precise definition of recreational areas, huntsmen challenge controls on their traditional activity, and locals demonstrate about the impact of EU directives for environmental protection. This attractively produced volume amply demonstrates how research on the environmental history and historical geography of French wetlands has moved beyond the stories being recounted almost half a century ago.

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PHILIPPE MADELINE and JEAN-MARC MORICEAU (eds), *Acteurs et espaces de l'élevage (XVIIe–XXIe siècle)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006). 328 pp., 25 figs, 16 tables, 10 maps. €32.

This volume is the ninth to appear in the *Bibliothèque d'Histoire Rurale* series of the *Association d'Histoire des Sociétés Rurales* and edited by Jean-Marc Moriceau of the University of Caen. Working with his geographer colleague, Philippe Madeline, Professor Moriceau has drawn together texts arising from a number of seminar presentations at the *Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines (Pôle Rural)* during 2003–2004 and the proceedings of a small conference held at Saint-Christophe-en-Brionnais in October 2004. The result is a fascinating collection of twenty papers by historians, geographers and other social scientists who examine the development of livestock husbandry in various regions of France (especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and highlight changes and challenges arising during the past quarter century. The editors provide a general introduction to the book plus an excellent bibliography of publications on livestock husbandry in France, with particular emphasis on cattle rearing. Overview articles, source materials, specialist journals and the great regional monographs by historians and geographers are listed to assist further study.

The first cluster of five papers includes a thorough discussion of the notion of agricultural specialisation by Annie Antoine who emphasises the importance of improved communications and growing urban demands for meat and milk toward the end of the *ancien régime* and throughout the nineteenth century, especially following the construction of the railway network. Reading this paper reminded me of the nineteenth-century *cartes gastronomiques* that placed sketches of dairy cows, hens, vines and other products on the appropriate section of the maps of France. Maps and diagrams are found in abundance in most chapters of *Acteurs et espaces* but are curiously absent from Antoine's overview. In

the next chapter I was reminded of another form of nineteenth-century iconography that displayed differing cattle breeds. Bernard Denis outlines how important efforts were made to enhance cattle breeding from the 1880s onwards and how the spatial distribution of cattle breeds changed substantially over the subsequent hundred years. Bertrand Vissac picks up this aspect of the changing agricultural geography of France in a later chapter.

Methods of research are explored by geographer Armand Frémont who presents an account of his research itinerary that began in the 1950s in the Pays de Caux and expanded into a major doctoral thesis on livestock rearing across the whole of Normandy. Frémont stresses his debt to earlier geographers and to his doctoral *patrons*, as well as discussing the strengths and weaknesses of using official agricultural statistics and undertaking interviews in the field. His doctorate summarized the historical evolution of livestock farming in the province, placed animal husbandry into the context of Norman society, and highlighted its spatial variations across a broad stretch of country from the Cotentin peninsula to the Pays de Bray. Finally, Frémont reveals how livestock farming has declined over the past quarter century and, widening his gaze, identifies three types of countryside in Normandy: areas where commuting to urban employment is significant; those where modernised agriculture is vibrant; and others where rural depopulation and decline of local services continue apace.

The second part of the book focuses on a dozen case studies that emphasize the diversity of livestock husbandry in France. Olivier Fanica demonstrates the existence of urban cow keeping in and around Paris during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and reveals how this phenomenon disappeared as long-distance milk supplies were brought by rail. Bernard Garnier shifts the focus from milk to meat, analysing the movements of cattle 'on the hoof' to the slaughterhouses and market halls of the capital. Cheese making enters the discussion in Eric Bourdessoule's account of pastoral life on the high pastures of the Cantal and in Jacques Rémy's study of livestock rearing in the Alpine Tarentaise. Very different environments are introduced by François Spindler, who shows how animal husbandry was once important on the rich lowland of Alsace (but has declined massively since 1970), and by Fabrice Poncet, who analyses the impact of dairy specialization around Isigny and in other parts of western Normandy. Eugène Calvez reveals the dramatic impact of food-processing corporations on the structure and organisation of dairying in western France, Michaël Bermond summarizes changes in farm

structure and production between 1970 and 2000 with the help of some fine coloured maps derived from detailed statistical analysis. The final cluster of papers moves to the Roannais-Brionnais area of central-eastern France, showing how cattle rearing became increasingly important during the nineteenth century, land-use patterns changed from mixed farming to permanent grass, and local markets coordinated the dispatch of cattle to other areas for fattening and to Lyons and Paris for slaughter and distribution to butchers' shops. Jean-Paul Diry draws this attractive volume to a close by sketching how *ruralité* has taken on new meanings in our own time with farming being just one of many activities to occur in the French countryside. His challenging overview makes a useful connection back to Frémont's ideas expressed earlier in the book. *Acteurs et espaces* provides further evidence of the vitality of rural research and communication at the University of Caen, and will be appreciated by those concerned with French agriculture – and the countryside more widely – past, present and future.

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ROSA CONGOST and JOSÉ MIGUEL LANA (eds),
Campos cerrados, debates abiertos. Análisis histórico y propiedad de la tierra en Europa (siglos XVI–XIX) (Pamplona: Universidad Pública de Navarra, 2007). 396 pp. €21.

There are two major themes to this edited volume: enclosure and the consolidation of exclusive property rights over the centuries, and the initiation of an open debate (minus any strong conclusions) on the relationship between property rights and social change in the countryside. The papers included are largely based on presentations made to the Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria (SEHA) at two seminars held in Girona and Pamplona in 2002 and 2004. Among the aims of the participants was to bring out the diversity of the enclosure process in Spain and, to a lesser extent, other European countries and to emphasise the persistence of common lands until much later than is often admitted by historians and social scientists. English-speaking readers seeking some flavour of this debate should consult Rosa Congost's excellent article 'Property rights and historical analysis. What rights? What history?', *Past and Present*, 181 (2003), pp. 73–106.

As Congost informs us in her introduction to this book, all of the contributors are agreed on the need to revise the dominant historical focus on property rights, seeing them not so much as social constructions but as legal products. The studies published here are grouped into three blocks: a) Property rights and their historical

significance, including contributions by Gérard Béaur on France and Guiliama Biagioli on central and northern Italy; b) Four case studies by Tine De Moor (Flanders), Jacinto Bonales (the Catalan Pyrenees), Fernando Esteve & Javier Hernando Ortego (Madrid), and Iñaki Iriarte and José Miguel Lana (Navarre), bringing out the complex relationship between communal property and the development of modern capitalism; c) Four studies on enclosure, consisting of an analysis of enclosure south of the Pyrenees as expressed in both the literature and legislation by Felipa Sánchez Salazar, followed by three case studies on Catalonia (Montserrat Pellicer) and Andalusia (Antonio Luis López Martínez and Juan Diego Pérez Cebada).

It is difficult to do justice to so many contributions in a brief review. Congost's seminal chapter is, in essence, a summary of her magisterial 2007 book, *Tierras, leyes, historia. Estudios sobre 'la gran obra de la propiedad'*, recently reviewed in the *Review*, in which she firmly rejects a 'linear view' of rural history as determined by changes in legal codes. For my part, I was much taken by Jesús Izquierdo's splendid chapter on late nineteenth-century attacks, not least from the great Aragonese polymath Joaquín Costa, on 'the excesses of liberalism' in the Spanish countryside combined with a rejection of private property as it was set out in Spain's civil code of 1889. As well as Costa, contemporary Spanish historians such as Rafael Altamira and sociologists like Gumersindo de Azcárate saw the *ancien régime* as 'a stage of complex conviviality between communal and private property'. While the old order is often viewed by scholars as a mere link in the long evolutionary chain towards a modernity dominated by private property, Izquierdo stresses that the peasantry in particular was profoundly interested in the survival of communal property. In their chapter on the 'moral economy' of the *ancien régime* in early modern Madrid, Esteve and Hernando Ortego emphasise the vitality of peasant communities along with their resistance to change within the communal regime. Iriarte and Lana nicely outline the state of the debate on public versus private property in Spain. Whereas in the 1980s most studies tended to focus on civil disentailing, the following decade witnessed a proliferation of studies on public property, including forests, which escaped privatisation. In their opinion, both lines of research have become far too compartmentalised.

With its detailed bibliography and providing much new data, this is one of the most interesting and stimulating collections of essays I've read on the agrarian history of modern Spain. Let's hope that it serves as a springboard for further research.

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ELVIS MALLORQUÍ (ed.), *Toponímia, paisatge i cultura. Els noms de lloc des de la lingüística, la geografia i la història* (Universitat de Girona, Documenta Universitaria, 2006). 183 pp., 26 figs. €17.31.

In this nicely produced and useful little book, based on short papers presented to a conference at the University of Girona in 2004, researchers with backgrounds in linguistics, geography, history and sociology, debate the importance of rural place names in Catalonia (north-east Spain) for the point of view of their own academic disciplines. As the historian Elvis Mallorquí points out in his tidily written introductory essay, toponymy, defined by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the place names of a country or district as a subject of study', can provide invaluable information for both amateur and professional investigators on the evolution of a particular locality over the centuries. In particular, considerable emphasis is placed on the original significance of names, on subsequent changes and, in a number of cases their disappearance. Some place names are fairly self-explanatory (for instance rocks, ravines or mountains), some descriptive (mills and monuments), whilst others make little or no apparent sense.

According to Ramon Amigó, the doyen of Catalan toponymists, it was not until the 1970s that studies of place names were first carried out in the Principality, mostly covering the south of the region, above all the wine growing area of the Priorat (Tarragona). While many of these accounts were based on archival research, others were derived from oral evidence including interviews with peasant farmers, shepherds, fishermen. Place names on the region's maps, he tells us, are often far from reliable. Even so, by Amigó's reckoning, such studies, published in a variety of sources, cover no more than ten per cent of Catalan municipalities: hence the urgent need for further research, not least in the under-researched province of Girona. In his own contribution, Mallorquí pays tribute to the English secondary school teacher John Field whose pioneering work *English Field-Names* (1972) demonstrated how men and women perceived a particular territory over time and how the latter supported a succession of social practices. Mallorquí then uses local place names, found in seigniorial ledgers (*capbreus*), in an attempt to reconstruct the Catalan landscape during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Such a source, he argues, provides much detailed information on such topics as crop types (e.g. beans), land use (meadows) or economic activity (mills). By consulting similar sources for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when viticulture took off in the Principality, he also shows how, at this stage, the names of cereals were frequently replaced by those of vines.

The study of rural place names south of the Pyrenees

is clearly in its infancy, and often takes the form of amateur enthusiasts compiling lengthy alphabetical lists. This valuable little pocket book, with its exhaustive bibliography, informative maps and excellent photographic illustrations may go some way to further the progress of a sadly neglected area of research.

JOSEPH HARRISON
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PETER J. ATKINS, PETER LUMMEL and DEREK J. ODDY (eds), *Food and the city in Europe since 1800* (Ashgate, 2007). xvi + 260 pp., 14 tables, 6 figs. £55.

For a collection of essays drawn from conference proceedings, this volume hangs together remarkably well. With the exception of only a few articles in the final sections, this book aptly traces practically all the important issues regarding food supply in the past two centuries in a fascinating range of European locales. We are taken to Berlin and Paris, London and Barcelona, Brussels and Bordeaux, Oslo and Prague. We are introduced to problems of supply and distribution, the battles over conflicting jurisdictions in food safety, arguments over nutritional theory, the replacement of small shops with supermarkets, the impact of exotic and immigrant food, and cultural issues of consumption. In a nutshell, this book traces everything that has gone wrong with food in the modern era, and why. Rather than an overarching theoretical summary of the history, this is a series of concise snapshots that bring into close focus the problems and processes that constitute the greatest transformation of the human diet since the Neolithic Revolution. The details are not always surprising, but they inform in a way that most food histories with their broad brushstrokes never manage to accomplish. Here are the results of meticulous research which will someday be used to paint a more complete picture of how we got into this mess in the first place.

Admittedly, the articles do not always depict a bleak picture. There are bright spots, just as there are some very good things about the way we eat today. Food is undoubtedly safer, we know more about nutrition, while famines are a thing of the past, at least in Europe. There are a wide range of affordable and interesting ingredients, good restaurants, and a thriving 'foodie' culture. But somehow, the problems, particularly those in the first half of the book still seem to confound us. We still suffer serious food scares and problems with adulteration. The public is still confused about what constitutes a health-promoting diet. Our food still travels great distances, and its price is still inflated mostly by superfluous handling, packaging, advertising, marketing and retailing. And of course there are still gross inequities in food accessibility, not merely among social classes within Europe, but

around the world. Many of these articles, unwittingly perhaps, provide a stern caveat for developing nations: learn from the mistakes of European cities. The book is entirely historical in scope, but its implications are timeless for the modern era.

It would be impossible to summarize the contents, but a few examples should illustrate the strengths of this collection. Peter Atkins discusses the structural and institutional differences in Paris and London after 1850 and how the two cities differed in managing their food supply. The role of the state in urban planning, the desire to allow free trade, and even differences between Covent Garden and English street vendors and Les Halles and fixed retail shops, explain how these two food cultures diverged. Corinna Treitel focuses on German physiologist Max Rubner to show how nutritional theory interacted with state policy in dealing with the urban poor. Peter Scholliers examines Belgian legislation in the great era of food fraud, detailing the actors' motivations, and how advanced chemical technologies changed the very definition of adulteration. Derek Oddy reveals the fascinating interplay among rival agencies in London dealing with analysis of food for safety, and how public demand for pure food influenced legislation. Alessandro Stanziani takes a similar look at Paris and the administrative problems of laboratories testing food clashing with other experts in assessing food quality with very different criteria. Vera Heirholzer shows how grass roots efforts to ensure food safety were co-opted by the government in late nineteenth-century Germany, a story which would be replayed many times in the next century right down to the present. The Dutch dairy industry and the impact of canned condensed milk is examined in an article by Adel den Hartog, again evoking *déjà vu* for readers who are accustomed to seeing products sold with explicit health claims while dangers are carefully left off labels. Jukka Gronow details the bizarre ideological inconsistencies in Soviet food culture, embracing both grim workers canteens and opulent department stores and restaurants for elite consumers. Peter Lummel's article on German supermarkets is a concise account of how and why food retail changed in the twentieth century, a process that of course is still under way. Final contributions detail foreign food in Amsterdam, immigrant cuisines in London, efforts at natural food reform beginning in the nineteenth century (which are certainly still in process, even though the definition of natural keeps shifting), plus another article by Virginie Amilien on how social classes in Oslo maintained distinction in culinary terms. The twentieth chapter by Isabelle Téchoueyres offers a fascinating discussion on the emergence of open air markets in Bordeaux, and their role as an elite or tourist leisure activity.

This collection provides not only some extremely interesting studies of the difficulties in feeding cities well, but a fascinating glimpse of the roots of problems with which we still grapple.

KEN ABALA
University of the Pacific

ROBERT DAVIES (ed.), *Letters from an American Farmer, Hector de Crèvecoeur* (Serendipity, 2006). xii + 85 pp. £7.95.

This volume contains a series of extracts from a minor classic of eighteenth-century American literature. Originally published in England in 1782, the *Letters* were a much larger, more amorphous work, ostensibly describing rural life in Pennsylvania in the preceding decade, through the eyes of an 'American farmer'. They covered a wide range of topics, from descriptions of the realities of mixed farming in the middle colonies, the home-spun rural economy, prospects for new settlers, the flora and fauna of the region, and some contrasting observations about other areas, such as Nantucket in the north, and Charleston in the south.

However, while these were based largely on the author's experiences, there was more literary artifice in de Crèvecoeur's account than first meets the eye, as the editor's very helpful introduction makes clear. For a start, he was hardly the typical 'American farmer', in whose name he wrote. His name was Michel-Guillaume St Jean de Crèvecoeur. He had spent a year with English relatives in Wiltshire learning English, before leaving for the French army in Canada in 1755. There he fought against the British, until he was wounded in 1759, after which he made for New York. He took up tenant farming, became a British subject in 1765, and eventually bought land in southern New York colony, near the Pennsylvania border. He lived there, with his wife, family, and several slaves, until 1779. By this time, the War of Independence had forced him to choose sides, and he offered (tacit) support to the Loyalists. He returned to France in 1780, became an American citizen in 1783, and returned to New York as the French Consul-General until 1790, when he returned to France for good.

Similarly, while his vivid, direct descriptions of rural life were undoubtedly based on his own experience, they also conform to contemporary literary genres. The letters privileged bucolic American 'self-reliance', over corrupting, metropolitan consumption and dissipation. They epitomize 'Enlightenment' attitudes to man as the arbiter and improver of nature. They idealize the home-making wife, the 'noble savage' and contrast the docile subordination of the black slave in the northern colonies, with the cruelties of the southern 'slave' colonies. In this respect, it is easy to understand why no less a

commentator than George Washington described de Crèvecoeur's work as 'highly coloured'.

So, these letters refract the world through a series of preconceptions and contrivances. However, this does not necessarily make them any more or less reliable than, say, de Crèvecoeur's contemporary Arthur Young. Instead, they are read best as an introduction to life in what Tony Wrigley has termed the 'organic economy', where consumption was tied directly to production, and in which the conservation of materials was more important than the minimization of effort. This world is depicted to greatest effect in chapter III, 'Food and drink', where de Crèvecoeur sums up the colonial subsistence economy by observing that 'the philosopher's stone of an American farmer is to do everything within his own family, to trouble his neighbours as little as possible, and to abstain from buying European commodities', and chapter V, 'Winter', in which this self-reliance is tested. His description of the austere, whaling community of Nantucket is also fascinating, not least for his stray comment that, 'a singular custom prevails here among the women ... of taking a dose of opium every morning'!

As the editor notes, de Crèvecoeur's writing is most powerful when it describes the simple routines and happenings of daily life, rather than in grappling with contemporary philosophical or political generalities. It may therefore be of interest to readers of the *Review*, both as a contrast to the more familiar English discourses of agrarian improvement in this era, and as an engaging illustration of the waste-not, want-not realities of farming on the American frontier.

HENRY FRENCH
University of Exeter

LIN FOXHALL, *Olive Cultivation in Ancient Greece. Seeking the ancient economy* (OUP, 2007). xvii + 294 pp., 8 tables, 66 figs. £65.

It is a commonplace that the olive was one of the pillars of Mediterranean agriculture, one part of a celebrated triad with cereals and the grapevine. Yet it is surprising how little serious scholarship exists in English on the economic and social history of this remarkable tree. Now at last we have a detailed and up-to-date account of the olive in the ancient Greek world, pulling together the threads of 30 years of scholarly research in which Foxhall has been a world leader. This book is a real gem and a rare delight to read. It surely will be hailed an instant classic and is a fine example of what all academics should strive for – being beautifully written, clearly structured, well illustrated and cogently argued.

The book is based on a series of key themes that allow the reader to understand the botanical characteristics of the plant, its place in the Mediterranean farming calendar,

its economic and social significance in the Greek world and some of the fundamental differences between that world and the Roman empire that succeeded it (when the nature and scale of olive cultivation and trade seems to have changed considerably). Readers of the *Review* will find the introductory chapter on the nature of the olive and chapters 5 and 6 on cultivating the olive and processing its fruit of particular interest. The argument is liberally peppered with fascinating facts and examples from the ancient texts, archaeological discoveries and modern ethnographic observations of traditional practices. In chapter 7 Foxhall explores the evidence of arboriculture more broadly in ornamental gardens in Greece, debunking a commonly held view that the Greeks did not go in for pleasure gardens. Here she gathers in textual and iconographic data to supplement a comparatively meagre archaeological record of excavated garden features.

There is also some excellent discussion about the relative level of economic sophistication of Greek farming economies and particular emphasis on the centrality of households in Greek productive industry (chapters 2–4 and 8). Domestic production and domestic consumption of olive oil was far more prevalent than large-scale surpluses passing out of factory-like pressing facilities and on to long-range trading networks (as seems to have evolved in some regions in Roman times). Indeed, I particularly liked the way Foxhall has made this a book about the ancient economy in general through the careful exploration of so many different aspects of the olive in Greek society. This case study of the olive can be seen in the end as a characterization of the economy overall. A key conclusion of the book is that to understand the true importance of the olive we must first grasp the closeness of fit of the olive with both the cultural and the agricultural spheres of Greek society. Foxhall makes an unanswerable case for the integration of study of Greek farming with a profound examination of social structure and social context of economic activity. The products and practices of farming simply cannot be studied in isolation. Many decisions about what and how to cultivate, what products to produce and how to use and dispose of them were founded on social or cultural desiderata, not market-driven economic motivations.

This is an outstanding and transcendent piece of research. It is also a fascinating work to read and engage with. It is going to be very influential in the fields of ancient history and archaeology, at which it is primarily aimed, but it will also find a receptive and enthusiastic readership beyond those core constituencies.

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Conference Report

The Society's Winter Conference, 2007

Approaches to the History of the Rural Landscape

by John Martin

An audience of more than fifty gathered at the Institute of Historical Research on a bright Saturday in December to listen to four entertaining and informative papers about the transformation of the rural landscape. First to go was Sam Turner whose paper on the Devon landscape was based on the database of historic landscape types which he had developed using GIS techniques, dividing the county into over 50,000 polygons. Using his own classification of landscape types – and in discussion he made important points about the problems of any standardised classification system for GIS use – he was able to map the whole of Devon. His major finding was that medieval strip fields systems had been widespread across Devon, covering some 40 per cent of the total area. Rough upland and woodland landscapes made up 17 per cent of the county, mainly in the north and west, while three per cent was composed of orchards, principally in the south and east. His database was then subjected to generalising software which, even after adjustment, derived regions that did not correlate to the Roberts landscape maps, or indeed to soil regions. Some landscapes showed that Bronze Age field systems remained important moulders of the landscape, while in the Tamar valley, modern mining activity was a dominant feature. Over 200 deserted medieval settlements had been noted. The biggest landscape change in Devon, as elsewhere, has been the modern destruction of field boundaries. The database is available online at www.devon.gov.uk/landscapes and Dr Turner referred readers to his book, *Ancient country. The historic character of rural Devon; a report on the Devon Historic Landscape Conservation project* published earlier in the year by the Devon Archaeological Society.

Following on from Dr Turner, Professor Tom Williamson (East Anglia) spoke on 'East Anglian meadows and water meadows, a long view'. Professor Williamson outlined the differences between meadows

which produced hay and grazing and water meadows which were irrigated by flooding in order to produce an early bite, enhance the hay crop and improve the quality of the sward. His illuminating talk analysed the long term increase in the areas of meadow land as well as explaining the reasons for marked regional variations in their incidence. His analysis stressed the many different forms of meadow management and showed that the most sophisticated types were evident in Wessex. Their popularity was explicable mainly in terms of the importance of livestock farming and other environmental considerations. He also provided a very pertinent critique of the debate about the woodland and Champion divide. His pleas for further research into an aspect of farming which has largely been ignored by conventional agricultural historians, who have concentrated primarily on the patterns of arable cropping, were persuasively made.

The afternoon sessions were launched by Professor Matthew Cragoe (Hertfordshire) and Dr Ian Waites (Lincoln) with their richly illustrated paper 'Perceptions of enclosure and the post-enclosure landscapes'. Professor Cragoe began by outlining the larger project which is funded under the AHRC landscapes initiative. Dr Waite then outlined how the landscape has been portrayed over the centuries and how the prevailing landscape genre had shaped the way we look at it. Based on a range of contemporary drawings, the paper examined a number of early attempts to portray the open landscape of the pre-enclosure era. Dealing initially with the early form of landscape portrayals in the first half of the eighteenth century, the 'prospect' view encompassed big images, where open fields were regarded as an integral and accepted part of the picture. As the tempo of agrarian change quickened, these were replaced by prints and drawings which focused more on the enclosed landscape, as well as on the need to record

what had been lost. By the early nineteenth century, artists had become more aware of the pre-enclosure tradition. In particular, Clare tended to idolise the pre-enclosure order. Agrarian changes, therefore, created a profound crisis and a deep sense of personal loss for artists of this genre. The paper illustrated that the loss of landscape was considerably more important than many of the early agricultural improvers had initially anticipated.

Finally, Professor David Jeremiah (Plymouth) gave his paper on 'Cars and the pleasures of the countryside: the weekend tour, rediscovery of the byways, popularising the beauty spots and the "See Britain First Campaigns"' provided an entertaining and well-illustrated tour of the changing role and impact of the motor car on the countryside. The paper explored the emergence of the car and showed how it had superseded the railway as the most important mode of transport. Attitudes were also influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and the notion of the countryside and heritage as a cultural commodity. These early developments had been influenced by the desire for a pre-industrial landscape that had escaped the mechanical revolution. It was in this matrix that the issue of the motor car had to be placed. Even prior to the infamous Red Flag Act of 1896, the car had been perceived by some as a threat to the countryside

as a result of rural rallies and roadside advertisements. Its impact was ubiquitous and penetrated into every corner and aspect of rural life. By 1900 every reputable rural hostelry had to cater for cars by providing garage services and petrol in two-gallon cans. Car ownership was initially the exclusive preserve of the upper classes, but with increasing affluence, it filtered down to the more wealthy artisan classes. This was amply illustrated by a number of pertinent newspaper advertisements demonstrating how motoring became a leisure activity in its own right. Increased mobility liberated people from the railway timetable, allowing resulting in a significant increase in the number of country houses touring individuals could visit. As well as transforming postal services, the provision of garages played a key role in reviving the flagging blacksmith trade. The motor car had also become an important symbol of national identity, a process aided by the development of new roads. This was also aided by Shell's role in promoting the 'See Britain First' campaign of 1925.

The conference concluded with thanks to Dr John Broad, who deputised for Dr Jane Whittle, for his hard work in organising another most successful conference. Delegates were reminded that that the 2008 conference will revert to its more normal slot on the first Saturday in December.

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Forthcoming Conferences

Spring Conference, 2009

The Society's spring conference 2009 will be held at the Sunley Management Centre, University of Northampton, from the 6–8 April. Speakers include Professor Richard Smith (University of Cambridge), Dr Ernst Langthaler (Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten, Austria), Dr Claire Griffiths (University of Sheffield), Dr Paul Warde (University of East Anglia), and Dr Briony McDonagh (University of Hertfordshire). Dr McDonagh and Professor Matthew Cragoe (University of Hertfordshire) will lead the field trip to examine landscape, enclosure and agriculture in Northamptonshire, and the new researchers session will include topics ranging from the medieval to the second world war.

Details of the conference and registration papers will be mailed to members of the Society in January 2009, when they will also be posted on the Web site. Research degree students in the field of rural and agrarian history may apply for a bursary that will cover the cost of the conference, but not travel expenses, and should make application to the secretary (j.broad@londonmet.ac.uk) giving reasons for the relevance of the conference, and providing a supporting letter from their supervisor.

The closing date will be 10 March 2009.

Rural History 2010: an international conference dedicated to rural economies and societies

Until now, there has never been an international forum dedicated to the study of rural history in all its forms. The British Agricultural History Society is aware of the diversity of work being undertaken in the field, sometimes in cognate disciplines such as gender or development studies or under the banner of rural sociology or environmental history, perhaps institutionally separated from the historical mainstream by being undertaken in social science faculties, agricultural colleges or NGOs. It is also keenly aware that the current difficulties in the world's agrarian economies – with the development of new markets, the sudden appearance of high prices, the spread of innovative and controversial technologies, the impact of land reform and the threat of long-term climatic change – may well draw renewed attention to the discipline. Within Europe, the post-productivist countryside may yet turn out to be an interlude rather than the final stage in rural development. Whilst we acknowledge the pioneering work of the European networks; CORN, for the Rural History of the North sea area – the COST-funded project Progressore, for the European Union; the Rural History Network embedded within the European Social Science History Conference and the Arbeitskreis für Agrargeschichte – all of which have developed European connections, the Society now wishes to develop, deepen and internationalize these contacts. We have therefore taken the initiative to convene the first international open meeting dedicated solely to rural history. This will take place in September 2010 at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK. We hope to receive sufficient support from the rural history community for the conference to run over three days with three or four parallel sessions.

This meeting will be open to all rural historians as well as those primarily interested in viewing contemporary conditions and likely future developments with a knowledge of the past. The conference does not accept that rural history has any single definition, nor does it admit any bounds, and the conference has no intellectual affiliation. It is open to those approaching rural history from any perspective, ranging from those of archaeology, anthropology and ethnography through rural geography, landscape studies and rural sociology to post-modern cultural approaches to the countryside. It will be equally concerned with the countryside as a place of production of foodstuffs as with the countryside as a place of consumption of leisure and the location of heritage and national memory. Papers will be welcomed on all periods from the prehistoric to the very modern; and there are no geographical limitations on the area

of study. Comparative discussions which deal with rural society as a whole will be especially welcome, together with accounts which seek parallels between present-day agrarian problems and the past.

It is intended that the conference should be the first in a series of biennial or triennial conferences and the Brighton conference will be the occasion when either a European rural history society or a continuation committee of some sort will be formed.

The timetable for the conference will be as follows:

Nominations for the scientific committee should be received from national and international societies, or individuals who wish to serve on the committee. The Society has nominated the editor of *Agricultural History Review*, Richard Hoyle, Professor of Rural History in the University of Reading, UK, as its chairman. It has also invited the chairmen of the three existing European networks, Professor Erik Thoen (University of Ghent), Dr Gerard Beaur (CNRS, Paris) and Dr Anton Schuurman (Wageningen) to join the committee ex-officio. In enlarging the committee, the Society is especially eager to receive nominations from outside north-western Europe and from those working in emerging or non-traditional fields of rural history. All national societies and communities are asked to send their nominations to the chair of the British Agricultural History Society, Dr Paul Brassley, with short cvs of their nominees, by 1 December 2008.

A call for papers will be circulated with the names of the scientific committee about Easter 2009. We invite proposals for two or three paper sessions or even linked sessions. In this event we require the names of the chairman and speakers, a short abstract of each paper (150–200 words) and a short cv of each participant including the chairman (150–200 words each). We intend to make provision on the conference Web site for potential session organizers to canvass for support from others interested in contributing to their area of expertise. Proposals may also be made for individual papers where, again, an abstract of 150–200 words and a short cv should be supplied.

The call for papers is expected to close on 1 December 2009, with a provisional programme announced in February or March 2010. The Society has established a conference committee, chaired by Dr Nicola Verdon of the University of Sussex, which will make the local arrangements. Accommodation will be provided at the University of Sussex, which is situated at Falmer, a few miles from Brighton. Brighton is a 30–40 minute train ride from Gatwick Airport and roughly 50 minutes from central London. Brighton is an attractive seaside town which, from the early nineteenth-century onwards, has had a rakish reputation. For those who prefer accommodation off-campus, there is plenty of choice in Brighton itself. For a list of university-approved guest houses and hotels, see www.sussex.ac.uk/about/hotels or see visitbrighton.com for further details. Falmer is also on the edge of the South Downs, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some delegates to the conference may therefore wish to extend their visit to a holiday and explore Brighton itself, the surrounding countryside and coast, or London.

A conference Web site is under construction and will be launched later in 2008. For the moment, expressions of interest or queries can be directed to Prof. Richard Hoyle, r.w.hoyle@reading.ac.uk, Dr Nicola Verdon, n.j.verdon@sussex.ac.uk, or the chairman of the Society, Dr Paul Brassley, p.brassley@plymouth.ac.uk.

Demesne and tithe: peasant agriculture in the late middle ages^{*}

by Ben Dodds

Abstract

The peasant sector of the agricultural economy is much less well documented than the seigneurial sector in the late middle ages. This paper is an attempt to use tithe data to shed light on cropping patterns outside manorial demesnes in six parishes in south-east England. Tithe receipts are compared with output from demesnes and the similarity of cropping in the two sectors is revealed. Peasant cultivators were clearly able to adopt intensive cropping regimes in response to various incentives like their seigneurial counterparts. Tithe data are found to be a problematic source since they reflect aggregate output levels. The impact of this difficulty on the conclusions is discussed and differences between large and small peasant holdings are suggested.

Somewhere in the plains of Castile La Mancha, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were resting with a group of goatherds after a long day's knight errantry. They passed around a wineskin, waiting for the return of a companion who had been sent to fetch provisions from a nearby village. When the boy arrived back, he came with a tale of love and loss, which he had heard from the villagers. The tragedy involved a young man named Chrysostom who had died for the love of a local beauty named Marcela. The villagers were particularly distressed by the death because Chrysostom had acquired a very useful skill. The bright son of a wealthy peasant family, he had been to university in Salamanca where he studied astrology. When he returned to the village, he was able to use his knowledge of the stars to predict grain yields, with good results for his family:

his father and his friends got very rich, because they believed him and did what he advised. He used to say: This year sow barley and not wheat, or: Now you can sow chick-peas and not barley, or: Next year there will be a full crop of olive-oil, and the three years following there won't be a drop.¹

^{*} I am grateful to Dr Neil Rushton for his work on the Westminster and Winchester tithe data used in this paper. Professors Richard Smith and Richard Britnell, as directors of the ESRC project out of which this paper arises, provided valuable encouragement, support and advice. Preliminary versions of this paper were read at the Ninth Anglo-American Seminar on the Medieval Economy and Society held at Lincoln in July 2007 and the Cambridge University Medieval Economic and Social History Seminar in October 2007. The participants made many useful comments.

¹ M. de Cervantes Saavedra, *The adventures of Don Quixote* (1950), p. 91.

This presents an example, albeit a fictitious one, of a seventeenth-century peasant family concerned to maximize the yields of one crop or another, from one year to the next.

The extent to which preindustrial cultivators were able to control yields is an important question for historians. The Malthusian model implies that the area under cultivation was the main determinant of output. However, observation of present-day 'traditional' agriculture reveals a range of techniques by which producers can raise yields per acre when required. One such example comes from northern Ethiopia where farmers plant a bean called the 'gebeto' six months before wheat and maize are sown. The bean tastes unpleasant and, although a few are used for medicinal purposes, the crop is left unharvested to dry and is then ploughed into the fields. The 'gebeto' crop has fertilizing effects on the soil and is reported by agronomists to increase yields considerably.²

Medieval agricultural historians have also observed the use of yield-raising techniques. In his recent book about decision-making on medieval manorial demesnes, for example, Stone pointed out that crop rotations were determined not 'by customary routine or by consultation with local astrologers' but rather by 'deliberate' and sensible decisions.³ In other words, like the Ethiopian farmers described above, medieval manorial demesne managers understood how different agricultural practices could be applied selectively to meet changing requirements.

One of the difficulties with studying medieval agricultural practices is that most of the evidence comes from the seigneurial sector which, even at the height of direct demesne management, probably produced only between one-fifth and one-third of total agricultural output.⁴ This raises the question of comparability between the seigneurial and peasant sectors. Stone and others have observed that those managing and working the manorial demesnes often cultivated their own holdings too, implying a common body of agricultural knowledge in the two sectors.⁵ However, awareness of techniques did not automatically mean that those techniques were put into practice. The requirements of many peasant cultivators were different from those of the managers of manorial demesnes, as were the resources at their disposal. It cannot be assumed that the practices of the demesne sector were also those of the peasant sector. To understand the response of medieval cultivators to incentives, therefore, an investigation is needed into the extent to which seigneurial and peasant farming differed.

The term 'peasant' is problematic in the context of late-medieval England because of cultivators' involvement in the market and the extent of their interests beyond the family and village.⁶ Most people to whom the term 'peasant' is applied were not subsistence farmers with fixed ancestral holdings, concerned only to supply their families. However, most did produce a substantial proportion of their own food and used significant quantities of family labour on their holdings. Following Ellis's definition, therefore, it is assumed here that the term 'peasant'

² The World Bank, Database of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices, <http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ikdb/detail.cfm?id=115> (viewed 2 July, 2008).

³ D. Stone, *Decision-making in medieval agriculture* (2005), p. 56.

⁴ B. M. S. Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture,*

1250-1450 (2000), p. 60.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1; D. Stone, 'Medieval farm management and technological mentalities: Hinderclay before the Black Death', *ECHR* 54 (2001), p. 634.

⁶ A. Macfarlane, *The origins of English individualism* (1978), pp. 165ff.

refers to people with only a partial dependence on markets for produce and labour.⁷ If used in this way, the term covers a wide range of types of cultivator, from the smallholder struggling to feed his family to the manager of a much larger holding producing a substantial surplus for the market. Care is taken in this study to distinguish between different types of peasant producer.

By comparison with the luxury of dozens of series of manorial accounts, evidence from the peasant sector is 'more fragmentary and indirect'.⁸ Tithe receipts are one of the few possible ways of assessing the farming of the peasantry. Tithe was a tax of approximately one-tenth, paid on all types of production and by all types of producer. The quantity of produce received as tithe provides an insight into the scale and character of peasant production.

Six sample parishes in south-eastern England were selected for study, on the basis of the quantities of surviving data from each and the distinct agricultural geographies represented (see Figure 1). They were appropriated to three different ecclesiastical organizations, a process which meant the monastic communities or bishop became the titular rectors of the parishes, collecting a substantial proportion of the tithe revenue, and employing vicars to look after the cure of souls. The tithes of Eastry, Monkton and Birchington in Kent belonged to the cathedral priory of Canterbury, those of Hambledon and East Meon in Hampshire to the bishops of Winchester and those of Feering in Essex to the abbey of Westminster. Advanced medieval bureaucracies, and institutional continuity since the middle ages, have meant that records of tithe income from these six parishes during the late middle ages survive with exceptional richness.⁹ Although tithe data survive from some of the series from as early as 1223 and as late as 1533, we selected a core period – from 1288 to 1412 – during which the survival of data from all six parishes is fairly consistent. The best documented parish is Hambledon, from which ninety sets of tithe data survive in the core period; the worst is Birchington with forty-six.

The extent to which tithe data from the sample parishes derive only from non-seigniorial cultivators is difficult to determine. All six parishes contained manorial demesnes that belonged to the tithe owners, i.e. Canterbury Cathedral Priory, the bishops of Winchester, and

⁷ F. Ellis, *Peasant economics: farm households and agrarian development* (1993), pp. 9–13. See also P. R. Schofield, *Peasant and community in medieval England, 1200–1500* (2003), pp. 6, 53, 79–81; B. Dodds, *Peasants and production in the medieval North-East: the evidence from tithes, 1270–1536* (2007), pp. 38–9.

⁸ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 2.

⁹ The rectory accounts from Eastry, Monkton and Birchington are found in the Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Canterbury Dean and Chapter archives [hereafter CCA DCc] and in the Lambeth Palace Library. I am grateful to Dr Michael Stansfield for letting me use his lists of the Canterbury manorial and rectory accounts. The rectory accounts from Hambledon and East Meon are found in the Winchester Pipe Rolls: Hampshire Record Office (hereafter HRO), 11M59/B1. Published samples are available in M. Page (ed.), *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1301–2* (Hampshire Rec. Ser.,

14, 1996), pp. 291–6, 303–4; id., *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1409–10* (Hampshire Rec. Ser., 16, 1999), pp. 273–81, 291–2. The Hambledon and East Meon demesne and tithe data were collected and tabulated by J. Z. Titow who made his research notes available: HRO, 97M97. A sample of these data has been checked by Dr Neil Rushton and myself and Titow's tabulations used for this paper. It should be noted that the catchment area from which East Meon tithes were collected changed over the course of the period, with tithes from certain parts of the parish being sold in some years. This means the East Meon data cannot be used to examine changes in the volume of production but can be expected to be representative of changes in the composition of output in the parish. The rectory accounts from Feering are found in the Westminster Abbey Muniments [hereafter WAM].

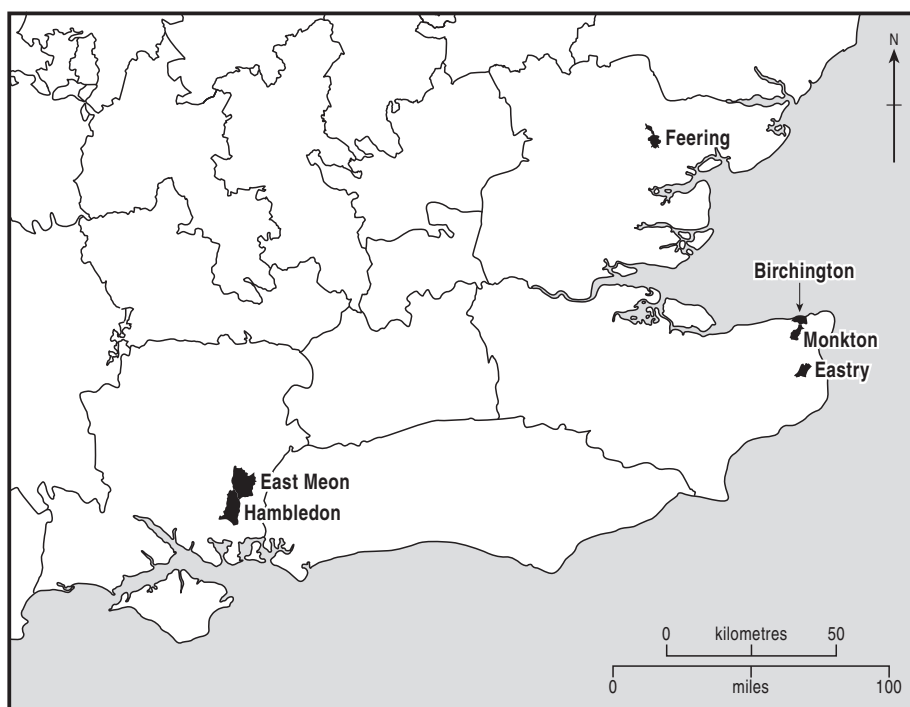


FIGURE 1. Six parishes in south-east England.

Source: The map was drawn by Mr Chris Orton, using data prepared by Professor Brian Roberts.

Westminster Abbey. No evidence has been discovered from the Canterbury Cathedral Priory and Westminster Abbey rectories to suggest tithe was levied on the monks' own demesnes. Tithe and manorial grain receipts tended to be recorded in separate accounts and there is no indication in the manorial accounts that tithe was deducted.¹⁰ In the case of Hambledon in Hampshire, it appears that tithe was paid on the bishop's manorial demesne. For this reason, one ninth of demesne produce has been deducted from tithe receipts, to give a more accurate indicator of non-seigneurial output. For reasons that are not clear, it appears that tithe was not collected from the bishop of Winchester's manorial demesne at East Meon.¹¹

Of course, parishes appropriated to ecclesiastical institutions often contained more than one manorial demesne. For example, in addition to their manorial demesnes from which separate accounts were rendered, the monks of Canterbury Cathedral Priory also received grain from glebe land in Eastry and Monkton. The glebe was a parcel of land attached to the rectory and originally intended to provide the sustenance of the incumbent priest. The usual practice was for the serjeants of the rectory to distinguish between grain from tithe, in the 'common grange',

¹⁰ For example, WAM 25603 records grain receipts from Feering manor for the year 1300-1 and WAM 25604 records tithe grain receipts from Feering rectory for the same period. Occasionally tithe receipts and demesne output were recorded as a single quantity (e.g. for

1366-7 in WAM 25687).

¹¹ J. Z. Titow, 'Field crops and their cultivation in Hampshire, 1200-1350', (unpublished paper deposited in HRO), pp. 18-20.

and glebe, in 'our own grange'.¹² It was also common for parishes to contain manorial demesnes not held by the titular rectors. Feering, for instance, contained at least three additional manors which can be traced back to the middle ages.¹³

It must be emphasized that the tithe data used here do not reflect total arable output in the parishes concerned. High value industrial crops, such as flax and hemp, are not likely to be represented in tithe returns from an appropriated parish since they were usually distinguished from the tithes of the major field crops, known as garb tithes, and collected as part of the small tithes by the vicar.¹⁴ Legumes were collected with the other garb tithes and sometimes constituted a significant proportion of total output. However, data for these crops are difficult to use because of the frequency with which they were fed unthreshed to livestock and no quantity for the amount collected entered in the account.¹⁵ Given the importance of legumes both as a foodstuff and in crop rotations, these receipts have been included in the tabulated data: all calculations were repeated only for cereals, to ensure that inaccurate data for legume production do not have a distorting effect on the interpretation of the results.

The six sample parishes contain land with three distinct agricultural geographies. Monkton, Birchington, and Eastry are situated on very rich agricultural land in north-east Kent. According to current agricultural land classifications, based on the physical characteristics of land and its agricultural potential, Birchington is situated on grade two and three land and Monkton and Eastry on grade one and two land. Such high classifications mean the land is suitable for a wide range of crops or for obtaining consistently high yields from certain high value crops. Although not as rich as the land in Monkton and Eastry, that in Feering is also fairly well suited to arable cultivation with classification at grades two and three. By contrast, Hambledon and East Meon are situated on poorer quality land, currently classified as grades three and four.¹⁶

Needless to say, it is not only the physical characteristics of the land that determine the types of crops grown and the intensiveness of production. Commercial factors are also important. The north-east Kent parishes were particularly well situated from this point of view. All three were around ten miles from a major centre of urban demand at Canterbury, less than 35 miles from Maidstone, and around 60 miles from London and adjacent boroughs. Ports were also accessible, including Sandwich, which was adjacent to Eastry, and Faversham, less than 20 miles away. The concentration of urban demand within reach of the Kentish parishes was exceptionally high: Mate has recently estimated that Canterbury, Maidstone, Sandwich and

¹² For example, in the Eastry rectory serjeant's account of 1286–7 (CCA DCc/Eastry 14) wheat entries were received 'from the wheat issue of the common grange by tally against William Sparke' and 'from our own grange by tally'.

¹³ P. Morant, *The history and antiquities of the county of Essex* (1768), pp. 170–3.

¹⁴ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1997), p. 1626. For example, when the vicarages of Eastry and Monkton in Kent were ordained in 1367, the vicars were granted various small tithes including flax, hemp, honey, apples and pears: W. F. Shaw, *Liber Estriae; or memorials of the royal*

ville and parish of Eastry, in the county of Kent (1870), p. 219.

¹⁵ E.g. in 1367–8 the Monkton accountant entered a nil receipt for vetch tithes because what was collected was of very poor quality and scarcely sufficient for fodder purposes: CCA DCc/Monkton 87. This entry implies that quantities of vetch were automatically used as fodder each year and not entered in the account of tithe receipts.

¹⁶ Agricultural Land Classifications may be found at <http://www.magic.gov.uk> and <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rds/publications/technical/alc.pdf> (viewed 2 July, 2008).

Faversham together had nearly 14,000 inhabitants in the 1520s.¹⁷ Faversham was an important coastal port through which London was supplied with grain.¹⁸ Hambledon and East Meon were also fairly well situated in terms of commercial potential. Winchester, a city of between 10,000 and 12,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the fourteenth century, was around 15 miles to the west and there were other market centres within the same radius including Southampton, Portsmouth, Bishop's Waltham, Meonstoke, New Alresford and Petersfield.¹⁹ Cultivators in Feering did not enjoy the proximity of so many marketing centres but there was considerable urban demand. Colchester, a town of between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants in 1300 and perhaps double that in 1400, lay fewer than nine miles to the north-east of Feering.²⁰ London and surrounding boroughs were approximately 45 miles to the south-west and it is known that grain from the parish was exported to outside the region.²¹

This paper contains a comparison between tithe receipts and output on manorial demesnes as a means of examining similarities and differences between peasant and seigneurial production. In all cases, the manorial demesnes from which data were used belonged to the titular rectors of the parishes. Data from the glebe were collected in addition to those from the manor at East Meon. In the case of Monkton in Kent, data were used from the glebe rather than from the larger manorial demesne because more data survive from the former. In the first section, broad similarities in tithe receipts and demesne output are considered and attributed largely to physical and commercial geography. In the second section, the extent to which the different restraints operating on peasant and seigneurial producers affected output from their holdings is examined. In the third section, the different consumption priorities in the two sectors are discussed. Finally the data are broken down into pre- and post-Black Death series for an examination of the effect of depopulation on output.

I

Table 1 shows that the composition of the tithe returns is broadly similar to the seigneurial output from the same areas. There is an apparently direct relationship between the proportion of oats in the harvest and the quality of the arable land in the parish. In Eastry and Monkton, where the arable land is classified grade one and two, oats represented on average 8 per cent of tithe output and 10 per cent of demesne output. In Birchington, where there is more grade three arable land, oats were a little more important, representing on average 15 per cent of tithe output. By contrast, in the Hampshire and Essex parishes, oats represented nearly one-third of total tithe output and over 40 per cent of demesne output. The relationship between the importance of oats in tithe returns and the quality of the arable land is indicated by similar fifteenth-century data from some of the less fertile areas of County Durham, where oats accounted for nearly half of

¹⁷ M. E. Mate, *Trade and economic developments, 1450–1550: the experience of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex* (2006), p. 239.

¹⁸ B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A medieval capital and its grain supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London*

region, c.1300 (1993), p. 76.

¹⁹ D. Keene, *Survey of medieval Winchester* (2 vols, 1985), I, pp. 366–68.

²⁰ R. H. Britnell, *Growth and decline in Colchester, 1300–1525* (1986), pp. 49, 159.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

TABLE 1. Composition of tithes collected and demesne harvests in Kent, Hampshire and Essex, 1288–1412 (per cent)

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes	
	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne
Eastry (Kent) ^a (tithe n=47, demesne n=33)	25	34	62	50	3	11	1	0	9	5
Monkton (Kent) ^{a, b} (tithe n=46, glebe n=36)	20	14	60	76	12	9	3	1	5	0
Birchington (Kent) (n=46)	10	-	64	-	15	-	3	-	8	-
Hambledon (Hampshire) (tithe n=90, demesne n=106)	33	21	33	41	30	35	1	0	3	3
East Meon (Hampshire) (tithe n=73, demesne n=107)	41	36	25	14	29	48	0	0	5	2
East Meon Church manor (Hampshire) (n=98)	-	37	-	16	-	46	-	0	-	1
Feering (Essex) (tithe n=60, demesne n=59)	54	52	4	3	30	37	3	1	9	7

Notes:

^a Manorial data from Kent do not always survive for the same years as the tithe data. All surviving data have been used but then the results tested using only years from which tithe and demesne data survive to ensure that the sample does not affect the interpretation of the results.

^b As explained in the text, the Monkton seigniorial data are taken from the glebe and not from the manorial demesne belonging to the monks with a serjeant rendering a separate account.

Sources: Eastry manor and rectory accounts, Monkton rectory accounts: CCA DCc; Lambeth Palace Library. I am grateful to Professor Bruce Campbell for letting me use data he collected from Eastry and Monkton manors. Hambledon manor and rectory accounts, East Meon manor and rectory accounts, East Meon Church manor accounts: Winchester Pipe Rolls, HRO, 11M59/B1. The Hambledon and East Meon manorial and tithe data were collected and tabulated by J. Z. Titow who made his research notes available: HRO, 97M97. Feering manor and rectory accounts: Westminster Abbey Muniments.

total production.²² Constraints on growing conditions are likely to explain the emphasis on oats production in the Hampshire parishes in particular since, as Campbell pointed out, oats were 'more tolerant of difficult growing conditions than any other crop'. Equally, it is possible that the proximity of urban centres may have meant oats were a profitable cash crop.²³

Soil type was partly responsible for the varied emphasis on wheat and barley. In the north-east Kent parishes, the lighter, sometimes chalky, soil is well suited to the cultivation of barley, which requires soil which is 'light, free, [and] open in texture'.²⁴ The contrast with Feering in Essex is most apparent. This area is characterized by heavier soils, clays and loams: these are better suited to wheat cultivation and do not produce good crops of barley.²⁵ Proportions of wheat and barley received as tithe in the Hampshire parishes are somewhere between the extremes represented by Kent and Essex. In some ways, it is surprising more barley was not harvested there, given the light chalky soils in this downland region.

Any patterns in legume output must be treated with caution given the problems with the data we have already mentioned. Nevertheless, it appears that legumes constituted a smaller proportion of the harvest in Hampshire. This may reflect the lower intensity of cultivation on less fertile soils but is, perhaps, more likely to be the result of the greater availability of pasture in a downland region, and therefore lower requirements for fodder crops.²⁶

The cultivation of rye was of little importance in the manors and parishes considered here but may have been encouraged by different environmental conditions elsewhere. The manor of Lydden, situated five miles east of Monkton and also belonging to the monks of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, provides a case in point. Although the soil is as fertile at Lydden as it is on the Kentish manors included in Table 1, rye and rye mixtures sometimes represented over one-third of total output there.²⁷ It appears that rye may have been preferred on this marshland manor because of its hardiness in cold and exposed conditions. Certainly, the ready accessibility of sizable urban markets must have meant that rye from Lydden was easy to sell.²⁸

Overall, patterns of output appear to have been similar on seigneurial and non-seigneurial land in the six parishes under consideration. Both tithe and manorial demesne output relate to Campbell's national classification of demesne cropping types although obviously the data used here relate to output rather than sown acreage, there being no surviving evidence of the sown acreages from which tithes were taken. Both before and after the Black Death, very intensive cropping regimes were put in place on a number of manorial demesnes in north-east Kent, including Eastry and perhaps also Monkton glebe: fallows were reduced and the nitrogenous properties of legumes were sometimes used to maximize wheat and especially barley production.²⁹ Likewise, what Campbell describes as 'three-course cropping of wheat and oats', with other crops playing only a minor role, prevailed on the clay soils of Essex both

²² Dodds, *Peasants and production*, p. 34.

²³ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 224–5.

²⁴ J. A. S. Watson and J. A. More, *Agriculture: the science and practice of British farming* (1945), p. 230.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 230.

²⁶ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 229.

²⁷ Lydden manor account 1291–2, CCA, DCc/Lydden

11.

²⁸ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 220; M. E. Mate, 'The occupation of the land: Kent and Sussex', in E. Miller (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, III, 1348–1500 (1991), p. 120.

²⁹ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 253, 278, 269–72, 286–8, 290.

before and after the Black Death.³⁰ The evidence suggests that the techniques were used equally on demesne and peasant land.

II

Despite the broad similarities observed in the composition of tithe receipts and demesne harvests in the three regions under consideration, there are also some important differences. The relatively greater importance of oats cultivation on most manorial demesnes than on tenant land requires closer examination. With the single exception of Monkton, oats represented a larger proportion of the demesne harvest than the tithe receipt in all cases shown in Table 1. Peasant cultivators appear to have grown more legumes than their seigneurial counterparts, suggesting some substitution of legumes for oats. Even taking this into account, fodder crops represented a smaller proportion of tithe receipts than demesne harvests.

This means that peasant farmers produced slightly higher proportions of more valuable cereals at the expense of oats than their seigneurial counterparts. Bailey observed the same greater emphasis on cash crops outside manorial demesnes in Suffolk parishes on the basis of surviving tithe receipt data.³¹ In the sample parishes considered here, the choice of wheat or barley depended partly on the region. In Kent, tenants and peasants appear to have grown less wheat and more barley than their seigneurial counterparts. In Hampshire, they grew approximately equally increased proportions of both wheat and barley. In Essex they grew more wheat and barley but with a considerably greater emphasis on wheat production. Environmental conditions obviously played a major part in this. As mentioned above, in Essex, maximization of barley production would have made little sense because the soil was ill-adapted to the crop.

Within these regional groupings, however, proportions varied from parish to parish, warning against simple explanations. In Hampshire, patterns of barley output varied between the two parishes and the three demesnes. Barley output on the two East Meon demesnes was much lower than on the Hambledon demesne, a difference which also applied, though to a lesser extent, to the tithe receipts. The difference between the two manorial demesnes could be explained by household supply factors but the fact that it is mirrored in the tithe receipts suggests something more may have been at stake. It may be that the character of the soil differed between the two parishes.

The only example in the sample where wheat and barley represented a more significant proportion of demesne than tithe output is Monkton. It may be that the small size of Monkton's glebe (see Table 7) explains this difference: Campbell observed that small demesnes tended to be cultivated more intensively than large ones since the land to labour ratio was lower.³² However, it is likely that consumption decisions were more important: there was no livestock operation on the glebe at Monkton, reducing the need for fodder crops.

In the light of some assumptions often made about peasant agriculture, the observation that high-value bread and brewing grains constituted a slightly higher proportion of tithe receipts

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 257, 262–3, 282, 285.

³¹ M. Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk: an economic and social*

history, 1200–1500 (2007), p. 77.

³² Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 71.

than demesne harvests is surprising. Titow assumed that peasant land would be inferior to that on the manorial demesne and yields would be lower.³³ On this basis, peasant cultivators would be likely to favour oats, which are better able to grow on poor soil than wheat and barley.³⁴ This comparison between tithe returns and manorial demesne output indicates, by contrast, that land outside the manorial demesne was of adequate quality to sustain more demanding cropping regimes than those adopted on the seigneurial land.

Titow also argued that peasants were less likely than lords to have been able to maintain their soil in good heart because they had less access to manure and other types of fertiliser.³⁵ Unfortunately there is little evidence concerning the means by which non-seigneurial producers in these parishes maintained the productivity of the soil sufficiently to sustain crops of wheat and barley. Livestock ratios are likely to have varied considerably from one region to the next. The Hampshire parishes of Hambledon and East Meon were situated in downland areas where there was land ill-suited to arable cultivation. This meant that tenants had access to grazing and sheep constituted an important part of the local economy.³⁶ It is likely that the densely populated parts of east Kent had considerably less available land for peasant livestock, an impression reinforced by Mate's evidence for the continued importance of arable farming in the region even after the Black Death and in the later fifteenth century.³⁷ The areas around Feering may have been more comparable with Kent than with southern Hampshire in terms of pasturing rights. Britnell commented on the irregularity of these rights in Essex and the existence of many villages where tenants had no rights over cultivated land.³⁸ As Stone has recently pointed out, shortage of manure from peasant livestock did not necessarily mean peasant land was inadequately manured. Even a small amount may have sufficed on peasant holdings, if used thoroughly and supplemented with other forms of manure, such as that supplied by poultry and household waste.³⁹ Another means by which productivity may have been maintained on peasant holdings is through the cultivation of nitrogenous legumes. The differences are small, and the data problematic, but it does appear that legumes constituted a more important part of tithe receipts than demesne output in all of the examples considered, with the exception of Hambledon.

Even accepting different levels of access to resources on manorial demesnes and non-seigneurial holdings, the intensiveness with which peasant producers could apply labour is likely to have been decisive in permitting the cultivation of higher-value, more demanding crops. It is probable that there was a lower ratio of land to labour on peasant holdings by comparison with manorial demesnes because of smaller holding sizes and the availability of family labour.

³³ J. Z. Titow, *English rural society, 1200–1350* (1969), pp. 80–1, 95.

³⁴ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 225, 260.

³⁵ Titow, *Rural society*, pp. 80–1, 95.

³⁶ J. N. Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement in the chalklands of Wiltshire and Hampshire from c.1200–c.1500', in M. Aston and C. Lewis (eds), *The medieval landscape of Wessex* (1994), p. 160; J. N. Hare, 'The Bishop and the Prior: demesne agriculture in medieval

Hampshire', *AgHR*, 54 (2006), pp. 194–6, 198–9; E. Miller, 'Occupation of the land: the southern counties', in Miller (ed.), *Agrarian History*, III, p. 144.

³⁷ Mate, 'Occupation of the land', p. 132.

³⁸ R. H. Britnell, 'Farming practice and techniques: eastern England', in Miller (ed.), *Agrarian History*, III, pp. 199–200.

³⁹ Stone, *Decision-making*, pp. 264–5.

III

So far the differences in the composition of demesne output and tithe receipts have been considered in relation to the resources available to different types of producer. Consumption priorities were also an important factor.

It is usually assumed that peasant producers consumed a large proportion of their output and therefore total output from their holdings should reflect their consumption patterns. In general terms, this appears to have been the case. In particular, barley, which features prominently in both demesne output and tithe receipts, was important in peasant diets. Although an inferior bread grain to wheat in terms of medieval dietary preference, barley offered the advantage of considerably higher yields per acre (Table 2).⁴⁰ However, peasant diet does not seem to be an obvious cause of differences between tithe receipts and demesne output. Indeed, oats were important in the diets of poorer peasants but feature less prominently in tithe receipts than demesne output, as shown in Table 1.

Clearly not all peasants produced solely for their own consumption: a proportion of output was sold. Commercialized output appears to be reflected in the tithe receipts. Aggregate tithe receipts from a parish were composed principally of output from the larger holdings. Even in an extreme situation where a village contained ten virgaters holding 40 acres each and 100 cottagers holding three acres each, nearly 60 per cent of sown acreage would be controlled by the ten virgaters. The likelihood is that the situation was rather less extreme in the parishes under consideration, meaning the larger tenants were responsible for an even larger proportion of total output. Lack of surviving rentals means it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of landholding patterns in these parishes but, in Hambledon and East Meon at least, a significant proportion of land transfers involved full virgates of forty acres.⁴¹ It is usually assumed that the larger the peasant holding, the smaller the proportion devoted to producing food for the peasant family and the larger the proportion devoted to cash crops.⁴² In other words, the composition of tithe receipts probably reflects the output of commercialized larger holdings: it is quite possible that the poorer quality grains featured more prominently in the diets of the poorest villagers than the tithe receipts suggest. For example, rye constituted a greater proportion of tithe returns than demesne output in all cases, except at East Meon where none was produced. Even though rye and mixtures constitute only between zero and 3 per cent of tithe output, these low proportions could hide the greater importance of rye production on the smaller peasant holdings.

However, it should not be taken for granted that arable production was most commercialized on the largest holdings. This may be illustrated by a consideration of the north-east Kent parishes, where barley represented nearly two-thirds of tithe receipts. Barley must have been a profitable cash crop for both seigneurial and non-seigneurial cultivators in

⁴⁰ D. J. Stone, 'The consumption of field crops in late medieval England', in C. M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson and T. Waldron (eds.), *Food in medieval England: diet and nutrition* (2006), pp. 17, 19.

⁴¹ I am grateful to Dr John Mullan for sharing the findings of his research with me and discussing its

implications for peasant landholding in East Meon and Hambledon.

⁴² J. Masschaele, *Peasants, merchants, and markets: inland trade in medieval England, 1150–1350* (1997), pp. 36–41.

this region. The land was exceptionally fertile and within reach of large urban and overseas markets, creating the ideal circumstances for commercial grain production. Such an intensive cropping regime could also be pursued in a region of flexible agrarian institutions; in a stricter three-field system, maximization of output of a single spring-sown crop would be more difficult.⁴³

Such heavy concentration on the production of barley outside the manorial demesnes is, nevertheless, surprising given the likely predominance of smaller holdings in the region. This was a densely populated and wealthy part of the country and the types of tenure in operation in Kent meant there had been more fragmentation of holdings in this region than in most others.⁴⁴ Dyer's work on peasant budgets has made it clear that it was very difficult for a family to subsist on holdings below a certain size: by the time deductions had been made for seed corn, tithe, and the payments of rents and taxes, very little was left.⁴⁵ Families with such tight budgets are likely to have consumed the cheapest grains, and yet rye, mixtures and oats represented total only 4–18 per cent of cereal output.

It is possible that barley appealed especially to those peasants with the smallest holdings in the Kentish parishes. Smallholders may have sold a very large proportion of their output and bought cheaper foodstuffs, such as rye and oats, for their own consumption. Apart from the natural suitability of the soil, barley, rather than wheat, was a sensible choice in agronomic terms too. Although barley prices were lower, quarter for quarter, than wheat prices, yields per acre were higher. The speculative analysis in Table 2 deploys Campbell's maximum yield figures, gathered from counties in southern and eastern England, to estimate the cash value of a year's output from five sown acres. It must be emphasized that the yields used for these calculations are the highest recorded in Campbell's sample, and have been chosen on the basis that peasant smallholders had strong incentives to maximize output. The difference in income from wheat and barley is lower if mean yield figures are used.⁴⁶ It is possible that lack of access to manure did indeed mean that peasant yields were lower than those on the manorial demesne. A relatively low requirement for manure, however, may be another reason why peasant farmers in Kent chose barley as a major cash crop: too much nitrogen can make a barley crop unsuitable for brewing.⁴⁷

Even if the difference between the cash value of five acres of wheat and five acres of barley was not as great as suggested in Table 2, the use of barley for brewing meant producers could further increase its sale value. Campbell has found examples of instances where a bushel of malted barley sold for 95 per cent of the price of a bushel of wheat. Supposing the barley and wheat prices used in Table 2 were adjusted along these lines, the difference in value between the two crops would be even greater. Needless to say, malting the barley would require additional labour and expense. However, in a high-pressure economy in which producers were struggling to make ends meet, such effort would be justified. There is plenty of Kentish evidence for the

⁴³ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 274.

⁴⁴ B. M. S. Campbell and K. Bartley, *England on the eve of the Black Death: an atlas of lay lordship, land and wealth, 1300–49* (2005), pp. 314–49; M. E. Mate, 'Tenant farming and tenant farmers: Kent and Sussex', in Miller

(ed.), *Agrarian History*, III, p. 681.

⁴⁵ C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later Middle Ages: social change in England, c.1200–1520* (1998), pp. 117–8.

⁴⁶ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 322–3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

TABLE 2. Estimating the value of land sown with wheat and barley

	<i>Five acres sown with wheat</i>	<i>Five acres sown with barley</i>
Maximum yield per acre	2qr. 2.6bz.	4qr. 4bz.
Output	11qr. 5bz.	22qr. 4bz.
Price per quarter	6s. 4d.	4s. 7½d.
Value of output	£3 13s. 7d.	£5 4s. ½d.

Note: The table shows that the value of the barley output is 1.41 times the value of the wheat output.

Sources: B. M. S. Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture* (2000), pp. 332–3; G. Clark, 'The price history of English agriculture, 1209–1914', *Research in Economic History*, 22 (2004), pp. 41–125.

presence of maltsters in the villages, operating on both a large and small scale, showing that some producers probably did follow this approach.⁴⁸

Overall, it is apparent that the relationship between production and consumption is not a simple one. The greater significance of barley, rye and mixtures in tithe returns may reflect peasant diets. However, it is possible that the tithe receipts conceal the greater significance of cheaper grains on the smallest peasant holdings. Equally, it is also possible that those peasants with the smallest holdings were some of the most commercialized, cultivating barley as a cash crop, malting it to obtain a higher sale value, and then obtaining cheaper foodstuffs for consumption.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that arable crops were not, of course, consumed only by humans. Legumes and oats, in particular, were widely used as fodder crops. Legumes constituted a larger proportion of tithe returns than demesne output in all five examples in Table 1, a factor which may be related to the role of leguminous crops in maintaining soil fertility, as mentioned above. It is also possible that peasant producers required more fodder crops to feed livestock because of limited access to pasture. Equally, the managers of manorial demesnes needed oats both for horses employed in ploughing and carting on the demesne and for horses used in the lord's household. The latter may have been particularly significant in the demesnes considered here since all except Feering were within fairly easy reach of the lords' households.

However, it is likely that there were more horses on peasant holdings than on the manorial demesnes, especially on the holdings of less substantial tenants. This is due to their greater versatility and the availability of older animals at cheap prices because they had no value for food at slaughter. In the light of this evidence, the fact that oats represented a smaller proportion of tithe receipts than manorial demesne output requires consideration. This is particularly striking in Kent, an area in which the evidence from inventories suggests horses were heavily used on peasant holdings, yet where tithe receipts from oats were low. It is possible that this apparent anomaly is explained by the differing workloads of horses on peasant and seigniorial holdings. Langdon pointed out the impact of this on feed requirements. The smaller size of peasant holdings meant peasant horses did less ploughing than their demesne counterparts. For much of the year, when the peasant horses were not required to undertake very heavy work,

⁴⁸ Mate, 'Occupation of the land', pp. 132, 134.

they could be fed on cheaper products than oats such as hay, grass and vetches.⁴⁹ In this way, even in areas where horses were heavily used by peasants with small holdings, the production of oats as a fodder crop did not have to be prioritized.

IV

The Black Death raged in Hampshire, Kent, and Essex from late 1348 to mid-1349, meaning the 1349 harvest was the first affected.⁵⁰ In Tables 3 and 4 the data have been divided into two separate series, before and after 1349, in order to examine any shift in production in response to the demographic downturn. The data reflect the increased importance of wheat and barley in tithe receipts and demesne output after the Black Death. This is commensurate with Campbell's evidence for the increased importance of wheat and barley relative to other bread and brewing grains on manorial demesnes throughout the country after the Black Death.⁵¹ Likewise, in his study of demesne and tithe output in Suffolk, Bailey observed the increased importance of these higher value grains on both seigneurial and tenant land after 1349.⁵² These shifts reflect the changing structure of demand as pressure on resources was relaxed and real wages rose, putting wheaten bread and ale made with barley within reach of a wider section of the population.

Tables 3 and 4 suggest that wheat and barley production expanded more, on average, as a proportion of demesne harvests than tithe receipts: from 63 to 69 per cent by comparison with 70 to 74 per cent. On first glance, therefore, it appears that, in general, the managers of manorial demesnes were responding to shifts in demand with greater alacrity than their counterparts in the peasant sector. It would, however, be unwise to place too much emphasis on the difference observed since it is likely to reflect the different ways in which the two types of cultivator were able to respond to changed economic circumstances. On manorial demesnes, oats output often contracted in the aftermath of the Black Death because the poorest land was withdrawn from cultivation.⁵³ The contraction of arable acreages on the Hampshire demesnes is clear from a comparison of the amounts of land sown in 1301–2 and 1409–10, shown in Table 5. On both East Meon and Hambledon demesnes, there were sharp falls in the percentage of sown acreage devoted to oats although on East Meon Church demesne this remained approximately the same. Table 6 shows a sharp fall in overall sown acreage at Feering and a fall in oats as a percentage of sown acreage across approximately the same period. Likewise, the proportion of acreage devoted to oats at Eastry fell, though it remained the same on the small glebe at Monkton (Table 7).

A retreat from poorer quality land may also have occurred outside the manorial demesnes as the demand for land fell. However, the contraction in sown acreage is unlikely to have been as marked, not least because land no longer cultivated as part of the manorial demesne was often

⁴⁹ J. Langdon, *Horses, oxen and technological innovation: the use of draught animals in English farming from 1066 to 1500* (1986), pp. 175, 178, 204, 228–9, 251–3; J. Langdon, 'The economics of horses and oxen in medieval England', *AgHR*, 30 (1982), pp. 37–9.

⁵⁰ P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (1970), pp. 148, 167–8,

173; O. J. Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353: the complete history* (2004), pp. 132, 134.

⁵¹ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 243, 244.

⁵² Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, pp. 212–3.

⁵³ Campbell, *Seigniorial agriculture*, p. 301.

TABLE 3. Composition of tithes collected and demesne harvests in Kent, Hampshire and Essex, 1288–1348 (per cent)

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes	
	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne
Eastry (Kent) ^a (tithe n=29, demesne n=24)	25	33	62	49	2	12	1	0	10	6
Monkton (Kent) ^{a, b} (tithe n=31, glebe n=18)	18	5	61	87	11	8	4	0	6	0
Birchington (Kent) (n=31)	9	–	65	–	15	–	3	–	8	–
Hambleton (Hampshire) (tithe n=39, demesne n=50)	33	23	30	28	31	46	1	0	5	3
East Meon (Hampshire) (tithe n=27, demesne n=51)	38	33	22	13	35	54	0	0	5	0
East Meon Church manor (Hampshire) (n=43)	–	36	–	14	–	49	–	0	–	1
Feering (Essex) (tithe n=39, demesne n=36)	55	54	2	0	32	40	3	1	8	5

Notes and sources: as for Table 1.

TABLE 4. Composition of tithes collected and demesne harvests in Kent, Hampshire and Essex, 1349-1412 (per cent)

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes	
	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne	tithe	demesne
Eastry (Kent) ^a (tithe n=18, demesne n=9)	26	35	62	52	3	10	1	0	8	3
Monkton (Kent) ^{a, b} (tithe n=15, glebe n=18)	23	23	60	64	12	10	2	3	3	0
Birchington (Kent) (n=15)	12	-	61	-	15	-	3	-	9	-
Hambleton (Hampshire) (tithe n=51, demesne n=56)	34	19	35	53	30	25	0	0	1	3
East Meon (Hampshire) (tithe n=46, demesne n=56)	42	40	27	16	26	41	0	0	5	3
East Meon Church manor (Hampshire) (n=55)	-	38	-	17	-	45	-	0	-	0
Feering (Essex) (tithe n=21, demesne n=23)	52	49	9	7	27	32	1	1	11	11

Notes and sources: as for Table 1.

TABLE 5. Sown acreages on Hampshire demesnes belonging to the bishops of Winchester, 1301-2 and 1409-10

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes		Total acreage	Percentage rise or fall in total acreage
	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%		
East Meon 1301-2	608	44	95	7	685	49	-	-	-	-	1388	
East Meon 1409-10	160	49	40	12	105	33	-	-	19	6	324	77% fall
East Meon Church 1301-2	129	44	58	20	105	36	-	-	-	-	292	
East Meon Church 1409-10	25	46	9	17	20	37	-	-	-	-	54	82% fall
Hambledon 1301-2	75	31	33	14	131	55	-	-	1 ^a)	>1	240	
Hambledon 1409-10	45	30	54	36	36	24	-	-	14	10	149	38% fall

Note: ^a 2bz. of peas were sown but no acreage is given. In the same year, peas were sown at a rate of 3bz. an acre in Cams (Hampshire).

Source: M. Page (ed.) *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1301-2* (Hampshire Rec. Ser., 14, 1996), pp. 288-9, 294-5, 300-1; M. Page (ed.) *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1409-10* (Hampshire Rec. Ser., 16, 1999), pp. 269-70, 277-8, 288.

TABLE 6. Sown acreages on the demesne at Feering belonging to the monks of Westminster Abbey, 1301-2 and 1403-4

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes		Total acreage	Percentage rise or fall in total acreage
	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%		
1301-2	276	53	-	-	236	46	-	-	6	1	518	
1403-4	138	42	27	8	107	32	2	1	58	17	332	36% fall

Source: WAM25605, 25606, 25758

TABLE 7. Sown acreages on the demesne and glebe in Kent belonging to the monks of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, 1306-74

	Wheat		Barley		Oats		Rye and mixtures		Legumes		Total acreage	Percentage fall or rise in acreage
	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%	acreage	%		
Eastry 1306-48 (n=23)	82	28	108	37	30	10	0	0	72	25	292	
Eastry 1349-74 (n=10)	81	35	90	39	15	6	0	0	46	20	232	21 % fall
Monkton glebe 1306-48 (n=20)	1	5	10	50	2	10	0	0	7	35	20	
Monkton glebe 1349-74 (n=18)	6	19	13	42	3	10	1	3	8	26	31	55 % rise

Source: CCA, DCc and Lambeth Palace Library, Eastry manor accounts, Monkton rectory accounts. I am grateful to Professor Bruce Campbell for letting me use data which he collected.

leased to local tenants. In other words, manorial demesne output data represent production on land that one landowner chose to cultivate. Tithe, by contrast, was owed by the cultivators of all the land in the parish. Even if a wealthy peasant chose to sublet part of his holding, this sublet land would still be included in the tithe return. Overall, changes in the structure of demand for grain in the aftermath of the Black Death appear to have been one cause of the relative increase in the production of wheat and barley in both the seigneurial and non-seigneurial sectors. It is argued here that the greater magnitude of the shift in the seigneurial sector may have been the result not of different production decisions in the two sectors, but rather differences in the types of data available.

V

This comparison of demesne output data and tithe receipts has demonstrated the similarity of the composition of the harvest in the seigneurial and peasant sectors. This is partly explained by the physical and economic geography of the regions under consideration, factors which affected both sectors alike. However, the comparison also sheds light on the impact of restraints and incentives on peasant producers. It is apparent that, in aggregate terms at least, peasant producers were not prevented from implementing demanding cropping regimes by poor soil, inadequate equipment or low levels of investment. On the contrary, producers outside the seigneurial sector were able to implement cropping regimes similar to, and often more intensive than, those put in place by managers of manorial demesnes. In the period following the Black Death, peasant producers were able to respond to changes in demand just like their counterparts in the seigneurial sector. Nor do peasants appear to have been producing solely for their own consumption. The prominence of the more valuable and demanding bread and brewing grains in tithe receipts indicates the importance of production for the market.

Tithe receipts represent one tenth of aggregate output and therefore reflect the composition of output on the larger holdings in each parish. This means that, whilst it is possible to confirm the similarity of aggregate output in the seigneurial and non-seigneurial sectors, significant differences in the composition of output on the largest and smallest holdings may be hidden in the data. It is possible that peasants with smaller holdings, little access to pasture and more limited resources to invest were not able to pursue such intensive cropping regimes as their wealthier neighbours. However, the Kentish parishes examined in this study suggest that the most commercially-minded non-seigneurial cultivators may have been found amongst smallholders forced to maximize the sale value of their output in order to make ends meet.

Medieval England is a long way chronologically and geographically from the fictitious scene in the seventeenth-century plains of Castile. However, Cervantes gave us a picture of a wealthy peasant family making strategic cropping decisions and it is from families such as these, we hope ones in which the eldest sons survived their unrequited love for local shepherdesses, that our tithe data derive. These data tell us that peasants were making decisions on cropping strategies and yield raising techniques, based perhaps on the movement of the stars but certainly on the opportunities presented by physical and commercial geography.

Manorial estates as business firms: the relevance of economic rent in determining crop choices in London's hinterland, c.1300^{*}

by Harry Kitsikopoulos

Abstract

This paper addresses the claim made by some scholars that production decisions on the part of manorial estates in the London region c.1300 conformed to the logic of a model advanced by the German agricultural economist Johann von Thunen. The claim is tested by calculating the economic rent of four major grains and the results are contrasted with actual cropping patterns, revealing certain discrepancies. In the end, an alternative interpretation is offered questioning the relevance of von Thunen's model.

Manorial accounts, comprising the richest source of information on English medieval agricultural history, have been used to establish with astounding clarity the production profiles of feudal estates, especially for the decades before the Black Death. This impressive documentation, however, has not been matched by progress in the realm of interpretation, particularly when it comes to understanding the rationale and motives driving production decisions. The role of markets in this regard is especially ambiguous. There is no doubt that manorial estates used markets as means of generating monetary wealth. Did they use them, however, only occasionally and after 'satisficing strategies' had been pursued to extravagant limits? If so, this would indicate that market activities played a useful but marginal role.¹ Or did markets function

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¹ The emphasis on 'satisficing strategies' has been advanced by Kathleen Biddick in *The other economy: pastoral husbandry on a medieval estate* (1989), and in her paper (with Catrien Bijleveld), 'Agrarian productivity on the estates of the bishopric of Winchester in the early thirteenth century: a managerial perspective', in B. M. S. Campbell and Mark Overton (eds.), *Land, labour and livestock: historical studies in European agricultural productivity* (1991).

as loci where a notion of profit, at least rudimentary, found its expression feeding backwards and determining production decisions?

Writing in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the German agricultural economist Johann von Thunen professed to have uncovered the principle that determines a broad range of decisions on the part of agrarian producers, from the choice of field systems and crops to the degree of commercial orientation and productive intensity.² This principle, he argued, was the level of economic rent whose size depended, *ceteris paribus*, on the distance of a farm from an urban centre and the transportation cost involved in carrying commodities to this market. Economic rent was defined as the difference between the price of a product and the total amount of payments made to the various factors of production.

Von Thunen's model provided the inspiration and theoretical framework for a large number of case studies, principally among economic geographers. One of the most recent studies to utilize this model, the 'Feeding the City' project (henceforth the FTC study), directed by Campbell and Keene and published in 1993, undertook the enormous task of uncovering the patterns of production and distribution within London's hinterland around the turn of the fourteenth century. Reviewing and assessing the multifaceted aspects of this work goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, there is one claim made by the authors that is particularly troublesome, namely that the configuration of economic rent played a significant role in determining crop choices on the part of manorial estates within London's provisioning zone.³ According to this argument, crops that were unable to sustain a high transportation cost (e.g., oats) were grown predominantly very near London, followed by intermediate crops (such as barley and rye), which prevailed at some distance from the metropolis; wheat, commanding the highest price among grains and thus able to sustain a high transportation cost, was the speciality of demesnes lying at the periphery of London's provisioning zone.

The present paper argues that the applicability of von Thunen's model for the issue at hand is uncertain; specifically, while it is a useful tool in defining the outer limits of this provisioning zone given different modes of transportation, it lacks predictive power when it comes to explaining the spatial configuration of crop choices, assuming we treat the London region as a single, unified market. To support the argument that economic rent was the principal determinant of the spatial distribution of crops, it is imperative to draw the marginal rent lines for each crop in order to calculate the distances at which economic rent is exhausted for each one of them, as well as the rings that define the areas where one crop's economic rent supersedes the rent of another. This theoretical exercise presupposes, as shown in the next section, the utilization of data regarding yields, market prices, production costs, and transportation rates for each crop prevailing at that time within the London region. Once the exercise is completed, the results can be contrasted with the actual distribution of crops to verify the presence or absence of identical patterns or, in the case of deviations, the magnitude of them. The authors of the FTC study cite all the data necessary, with the exception of production costs, for this theoretical

² J. H. von Thunen, *The isolated state*, ed. P. Hall (1966).

³ B. M. S. Campbell, James Galloway, Derek Keene, and Margaret Murphy, *A medieval capital and its grain*

supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London region, c.1300 (1993); the discussion on crop choices is on pp. 111–25.

exercise to be undertaken. Despite the fact that rough but reasonable estimates of the latter can be provided, they failed to calculate them, instead assuming that production costs were 'roughly constant' for each crop;⁴ as will be shown later, this claim is a fatal flaw in their argument. They then conclude that the actual crop distribution patterns conform to von Thunen's model without having drawn the marginal rent lines of each crop, as the model dictates. Hence, the primary objective of this paper is a methodological one: to describe the theoretical exercise that ought to have been undertaken by the authors of the FTC study before any claims to von Thunen's authority were made.

The resolution of this issue has far broader implications. There is a lively and ongoing debate regarding the determinants of medieval economic growth and the role played by markets in this context. There is an optimistic interpretation, whose origins can be traced back to Boserup's work, arguing that population growth induced the expansion of markets, drew a positive response from producers (the evidence is drawn mainly from manorial estates) and led to an increase of total output, a mechanism that came to a halt with the great epidemic. The behaviour of the London market is particularly important in this respect because that is where population growth and urbanization were the most pronounced. Ultimately, this view assigns the crisis of feudalism to an exogenous factor, disease. In referring to managerial attitudes, Stone has argued that at least some medieval landlords acted as proto-capitalists in that they were responsive to maximizing revenues through market sales in order to finance investment, building works, and military campaigns. Their practices left a lot to be desired by the standards of modern capitalists, lacking both a personal interest in day-to-day decisions and any techniques for calculating profitability. This interpretation has been counteracted by a bleaker approach, viewing markets as 'largely localized, episodic, causal and poorly integrated'. In this latter view, forwarded by mainstream historians such as Britnell and applauded by sympathizers of a Marxist viewpoint, a plausible interpretation of the role of medieval markets is that they functioned as outlets for grain surpluses once the primary goal of extravagant consumption has been satisfied; as such, they failed to play a critical role in shaping sustained economic growth.⁵

Campbell's work clearly falls on the side of the optimists. But, at a microeconomic level, in addressing the role of economic rent in shaping production and distribution choices, particularly when it comes to crops, Campbell has wobbled between the purist position of market primacy and statements that assign significance to other factors, in the process creating a considerable degree of ambiguity, as I shall show later. Space limitations preclude any participation in this

⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

⁵ For the exposition of the optimistic viewpoint, see James Masschaele, *Peasants, merchants and markets: inland trade in medieval England, 1150–1350* (1997); D. Stone, 'Medieval farm management and technological mentalities: Hinderclay before the Black Death', *EcHR* 54 (2001); B. M. S. Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture, 1250–1450* (2000). Mainstream historians who have adopted a pessimistic approach include R. H. Britnell, 'Urban demand in the English economy, 1300–1600', in James Galloway (ed.), *Trade, urban hinterlands and*

market integration, c.1300–1600 (2000), and Mark Bailey, 'Peasant welfare in England, 1290–1348', *EcHR* 51 (1998). The Marxist argument is not monolithic when it comes to the role of markets; for two variations of it see Brenner's and Bois' contributions to T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (eds), *The Brenner debate: agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe* (1987). The quote comes from John S. Lee, 'Feeding the colleges: Cambridge's food and fuel supplies, 1450–1560', *EcHR* 56 (2003), p. 262.

larger debate. But the discussion of crop choices in the light of von Thunen's model will generate certain implications relevant to this wider debate about the role of medieval markets.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first one summarizes the part of von Thunen's model that is relevant to the theory of crop choices. The second section reconstructs the marginal rent lines for four major grains, revealing a production pattern that ought to have been adopted if producers followed the logic of the model, whereas the third one addresses the question of whether the actual crop choices conform to the results of the theoretical exercise.⁶ The final section evaluates the results in the context of an alternative interpretation which questions the argument underpinning the FTC study.

I

Von Thunen's model seeks to discover the principles that define the typology and functional character of field systems within a uniform plain dominated by the presence of a single urban center whose inhabitants derive their food supplies from its productive hinterland. In a brilliant exposition of partial equilibrium analysis, a precursor of the Marshallian methodology, he sets constant, implicitly or explicitly, a number of parameters within this plain: weather and soil conditions, absence of alternative markets, as well as uniformity in the quality of management and transportation networks. The only variable in his system is transportation cost (i.e., carting cost) which increases with distance from the town, producing a sliding scale in terms of the farm-gate prices received by producers.⁷

Von Thunen's theory of crop specialization may be reduced, like everything else, to a problem of maximizing economic rent.⁸ The economic rent of each crop can be defined as:

$$R = E(p - a) - Efk$$

Where R = rent per acre (dependent variable); k = distance (independent variable); E = yield in quarters per acre, p = market price per quarter, a = production cost per quarter, and f = transportation rate per quarter per unit of distance for each crop (constants or parameters).

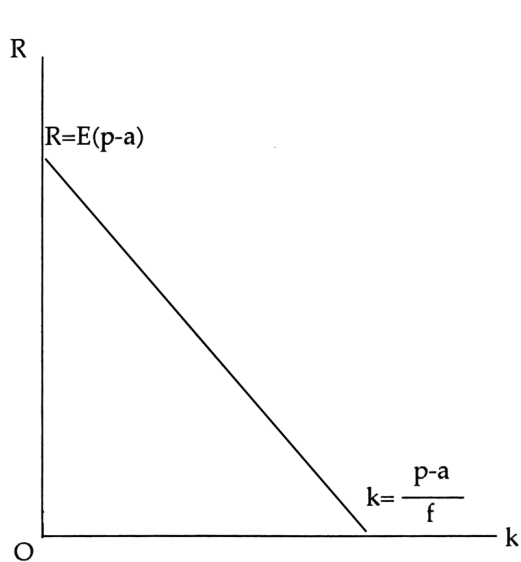
Figure 1A depicts the simplest possible case of deriving the economic rent in an economy with a single crop. The R -intercept gives us the economic rent generated by a plot located in the town, being equal to the yield times the net receipt per acre; the higher the yield and the price (a function of demand) of this crop, and the lower the production cost, the higher up the vertical line the R -intercept is going to be located. The slope of the marginal rent line depicts a linear relationship, given the constants and parameters in the above formula, and it reveals that rent per unit of land is diminished for each unit of distance at a rate equal to the product

⁶ The entire exercise uses data derived from manorial estates, as the FTC study does. The scarcity of relevant data when it comes to peasant holdings precludes a more expanded scope in order to include the peasant sector.

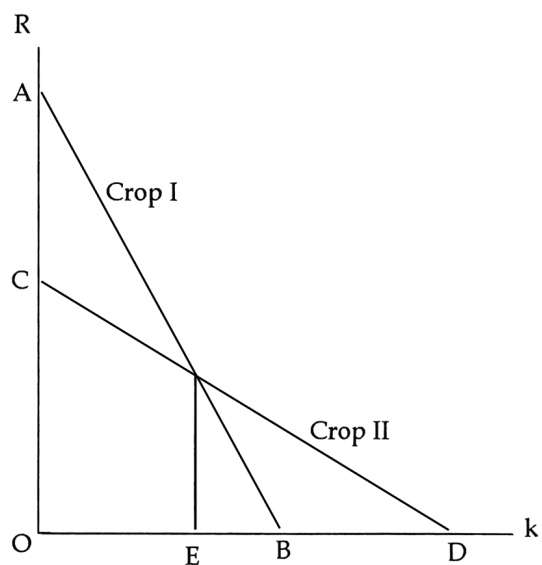
⁷ Von Thunen, *The isolated state*, pp. xxii, xxiv.

⁸ The entire segment on crop specialization relies heavily on Edgar S. Dunn, *The location of agricultural*

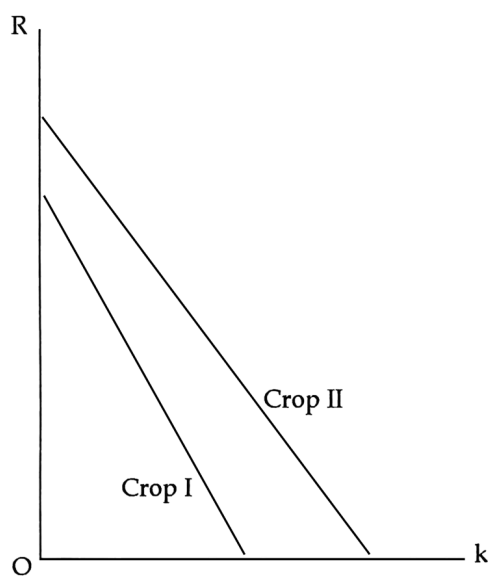
production (1954), esp. pp. 6–27, 38–47, 55–63, 66–75, 93, 99–104; for shorter expositions, see J. R. Peet, 'The spatial expansion of commercial agriculture in the nineteenth century', *Economic Geography* 45 (1969), pp. 284–90, and David Grigg, *The dynamics of agricultural change* (1982), pp. 136–7.



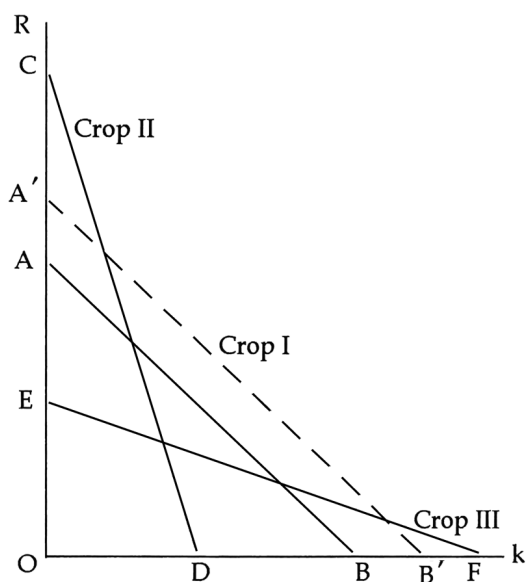
(1A)



(1B)



(1C)



(1D)

FIGURE 1. Crop specialization under von Thunen's model

of the yield and freight rate. Rent is eventually exhausted at the k -intercept where $k = p - a/f$. At this point commercial production ceases and total economic rent is maximized, because that is where marginal rent equals marginal cost.⁹

Figure 1B takes the analysis a step further by looking at an economy producing two crops; crop I yields a marginal rent of AB, and crop II a marginal rent of CD. The major constraint for crop I has now been altered. Instead of being concerned with the point where its marginal rent becomes zero, the problem is now finding the point at which its marginal rent becomes equal to the marginal opportunity cost presented by the rent-yielding potential of crop II. The graph shows that for the distance OE, which in essence is a radius defining a concentric ring, crop I is going to be produced exclusively because its marginal rent exceeds the marginal rent (opportunity cost) of crop II. Reversing the logic, crop II is going to be produced in the zone defined by the distance ED.

It is important to note that ring formation is not a predetermined fact in a multiple-crop economy. Ring formation presupposes two necessary and sufficient conditions, namely, that the R -intercept of a crop has to be higher and its k -intercept has to be lower than the equivalent intercepts of the second crop, as depicted in Figure 1B. These two conditions ensure that the marginal rent line of the first crop will have a steeper slope and that it will cross the marginal rent line of the second crop within the positive quadrant of the graph. To state it differently, the crop with the largest net return at the town must have a higher transport cost per unit-distance if ring formation is to be established. If any of the aforementioned conditions is violated, we can end up with a situation such as the one depicted by Figure 1C where crop I is excluded and crop II dominates the productive hinterland of the town.

Finally, Figure 1D examines how considerations of demand affect market equilibrium in a three-crop economy.¹⁰ Let us assume that the price of crop I increases. This development will increase the R -intercept of crop I and shift its marginal rent line to A'B' resulting in an expansion of its ring and the re-establishment of equilibrium in this market based on the new supply line. However, the expansion of the supply for crop I encroaches upon the supply zones of the other two crops and comes at their expense. If crops II and III are not close substitutes to crop I, their demand will exceed their (diminished) supply leading to an increase of their prices. The presence of disequilibria in the markets for crops II and III will prompt an expansion of their own supplies and a shift of their marginal rent lines to the right in the same fashion as the shift to A'B'. This development will restrict the supply zone of crop I, increase its price, and prompt a new cycle of reaction like the one just described. The point is that the supply and the extent of a crop's ring depend not only on its own price but on the equilibrium prices of all other crops.¹¹

In the end, economic rent is the ordering principle that determines the spatial distribution of crops. Alas, the level of economic rent is determined in reality not only by distance but by

⁹ The horizontal axis is the marginal cost line since rent is expressed net of production costs; see Dunn, *Location of agricultural production*, p. 9.

¹⁰ The principles for ring formation in this figure are precisely the same as in figure 1B.

¹¹ The implication is that the problem of the spatial

extent of production for each crop has to be looked at in the context of a general equilibrium model. Such an attempt will not be made at the present paper; the interested reader, however, can find an abstract formulation of such model in Dunn, *Location of agricultural production*, pp. 18–24.

a host of other factors which have been termed as constants or parameters at the beginning of the analysis, a fact of which von Thunen was fully aware. The issue of variations in soil and weather conditions, for instance, is of paramount importance. To begin with, the chemical balance of soil in terms of nitrogen necessitates the cultivation of legumes, regardless of whether their economic rent falls short of the economic rent generated by grains.¹² Most importantly, the precise nature of soils affects the degree of adaptability of various crops and hence their production costs and yields. Von Thunen noted that 'the lower the fertility of the soil, the more expensive the crop is to produce – and soil of low fertility can be cultivated only when the price of grain is high'.¹³ In other words, declining fertility results in altering the outer boundaries of commercial production, and in distorting the linearity of the marginal rent lines.¹⁴

Another complication arises when there is more than one urban center in the same region.¹⁵ If we are dealing, for instance, with two towns of different population endowments, income distribution patterns, and consumer tastes, the supply zone of the smaller town will cut a wedge into the supply zone of the larger one and it will force an extension of the latter's supply zone. The main complexity arises from the fact that we now have to establish two marginal rent lines for each crop, one for each town. Furthermore, any change in the demand and price of a crop is bound to alter both the ring formation and the equilibrium conditions of both markets since they comprise part of an interrelated system.

All in all, the simultaneous relaxation of every assumption in von Thunen's model renders unavoidable a sense of excessive complexity.¹⁶ In the end, the main weakness of the model is the tremendous burden it places on the time of a researcher when it comes to gathering data for anything but a narrow locality; for medieval England, in particular, the burden is especially keen because of the paucity of records regarding some key variables of the model (e.g., certain grain prices and production costs). Nevertheless, by returning to von Thunen's static partial equilibrium approach and by taking some liberties with extrapolations when using data, an attempt will be made to test the claim advanced by the authors of the FTC study that maximizing economic rent was the key determinant of crop choices on the part of manors located within London's hinterland.

¹² The cultivation of a crop with low economic rent may also be warranted when it functions as an input to animal husbandry, is the preferred choice for human consumption, or when it helps in reducing overall farming costs while is produced in conjunction with another crop. For instance, spring grains may generate a lower rent compared to winter grains (or the other way around), but there may be savings realized by including them in the annual routine since they spread the demand for labour and capital inputs throughout the year.

¹³ Von Thunen, *The isolated state*, p. 30. He noted that, as fertility and yields decline, costs decline proportionately less because certain types of cost are fixed (at the same time, he assumes that variable costs decline by the same proportion as yields).

¹⁴ Dunn argues that we are likely to end up with

concave curvilinear rent functions, that is, economic rent will decline at a decreasing rate with distance; but he adds that the principles which establish ring formation for various crops, as well as the conditions for spatial equilibrium remain essentially unaltered; see Dunn, *Location of agricultural production*, pp. 39–43.

¹⁵ This complication arises only when the supply zones of these towns overlap. For visual representations of how the supply zones and rings may look like, see *Ibid.*, pp. 59–63; also, von Thunen, *The isolated state*, pp. 171–4, 215–22 where he discusses this and other complications when some of his assumptions are relaxed.

¹⁶ The list of factors which add to the complexity of the model is not limited to the ones mentioned in the previous two paragraphs. Von Thunen, for instance, brings up the presence of alternative transportation networks, such as the existence of a navigable river.

II

The hypothesis regarding crop specialization in the London region can be tested by calculating the economic rent for each grain type and the distance at which it was exhausted by transportation cost (see Figure 1). Economic rent at the farm-gate is given by the expression $R = E(P - A_1)$, whereas the distance at which it was exhausted can be found by using the expression $k = P - A_2/f$, where R = economic rent per acre, E = yield per acre (in quarters), P = price per quarter, A_1 = production cost per quarter, k = distance in miles, A_2 = production cost plus dealers' profits per quarter, and f = transportation cost per quarter per mile.

Estimates for the production cost of each grain type are presented in Appendix 1 along with information on the sources regarding yields and prices. Some brief discussion, however, is necessary regarding the cost of different transportation modes. Beginning with land carriage, the standard method was to specify a rate per quarter depending on the type of grain and the distance travelled.¹⁷ A rate of 0.317*d.* per quarter of wheat per mile has been adopted based on a sample provided by Masschaele.¹⁸ Subsequently, the cartage rates for the other types of grain have been extrapolated based on their weights relative to wheat.¹⁹ The same method followed for the calculation of river and coastal shipments, indicates that the unit cost of the former was

¹⁷ A less preferred method was to hire a cart by the day in which case it became necessary to specify the loading capacity of the cart and the distance to be travelled in a day; see James Masschaele, 'Transport costs in medieval England', *EcHR* 46 (1993), p. 269. For the loading capacity of carts, see *id.*, pp. 269, 276, and Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 214. Campbell's estimates have been used in this paper.

¹⁸ Masschaele, 'Transport costs', pp. 270–1, 277–8. It should be noted that only data from Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, and Oxfordshire (Table 1) have been utilized – as opposed to his entire sample which includes counties beyond the core of the London region since rates there were lower – deriving a figure of 1.9*d.* per ton-mile. The latter figure has been adjusted in three ways. First, it was converted to cost per quarter per mile; second, it was adjusted based on a quarter of wheat equal to 424 lbs, as opposed to 384 lbs adopted by Masschaele, in order to keep consistency with the weights adopted by the authors of the FTC study; third, it was adjusted to include the cost of overnight stays which is not taken into account by Masschaele. Payments to either *famuli* or customary tenants performing carrying services were very common and included the cost of food when day trips were undertaken or an additional amount when overnight stays were involved, specifically for the 'expenses of men and horses'. Evidence for these extra payments comes from the Wiltshire manors of Monkton Deverill and Longbridge Deverill. Two sorts of payments were made, one for ½*d.* per quarter of wheat and barley when

the destination was up to 10½ miles away, and 1*d.* per quarter when the distance was over that limit but never exceeding 20 miles. The only explanation for the difference in payments is that it involved the cost of overnight stays given the fact that approximately 10 miles seems to have been the normal distance that could be travelled by carters allowing them to return back home the same day. The method that has been used to incorporate the cost of overnight stays is to add 0.025*d.* to the cost of transporting a quarter of wheat, barley, and rye per mile (that is, divide 0.5*d.* by 20 miles, the normal distance travelled in a day); the added cost per mile for oats has been derived as 0.018*d.* This simplistic method has been chosen in order to retain the linearity of the marginal rent lines in graphical analysis. See Masschaele, *Peasants*, pp. 203–4; D. L. Farmer, 'Two Wiltshire manors and their markets', *AgHR* 37 (1989), pp. 5–7; D. Postles, 'Customary carrying services', *J. Transport Hist.* 5 (1984), p. 7; D. L. Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside, 1200–1500', in E. Miller (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, III, 1348–1500 (1991), pp. 350–2. On the other hand, the cost of renting granaries, which could be quite substantial, was not included in the calculations since it would presumably have been covered by the dealer. For references to such costs, see Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: towns, commerce and crafts, 1086–1348* (1995), p. 151; Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside', p. 351.

¹⁹ Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 215 (Table 5.04).

TABLE 1. Transportation costs of various grains (in pence per quarter per mile)

<i>Mode of transport</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Rye</i>
Cart	0.317	0.275	0.216	0.305
River	0.108	0.093	0.073	0.103
Coastal shipping	0.030	0.026	0.020	0.028

Source: see text.

one-third and the latter one-tenth of that for overland transportation.²⁰ The overall impression, however, is that transportation cost, including land cartage, was not a major obstacle in commercial transactions, although the validity of this statement hinges on the level of grain prices and the distances travelled.²¹

The figures for the transportation costs of various grains are summarized in Table 1 and are used (along with data on yields, prices, and production costs) to derive the level of economic rent for each crop and the distances at which they were exhausted (Table 2 and Figure 2).²² The results of this theoretical exercise will be contrasted with the actual patterns of crop production and distribution in the London region, to assess the claim that economic rent was the primary determinant of such patterns. In the author's view two tests seem particularly pertinent: first, whether the actual distances from which London drew its supplies are in line with the results of Table 2; second, and even more important, whether manorial estates ended up producing and selling the grains with the highest economic rents and, if so, whether

²⁰ Regarding river transportation, only the figures for the river systems of the Essex and Kent coastlines, and of Thames have been utilized (Table 2) since the rest of the data cover waterways outside the core of the London region; see Masschaele, 'Transport costs', pp. 271–3. It should be noted that the authors of the FTC study also provide their own estimates of transportation costs; they have not been utilized, however, for several reasons. First, when it comes to land cartage, they rely heavily on data from Essex and Hertfordshire where the rates were higher than elsewhere and despite the fact that they cite figures from other parts of the London region; including the latter figures produces results almost identical to those of Masschaele. Second, Masschaele's figures on the cost of river and coastal shipments are preferable because they include loading and unloading charges, as opposed to the authors of the FTC study that include them in only one of their entries; these handling charges were much higher when boats were used compared to carts, i.e., 0.91d. vs. 0.25d. per quarter of wheat. As a result of overestimating cartage costs and underestimating the cost of water transportation, the authors of the FTC study present a wider gap regarding the cost differential of the two modes. See Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval*

capital, pp. 60–3, 193–8; also Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 270 (n. 41). For a sample of transport costs in other parts of the country, see Masschaele, *Peasants*, pp. 207–10; D. L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages', in H. E. Hallam (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, II, 1042–1350 (1988), pp. 742–3; Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 270.

²¹ Masschaele, 'Transport costs', pp. 273–4; Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 215 (Table 5.04).

²² It ought to be stressed that the gradient of each crop line in Figure 2 is based on average figures. The overall robustness of the calibration could, in theory, have been checked by assigning some margins of error to the underlying parameters in order to calculate the confidence interval around each line, just as we would do for a regression line. However, the results of such an exercise would have been highly tentative given the incomplete series of prices for crops other than wheat and of production costs for individual manors. Moreover, such an exercise, even if feasible, would most likely affect the cross-over point of the barley and rye lines, given the proximity of their intercepts. But it is highly unlikely that it would affect the relative position of the wheat and rye lines, given the considerable gap that separates them.

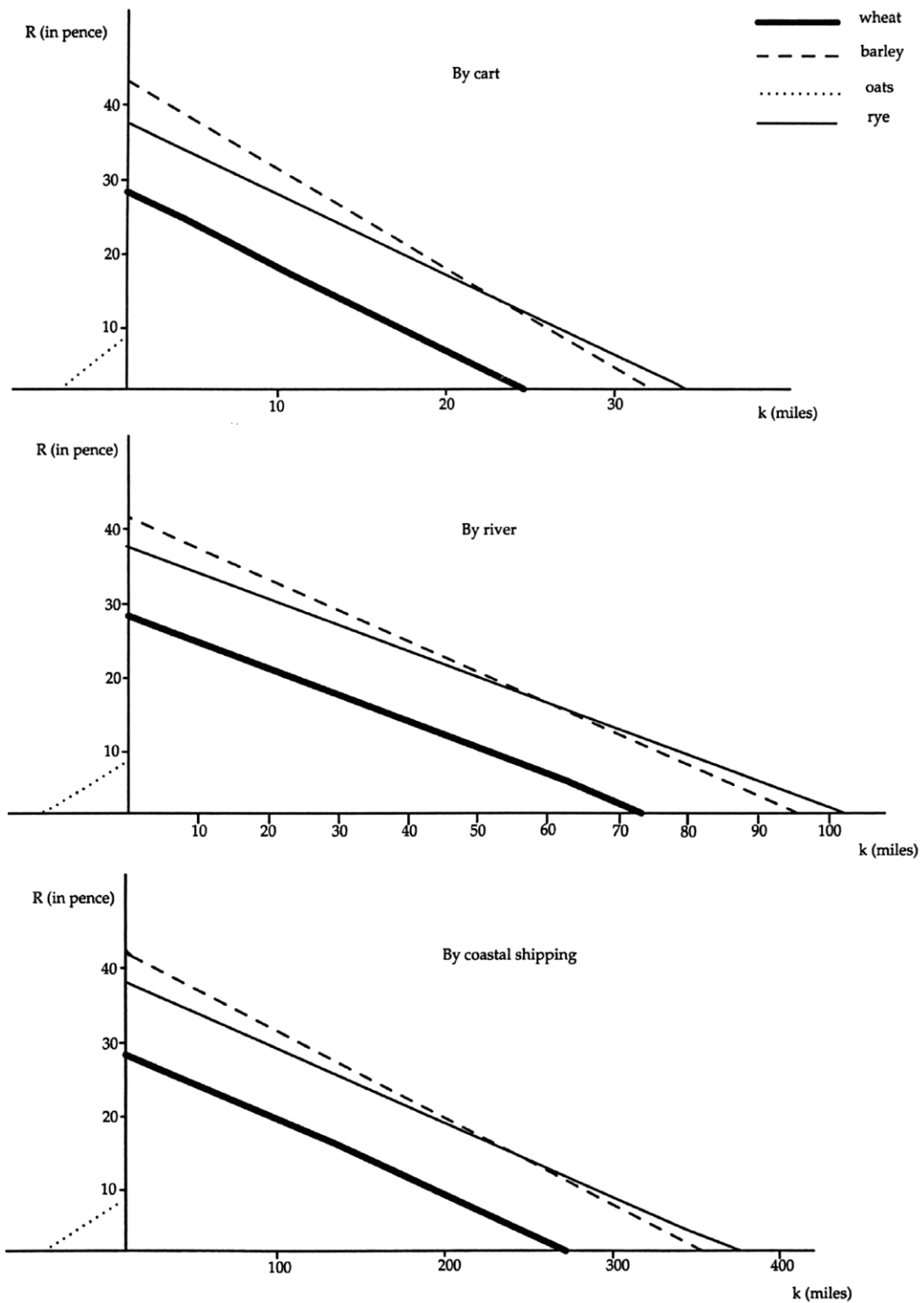


FIGURE 2. Stylistic depiction of marginal rents in the London region, various rents

TABLE 2. Economic rent at the farm gate and the distance at which is exhausted, various grains and modes of transportation (figures in quarters, pence, and miles)

	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Rye</i>
Economic rent	Rw = 1.31 (70.24 – 48.25) = 28.8	Rb = 2.15 (53.38 – 33.72) = 42.26	Ro = 1.6 (30.2 – 25.21) = 7.98	Rr = 1.71 (58.29 – 36.2) = 37.77
Distance (cart)	Kw = (70.24 – 62.29) ÷ 0.317 = 25	Kb = (53.38 – 44.39) ÷ 0.275 = 32.69	Ko = (30.2 – 31.25) ÷ 0.216 = -4.86	Kr = (58.29 – 47.85) ÷ 0.305 = 34.22
Distance (river)	Kw = (70.24 – 62.29) ÷ 0.108 = 73.61	Kb = (53.38 – 44.39) ÷ 0.093 = 96.66	Ko = (30.2 – 31.25) ÷ 0.073 = -14.38	Kr = (58.29 – 47.85) ÷ 0.103 = 101.35
Distance (sea)	Kw = (70.24 – 62.29) ÷ 0.030 = 265	Kb = (53.38 – 44.39) ÷ 0.026 = 345. 76	Ko = (30.2 – 31.25) ÷ 0.020 = -52.5	Kr = (58.29 – 47.85) ÷ 0.028 = 372.85

Sources: Table 1 and Appendix 1.

the spatial configuration of each grain type within the London region conforms to the logic depicted in Figure 2.

III

London was a bustling metropolis by 1300, with a population (according to the FTC study) approaching 100,000 inhabitants, generating a total demand in the range of 165,000 quarters of assorted grains (for food, drink, and fodder), which required approximately 137,000 acres to produce them.²³ Its grain requirements, however, would have to be drawn from a wider area, because a large quantity of grains produced within its supply zone would have been consumed locally or used to procure the needs of overseas markets (Flanders, Norway) and secondary urban centres, most notably Oxford, Ipswich, Yarmouth, Norwich, King's Lynn, and Boston. It has been estimated that each one of these towns drew supplies from a radius of 8–12 miles around them, as was the case for Norwich with a population of around 25,000 in 1330.²⁴

The first test as to whether the results of the FTC study conform to patterns predicted by

²³ The figure for London's grain requirements is the mean of a wider range and corresponds to an annual per caput mean of 1.65 quarters. For this information, as well as estimates on the amount of calories per bushel of various grains, see Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 35, 41, 72.

²⁴ Hence, the capital's needs would be met mainly by southern Oxfordshire, southern and eastern Berkshire, Hertfordshire, southern Bedfordshire, most of Essex, and northern Kent. On the other hand, irregular supplies would be forthcoming from parts of Kent, Sussex,

East Anglia, the axis of Lynn-Boston and its interior, and areas lying beyond Henley along the Thames, Henley being the end of effective navigation for Thames; supplies from these places would be drawn upon once every 4–11 years, depending on the price of grains in London and the level of traders' profits. When it comes to the south-eastern coastline, in particular, it was cheaper to dispose of grains to Flanders and Norway from parts north of Colchester (Essex) and east of Faverham (Kent) than to London. See *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10, 14, 24, 47, 68, 70–1, 77, 143–4, 173, 181–2, 195, 197–8.

von Thunen's model is to look at the distances involved in provisioning London with grains. In contrast to the methodology of the present study, which specifies the exact distance at which economic rent for each grain was exhausted given different modes of transportation, the authors of the FTC study define some broad limits. Specifically, 'London's grain supply area in normal years appears to have extended to include market towns up to 20 miles from the city when only land transport to London was available'.²⁵ The estimate is a bit more specific when it comes to wheat, the most commercialized crop, whose regular supply came from as far as 18 miles, and occasionally extending up to 26.5 miles from the capital.²⁶ These figures conform fairly well with the results of Table 2 according to which the economic rent of wheat was exhausted at 25 miles from London, whereas the limits for barley and rye, when carts were used, were around 33 or 34 miles, somewhat above the 20 miles of the regular supply zone specified by the FTC study but still within the realm of reason when irregular supplies are taken into account. The aforementioned comparison is mainly relevant when it comes to the provisioning of the capital with wheat, barley, and rye, but the conformity of results extends also to oats. Campbell's conclusion that the 'commercial production [of oats] had to be geared in the main towards the provisioning of local markets' is clearly supported by the figures of Table 2 which show that a modest economic rent could be earned only when sales were made directly by producers at the farm gate.²⁷

When it comes to river transportation and coastal shipping, there is a less satisfactory convergence of results between the present paper and the FTC study due to the adoption by the latter of much lower transportation rates. The main implication is that, if these lower rates were adopted, the limits at which economic rent was exhausted would have been more distant from the capital. On the other hand, the FTC study specifies the provisioning limits of London 'up to about 60 miles *as the crow flies* when water transport could be used' (my emphasis);²⁸ this figure is not terribly different from the *actual* distances of Table 2, at least when it comes to river transportation which was the most common means of conveying grains across water.²⁹

It should be noted that actual distances travelled by boats and, especially, carters, often exceed the limits specified in Table 2. The logic of the model presented in the previous section can easily incorporate such exceptional cases by allowing for regional differences in production costs, yields, and dealers' profits; by prices exceeding the adopted averages for various crops at any given year; by taking into account the cheaper (but not free) transportation cost involved with the use of customary services which would have allowed direct marketing by eliminating

²⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

²⁶ The two figures were extrapolated in the following way: Campbell and his associates argue that the regular supply of wheat to London would be derived from an irregularly-shaped area whose outer limits were defined by a transportation cost of 6.3*d.* per quarter of wheat, whereas irregular supplies would be forthcoming from an isopleth whose outer limits extended up to 9.3*d.* per quarter. These two figures are subsequently divided by the cartage cost adopted by the authors thus defining the two isopleths in terms of mileage. See Ibid., pp. 60–1,

esp. Figure 7.

²⁷ Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 224.

²⁸ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 173.

²⁹ According to the figures of Table 2, using the Thames would have allowed the provisioning of the capital with wheat from locations a few miles beyond Henley, whereas barley and rye could be shipped from almost as far as Abingdon. Coastal shipping could have pushed the limits all the way north to the Yorkshire coastline, south to Devon and Cornwall, as well as continental markets.

the dealers' profit; and by the value of certain shipments in which economic rent was not an issue, as was the case with the provisioning of the royal army or household.³⁰

The more pertinent question is not whether the present paper agrees with the results of the FTC project when it comes to outlining the geographical limits of London's supply zone. Despite the broad agreement on this issue, the second and most crucial test is whether the quantitative extent of production and commercial disposal of crops, as well as their spatial dispersal within that supply zone, conform to the logic of von Thunen's model. In terms of the former aspect of this test, and assuming economic rent was the sole criterion of cropping choices, one would expect the productive hinterland of London to be dominated by barley and to a lesser extent by rye (see Figure 2). There are other factors (not relating to the objective of profit maximization), to be discussed in the next section, that would justify the production of wheat and oats without rendering von Thunen's principles irrelevant. One would expect, in this case, a more balanced allocation with barley still being the leading crop, followed by the cultivation of fairly substantial shares of the other three grains. Alas, this expectation is not justified. In reality, wheat and oats, the two crops with the lowest economic rents, generated, by far, the highest levels of output (36.7 and 33.1 per cent respectively), with barley and rye being far behind (12.3 and 6.6 per cent respectively).³¹ Not only did barley and rye occupy fairly small shares of the grain acreage, but their commercial disposal trailed far behind that of wheat: less than a third of barley and rye (32 and 29 per cent respectively) was sold, as opposed to 48 per cent of wheat;³² in fact, 'less wheat than any other grain was retained for consumption on the

³⁰ Sheriffs' accounts, for instance, reveal the cartage of wheat from Cambridge to London (50 miles) and of various grains from Bedfordshire to Carlisle on behalf of the king whose purchases were dictated by military and consumption imperatives. Use of customary services also allowed the cartage of grains at longer distances by eliminating the dealers' commission and reducing the cost below that charged by hired carters. The utilization of such methods allowed Ibstone to transport oats to Henley or Wycombe, and the manors of Shillington and Higham Gobion in Bedfordshire to sell wheat to London, despite the fact that they were located beyond the specified limit of 25 miles. Beyond the London area, Exeter also drew supplies of wheat from as far as 30 miles (e.g., Taunton) when customary services were involved. For these types of arrangements and the distances involved, see R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory: a study in monastic administration* (1943), pp. 119–23; Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England*, p. 150; D. Roden, 'Field systems in Ibstone, a township of the south-west Chilterns during the later Middle Ages', *Records of Buckinghamshire* 18 (1966), p. 56 (n. 46); James A. Galloway and Margaret Murphy, 'Feeding the city: London and its agrarian hinterland', *London J.* 16 (1991), p. 7; Postles, 'Customary carrying services'; Mark Bailey, *A marginal economy?*

East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages (1989), p. 157; E. Miller, *The abbey and bishopric of Ely* (1951), pp. 84–6; Maryanne Kowaleski, 'The grain trade in fourteenth-century Exeter', in Edwin Brezette DeWindt (ed.), *The salt of common life: individuality and choice in the medieval town, countryside, and church* (1995), pp. 2–3, 9–10, 23–5, 28, 30–1, 44–5; Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 173; Masschaele, *Peasants*, pp. 203–7; Farmer, 'Prices and wages', pp. 742–3; id., 'Marketing the produce of the countryside', pp. 348–9, 354, 363–4, 367–9. For the fluctuations in London wheat prices, see Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 200–2.

³¹ For illustration purposes, rye and its mixtures were grown, to one degree or another, in six out of ten demesnes but they were the leading crop on only 9 per cent of them. In contrast, wheat was grown on 95 per cent of database demesnes (a total of 198) and it was the leading crop in slightly over half of them. See Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 39 (Table 1), 121–2, 124.

³² Ibid., p. 146 (Table 15); see also B. M. S. Campbell, 'Measuring the commercialization of seigneurial agriculture, c.1300', in Richard Britnell and B. M. S. Campbell (eds.), *A commercializing economy: England 1086 to c.1300* (1995), pp. 156–7, 161. The figures refer to receipts net of tithe and seed.

demesne' despite its lower economic rent.³³ The only crop that was less commercialized than barley and rye was oats (22 per cent).

Furthermore, and beyond the quantitative degree of grain production and disposal, the spatial pattern of such choices fails to reveal a neat pattern. The authors of the FTC study produce some very helpful maps referring to individual crops, in which they classify manors based on the percentage of a particular crop in terms of total grain acreage. Choosing the top two categories in each map, referring to a crop that occupies 37.5 per cent or more of the total grain acreage, provides a neat method of testing patterns of regional specialization, or lack thereof. Once again, there is little coincidence with the expectations raised by the graphs of Figure 2 because there is no evidence of a neat pattern of ring formation. This is particularly evident in the distribution of manors specializing in the production of wheat and oats which were spread in virtually every part of London's supply zone, both in landlocked areas and also closer to water routes. When it comes to the production of barley, most of the few manors that specialized in it were located downstream of London along the north-eastern coastline of Kent, whereas the distribution of the few manors specializing in rye was more erratic with only some of them concentrated upstream along the Thames; in other words, even in the case of barley and rye we do not see the formation of 360° concentric rings around London defined by transportation cost isopleths.³⁴

The more relevant criterion, in terms of whether concentric rings were formed, would be production specialization in conjunction with the location of manors that disposed commercially the greatest quantities of each grain. The authors of the FTC study reproduce another set of maps outlining the commercial profile of manors included in their database. In contrast to the expectations of Figure 2 (heavy sales of barley in the majority of the supply zone, closer to London, and rye sales from the outlying periphery), the relevant maps of the FTC study reveal a very blurred picture of disposal for every single grain, with sales generated both from landlocked areas and along water routes throughout the entire region.³⁵ The only difference in this set of maps is the density of manors which is far more pronounced in the case of wheat, the most commercialized crop, as opposed to barley, oats, and rye.³⁶

In concluding this section, it is clear that the authors of the FTC study fail to recognize these discrepancies because they do not subject their data to a rigorous analysis that takes into account all the variables and parameters relevant to the spatial determination of economic rent for each grain along the lines suggested in the previous section. In regard to rye, for instance, Campbell argues that 'the range over which [it] could be effectively marketed was ... less than that of wheat, since its comparable weight but lower price meant that it was less able to bear the costs of carriage'. And, in regard to barley, 'it could be marketed at a greater distance than

³³ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 167.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 115–25, esp. figures 12, 14, 15, 16.

³⁵ Looking at manors that sold 40 per cent or over of the receipt of a particular type of grain, net of tithe and seed, the same criterion used by Campbell. It is interesting to note that in some cases heavy specialization in the production of a crop does not translate to high levels of commercial disposal. For illustrative purposes,

the production of barley was mainly concentrated in northern and eastern Kent but intermanorial transfers within monastic estates meant that this area appears less prominent in terms of its commercial disposal. See *Ibid.*, pp. 163–4; also Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 206–7 (Table 5.03).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 160–70, esp. figures 24, 26, 27, 28.

rye' and even challenge wheat, assuming it was malted, because in its latter state it commanded a higher price at a lower transportation cost.³⁷

These statements clearly reveal a misunderstanding of the concept of economic rent since its level hinges not only on prices and transportation costs but also on yields per unit of land and production costs per unit of commodity. It is true that wheat commanded higher prices than barley and rye and that its transportation cost was not much higher than those of the latter two crops. On the other hand, the production costs of barley and rye were much lower for two main reasons: first, their lower prices and higher yields per seed meant that seed requirements for the production of a unit of output (e.g., quarter) were lower; second, their higher yields per acre meant that the same unit of output could be obtained from a smaller fraction of an acre compared to wheat translating to lower labour costs (see Appendix 1). In the end, Campbell and his associates' reliance on the notion of economic rent appears highly problematic and thus it makes it necessary to broaden the discussion in order to include other potential explanatory factors.

IV

In the author's view, it is doubtful whether a model that relies primarily on market forces is an adequate instrument for explaining crop choices in the context of medieval agriculture. Instead, the interpretation of the evidence ought to include a set of multiple factors, mutually consistent, that both elaborate and expand the theoretical framework of the FTC project. The present section will provide the basic outlines of such an alternative methodology without subjecting it to a test through the use of data; such a task would entail a project of considerable scope and complexity (and perhaps of dubious feasibility when applied to a large scale), well beyond the objectives of the present paper.

An initial set of predisposing parameters

Figure 2 portrays the formation of two rings with a single crop grown in each of them, that is, barley in the ring near London superseded by rye at some distance. This seasonal monoculture, however, entails risks by rendering an estate susceptible to price fluctuations and thus necessitates a more expanded crop diversification. In addition, choosing to cultivate both a winter- and a spring-sown crop would produce the benefit of realizing savings since the use of labour and equipment is spread throughout the year, as opposed to a single season. It follows that 'the advantages of specialization do not actually prevent the formation of belts, nevertheless they prevent the production in these belts of only the single commodity whose name they bear'.³⁸

The benefits of diversification were sufficiently 'common sense' to have led manorial officials to pursue it. But what criteria became relevant in choosing specific crops? The role of edaphic (i.e., soil) conditions was a factor of great importance. We cannot establish a strict correlation between crop choices and soil types, particularly in the case of manors that contained different

³⁷ Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 220, 223.

³⁸ August Losch, *The economics of location* (1954), p. 20; see also pp. 88–9.

soil types; we do not know which land segments were cultivated and with which crops. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that there was a bias towards certain soil types when it comes to three of the main grains: barley on light to medium silts and loams, rye on shallower and lighter silts and loams, and oats on heavy or water-logged soils.³⁹

Edaphic conditions were a significant predisposing factor but the presence of certain discrepancies (e.g., rye was not invariably grown on the aforementioned soil types) indicate that there was room for some others. Rye and, to a lesser extent, oats were used as liveries and payments in kind to the manorial workforce.⁴⁰ Most importantly, a very large quantity of certain grains had to be grown and set aside for animal and human consumption. In terms of the former, oats was the preferred choice for fodder given that its production cost was far lower than any other grain (see Appendix 1). Wheat, on the other hand, was the premier grain when it came to consumer preferences, based on its attributes of calorific content, baking qualities, and taste.⁴¹ Finally, a certain quantity of barley and oats had to be grown to be malted as ale.⁴²

These three factors (edaphic conditions, consumption imperatives, payments to the workforce) go a long way in explaining the pattern on the production side, that is, the heavy dominance of wheat and oats at the expense of barley and rye. But they still fail to solve the puzzle of why wheat was the most commercialized crop, as opposed to barley and rye, despite its lower economic rent.⁴³ A re-evaluation of the evidence on the role of market forces in driving disposal decisions is therefore the next step of this alternative interpretative framework.

The London grain trade: one market or many?

The heavy commercialization of wheat seems to contradict the notion that manorial reeves acted as rational economic agents – pursuing profit maximization through crop disposal – and creates a major stumbling block to acceptance of the relevance of von Thunen's model. This conclusion is inescapable in the context of the premise that the London region was a single, unified, and well-integrated market. But was it? Here I will re-examine the question of market rationality on the part of manorial officials in light of some evidence which points strongly, though not conclusively, towards the presence of a cluster of fragmented markets within the London region. It will be argued that some wheat prices in the London region may have been well above average thus generating the most profit, despite the fact that wheat had the highest production cost.

To elaborate this point we need to review the scenario depicted in Figure 1D, in which an increase in the price of crop I increases its R-intercept and shifts its marginal rent line to the right, thus encroaching upon the rings of other crops. This scenario may have been realized during the pre-plague decades but not in the context of a single, unified regional market (as

³⁹ As was the case on Romney Marsh, the coastal marshes of Essex, and Hertfordshire. See Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 116, 120, 122, 177; Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 225. 'Soil infertility also explains the greater prominence of oats' in Breckland; see Bailey, *A marginal economy?*, p. 138.

⁴⁰ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 116, 122, 165.

⁴¹ Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 214.

⁴² For instance, a significant portion of the barley cultivated in the manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory was kept for internal consumption; see Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 121.

⁴³ The very low level of sales when it comes to oats is not an issue since both this author and the FTC study agree on its limited marketability.

depicted in Figure 2) dominated by the London wheat price functioning as 'the datum from which prices in all other parts of the territory were derived',⁴⁴ at a descending scale as distance and transportation cost increased. Instead, the rightward shift of wheat's marginal rent line at the expense of those of barley and rye may have taken place in isolated cases in the context of fragmented markets within the London region. This is suggested by the fact that wheat prices in some parts of the region were either similar to or, occasionally higher than, the London price. Specifically, the authors of the FTC study pointed out that 38 per cent of the manors in their sample recorded wheat prices higher than those in London during the period 1288–1315. The regional distribution of these demesnes is highly significant: most of them were concentrated in Kent, Surrey, Essex, Middlesex, south Buckinghamshire, eastern Hertfordshire, and around Oxford.⁴⁵ The case of Wargrave manor is indicative of these anomalies. The manor was located just a couple of miles south of Henley and its surplus wheat had ready access to the London market along the easily navigable segment of the Thames. Nevertheless, as Figure 3 shows, wheat prices at Wargrave were higher in 11 out of the 24 recorded years; and even when Wargrave prices were lower, the difference was wide enough to allow coverage of transportation cost and the emergence of an economic rent in only five years.⁴⁶ These types of anomalies are

⁴⁴ M. Chisholm, *Rural settlement and land use* (1968), p. 33.

⁴⁵ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 63–8; Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, pp. 355–6. Work on this subject, however, has produced ambivalent results. Farmer, for instance, produced regional groups of wheat prices showing them to be below the price in the Lower Thames valley (presumably synonymous with London) and to an extent that would have allowed those regions to cover the transportation cost involved in sending wheat to London. It should be noted, however, that the specific price series covers only four years and, most importantly, his broad regional groupings mask anomalies that would have become apparent with a more closely-focused approach. Such an approach is offered by Galloway in terms of wheat price differentials between London and some key locations which functioned as collection and embarkation centers for grains finding their way to the London market (Abingdon, Henley, Maidstone, Shoebury). This study does find a descending scale of prices between London and the aforementioned locations in the periphery of its supply zone. Nevertheless, the price sample refers to only a single year (1295) and, furthermore, whether the price gap between London and the other locations was sufficient to generate an economic rent, and thereby induce sales to the London market, depends on the transportation rate we adopt; using Masschaele's rates adopted in this study would not have been sufficient to induce wheat sales to London. See Farmer, 'Prices and wages', pp. 743–4; James Galloway, 'One market or many? London and the grain trade in England', in Galloway (ed.), *Trade*, pp. 28–30.

⁴⁶ That depends, once again, on the transportation rate that is adopted. Galloway argues that the transportation cost for a quarter of wheat between Wargrave and London was 3.3d. which, if accepted, would have rendered profitable the sale of wheat to the London market in nine (out of 24) years. It should be noted, however, that Galloway also verifies that Wargrave prices were higher 'at some periods' and this conclusion was extended both by him and Farmer to several other manors of the Winchester bishopric, most of them in the upper Thames valley. See Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside', pp. 367–9; Galloway, 'One market or many?', pp. 29–31. The prices of Figure 3 have been derived from M. M. Postan (with statistical notes on Winchester heriots by J. Titow), 'Heriots and prices on Winchester manors', in M. M. Postan (ed.), *Essays on medieval agriculture and general problems of the medieval economy* (1973), pp. 174–8 (Table 9.1); Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 200–2. All dates are those at the end of the accounting year to which the figures relate. Figure 3 is intended to show broad trends, as opposed to precise differentials because the authors of the two studies cite prices which are not directly comparable. On the one hand, Campbell and his associates cite prices, mostly dated, from different London markets for a particular year out of which an unweighted average has been calculated. On the other hand, Postan and Titow provide a mean annual price extracted from individual sales cited in the Winchester pipe rolls which are virtually never given a within-year date. The issue of the dating of prices plays a role in determining the respective averages because as the time progresses following a harvest prices

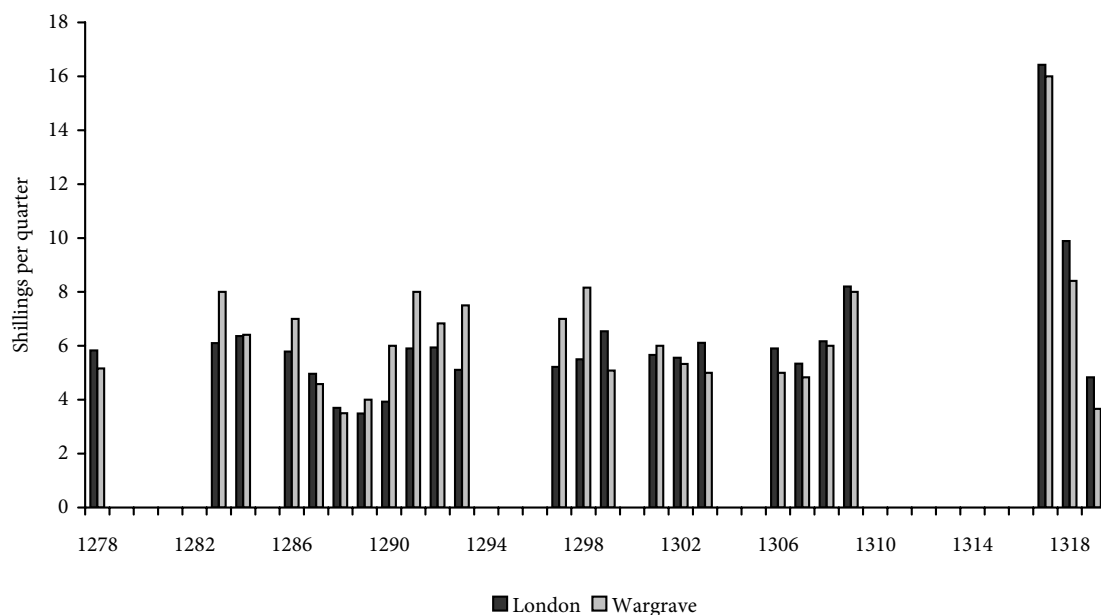


FIGURE 3. Wheat prices in London and Wargrave, 1278–1319

characteristic of not only the years around the turn of the fourteenth century but also the second quarter of it.⁴⁷

The interpretation of this evidence is not an easy task but certain remarks can be offered in the context of an ongoing debate regarding the nature of medieval markets. Price movements are reflections of the interaction between supply and demand. Given the fact that the latter is fairly constant in the short-run, the high end of regional discrepancies in the price of wheat ought to have been the outcome of local scarcities due to supply deficiencies. It is interesting to note that those areas which recorded some of the highest wheat prices happened to be the same that also recorded some of the lowest wheat yields, namely, Middlesex, Surrey, Essex, and Hertfordshire. The high prices recorded in Kent and the western segment of the Thames valley (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire) do not reflect a low level of productivity since wheat yields were either much or modestly higher respectively;⁴⁸ they may still indicate, however, a difficulty on the part of suppliers to respond to a market demand forthcoming, in addition to London,

Note 46 *continued*

tend usually (but not invariably) to climb. This problem may create a minor issue in the results when the price differential between the two locations is small. Nevertheless, it will certainly not change the overall conclusion that London prices were often lower and that, even when higher, the price gap was not large enough to cover transportation cost and generate an economic rent.

⁴⁷ Farmer's data show that wheat prices in some parts of the London region during the period 1326–48 were

either virtually identical to those in the lower Thames (presumably synonymous with the London price), as was the case in the upper Thames region and Essex, or lower (Chilterns) but not to an extent sufficient to cover transportation cost; on the other hand, prices in Kent were higher. Once again, however, Farmer's methodology should be treated with caution for the same reason pointed out in n. 45; see Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside', p. 373 (Table 4.6).

⁴⁸ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, pp. 125–8.

from a dense local population and continental markets (in the case of Kent) or from Oxford (in the case of the western Thames region).

This uneven and erratic pattern of price formation, both in regional and temporal terms, indicates the presence of high economic rents for wheat within some clusters which may well have induced sales at the local level – without the London price being relevant in this case – in the end rendering it the most commercialized crop at the expense of barley and rye.⁴⁹ The latter two crops would still have been produced and sold in some minimum quantities given that this scenario need not have had universal applicability in the London region, and given the factors previously discussed such as crop diversification to minimize risks, the influence of edaphic conditions and, most importantly, the need to produce barley for ale and the requirement for rye to pay the manorial workforce.

Overall, the evidence seems to point towards the formation of fragmented and localized markets, as opposed to a single unified one whose price structure was dominated by London's demand. This conclusion is further reinforced by the presence of significant fluctuations in the price of wheat, another criterion that is often cited to test the lack of market integration;⁵⁰ and it points towards a 'weak mercantile organization' at the level of interregional trade.⁵¹

Granted the growing evidence pointing towards the lack of integration of medieval markets, it has to be admitted that this statement is still in the process of transitioning from a conjecture to being fully validated. Assuming there is merit to it, however, can one argue that manorial officials acted rationally in pursuing the cultivation and sales of large quantities of wheat? In other words, if the Thunenesque logic is not applicable in the context of a single market, is it relevant in the context of many, fragmented markets?

The problem with this line of argument is that there were no systematic efforts in manorial accounts to calculate total or unit production cost, particularly its most prominent component (i.e., labour cost), or profit per unit of output.⁵² The implication is that manorial officials may

⁴⁹ To be precise, wheat's economic rent not only had to be high but, in addition, higher than those of other grains in order to dominate local markets. The appropriate method of analysis in pursuing further this conjecture would be a general equilibrium model that incorporates multiple local markets; the construction of such a model, however, goes well beyond the scope of this paper.

⁵⁰ Evident, for instance, in Figure 3 in regard to both London and Wargrave; see also A. J. S. Gibson and T. C. Smout, 'Regional prices and market regions: the evolution of the early modern Scottish grain market', *EcHR* 48 (1995), p. 261; Galloway, 'One market or many?', pp. 34–5; Bailey, 'Peasant welfare', pp. 235–6.

⁵¹ R. H. Britnell, *The commercialisation of English society, 1000–1500* (1993), p. 100.

⁵² Interestingly, some estates located in highly commercialized East Anglia and Kent did adopt a form of balance sheet that resembled modern notions and procedures for the calculation of profits. Specifically,

there was an effort to inquire into the sources of profitability, particularly by distinguishing its arable and pastoral components. Eminent examples of such efforts have been documented for Norwich Priory under the leadership of Henry of Lakenham, the lay estates of Clare and Bigod, as well as Canterbury Cathedral Priory. Nevertheless, beginning in the 1330s, these efforts were not characterized by continuity since accounting practices reverted back to the cruder, older methods, while the 'high-farming' phase was still going on. Generally, and Campbell concurs on this, manorial accounts were drawn in such a way as to avoid fraud, as opposed to calculating profit and its sources. See Campbell, 'Measuring the commercialization of seigneurial agriculture', pp. 191–2; see also E. Stone, 'Profit-and-loss accountancy at Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.* 12 (1962), and H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey: a study in the social and economic history of Devon* (1951), pp. 219, 243, 248; Stone, 'Medieval farm management', pp. 613, 632.

have been deciding on crop choices by taking into account only prices and transport costs, two variables easily perceived and compared, but failing to incorporate in their judgments differences in production costs. Given the level of complexity involved in calculating the latter (see Appendix 1), they may have abstained from such calculations, coming instead to the conclusions that the production costs of different crops were similar and that wheat was the most profitable crop, given its higher price and a transportation cost gradient similar to that of other grains.

In the end, if the price differential between wheat and rye or barley in these localized markets was wide enough to counterbalance the former's higher production cost, manorial officials may have been taking the right decisions in terms of crop choices but based on a faulty methodology. If that is the case, the furthest one can go is to argue that some manorial officials may have possessed commercial astuteness and traits of proto-capitalist behaviour, but not the level of sophistication that characterizes the decisions of capitalist producers and which is demanded by von Thunen's model.

V

The present paper had limited objectives and scope, that is, to expose the conceptual flaws found in the FTC study by applying a particular model to explain the choice of crops among manorial estates in the London region. The resolution of this issue bears relevance to the controversy about the role of markets in driving production and disposal strategies on the part of manorial estates. Despite the fact that the demesne sector accounted for no more than a third of the total arable area and that peasant involvement in the market was likely to have been driven by different motives and constraints, the rewards of further work on this subject would be enormous.

In the form of some final thoughts, it would be useful to reiterate the main points of contention and agreement and suggest some venues for further research. The present paper and the authors of the FTC study are in agreement when it comes to the role of certain predisposing factors, such as ecology and soil type, that 'influenced rather than determined the pattern of cultivation' in the London region.⁵³ But beyond these predisposing factors, the real issue of contention is the role of market forces. For analytical purposes, it would be useful to discuss this role in determining production and disposal decisions separately, although the two were obviously related.

In terms of production decisions, Campbell's position on this issue has generated the semblance of conceptual contradictions given his statements that 'the basic consumption needs of seigneurial households still had first claim upon demesne production on many estates';⁵⁴ nevertheless, 'it was the market via its influence upon economic rent which largely determined the crops produced'.⁵⁵ Campbell's apparent ambivalence on this issue may stem from his failure to appreciate that estate owners did not simply engage in 'basic' consumption; instead, their

⁵³ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 176.

⁵⁴ Campbell, 'Measuring the commercialization of seigneurial agriculture', p. 186, emphasis added; see also *id.*, 'Matching supply and demand: crop production and

disposal by English demesnes in the century of the Black Death', *JECH* 57 (1997), pp. 847–8, 853.

⁵⁵ Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 203.

consumption reached extravagant levels. Dyer, among others, has documented varying, but still extraordinary, levels of expenditure, depending on the number of retained servants (from a couple to several dozen in the case of higher nobility) and guests visiting periodically during the year, and the degree of travel of the lord and his companions from manor to manor, in the process 'eating the estate produce or using up the accumulated cash for rents'.⁵⁶ The most prominent cost of such lifestyles was the amount spent on food, which could amount to between a quarter and half of a household's budget, although even more extravagant levels have been recorded. Dyer stresses that estate owners were 'influenced by ideas about consumption that put emphasis on largesse' and despite the fact that he qualifies his statement by noting that such ideas were 'tempered always by a practical restraint and occasional moral qualms',⁵⁷ nevertheless, 'basic' in terms of characterizing seigneurial consumption is clearly a misnomer. The evidence regarding excessive consumption has become even stronger through the work of Biddick, which established that cropping practices in several manors were strongly correlated to consumption patterns but not to prices.⁵⁸

When it comes to the role of markets in shaping disposal strategies, the FTC study notes that

a concentric pattern of specialization in the production and sale of different types of grain ... on the lines of that predicted by the von Thunen model, is approximated in only a part of the region which supplied London with grain ... [but] that pattern lacks the immediate spatial clarity envisaged in the idealized world of his Isolated State.⁵⁹

In fact, it has been argued here that the lack of clarity is far more pronounced, assuming the London market is treated as a single entity. It is useful to reiterate once more that the Achilles' heel of the FTC study is its faulty methodology, that is, its presumption that the production costs of different crops were the same and, therefore, economic rents were largely determined by selling prices. It made no attempt to calculate such production costs.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ C. C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later Middle Ages: social change in England, c.1200–1500* (1989), pp. 27–108. The quote is from p. 54.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵⁸ Correlation coefficients between cropped acreages and the consumption levels of wheat (but also of other grains) were very high among several manors of the Winchester bishopric, whereas correlation coefficients between cropped acreages and prices were, by and large, either very low or negative, including manors that were within London's core supply zone (e.g., Brightwell, West Wycombe, Witney); see Biddick (with Bijleveld), 'Agrarian productivity', pp. 106–13. This study refers to the early thirteenth century; however, see also Biddick, *Other economy*.

⁵⁹ Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 178.

⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the same faulty methodology is followed in other studies that touch upon the same subject. In a study of Hinderclay manor, Stone concludes that

sowing strategies 'were very effective' by correlating the sown acreages of each crop with the movement of their prices and how the latter affected gross returns per acre, in the process ignoring relative costs. Of course, economic rent (or profit) is not synonymous with gross returns per acre. An even more objectionable methodology is followed in Lee's attempt to test the relevancy of von Thunen's model in the provisioning policies of two Cambridge colleges during the period 1450–1560. Lee maps the distances between Cambridge and different points in its hinterland where provisions came from, in the form of fuel and food supplies (including wheat and malt barley, the only two crops he considers), and then simply contrasts the zoning pattern that emerges with that outlined in von Thunen's model. No attempt is made to calculate the economic rents (or even to look at relative prices) of the different commodities. See, Stone, 'Medieval farm management', pp. 619–25; Lee, 'Feeding the colleges'.

The present paper wishes to suggest two alternative, but largely irreconcilable, explanations whose validity can only be assessed with further research. First, the evidence discussed here regarding the spatial configuration and erratic nature of wheat prices suggests that there is no such thing as the London grain market but a configuration of fragmented localized markets, lacking institutional maturity. Were the marginal rent lines of crops in local markets different from the ones drawn in this paper because London prices were irrelevant? Von Thunen's model is a useful analytical tool in resolving this issue if it is applied to individual manors with enough data to reconstruct the various parameters and variables of the model. It is plausible, I suspect, that some manorial officials may have acted as proto-capitalists taking production decisions based on unsophisticated judgments, that is, focusing on the movement of relative prices, as opposed to adopting a modern methodology of profit calculation. If so, choices would be 'irrational' (from a neoclassical point of view) but the role of markets would be relevant to a degree still to be determined.

But another possible explanation, hardly explored by any scholar, is the relationship between the type and volume of crop disposal, on the one hand, and the degree of seigneurial prerogatives on the part of individual estates, on the other. Campbell's analysis of the *IPMs* and the *Nonae* Rolls has revealed that only a fairly modest portion of seigneurial revenues were contributed by the exploitation of demesne lands (30 per cent), the remaining coming from rents, tithes, and banalities.⁶¹ In other words, manorial wealth was based much more on property ownership and political prerogatives and compulsion than on managerial skills. It is important to note that revenues from demesne lands declined in significance as we move from the estates of the gentry, crown and nobility to those of greater clergy and it is useful to recall that the presence of the latter was particularly noticeable in the London region. We would not be violating common sense by stating that there may have been an inverse relationship between the size of seigneurial prerogatives and the incentive for landlords to use the market as a source of wealth creation; in other words, access to these prerogatives may have created a widespread, though not necessarily universal, indifference towards profit maximization, the reverse also holding true. Despite the fact that these two sources of wealth creation are not necessarily contradictory, unresponsiveness to the presence of economic rent in the market place did not incur the same penalties as in a capitalist economy; in contrast, in the abstract world of the *Isolated State*, producers would have to act in a fashion much more similar to modern economic agents. In the end, pursuing this line of research may prove that the attempt to apply von Thunen's model is problematic even in the context of fragmented markets in the London region.⁶²

⁶¹ B. M. S. Campbell, 'The agrarian problem in the early fourteenth century', *Past and Present* 188 (2005), p. 19, Table 3.

⁶² Campbell has talked in his various publications

about the role of institutional rigidities, relegating them to a factor of secondary importance, but has never elaborated on this term and its impact on production decisions.

APPENDIX 1
Production and distribution costs of various grains

TABLE A1. Production and distribution costs per quarter of various grains (all figures in pence)

	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Rye</i>
Harvesting ^a	3.47	3.47	3.47	3.47
Gleaning ^b	0.19	0.11	0.15	0.14
Carting and stacking ^c	0.2	0.17	0.14	0.19
Threshing and winnowing ^d	2.5	2	0.87	2.5
Carting and spreading manure ^e	1.14	0.69	0.93	0.87
Carting and spreading marl ^f	7.83	4.74	6.39	5.97
Ploughing ^g	3.16	1.91	2.57	2.41
Sowing ^h	0.19	0.11	0.15	0.14
Harrowing ⁱ	0.38	0.23	0.31	0.29
Weeding ^j	0.57	0.34	0.46	0.43
Total labour cost ^k	19.63	13.77	15.44 (9.05)	16.41
Capital cost ^l	5.54	3.89	4.36 (2.55)	4.63
Seed ^m	18.70	13	11.32	11.87
Administrative cost ⁿ	4.38	3.06	3.11 (2.29)	3.29
Total production cost	48.25	33.72	34.23 (25.21)	36.2
Dealers' profit ^o	14.04	10.67	6.04	11.65
Production cost + dealers' profit	62.29	44.39	40.27 (31.25)	47.85

Notes:

^a Harvesting cost is found by taking one quarter (= 8 bushels) and dividing by 5, that is, the number of bushels one worker can reap in one day. There are a number of methods for extrapolating productivity rates per acre and per man-day when it comes to harvesting but I have adopted estimates provided by Walter of Henley; for a discussion of these methods, see Harry Kitsikopoulos, 'Standards of living and capital formation in pre-plague England: a peasant budget model', *ECHR* 53 (2000), p. 255.⁶³ The product of the division (1.6) gives us the number of man-days needed to harvest a quarter of grains and it is subsequently multiplied by a daily wage of 2.17*d*. The latter figure is derived from the decennial means of reaping wages during the period 1250–1347 based on a very comprehensive sample provided by Farmer; see his 'Prices and wages', p. 768 (Table 7.7). Farmer's figures refer to reaping cost per acre, which has been converted to a daily wage by dividing his average by 2.5, that is, the number of man-days needed to reap one acre (again following Walter of Henley).

^b In the absence of reliable data on gleaning, a productivity rate of 6 acres per man-day has been adopted (assumed to be a reasonable approximation), and a daily wage of 1.5*d*., since that was the typical remuneration of a common worker during the pre-plague period; for the latter, see Dyer, *Standards*, p. 117, and N. W. Alcock, 'An East Devon manor in the later Middle Ages', *Trans. Devonshire Association* 102 (1970), pp. 171–2. The area necessary to glean

⁶³ Stone provides a few figures from Wisbech manor showing that the productivity rate varied in the range of 3.90–7.42 bushels per man-day depending on the composition of the labour force in terms of hired labour vs. customary services, the former being more productive; see D. Stone, 'The productivity of hired and customary labour: evidence from Wisbech Barton in the fourteenth century' *ECHR* 50 (1997), p. 652.

in order to obtain one quarter of wheat, barley, oats, and rye was 0.76, 0.46, 0.62, and 0.58 acres respectively, given the gross yields per acre for each crop cited in Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 40 (Table 2, column 4, internal method). The gross yields used in this paper are inclusive of tithe. I have decided to include it because tithe may be a deduction from the point of view of an individual manor but not for the London region as a whole, which is the focus of the paper. That is because some manors did have to pay tithe but others were in receipt of it or had both to pay it while at the same time they were receiving it. Unlike seed – which is a genuine cost item from the point of view of the region as a whole, since it is lost in production – the quantity of tithe grain was retained within the region and 'was an important source of commercial supply ... sometimes exceeding in volume the amount sold directly by the demesnes'; see *Ibid.*, p. 74, esp. n. 113. Finally, even if yields net of tithe were used, it would not affect the relative positions of the marginal rent lines in Figure 2 since the deduction would be proportionally the same for each grain, that is, ten per cent of the harvest.

- ^c In the absence of a comprehensive set of data, the daily wage of a carter (1.17*d.*) has been calculated by finding an arithmetical average from figures referring mainly to annual wages in several manors and then dividing by 270 days (that is, excluding Sundays and holidays). The following sources were used: Farmer, 'Prices and wages, 1350–1500', p. 480; K. Ugawa, 'The economic development of some Devon manors in the thirteenth century', *Trans. Devonshire Association* 94 (1962), p. 670; Ian Kershaw, *Bolton Priory: the economy of a northern monastery, 1286–1325* (1973), p. 55. The productivity rate varied based on the distance between the fields and storing facilities, but it is assumed to have been the loading, transporting, and unloading of two cartloads (2,400 lbs) per man-day; for the loading capacity of medieval carts, see Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 214. The cost of carting a quarter depended on the weight of each grain type. One quarter of wheat was 424 lbs, of barley 368 lbs, of oats 288 lbs, and of rye 408 lbs; see *Ibid.*, p. 215 (Table 5.04). Each one of these weights has been divided by 2,400 and then multiplied by 1.17.
- ^d The figures are based on payments in two manors cited in Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 112, n. 5. In the absence of rye figures, the one for maslin was used, a mixture of wheat and rye. An arithmetical average was taken for the barley and oats figures.
- ^e The productivity rate can only be conjectured but a reasonable extrapolation can be derived from manorial practices. At Balsham carrying 2½ cartloads of dung was considered to be one day's labour service; see H. E. Hallam, 'Farming techniques: eastern England', in Hallam (ed.), *Agrarian History*, II, p. 285. It follows that it would take about one man-day to both cart and spread one load. In the absence of reliable data, a daily wage of 1.5*d.* has been assigned (as in note b) but the latter figure has been adjusted to the acreage necessary to produce one quarter of each grain type (by multiplying the respective figures in note b above with the daily wage).
- ^f The cost of marling, easily the most expensive task in the agrarian routine, is fairly well-documented in manorial records. A cost of 8.59*s.* (103.08*d.*) per acre has been calculated, as an arithmetical average, and then the latter figure has been adjusted to the fraction of an acre necessary to produce one quarter of each grain type (see entry 2 above); the product was multiplied by 0.10 based on the assumption that marling was undertaken once every 10 years, as was the practice among some estates (e.g., Bury St. Edmunds). The data were extracted from the following sources: Hallam, 'Farming techniques: eastern England', pp. 285–6, and 'Farming techniques: southern England', in Hallam (ed.), *Agrarian History*, II, pp. 347–8; Eleanor Searle, *Lordship and community: Battle Abbey and its banlieu* (1974), p. 291; Smith, *Canterbury*, pp. 136–7; M. Mate, 'Medieval agrarian practices: the determining factors', *AgHR* 33 (1985), p. 23; P. F. Brandon, 'Farming techniques: south-eastern England', in Hallam (ed.) *Agrarian History*, II, p. 314, and *id.*, 'Demesne arable farming in coastal Sussex during the later Middle Ages', *AgHR* 19 (1971) p. 134; and Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 360.
- ^g Productivity rates, when it comes to ploughing, varied between half and one acre employing a team of two men; a rate of 0.75 acres per day has been adopted here. The daily wage of the ploughman was estimated by taking the annual wage, estimated by Thorold Rogers, and dividing by 270 days (as in note c above). It comes to 1.56*d.* or 3.12*d.* for the team. The latter figure has been adjusted to the acreage needed to produce one quarter of each grain type (see note b above). For relevant sources, see Searle, *Lordship*, p. 308, n. 9; J. Langdon, *Horses, oxen and technological innovation: the use of draught animals in English farming from 1066–1500* (1986), pp. 160–1; C. C. Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a changing society: the estates of the bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540* (1980), p. 102.
- ^h There are no sufficient data when it comes to productivity rates or daily wages regarding sowing; in light of it, a rate of 6 acres per man-day at a daily wage of 1.5*d.* has been adopted (representing the typical wage of a common worker) and the latter has been adjusted to the acreage needed to produce one quarter of each grain type (see note b above).

- ⁱ There is very meager evidence when it comes to the productivity rate for harrowing. A reference regarding labour services in an Essex manor indicates a rate of two acres per man-day. However, given the low productivity of labour services, as opposed to wage labour, and the fact that later evidence (from the nineteenth century) suggests double this rate, it has been decided to adopt a rate of three acres per man-day; see Langdon, *Horses, oxen, and technological innovation*, pp. 162–3. The lack of sufficient data on wages forces us to adopt the generic figure of 1.5*d.*, which has been adjusted to the acreage needed to produce each grain type (see note b above).
- ^j Productivity rates for weeding can be derived by dividing piece rates by daily wages. In this case, however, a figure of two acres per man-day was adopted based on evidence from Wisbech manor which shows some variation around this figure depending on whether hired or customary labour was used. The daily wage is taken as 1.5*d.* and then adjusted to the acreage needed to produce each grain type (as in note b). See Stone, 'Productivity', p. 652; C. C. Dyer, *Warwickshire farming, 1349–c.1520: preparations for agricultural revolution* (1981), p. 15.
- ^k Total labour cost for oats is calculated with and without (the figure in parenthesis) the cost of marling. The acreage under oats was rarely, if ever, treated with marl. The same distinction is made in subsequent entries.
- ^l The capital cost figures have been calculated by assuming that they comprised 28.25 per cent of total labour cost based on a weighted average of the respective proportions of the two kinds of cost at the 12 manors of Bolton priory and three manors of the earl of Devon (Tiverton, Topsham, Plympton). See Harry Kitsikopoulos, 'Urban demand and agrarian productivity in pre-plague England: reassessing the relevancy of von Thunen's model', *Agricultural History* 77 (2003), pp. 517–21 (Appendix B); Kershaw, *Bolton priory*, pp. 31–3, 35–7, 47–9, 58, 119.
- ^m The calculation of seed is based on gross yields and seeding rates cited in Campbell *et al.*, *Medieval capital*, p. 40 (Table 2, columns 1 and 4) but adjusted to get the seed requirements for the production of one quarter of each grain type. Grain prices have been found by first calculating the London wheat price (1288–1309) at 70.24*d.* per quarter from data cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 200–2 (Table 18). Subsequently, the prices of other grains were derived based on their price ratios relative to wheat (during the period 1288–1315) cited in Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 239 (Table 5.07, entry on FTC counties).
- ⁿ Calculated by adding 10 per cent to labour and capital cost (including the value of seed) which conforms to a similar estimate by Gregory Clark, albeit in relation to enclosure projects; see his 'The cost of capital and medieval agricultural technique', *Explorations in Economic History* 25 (1988), p. 278.
- ^o Assuming a 20 per cent commission on the final price. Disposing grains by selling to dealers was more common than direct marketing through the use of customary carting services; see Galloway and Murphy, 'Feeding the city', pp. 6–7.

Milk as payment for farm labour: the dairy economy of a Swedish estate, 1874–1913^{*}

by Carin Martiin

Abstract

The development of Swedish commercial dairy production in the late nineteenth century should not be regarded as a distinct shift from one kind of production to another, nor did it imply a change from a subsistence to a cash economy. On the basis of an investigation of an estate archive from Krusenberg, this article aims at a more nuanced interpretation of this process. It reveals that production for self-sufficiency continued side-by-side with commercial butter production. The use of milk on the estate increased over time, chiefly through the continued use of milk as a means of payment for farm labour. The strategy on this particular estate illustrates a more general tendency in Swedish agriculture around the turn of the century.

The dairy sector in Sweden expanded enormously during the second half of the nineteenth century. Production of butter increased dramatically and butter exports, chiefly to Britain, became of great economic importance. In the mid-1890s, they represented as much as ten per cent of the total Swedish exports by value. At the same time domestic urban demand for dairy products increased and contributed to an expanding market for milk, butter and cheese.

Increasing market demand offered new opportunities for the livestock and dairy industry, which had previously been characterized by a subsistence orientation. Milk and milk products had fulfilled various social purposes within traditional Swedish rural society: milk served as poor relief, cheese was made collaboratively by the women in the parish, and beautifully ornamented butter was displayed at weddings and funerals. Small-scale farmhouse cheese- and butter-making for commercial purposes did exist in Sweden, but it did not play as important a role in the farming economy as it did in England.¹ In traditional Swedish livestock and dairy production, cows and milk were regarded as a part of the female sphere. With the new commercial importance of dairy production, a new status was brought into the dairy sector and this awakened male interest.

Official statistics show large increases in the number of cows, milk yield per head, total milk

^{*} I am grateful to Janken Myrdal, Professor in Agricultural and Rural History, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala and Johan Söderberg, Professor in Economic History, Stockholm University, for helpful comments on the manuscript.

¹ A similar observation is described in Lena Sommestad, 'Från mejerska till mejerist. En studie av mejeriyrkets maskuliniseringsprocess' ['From dairy maid to dairyman. A study of the process of masculinisation in professional dairying'], Ph.D thesis, University of Uppsala, 1992, p. 47, n. 8.

production, number of dairy plants and volume of milk produced during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth.² These improvements have given the impression of a rapid and far-reaching switch from a subsistence, household-orientated economy into commercial dairying. In this article I propose a more nuanced interpretation of the change. Without questioning its scale, it is argued that the shift was incomplete and characterized by a combination of self-sufficiency and commercial dairying. The argument is based on a detailed investigation of archive material from a Swedish estate, Krusenberg, for the years 1874–1913.³ By the end of this period, commercial dairy production was well established at Krusenberg but it had not led to the abandonment of the subsistence dairy economy. On the contrary, the archive reveals that increased commercial milk production was accompanied by a rise in the use of milk and milk products as payments in kind.

Although the study is based on Swedish materials, it may also be found interesting from an international perspective. It is likely that butter from Krusenberg found its way into the export trade to England and consequently affected the British dairy market. The situation here has been tellingly described by Joan Thirsk: 'a new phase opened after 1874, when the farmers who knew all the hazards implicit in war, bad weather and restrictive tariffs, faced another enemy – not unknown before but now suddenly grown giant-like in strength and stature – foreign competition'.⁴

Previous research in English concerning milk and dairy production during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has discussed the motives for commercialization, the timescale over which the commercialization of dairy products took place and the consequences of an enlarged male interest in an exclusively female sphere.⁵ Attention has also been paid to the shift from commercial small-scale farmhouse cheese and butter production to deliveries of commercial liquid milk.⁶ Previous accounts of the restructuring of dairying have however not

² For the number of cattle, see BISOS, Official Swedish Statistics, Arable Farming and Animal Husbandry. For milk yields, Carin Israelsson (now Martiin), 'Kor och människor. Nötkreatursskötsel och besättningsstorlekar på torp och herrgårdar, 1850–1914' ['Dairy cattle and people: Cattle husbandry and herd sizes at cottages and estates, 1850–1914'], Ph.D thesis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, 2005, p. 61f. For the number of dairy plants and volumes of milk delivered to them, Gustaf Liljhagen, *Svensk mejeridrifts-statistik för andelsmejerier* [Swedish [Dairy statistics, co-operative dairies] (published annually 1905–12) and official Swedish statistics, Dairy Statistics, 1913–39. Relatively complete Swedish agricultural statistics were collected from 1865. From this year onwards, the number of cows is relatively well established but figures for commercial dairy production are patchy until 1913.

³ With regard to dairy production, the Krusenberg archive is the most comprehensive and complete of all the farm archives at the Regional Archive in Uppsala. The Krusenberg archive was also studied for my doctoral thesis, 'Kor och människor'. The document chiefly used

here, the dairy journal, D4A:6, will simply be referred to as 'dairy journal'.

⁴ Joan Thirsk, *English peasant farming. The agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor to recent times* (1957), p. 198.

⁵ See Joanna Bourke, 'Dairywomen and affectionate wives: women in the Irish dairy industry, 1890–1914', *AgHR* 38 (1990), pp. 149–64; T. W. Fletcher, 'Lancashire livestock farming during the Great Depression', *AgHR* 9 (1961), pp. 17–42; C. Hallas, 'Supply responsiveness in dairy farming: some regional considerations', *AgHR* 39 (1991), pp. 1–16; Bodil K. Hansen, 'Rural women in late nineteenth-century Denmark', *J. Peasant Studies*, 9 (1982), pp. 225–40; Sally McMurry, 'Women's work in agriculture: divergent trends in England and America, 1800 to 1930', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992), pp. 248–70; Lena Sommestad, 'Able dairymaids and proficient dairymen: education and de-feminization in the Swedish dairy industry', *Gender and History* 4 (1992), pp. 34–48; Sally McMurry and Lena Sommestad, 'Farm daughters and industrialization: a comparative analysis of dairying in New York and Sweden,

discussed the survival of a subsistence dairying economy alongside the nascent commercial economy, which is what we find at Krusenberg and, it is suggested, in Sweden generally.

I

The archive from Krusenberg offers material for a comprehensive study of an estate with mixed agricultural production. In common with other large farms at this time, Krusenberg was characterized by increased concentration on dairy and feed production. Some commercial horticultural production was also undertaken.

The estate was well located, with good sea connections and, from 1866, railway communications to Stockholm and Uppsala, respectively 60 kilometres south and 15 kilometres north-west of the estate. Figure 1 illustrates Krusenberg with its arable land, forests and numerous poor settlements. The total estate area covered as much as a third of the small rural parish of Alsike, characterized by a mosaic of arable land, small pastures, exposed rock and extensive pine forests. Despite its dominant position in the parish, Krusenberg may be regarded as a middle-sized estate, with 300 hectares of arable land, 20 hectares of pasture, seven hectares of garden and 600 hectares of forest. In 1896 about three quarters of the arable land was used for feed production: hay, oats, barley, leguminous plants, potatoes and roots. No information has been found about earlier cultivation, but Krusenberg almost certainly followed the general Swedish trend of increasing the production of fodder-crops for cattle in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Animal production was dominated by the dairy herd, but horses, oxen, bulls, sheep, pigs and poultry were also found on the estate.⁷

Krusenberg had two proprietors during the period under discussion. Carl Cederström died in 1892, but the responsibility for the management of the estate was transferred to his son, Emanuel Cederström, in 1890. At first sight, the most important innovations in dairy production appear to have been introduced by the older man who invested in a dairy and a cowshed during the 1870s. A closer study reveals that further changes were implemented by Emanuel Cederström in the early 1890s.

Note 6 continued

1860–1920', *J. Women's History* 10 (1998), pp. 137–64; Kirsti Niskanen, 'Modernisation revisited: market structures and competent farmers in Södermanland county, Sweden, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', *Rural Hist.* 8 (1997), pp. 175–93; D. Taylor, 'Growth and structural change in the English dairy industry, c.1860–1930', *AgHR* 35 (1987), pp. 47–64; id., 'The English dairy industry, 1860–1930: the need for a reassessment' *AgHR* 22 (1974), pp. 153–59; N. Verdon, 'Women and the dairy industry in England, c.1800–1939' (paper presented at the XIVth International Economic History Congress in Helsinki, Aug. 2006); E. Whetham, 'Supply responsiveness in dairy farming: a note', *AgHR* 39 (1991), pp. 169–70; and M. Winstanley, 'Industrialization

and the small farm: family and household economy in nineteenth-century Lancashire', *Past and Present* 152 (1996), pp. 157–95.

⁶ See Hallas, 'Supply responsiveness', Taylor, 'English dairy industry' and id., 'Growth and structural change', Verdon, 'Women and the dairy industry' and Whetham, 'Supply responsiveness'.

⁷ Regional Archive, Uppsala, Primary statistics, F4A:14, including all crofts and two smaller farms. Statistics were collected by The Agricultural Society of Stockholm County as a primary source for the official Swedish statistics. Exact proportions between crops for human and animal use cannot be stated because some crops may have been used for both human and animal purposes.

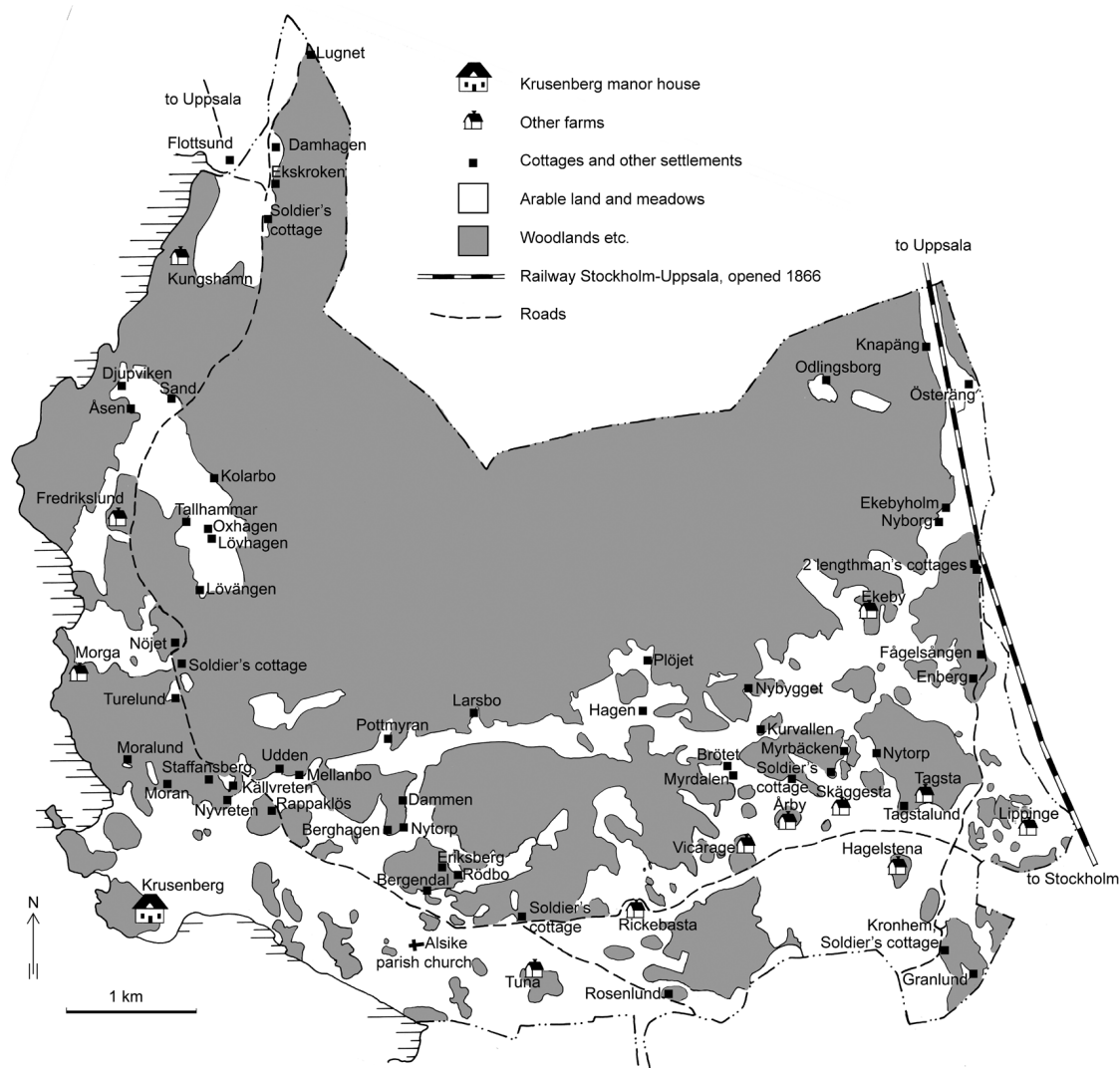


FIGURE 1. Map illustrating the area of the Krusenberg estate. The manor house, farm buildings and some workers dwellings are found down to the left. Crofts are scattered over a wide area. White indicates arable land, including meadows, and grey wooded land.

Illustration: Karin Hallgren, Agricultural and Rural History, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Sources: The map has been constructed with the help of several maps: The Research Archive at the Swedish Board of National Land Survey, A3-2:3 1894, Gävle; a privately owned map of Krusenberg, 1841-43; a map of Alsike parish 1895 and mapping of the hundred Ärlinghundra with Alsike parish, 1895, DVD, The Swedish Board of National Land Survey, 2003.

According to an estate inventory of 1892 made after the death of Carl Cederström, farming was the main source of income for the family, although Cederström also owned other rural property and a flat in the very centre of Stockholm. The city and country households were closely connected. The proprietor's family moved between the two, goods were transported



FIGURE 2. Krusenberg manor house. *Photo, Carin Martiin, 2008.*

from one to another and the staff were occasionally transferred from the one household to the other.⁸ The aristocratic character of the family is illustrated by Emanuel Cederström's membership of the county agricultural society.⁹ Membership may indicate an interest in progressive agriculture, but a close study of the Krusenberg estate archive reveals that neither agriculture nor dairying at Krusenberg were outstanding.¹⁰ As well as the Cederström family at the manor house (Figure 2), a large number of other people lived on the estate, some of them close to the manor house or the home farm, but many at crofts and other scattered settlements. These inhabitants and the estate labour force are described later.

II

Dairy production at Krusenberg can be followed from the 1860s, although sources are patchy until November 1873 after which the archive provides excellent opportunities for studying the dairy economy. The commercial importance of dairy production started to grow in the mid-1860s. During this decade cash income from the dairy rose from seven to 20 per cent of total farm income, although grain remained the most important source of income at this time.¹¹

In the early 1870s, a new dairy was brought into use. At the end of the decade the dairy cattle

⁸ Regional Archive, Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, F3:1 (estate inventory, 1892).

⁹ *Uppsala läns hushållningssällskaps handlingar, 1879–81* [Uppsala County Agricultural Society, 1879–81], p. 153.

¹⁰ Among other observations, many cows had long dry periods and the milk/butter ratio was relatively low.

Regional Archives, Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, D4:2 (stable journal) and dairy journal.

¹¹ Regional Archives, Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, cash journal, G2A:2. The book-keeping year was Nov.–Oct. In this article the period Nov. 1873–Oct. 1874 is treated as 1874 and so on.



FIGURE 3. Farm buildings at Krusenberg including the old cowshed (white walls) where dairy production took place from the 1870s to the late twentieth century. *Photo: Carin Martiin, 2008.*

were moved into a large new building (Figure 3). From then on, commercial dairy production at Krusenberg was well established. The number of milch cows increased from about 30 in the 1860s to more than 80 in the 1890s. It took about fifteen years for the herd size to reach its maximum and for the cowshed to be fully utilized; a result of increased breeding of heifers after Emanuel Cederström inherited the estate.¹²

From 1874 to 1913 milk production increased 270 per cent, peaking in 1909, when 155 tons were produced. From around 1910 the trend was reversed, with a decrease in the number of dairy cows, reduced volumes of milk produced and declining dairy income. This downturn is specific to Krusenberg and does not mirror any general tendency in the market. No clear explanation for these changes has been found other than possibly a reduced interest in the dairy business by the Cederström family. So whilst production peaked in 1909, the following years were marked by a ten-fold increase in the sale of cream, probably to another dairy, and at the end of 1913 the estate dairy seems to have been shut down. By analogy with changes elsewhere, the processing of milk from Krusenberg may then have been transferred from the private estate dairy to a co-operative dairy factory.¹³

¹² Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, D4:1, D4:2 (stable journals). The number of dairy cows varied slightly from year to year. The size of the cowshed has been estimated with the help of a map (Krusenberg farm archive) and personal inspection of the building, which was used for dairy cattle until the late twentieth century.

¹³ Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive,

D2:1 (inventory) and Official dairy statistics, 1913–39. The transition from private to co-operative dairy plants has been discussed by Kirsti Niskanen, 'Godsägare, småbrukare och jordbrukets modernisering Södermanlands län, 1875–1935' ['Large farmers, small farmers and the modernisation of agriculture, Södermanland county, 1875–1935'], Ph.D thesis, University of Stockholm, 1995, p. 41.

A detailed dairy journal was kept throughout the period of commercial dairying at Krusenberg, from 1874 to 1913, and this forms the chief source for this paper. It records the quantities of milk produced and delivered to the dairy, and the ways in which it was utilized. An audit of the source confirms its essential reliability. Almost all milk was transported from the cowshed to the dairy, weighted in and registered, irrespective of whether the products were intended for sale or for internal use. No noticeable volumes seem to have been received from other herds.¹⁴

III

Milk is a flexible product which can be processed into a number of value-added products. This can be quickly rehearsed with reference to dairying at Krusenberg.

Except for milk intended to be consumed fresh, all milk at Krusenberg was processed into cream and skimmed milk. (No cheese production was noticed in the dairy journal after the first few years.¹⁵) The five products which were handled at the dairy are as follows and the relations between them are illustrated in Figure 4.

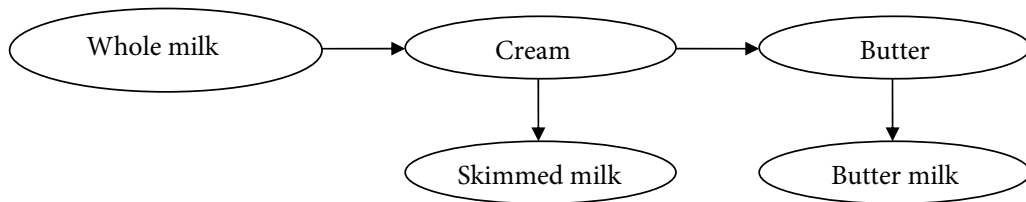


FIGURE 4. Milk products produced at Krusenberg.

1. *Whole milk*. The most valuable form of milk and the basis of all the others.
2. *Cream* should be regarded as an intermediate form, made in the process of turning whole milk to butter, and only small quantities of fresh cream were sold or consumed in the estate household.
3. *Butter* was the most valuable and tradable of the products made on the estate.
4. *Skimmed milk* was an important by-product of the creaming process where the cream was skimmed from the milk.
5. *Buttermilk* was a by-product of churning of cream into butter.

All the products in Figure 4 were sold but, as will be discussed later, all also had roles within the estate economy (Table 2).

¹⁴ Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, D4:1, D4:2 (stable journals) and dairy journal. The farm at Kungshamn was also owned by the Cederström family but had a separate dairy (F3:1, estate inventory). Obviously Krusenberg had a so-called estate dairy, processing milk only from the estate. This was one of four main categories of dairies in Sweden: the others estate dairies which also processed milk from other farms; dairies

owned by private companies; and cooperative dairies (Official dairy statistics, 1913–39, and Niskanen, 'Godsägare, småbrukare ...', pp. 38ff).

¹⁵ The dairy journal has a few early references to cheese production, but thereafter no cheese at all was recorded. Receipts from purchase of cheese from Uppsala confirms that cheese was not produced on the estate (F3:1, estate inventory).

Dairying can be regarded as a closed system where milk is separated into different products without anything being added or taken away (except, in butter-making, salt and, eventually, colour). This means that the total weight of the five products equals with weight of the initial whole milk. Figures 5 to 10 are all based on the weight of butter, skimmed milk etc. produced and recorded in the dairy journal. This is one of several methods which can be used to analyse the production and use of dairy products but it conceals the differing value of the products, for example between one kilo of butter and one of skimmed milk.

The separation of whole milk into dairy products of varying economic values, durability and potential usefulness implies that the attention given to each reflected management decisions of great importance. Yet, the efficiency with which butterfat was extracted from milk did not receive much attention from successive owners of Krusenberg. During the years 1874–1913, the ratio of milk and butter varied more than 25 per cent from year to year. In kilos, it varied between 25.2 and 37.6 kilos, with an average of 31.3 kilos of milk to produce one kilo of butter. A sudden improvement occurred in the early 1890s, but then again the ratio increased and was relatively high even in the 1910s.¹⁶ Comparisons with the general Swedish milk:butter ratio must be restricted to the period 1905–10 when the first official figures, which only covered about half of Swedish dairies, were collected. These figures present an average of 26.0 kilos of milk to one kilo of butter, about ten per cent better than the average of 28.3 at Krusenberg between 1905 and 1910. On this measure Krusenberg should not be regarded as a model of efficient butter production in the early years of the century.¹⁷

A low level of technology at the dairy stands out as a possible reason for the low level of butter production achieved at Krusenberg. According to the estate inventory from 1892, the dairy technology was based on manual creaming and hand-driven butter kernels, which were then old-fashioned, a decade after the introduction of the DeLaval separator. In April 1895 a dairy adviser, Gustav Bohm, visited the estate dairy and pointed out three technological problems: too much cream was poured into each churn, intervals between the churnings were too long, and the indoor temperature was too low in wintertime. Bohm suggested some new investment, but did not go so far as to recommend the purchase of a separator, which would have been appropriate by this time. As far as may be seen from the milk:butter ratio, Bohm's advice did not result in any tangible improvements.¹⁸ It may also be suggested that out-moded technology and low levels of butter production were linked to the employment of women. Lena Sommestad has demonstrated that the adoption of modern technology resulted in a redefinition of the gendered division of labour in Swedish dairying.¹⁹ Such a process though only really applies to the larger dairy plants in the decades *after* the period studied in this article and is probably not relevant to a small estate farm at this date.

The poor average milk:butter ratio and its yearly fluctuations may also be explained by a lack of ambition in dairy production. This is indicated by the fact that the dairy maids stayed

¹⁶ Dairy journal.

¹⁷ Liljhagen, *Svensk mejeridrifts-statistik* ..., based on reports from cooperative dairies in about half of all Swedish counties; Dairy journal.

¹⁸ Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, F3:1

(estate inventory); Sommestad, 'Från mejerska till mejerist', p. 48; D4:2 (stable journal).

¹⁹ Lena Sommestad, 'Rethinking gender and work: rural women in the Western world', *Gender and History* 7 (1995), pp. 100–05, *passim*.

only 2.4 years on average.²⁰ Employment for two or three years is not surprising for young unmarried women doing unskilled work, but not when it comes to skilled and responsible tasks in an estate dairy. Moreover, the dairy maids were badly paid, at a level between the estates' house-maids and laundry women. Such a level would probably not have been acceptable to experienced and skilled dairy maids and suggests that the butter production was run by young, unqualified, unmarried women.²¹ A consequence of this approach to dairying may have been the creation of a vicious circle of unattractive working conditions and dissatisfied dairy maids who lacked the competence, pride and influence that ambitious and experienced dairymaids brought to the task. The importance of these qualities has been stressed by Sally McMurry and Lena Sommestad. They are also emphasized in the answers to a questionnaire concerning the working conditions of contract workers distributed in 1938. We can speculate that poor working conditions, low wages and a rapid turnover of staff hindered the achievement of quality production at Krusenberg.²²

In essence, the farm management seems to have been unaware of the importance of good dairy maids. Although the poor milk:butter ratio did not mean that valuable butterfat disappeared totally, it resulted in an uneconomic distribution of butterfat. The quantity of butter produced was reduced, while the skimmed milk retained a higher fat content that was probably not compensated for by a higher price when sold or through a corresponding increase in the production of veal or pork when it was used as feed.

IV

The importance of varying kinds of milk products may be measured in market values, quantities (kilos of butter, of skimmed milk etc) or with regard to usefulness (whole milk versus buttermilk etc). Figure 5 demonstrates the quantitative and economic distribution between the varying marketed dairy products from Krusenberg from 1874 to 1913. Butter, valuable and concentrated, was the most important source of income from dairying, contributing 69 per cent of the total income but only five per cent of the quantity by weight. On the other hand, the voluminous skimmed milk represented 89 per cent of the weight but only 26 per cent of income. Sales of fresh milk, of cream for direct consumption, and of buttermilk from the churning process, were all of marginal importance, contributing in all six per cent of the quantity and five per cent of the cash income from the dairy.

Figure 5 shows only marketed dairy products and not the quantities used on the farm. Notwithstanding a doubling of total marketed quantities from 1874 to 1909 (when commercial production reached its maximum), vast quantities continued to be used to pay workers in kind. Figure 6 clearly illustrates how the total quantity of dairy products used within the estate also increased over time despite the establishment of commercial butter production.

²⁰ Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, G4A:6 (monthly reports from the dairy, 1880–1906, including names of dairy maids).

²¹ Regional Archive Uppsala, Krusenberg archive, F3:1 (estate inventory).

²² McMurry, 'Women's work in agriculture', pp. 251f;

Lena Sommestad, 'Able dairymaids and proficient dairymen; education and defeminization in the Swedish dairy industry', *Gender and History* 4 (1992), pp. 34–48 and questionnaire NM 82 from the Nordic Museum, Stockholm, *Statare* [contract workers].

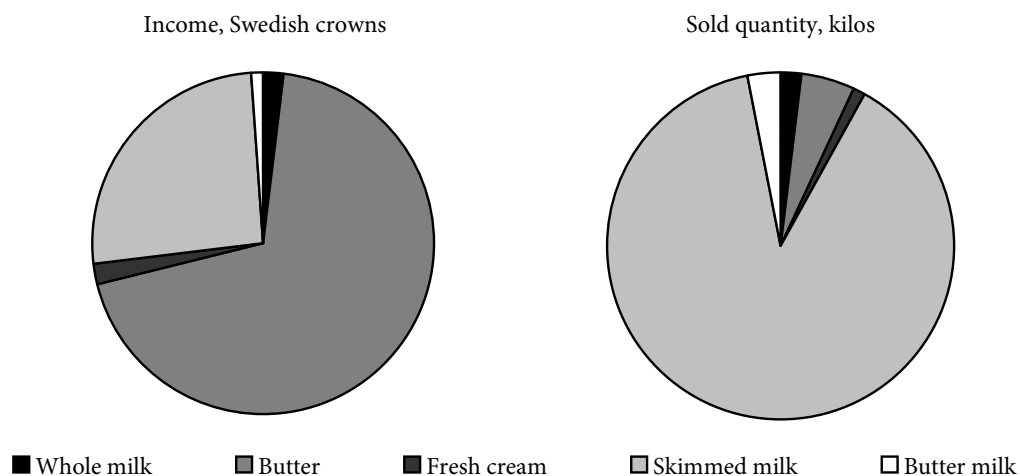


FIGURE 5. Proportional distribution of marketed quantities of whole milk, butter, fresh cream, skimmed milk and buttermilk from Krusenberg, 1874-1913, by value and weight.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

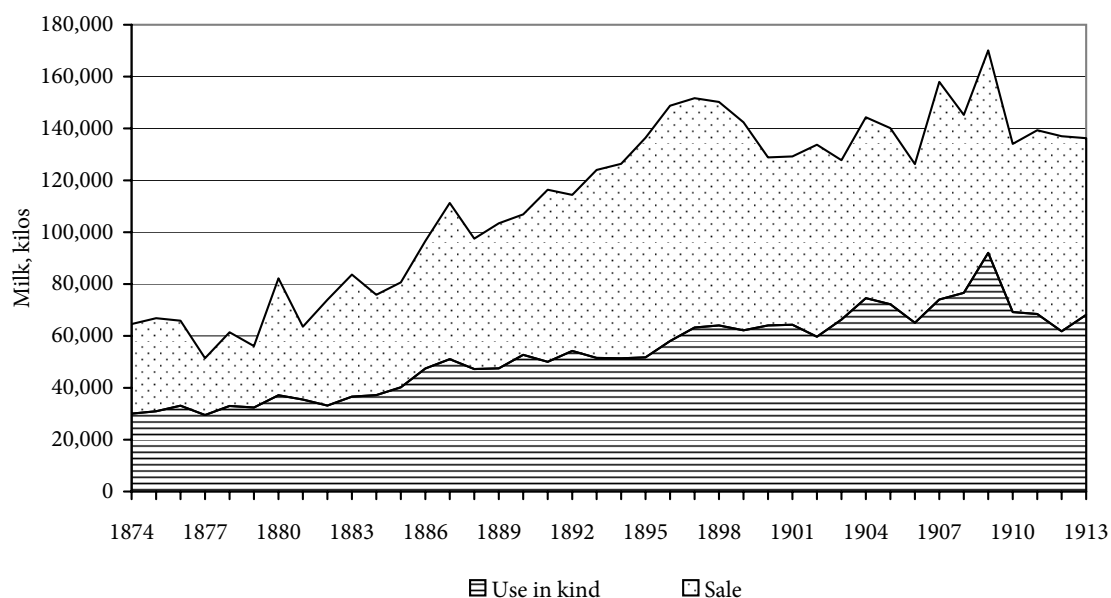


FIGURE 6. Quantities of milk and milk products sold and used to pay workers at Krusenberg, 1874-1913 (kilos). Note that the figure is the result of the addition of products with strongly varying concentration and value: whole milk consumed fresh, butter, cream consumed fresh, skimmed milk and buttermilk.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

TABLE 1. Distribution between quantities sold at the market or used to pay workers at Krusenberg, 1874–1913 (per cent)

	<i>Whole milk</i>	<i>Butter</i>	<i>Fresh cream</i>	<i>Skimmed milk</i>	<i>Buttermilk</i>
Sale	7	96	50	66	14
Payments in kind	93	4	50	34	86
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Dairy journal.

According to Figure 6, only about half of the total production by weight was sold while the remainder was used internally. Moreover, the volumes used for payment in kind increased in parallel with the commercial production, both doubling between 1874 and 1913. The figure also shows how the proportion for internal use was somewhat more stable when compared with quantity marketed, varying 15–20 per cent from one year to another. Obviously, an increased production for commercial purposes did not mean that the use of milk as payment was abandoned at Krusenberg. It should, however, be remembered that the method of describing milk products by weight conceals their differing values and characters. When value is taken into consideration, the proportions sold and used for payment are found to be quite different. Of all whole milk, 85 per cent was sold as butter, fresh whole milk or fresh cream, whilst only 15 per cent was used to pay workers.

A more detailed view of the distribution between sale and payments in kind is presented in Table 1. Almost all butter and two thirds of the skimmed milk were sold, while the larger part of the less valuable buttermilk was used on the farm. The small quantities of fresh milk sold probably refer to the occasional sale of small quantities to individual customers. The proportions of fresh cream are somewhat misleading and are explained by a heavy increase in sale of cream after 1910, whilst in previous years the only fresh cream used on the estate was that consumed at the Cederströms' table.

V

We now turn to a fuller investigation of the use of dairy products within the estate. A large and varied population inhabited the estate and its surroundings: the Cederström family itself, their housekeepers, gardeners, farm managers of varying levels, horse drivers, craftsmen, dairymaids, agricultural workers, and the members of their families. Moreover, about thirty crofts and other poor settlements were scattered around the estate.²³ Crofters and craftsmen-crofters made a living out of varying combinations of daywork on the estate, the cultivation of small plots of arable land and small-scale livestock production with one or two cows. The poorest inhabitants, widows and others, had little or no land but often had a cow. Seen from the vantage point of the estate, the inhabitants can be divided into four categories.

²³ Regional Archive Uppsala, Parish catechetical lists, Alsike parish, AI:11–14 and AIIa:1 (1871–1900). The crofts are further discussed in Israelsson, 'Kor och människor', pp. 82ff. and p. 286.

1. The Cederström family and their guests.
2. Their employees who took their meals in the estate household, in or close to the kitchen. Characteristically, these were young, single women and farmhands, working in- or outdoors, but they included some older, unmarried persons.
3. Contract workers to whom milk was given as a form of payment in kind.²⁴ These families were provided with a simple place to live, often a room with a shared kitchen. Their contract also gave them clothes and food such as rye meal, potatoes and herring. The contract workers were usually married. The men in this category worked in arable farming, or the stables: they undertook repairs on the estate, and cut firewood and ice in wintertime. In general, the women did the milking two or three times a day.²⁵
4. There were then crofters and others with one or two cows of their own. Several crofts are shown in Figure 1. Whilst the croft would include a small garden plot and a byre, crofters, or people substituting for them, had to do two or three days work for the estate each week as rent for the croft. Occasionally the crofter family bought feed or calves from the estate, and sometimes cattle were sold from the croft to the estate.²⁶

Whilst the last group produced their own milk, the consumption of the first three categories was noticed in the estate's dairy journal. This also shows that milk was used as feed for a wide range of animals on the estate.

The system of employing contract workers, *statare* in Swedish, was well known in the country, and has often been seen to represent miserable conditions and the exploitation of rural people. *Statare* was practised at large or middle sized farms and characterized by annual contracts and payment in kind: grain, milk, potatoes, wool, housing etc, supplemented with a little cash each year.²⁷ Contract workers were usually married and their wives were normally obliged to do the daily milking. The position of the wives has sometimes been described as close to slavery. The food payments were often fixed within a farm, irrespective of the size of a worker's household, although large families might have some extra ration provided. The number of contract workers increased during the nineteenth century, which Mats Morell has related to the growth of Swedish dairy production.²⁸ As this expansion was export-driven in its early stages, there are close connections between the increased employment of contract workers and the commercialization of dairying for export.²⁹

²⁴ The term 'contract workers' is also used by Christian Lundh and Mats Olsson, 'Contract workers in Swedish agriculture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (paper presented at the Twentieth International Congress for Historical Sciences, Sydney, 2005).

²⁵ The description is based on The Nordic Museum, Stockholm, questionnaire NM 82, *Statare*. Sources for female work at Krusenbergs are inadequate and do not describe work done by contract workers' wives.

²⁶ Krusenbergs archive, G3B1, account books concerning crofters.

²⁷ Although use of farm products as payment in kind has strongly been connected with the contract workers, the practice was also used for better off employees, who

might get rations of food, housing etc, complemented with more cash than was given to contract workers. See Nordic Museum Stockholm, NM 82, Contract workers, EU 13477, 18727, 29415, 30928, 31856 and 54318, examples from varying parts of south and central Sweden. Dairy journal, separate book with daily notes on volumes distributed to contract workers.

²⁸ Mats Morell, *Det svenska jordbrukets historia*, IV, *av Jordbruket i industrisamhället, 1870–1945* [*The history of Swedish agriculture, IV, Agriculture in the industrial society, 1870–1945*], p. 71.

²⁹ Nordic Museum, NM 82, Contract workers, and Lundh and Olsson, 'Contract workers', pp. 10f. For an economic perspective on the system, Herman Juhlin-Dannfelt

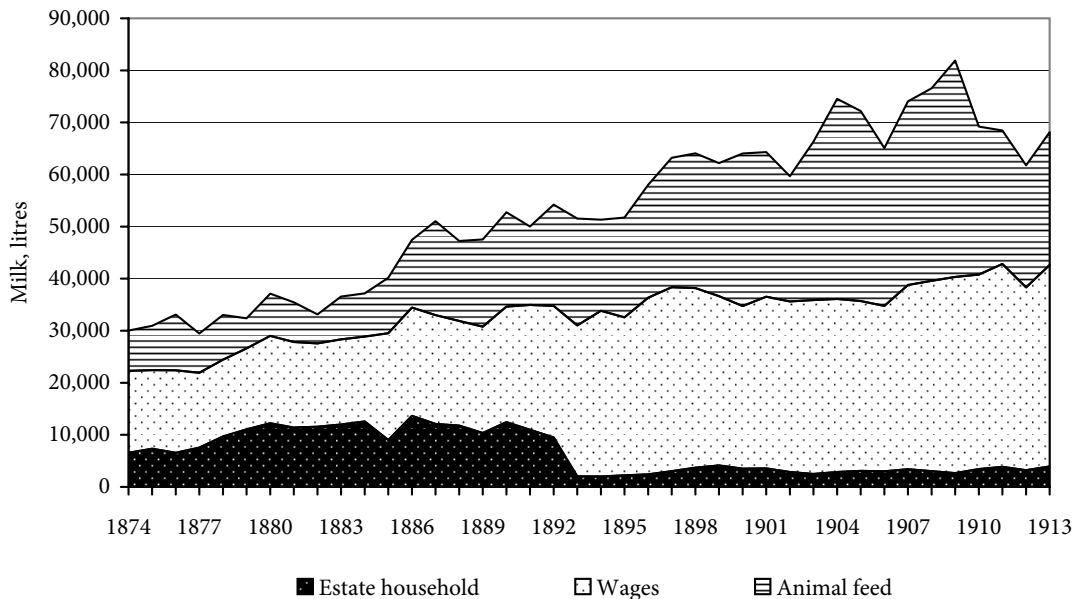


FIGURE 7. Balance of milk and milk products (in kilos) used in the estate household, as wages or as feed, Krusenberg, 1874–1913.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

Figure 7 shows the total quantities of whole milk, butter, cream, skimmed milk and buttermilk used in the estate household, chiefly as payment for farm labour or as animal feed. It reveals a continuous increase in the total quantity used for wages and animal feed, whilst the quantities used in the household were drastically reduced from the time of the change of ownership in the early 1890s. The varying kinds of dairy products that were consumed in the estate household, as wages in kind and as feed, are presented in Table 2. This shows how each kind of dairy product was deployed within the estate. Butter and cream were used exclusively by the estate household, whereas, to greater or lesser extent, fresh and skimmed milk were consumed by all categories of humans and animals.

The use of whole milk deserves particular attention. As a multi-purpose commodity that can be used for all kinds of consumption and processed further, the allocation of whole milk to an activity may be regarded as indicating the priority and status attached to it. Between 1874 and 1913, 85 per cent of the total volume of whole milk was utilized for commercial butter

Note 29 *continued*

and Abraham Sjöström, *Handbok i jordbruksekonomi* [Agricultural Economics] (1906), p. 418. The Swedish term *statare* refers to the word *stat*, 'allowance in kind'. Swedish contract workers are described in Sven Jerstedt, *På statarnas tid* (1975) and Lars Olsson (ed.), *Skånska statare och lantatbrtare berättar* (1985), publications based on contemporary accounts. The miserable living conditions among contract workers were frequently described in fiction during the 1930s and '40s, for instance, Ivar Lo-Johansson, *Bara en mor* (1939, trans. *Only a mother*, 1991). and Moa Martinson, *Mor gifter sig* (1936, trans. *My mother gets married*, 1988). For other recent research on contract workers, see Lundh and Olsson, 'Contract workers'.

TABLE 2. Distribution of the varying kinds of milk products at Krusenberg, 1874–1913

	<i>Fresh milk</i>	<i>Butter</i>	<i>Cream</i>	<i>Skimmed milk</i>	<i>Buttermilk</i>
Estate household	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wages in kind	Yes	Yes ^a	–	Yes	–
Calves	Yes	–	–	Yes	–
Pigs	Yes	–	–	Yes	Yes
Hens	Yes	–	–	Yes ^b	Yes
Horses, foals	Yes ^c	–	–	Yes ^d	Yes
Dogs	Yes	–	–	Yes ^e	Yes
Sheep	Yes	–	–	Yes ^f	–
'Gratifications'	–	–	–	Yes ^g	–

Notes:

^a Butter was only provided to the agricultural workers between 1892 and 1910, during which between 7 and 24 kilos per year was distributed amongst them.

^b The poultry at the estate were fed with skimmed milk or little buttermilk during the second half of the period.

^c In 1892, a foal was fed with fresh milk, skimmed milk and buttermilk.

^d Refers to skimmed milk given to 'Syra', who may have been a horse.

^e From 1891, milk was fed to dogs, a new strategy which can be related to the new proprietor.

^f In 1898, small quantities of skimmed milk were given to the sheep.

^g From 1891, skimmed milk was distributed as 'gratification'. The dairy journal does not provide further details, but the milk might have been given to retired agricultural workers, their widows etc.

Source: Dairy journal.

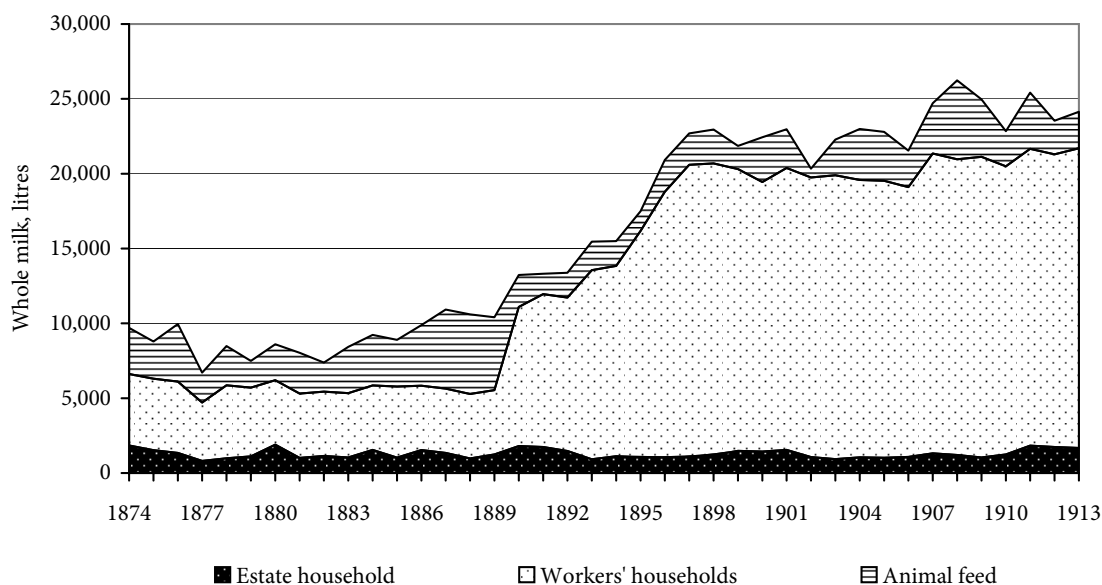


FIGURE 8. Use of whole milk for varying purposes at Krusenberg, 1874–1913.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

production and 15 per cent was used in kind at the estate. Of the amount used internally, 75 per cent was used as payment for farm labour, 8 per cent was consumed by the estate household, 15 per cent was given to calves and small amounts to other animals. The large-scale use of whole milk as a payment for work stands out very clearly.

According to Figure 8, where the estate household consumed a constant volume of whole milk over the four decades, the amount of whole milk allocated to the workers' households increased heavily during the 1890s. At the same time, use of whole milk as feed for calves was radically reduced. It has not been possible to investigate whether this was a conscious redistribution within the internal dairy economy, or if there were other reasons for altering the feeding regime for the calves.

VI

The estate household included the proprietor, his family and their guests but also domestic servants and farm hands. As well as provisioning the house at Krusenberg, some dairy products and other foodstuffs appear to have been transported to the family's household in the centre of Stockholm. The consumption of whole milk in the household was relatively stable, about 3.5 litres per day. The consumption of cream and butter changed over time but was, on average, one litre of cream and two kilos of butter per day, probably first and foremost for the proprietor's table.³⁰

Use of butter and cream increased progressively from 1874 to 1892. After Emanuel Cederstrom took over from his father, the consumption of the less valuable milk products was drastically reduced, skimmed milk by about 90 per cent and buttermilk almost completely. The consumption of cream was also reduced whilst that of whole milk and butter remained at a stable level. All this suggests a new dietary regime in the estate household was introduced with the change of generations, especially for the labourers whose meals came from the estate.³¹

The fact that maids and farmhands had their meals at the estate, at least until 1892, implies that some of the dairy products that were consumed in the estate household should be regarded as payment for labour, similar to payments to contract workers. It has not been possible to identify the distribution of dairy products within the estate household. What was drunk or eaten by the Cederströms cannot be distinguished from the consumption by the servants in the kitchen. Our lack of knowledge about workers' dairy consumption in the estate household means that exact use of milk as payment for farm labour cannot be calculated. Since workers' consumption within the estate household was low compared with the volumes consumed in contract workers' households, this lack of information does not affect the overall picture about use of milk as means of payment for farm labour.

³⁰ Uppsala Regional Archive, Parish catechetical lists, Alsike parish, AI:11-14 and AIIa:1-4 (1871-1920); Krusenberg archive, F3:1 (estate inventory, 1892), and dairy journal.

³¹ The dairy journal shows that buttermilk was only

consumed in the summer, which suggests it was served as refreshment during harvest. This practice is described in answers to ethnological and linguistic questionnaires, Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore, ULMA No 1, Dairying.

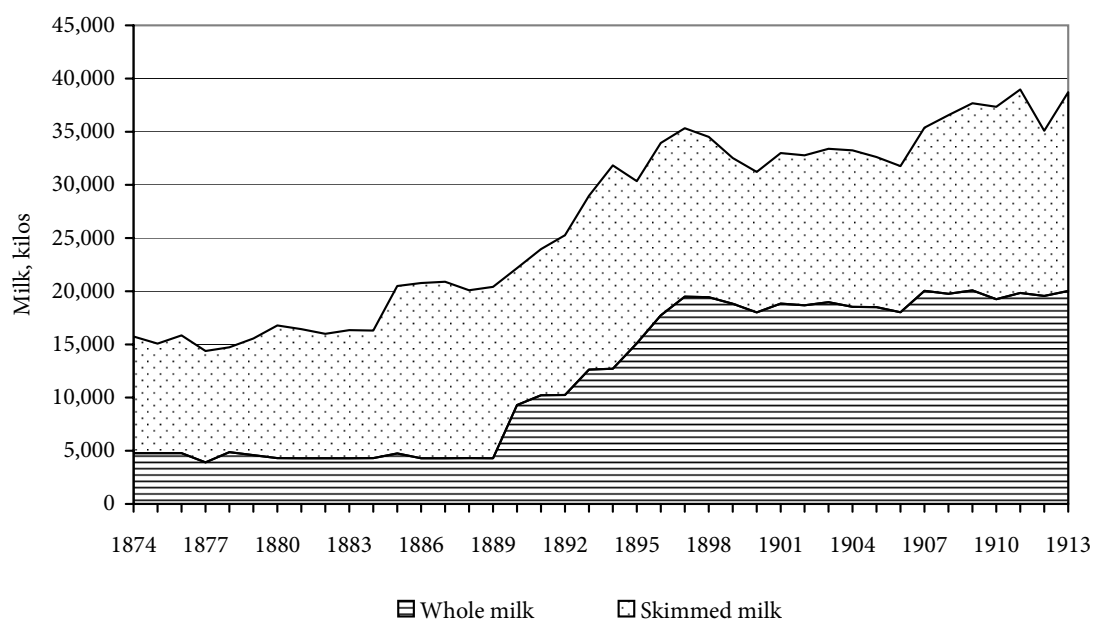


FIGURE 9. Kilos of whole and skimmed milk paid to contract workers at Krusenberg, 1874–1913.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

VII

Of all whole milk used in kind, 75 per cent (11 per cent of total milk production) was used in payment to contract workers. Corresponding figures regarding skimmed milk were respectively 53 per cent and 18 per cent.³² It is unclear how employees with separate households such as estate managers were provided with milk. The most plausible explanation is that those people who were neither members of the estate household nor contract workers were supplied with milk from their own cows. This conclusion is supported by a comparison of the numbers of households receiving milk and a detailed estate account for the years 1873–89.

Total quantities of milk paid to contract workers at Krusenberg between 1874 and 1913 are presented in Figure 9.³³ The diagram demonstrates two levels of consumption, a stable low level during the 1870s and '80s, and a considerably higher level after the turn of the century. In between, the 1890s stands out as a transitional period when the total volume rose fifty per cent, due to dramatically increased quantities of whole milk. In the space of a year, 1889–90, the amount of whole milk allocated to contract workers was doubled, and within less than a decade, the quantity more than quadrupled.

Four reasons can be suggested for the increased use of whole milk in payment to contract workers at Krusenberg. Firstly, the number of contract workers may have increased in line with an increase in the herd size and a possible intensification of arable farming in order to supply it with fodder. Second, the number of workers who had their meals in the estate household may

³² Dairy journal.

³³ Dairy journal.

have been reduced and replaced by a corresponding rise in the number of separate households, treated as contract workers in the dairy journal. According to Table 4, the number of contract workers' households increased only slightly, by 14 per cent from 1887 to 1900, which does not explain 60 per cent higher total volumes and a tripled quantity of whole milk. Consequently, the increased milk volumes cannot be explained by a transfer of consumption from the estate household to contract workers' households. Neither does the limited increase in the number of contract workers' households allow for a third possible explanation, a transfer of employment from crofters to contract workers. Such a tendency has been demonstrated by Eriksson and Rogers, who point to a diminished number of crofters but increased number of contract workers during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Ulf Jonsson has refined this interpretation and argued that the organization of labour at estates in Central Sweden varied from estate to estate. A relatively stable combination of crofters and contract workers was sought all through the nineteenth century.³⁴ At Krusenberg, parish catechetical lists demonstrate that the practice of employing crofters was maintained into the twentieth century. Seven families were established as new crofters during the 1920s.³⁵

None of these explanations for the increase of milk consumption on the estate is convincing. A fourth explanation, that improved rations per household should be regarded as a conscious strategy by the managers of the estate, is more plausible. This explanation relates the increased use of whole milk after 1890 to the coincidental transfer of the management of the estate to the proprietor's son. Is it possible that the younger generation implemented an increased use of the commercially-valuable whole milk to pay workers? This suggestion is supported by the authorities in agricultural economics, Juhlin-Dannfelt and Sjöström who, at the turn of the century, recommended increasing rations of milk in place of wage rises. They stressed the importance of providing the workers' families with whole milk, especially households with children.³⁶ Such a recommendation may reflect not only a concern about the families, but also an effort to prevent contract workers leaving farming for the expanding urban industries.

A study of the payments in kind paid to contract workers at other Swedish farms confirms that similar strategies were practiced. Table 3 compares figures from Krusenberg and the volumes discovered by the questionnaire mentioned previously, circulated at the end of the 1930s. Because of the character of the questionnaire, figures from only nine farms could be related to a specific decade.³⁷ The answers to the questionnaire show a range of variation between farms in the quantity of milk given to estate workers, the balance between whole and skimmed milk and moments at which the amounts of milk were increased.³⁸ An upward trend

³⁴ Ingrid Eriksson and John Rogers, *Rural labor and population change: social and demographic developments in east-central Sweden during the nineteenth century* (1978), App. B, Table 3, pp. 256–60 and Ulf Jonsson, *Jordmagnater, landbönder och torpare i sydöstra Södermanland, 1800–80* (1980), p. 89f.

³⁵ Uppsala Regional Archive, Parish catechetical list, Alsike parish, AIIa:5 (1920–8).

³⁶ Juhlin-Dannfelt and Sjöström, *Handbok i jordbruks-ekonomi*, p. 416 f. The recommendations were published

more than a decade later, but may have been discussed and applied earlier.

³⁷ Nordic Museum, Stockholm, NM 82, Contract workers.

³⁸ Such variations in volumes between farms in southern and central Sweden are in contrast to observations by Lundh and Olsson, 'Contract workers', p. 5, reporting that 'quite stable' quantities were paid in kind in the Scania region in the very south of the country.

TABLE 3. Total volumes, per household, per day, of whole and skimmed milk given as payment for farm labour at Krusenberg and nine Swedish farms

	1870s	1880s	1900s	1910s
Krusenberg	3.6	3.9	5.6	8.8
Questionnaire NM 82	3.5	3.6	5.7	6.0

Sources: Dairy journal and Nordic Museum Stockholm, questionnaire NM 82, Contract workers.

in quantity of milk provided is clearly shown by the average figures in Table 3. The table also shows a broad similarity between figures from Krusenberg and averages from the questionnaire. The figures regarding the early twentieth century also correspond with examples published in 1909–11 and recently discussed by Christer Lundh and Mats Olsson.³⁹ There is a difference though between figures from the estate and those given by the questionnaires concerning the proportions between whole and skimmed milk given in payment. During the 1870s and '80s only a quarter of the quantity given in the payment at Krusenberg was whole milk, compared with about half at the nine farms described in the questionnaire. Later, in the early twentieth century, the proportions were similar, about half of the volume paid as whole milk and half as skimmed milk. The increased use of milk as a form of payment at Krusenberg thus seems to reflect a general tendency, although the timing – in this particular case – was determined by the change in management after 1890.

Despite the fact that both increased volumes and larger proportions of whole milk resulted in diminished cash income from dairying, these changes does not seem to have been subject of much debate. A search of the farmers' journal *Tidskrift för landtmän* for 1880–1913 did not reveal any discussion of this particular subject.⁴⁰ Some articles debated 'the labour question', which shows that this journal would have been an appropriate forum for any discussion of milk payments. Later, in the 1930s and early '40s, the farm labourers' organization pursued an intensive debate about the contract system, which ended with the abandonment of the system in 1945. This was a debate on farm workers' freedom and living standards, not about the character of payments in kind. Neither was the principle of using milk as payment questioned in another farmers' journal, *Mjölpropagandan*. This frequently reported on milk volumes and dairy consumption during the inter-war period, but without any discussion of the extent to which milk was used on the farm.

The relevance of the quantities paid to contract workers at Krusenberg can be discussed on the basis of Table 4, which shows the number of households and household members as well as the amount of milk per household and person between 1873 and 1913. According to the parish catechetical lists, average household size was 4.6 people in 1873 and slightly below four at the three other points in time. Household size varied between two and eight members.

The estate archive does not offer any information about the quantity of milk provided to

³⁹ Juhlin-Dannfelt and Sjöström, *Handbok i jordbruksekonomi*, pp. 409, 415; Lundh and Olsson, 'Contract workers', p. 5.

⁴⁰ 1880 was the first year of publication. The journal circulated nationally, although primarily among men responsible for large farms.

TABLE 4. Number of contract workers' households, household members and average daily volumes of whole and skimmed milk per head, Krusenberg

	1873	1887	1900	1913
Households	12	14	16	12
Household members	55	54	62	46
Whole and skimmed milk, person/day	0.79	1.02	1.46	2.30

Note: figures are for years ending 31 December. The use of late 1873 is explained by the fact that the estate used November-October as the financial year. In this article, November and December 1873 are regarded as 1874, although the parish catechetical list refers to December 1873.

Sources: Dairy journal and Uppsala Regional Archive, parish catechetical lists, Alsike parish, AI:11 and 14; AIIa:1 and 4.

individual households and so it is impossible to relate the quantity provided to household size. In fact, the questionnaires found that milk quantities at a farm were often fixed, irrespective of household size. Thus, daily volumes per household may have been insufficient for large households but more than adequate for small ones. The lowest quantity that may be distinguished from the estate archive was half a litre per head, mostly skimmed milk, paid to families with five or six children living at Krusenberg in 1873 and 1887. By 1913, people living in households with two members had access to 4.4 litres per day, of which half was whole milk.

According to this same questionnaire and another asking about dairying and eating habits, milk and milk products were regularly used in rural Swedish households. When milk was available, it was used for porridge, pancakes, soup, varying kinds of fermented milk, cottage cheese and, if possible, a little butter and hard cheese. Milk was also poured into bottles for children and adults for lunch in school or outdoors.⁴¹ The wide use of milk suggests that the volumes provided before the early 1890s must have been insufficient for families with children. Complaints about lack of milk frequently occur in discussions of contract workers. The questionnaires also offer examples of workers buying extra milk with their limited cash income. On the other hand, members of small households could use their milk to make butter and cheese or even fatten a pig or calf. According to a printed employment contract from 1922, attached to the questionnaire about contract workers, it was by that time possible for the labourer to sell surplus milk back to the farmer for cash.⁴² Obviously, the increased volumes of milk provided during the later part of the period offered opportunities for a better standard of living for contract workers' households. But there can be no doubt that the practice of paying people in kind continued to be a way in which landowners exercised power and restricted the workers' freedom.

⁴¹ Nordic Museum, Stockholm, questionnaire NM 82 and Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore, questionnaire ULMA no 1.

⁴² Nordic Museum, Stockholm, NM 82.

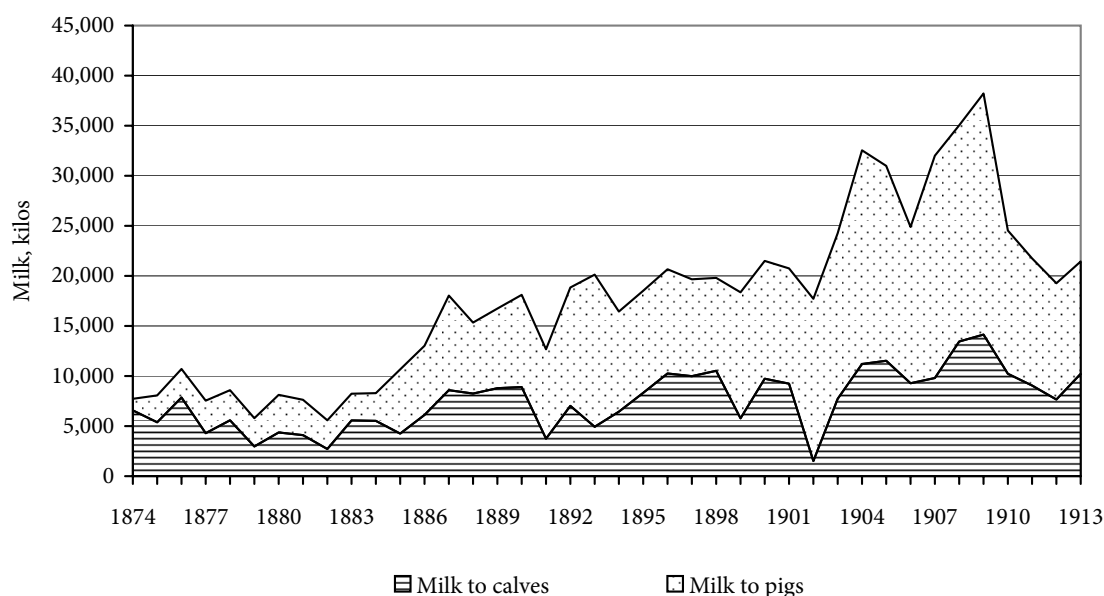


FIGURE 10. Whole milk, skimmed milk and buttermilk used as feed for calves and pigs at Krusenberg, 1874–1913.

Source: Calculated from dairy journal.

VIII

Milk was regularly used as feed for calves and pigs at Krusenberg. From the early 1890s onwards, trivial quantities were given to sheep, poultry, foals and dogs (Table 2). Most of the milk used in this way was given to calves and a smaller quantity to the pigs. Over the whole period 1874–1913, 92 per cent of the whole milk used as feed was given to calves and only 8 per cent to pigs. A closer analysis of the dairy journal shows that much less milk was given to the calves after the change of management in the early 1890s. The new proprietor evidently reconsidered how milk might best be used. Pigs were fed with limited volumes of whole milk throughout the period, except for a peak in 1893, which may be interpreted as a feeding experiment by the new proprietor. On the other hand, pigs consumed 96 per cent of all buttermilk used in kind. Total use of whole milk, skimmed milk and buttermilk as feed for calves and pigs, is presented in Figure 10, which shows that the total volumes fluctuated over time. The variations indicate that milk used as animal feed had the character of a buffer to soak up surpluses, and the quantity used rose and fell in line with milk production at the farm, and the price of dairy products, veal and pork. The small quantity of milk given to calves in 1903 is explained by consequences of contagious abortion that struck the herd badly and resulted in a loss of about one third of the calves.⁴³

The great share of milk used for calves does not imply the large scale fattening of calves. With an estimated average number of 50 calves born per year, each calf could consume 150 litres (four

⁴³ Krusenberg archive D4:2. (stable journal).

litres per day of whole or skimmed milk over five weeks). According to the rules for feeding calves at Krusenberg, calves were to be fed with milk until three months of age, so each one consumed 314 litres.⁴⁴ This means that not all calves can possibly have been reared to heifers, or fattened. Some of the newborn calves must have been slaughtered early, whilst others were reared into new dairy cows. Only a small number were fed to make veal. The fattening of pigs may be regarded as a conscious strategy to make use of the low-value buttermilk, of which only 14 per cent was marketed.

IX

Krusenberg was adapted to commercial butter production relatively early. The estate's butter almost certainly found its way into the export trade. A central argument of this article is that the development of commercial butter production at Krusenberg did not mean that production for internal use was abandoned. On the contrary, it continued and even increased over time. The use of milk as a means of payment may be interpreted as a conscious and modern strategy. Yet, the use of products in this way also illustrates the strong continuities with traditional rural practices; a striving to minimize cash expenditures and make as much use as possible of internally-generated products and services.

Three periods of change have been identified as being of particular importance. The process of commercialization started in the 1860s and 1870s when basic investments were made: an estate dairy and a large cowshed. At this time the volumes paid in kind to estate workers were kept on a low, stable level. A second period from the early 1890s onwards was marked by extended commercial production in combination with strongly increased rations of whole milk to contract workers. Finally, the first decade of the twentieth century has been identified as a period with a high, but stable level of milk rations.

To what degree does this study of Krusenberg mirror dairy economies at other large Swedish farms? The system of employment using *statare* was practiced on almost all large farms. According to examples of rations given to contract workers at other farms, the volumes of milk paid in kind generally increased over time. Such an increase may have been related to more or less conscious calculations of the profitability of such a strategy or to meet the pressure from the farm labour organizations. Increased volumes of milk were used internally on Swedish farms at a time when commercial trade was expanding. Such a farm economy implies that the Swedish potential for commercial production was not fully realized. This view is strengthened by figures reported in *Mjölpropagandan* in 1929 that only about 40 per cent of the total Swedish milk production was delivered to dairy plants while 60 per cent was consumed by rural citizens, animals, used for farmhouse butter- or cheese-making, or sold directly to urban consumers.⁴⁵ Thus, the Swedish impact on the international market, and the distress it caused British farmers, was much less than it might have been if almost all Swedish dairy products had been marketed. Even though the Swedish butter exporters were selling into one of the most highly commercial economies in the world at that time, we have the paradox of the co-existence of commercial

⁴⁴ Krusenberg archive D:5 ('Instructions for feeding of calves').

⁴⁵ *Mjölpropagandan* 9 (1929), p. 171.

production with the survival of archaic and backward systems of employment inherited from earlier generations. In these respects, the Swedish dairy industry before the First World War was incompletely commercialized and far from modernized. It was to remain so for a further generation.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Carin Martiin, 'Specialization in dairying', a paper read at a PROGRESSORE conference in Rennes and forthcoming in the proceedings edited by Annie Antoine; Karl Amark, *Kristidspolitik och kristidshushållning i Sverige under och efter andra världskriget* [*Crisis politics and economy during and after World War II*], SOU [Swedish Government Official reports], 1952:49, vol. I.

Death of a farmer: the fortunes of war and the strange case of Ray Walden*

by Brian Short

Abstract

The sweeping powers necessitated by World War Two emergency conditions are illustrated by the tragedy which unfolded when one farmer, Ray Walden of Itchen Stoke, refused to plough up a large portion of his farm at the insistence of the Hampshire County War Agricultural Executive Committee. The committee finally decided to dispossess him of his farm, and an attempt to evict him followed, but Walden opened fire on the police officers. A one-night siege was followed by the shooting of the 65-year-old bachelor inside his own farm house. He died in hospital. The coroner's verdict was 'justifiable homicide'. The paper sets out the structures of power, the setting of this agricultural conflict, reconstructs the narrative of events and offers an evaluation.

The huge loss of life in World War Two left few British families untouched in some way. In the UK alone there were over 60,000 civilian deaths, alongside the 265,000 from the forces who were killed.¹ The blitz on British towns meant that the vast majority of civilian deaths came primarily from urban areas. It is a pertinent question therefore to ask why the death of a single non-combatant should be worthy of our attention. But this was a strange death. An otherwise unremarkable Hampshire farmer, George Raymond (known locally as Ray) Walden, was shot by police in July 1940, in his own farmhouse, and later died from his wounds. This paper aims to demonstrate and evaluate the extreme measures facing the farming community during World War Two and the relations of power within agricultural communities.

* This paper is an expanded version of one first read to the British Agricultural History Society's annual meeting in Hereford in April 2007. I am grateful for the help of staff at the Hampshire Record Office, and especially Sarah Lewin, for making arrangements for me to see the uncatalogued Tichborne papers and for assisting with the illustrations; to John Martin, Gavin Bowie, John Curtis, Gertie Northcote, Peter and Marion Stoddart and the Hampshire Constabulary History Society; and to Pamela Hunter (Archivist for Hoare's Bank).

¹ The precise numbers of deaths vary according to different authorities. These statistics are taken from N. Longmate, *How we lived then. A history of everyday life during the Second World War* (1971), p. 84. About half of the civilian deaths were in London. There were 43,000 civilian deaths in 1940 and 1941 and 17,000 in the remaining years of the war. See also W. F. Mellor (ed.) *Casualties and medical statistics* (UK Official History Series, 1972).

I

During the 1930s, faced with continuing agricultural difficulties, and with the increasing deterioration of relations with Germany and the likelihood of a new war, the British parliament re-evaluated its previous *laissez-faire* stance towards farming. Agriculture was now actively prepared for the siege economy which it was feared Germany was about to impose by blockading imported food supplies. As part of the pre-war planning, arrangements were made for the revival of the county committees which had supervised agricultural production in the last two years of the First World War. On the outbreak of war the County War Agricultural Executive Committees (CWAECs) were already in place and quickly assumed total control under Section 49 of the Defence Regulations. The 62 CWAECs had between eight and twelve members each. Their establishment was lauded as one of the war's major administrative successes, and possibly the best example of decentralization and democratic use of control.² It was unarguably the case that through their sustained efforts, food did remain available, albeit with considerable consumer patience, austerity, and hard work by the Ministry of Food in rationing (from January 1940) and distributing supplies.

The outlines of wartime state intervention in British farming are now relatively well known. However, there remains a dearth of local studies which illustrate the impact of these policies at the farm level.³ According to official accounts, the relations between individuals and CWAECs were fairly harmonious throughout the war, but there were many cases, some of exceptional severity, where accusations were levelled of mishandling and bullying by the CWAECs. They were required to put in motion 'firmer measures against the recalcitrant or hopelessly inefficient'.⁴ This could include taking possession of some of a farm's land, or all of the land and the farmhouse, thereby requiring the eviction of the resident.⁵ Depending on the contingent circumstances of each case, these ultimate measures could be undertaken in ways which ensured compliance or, at the other extreme, great hostility.

The Hampshire CWAEC (HWAEC) was chaired throughout the war by Charles Lennard Chute from The Vyne, Basingstoke, with two vice-chairs: Roland Dudley from Linkenholt, and Gerald Wallop (Viscount Lymington, the ninth Earl of Portsmouth), the 'innate shire Tory' with Fascist leanings, from Farleigh Wallop. The backgrounds of such men were typical of those chosen to lead the wartime committees, selected for their substance, influence and farming expertise. Wallop's views were certainly extreme, and pro-German. He may have regarded

² K. A. H. Murray, *Agriculture* (History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, 1955), pp. 338–9.

³ John Martin, 'The impact of government intervention on agricultural productivity in England and Wales, 1939–45' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1992), pp. 261–6. One recent local study is C. Rawding, 'The treatment of "failing farmers" in south-west Lancashire during the Second World War', in B. Short, C. Watkins and J. Martin (eds), *The front line of freedom: farming in Britain in the Second World War* (2006), pp. 179–93.

⁴ TNA, CAB 102/325, draft by E. H. Whetham for her official history of wartime farming, ch. 3, p. 7. The task was passed by the series editor, W. E. Hancock, to Murray (TNA, CAB 102/327). See also Martin, 'The impact of government intervention', p. 267.

⁵ For the national picture of farm dispossessions see Brian Short, 'The dispossession of farmers in England and Wales during and after the Second World War', in Short *et al.* (eds), *Front line of freedom*, pp. 158–78. For a case study, see G. Neville, 'Eviction and reclamation in World War Two: the case of a Worcestershire farm', *Local Historian* 29 (1999), pp. 76–90.

the HWAEC as an extension of his personal fiefdom and as an instrument to further his own philosophy, one essential tenet of which was the need for landlord control to reassert English agrarian harmony.⁶ In this philosophy he was joined by Charles Chute who, in a letter to *The Times* in 1943, looked forward to the prospect of post-war farming but was anxious that the landlord should retain his key role when the CWAECs were disbanded. He wrote, 'is it really reasonable to expect that most of the best farmers in the country will continue to devote a large proportion of their time and energies to the assistance and guidance of their weaker brethren for no other reward than the proverbial one of virtue?'⁷

The HWAEC, in the phraseology applied to all counties, was charged by the Ministry of Agriculture with the increased production of food from the county and could take 'all necessary measures to secure that land [was] cultivated to the best advantage'. A quota for the area to be ploughed up was given to each county: Hampshire's quota for 1939–40 was 40,000 acres and such good progress was made that 46,934 acres had been ploughed between 4 June 1939 and 15 May 1940, with as much as 38,000 acres ploughed voluntarily by the end of October.⁸

Chute called the committee together informally on 30 June 1939 to report on a preliminary meeting held in Whitehall for designated chairmen and their executive officers and to discuss 'initial arrangements which were felt to be worthwhile in view of the international situation at the present time'.⁹ During the war the committee was to meet every Tuesday at 10.30 in the Castle, Winchester. Within two months there was a change in membership necessitated by the resignation of Sir Rudolph Dymoke White on his election to parliament as Conservative MP for Fareham.¹⁰ By October 1940 R. H. Howard, the labour representative, had given way to R. Chick, who in turn gave way to A. W. Gardiner in June 1941. By September 1941 there appear to have been problems in the administration of the Women's Land Army in Hampshire. By July 1942, Mrs Chute, wife of the chairman, had been replaced by Miss Pauline Woolmer White as Chairman of the county WLA, who retained the post for the duration of the war, and thereby became an ex-officio member of HWAEC (Table 1).¹¹

⁶ Sir Charles Lennard Chute (1879–1956) bequeathed the Vyne, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, to the National Trust on his death. For Lord Portsmouth see Malcolm Chase, 'Wallop, Gerald Vernon, ninth earl of Portsmouth (1898–1984)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/59347>, accessed 12 Oct 2006]. His autobiography, *A knot of roots* (1965) offers insights into other personalities on the Hampshire WAEAC, such as Tom Mitchell with whom Portsmouth worked at tasks which were 'sometimes sad ones when a really hopeless farmer had to be turned out of his holding to make way for better food producers' (p. 71). Further material on his various wartime activities may be found in the Wallop Papers in the Hampshire Record Office (hereafter HRO), 15M84/F213 and 302.

⁷ Letter to the editor, *The Times*, 29 Mar. 1943.

⁸ *Farmers Weekly*, 31 May 1940, p. 17; TNA, MAF 80/894.

⁹ TNA, MAF 80/894. The establishment of the HWAEC and its sub-committees is thoroughly set out in this document.

¹⁰ Dymoke White, originally proposed as a vice-chair of the HWAEC in June 1939 (TNA, MAF 80/894), is remembered by one Hampshire contemporary as 'in charge of all sorts of things'. I am grateful to Mr David Green for his thoughts on the HWAEC. The Fareham by-election of 6 Oct. 1939 was unopposed and was the first wartime by-election. White's maiden speech in Oct. 1940 was concerned with the plough-up campaign, the use of acorns for pig feed, and threshing machines. (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1940/oct/22/food-production>) (accessed 21 July 2008).

¹¹ HRO, 17M81/4–5, letter to Mrs Chute from Lady Denman, Hon. Director of the WLA, 17 Sept. 1941; TNA, MAF 39/254.

TABLE 1. The Hampshire War Agricultural Executive Committee

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Address</i>
C. L. Chute MC	Chair	1939 onwards	landowner	The Vyne, Basingstoke
Earl of Portsmouth	Vice chair	1939 onwards	landowner	Farleigh Wallop
W. B. Mason		April '40 onwards	farmer	Manor Farm, Bedhampton
T. S. Mitchell		1939 onwards	retired farmer	Ingsdon, Shawford and Swan Hotel, Alresford
R. P. Chester		August 1943 onwards	pig farmer/ business interests	Wheely Down, Warnford, Southampton
H. Yates		August 1943 onwards	horticulturalist & smallholder	New House Farm, Botley
E. J. Parker		July 1945 onwards	large farmer	Charity Farm, Fareham
Miss Woolmer White	WLA	July 1942 onwards		Orchard House, Rowlands Castle
A. W. Gardiner	Lab Rep	June 1941 onwards	TGWU	22a Devizes Road, Salisbury
J. Wannop Williamson	Deputy EO, later EO	EO November 1945 onwards	county agricultural organiser	2 The Deane, Overton
L. G. Troup OBE	EO & secretary	1939 to November 1945		Candover Park, Brown Candover
J. N. McClean		1939 to March 1945		Flexcombe, Liss
R. Dudley	Vice chair	1939 to July 1943	farmer	Linkenholt Manor, Andover
Mrs Chute	WLA	1939 to July 1942		The Vyne, Basingstoke
R. Chick	Lab Rep	October 1940 to June 1941		80a High Street, Southampton
R. H. Howard JP	Lab Rep	1939 to October 1940		17 Council Houses, Sherborne Road, Basingstoke
Capt Sir R. Dymoke White		1939 to November 1939	MP for Fareham Oct '39 onwards	Southleigh Park, nr Havant
C. F. Hughes		1939 to early 1940	County Land Officer	81 North Walls, Winchester
G. S. Gray		1939 to mid-1940 (died)	farmer	Graces Farm, Martyr Worthy, Winchester

Notes: EO, Executive Officer; WLA, Womens Land Army Representative; Lab Rep, Labour Representative.

Source: TNA, MAF 80/894; 39/255.

The Hampshire committee rapidly acquired a reputation for the enthusiastic implementation of its remit, possibly a little too enthusiastic at times. This zeal was inherited from the county's pre-war agricultural committees: the Agricultural Education Committee, for example, had a highly developed record system using detailed cards for each farm, a system that was praised by the Ministry of Agriculture as being highly appropriate in the event of war.¹² And at the outset of war the HWAEC, despite anxieties expressed by Roland Dudley, put forward a proposal for a detailed land fertility survey of the county, which they would complete by the end of December 1939, using a staff of 40. The Ministry turned down the proposal in favour of a requirement to proceed instead with farm assessments and the plough-up campaign.¹³

The CWAECs' sweeping powers, bestowed by Whitehall, were in turn devolved to District Committees which were at the grass roots of operations tackling local farming issues, with memberships drawn from the districts themselves, and having daily contact with farmers. There were also specialist sub-committees which in Hampshire dealt with such matters as cultivations, machinery, horticulture, farm supplies, labour, agricultural requisites, rabbits and pests, and land drainage. The Hampshire Cultivations Committee, responsible for overseeing the ploughing-up of grassland, and thus directly in contact with farmers such as Ray Walden, actually comprised the members of the Executive Committee.¹⁴ These committees were organized early, at a meeting on 30 August 1939.¹⁵

There were six District Committees covering Hampshire. District Committee 6, the Central or Winchester district, covered the upper Itchen valley, and included Winchester Rural District, Winchester and Eastleigh Metropolitan Districts, and Portsmouth County Borough. It was initially chaired by G. S. Gray of Martyr Worthy near Winchester, who also sat on the Executive Committee, until ill-health forced him to resign early in 1940. He died later that year. The chair of the District Committee was taken over by T. W. Ashton from the Hursley Park estate office, near Winchester. The District Committee included seven other land-related professionals and farmers from the Winchester and Alresford area, including a near-neighbour of Walden's, J. R. Burge of Itchen Down, Itchen Abbas who farmed over 1300 acres on the loamy chalk soils to the north of the Itchen valley.¹⁶ The District Officer was W. C. Mitchell, who had been transferred from the county land office for the duration of the war.¹⁷ A District Committee

¹² TNA, MAF 38/469 includes an example of one of the cards. For the minutes of the committee see HRO, H/CX1/3/3. I am indebted to Sarah Lewin for drawing my attention to the minutes.

¹³ TNA, MAF 80/894. A copy of the extremely detailed questionnaire is preserved with the minutes of the HWAEC feeding stuffs committee (TNA, MAF 80/948).

¹⁴ Membership of these Hampshire committees is given at TNA, MAF 39/255. Later minutes of the Cultivations sub-committee (1944-7) are preserved at HRO as H/CX1/2a/2 but no earlier minutes for this committee appear to have survived at either HRO or TNA.

¹⁵ TNA, MAF 80/894.

¹⁶ J. R. Burge was also a tenant of Lord Ashburton's, and by the time of the National Farm Survey he had

been on his farm for 20 years (TNA, MAF 32/981/304). With 90 cows and heifers in milk, he had a workforce of no fewer than 39 full-time regular workers, and 17 tied cottages. He was graded 'A'. Nearly 200 acres was ploughed up for the 1941 harvest, nearly all for cereals or potatoes. A week after Walden's death Burge was hosting a silage-making demonstration at Itchen Down Farm (*Hampshire Observer*, 27 July 1940).

¹⁷ TNA, MAF 39/255. The county land officers had been responsible for matters of agricultural education, smallholdings and other rural matters in the inter-war period. They continued throughout the war but personnel and many functions were effectively transferred to the CWAECs.

meeting was held at Winchester within two weeks of the declaration of war, but foot-and-mouth disease in the district hindered a survey of grassland to be ploughed, although it was clear at the outset that the large areas of Itchen water meadows were going to present a particular problem for the plough-up campaign.

Hampshire people were not always fully cooperative with the committees' operations. One Horticultural Advisory Officer on the Horticulture sub-committee had the task of allocating quotas specifying the maximum area for flower growing, which restricted output. But some tried to ignore the quotas, and despite the food production sign on his car, he remembered that 'Some of the places I never got past the front gate; the dogs were let loose and that was that!' In other places he, and the committee man with him, were met by people with guns.¹⁸

The committee's enthusiasm, and the manner in which it went about its task, was not to everyone's taste. Roland Dudley, vice-chair until 1943, Sheriff of Hampshire in 1941 and an enthusiast for farm mechanization, resigned in protest at some of its courses of action.¹⁹ And when in June 1944 the tenants on farms taken over by the HWAEC were late in making their 4 June Returns, the WAEC decided to withhold livestock rations from the guilty farmers. In fact the Ministry was unhappy about this draconian action, since there were already penalties in place for failure to comply and these did not include the withholding of rations for livestock. The practice was therefore deemed unnecessary.²⁰ In another Hampshire case, John Crowe of Ashe Manor Farm, between Basingstoke and Whitchurch, was given three weeks' notice to quit in March 1940. He had previously been a distinguished manager for the Duke of Westminster's home farm in Cheshire for 21 years before taking the lease of the farm in 1926 at a time when it was in a very poor state. He then built up a prize-winning herd within a short time. It was claimed that he had offered to increase milk production, but that the HWAEC had wanted more wheat; that he had never refused to carry out HWAEC orders, and was never informed whether he was graded A, B or C. Two well-known firms of valuers were astonished at his dispossession.²¹

The case of Rex Paterson from Hatch Warren Farm near Basingstoke also came to public attention: an innovator and farming pioneer on the chalk downland, he was farming 10,000 acres by 1942, mainly in Hampshire. Using the outdoor bail system of milking cows, which required less labour to manage, he was however, graded B by the CWAEC because it was felt that he had insufficient labour to run his holdings effectively. He had ploughed up land according to their instructions but became embroiled in arguments with the committee from 1943 about the fields which were to be ploughed, a dispute publicized in the *Farmers Weekly*. He was eventually vindicated in a report following a Hampshire NFU investigation in 1944-5,

¹⁸ Imperial War Museum sound archive: 14042/2 (Mr Taylor).

¹⁹ HRO, Q21/3/11: Oath and declaration of Sheriff: Roland Dudley 1 Apr. 1941; J. Wentworth Day, *Harvest adventure* (1946), p. 251. And see H. G. Robinson, 'A pioneer mechanised farm', *Country Life*, 1 Feb. 1933, pp. 156-8. An article in *Farmers Weekly*, 10 Aug. 1934 also explains that he had 1000 acres, mainly arable and that he used combine harvesters and crop dryers. He was

later awarded the OBE.

²⁰ TNA, MAF 80/909.

²¹ Farmers' Rights Association, *Living casualties (the dispossessed farmer)* (1946), p. 10. The activities of this Association are discussed more fully below. The gradings implemented by the CWAECs were, technically, based on the state of the farm, rather than the farmer's abilities. The latter were not so assessed until the National Farm Survey which began in 1941.

which criticised the local officials for victimization, and for allowing the matter to get out of hand. Reference was even made in the House of Commons to the NFU report, which ran to more than 5,000 pages, the adjournment debate in 1945 noting the 'vindictive policy' of the HWAEC, 'a policy which is responsible for dispossessing quite a large number of farmers in Hampshire'.²² Paterson served as chair of the Oxford Farming Conference in 1964, and was awarded an OBE for services to agriculture that same year.²³

The friction, it was claimed in the NFU report, arose because of the 'methods and attitude of the WAEC'. Furthermore the committee's treatment of Paterson was 'wholly unwarranted'. William Craven-Ellis, MP for Southampton, went on to accuse WAECs of abusing their powers, and other members called for the ending of 'Gestapo methods' and especially for a right of appeal to be instituted, a call rejected by the Minister as time-wasting during wartime (but which was incorporated in the Agriculture Act 1947).²⁴ However, the attacks on the HWAEC in the debate did not go unchallenged. Godfrey Nicholson, Conservative MP for Farnham and trustee for an 800-acre holding in Hampshire, stated that he had received 'nothing but great help' from the HWAEC, and his only criticism was that 'they are not quite harsh enough and soon enough in their criticisms'. He felt that his views were widely shared among his relations and the farming community more generally within the county.²⁵ It is clear that the WAEC often had to instruct farmers to farm their land badly, mortgaging the future for the extra yields required in the emergency of war. But while the influential Paterson could obtain some redress through the NFU, there were many smaller farmers for whom no such access was immediately available. Indeed the wartime compliance of the NFU with the CWAECs in general was a notable feature, designed (successfully) to win greater rewards for farmers in the post-war years. The NFU even opposed the relaxation of the dispossession procedures in 1947, fearing that this might result in less favourable farm financial support mechanisms being implemented.²⁶

²² Parliamentary Debates (PD) (Commons) 407, 6 Feb. 1945, 2025–7. The lack of even-handedness of the Wiltshire WAEC has been demonstrated by John Martin, 'George Odum, the Ministry of Agriculture and "Farmer Hudson"', *AgHR* 55 (2007), pp. 229–50.

²³ John Martin, 'Paterson, Rex Munro (1902–1978)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52533>, accessed 15 Oct. 2006]; 'Rex Paterson and the Hampshire WAEC', *Farmers Weekly*, 10 Nov. 1944, p. 21. Paterson's disagreements with the HWAEC can be seen in his papers deposited at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading (FR PAT B/2). See also R. Paterson, 'Low cost milk production', *JRASE* 123 (1962), pp. 22–32. Paterson also held 100 acres in nearby Old Alresford (TNA, MAF 65/22).

²⁴ The request for an appeals procedure was repeatedly

raised in the Commons during the war, but consistently refused by the minister, Robert Hudson. See, for example, PD (Commons) 400, 8 June 1944, 1629–50. The question of the seemingly absolute power of the CWAECs was actually raised in the Commons just about three weeks after Walden's death, although there was no specific reference to the case (PD (Commons) 364, 15 Aug. 1940, pp. 964–5).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2032–3. Nicholson had made similarly supportive remarks about the HWAEC in June 1944 (PD (Commons) 8 June 1944, 1636), whilst denouncing Labour Party opponents as totalitarian and Socialism as the 'ante-chamber to Fascism'.

²⁶ P. Self and H. J. Storing, *The state and the farmer* (1962), p. 126.



FIGURE 1 Borough Farm and the Itchen Valley. The farm is just to the south of the railway line and Walden's landlord was based at Tichborne House, at the southern edge of the map. The fields which were the subject of the plough-up order are outlined. Extract from the 1870 1:10,560 map SU 42 (Reprinted by permission of the Hampshire Record Office).

II

Moving from the national and county context, we may now turn to the immediate farming environment. Itchen Stoke and Ovington were two small villages and, until they were amalgamated in 1931, parishes, in the Itchen valley, just to the west of New Alresford. The population of the combined parishes in 1931 was 304. Almost on the boundary between the two former parishes, and also reaching into the parish of Tichborne, lay the small Borough Farm, part of the Tichborne estate to the south (Figure 1). It was situated in an area described in the Rev. Telford Varley's *Hampshire* thus:

The whole of this river valley indeed is attractive to a rare degree. Hard as it is to decide between one spot and another, perhaps the sweetest of all is the mingle of river, reed-swamp and watersplash between Itchen Stoke and Ovington.²⁷

The farm therefore lay in an idyllic countryside, indeed in the valley of one of the finest chalk streams in the world.²⁸ It also offered some of the best trout fishing in the country and attracted the attention of visitors and anglers, including W. H. Hudson whose sojourn from 1900 at neighbouring Itchen Abbas, is portrayed in his *Hampshire Days* (1903).²⁹ He stayed in a cottage belonging to the Liberal Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, whose similar delight in the valley is recorded in his privately printed *Cottage Book* (1909).³⁰ Borough Farm was sited between narrow chalk hills to north and south, and with the Alton and Winchester line of the London and South-Western Railway running close to the north of the farmhouse. To the west was a tributary of the Itchen, the Candover Stream, and to the south was the modern B3047. To both east and west were extensive water meadows. The soils are a combination of silts and shallow soils over underlying chalk, depending on their proximity to the river itself. The farm was never much more than 60 acres, and much consisted of two large fields of 22 and 11 acres to the south. The 1940 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet therefore shows the farmhouse and farm buildings, somewhat hemmed in (Figure 2).³¹ To the north, east and west was land belonging to the extensive Itchen Stoke Manor Farm, belonging to the Hon. A. H. Baring, the wealthy retired banker and later 1st Lord Ashburton, while to the south lay lands belonging to Park

²⁷ HRO, 24M71/21: Norah Cole, *History of Itchen Stoke* (n.d., 3 typescript vols), p. 4, citing Rev. Telford Varley, *Hampshire* (1909).

²⁸ Because of its outstanding ecological value, the upper Itchen at this location was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1997 and in 1998 a Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) under the European Habitats Directive. The area is on the north-western boundary of the proposed (2008) South Downs National Park.

²⁹ B. Tippet, *W. H. Hudson in Hampshire* (Hampshire Papers 27, 2004), pp. 19–21. Hudson's visits to Ovington are recorded in W. H. Hudson, *Hampshire days* (1928), pp. 251, 270. The area attracted many walkers and painters: a fine pen and ink sketch of Borough Farm and the

River Arle at Itchen Stoke, 1880, for example, was made by Marianne Hunt (HRO, 55M88/1, fo. 34). The claim as to trout fishing is made in the sale catalogue for Ovington Park in 1949 (HRO, 117M91/SP140/1).

³⁰ M. Waterhouse (ed.), *The Cottage Book: the undiscovered country diary of an Edwardian statesman* (1999).

³¹ HRO, 152M82/6/3, Valuation Book 1910–15 for Ovington shows the hereditament. Valuation Office Field Books, which would have offered more detail on the farm, are missing, as are all those for the Winchester area, through bomb damage in the Second World War. A request from the Inland Revenue to see the National Farm Survey maps was therefore granted in 1943 (TNA, MAF 38/865).

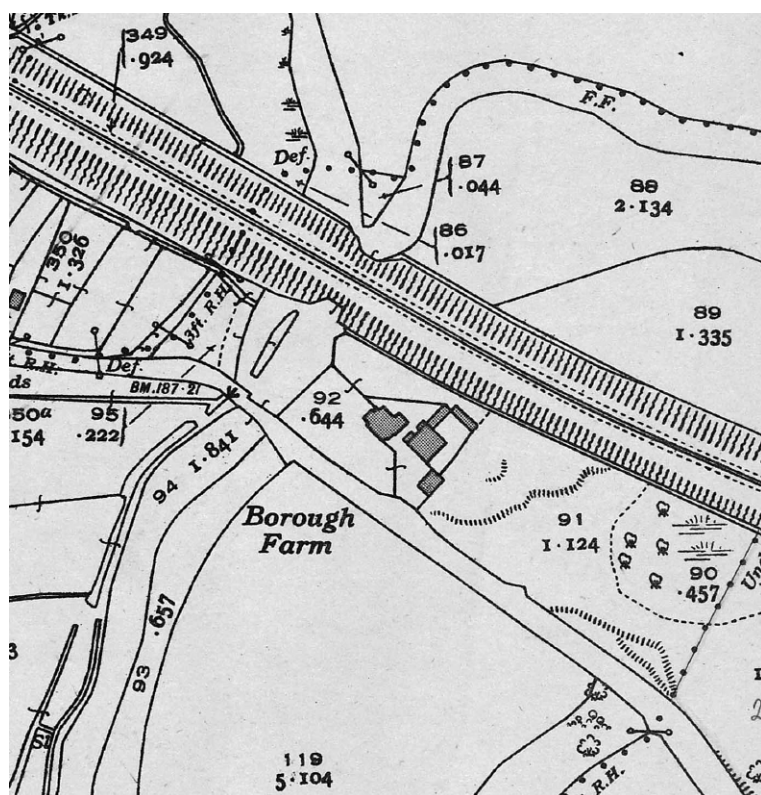


FIGURE 2 Extract from the 1940 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet SU 42 SW sheet 9, showing Borough Farm. The old gravel pit is shown as parcel number 90 (reprinted by permission of the Hampshire Record Office). The farmhouse is to the north-west of the farm complex.

Farm (tenanted by Mr Porter in 1941, 330 acres) and Tichborne Down Farm (T. E. Bennett, 65 acres).³² At Ovington Park was another banker, Arthur Hervey Hoare of the private banking family, who moved his most of his London banking staff to Tichborne for the duration of the war before leaving the house in 1946. The village was also home to numerous evacuees 'trekking' from Southampton, where the bombing of late November 1940 was particularly heavy.³³

The early 1930s Land Utilization Survey found the area to be primarily pastoral, with some marshland pastures among the Itchen water meadows. Much of the surrounding countryside was arable on the central Chalk area, even though prices for wheat were generally poor at this depressed time. Lying in the Itchen valley, however, Borough Farm was on unpromising river gravels surrounded by alluvial and low lying soils, described in the 1930s as 'sometimes neglected and now only reedy rough pasture'.³⁴ A derelict gravel pit lay to the east of the farmhouse by

³² In June 1941 A. T. Porter was described as offering 'insufficient personal supervision and drive [being a] non-working, sporting type of farmer'. He was graded 'B'. The Hon. A. H. Baring was graded 'A' (TNA, MAF 32/981/304). See below n. 60 for further information on T. E. (Thomas) Bennett.

³³ HRO, 45M90/2, Ovington and Itchen Stoke Womens' Institute publication (1952) (no pagination). Arthur Hervey Hoare (1877–1953) oversaw the move to

Ovington, setting up the bank's administration in the house and billeting staff in the village, most of which he owned. Messrs Hoare's own archive contains papers relevant to the move (HB/7/B/7; HB/9/E/4 and HB/9/E/6), and see also V. Hutchings, *Messrs Hoare Bankers: a history of the Hoare banking dynasty* (2005), pp. 204–7.

³⁴ Land Utilisation Survey of Britain sheet 123 (Winchester) and L. D. Stamp (ed.), *The Land of Britain, Part 89: Hampshire* (1940), p. 368.

the late nineteenth century. The farm was small, inconvenient and old-fashioned: only in 1937 was decent drainage obtained, when a Winchester Rural District Council scheme to improve domestic drainage resulted in a drain and cesspool for sink waste.³⁵

From this otherwise inauspicious farm came the best-known individual farm dispossession case of World War Two, that of (George) Raymond Walden. He had been born in Chardstock, Dorset in 1874.³⁶ His father George had been born at Yetminster, and his parents and both sets of grandparents had lived in the Dorset, Devon and Somerset border country. George and his wife Frances (née Sandford) had seven children. From their dates and places of birth, it appears that his move with Frances and two children (Beatrice, the oldest child, born 1873 and Ray) into Hampshire took place by 1876.³⁷ Ray's five younger sisters were born after the move. They were Barbara (born 1877), later Mrs Roskilly, who gave evidence of identification at Walden's inquest, who in 1901 was working as dressmaker at St Mary Kalendar (absorbed into the parish of St Maurice) in Winchester, and living with her sisters Lucy (born 1881) and Frances (born 1876), who was working as a grocer. Beatrice (no occupation given) and Mabel (born 1883), who was a dressmaker, were still living in Ovington in 1901. The other daughter, Clara, (born 1879) was living in Islington as a draper's assistant in 1901. The eastward migration of this west-country farming family was consistent with that of many others from the region who were looking to bring their dairying skills to the depressed south-eastern farm economy during the 1870s, when unlet farms were in plentiful supply and rents in Hampshire at a low level.³⁸ It is relevant to note that Ray's uncle and aunt also moved from the same west-country area to Staffordshire in the late 1870s. Other members of Frances' family moved further eastwards to farm in Sussex.³⁹

It is unclear whether George brought his family immediately to Borough Farm, since the first appearance of the Waldens in the Tichborne estate rentals is for the Lady Day (25 March) audit 1881 when it was stated that they had taken over the holding from the executors of the previous tenant, the late Eleanor Smith, at £30 per annum, with a standard clause that the landlord was to find timber, bricks, flint, sand and lime for repairs.⁴⁰ However, two of the younger children, Frances (five years) and Barbara (three years), were returned in the 1881 census as having been born in Itchen Stoke. The census birth dates are correct, as corroborated by their registered

³⁵ HRO, 39M73/BP3380 (Winchester RDC Building Plan).

³⁶ Chardstock was transferred to the county of Devon in 1896.

³⁷ Birth date information and other genealogical material is taken from the England and Wales Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes, together with the relevant census enumerators' schedules 1871–1901.

³⁸ 1881 census, TNA, RG11/1244; 1891 census, RG 12/949; 1901 census, RG13/1097. For the agricultural depression of this period see R. Perren, *Agriculture in depression, 1870–1940* (1995); P. J. Perry, *British farming in the great depression, 1870–1914* (1974); E. J. T. Collins, 'Rural and agricultural change' in Collins (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, VII, 1850–1914 (2000), pp. 151, 374.

³⁹ Jonas Phillips, a miller, had married Hannah, Walden's aunt who had been born in Chard. By 1881 they were in Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire (TNA, RG 11/2777). Information on the Sandford and Phillips family was kindly supplied by Mrs Gertie Northcote (née Phillips) the granddaughter of Walden's aunt Clara (Frances' sister), in an interview on 21 Nov. 2007.

⁴⁰ For the Tichborne rentals, see HRO, 37M48/8 (I am grateful for permission from the Tichborne estate to study this documentation). There were actually few calls on the estate for repairs at Borough Farm, work on a cart shed roof in 1891 being quite unusual (HRO, 37M48/111/10). Eleanor Smith was the tenant at the time of the tithe survey of Ovington (apportionment 1846, map c.1848–51) (HRO, 21M65/F7/183/2). Her will is dated 1879 (HRO, 5M62/18, p. 526).

birth dates, so the family would appear to have lived elsewhere in the area for about five years before taking on Borough Farm, generally referred to as being in Ovington.⁴¹

George died in February 1887, and was buried in St Peters, Ovington churchyard. Ray was 12, and Frances was thus left with seven young children. The Lady Day rentals show that she continued the farm, remaining in the rentals as 'Widow Walden'. The 1891 census shows Frances, aged 47 and a farmer, with four children living at home. Ray was then aged 16 and already returned as a farmer. Frances herself died in 1902, aged 63. The service for her burial at Ovington was conducted by the priest from the Catholic chapel at Tichborne House and it would seem that her children were brought up as Catholics, since Ray's own burial at Ovington, in 1940 was also officiated by a Catholic priest.⁴² The Catholic connection between tenant and landowners may even have been significant in their taking up a tenancy here, although there is no indication that George had been a Catholic.

Walden remained farming with his mother at Borough Farm, but by August 1902 he was farming some land at Tichborne Down on his own account at £30 per annum. On occasion the half-yearly rents were paid by both mother and son together, 'by Raymond and Mrs Walden'. In 1901, aged 26, he was returned in the census as living at nearby 'Verindhall' (almost certainly Vernal Farm), with one living-in servant, a carter, James McCartie (ironically perhaps, given what was to come, the son of an Irish police inspector). He then succeeded to the tenancy of Borough Farm, taking over on his mother's death.⁴³ The fact of employing a carter was perhaps significant, since one valuable source of income for Borough Farm was the digging and carting of gravel, either 'rough' or the finer material, from the gravel spur upon which the farm was situated (Figure 2). His father had been paid for this service by the estate, carting the gravel to the Alresford Union, to other tenants, or to sell on to the highways authorities, and he and his mother continued the practice at least through to the latter's death. His mother was also paid by the estate for clearing the river of weeds, a twice-yearly payment

⁴¹ The time of the Waldens' arrival at Borough Farm coincides with a difficult period for their landlords, the old Catholic Tichborne family. They had suffered financially from having money squandered by the high-living Sir Alfred Tichborne, and had also just emerged in 1874 from the expensive law suit connected with 'the Tichborne Claimant' (D. Woodruff, *The Tichborne claimant: a Victorian mystery* (1957)). The Tichborne and Doughty Estates Act, 1874, was passed to enable the trustees of the estate to raise the sum of £91,677 12s. 2d. expended in the various legal proceedings. The rentals of the estate were reckoned at £25,000 (J. B. Atlay, *Famous trials of the century* (1899), p. 387). Today the Tichborne Estate comprises a mansion house, some housing in the village of Tichborne, 1150 acres of farmland and 400 acres of woodland.

⁴² HRO, 32M69/PR8/7. Frances' will was dated 1903 (5M62/31, p. 46). The chapel at Tichborne House, inserted into the house at its rebuilding from 1803, served as the focus for the Catholic parish of Tichborne. A

chaplain and missionary priest are noted here in *VCH Hants*, IV, p. 338 and the priest lived at The Presbytery until the 1920s. The parish church, unusually, has a Catholic chapel in the north aisle, and a Catholic school was held to the south of the church from 1845 until some point before the end of the nineteenth century (HRO, 37M48/3). This may have been where the Walden children were educated. The building has now been demolished (E. Roberts and E. Crockford, *A history of Tichborne* (nd, privately printed)). Mrs Gertie Northcote informed me that one of Frances' brothers became a Catholic priest as also did one of Ray Walden's cousins.

⁴³ Raymond Walden is listed as the farmer at Borough Farm in the first year of his tenancy proper in 1903 (*Kellys Directory for Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and the Isle of Wight and Channel Islands* (1903), p. 247). He is similarly listed in the last full year of his life in the 1939 edition (*Kellys Directory for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1939), p. 287).

of £3 10s. 0d.⁴⁴ In 1900 Ray was being paid for cartage work for the estate and in 1901 he was providing 'horses for ploughing etc', for which he was paid £23 1s. 0d. This extra income would undoubtedly have been a significant factor in maintaining a small farm at this time. During the 1880s the estate was making allowances against the rentals of its tenant farmers, to allay problems caused by the recession in farm profits, but there are no mentions of such allowances by the later 1890s.⁴⁵ The Waldens paid their rent at the due dates of Lady Day and Michaelmas, and the only time when some arrears are noted is in 1903 following Frances Walden's death when arrears of £39 18s. 0d. were noted. The arrears were paid off, however, by January 1904. During this time the rents were actually paid to the estate office by the bailiff, Edward Eames, but by August 1904 Ray Walden was paying the rent himself, when it had increased to £40 per annum for 'Borough Farm and land late Godwins'. The neighbouring farmer Thomas Godwin was now in his 70s and Walden took over a meadow and some downland from him – the latter almost certainly the land for which he was later to be in trouble with the CWAEC – and he continued to farm this land and pay £40 per annum to the time of his death, the last payment being recorded in the estate ledgers on 29 May 1940.⁴⁶ He kept much to himself, remained a bachelor, and over 50 years had scarcely left the neighbourhood.⁴⁷

III

The power to dispossess farmers, wholly or in part, if CWAEC instructions were consistently refused, was enfolded within an elaborate process. One element was particularly unpopular with farmers: there was no right of appeal except to the CWAEC, the rationale being that any more complicated procedure would have slowed down production. This remained, however, a recurrent grievance.

The first mention of Walden in the Hampshire WAEC minutes comes on 9 April 1940: 'That the occupier be asked to write before or attend at the next meeting of the committee stating his objections to the issue of the order (reference 6/312/8225) – for 34.257 acres to be ploughed up'.⁴⁸ The minute is very clear on the acreage required, and it is repeated in a later minute. The discrepancy between this minuted requirement and the figure of four acres commonly given, is explained below. But that this stage had already been reached implies a previous refusal by Walden to comply with District Committee requirements, with the result that the matter was referred to the Executive Committee. The matter was deferred to the next meeting on 16 April, when it was agreed that a compulsory order for ploughing should be issued and served. On 7 May special consideration was given to the case, when it was agreed that the Executive Officer should contact Walden's landlord's agents to ask whether they could obtain a more suitable

⁴⁴ In November 1902 Lady Dorothy Grey, wife of Sir Edward Grey, noted from their cottage retreat at Itchen Abbas how each meadow channel was being cleared out with a spade and reeds cut (Waterhouse, *Cottage book*, p. 132).

⁴⁵ HRO, 37M48/4.

⁴⁶ HRO, 158M89. Tichborne estate rent roll, 1892–1909; and Estate cash book and ledgers, 1930–49.

⁴⁷ *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 26 July 1940, p. 12. It should be noted that none of his six sisters were married by the time of the 1901 census, with their ages then between 25 and 17. Barbara was married in 1914, aged 37.

⁴⁸ The minutes of the Hampshire WAEC are at TNA, MAF 80/895, covering the period 20 Feb. to 20 Aug. 1940, and 80/896, for the period 3 Sept. to 19 Dec. 1940.

tenant if the existing tenancy were to be terminated on grounds of bad husbandry and non-compliance with the committee's directions. In the meantime application was to be made to the Minister of Agriculture for consent to the committee taking possession of Borough Farm, comprising 62 acres. This was the standard procedure in such cases.

It appears that there were problems on the farm other than the refusal to plough. At the 21 May meeting it was reported that the corn ricks at Borough Farm remained unthreshed, and the Ministry was again to be approached, this time for permission to requisition the ricks, if consent was also given to take possession of the farm.⁴⁹ We hear nothing more until 25 June when the County Land Officer had reported on the farm and it was resolved that in the event of Walden failing to comply with the order terminating his tenancy, formal possession of the farm be taken, and the Chief Constable be requested to arrange for the eviction. It is perhaps noteworthy that at a special meeting of the HWAEC on 2 July the Minister of Agriculture, Robert Hudson, addressed the committee on the future of government policy for agriculture 'in the light of changing circumstances'. The Liaison Officer with remit for Hampshire, Anthony Hurd from Wiltshire, was also present.⁵⁰ One of Hudson's tasks during the war was to stiffen the resolve of CWAECs in their efforts to expand farm production, and to dispossess their farmers if necessary. No doubt his visit reinforced the Hampshire determination to tackle foot-dragging farmers such as Walden. On 9 July it was agreed that notice be served on Walden, informing him that unless he vacated the farm within seven days he would be evicted. This is the last mention of Walden in the minutes of the committee before his death.

On the 22 and 23 July the siege of Borough Farm took place, likened by one reporter to a 'rural Sidney Street'.⁵¹ Unsurprisingly the incident was reported in local newspapers, but several national newspapers, such as the *Daily Mirror*, also covered the story.⁵² *The Times* carried a report of the inquest under the headline 'Farmer killed in all-night siege'.⁵³ The *Daily Mail* Special Correspondent wrote from Alresford:

Sixty six year old Raymond Warden [sic] bachelor farmer of Alresford, died in hospital last night after being wounded in an astonishing 18hr one-man resistance to a siege, by armed police at his farm. In various towns and villages around the county are policemen and firemen whose legs and arms smart from shot-gun wounds they received in this remarkable episode. One of them PC Reginald Draper of Ropley, ... [the] first police casualty had to be taken from his home this afternoon to Winchester hospital – to a bed near the old farmer's, so serious were his wounds. Tear gas bombs, rifles, shot-guns, revolvers and sticks all figure

⁴⁹ This is the only mention of unthreshed ricks, and it is difficult to know how such criticism should be taken. Their existence may have reflected the fact that government policy was to encourage farmers to hold wheat in stack until it was required for flour milling. The existence of unthreshed ricks of wheat was not necessarily indicative of Walden being an incompetent farmer. Criticisms of this type were also levelled at the progressive farmer George Odium by a member of the Wiltshire WAEC. The criticisms were disclosed in the 1949 'Odium versus Stratton' case in Wiltshire, but were successfully refuted.

I am indebted to Dr John Martin for drawing my attention to this point. The judgement was reprinted by the *Wiltshire Gazette*, and the relevant section is on p. 7. See also Martin, 'George Odium'.

⁵⁰ Hurd's role as Liaison Officer is well described in his book *A farmer in Whitehall* (1951). He gives 2,695 as the total figure for tenancies terminated between 1940 and 1944 (p. 128).

⁵¹ *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 26 July 1940, p. 12.

⁵² *Daily Mirror*, 24 July 1940.

⁵³ *The Times*, 31 July 1940, p. 2.

in this story. It began yesterday morning when PC Draper and others cycled to Borough Farm ...⁵⁴

The *Hampshire Chronicle* contained a report:

Forcing their way into Borough Farm, Itchen Stoke, early on Tuesday morning – after an 18 hours siege and gun battle – police officers found the man who had successfully held them at bay lying helpless with a serious gunshot wound in the head. The farmer, 65 years' old George Raymond Walden, died in the Royal Hampshire County Hospital at Winchester during the evening, after lying gravely ill throughout the day ... Police Constable Draper, in the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, is reported to be in a comfortable condition. Inspector Hatcher, Police Sergeant Longman, Police Sergeant Warren and Police Constable Cripps were all hit with pellets, but fortunately none were seriously wounded.⁵⁵

The inquest was opened at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, on 25 July. Only evidence of identification was taken; this was given by Walden's widowed sister, Barbara Roskilly, from Alresford. She had been keeping house for her brother for about the last 10 years, and had last seen him alive on the Monday morning at about 11 o'clock before the siege began. She added that his state of health then was quite good, and had in fact been so for some time past. 'He only had a few headaches now and again. He was not an excitable person, to the contrary, he was very placid. Sometimes when things upset him he was a little nervous.' The inquest was then adjourned until 30 July at the Guildhall, Winchester.

The adjourned inquest was conducted by the Winchester City Coroner, Theophilus E. Brown, sitting with a jury.⁵⁶ Those reported as present included R. Knox (Deputy Chief Constable of Hampshire), W. G. Stratton (Head Constable of Winchester), C. G. Hickson (Deputy Clerk to the County Council, representing the police), D. S. M. Scott (representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the HWAEC), S. A. Pettifer (Frere, Cholmeley and Co., Lincoln's Inn, representing Sir Anthony Tichborne, the landlord and Messrs James Harris and Son, agents for the Tichborne Estate), R. R. Geech (representing members of the deceased's family), Supt. Fielder, and others. PC Draper attended the court on a stretcher. The coroner specifically stated that the inquest was only to ascertain the cause of death, and that he would attempt to keep strictly to that limited aim. A number of people involved with the incident then gave evidence.

⁵⁴ *Daily Mail*, 24 July 1940. The reporter had obviously spoken to a neighbour, hence the use of Raymond alongside the mis-spelling of his surname. Walden's age was given as 65 on his death certificate. Other reporting inaccuracies include the *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 26 July 1940 referring to 'Warden' rather than Walden throughout, and mis-identifying Walden's sister Barbara as 'Mrs Rose Killy' (rather than Mrs Roskilly).

⁵⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, 27 July 1940. In the reports published in the *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 26 July 1940 and *Hampshire Advertiser*, 27 July 1940, it was

stated that members of the Alresford Fire brigade were also present at the scene. If so, it would seem that the numbers of police, firemen and onlooking neighbours would have represented a considerable crowd at various times during the siege.

⁵⁶ I am grateful for the help of Mr and Mrs Stoddart in the initial stages of this research. See the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 3 Aug. 1940, p. 3. The jury would be required since death had resulted from an injury caused by a police officer in the purported execution of his duty. This is now set out in s. 8 (3) of the Coroners Act, 1988.

The Cultivation Officer was William R. Mead, based at 82 High Street, Winchester. He stated that, after due consideration, the committee made a Cultivation Order dated 17 April 1940 directing the ploughing, summer fallowing, and preparing for a cereal crop in 1941 of two areas amounting to approximately 34 acres. That order was not complied with. The matter was further considered in connection with both the landlord and the tenant and an order for taking possession was issued on 20 July. At that stage the landlord had no power to intervene in the action of the CWAEC, only being furnished with a copy of the possession order as a matter of courtesy. An attempt by Mr Geech to ask about CWAEC procedures was interrupted by the Coroner because it was thought to wander beyond the cause of death.⁵⁷

John Reginald Morton, based at the Carfax Hotel, Winchester, was the Assistant County Land Officer, employed by the HWAEC. He stated that he prepared a schedule of Borough Farm, in support of the application to the Ministry. Notice to terminate the tenancy was served on Walden. On 24 June, Mrs Roskilly came to see him and he gave her some friendly advice, as a result of which he saw Walden on the following day. But neither he nor his sister were successful in persuading Walden of the gravity of his position, and notice of intention to take possession on 20 July was then served, the notice later being found among Walden's papers. Arrangements were made with the Chief Constable that two constables should be present at Borough Farm at 11.20 am on July 22 to see that there was no breach of the peace. Morton was instructed to carry out the dispossession, and when he arrived the police were already there. He tried the doors but found them locked, and thereupon broke open the back door and the inner door of the farmhouse. As they went through the inner door one of the two policemen with him warned that Walden was inside with a gun, and advised him to retreat outside. This he did, and Walden re-fastened the outer door.⁵⁸

At the start of the police evidence a sketch plan of part of the farm premises was produced, together with photographs which had been taken. PC Draper, stationed at Ropley, gave evidence (from his stretcher) that at 11.30 am on July 22 he went, on instructions, with PC Cripps to Borough Farm. He saw Walden standing at the back door of the farmhouse. Cripps went first, saying 'Good morning, Mr Walden, I want to speak to you.' Walden said 'No!' and something else which he could not catch, closing the door and bolting it top and bottom. Cripps shouted to him but there was no reply. The position was explained to Mr Morton (who had arrived) and then he and PC Cripps got through the back door into the scullery. They moved through to the kitchen (which was fastened on the inside) and Cripps then warned 'Look out. Here he comes with a gun.' Neither policeman was armed, so they withdrew to the yard. Cripps went to inform Supt Fielder, while he remained to watch Walden's movements. At about 12.50 he was standing at the entrance to the cow pen yard when he heard the back door open. He stepped behind a board fence and peeped over. He saw Walden about 12–15 yards away, so he said 'Well, what are you going to do now?' Without speaking, Walden raised the gun and fired with one barrel

⁵⁷ Mr Geech was almost certainly from the firm of Burley and Geech (Solicitors) from Bishop's Waltham, near Winchester (HRO, 45M69). He is thought by John Curtis to have been a friend of Walden's sister Barbara (pers. comm., 29 Nov. 2006).

⁵⁸ In an answer to Mr Pettifer, Morton emphasised that the process of eviction had nothing to do with the landlord or the landlord's agents (*Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 2 Aug. 1940, p. 5; *Hampshire Observer*, 3 Aug. 1940).

of a double-barrelled gun, hitting Draper in both legs and one arm. A roadman and some field workers came to his assistance on the ground. He received 15 pellets in the left leg, two in the right leg, and two in the left arm. He was taken home and later to the Royal Hampshire County Hospital. At the time of giving his evidence only two pellets had been extracted.

PC Cripps, stationed at Preston Candover, corroborated Draper's evidence. Having seen Walden creeping down the stairs with a gun, he went off to inform Supt Fielder while Draper remained. He returned to find that PC Draper had been shot. After seeing him to the doctor's surgery at Ropley, he returned again, and tried to get Walden to come out, but without success. Leaving the scene he later returned about midnight with other officers under the command of Inspector Hatcher. He and Sgt. Warren each threw two tear gas canisters into the house to force Walden out; they then heard movements and he and another officer stood ready to arrest him as he came out. But the door opened a little and Walden fired both barrels through the partly opened door without hitting anyone. Then he fired again, presumably from another gun, as he had not had time to reload. The door was then shut again and barricaded from the inside. Half an hour later Cripps and Warren forced the house and in the kitchen at the foot of the stairs they found an empty civilian gas respirator case, thus explaining why the gas canisters had not been effective. Cripps then stated that he heard a movement on the stairs. Withdrawing quickly, he just got out of the way when another shot rang out. Later he advanced across the farmyard towards the front door only to be shot at again, this time receiving pellets in his right arm, right leg and chin. Inspector Hatcher, who was with him, was also slightly wounded in the left hand. The police were using electric lamps and were thus visible in the darkness to Walden, who also had the reputation of being a good shot. Cripps remained on duty outside the premises until 7 am the next morning, keeping out of sight of the house. Then he left, and when he returned Walden was being carried out of the house suffering from severe injuries.

Inspector Hatcher, stationed at Basingstoke and the officer in charge at the scene, said he saw Draper at his home at Ropley after he had been shot. The same afternoon police officers were stationed all round Borough Farm. His intention was to arrest Walden on a charge of attempting to murder PC Draper. In turn he corroborated Cripps' evidence. At daybreak on 23 July additional police were brought to the farm and the house was surrounded. Shortly before 7 am both the outer doors of the house were forced and wedged open. Walden then fired at the officers. Sgt Longman, together with three constables, Ward, Cole and Vine, entered the scullery by the back door and Sgt Longman called to Walden to surrender, assuring him that no harm would befall him. Walden merely said 'You are going to kill me or I am going to kill you; I am not going to give in.' The scullery door was forced and he heard several more shots fired, the last two in fairly close succession. He entered by the front door and found Walden lying on the floor of the kitchen in a kind of sitting posture, and with a severe wound on the right side of his head. By his right side was a double-barrelled gun, which he was not holding but which was pointing towards his head. Hatcher searched the premises, and found, in addition to the double-barrelled 12-bore gun by Walden's side, a single-barrelled, loaded 4.10 gun under the bed and a certain amount of ammunition for both guns, some of which had been fired. He gave evidence also of finding shot marks on the kitchen walls, on the staircase and near the entrance to the stairs, but none in the ceiling. Both the guns used by the police, and Walden's double-barrelled gun, were firing No. 6 cartridges.

Police Sgt. Longman, also stationed at Basingstoke, spoke of the final attack. He forced an entry to the scullery with the three constables, and forced open the kitchen door. He then saw a gun pointing towards him from the stairs. He pushed the door to, and shots were fired. He called out to Walden, 'Put your gun down and surrender.' Walden replied 'I am going to kill you like you are going to kill me; I am not going to give in.' Longman said 'Don't be a silly man, put up your gun and come out.' But Walden fired, and so taking a gun which one of the constables gave him Longman fired back twice towards the stairs. He called out again to Walden telling him to come out, but Walden only fired in reply. One of these shots struck him in the neck and arm, so he gave the gun to PC Cole, who also called on Walden to surrender, and later fired. Hearing a groan he went into the kitchen and at that moment Inspector Hatcher came in at the front door with other constables. Walden was slumped on the floor, his gun containing two empty cartridges.

PC Cole corroborated Sgt Longman's statement up to the time when the latter was hit by a shot and he took the gun. He then said to Walden 'Come out and put that gun down.' And Walden replied 'No, I am not coming out; I am going to shoot.' Looking out of the door he saw Walden standing on the stairs pointing the gun directly at him. He could see what looked like his elbow and he fired at that. After a short time he heard a groan, and going into the kitchen with Sgt Longman he found Walden in the position that Inspector Hatcher had described.

The hospital pathologist said that Walden died on the day of his admission to hospital suffering from gun-shot wounds. In his post-mortem examination he found a gun-shot wound on one side of the head, and there were 30 pellets there in a circle about four inches in diameter. One pellet had gone through the right eye to the brain and it was that one pellet which caused his death. There were no signs of scorching or powder marks. Howard Davies, an experienced Winchester gunsmith, said that there were approximately 280 pellets in a No. 6 12-bore cartridge. If such a cartridge had been fired at the head of a man from two feet, there would certainly be some scorching, and moreover, if a man had fired it at himself from such a range there would be massive injuries. He concluded that Walden's wound was consistent with being shot from a distance of about 15 feet.

Summing up the case, the Coroner said that it had aroused some notoriety but when one came to boil it down, there was really very little in it. Walden had been ordered by the CWAEC, in the execution of their duty, to do certain acts upon his farm. A good many attempts were made to induce him to carry out what had been ordered; but he disregarded the order; in fact he flouted it, and he did not attempt in any shape or form to do what he had been ordered to do. In consequence, the Committee had applied to the Ministry of Agriculture, and had been authorized, if they failed to get their orders carried out, to evict Walden. That eviction had nothing whatever to do with the landlord, Sir Anthony Tichborne, or his agents. That was the position of 22 July. Eviction at all times was a somewhat difficult process, and the HWAEC, in their wisdom and quite properly, applied for two police officers to accompany their representative to ensure that there was no breach of the peace. So PCs Draper and Cripps, together with Mr Morton, went to the house and made a peaceable approach to take possession of the land. They were unarmed. One of these officers remained behind while the other went to report that Walden was armed. Then, without warning Walden shot at the remaining constable 'in what he could only describe as a murderous manner'. Reinforcements were obtained, and

entrance was ultimately obtained. But before that, and after it, and practically continuously until 7 o'clock the following morning, Walden was shooting at every officer who appeared, and as a result he wounded four, including one quite badly. Consequently the position changed from what had been a civil proceeding to a criminal act. Walden, without any justification whatever, had fired at PC Draper and wounded him. If he had not been killed, he would undoubtedly have had to stand trial on a charge of attempted murder. There was no suggestion that he committed suicide, and it was a shot from one of the policemen which caused the fatal wound. If the jury came to that conclusion, the coroner thought the proper verdict for them to return was justifiable homicide, and he instructed the jury to this end. Their verdict was indeed one of justifiable homicide

On behalf of the jury the foreman expressed sympathy with PC Draper and wished him a speedy recovery. The same expression was made by Mr Geech on behalf of the relatives, and sympathy with the relatives was expressed by Mr Pettifer on behalf of his clients, mentioning that this unfortunate affair closed 'a very pleasant association of landlord and tenant' with the Walden family lasting many years. Mr Scott, on behalf of the HWAEC, also expressed his regrets at the occurrence. There the inquest proceedings ended.⁵⁹

A meeting of the HWAEC actually took place on 23 July, the day that Walden died, but there was no mention of the incident in the minutes. However, on the 30 July a minute states that:

Arising from the County Land Officer's report, the committee considered certain statements which had been made in regard to the tragic circumstances of this case, and the advisability of holding an enquiry into the manner in which the eviction was carried out. Resolved: that an enquiry into this case was not necessary.

Instead, at their 6 August meeting, two weeks after the shooting, it was resolved that:

Arising from the County Land Officer's report ... that the landlord's solicitors be informed that there was no objection to their new tenant moving into the farm, but that the committee cannot accept any liability for the damage done to the premises by the police.

The final mention of Borough Farm at this time was in the minutes for 10 September when it was resolved that the account of Walden's neighbour T. E. Bennett for £2. 4s. *od.* for looking after the farm be approved and paid.⁶⁰

The 1941 National Farm Survey makes it clear that Borough Farm had been merged for practical purposes with John Foot's Home Farm in Tichborne to give him 163 acres of crops and grass and 55 cattle (including 21 cows and heifers). Foot, working the farm with his three

⁵⁹ Walden's death certificate was later issued from Winchester Registration District on 2 Aug. 1940 (number DYB 091450) with the cause of death 'injury to the brain following a gunshot wound inflicted by a police officer in self defence and in legal execution of his duty. Justifiable homicide PM'.

⁶⁰ This was Thomas Bennett, born in 1890 into the family of a rural postman, and living as a baby at Tichborne Down in the 1891 census (TNA, RG12/949).

His was the neighbouring Tichborne Down Farm, of a similar size (65 acres in 1941) and also belonging to the Tichborne estate, but classed by the Ministry of Agriculture as being in New Alresford parish (TNA, MAF 65/22). In the National Farm Survey he was classed as a 'B1' farmer, with 'no obvious failings', the form having been filled in by J. R. Burge and T. W. Ashton, and completed by W. T. Mitchell on 21 Sept. 1941 (TNA, MAF 32/985/312).

sons, was graded an 'A' farmer. He had ploughed up 8 acres of 'The Crawls' near the mansion for oats for the 1940 harvest, and for 1941 he had ploughed part of the old Borough Farm's Miller's Hill field for 20 acres of oats and 7½ acres of wheat. He had occupied Home Farm for 6½ years but had taken on an additional 51 acres since June 1940 – a clear reference to Walden's farm, although there is no mention of Walden at all.⁶¹

The notoriety of the building seems not to be well known by local people today. But John Curtis of West Lea farm shop (with watercress a speciality from its beds next to the clear waters of the Itchen which divide his land from Borough Farm) knew Ray Walden as a rather thin-faced man who wore an old hat and carried a gun – a rather fearsome old man to a child. John was 11 years old at the time of the trouble and remembers his father trying to intervene but being stopped by police. His father always thereafter remained convinced that if he could have spoken directly with Walden he could have prevented the final outcome. One newspaper report did state that two friends called out to him, but that he did not reply or open the door. John also remembers that Walden had a sister living with him [Barbara], but that she was away at the time of the shooting, and he also remembers that the issue aroused great sympathy in the locality.⁶² Barbara had left to stay with friends in Alresford rather than witness the sorry dispossession of her brother from the farm where they had both been raised as children.

IV

It is a commonplace that history is a story written by the victors, and Foucault saw truth as the fragile product of historical struggles. Despite early work by the Hammonds, English agrarian history has only recently begun in earnest to recover 'other' versions of 'improvement' or 'progress'.⁶³ The story of the real CWAEC wartime successes in feeding Britain undoubtedly hides the stories of the victims. But contemporary demands for the rights of those deprived of their freedom to farm as they thought appropriate were immediate, and debated locally and nationally, even within the exigencies of wartime. In today's atmosphere of concern for minorities, 'others' and ethical scholarship, what has been called 'contrition chic' has appeared.⁶⁴ Yet standards of historical evidence are important in judging events such as the death of Walden, as is the context of his death. In presenting this account, it is also significant that it has recently been claimed that civilian death during the Second World War, and perhaps in the twentieth century more generally after 1918, has remained an under-researched area compared with other historical periods.⁶⁵

⁶¹ TNA, MAF 32/991/321 and 73/15/42, Sheet XLII.5. John Foot had ploughed the 8 acres for the 1940 harvest in response to a ploughing order from the Executive Committee dated 15 Nov. 1939 (TNA, MAF 80/894).

⁶² Interviews with John Curtis, Aug. 2001 and Nov. 2006. The report mentioning the friends was in the *Hampshire Observer*, 27 July 1940.

⁶³ For a summary of views on agricultural progress and the social relations of agricultural change, see

A. Howkins, 'Agrarian histories and agricultural revolutions', in W. Lamont (ed.) *Historical controversies and historians* (1998), pp. 81–91.

⁶⁴ A conversation evening on repatriation, restitution and reparations hosted by the British Academy in December 2006 raised these issues.

⁶⁵ J. Rugg, 'Managing "Civilian deaths due to war operations": Yorkshire operations during World War II', *Twentieth-century British History* 15 (2004), pp. 152–73.

The mystery of the exact requirement of land to be ploughed is interesting. Was it four acres, as stated by some reporters at the inquest and as thereafter used by other writers? Or was it the 34 acres as stated in the HWAEC minutes, and also as stated by other reporters present at the inquest? If the latter, then Walden was being asked to plough up 55 per cent of his small farm, at a time when most other farmers were being asked to plough about 10 per cent. Mead, from the HWAEC, was certainly cited as stating that 34 acres was the required amount. One suspects that the four acres was the result of mis-hearing by a reporter during the inquest proceedings, and it is therefore most unfortunate that it is this figure which has been used in later publications and by the Farmers' Rights Association (FRA).⁶⁶ Mead quoted the 34 acres as stemming from a cultivation order dated 17 April, and on both 9 April and 16 April the minutes of the WAEC explicitly give the compulsory acreage to be ploughed as 34.257 acres, a figure clearly denoting that particular fields had been allocated for arable production.⁶⁷ And indeed, the National Farm Survey map annotated between 1941 and 1943, shows two larger fields, separated at their northern end by a small belt of trees and situated on downland to the south of Borough Farm which are colour-washed grey and labelled 'Borough Farm 6/312/8225'. The final number in this reference '8225' matches the number cited in the HWAEC minutes. The larger of the fields contains 22.417 acres, the smaller 11.840 acres – together giving 34.257 acres – the amount Walden was expected to plough up according to the minutes.⁶⁸ (The fields are shown in Figure 1.) So there can be no doubt that he was expected to plough up more than half of his farm, being that part on the downland outside the narrow confines of the valley itself. This would have depleted hugely his resources for maintaining his dairy herd, especially since it appears that he was already producing some corn from his 62 acres, hence the reference to his corn ricks remaining unthreshed.⁶⁹ Even assuming a minimum of four acres of corn already being grown, if the order was indeed for 34 acres the required additional plough-up would have taken up nearly 60 per cent of his remaining pasture, a figure difficult to justify rationally on farming grounds, especially of an elderly farmer. Furthermore, if Walden was being required to plough up in the Spring (April), which is when the WAEC minutes of his case begin, in order to rid his land of weeds by summer fallowing, he was being deprived of his summer grazing or of the chance to get a hay crop in for his winter feed requirements. It was certainly the case that dairy farmers in Hampshire had been forewarned in September 1939 that they would be expected to break up some of their grassland for arable, but the amount demanded of Walden seems disproportionate.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ The *Hampshire Observer*, 3 Aug. 1940 gives 34 acres, as does the *Hampshire Advertiser*, 3 Aug. 1940; the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 3 Aug. 1940 gives 4 acres. Given that two fields are mentioned as being required to be ploughed, it does seem unlikely that these would only amount to 4 acres. Finally, and difficult to fathom, the *Hampshire Advertiser*, 27 July 1940, gives 5 acres. But this latter article also consistently refers to the deceased as 'Warden'!

⁶⁷ The minutes (TNA, MAF 80/895) give the compulsory order reference number as 6/312/8225.

⁶⁸ TNA, MAF 73/15/42, sheet XLII.5. The sheet is a

reduced copy of the 25-inch sheet, which includes original printed Ordnance Survey field sizes.

⁶⁹ That Walden normally produced some arable crops is also confirmed by John Curtis who remembered seeing Walden's sister about the farm when, as a boy, he helped with Walden's harvest, binding and rick building (pers. comm., 29 Nov. 2006).

⁷⁰ See the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 3 Aug. 1940 for the instruction to summer fallow the ploughed land. For the warning to dairy farmers, see TNA, MAF 80/894, minute of 14 Sept. 1939.

TABLE 2. Acreages of wheat, barley, oats and potatoes (combined) in the United Kingdom, Hampshire, and in the locality of Borough Farm, 1939–41

	1939	1940	% change 1939–40	1941	% change 1940–1
United Kingdom ('000 acres)	5,910	7,380	24.9	8,814	19.4
Hampshire	112,196	143,287	27.7	188,075	31.3
Tichborne	511	620	21.3	966	55.8
New Alresford	158	113	–28.5	172	52.2
Itchen Stoke and Ovington	499	836	67.5	1,032	23.4
Combined three parishes	1,168	1,569	34.3	2,170	38.3

Source: K. A. H. Murray, *Agriculture* (History of the Second World War series, 1955), Appendix Table 4, p. 373; TNA, MAF 68/3905; 3942; 3979.

It is not known whether he possessed a tractor, and if he relied on horses the ploughing could have entailed more than 30 days' work. There is no mention in the HWAEC minutes of a contractor being employed, and it is possible that Walden – as with John Crowe, and indeed with Odlum in Wiltshire – were caught in the prevailing bias against 'dairymen' as opposed to 'real' (i.e. arable) farmers, being expected to restructure their farming without experience or adequate equipment.⁷¹

Even though there were criticisms of Walden's farming other than his refusal to plough, the more one thinks about the decision and its tragic outcome, the harsher the treatment meted out by the HWAEC appears. Table 2 gives the acreages of wheat, barley, oats and potatoes being grown in the three parishes making up the locality within which Borough Farm lay. These were the main crops emphasised in the early years of the war, and it can be seen that the percentage increases of these crops between 1939 and 1941 was greater than either the UK figure or that for Hampshire as a whole. This was despite the presence of the water meadows and the loss of farmland within the boundaries of New Alresford parish, probably for military use.⁷² Table 3 shows the rate of plough-up of permanent grassland, and again demonstrates that the area around Borough Farm was well in advance of both national and county rates. It would appear from these data that the area was performing above the norm for national and county expectations, and that there should have been little cause for the HWAEC to be anxious about these parishes pulling their weight at this time. The data for 1941 would not, of course, have been available to the HWAEC at the time of the decision to dispossess Walden.

⁷¹ The case of Odlum is dealt with in Martin, 'George Odlum'.

⁷² The area to the east, north-east and north-west of Winchester, and around Borough Farm at Tichborne

Park, became a training ground for American troops on their way to Normandy later in the war (<http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/USARC/DIV-IT/0095DIV-IT/History.htm>) [accessed 22 June 2008].

TABLE 3. Acreages of permanent grass (for mowing) and permanent grass (for grazing) (combined) in the United Kingdom, Hampshire, and in the locality of Borough Farm, 1939–41

	1939	1940	% change 1939–40	1941	% change 1940–1
United Kingdom ('000 acres)	18,773	17,084	–9.0	15,114	–11.5
Hampshire	287,422	262,232	–8.8	226,724	–13.5
Tichborne	936	824	–12.0	759	–7.9
New Alresford	576	460	–20.1	264	–42.6
Itchen Stoke and Ovington	961	811	–15.6	462	–43.0
Combined three parishes	2473	2095	–15.3	1485	–29.1

Source: K. A. H. Murray, *Agriculture* (History of the Second World War series, 1955), Appendix Table 4, p. 373; TNA, MAF 68/3905; 3942; 3979.

Walden's death aroused great sympathy, not only in the neighbourhood, but also nationally, and was an undoubted spur to the establishment of the FRA from Shropshire by L. V. Priestley. The Association was an outlet for aggrieved farmers, many having been dispossessed, and several pamphlets were published from their Church Stretton offices. One, *Living Casualties* (*The dispossessed farmer*), was:

dedicated to the memory of George Raymond Walden aged 65 years of Borough Farm, Itchen Stoke, Hampshire who was dispossessed by the Hampshire War Agricultural Executive Committee. While defending his home, where he had lived all his life, and his father before him, he was gassed and shot to death.⁷³

The FRA later declared him a 'martyr of civil liberty'.⁷⁴ Whilst we have seen that the claim to life occupancy of Borough Farm was not strictly correct, and neither was the mis-quoted figure of 4 acres to be ploughed up which was also used, the pamphlet does indicate the strength of feeling over Walden's death, and also the resistance to eviction without the right to independent appeal which had been such a contentious feature of wartime CWAEC activities.

The well-known agricultural journalist and broadcaster, A. G. Street, published his novel *Shameful Harvest* (1952), with a story loosely based on this case, and with a dedication to George Walden. His later *Feather-bedding* (1954) referring to the need for 'Desperate measures and desperate remedies' also contained a reference to the incident, calling it 'un-British and

⁷³ Farmers' Rights Association, *Living casualties*. Walden's fate is mentioned by other agricultural historians in discussions of the opposition to CWAEC control: see J. Martin, *The development of modern agriculture: British farming since 1931* (2000), pp. 63–5; S. Ward, *War in the countryside, 1939–45* (1988), p. 24. The latter mentions that the police were backed up by troops, but no

contemporary source confirms this.

⁷⁴ Issues relating to dispossession are also dealt with in Self and Storing, *State and the Farmer*, pp. 127–38. As well as *Living Casualties*, where the reference to Walden is on p. 22, the FRA also published *The New Morality* (1945) and *The New Anarchy* (1948).

undemocratic'.⁷⁵ Here was, as Angus Calder remarked 'where the mailed fist showed through the velvet glove'. Both Calder and Street in *Shameful Harvest*, incidentally follow others in ascribing the incident to one arising over a requirement to plough just four acres of land.⁷⁶

Perhaps Walden was something of a test case for the HWAEC, maybe even a flexing of their muscle and a refusal to back down in a struggle over principles. Walden may not have been an energetic or particularly good farmer, but there was no history of difficulty with the pre-war Hampshire Agricultural Committee.⁷⁷ He was an elderly bachelor with relatively few contacts, probably somewhat isolated from the rest of the farming community, stubborn and old-fashioned – perhaps even unpopular with his landlord, although like him a Catholic. There is no evidence that his landlord tried to intervene on Walden's behalf: a question asked at the inquest on behalf of Sir Anthony Tichborne was designed only to absolve him from any connection with the incident. The coroner's terms of reference were confined to ascertaining the immediate circumstances and the cause of death. The events leading up to the incident were only briefly stated. Any further investigation of the incident was therefore left to the HWAEC, and perhaps significantly, they declined to pursue it.

Walden had become – in Anthony Hurd's words – one of 'agriculture's war casualties'. These were, it was claimed, inevitable in fighting a totalitarian war, when 'action was speedier and safeguards far less' and when extended reporting of such incidents was curtailed for fear of damage to morale. But whereas most wartime deaths, whether military or civilian, were reported with an overt or underlying 'heroic' rhetoric, Walden's could not be, except by a small minority of his peers and neighbours. Under the pressures of war, mistakes were made by the CWAECs, and there was waste of resources on many occasions, but in national terms, the job got done.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, as Whetham noted, 'the more notable of their omissions and mistakes will find a permanent, if exaggerated, record in local gossip and local history'.⁷⁹ For the FRA there was the hope that 'perhaps a more enlightened generation will honour the memory of this obscure Hampshire farmer'.⁸⁰ Certainly Street felt that Walden, in refusing to budge from his family home, was fighting:

Nazi methods in Hampshire as stoutly as younger Britons were fighting them overseas. Somehow it is difficult to blame him overmuch. The real blame for his martyrdom lies with

⁷⁵ A. G. Street, *Shameful harvest* (1952); id., *Feather-bedding* (1954), pp. 28–35. A lukewarm review of the former book in the *Illustrated London News* (10 May 1952, p. 814) referred to 'woodenness', a 'deadening effect' with the small, independent farmer in the novel, Jimmy, having made a enemy of an old but wealthy friend, finding that 'when war breaks out, and independence can be made a crime, the power to save or smash him is invested in his old foe'. And the *Times Literary Supplement* (6 June 1952, p. 373) referred to 'a violent climax [which is] not very convincing'. All the same, the novel is a vituperative attack on the CWAEC wartime powers. A review in *The Times* (5 Apr. 1952, p. 6) wrote of the CWAEC's 'excess and extremism'.

⁷⁶ A. Calder, *The people's war: Britain, 1939–45* (1969),

p. 427; and for the same 4-acre figure, see F. Mountford, *Heartbreak Farm: a farmer and his farm in wartime* (1997), pp. 106–7. Street actually refers to 4½ acres (p. 274). Most recently *The Guardian's* 'Country Diary' editor, Martin Wainwright, repeats the error in his edited *Wartime country diaries* (2007), p. 100. It is high time this canard was laid to rest!

⁷⁷ HRO, H/CX1/2, Hampshire Agricultural Committee minutes, 1926–47.

⁷⁸ Self and Storing, *State and the farmer*, p. 133, n. 1; Hurd, *Farmer in Whitehall*, p. 35.

⁷⁹ TNA, MAF 102/326, draft of official wartime history by Whetham, p. 395.

⁸⁰ FRA, *Living Casualties*, p. 22.

those responsible for the administration of the war-time state control of farming at that date, and principally with his farmer neighbours. Some of these were on the committee that issued the instructions that ultimately led to his death; while the others stood by and let this dreadful thing happen without making any effort to prevent it. To the lasting shame of British farmers in general and Hampshire farmers in particular history will show that not one farmer fought alongside George Raymond Walden in his hour of need.⁸¹

We might conclude with E. H. Carr's words – that the incident demonstrates 'the thesis of the lesser evil and the greater good'.⁸² It was vital that food supplies were maintained, in the face of merchant shipping losses in the Atlantic, for the urban majority whose morale might quickly evaporate if supplies were threatened, undermining national solidarity.⁸³ But we have also seen that the issue was more complex than this because Walden became a symbol. For progressive farmers he symbolized old-fashioned small-farmer attitudes; for those on the HWAEC he symbolized resistance to their wartime campaign to produce more food at almost any cost; for his neighbours and fellow tenants he was insular and little part of any community spirit; and for the FRA he was a martyr for his stand against state tyranny. Who was to blame for his death? It is, of course, difficult, possibly invidious, at this remove to apportion blame. Walden was particularly obstinate in refusing the HWAEC request, even turning a deaf ear to last-minute attempts to change his mind by his sister, among others. The HWAEC was undoubtedly over-zealous in its pursuit of plough-up; and the police surely handled the siege itself rather badly and need not have stormed the house at all. Walden died intestate, and his sister Barbara administered his effects, worth £461 14s. 11d.⁸⁴ Borough Farm was later sold off by the Tichborne Estate. The final word should go to the official recognition of such cases as these:

One farmer may be called upon to plough up most of his farm or revolutionize his whole method of farming, with possible loss to himself, whilst his neighbour engaged in mixed arable farming continues relatively undisturbed with increased profits. These are the fortunes of war, which it's difficult and often impossible to avoid.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Street, *Feather-bedding*, pp. 30–1.

⁸² E. H. Carr, *What is history?* (1967), pp. 79–81.

⁸³ See R. Mackay, *Half the battle: civilian morale in Britain during the Second World War* (2002); S. Rose, *Which people's war? National identity and citizenship in wartime Britain, 1939–45* (2003), pp. 197–238. For shipping losses during the summer of 1940, see Central Office of Information, *The Battle of the Atlantic* (1946).

⁸⁴ *National Probate Calendar 1940*. 'Administration: Llandudno 13 Nov. to Barbara Roskilly, Widow'. Walden was buried next to his father in Ovington churchyard on 27 July 1940 (HRO, 32M69/PR8/7).

⁸⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, *Notes on agricultural policy for those directing the food production campaign* (Spring 1942), p. 4.

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN, *Landscapes decoded. The origins and development of Cambridgeshire's medieval fields* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006). xiv + 176 pp., 5 tables, 51 figs. £14.99.

Susan Oosthuizen's book is of importance way beyond its local study area – the Bourn Valley of Cambridgeshire – for it offers an interesting and detailed case study for a period that is still imperfectly understood. Although much of this material is already available as journal articles it is here brought together and discussed within this wider setting. Current opinions on the origin and development of field systems are presented and attempts are made to set changes within a chronological time frame.

Oosthuizen recognizes a series of landscape features and examines how parts of older systems may have been fossilized within later arrangements. A regular system of land division involving roughly parallel long boundaries, parts surviving as route ways, can be identified in the Bourn valley, similar to those which formed part of the prehistoric co-axial systems that have been identified elsewhere. Oosthuizen dismisses these as resulting from transhumance and the presence of linear drove ways for moving stock because the distances involved are too short, seeing them rather as the result of 'the relatively equitable apportionment of the environmental resources ... between family groups' (p. 88). This may remain open to question, for the main reason behind the movement of stock was to remove the animals away from crops during the growing season, and the distance covered was immaterial (often only a relatively short distance over a few hundred feet in later historical times in west Wales). More innovative is the recognition of a 'proto-common field' laid out across several contiguous parish areas, it is argued, between 700 and 870 – before estate fragmentation – also giving rise to a series of narrow linear commons (or were these ways?) running across the four parishes involved. This seems to indicate that the system was laid out at a time when these parishes were part of a single estate. Although early settlement evidence is not readily available in this area, the theory

appears to echo other recent suggestions of settlement nucleation in parts of the East Midlands taking place within composite estates before estate fragmentation (something it is, however, particularly difficult to date in areas devoid of charter evidence). The 'classic' common fields confined within each parish area in the Bourn Valley appear to have represented an extension of the arable between the tenth and twelfth centuries. These are interesting theories that demand further studies in other regions, especially as most of this analysis is based upon the technique of topographic or retrogressive map analysis, a technique that can be as dangerous as it is useful.

The emphasis here seems to be upon deliberate planning as the motive behind the apparent regularities observed in the landscape rather than functional factors of land use, such as the need for access ways both across and along the valley for the farming communities who lived and worked the land. Some other suggestions may be open to question and may not be as straightforward as assumed: the nature of Roman field systems, for instance (p. 4); the ability to elucidate methods of woodland management in early medieval England from place-names alone (p. 35); the identification of areas subject to woodland regeneration in the post-Roman period (p. 6): these are taken as fact when they are all open to interpretation and require much more critical analysis than is suggested here. However, in all fairness, there are more critical discussions of more directly relevant matters such as the use of the heavy plough. The development of individual settlement nuclei is also well covered with some detailed examples. By 1300 a pattern of big, nucleated villages, still keeping their offals (former common pastures) and greens under communal control, had appeared.

This is essential reading for all those working in the early medieval or medieval periods; it is original and thought-provoking and, provided one maintains a critical eye, provides an excellent spur to much needed studies elsewhere and to further deliberately structured field analysis and archaeological investigation.

DELLA HOOKE
University of Birmingham

JOE and CAROLINE HILLABY, *Leominster minster, priory and borough, c.660–1539* (The Friends of Leominster Priory & Loaston Press, 2006). xii + 292 pp., 146 figs, 20 illus., 15 tables. £10.00.

This lavish production owes much to the injection of Local Heritage Initiative funding. It provides an extensive analysis of the development of Leominster from the foundation of its Saxon minster c. 660 until the Dissolution in 1539 of the successor priory established by Henry I (not Henry II as the back cover proclaims) as a dependency of Reading Abbey. There is a list of abbreviations along with a single set of notes, undivided by chapter, running to 24 pages in double column and, even more frustrating, a single index of persons, places and subjects; a proper bibliography and footnotes would greatly have facilitated the volume's scholarly use. The volume is copiously illustrated.

Much is made of the seventh-century minster of Sts Edfrith, Hæmma and Æthelmod, its precinct built on an island site and the huge 12-mile wide dependent *parochia*. Its parallels as a site of historical significance with Glastonbury are explored. But apart from the *Secgan*, most of this is extrapolation to fit in with Leland's stories; in reality we know so little of these early institutions as is shown by the dearth of historical data for Brixworth, Clapham's 'most imposing architectural memorial of the seventh century surviving north of the Alps.'

Leominster seems to have become a double house, perhaps a daughter of the nunnery of Shaftesbury, by the early eleventh century: Wulfgeat of Donnington's will and John of Worcester's *obit* for Earl Leofric of Mercia (cited p. 269, n. 111) both use the word *cænobium* of Leominster, rather than *monasterium*. It is assumed that the minster priests became prebendaries serving both the nuns and the *parochia*: in fact what evidence there is for this phenomenon comes primarily from the royal nunneries of Wessex.

There are interesting, and attractively illustrated, chapters discussing the fabric of the Romanesque priory church, the parochial nave and their decoration. Others examine Leominster's library and relic collections. Those cataloguing the priory's influence on the location, development and shape of the borough are somehow less convincing.

M. J. FRANKLIN
Hughes Hall, Cambridge

MARK BAILEY, *Medieval Suffolk. An economic and social history, 1200–1500* (Boydell Press, 2007). xiii + 328 pp., 6 tables, 16 plates, 18 maps. £25.

Mark Bailey's authoritative study of the economic and social history of medieval Suffolk is the first volume to appear in a multi-volume history of Suffolk. With the publication of Bailey's volume the series is off to more than a solid start. Bailey is well known as a historian of medieval Suffolk and has published extensively on the county's economy in the middle ages; he brings his earlier research and a strong foundation in the primary material for the county to bear on this study. His work is broadly chronological and divides between the high and late middle ages, the first chapters dealing with his main themes before the mid-fourteenth century; in the final chapters Bailey examines the key events in the county from the period of the Black Death and their social and economic consequences. There is no absolute replication of chapters across both periods; instead, Bailey's chosen emphases shift, sometimes only by small degrees, often to reflect changes in the county's economy and social organization, the available material and the historiographical trends.

His aim, as he makes clear, is to illustrate the variety within the county and its subtleties, which challenge any simple models of longer-term economic change. This last point he explores in a conclusion to the volume in which he, developing at the empirical level ideas already discussed by Bailey and John Hatcher in an earlier publication (*Modelling the Middle Ages* (OUP, 2001)), rejects a notion of historical prime movers in favour of the accumulation of individual pieces of the historical jigsaw. As such, the volume is also a paean for local historians and for local history, a recognition that the local study is vital to the historian whose interests reside in the investigation of broader economic and social trends.

There is certainly a great deal of benefit in this volume for both the general and 'specialist' reader. One of its clear strengths is that, allied to clear and compelling prose, Bailey is careful to locate his discussion within the more general secondary literature. Although, of course, the focus and the emphasis of the discussion is wholly directed at the condition of medieval Suffolk, this volume will appeal to those keen for an introduction to the economic and social history of medieval England. That said, readers of the volume eager to discover the particularities of medieval Suffolk will not be disappointed. Throughout, Bailey is determined to stress the discrete features of the county's economy and in this respect draws attention, on more than one occasion, to the high incidence of personal and tenurial freedom, the density of population, and the considerable volume of

commercial activity. He contrasts those characteristics with other, almost paradoxical features of the economy, including well-established lordships, most obviously the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, with traditional expectations of their local economy.

The experience of high and late medieval Suffolk provides Bailey with the opportunity to engage with a number of ongoing historical debates, not the least of which concerns the significance of lordship and serfdom as determinative factors in the development of the medieval economy. In his discussion, and quite appropriately, Bailey's own interests are strongly evident, though they certainly cannot be said to dominate. Thus, for instance, there is a good deal of close information on agrarian production and demesne management, as well as careful dissection of the range of produce across the county and change over time in relation to the same. There is relatively less on aspects of the more overtly social and institutional frameworks, though the volume contains, for example, considered discussions of the land market and of the nature of villeinage within the county. In terms of the latter, and operating from his perspective on Suffolk, Bailey questions the overall significance of serfdom for that county, though accepting a local significance.

In his concluding discussion Bailey also offers some useful comparison with recent work on neighbouring counties, and especially on Norfolk, for which a great deal of research on its economy and society has been undertaken in the last quarter century. The subtle regional and sub-regional distinctions, which help to explain, though not fully, the difference experiences of the two counties and areas within them, are grist to Bailey's mill, as his final discussion of the textile industry in the region illustrates. The lack of consistency in its history, he points out, defies simple explanatory models.

Bailey recognizes that an economic and social history defined by county risks imposing too rigid an administrative boundary on historical developments not so easily confined. Compared, though, to the large number of estate and manorial studies, as well as research on individual towns, there are, notwithstanding a long- and well-established commitment to county histories *per se*, relatively few histories of the medieval economy and society conceived at the level of the county. The focus upon the county is useful here as it opens up, as it did in Larry Poos' study of later medieval Essex and Jane Whittle's work on Norfolk, avenues for investigation which would not always coincide in studies with a different focus. Thus, we see the exercise of lordship beyond the great estates, for instance, and we look both at rural and urban economic activity. In this respect, as in others mentioned above, the volume is a welcome and

valuable addition to the study of the medieval English economy and society. The volume is well supported by a full bibliography and an effective index, as well as intelligently employed figures, maps and plates.

PHILLIP R. SCHOFIELD
Aberystwyth University

ADRIAN R. BELL, CHRIS BROOKS and PAUL R. DRYBERGH, *The English wool market, c.1230–1327* (CUP, 2007). viii + 205 pp. £50.

As the authors outline in their introduction ('The Context'), the wool trade of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, with its abundant source material in the form of customs accounts and contracts for the purchase of wool, has already attracted much attention from historians. However, they contend that the full potential of the documentation has yet to be realized as a source for financial dealings and trading networks on a local and national stage. This book is not a history of the English wool trade – indeed, the authors explicitly reject such a claim. Rather, at the heart of the book is the study of advance contracts for the sale of wool, drawn up between English wool producers and largely foreign merchants. The authors show that these survive in greater numbers than had previously been thought and the contracts are here examined exhaustively for the light they shed on the buyers and sellers, advance payments, the reasons for advance contracts and problems associated with them, as well as the stages of the preparation and delivery of the wool. Both lay and monastic producers were involved in the process but it will come as no surprise to read that the latter were dominant, accounting for 84 per cent of surviving advance sales.

The authors move from the general (chapter two) to the particular, with a detailed look at the evidence from one Cistercian abbey, Pipewell in Northamptonshire (chapter three). The monks of Pipewell entered into contracts, negotiated and renegotiated, with merchants from Cahors. This is case study of great interest and highlights the centrality of these contracts to monastic finance and credit; indeed the earliest surviving indenture for an advance sale of wool comes from Pipewell (1242). Pipewell itself is revealed as 'belonging to a group of specialist smaller-scale producers who marketed an "intrinsically better product" than their competitors' (p. 77). This chapter reveals a community moving from using the cash raised from advance sales for building activities and paying taxes to using it to service unpaid loans. Four instances of sheep disease in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries threatened to undermine the whole basis of the abbey's trading and credit operation and brought it to near disaster. At the

outset of the book the authors state that their approach is to combine 'empirical historical and modern financial research methods'. The final chapter therefore looks at the structure of forward agreements for sale, calculating interest rates and assessing the efficiency of the wool market. The conclusions are that the market economy was a dynamic one, and those operating in it were capable of financial sophistication.

JANET BURTON
University of Wales, Lampeter

BRIAN BARKER, *Law and disorder in the Medieval North-East: the Claxtons and the Barony of Dilston in Northumberland, 1373–1441* (Papers in North Eastern History, 16, North-East England History Institute, 2007). 42 pp. £5.95.

Studies of disputes among the late medieval gentry have long assumed major historiographical importance. The eruption of violent disagreements concerning property were once thought to reflect the decay of the feudal system until detailed prosopographical studies revealed a complex society made up of many-layered networks and allegiances. In recent years, historians have come to look beyond the fragmentation of regional and local society to emphasize the vertical ties between gentry, nobility and crown. The north-east of England has, to some extent, been left out of this scholarly tradition, characterized as a border region different from the rest of the kingdom. Barker's detailed analysis of one particular dispute between Durham and Northumberland families is therefore to be welcomed.

The story told in this paper is a gripping tale of marital strife and decades of legal wrangling which took place in the shadow of the great northern magnate families of Neville and Percy. Before his death in 1378, doubtful of his wife's fidelity and therefore the legitimacy of her children, Walter Tyndale alienated his inheritance to the Claxtons. The inheritance included lands in Northumberland and, given the links between the Claxtons and the Nevilles, threatened Percy territorial interests. Barker develops the narrative by alternating his focus between the gentry dispute and the magnate interests at stake. Following a settlement in 1398–9, the dispute was renewed in the 1420s after the death of the Claxtons' political patron Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland. With obvious Percy backing, a self-proclaimed Tyndale heir emerged and seized Dilston by force. Matters were not resolved until the 1440s when, with the Neville family bitterly divided, Robert Claxton became a Percy retainer and secured the Tyndale inheritance.

Barker uses this case study to demonstrate the links between the gentry in north-east England, the great magnate families and, by extension, the kingdom at

large. The dispute was carried out in a way similar to other such disputes elsewhere in the kingdom, undermining notions of the distinctiveness of the region. Likewise, competing Neville influence in Durham, expressed through the Claxtons, and Percy influence in Northumberland, exercised through the Tyndales, suggest the North-East should not always be regarded a homogenous region. Barker's conclusions raise interesting questions concerning the representativeness of this particular dispute, especially in the light of recent work by Liddy on the distinctiveness of gentry society in the Bishopric of Durham. Barker's study is clearly written and he has provided a useful glossary, family trees, a map and the transcription and translation of a key document.

BEN DODDS
Durham University

MARGARET YATES, *Town and countryside in western Berkshire, c.1327–c.1600: social and economic change* (Boydell Press, 2007). xii + 338 pp., 10 figs, 24 tables, 3 maps. £55.

Yates' study of western Berkshire in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the transition from the medieval to the early modern periods on a regional level. The region chosen by Yates for her study consists of the distinct sub-regional geographies of the Vale of the White Horse, the Berkshire Downs and the valley of the River Kennet. The region also contains the cloth town of Newbury and Yates is much concerned to describe and analyse the relationship between town and country.

A number of descriptive and causal frameworks have been applied by historians to the transition between the medieval and the early modern periods. After describing these frameworks in her introduction, Yates takes them apart and tests them against her evidence. For example, she points to the prominence given to 'early incidences of capitalistic production' in discussions of the emergence of capitalism (p. 81). Newbury could be regarded as one such example. Yates examines the centralized cloth production which developed in the town and was described in a late sixteenth-century poem:

Within one roome being large and long,
There stood two hundred Loomes full strong:
Two hundred men the truth is so,
Wrought in these Loomes all in a row. (p. 91)

However, manufacturers such as the Winchcombes, on whom the poem is based, were unusual. This form of centralized cloth production was transitory in Newbury and arose in large part as a result of 'individual entrepreneurial activities' (p. 98). Throughout

the book, Yates always seeks to examine problems from multiple perspectives and, although she acknowledges the predominance of cloth in the economy of Newbury, she also discusses other economic activities including the trades in fish, raisins and pottery.

Interesting though the discussion of western Berkshire is, Yates goes further than the study of one particular region: she explores the factors which defined a region and the sub-regions within it. In her chapter on 'Landscapes, population and wealth' she shows that one small region actually contained significantly different sub-regions. She uses records of taxation to demonstrate that, although in the fourteenth century the distribution of population and wealth remained fairly uniform at a sub-regional level, by the sixteenth century there had been significant changes, particularly in the distribution of wealthy rural inhabitants and wage labourers. Wider economic changes had varying effects on the vale, downland and wood-pasture areas and the prosperity of Newbury itself was significant. Yates is also sensitive to the unpredictable impact of exogenous changes such as the dissolution of the monasteries. Prior to the dissolution, the abbeys of Abingdon, Reading and Beaulieu were major landholders in the region. Despite stability in the patterns of landholding from the fourteenth into the sixteenth centuries, the dissolution represented an exogenous shock after which there appears to have been much more change in the landholding class. Another important aspect of Yates' conceptualization of region and sub-region is the relationship between town and countryside. She uses investment and debt as indicators of relationships between different areas and finds the explanatory models of urban hierarchies inadequate. The case of Newbury is of particular interest because debts do not seem to have been contracted between townspeople and those in the immediate hinterland of the town but rather within the town itself and outside the region altogether.

One of the most troubling aspects of the fifteenth-century economy in particular is the question of the chronology of change. Historians have identified the existence of distinct sub-periods, which is confirmed by Yates. She is also able to establish the importance of regional and sub-regional differences in patterns of development. Newbury enjoyed relative economic buoyancy in the fifteenth century and a period of prosperity following the mid-century recession, a factor which had some impact on the surrounding area. The picture in the north of the region is different. The town of Wantage did not enjoy similar economic buoyancy, depriving the area of the benefits of nearby urban prosperity. As always, though, Yates is aware of the complexity of the impact of various factors on

different groups in society. For example, she observes the prevalence of smallholdings and poorer tax payers in the Kennet region but points out the availability of different sources of income in the area, including employment in the finishing of cloth, which encouraged immigration and ensured the viability of the local economy.

Yates' approach is driven by her questions rather than by the survival of particular collections of documents. This means she has to fill gaps in the available evidence from western Berkshire as best she can, drawing on a very wide range of sources including many different types of administrative documents, literature, and archaeology. Her technical expertise is shared with readers in four appendices containing substantial quantities of data and detailed discussions of the methodological issues arising. Those undertaking research projects on the economic and social history of the late medieval and early modern periods will find this discussion useful.

It is tempting for historians to remain in the comfort of their own periods, a tendency often reinforced by the arbitrary divisions of university curricula. Yates has courageously attempted to transcend these divisions and finds it is not possible to identify one 'specific moment that constitutes a break with the past and the end of the middle ages'. Instead, she finds many of the processes of change underway in the fourteenth century and then a 'discontinuous process which continues to this day' (p. 23). Nor can the process of change easily be attributed to any particular causal factor or group in society. Rather the impact of lords as well as that of 'enterprising individuals' must be set in the context of urban-rural relations, physical geography, unexpected exogenous factors and so on. In this book, Yates has not only given us a detailed picture of continuity and change in one region but has demonstrated the complexity of the chronology of change and its causation.

BEN DODDS
Durham University

ROBERT LIDDIARD (ed.), *The medieval park. New perspectives* (Windgather Press, 2007). xiv + 207 pp., 69 figs. £25.

How the history of parks has changed. Now, as this attractively produced and illustrated volume of essays shows, historians discuss the sociology and cultural context of park-making (Miles), parks as spaces where cloistered ladies could indulge in sporting activities while shielded from prying eyes (Sykes) and parks as part of planned landscapes (Richardson). Anyone who ever found parks boring should think again. This collection is intended to demonstrate the new diversity of approaches to the subject, and it admirably succeeds in its aim.

The essays are all of high quality, and generally clearly

written. The first five chapters are rather grandly described as examining some 'conceptual issues concerning the place of parkland'. Stephen Miles on shows just how varied were the precise circumstances and motives of those who established parks, refining the notion of parks as status symbols and setting the subject firmly in a context of gentry formation and status display. Amanda Richardson's fascinating chapter examines the way certain parks were integrated into the landscapes surrounding royal residences. Naomi Sykes shows how fruitful the zooarchaeological approach can be; bone assemblages, this reviewer was delighted to find, suggest that the best venison joints went to the lord's residence, the less good to those lower down the social scale. Pluskowski argues for an environmental archaeology of parks, emphasising changing medieval conceptions of them, and usefully locating them between forests on the one hand and gardens on the other, and in a broader context of aristocratic hunting culture. Ian Rotheram, writing on the historical ecology of parks, follows them through to the twentieth century and discusses the challenge of conserving this heritage.

These introductory chapters are followed by a series of case histories (Stephen Moorhouse, on Yorkshire, Anne Rowe on Hertfordshire, Rosemary Hoppit on Suffolk and Angus Winchester on Cumbria) that bring us firmly back to earth. Every one of these is useful and together they provide a remarkable illustration of how different approaches applied at the level of a county can illumine aspects of park histories. They bring out the wide range of purposes and uses to which parks were put in different places, periods and circumstances. 'No two parks are the same', observes Moorhouse, with justice. They might mostly contain deer, but they were rarely simply 'deer parks'. Some were stock farms or studs; many (perhaps most) were exploited for their grazing and timber; others contained quarries, fishponds or rabbit warrens, and a host of lesser resources were also drawn on, such as nut trees. Rotheram talks of the 'working medieval park', Hoppit of 'working resource-units'. And just as parks might change in size and shape over time, so might their primary purposes. Yet Moorhouse himself and his fellow contributors are alert to general features too. The extent to which the gentry created parks may vary from one county (or region) to another (Rowe finds many in Hertfordshire; they seem to be fewer elsewhere), but their parks are generally smaller than those of their social superiors. The siting and distribution of parks relates to territorial organisation, lordship and tenure as much as to the distribution of woodland or topography. They may often have been a response to erosion of woodland.

A recurring theme in these essays is the extent to

which parks were integrated into a planned landscape based on the seigneurial residence – designed as settings, perhaps even with the visual pleasure they might provide in mind. Amanda Richardson's examination of royal parks is immensely stimulating. Those puzzling 'little' ('inner' or 'home') parks fit well into such a perspective. But she herself is aware that the general applicability of these ideas remains to be tested; in any case she is writing about exceptionally large royal parks and her focus is largely on what she calls the 'great age of the medieval park', the fourteenth century. Parks were often close to or adjoined the residence but many were well away, on the edges of manors or parishes, partly because that was the only possible place for them at the time of their creation. In fact the circumstances and manner of their creation are largely absent from these stories, as is the relationship of parks to the rest of the manorial economy. Clearly this, too, varied, but the subject needs to be explored. There are occasional references to ridge and furrow in parks or running beneath park enclosures. What had happened here? There is, I think, one reference to what is rather euphemistically called 'settlement disruption' (Pluskowski), another to the dispossession of tenants, but in the sixteenth century. The point is several times made that it can be difficult if not impossible to pin down the date of a park's creation (licenses to impark are shown not always to be reliable) and the need to consider the attitudes of the local population is sporadically noted, but such subjects are never really tackled. The park at Cockermouth (Winchester) was a 'valuable tract of woodland and pasture for the local community', yes, but the local community had to pay to use it. So this is very much parks from the park-owners' point of view. But it is a collection that should send us all back to our sources, which is high praise indeed.

JEAN BIRRELL

University of Birmingham

ANDY WOOD, *The 1549 rebellions and the making of early modern England* (CUP, 2007), xix + 291 pp. £55.

The rebellions of 1549 are in sore need of a new study, so the appearance of this book is a cause for celebration. It is not a straightforward narrative of the revolts, however, and its structure will confuse some readers. Chapters one and four deal most directly with the rebellions of 1549. Chapter one sets the scene, examining the political and religious situation in the run up to 1549 before undertaking a whistle-stop tour of the rebellions themselves. There is little new here, but Wood writes an engaging narrative. A more detailed analysis of the events and actions of 1549 is provided in chapter four, which, although titled 'Rebel political language', could

just as happily be called 'Rebel politics'. Chapter four concentrates heavily on Kett's rebellion and dissects the actions, demands and the social make-up of the 'commotioners'. This is Wood at his strongest: full of perceptive insights into what happened and why. Two further chapters are concerned with events after the revolt. Chapter two looks at the four years after 1549, examining the disorder and suppression which followed the rebellions, and linking the popular politics of 1549 with the commons' role installing Mary as queen in 1553. This is interesting, and it is a pity the chapter is so short. Chapter six considers the afterlife of Kett's Rebellion: how its history was constructed through the narratives of Neville and Sotherton, right up to the present day. Placing this chapter last has a certain logic, and makes a fitting ending to the book, but it means that detailed consideration of the historiography of Kett's Rebellion is disconnected from the rather uncritical account provided in chapter one.

The book's main fault is its uneven coverage. While events in Norfolk receive a reasonably full treatment, those interested in the equally large and bitter Western Rebellion of 1549 will be disappointed. Other than short sections in chapters one and two, and a smattering of references elsewhere, it gets little consideration and no new research. The same can be said of the disturbances elsewhere in England. In addition, the book has a curious emphasis on events *after* the revolts rather than before. Wood considers immediate political and religious context of the revolts, and makes a strong case for the benefits of breaking down the barriers between social and political history via the study of popular politics. However, at the same time he is setting up new barriers, disconnecting social history from the economy. Little consideration is given to the economic grievances voiced in 1549 and their origins. Enclosure receives no sustained treatment. Wood's detailed analysis of class relations floats free from any roots in actual economic circumstances. Instead the book contains two further chapters which are largely superfluous to the history of 1549. Chapter three begins with an examination of the difficulties of recovering 'rebel speech', what Robert Kett actually said during the rebellion and in his confession, before continuing with a discussion of the role of speech in popular politics and resistance. This long exposition boils down to the uncontroversial statement that speech can be considered a form of action in early modern England. In a book on rebellion it might have been apt to give more consideration of obverse relationship: how, in the absence of detailed verbal statements of the rebels' intentions, actions can be seen as a form of language. Rebellion is the point where speech turns into action, and a more detailed analysis of rebel actions

would have fitted well here. Chapter five looks at the 'decline of insurrection'. 1549 was England's last great popular uprising, and it is uncontroversial to explain this in terms of the widening social and economic gulf in village society between wealthy tenants and the labouring poor in the late sixteenth century. Wood, however, wants to argue something rather different. For him the government deliberately extended the village elite's inclusion in officeholding and local politics to widen the social gulf. The village elite's increased hostility to their poorer neighbours provides evidence that this tactic was successful in undermining the roots of future rebellion. What is at fault here is the chronology: Wood wants to place these changes after 1549. But the emergence of the village elite, their role in office holding, and the criminalization of the poor, have origins which can be traced back to the Statute of Labourers in 1349–51, if not before, and are well documented in the late medieval studies of McIntosh and Dyer, which Wood does not consider. Instead he has mistaken a discontinuity in the historiography, the tranche of early modern studies which have a start date of 1550 or 1560, for a real discontinuity in sixteenth-century England. Despite these criticisms, at its best, this book has a great deal to offer the historian of popular rebellion. In places it is sophisticated and perceptive, even inspirational in its approach. But it is a patchy book, and will leave readers who hankered after a new history of 1549 dissatisfied.

JANE WHITTLE
University of Exeter

H. R. FRENCH and R. W. HOYLE, *The character of English rural society. Earls Colne, 1550–1750* (Manchester UP, 2007). xxv + 309 pp., 30 tables, 3 illus. £60.

Earls Colne is a place well known to many historians of early modern rural society in the English-speaking world and beyond. It owes its fame to its seventeenth-century clergyman and diarist Ralph Josselin. It was Josselin's voluminous diary that first attracted the attention of the historical anthropologist Alan Macfarlane and which subsequently made Earls Colne the object of Macfarlane's pioneering but ultimately unrealized (and unrealizable?) attempt at a totalizing historical reconstruction. French and Hoyle take advantage of the online resources this created to revisit a fundamental question in the history of English rural society – the disappearance of the English peasant and agricultural transformation.

A helpful introductory chapter, which deserves to be widely read, revisits the debate over the early development of agrarian capitalism in England triggered by the thesis advanced by the American historian Robert Brenner in the 1970s. What came to be known subsequently as

the Brenner debate saw Brenner criticize explanations grounded in commercialization and demographic pressure and argue for the centrality of class relationships and the erosion of peasant property rights. Writing at much the same time, but largely ignoring the issue of landlordism and drawing directly on his researches in Earls Colne, Alan Macfarlane offered a very different reading of agrarian change which sought to undercut the debate over the transition from feudalism to capitalism by challenging both thesis and chronology, arguing for a more ego-centred and commercially-oriented English 'peasantry' from at least the middle ages. French and Hoyle skilfully summarize and critique this debate in the light of more recent research and make this the focus of the often very detailed chapters that follow.

The book moves from general debate to a consideration of Earls Colne's particular characteristics. The authors are careful to acknowledge the potential problems of a single parish study, emphasizing Earls Colne's particular character. Anciently enclosed, located in an area of wood pasture and practising a mixed agriculture, the village had a more diversified occupational structure that reflected in part its involvement in the north Essex cloth industry and, importantly, the urban influences of Colchester and even London. This was a complex, commercialized, and mobile society.

At the core of the book is a detailed analysis of changes in the pattern of landholding and the respective roles of landlordism, inheritance and land market. With two manors, half the land was held in demesne, but with much of this leased out and, with freehold accounting for only some six per cent, copyhold was the dominant form of tenure. In line with the experience of much of eastern England, after the climacteric of the 1549 rebellions and an arrested seigneurial reaction, the favourable terms enjoyed by copyholders by inheritance in East Anglia were consolidated in Earls Colne. Fines to the lord increased over the longer term by perhaps as much as thirty-fold, but represented only about a fifth of manorial income. At various points, the resident lords of the manor, the Harlakendens, sought to assert manorial rights. This gave rise to disputes between them and the previous owners, the earls of Oxford, and with various tenants. In analysing these, the book offers valuable evidence of the existence of faction and feud at even this local level. But the relative unimportance of income from copyhold as against demesne leasehold helped to explain why the manorial courts slowly declined.

Painstaking computer-generated reconstruction of the myriad land transactions recorded in the manorial courts allows the authors to map the pattern of landholding and land transactions over the period of study. The picture that emerges is highly complex. This was a fundamentally

bifurcated market in which volatility, until perhaps the later period, was the norm, with a pattern of land retention for a little under half of the acreage over fifty-year cycles while, by contrast, many holdings were held for surprisingly short periods. While, over the longer run, there was some consolidation into larger holdings, the average holding size remained small, with many holdings often very small at less than one acre. Much copyhold land was held as an investment. Inheritance remained the largest factor in land acquisition, with many of those inheriting land, including the Harlakendens, ex-stewards to the earls of Oxford, being otherwise not very active in the further acquisition of land. Significantly, those acquiring land through purchase usually exhibited more activity subsequently. While there was a gradual tendency towards consolidation of larger holdings with the emergence of a few parish gentry and a significant presence of the middling sort, two factors worked against this. In practice, a pattern of partible inheritance saw accumulated holdings subject to the demands of younger heirs, while the disappearance of families into urban society saw plenty of very small holdings sub-let. Indeed, with minimal freehold, most of the demesne leased, and just under forty per cent of copyhold land sub-tenanted, the owner-occupier was an exception in Earls Colne. As an analysis of the pattern of office-holding suggests, it was acreage, not ownership, that mattered most.

Earls Colne does not England make. Nevertheless, the detailed work that Macfarlane's original research project made possible means that it is unlikely that we will ever be able to better the insights into the land market that French and Hoyle's study offers. Their work suggests that early market involvement, for smaller landholders with secure 'peasant' property rights and larger landholders alike, made the whole sector necessarily sensitive to the incentives offered by secular shifts in the price of grain. But, given the detail of the analysis offered, there is much more for the reader of the book to discover, not least a shadowy historical community study revealing something of the strengths and limitations of Earls Colne, given the absence of key records, had Macfarlane attempted a 'total history' there.

JOHN WALTER
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PETER EDWARDS, *Horse and man in early modern England* (Hambledon Continuum, 2007). xii + 340 pp., 10 illus. £35.

Alongside Dorian Gerhold, Peter Edwards is the foremost historian of the horse and the horse-drawn world of early modern Britain. Indeed, taken together, Gerhold's *Carriages and Coachmasters* and the present

volume provide as good a 'general view' as we are likely to get in the absence of detailed local studies. Prof. Edwards' book, drawing on an impressive range of sources (including, *mirabile dictu*, material from Wales) serves up a massively detailed account of the horse in all its manifestations; as a status symbol and object of conspicuous consumption, as a tool of war, as a labourer yoked to coach and plough and as a central player in a variety of sports.

The major strength of the book lies in the discussion of the issue of demand for horses of differing shapes and sizes as the economy expanded after the mid-sixteenth century. Before 1500 the profile of both saddle and draught horses in Britain was strictly limited, but with the development of regional specialization in agriculture, the opening of mines and quarries and the expansion of internal trade by road and water, bigger and better horses were required. As time went by, indigenous stock (or, at least, some of it) was improved by judicious crossing with Oriental and northern European animals, so that the great fairs of the east Midlands and elsewhere thronged with horses of every size and description. To these fairs flocked the carriers, traders and packmen, where they jostled with farmers seeking horses for the plough or gentlemen in pursuit of well-matched beasts to haul their newly-purchased coaches. Since everyone of any substance rode a horse, either their own mount or a hireling, the horse fair was of almost universal interest.

A gentleman attending the fair might be looking for mounts of decent stamp to meet his obligations under the various pieces of militia legislation (and I should add, incidentally, that Edwards is especially strong on the whole subject of the cavalry in early modern warfare). Alternatively he might be seeking a decent ambling hack for hawking, a speedy hunter which might occasionally be raced in a gruelling long-distance 'match', or even a candidate suited to the riding school. But, in any event, the matter of status and style was never far from his mind, because a gentleman could not fittingly be seen on any old horse. It was all very well for a farmer or a lawyer to go about his business on a nondescript mare, but the cut of a gentleman's horse was a symbol of his power and authority; it had, perforce, to be an animal of distinction in the same way as his carriage horses had to be matched for colour and size and trained to move with studied dignity. And it was useless spending good money on the sort of horse capable of cutting a dash if you were unable to ride him properly; hence the development of 'High School' riding. A man well-versed in the classics, mathematics, music and poetry was still only half a gentleman if his dancing and swordsmanship were below par and his

riding not of the highest order. The *manège* took riding beyond a mere leisure pursuit and made it central to a gentleman's education. The polite fiction was maintained that training in the *manège* helped prepare a man for war. And polite fiction it remained; how, after all, could the balletic movements developed in the *manège* have any relationship to mounted swordplay or the taxing business of re-loading a pistol at the trot? At the end of the day, *manège* training did little more than offer a man just one other means of showing off!

Hunting was another matter altogether. While Edwards remains equivocal, I would suggest that riding to hounds, which demanded extremely skilled horsemanship, was as good a way as any of fittening horses and men. Anyone who has hunted knows that the sport requires strong nerves and considerable bravery, reminding one of Mr Jorrocks' observation that hunting was the image of war with none of the guilt and twenty-five per cent of the danger. Besides, hunting controlled vermin, encouraged horse-breeding and the horse trade and, on another level, emphasized man's governance over creation.

Edwards makes extensive use of contemporary accounts, estate records and the toll books of fairs. In so doing he rightly warns us that these sorts of documents only give a partial view of the attitudes and behaviour of people towards their animals. He seeks to argue that the instruction manuals and literary sources suggest that people's behaviour towards horses became more humane and training methods less brutal later in the early modern period. Perhaps, but what of the approach of those unable to read these sources? I would guess that across all levels of society the brutality of behaviour meted out to a horse was in inverse proportion to its willingness to cooperate. I have known horses whose extraordinary stupidity and obtuseness would have driven the mildest and most humane of trainers to reach for the whip, chain and curb, and I suspect that things were much the same four centuries ago. Whatever the case, horses were over-ridden, over-driven and generally over-worked as a result either of ignorance or of economic pressures. Meanwhile the unfortunate animals were bled, purged and drenched with alarming abandon in what were often hopeless attempts to heal injury or cure disease. Of course, some customary poultices worked, but most veterinary procedures were utterly ineffective, while contagious diseases remained largely untreatable beyond keeping infected animals in isolation. Anyone with an interest in animal welfare who takes the trouble to read a pre-twentieth century veterinary text will offer up a silent prayer of thanks for some of the more recent developments in veterinary science. At the same time they will deprecate the posturings of the organicist zealots who would deny animals the benefits of science

and, like a friend of mine, eschew proper treatment in favour of worming their horses with a clove of garlic when the tide is in ebb. Well, really!

Although Prof. Edwards has given us an important, well-researched and highly-authoritative book, it is not without its flaws. The syntax is occasionally garbled to the point of incomprehension. One is sometimes left quite breathless, as in the case of 'Accordingly, the initial covering should normally take place in the third year, though gentlemen might wait a further twelve months'. Thoughtful proof-reading would have helped elsewhere. Meaningless remarks like 'horses' dietary requirements were high', the totally unfounded observation that Berber horses from North Africa had acquired Spanish blood in prehistoric times and references to 'equine (as opposed to "equestrian") pursuits' could have been clarified with a little care. So too would have been the claim that 'Innogen' was a character from *Cymbeline*, that the Suffolk Punch was a recognized breed in the sixteenth century, that horses were sold for 'pistols' rather than 'pistoletos', or that 'Lorimers' engage in making mountings for bridles. And when, pray, will writers on the history of horses honour the Thoroughbred, a recognized breed, with the dignity of a capital 'T'? Finally, while I reckon to know a little about horses, I fear a fog descends when I read of 'a riffey horse' or the 'pocky fashions'.

But these are whingeing criticisms of a major achievement which should be essential reading for historians of the horse and for those with a more general interest in the early modern period.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
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DAVE POSTLES, *The North through its names. A phenomenology of medieval and early modern England* (Oxbow Books, 2007). xii + 244 pp., 21 tables, 47 maps. £35.00.

With this volume, the eighth in the series that began in 1973, the English Surnames Survey, funded by the Marc Fitch Fund and housed in what is now the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, comes to an end. Previous volumes in the series have been county surveys; this one is devoted to the use of onomastic evidence in tackling the elusive concept of the North as a separate region. It is based on an impressive range of printed sources – lay subsidies, poll taxes, manor court rolls, cartularies, etc. – from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with some evidence from the twelfth century and more from parish registers in the early modern period. A series of maps shows the geographical distributions of various names to demonstrate their northern provenance or their confinement to local societies within the wider North

(but it is not always clear whether blank counties signify the lack of examples or the absence of evidence).

Dr Postles is not concerned with those numerous northern names that are derived from farms, hamlets and villages, including such splendid examples as Ackroyd, Entwistle, Ramsbottom and Sowerbutts, for such names were obviously formed locally. It should be noted, however, that in the North they account for about 50 per cent of surnames. His concern is with other categories of bynames and hereditary surnames at the period of their formation. His scholarly work adds a great deal to our understanding of these processes. But how far do they help in defining a distinctive northern region?

He begins, with suitable caution, by considering whether names such as North (or Norris), South, East and West relate to migrants. The answer to his question can be provided by much later evidence, that of the 1881 census returns, which have been shown to point to the 'homes of family names' in much earlier times. At that time, the 9,929 Norths were living mainly in the North (with 2,095 in the West Riding) and in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire. The 12,865 people named Norris were also found predominantly in the North (with 2,245 in Lancashire). Those named South lived mainly in the South, and (if we exclude London) the highest number of those named East were living in Lincolnshire, with very few in western England. Only the widespread name West does not conform to this pattern. It is clear that such names mostly referred to people who were living not far north, south, east or west of a locality, just as place-names such as Norton, Sutton, Aston and Weston were coined in a local context.

Dr Postles acknowledges that the naming patterns which he observes are not confined to the North, though they are far more evident there. The problem, of course, is where is the southern boundary of the northern region? The distributions on his maps often extend down to Lincolnshire and Leicestershire and occasionally into Norfolk. He concludes his discussion of occupational names, for example, by referring to 'the spilling out of the North into lower reaches', but notes that their density 'was more intense in the northernmost reaches, so that they can be construed as characterizing the North if not exclusively northern'. He also recognizes the importance of *pays* or 'country' within the northern region. Indeed, he is rightly concerned to emphasize this point in each of his discussions of particular forms of name. But when we look at the map on p. 95, which shows that in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries elliptical topographical bynames such as Northiby were largely confined to north Lincolnshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire,

with some spillage into the North Riding, we wonder how this can be reconciled with the notion of a northern region beyond the Humber and the Mersey.

In a book that is packed with detailed evidence it is, of course, only to be expected that some interpretations might be questioned. Thus, in an interesting discussion of occupational bynames, it might be noted that Badger is not especially northern, as it has a strong presence in the West Midlands, and that Collier is widespread nationally, as it was more commonly applied to a charcoal burner than to a coal miner. It is also interesting to note that Neathird, which features so strongly in Leicestershire on his map based on the poll tax returns of 1377–81, should be included in his examples of the instability of bynames, for it does not survive as a surname.

The strength of this book is in the thorough assembling of evidence for many different types of byname. Although it is already well known that some forms, such as names ending in -son or -man or occupational names such as Walker, Lister or Thacker, are predominantly northern, Dr Postles has provided firm evidence placed in a wider context. He is particularly informative on the formation of bynames from surviving pre-Conquest personal names, pet forms of names that are often concealed by Latin forms in taxation records but are revealed in manor court rolls, 'inventive and sometimes salacious forms of nicknames', and a distinctive topographical vocabulary that includes Scandinavian terms such *bek*, *kar*, *lund*, and *scale*, etc. Throughout, he is concerned with the various bynames that were acquired by peasant farmers, many of which (at least in Yorkshire) developed into hereditary surnames during the first half of the fourteenth century. His book is therefore of interest to medieval agrarian historians and not just to specialists in the field of onomastics.

DAVID HEY
University of Sheffield

JOHN GURNEY, *Brave community. The Digger movement in the English revolution* (Manchester University Press, 2007). xiii + 236 pp. £55.

This book has four principal aims: to explore the local background to the Digger movement; to study the Digger movement as a whole, providing a corrective to the normal fixation on Gerrard Winstanley; to offer a reassessment of Winstanley's background, connections and ideas; and to assess the very different reactions the Diggers provoked in Walton and Cobham. Supported by evidence drawn from extensive archival research, Gurney's study demonstrates how stimulating and valuable local history can be. While not devoid of weaknesses, the book is sure to become a key reference point for all future studies of the Diggers.

One of the key questions running throughout the book is 'who exactly were the Diggers?' Here, Gurney suggests that they were a disparate group with similarly disparate motivations. Among their ranks one finds local bricklayers, blacksmiths, maltsters, drapers, shoemakers and glaziers as well as radical sectaries drawn from further afield. The level of detail provided by Gurney makes for fascinating reading, and what we have in this book is the most comprehensive profile of Digger membership to date. I did find it slightly odd, however, that Gurney chose to give unexpected prominence to one particular Digger, John Coulter.

Coulter is introduced to us in the book's Preface, and what we learn of him there serves as a narrative frame for the study as a whole. Coulter was both a Digger stalwart – present from beginning to end – and a local yeoman farmer who had inherited a thirty-acre estate, a major player in manorial affairs and a respected member of the 'middling sorts'. What is slightly odd about this is that Coulter later turns out to be an anomaly, the only Digger ever to have played a prominent role in local affairs, and, indeed, his status and position appear to have been overplayed somewhat in the Preface. The other local Diggers were parish residents lacking the security of tenure and united by their marginal, vulnerable and economically precarious position on the fringes of society. The emphasis throughout the book – and Gurney's choice to foreground Coulter is illustrative of this – is placed on the Diggers as a movement of the respectable 'middling sorts'. The evidence cited, however, seems more consistent with a position never explicitly advanced, namely, that the Diggers were a movement of the poor and the poorer elements of the 'middling sorts'.

Gurney is at his best in situating the Diggers within their local context. In addition to discussions of familiar themes such as the spread of religious radicalism and the costs of free quarter, there are excellent sections dealing with rural popular protest in Surrey during the 1640s and the history of bitter landlord-tenant conflicts in Cobham. The latter partly explains why the Diggers encountered less local opposition once they relocated from St. George's Hill in Walton to Little Heath, Cobham. Given popular hostility toward landowners in Cobham, people were reluctant to engage in a campaign against the Diggers orchestrated by a manorial lord, John Platt, whose aim was to protect his own interests. Whereas opposition in Walton had come from the poor and 'middling sorts' as well as the agents of kingly power, it seems that in Cobham Platt had to rely on hiring men from outside the parish to do the dirty work of destroying crops and houses.

There was a more basic reason why the Diggers were

better received in Cobham than in Walton. As Gurney argues throughout the book, many of the Diggers were residents of Cobham, linked to non-Diggers by complex kinship and neighbourhood ties. The different reactions the Diggers provoked is thus explained by the simple fact that in Walton they were outsiders, while in Cobham they were locals. As ever, though, Gurney enlivens even the most prosaic of arguments with plentiful concrete detail. One is thus presented with two Walton neighbours, Henry Bickerstaffe and William Starr, the former a Digger, the latter one of their leading persecutors. While Starr was motivated primarily by the perceived threat the Diggers posed to his own claim to the commons, Gurney suggests that personal score-settling may also have played a part, because Starr sought revenge for a violent and public humiliation that his own father had suffered at the hands of Bickerstaffe. It is this level of tangible human detail that makes Gurney's study both original and engaging.

Although Gurney seeks to shift the focus away from Winstanley as an individual and on to the Diggers as a movement, he does offer an analysis of Winstanley's ideas. There is much of value here. The final chapter, for example, contains an interesting discussion of Winstanley's strategic reassessments, i.e., the subtle changes in emphasis and argument used to legitimate and secure support for the Diggers. Nonetheless, the treatment of Winstanley's ideas is the least original aspect of the book. Gurney follows many others in suggesting that religion and politics were fused in Winstanley's thought, that he propounded a powerful practical Christianity, and that his ideas were influenced by, but went beyond, those of contemporary social reformers. Of course, Gurney's primary concern is not the political thought of Gerrard Winstanley. In keeping with the book as a whole, Gurney's contribution to the study of Winstanley lies in the results of his archival research.

Following the invaluable work of James Alsop, it is now widely accepted that Winstanley was neither one of the labouring poor nor a member of the pseudo-gentry, but that he came instead from an artisanal family of modest means. Although Gurney is quick to point out that conclusive evidence is in short supply, his own research recasts Winstanley as the member of 'an influential community of interest encompassing major gentry families, politicians, mercantile leaders and prominent religious figures' (p. 66). This is sure to provoke debate and reaction. It is also one of the reasons, among many, why the book is destined to become a key text in Digger studies.

DARREN WEBB
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J. FINCH and K. GILES (eds) *Estate Landscapes. Design, improvement and power in the post-medieval landscape* (Boydell Press 2007). ix + 234 pp., 67 figs. £50.

This book, the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology's fourth monograph, consists of papers given at the Society's Estate Landscapes Conference in April 2003 and includes work undertaken both in the British Isles and the New World. The aim of the conference, as summarized by the editors in the preface, was to 'explore the increasing interest amongst archaeologists in the study of post-medieval landscapes in general' and the form of the 'estate landscape in particular' (p. vii). Tom Williamson's inspiring introduction whets our appetite for what we believe will surely follow. The great estates are a post-medieval phenomenon worthy of study by post-medieval archaeologists who are academically equipped to look at them in ways not previously tackled. Although new, many estate landscapes incorporated something from the past; they reflect new attitudes to property and aesthetics as well as often contradictory political, ideological, and economic motivations. 'All papers demonstrate how understanding the landscape demands that researchers break through their own conceptual boundaries and address issues raised in agriculture, economics, literature, philosophy and politics' (p. ix). This is great stuff, but do the papers live up to these high expectations?

Much that follows testifies to the fact that what makes a good conference presentation does not easily transfer itself to the printed page. Quite appropriately most of the papers aim to show the value of an archaeological rather than landscape-historical approach to the various features which surround the great house. This is particularly clear in Charles Orser's contribution from Tanzyfort House in County Sligo. Here, meticulous excavation and recording of the building remains shows how an older 'vernacular' house was partially rebuilt to form dog kennels. While it would obviously have been easier to build from scratch, an older structure was retained to enforce the idea of stability and continuity within a later landscape. Detailed archaeological investigation is thus interpreted in the light of the known social aspirations of the time. Similarly work on the pottery kiln at Dunster is given a truly archaeological perspective by David Dawson and Oliver Kent. Although much of the paper reads like an excavation report, including cross-sections of pottery sherds, the placing of the kiln within the context of landscape design is fascinating. The kiln was located, not for the convenience of importing raw materials and exporting the product, but so that it could be seen from the castle, thus incorporating an 'industrial' element into the otherwise rural scene and so emphasizing

the modernity of the owner. Classical archaeologists have always understood the importance of memorials to an understanding of society and collective memory and so Harold Mytum's paper on monuments in estate landscapes is significant. Although small elements in the landscape, their symbolism is obvious. Amongst other things, they represent the continuity of land ownership, evoke memories and encourage the ethic of loyalty. All these attributes are present in his chosen areas of study at Castle Howard and Sledmere. Sir Mark Sykes' famous memorial to the Wolds Wagoners, who were raised by Sir Mark to provide transport in a war zone during the First World War, is particularly important in linking the Sykes family with the community. So far so good; the interpretations of the archaeologist have been informed by issues from literature, philosophy and politics.

Other papers are more influenced by the approach of the landscape historian. Jonathan Finch reminds us that even in the most fashionable of landscapes – that at Castle Howard – earlier features, such as ancient woodland and medieval fish ponds, survive, while Paul Everson elegantly shows how many seventeenth-century gardens, particularly 'fishing gardens' when laid out by puritan gentry, were created as an aid to contemplation. Robert Silvester and Judith Alfrey describe the development and consolidation of a Welsh estate, paying particular attention to the importance of the mainly nineteenth-century built environment from the black and white traditional-style cottages and artisan's dwellings to the smallholdings through to the gentrified farms. They point out the significance of these different types of buildings to any understanding of how the social system operated. Sam Turner describes in general terms the development of the field systems of the South-West and links this rather loosely to estate landscapes. Although enclosure was generally early, there was some reorganization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly on the larger, 'barton' farms of the gentry. Here 'the reorganizing of their estates into more regular enclosures could have been a way of expressing their rights of ownership; power to alter and improve their lands might have emphasized their growing status' (p. 65).

A final section widens the subject to include colonial landscapes, often, as in the example from south-west Ireland described by Colin Breen, created not by the traditional landowning elite relying on agriculture and rents for their income, but by an entrepreneurial mercantile group. While they may have justified their actions by harping back to a classical model of colonization, dispossessing the local Gaelic-Irish and destroying their language and traditions, their motives were mainly financial. This critical shift from the practices of the past had a huge landscape impact. Unlike at Tanzyfort, there

was no attempt to emphasize continuity and stability by retaining past elements in the landscape. Leech and Hicks develop this theme of the 'archaeology of capitalism' further in their papers on Nevis, St Kitts and the Leeward Isles. Links between landscapes of colonization in the West Indies, often master-minded by the owners and designers of the great British landed estates, are stressed by Dan Hicks, who concludes

When we consider the financial connections between the West Indian planters and British estate holders in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ... the observation that the working out of ideas of improvement in the landscapes of the Caribbean might have had a central role in influencing the ideas of improvement in Britain is still more compelling' (p. 222).

While, as Barbara Heath explains, Jefferson consciously modelled his rural retreat on classical and English models, perhaps we should also be looking for a colonial influence on English estates.

Thus, while many of these papers contain intriguing and thought-provoking material, their concentration on detail in their own chosen fields means they often read like research reports and so do not in fact 'break through the conceptual boundaries' that Williamson describes.

All the papers are let down by the standard of the illustrations. Too many of the maps are fuzzy and the photographs dark. We expect better of a book priced at £50.

SUSANNA WADE-MARTINS
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ADRIAN RANDALL, *Riotous assemblies. Popular protest in Hanoverian England* (OUP, 2006). xii + 354 pp. £65.

This volume comprises a very wide and detailed survey, based on an impressive range of primary sources, and also utilizes the very numerous secondary works on the topic. It has already proved very popular with my undergraduates, though at this price one hopes a paperback version will soon follow.

Randall begins with an incisive analysis of power and authority as bolstered by the 1715 Riot Act passed shortly before the aborted Jacobite rebellion in Scotland. It remained on the statute book until 1919. Under its provisions 'felonious violence' could be met with what he dubs 'summary judicial slaughter' following the magistrates' rendition of a proclamation enjoining a dispersal of assemblies within an hour. The main agency of riot control was the regular army, though its officers showed little enthusiasm for bloody confrontations, not least because *in extremis* the ranks might turn on their

commanders. But, as Randall observes, magistrates rarely resorted immediately to the dispersal order, whether or not troops were available, but most commonly at least attempted to negotiate solutions, which regularly included the investigation of popular grievances as well as dispersal. In this scenario there was often a theatrical element.

Nevertheless the English especially, though not exclusively, were particularly prone to protest over a multitude of matters, some of them relatively minor, including the relocation of a central village pump to an awkward peripheral spot. However, historians of popular protest are virtually unanimous that the most common issue was high food prices in the Georgian era, notably in the second half of the eighteenth century, when demographic growth increasingly pressed on the capacity of the British agrarian sector to keep abreast of demand, particularly after substandard cereal harvest yields became recurrent features. Grain imports in wartime proved difficult, especially during the war against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, when the situation was further aggravated by *consecutive* harvest failures of 1794 and 1795, 1799 and 1800, and finally 1810 and 1811. 'In any other country', opined the President of the Board of Trade on conditions in 1800, they 'would be called a famine'. Nevertheless, improved communications over the eighteenth century, facilitated the development of a national cereal market, notably in the mid-century creation of London's Mark Lane exchange, where merchants, factors and millers dealt in grains based on samples exhibited. This move away from customary pitching markets was also reflected in dealings between farmers, corn-factors and millers, increasingly negotiated in the privacy of 'market rooms' in substantial inns, which came to replace the traditional public forum. Price speculation was also facilitated through the official *London Gazette's* weekly listings of provincial cereal prices, originally designed for the price-mechanism governing the import and export stipulations under the Corn Laws, which Randall overlooks.

Unsurprisingly, his perception of disturbances over food issues is strongly coloured by E. P. Thompson's famous study, of 1971 vintage, identifying the 'moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', buttressed by the essay 'The moral economy reviewed' in his *Customs in Common* (1991). Randall defends Thompson's analysis, but challenges his argument that during the wartime famines the customary 'equilibrium between paternalist [local] authority and the crowd ... was undermined ... [by] acute anti-Jacobinism of the gentry [and] by the triumph of the new ideology of political economy'. Ironically, Randall shows that the first and especially the second famines produced a fundamental

division between the government committed to orchestrating the rigorous suppression of food riots, and the senior judiciary led by Lord Chief Justice Kenyon who ruled that, under common law, traditional marketing offences remained illegal. Moreover, Pitt's early 1801 resignation, usually attributed to George III's resistance to full Catholic emancipation under the 1800 Act of Union, was dictated more by the fact that the current famine necessitated peace at any cost, which under Pitt was out of the question. Only one of Pitt's cabinet survived, the experienced and forceful home secretary, the Duke of Portland, responsible for the state's so-called 'terror' in the later 1790s, including the rigorous suppression of food riots; he was not replaced until the famine terminated in mid-1801. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that populist moral-economic perceptions survived amongst all ranks, including those comprising the critical agency, the unpaid magistracy, despite Portland's very public denunciations of some justices.

Another major component of Randall's study focuses on industrial protests, both before and during the principal Luddite explosion in 1811-3. Luddite antecedents were addressed in his earlier incisive and influential study *Before the Luddites* (1991). Here the focus is on the breakdown of Tudor legislation banning designated mechanical innovations, and technically still enforceable. This provoked affected workers to combine – not necessarily on a permanent basis – to demand protection through prosecutions of offenders, appeals to parliament, and militant physical intervention against new machinery. There seems to be little doubt that politicians were particularly concerned that recurrent violent industrial riots might trigger wider metropolitan protests, a possibility which manifested itself later with the Gordon riots, even if parliamentarians were far less concerned about provincial mobilizations. Randall addresses various militant protests from the early eighteenth century, before focusing on the fierce and prolonged riots in West Country woollens at the turn of the century, which spawned the Brief Institution, basically a trade union which also embraced their West Riding counterparts. Under its auspices, grievances were taken to Westminster, with select committees in the Commons interrogating witnesses in 1803 and again in 1806. The unionists advocated the enforcement of the ancient statutes, while substantial employers insisted on repeal. If these are rightly interpreted as 'ideological confrontations', the report of the 1806 committee, which recommended the repeal of no less than 76 'redundant' statutes, enabled uncontrolled industrial capitalism, and comprised the state's much trumpeted solution, but it was not to pass uncontested.

Randall's coverage of the three well-known Luddite

districts, hosiery in the East Midlands, the gig-mills of the West Riding woollens, and power-loom in Lancashire and Cheshire is penetrating, despite further recent studies. Quite rightly, he dismisses Thomis' 'compartmentalist' thesis, which asserted that Yorkshire croppers' violence reflected their non-unionization. Randall also accurately perceives that northern Luddism was more complex than its Midland counterpart, and much more violent, including resort to arms and arson attacks that targeted both domestic and business premises. This northern militancy was also intermixed with food rioting accompanying the third wartime famine, and conjoined with insurrectionary plots. In its two principal theatres, Northern Luddism was ultimately crushed by the army, tantamount to embryonic civil war in some witnesses' estimation, and followed by mass hangings of activists convicted in Yorkshire. Evidence relating to Midland Luddites' politics is thin. However, it is worth adding that the City of Nottingham was a major centre of popular radicalism in the 1790s and beyond, and the only known location for a political meeting of over fifty people authorized by two justices under the Seditious Meetings Act. This reviewer considers that the 1810–13 crises requires an *holistic* study, with coverage on a scale equal to the study of its two wartime precedents, a suggestion I suspect Randall would support. That should include government policy and intervention, and embrace Luddism in Cumberland and Westmorland, which await their historian.

It must also be acknowledged that Randall's book embraces many other categories of popular protest, including entire chapters relating to the politically-motivated, among them those associated with Wilkes and Gordon, and another on popular protest in the English countryside. The latter includes anti-Turnpike riots, reflecting what Randall rightly dubs the 'privatization' of previously publicly-owned roads, anti-Militia protests, notably by peasant and other small farmers opposed to the lottery-like enforced recruitment of their sons, who were vital sources of free labour. However, there is nothing *systemic* on opposition to enclosure, possibly reflecting the continued influence of Neeson's fine monograph. There is more thorough consideration of the admittedly smallish mobilizations complaining about decisions and policies adopted by poor-law administrations in both urban and countryside parishes. Above all, Randall's study emphasizes the remarkable capacity of the English propensity to mobilize – peacefully or violently or with a mixture of both – on a huge range of issues adversely affecting working-class people especially, but never exclusively.

ROGER WELLS
Canterbury Christ Church University

DAVID OLDROYD, *Estates, enterprise and investment at the dawn of the industrial revolution. Estate management and accounting in the north-east of England, c.1700–80* (Ashgate, 2007). x + 234 pp., 3 illus, 55 tables, 2 maps. £55.

Oldroyd offers a fascinating insight into the accounting and management practices of three estates in the north-east of England. The estates, owned by the Bowes, Cotesworth and Ridley families, all had a significant involvement in mining and the coal trade. They were large, complex businesses and the periodic absences of their owners and the broad geographical spread of their interests meant that it was necessary to adopt organizational structures that delegated responsibility to stewards. Oldroyd examines the performance of these structures in four key areas: contractual arrangements, investment planning and returns, the management of labour and the behaviour of managers. He finds that the systematic keeping of accounts functioned to support and protect property rights and enforce contractual obligations. It allowed owners, stewards and viewers (professional mining engineers or managers) to assess productivity, regulate costs, manage risk and engage in forward planning. Accounting also played a vital role in the oversight and management of stewards and viewers, although not in the management of the general labour force in the mines. Here, accounting was used to ensure that workers were properly paid, but did not function as a means of establishing disciplinary control. Oldroyd's explanation for this apparent anomaly is that, since pay and conditions were relatively good, industrial disputes rare, and there was a shared understanding about what constituted acceptable levels of work, the mines were productive and profits derived from the miners' endeavours remained high. Thus, there was little incentive to rock the boat by introducing closer oversight or attempting to change working practices.

In spite of the limited impact of accounting on the behaviour of the general workforce, one of the most interesting aspects of Oldroyd's work is his analysis of how accounting practices functioned to shape the mind set and actions of the stewards and viewers managing the estates. Indeed, accounting could become a powerful tool in aligning the behaviour of the managers with the expectations of the owners. Notably, the requirement to keep records acted as a form of surveillance and particularly served to restrict managers' ability to defraud their employer. This was especially important to William Cotesworth who, coming from a lowly background and having previously exploited his own employers, harboured a mistrust of his employees. Oldroyd also provides us with the occasional insight into the consequences of the failure to manage this

aspect of business properly. William Thompson of the South Shields salt-pans, for example, found a lack of the proper receipts meant that payment for services rendered was not forthcoming. Accounts allowed the judgement not just of honesty and competence but also enabled performance to be monitored. This worked against the mine manager Nathan Horne, who found himself accused of inefficiency and mismanagement as a result of the failure of the mine under his control to turn a profit. But in other circumstances the meticulous construction of accounts protected stewards and, in some cases, enabled them to prove their value and, in consequence, advance their interests.

Oldroyd's general conclusions run contrary to those of Sidney Pollard in his influential *Genesis of modern management*. Pollard argued that because of inexact costings, confusion between capital and profits and inability to recognize capital as the central motivating force behind entrepreneurship, accounting was of limited use to those making business decisions. Oldroyd's view is that accounting was actually an essential and adaptable tool in the management of the estates in question and that it did function as a means of maximising profits. Consequently, *Estates, enterprise and investment* provides a valuable contribution to the debate about the progress of capitalism during the eighteenth century.

ANNE L. MURPHY
University of Exeter

CHERYL SCHONHARDT-BAILEY, *From the Corn Laws to Free Trade. Interests, ideas and institutions in historical perspective* (The MIT Press, 2006). xiii + 426 pp., 32 figs, 30 tables, 3 maps. £30.95.

The protection of agriculture is an enduring concern in every modern state, no matter how devoted it may be to the freeing of international trade. The repeal in 1846 of Britain's Corn Laws by a parliament dominated by landowners has therefore never ceased to fascinate economists, political scientists and historians alike. The author of this study is a political scientist. She is keenly interested in the theoretical implications of her study for political explanation; and toward this end, she deploys a range of methodologies which are daunting to the layman. She succeeds nevertheless in bringing out some points of enduring importance to anyone, whether layman or scholar, who is interested in crucial turning-points in agricultural trade policy.

This study focuses much of its attention on those Conservatives in the House of Commons who ultimately voted alongside Sir Robert Peel to repeal the tariff on cereals, pre-eminently wheat, which they had been elected to uphold. Free-trading ideas, as the author documents, had remarkably little to do with their decision. The

economic interests of most of these Conservative MPs were still predominantly agricultural and pointed in the opposite direction, though free-trading interests were gaining ground in their constituencies. So what persuaded this Conservative minority in the Commons, subsequently known as Peelites, to vote for repeal? Only four of them had voted on the free-trading side on this issue in the House of Commons over the previous four years.

Using computer-assisted content analysis, the author finds her answer in the debate in the Commons. This methodology enables her to identify the need felt by Conservatives, particularly those representing constituencies with substantial interests in the freedom of commerce, to find a Conservative rationale for their change of mind. Sir Robert Peel suggested one such possibility in his opening statement to the House of Commons, but without laying much emphasis upon it. He argued vaguely for repeal as a good way to preserve the landed basis of parliament. Would-be Peelites embraced this notion with such enthusiasm that it crystallized and bulked large when Peel drew the prolonged debate to its eventual close. They welcomed the conception of repeal as the best way to preserve the 'territorial constitution' of King, Lords and Commons dear to all Conservatives. Peel was in effect proposing an economic concession by the landed classes to preserve or at least to prolong their political primacy. The House of Lords, where landed interests were still stronger than in the Commons, found Peel's suggestion equally persuasive, and accepted the economic concession required of them in order to ward away the democratic reforms which would destroy their political base.

In the event Peel was proven triumphantly right, though his political opponents drove him from office the moment that he secured repeal. The Anti-Corn Law League, which had mounted a massive, radicalizing agitation throughout the country, was disbanded, and the fervour it had generated died. Two years later, the intransigence of the July monarchy in France precipitated a wave of revolutions across continental Europe, thus apparently validating the line of thought and action that Peel and the Peelites had embraced in Britain. Doubts about the wisdom of the Peelites were nevertheless raised on both flanks of the Continent: in Britain by Disraeli and protectionist Conservatives in the name of party loyalty and honouring commitments to constituents; by the generation in the wilderness to which the Peelites consigned the Conservative party by going their own way; and by Russia which managed to avoid revolution for the rest of the century through relentless repression.

PETER T. MARSH
University of Birmingham

H. KRISTENSEN (ed.), *The diaries of William Brewis of Mitford, 1833–1850* (Wagtail Press, 2007). 116 pp., 21 illus. £9.99.

Farmers' diaries take a variety of forms. At their simplest they are kept intermittently and consist of short notes about family, weather and prices, with an occasional aside about local events of more than usual importance. More elaborate journals are written up regularly, often with an entry for each day which may sometimes occupy several pages of manuscript. Published editions of farm diaries usually begin with an introduction containing substantial information about the diaries and their author, the area in which the diarist was farming and something about the historical significance of the diary. *The farming journal of Randall Burroughs (1794–99)* edited by Susanna Wade Martins and Tom Williamson and published by the Norfolk Records Society provides an excellent example.

The publication of Brewis' diary follows none of the conventions. The book under review consists of extracts from fifteen diaries kept by William Brewis, a tenant farmer at Mitford in Northumberland, between 1833 and 1850 (the volumes for 1835 and 1836 appear not to have survived). An illustration of two pages of the diary, included in the book, demonstrates that the diary was written in copies of the annually issued *Newcastle memorandum book and register of the northern counties*, a local almanac and diary. The diaries are now in the Special Collections section of the Robinson Library at Newcastle University. Extracts had previously been separately transcribed by two scholars, Joan Foster and Dr Michael Smith, who drew the current editor's attention to the diary. It is their extracts which, as she explains in the introduction, she has edited for publication. One consequence of this, as the illustrations show, is that the stated editorial convention of retaining original spelling and grammar has not been followed. A second is that no effort seems to have been made to provide any of the usual information about the diarist or his farming background. The short paragraph about him in the introduction is culled from the extracts and is only supplemented by the inclusion of a family tree and an epitaph given at the end of the book.

Much that might be useful to many historians has been lost by this process. Brewis was a tenant of the Mitford family whose estate covered several thousand acres in the neighbourhood of Morpeth, one of the two most important towns in Northumberland at that time and the location of an important livestock market. The farms that he tenanted were situated at Throphill on the north bank of the river Wansbeck approximately three miles west of Morpeth. Although the book contains illustrations of maps made of both farms in 1839 for

the estate, no information about them is taken from the accompanying schedule of the acreage, rent or cropping systems. Similarly, no use has been made of other estate papers or of Tithe Commutation files. During the period covered by the diaries, two important articles on agriculture in Northumberland appeared in *The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*. John Gray of Dilston's was published in 1840 and William Colbeck's in 1847. Both were noted authorities on farming in the county and provide important contextual information which apparently escaped the attention of the editor.

The publisher states that the 'diaries give the reader a fascinating insight into farming, markets and fairs, weather, crops and livestock, sport, horses and hounds etc', while what is really presented are randomly selected vignettes for the entertainment of a general reader. The thorough analysis of the work of one local farmer that would have been of considerable use to local and agricultural historians remains a desideratum.

IAN D. ROBERTS
University of Durham

GEOFFREY TUDOR, compiled by HELEN HILLIARD,
Brunel's Hidden Kingdom. The full story of the estate he created and his planned house at Watcombe, Torquay (Creative Media Publishing, 2007). 160 pp. £23.50.

This is the story of Watcombe house and estate, lovingly researched over twenty years by local resident and former Sandhurst and Dartmouth lecturer, Geoff Tudor, and brought to publication in commemoration of the bicentenary of Brunel's birth by the wife of the general manager of what is now Brunel Manor, a Christian Holiday and Conference Centre.

It was characteristic of Isambard Kingdom Brunel that when he looked for a country seat at the height of his career in the 1840s, he disdained to buy any existing estate but was determined to create one for himself out of a bare, arid and exposed hillside above Torquay – a site he had discovered while engineering the building of the South Devon Railway. It provided enough problems for him to solve to satisfy his need for a challenge, and this book tells how he engineered his park and laid the foundations for his house before his financial losses over the calamitous construction of the SS *Great Eastern* forced him to initiate steps for its sale just before his untimely death in 1859, at the age of 53.

The account is largely formed around two documents – the Watcombe Estate map of 1859 in the Devon Record Office, and Brunel's garden memorandum book in the Bristol University Library Brunel archive – and it is a useful case study of how a new park and garden was created in the Victorian period: the creation of a surrounding shelter belt of trees; the establishment

of walks and carriage drives to encompass the best viewpoints both within and over the surrounding countryside; the engineering of a water supply from seven linked wells and raised nearly 300 ft by a gas-powered pump to two reservoirs 800 yards away at the top of the estate to feed a fountain and provide water in periods of draught for his plants; the purchase of thousands of trees and shrubs including all the latest specimens brought back from Asia and the Americas by the Victorian plant hunters, and the preparation of the soil for them, including use of the very latest fertilizer, 'a plentiful supply of vegetable mould, wood ash and bone, with just a little Guano and soda and burnt clay'. Brunel intended his gardening to be as advanced as his engineering! His calculations for how many cubic feet of water were required to play his fountain for 12 hours a day, and his annual measurement of the growth of his plantings between 1853 and 1858 show how he threw himself as energetically into this project as all his others.

The book is profusely illustrated in colour, including plans for the never-built French Renaissance chateau-type house he had the country house architect William Burn design for him. Amongst the mine of information, this reviewer was amused to discover that Brunel, who had driven his railways through so many peoples' back yards was a 'nimby' himself when faced with a proposal to build a cement works on the beach below his estate! The major regret to be expressed is the lack of referencing within the text, which abounds in interesting but annoyingly un-attributed quotations from his letters.

MICHAEL DUFFY
University of Exeter

EDWARD BUJAK, *England's Rural Realms. Landholding and the agricultural revolution* (Tauris Academic Studies, 2007). ix + 270 pp., 10 tables, 3 maps. £65.

By the 1830s one-third of all English grain came from just six eastern counties: Cambridgeshire, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. It was here that the new fodder crops made their greatest contribution to agricultural productivity, by allowing farmers to reduce the area under permanent or temporary grass while maintaining livestock numbers without loss of manure. Suffolk won the admiration of James Caird for its mixed farming on heavy land, its pipe and tile drainage, and its commitment to artificial fertilizers. All was so well and good through the years of high farming that no one really spotted the change – when it came. Landowners were so convinced that they had invested wisely that when grain prices started to fall they unwisely buried their proverbial heads in the local clay, convinced that the higher yields they were

achieving must eventually bear financial fruit. In the end they compromised and what emerged was what Edward Bujak calls 'a bastardized version of mixed arable and livestock farming', which enabled farmers to continue to fatten livestock and also to keep some arable land in tillage – at a significantly reduced rent (pp. 59–60).

Much of this story is perhaps predictable, particularly in the light of Tom Williamson's recent work on East Anglia, but Bujak looks beyond the bare agricultural facts to ask interesting questions about the rural social structure. Suffolk was a county of large estates, but why was it possible for these estates to survive the tempestuous times of the agricultural depression, as well as the legal changes brought about by the Settled Land legislation, more or less intact? Why did tenant farmers remain loyal through these years, to their landlord and to his political preferences? Why did land reform make so little progress in the county? Why did labourers continue to doff their caps when they might have been expected to be in dispute with their employers through agricultural trade unions, or simply take to the road to London in the search for fortune, if not fame? The answer to these questions, Bujak suggests, is that there was a kind of elaborate conspiracy in which landlords refused to betray their tenants, keeping them on through thick and thin because letting a farm during the agricultural depression was not something to be contemplated lightly. Tenants in turn respected their landlord's position by continuing to vote Conservative (and thus also took little notice of either the Liberal party or its flirtation with land reform). Any potential disrespect from labourers was nipped in the bud, with new cottages, gardens and allotments, often made available in protective closed villages. Everyone gained: landlords retained their estates and their political influence (transferring it by the 1880s adroitly from national to local politics), tenants renegotiated their leases when conditions were bad, and labourers lived in relatively good circumstances – although Bujak has little to say on wages. Of course, some of this rosy glow could not survive the agricultural downturn of the 1880s and beyond. Some landowners were forced to sell, although usually only their detached estates. Some labourers were locked out in a trade dispute in 1874, but were admitted back into their old jobs and cottages soon enough afterwards. Deference was challenged, but not defeated.

Bujak argues a good case, bringing together economic history, political history, and rural social history, to show how the different strands interacted through the years of plenty and the years of dearth. His discussion of the impact of the land reform movement in its Suffolk context is particularly illuminating, and he contributes to a number of mini-debates as he goes, such as the role of

local landowners in the implementation of the New Poor Law, and in the reforms of local government from 1888. But at the end of the book I was left with a slight tinge of concern. I have no doubt that Suffolk landowners built cottages, laid out allotments and closed villages, but they come over as a smug lot, anticipating the needs of farmers and labourers, and digging deep into their pockets to fund them. Yet Rider Haggard, writing of Suffolk in 1902, found that 'the owners of land who have no other source of income are practically ruined'. Had they spun him a yarn, or was he painting a deliberately provocative picture of the late Victorian countryside? This book suggests the latter, and in doing so it raises some interesting questions for future research.

J. V. BECKETT
University of Nottingham

GARY MOSES, *Rural moral reform in nineteenth-century England. The crusade against adolescent farm servants and hiring fairs* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007). vii + 247 pp., 2 tables, 3 maps. £69.95.

Gary Moses has been building up to this work for over a decade, so much so that those cognizant with his publications will already be familiar with the contents of this book. For those readers who are perhaps not fully conversant with Dr Moses' work, the book is not quite as broad-ranging as the title suggests, but is an analysis of the evangelical campaign against hiring fairs in the East Riding of Yorkshire, 1850–80. Due to the research output of both Steve Caunce and Gary Moses, the farm servants of the East Riding are undoubtedly one of the most closely studied groups of English farm workers, and this synthesis of the existing scholarship forms a very useful addition to the available literature. However, this book is not well presented by the publisher, nor is it priced at an accessible level, and the familiarity of its contents will not aid its success.

The importance of hiring fairs is not as widely recognized as it could be, and there is a tendency to see them, like farm service itself, as a northern anachronism. In this respect it is only right that this book should indeed be seen as a contribution to our understanding not only of moral reform, but of the social, economic and cultural landscape of rural England in this period. Although much work remains to be done on hiring fairs and on farm service in general, it has been successfully argued that neither are incompatible with highly productive and progressive, commercial agrarian regimes. So if this book assists in the ongoing process of the intellectual acceptance of northern agrarian systems as being integrated within a national whole rather than being dismissed as being peripheral, anachronistic or simply different, then it will serve an invaluable purpose.

Despite the essential contribution made by hiring fairs to agricultural success in much of the North, it was argued by some contemporaries that they were outmoded and uncouth, incompatible with respectability and economically unnecessary. Although there is no paradox whatsoever between capitalist farming and the public hiring of servants, hiring fairs themselves were an arena that offended some contemporary perceptions of modernity, the collision of capitalism and respectability, between popular culture and moral reform. Hiring fairs were, quite literally, a labour market, but they were also mass recreational assemblies that were feared due to their corrupt and corrupting influence.

Chapter one introduces the book by reviewing literature on approaches to popular culture, as well as discussion of the importance of farm service in northern English agriculture. Chapter two is based substantially on the article that appeared in the *Review* in 1999, and discusses the relationship between farm service and the changing economic landscape in the East Riding c.1840–80. Chapter three discusses hiring fairs as labour markets, arguing that they adapted and expanded in response to market conditions. Chapter four investigates hiring fairs as arenas of popular recreation in the recreational cycle of activities, demonstrating how they provided the carnivalesque atmosphere within which servants expressed their independence. It was because of this temporary cessation of normality, when servants were masterless, that they became a perceived threat. Their exuberance in leisure coupled with their bargaining power helped fuel antagonism towards both hiring fairs and servants.

Chapter five, 'The church critique of hiring fairs and farm service', is partially reprinted from an article that first appeared in *Rural History* in 1996 and demonstrates that the church objected to the 'moral danger' posed by hiring fairs. This was coupled with wider national concerns about the loss of status for the established church. The campaign against hiring fairs is discussed further in chapter six, which discusses proposals emanating from the Church for the reform of hiring fairs. The most successful of these was the promotion of separate indoor hirings for female servants; campaigns to undermine farm service as a system, or as a labour contract, were very largely unsuccessful. Despite the clamour generated by the Church of England against the perceived immorality of hiring fairs, the campaign against farm service achieved very little. This is undoubtedly a product of the extent to which servants were integral to the intensification of capitalist production and the 'reshaping of farm service into a proletarian institution' (p. 212).

ANDREW J. GRITT
University of Central Lancashire

JOYCE BURNETTE, *Gender, work and wages in industrial revolution Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). xii + 377 pp., 24 figs., 58 tables. £55.

There is abundant evidence from different continents and across the centuries to suggest that historically women have earned less than men. In Britain during the classic period of the Industrial Revolution (c.1750–1850), women usually earned somewhere between a third and two-thirds of the male wage. Moreover, occupational sorting had resulted in men and women performing different jobs, with women workers being found in a fairly limited range of occupations. Whilst the existence of job segregation and the wage gap is well-known and not disputed, there is less agreement amongst historians as to the cause of this gender division of work and wages. The primary aim of Joyce Burnette's book is to tackle this contentious question head-on and produce a nuanced debate about gender discrimination in the workforce. She sets out her reasoning carefully and clearly in the introduction: economic motivation was the driving force behind gender differences in work and wages. This explanation is at variance with those historians who give preference to gender ideology. Whilst not dismissing the importance of ideology, Burnette argues that economic actuality drove ideology, not that other way round.

Burnette is therefore interested in 'what work women did, rather than how people thought or spoke about this work' (p. 3). Chapter 1 attempts to provide an overview of women's work. It begins by measuring the incidence of occupational sorting by extracting statistics from a range of sources including the census, parliamentary reports, and commercial directories, before moving on to a qualitative description of the main female occupations (textiles, cottage industry, agriculture and domestic service) from anecdotal sources. Chapter 2 then establishes the size of the wage gap across occupations, carefully differentiating between time-rate wages (by the day or week) and piece-rate earnings (by output). The results concur with those of other historians and confirm that the wage ratio between women and men usually ranged between one-third and two-thirds (even after correcting for variables such as the different hours worked by men and women, and non-cash benefits). The rest of this chapter and the next get to the real gist of the book, seeking explanations for the wage-gap and occupational sorting by gender. Were they determined by custom or by market forces? Burnette concludes that in the competitive portions of the labour market women's lower wages were the result of their labour productivity and were set by the market rather than custom. In piece-rate work, differences in earnings were due to differences in productivity and time worked, not to men and women being paid different rates. In time-rate work, differences

in strength and training were the key determinants in divergent productivity rates. Biological factors also explain occupational sorting, especially strength. Except laundry work, workers in strength-intensive industries tended to be men, and workers in industries requiring less strength were primarily women. Childbearing and rearing also led women to be concentrated in certain industries, with high childcare costs encouraging women to work in the home-based industries. Occupational sorting could therefore be beneficial to women: it guided them to occupations where strength was not important and minimized the wage gap by allowing them to earn higher wages than they would have had in an economy without it. Burnette also argues that women's wages were market-led and could and did respond to supply and demand conditions. Evidence presented in chapter 3 shows that women's wages did rise when demand for their labour was high (for instance in the lace and straw-plait industries during the Napoleonic Wars) and, in chapter 5, evidence for substitutability being present in agriculture is offered, with farmers willing to hire more women if men's wages increased too much and began to squeeze their profits. In contrast chapters 5 and 6 turn to industries where occupational barriers did exist, in the less competitive skilled labour market (where unions benefited from exclusionary tactics) and in self-employment, such as the professions and retailing, where capital requirements, educational handicaps and gender barriers all limited female opportunities. Gender ideology therefore had a more pervasive influence in these non-competitive areas of the economy. Finally, chapter 7 analyses women's labour force participation, arguing in the first half of the nineteenth century this was caused by declining demand, whereas after 1851, mounting occupational barriers, rising household incomes and new attitudes and information about health all contributed.

Burnette argues that contemporaries did not necessarily understand economic models and therefore often turned to the language of custom to explain the gender division of work and wages. Historians should not construe these statements as a description of reality. But will her methodology and conclusions convince? Many will pick up this book already familiar with the line of argument as published in a series of high-profile articles over the last few years and will need no persuading. Some will be more sceptical. I found many of the arguments relating to the existence of market forces in chapters 2 and 3 persuasive. However, much of the evidence comes from the agricultural sector. Whilst obviously not wanting to question the significance of the industry that has formed the focus of my own academic research, can this be taken as typical of work and wages

during the industrial revolution in Britain as a whole? Others will find the econometric approach forbidding, if not completely off-putting, and the result may be a more pronounced schism between historians of women's work based on methodological approach. There is no doubt that the author has a confident and sophisticated handling of the data. At other points though the author appears to be rather out of her comfort zone and I found sections on the exclusionary tactics of trade unions or explanations for declining female labour force participation for example, rather less convincing.

This book is relevant to everyone with an interest in women's work in Britain in the post-1750 period and deserves a wide audience. Even those with an aversion to economic modelling need to give it a go. The nuanced debate that Burnette calls for in the introduction should then be guaranteed.

NICOLA VERDON
University of Sussex

ELIZABETH T. HURREN, *Protesting about pauperism. Poverty, politics and poor relief in late Victorian England, 1870–1900* (Royal Historical Society/Boydell, 2007). 12 tables; 1 illus; 9 figs; 2 maps. £50.

This excellent study of the administration and politics of the English poor law, in a comparatively neglected phase of its history, contributes greatly to our understanding of the 'poverty, politics and poor relief' of the title. Hurren sets out to examine the origins and, especially, the impact of the '*crusade* against outdoor relief' (for reasons that are not made explicitly clear, Hurren italicizes *crusade* and words derived from it), which has been examined by Karel Williams, Mary MacKinnon and others. From the late 1860s to the mid-1890s, poor law unions were encouraged by the central government, particularly after the establishment of the Local Government Board in 1871, to cut back on the payment of outdoor relief, adopting various harsh and controversial strategies to retrench on poor law expenditure. Hurren's book focuses on a single rural poor law union, the notorious Brixworth Union in Northamptonshire, where the crusade against outdoor relief was embarked upon with greater enthusiasm and success than in most other unions. The Brixworth crusade was led by an imposing trio: the fifth Earl Spencer, who was the largest landowner in the union, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Gladstone's first two governments; Albert Pell, the Conservative MP for south Leicestershire, a spokesman for the Charity Organisation Society and a leading figure in national poor law debates; and the Rev. William Bury, rector of Haselbech and chairman of the board of guardians in Brixworth for much of Hurren's period. Brixworth was not a typical poor law union; it was

one of the Local Government Board's 'model' unions, and was often discussed in official investigations, the Board's annual reports, Charity Organisation Society publications and in the leading periodicals of the day. It was an important theatre of political conflict between 'crusaders' on the board of guardians on the one side, and more liberal guardians and representatives of the labouring poor on the other.

The introduction and part one of the book convincingly locate Hurren's study within the large historiography of the English poor law; she sets out to establish the importance of the late nineteenth century in the history of the poor law, and of social policy more generally. In parts two and three Hurren takes her readers on a compelling 'poor law journey' (p. 217), which follows the 'political journey' (pp. 160, 251, 253) taken by the 'working people' of Brixworth, as they responded to the crusaders' attacks on the poor law benefits to which they had customarily been entitled. We read of the origins of the crusade at the level of central government – the 'Goschen Minute' and 'Longley Strategy' are familiar to students of the poor law – but Hurren also points to the local factors behind the Brixworth 'crusade', which can be seen as a 'pre-emptive strike' (p. 112) against incipient agricultural trade unionism in the district. She shows that the labouring poor in the Brixworth union fought back in a variety of ways against the 'crusading' majority on the board of guardians, arguing that previous historians have understated the extent of resistance to this phase of poor law administration. A central place in Hurren's analysis is given to the 'coming of democracy' (pp. 155, 244): the spread of the poor law franchise and the abolition of plural voting in the early to mid-1890s allowed the anti-crusaders in the Brixworth District Outdoor Relief Association to obtain a majority on the board of guardians by 1896, and to reverse the crusading strategy. Some of these anti-crusaders had served their political apprenticeship in the National Agricultural Labourers' Union some two decades earlier. In the intervening period, the labouring poor and their supporters were often able to voice opposition to stringent poor law administration in parish vestries, the significance of which has often been overlooked by historians of the later nineteenth century.

In common with many social historians, Hurren is eager to emphasize the agency and political participation of the 'working people' of Brixworth, although it is notable that, before the franchise reforms of the 1890s, their victories over the crusaders were often won with, and perhaps only because of, the prominent support of other members of local elites, such as the dowager Viscountess Milton (pp. 161–2). Nevertheless, it is clear that the working-class population had a detailed knowledge of the rules and workings of the

poor law, as other historians have also suggested. This was not surprising, as the crusading policies of the guardians were posted on church doors within the union (p. 119; this is a feature of the poor law that Keith Snell has recently emphasized). Hurren's study illustrates the profound physical and psychological impact of these policies on the poor – often through detailed accounts of individual cases, ably reconstructed from a range of sources – and details the complex strategies to which they resorted in response to them. There are some useful insights from contemporary sociology and anthropology, although perhaps these could have been developed further. There are also some minor presentational infelicities: for example, the use of the same quotation from Sidney Ward, a local anti-crusader, twice (pp. 104–5, 262–3), a reference to Joseph (rather than Seebohm) Rowntree as the author of *Poverty: a study of town life* (p. 72) and a number of typographical errors.

The local focus of Hurren's study does not prevent it from making a significant contribution to the historiography of the later nineteenth century. She successfully challenges the 'misconception that studying the minutiae of pauperism records means losing the bigger poor law picture' (p. 250). *Protesting about pauperism* is an impressive account of the importance of local politics in the development of social policy in the period, and contains several useful suggestions for further research. It is a significant contribution to the historiography, not only of the poor law, but also of English local politics and rural life in the later nineteenth century.

MARK FREEMAN
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ALAN CROSSLEY, TOM HASSALL and PETER SALWAY (eds), *William Morris's Kelmscott. Landscape and history* (Windgather Press, 2007). xiii + 210 pp., 113 illus. £25.

Certain towns and villages are known to people outside their regions mainly for having been the homes of great writers or artists; and so deeply informed have been our perceptions of some broad landscapes – most notably Wordsworth's Lake District and Hardy's Wessex – by their imaginative representation that, when we visit them, many of our own impressions are essentially predetermined. Furthermore, the artistic or literary associations of a place might be seen to have influenced local demography, planning decisions, priorities in conservation, and the development of tourism, as well as the more recent interpretations of the environment and its human inhabitants. The publication of a book entitled *William Morris's Kelmscott. Landscape and history* clearly demonstrates that a famous inhabitant can affect both

the character and identity of a place more than a century after their departure.

The thirteen chapters collected here originated as papers delivered at a conference, *News from somewhere: William Morris and the Kelmscott landscape*, organized by the Society of Antiquaries and held at Kelmscott Manor in 2003. The contributors are archaeologists, historians and architects of various kinds, possessing expertise in their fields, one trusts, yet, with the exception of Linda Parry (a past President of the William Morris Society), no obvious affinity with Morris nor special facility for analysing his work. This is strange, in a situation where Morris is one of the most studied Victorians, with a twice-yearly scholarly journal and a quarterly newsletter devoted to him, besides a steady stream of academic and popular books examining various aspects of his life and work. There is a guaranteed market for a book on Morris's Kelmscott; but will its purchasers' expectations be satisfied by its actual contents?

Addressing the Ancoats Brotherhood in 1894, Morris declared that 'through forty years of my life I have diligently and affectionately *noticed* the countryside in its smallest detail'. There are many passages in his writings which support this claim. Indeed, Morris's modern biographer Fiona MacCarthy has remarked on 'the mixture of succinctness and deep feeling that made him so exceptional a writer about landscape'. Therefore it is remarkable that in *William Morris's Kelmscott* very little of Morris's poetry or his prose romances are considered, and his lectures, essays and journalism are virtually ignored. As a writer, he is treated principally as the author of *News from Nowhere*, and even with this novel the contributors' engagement is superficial and often careless.

There are times when the contributors seem unable to distinguish between Morris's depiction of the countryside as, in *News from Nowhere*, he fantasised how it could be in a utopian future and how it actually was in Victorian England, so that his appreciation of the contemporary rural situation, his knowledge of local landscape history, and even his reliability as an observer, are all called into question. For example, Robert Parkinson remarks: 'Ironically, Morris idealized country life at a period of dramatic decline in agriculture' (p. 174). Similarly, Mark Robinson argues: 'This idyllic countryside of William Morris's time was almost entirely artificial, the creation of millennia of human activity' (p. 30). It was not idyllic and Morris did not represent it thus. He was well aware of the human activities which had shaped the countryside (this is acknowledged by Tom Hassall, pp. 5–6) and, unusually at that time, appreciated the roles of people in all social classes, in a wide variety of occupations, working upon and from the land. He also

delighted to observe the trees, flowers and birds around him; and almost always, when these are mentioned in his writings, it is by their particular species. Thus it was for Morris a *living* landscape in several respects, which is profoundly different from regarding it as 'almost entirely artificial', a surprising – nay, alarming – assertion from a palaeo-botanist who has in his previous sentence mentioned the fritillary and ox-eye daisy.

Within the confines of a review, it is impossible to present a comprehensive rebuttal of the assessment of Morris given in this book. Let it suffice to point towards his journalism and lectures, in which he repeatedly describes the hardship of agricultural workers and the mismanagement of farmland. For example, Morris rails against the situation in which, whilst politicians feast in London, out in the countryside there are field-labourers 'Rubbing through life toward the workhouse and the grave on ten shillings a-week' (*Commonweal*, 16 June 1888), 'their slavery to the farmers being so direct that it presses on them every day' (*Commonweal*, 10 December 1887). He yearns for the time when they might 'no longer fear starvation as a penalty for not working more than enough' ('The Aims of Art', 1886 lecture), and advocates 'the ennobling of daily and common work, which will one day put hope and pleasure in the place of fear and pain, as the forces which move men to labour and keep the world a-going' ('The Beauty of Life', 1880 lecture).

In *News from Nowhere*, the idyllic rural scenes, set in a utopian future England, are explicitly contrasted with the nineteenth-century reality, yet Morris's graphic descriptions and scathing criticisms of his contemporary countryside have received scant attention in *William Morris's Kelmscott*.

There is a wealth of published scholarship concerned with the various aspects of Morris's life and work, yet not much of it has been incorporated into this volume. Notable omissions from the chapter notes and bibliography include E. P. Thompson's intellectual biography, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, and Peter Faulkner's insightful studies of the poetry and fiction. Nicholas Salmon, a brilliant scholar who specialized in Morris's political ideas and activities, and who edited his contributions to *Justice* and *Commonweal* for publication in book form in 1994 and '96, is cited only as a co-author of *The William Morris Chronology*. Jan Marsh's biographies have been used, but not *Back to the Land*, her study of radical agrarianism from 1880 to 1914, which identifies Morris – with John Ruskin – as one of the two leading prophets and original inspirations for this movement. Most glaringly of all, John Payne's eclectic and thought-provoking book, *Journey up the Thames: William Morris and Modern England*, has been omitted, even though its topic and method could hardly

be more pertinent to the present study. Payne's invisibility has a sinister aspect, for – unmentioned anywhere in this volume – he delivered a lecture on 'Kelmscott and Englishness: a sideways look at the English Countryside' at the 2003 conference from which *William Morris's Kelmscott* is derived. Payne tells me that he wrote up and submitted his lecture to form a chapter in this book, but it was rejected for being too polemical and not properly historical in its method and focus.

This brings me to the heart of my discomfort with *William Morris's Kelmscott*. Morris's intense engagement with politics, as a leading revolutionary communist, during the very period that he was co-tenant of Kelmscott Manor, is barely admitted, let alone discussed by any of the contributors. Instead, Morris is presented as a would-be country gentleman who enjoyed fishing, visiting old churches and designing wallpaper. By, in effect, denying Morris's passion for social justice, underplaying his commitment to conservation (hedges and public footpaths as much as historic architecture), and not recognizing his blunt contempt for the privileges conventionally demanded by social class and monetary wealth, this great man is grossly misrepresented. The book is blatantly revisionistic.

Moreover, its tone is often identifiably that of the establishment, conservative and occasionally reactionary. To say, as does Hassall, that the earth 'had been shaped for millennia by Man' (p. 5) is surely nowadays unacceptable in its use of this gendered and capitalized form. John Cherry tells us that a display, arranged by the Oxfordshire War Agricultural Committee in 1916, of women agricultural workers in the district 'was attended by *important people* such as Sir Sydney Olivier, Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, Lord Jersey, Sir John Dashwood and others' (p. 171; my italics); and referring to the same event, Mary Hodges says that 'The great and the good attended' it (p. 80). It seems we are being instructed to be deferential towards our superiors. Ironically, Hodges's chapter is entitled 'Kelmscott: The people in their place'.

The value of this book consists mainly in the chapters which concentrate on aspects of local history and heritage, where Morris features only incidentally. Of these, Simon Townley on 'Medieval and modern settlement at Kelmscott' and Julian Munby on 'Vernacular architecture in Kelmscott' are the most commendable. 'The Morris family and Kelmscott', by Linda Parry, is reliable and appreciative, though it attempts little more than a biographical narrative. Her account is ably complemented by Nicholas Cooper on 'Kelmscott Manor' itself, and Cherry's chapter on 'Kelmscott depicted' contains interesting information about the artists who worked there in Morris's time and

subsequently. In the final chapter, on 'Kelmescott and conservation policy', Parkinson's observations upon the current situation are banal and his vision for the future is lamentably restrained, in both respects rather less inspiring than what might have been provided by Ken Worpole or Colin Ward (both of whom are Morrisians) or – I hardly need add – John Payne.

Lavishly illustrated, including many fascinating photographs and reproductions of some little-known artworks, *William Morris's Kelmescott* is an attractively produced volume, in this respect worthy of the subject. Its textual content offers quite a lot for the residents of Kelmescott and its surrounding area, and possibly also for some visitors to Kelmescott Manor; but unfortunately Morris – as a writer, thinker, campaigner and credible countryman – is very poorly served, as are his scholars and his many admirers who will be disappointed by this book.

MARTIN HAGGERTY
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K. REDMORE (ed.), *Ploughs, chaff cutters and steam engines. Lincolnshire's agricultural implement makers* (Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2007). 156 pp., 191 figs. £17.50.

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, which has a distinguished record of publication, has an active interest in industrial history, hosting its own Industrial Archaeology Team. The Society has now brought together members of this team and others, who collectively have achieved a major contribution to industrial and business history within the confines of this deceptively brief book.

In the nineteenth century, Lincolnshire (especially Lincoln itself) became the centre of the British agricultural engineering industry, a position which it held until the late twentieth century. While there are recent histories of some of the larger firms (notably by Michael Lane), this book concentrates on the second-order firms, mostly of middling size. There are 13 chapters here, each devoted to a different firm. The only one whose name might be recognizable to a wider audience is Blackstone of Stamford, which achieved an international reputation for its mowing and haymaking machines before 1900, later moving heavily into oil engine building. Taken over by Listers in 1936, and subject to a series of post-war takeovers, Blackstone's Stamford works finally closed in 2002.

The other firms examined here had a diverse history. They range from the small firm of William Howden of Boston, who made the first 'portable' (i.e., moveable with horses) steam engine in the county (in 1841), but produced only a further 11, because he didn't wish to

flood the market (!), to Blackstones and The Malleable of North Hykeham, which began with castings for agriculture, before moving into castings for the motor trade, finishing with about 2,000 employees in 2000. There are also chapters on William Cooke (peak employment about 100), which became the largest plough maker in Lincoln until its demise in the 1920s; on James Hart of Brigg, who never recovered from the technical failure of his steam engine at the 1854 Royal Show, and two of the surviving firms, J. and B. Edlington (Gainsborough) and T. and J. Fletcher (Winterton), which were larger in the past, but have adapted deftly to the twenty-first century. They also include a notable and still surviving dealer in farm machinery, Peacock and Binnington (Brigg).

Most of these firms had (or have) a long history. How far does this book illuminate the factors making for industrial success or failure? Only two may be said to have failed – Cooke and Hart. Cooke was a case of product inertia, continuing most of its pre-1914 lines until the 1930s, without much serious attempt to adapt their implements for use with tractors, and remaining craft-based until going into receivership in 1938. Apart from his disaster at the Royal Show, Hart, along with other small steam engine producers, was at a disadvantage as the nineteenth century wore on and competition from other Lincolnshire giants like Ruston, Hornsby, and Clayton and Shuttleworth proved irresistible. Whether Duckering failed or merely closed is a moot point. In the late nineteenth century the firm concentrated heavily on cast-iron kitchen ranges, for which presumably there was little chance of repeat orders once they were installed in the burgeoning Victorian terraces of Lincoln, and their sheer weight must have confined sales to the locality. The firm closed in 1926, although the foundry survived until 1957.

These failures apart, there were six firms which just closed, either due to the late twentieth-century corporate reorganizations (Blackstone, Malleable), or just dribbled to a halt – Coultas (1955), Hett (founder retired, 1895), Howden (founder left firm in 1859, though the works continued under a successor until 1876), and Tuxford (closed in 1880s; left no business records, but seems to have been more interested in innovation than profitability). These latter may be classed as the not unusual terminations of firms which begin well and enjoy a period of prosperity before either having their energies diverted into unprofitable lines or losing their entrepreneurial 'animal spirits' as Keynes described them.

Perhaps the most useful examples are to be drawn from the remainder of this list, who survive to this day – Edlington, Fletcher, Peacock and Binnington, and Rundle. The three manufacturers all achieved a good

reputation for their products in the nineteenth century, and showed nimble footwork in thinking up new lines in the difficult times of the inter-war period. Continued product innovation and niche marketing seem to be the key to their survival. The non-manufacturer, Peacock and Binnington, has from the start taken as its motto 'Service before Sales', so that customers would stick to the firm in the future, and has prospered accordingly.

Each case is different, but overall the book is a testimony to the continuing importance of the ever-alert entrepreneurial spirit. Cooke might have survived with more of this at its disposal; Duckering and its successors definitely lacked it; the surviving firms certainly have it. Mere technical expertise is clearly not enough, as the histories of Hart, Howden and Tuxford demonstrate.

The variety of industrial and business experience highlighted in these pages is the more convincing because the authors possess a variety of backgrounds and experience. Some have personal knowledge of the firms concerned, and can thus flesh out the available documentary material. Others have come to the project through the SLHA and its industrial archaeology team, or have a strong interest in industrial and business history. They all manage to pack a large amount of information and thoughtful appraisal into a small compass and the result is an indispensable addition to the literature on the history of the British agricultural engineering industry.

The agricultural engineering industry was (and is) a protean one, ranging from the blacksmith to the multinational giant. It is difficult to trace all the individuals, partnerships and firms who have claimed to be agricultural engineers in the last two centuries. It is therefore particularly welcome that the editor has compiled a selected list of Lincolnshire implement makers (pp. 144–49), comprising a total of 142 names and firms. This is the first time this has been done for any English county; it is to be hoped that other county historical societies may follow suit.

A final word on the quality of the book production; overall it is very high indeed, and the numerous and well-chosen illustrations are both useful and a delight to the eye.

PETER DEWEY
Oxford

BROMYARD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY, *A pocketful of hops* (New edition, 2007). x + 190 pp. Illus. £14.95 incl. p. and p. from Peter Mesdag, 29 West Hill, Bromyard, HR7 4EU.

This is the second edition of a book, first published in 1988, that has found a wide popular readership. The major change is new material that brings the historical narrative up to date (2007). Other changes

include the addition of new photographs, maps and other illustrations and some stylistic revision of the original text. All of these changes help to make the book more readable and generally attractive, whilst, as the introduction notes, leaving intact the broad format and flavour of the original.

A pocketful of hops remains a solid and accessible social and economic history of hop-growing in Bromyard, Herefordshire – once one of the main hop-growing areas in England – from the turn of the twentieth century to the present day. A key focus, as befits a book produced by a local history society, is on the significance of hops for not only farmers but also the wider community around which the industry revolves.

After an introductory chapter tracing the evolution of hop-growing in Bromyard from the middle of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, the book falls into two parts. First it examines the social dimensions of hop-picking; five chapters cover the perspectives of growers, local pickers and seasonal migrant labour and the various local authorities and voluntary organizations that took responsibility for their welfare and organization. The second half of the book examines the changing fortunes of the industry itself, with six chapters covering technical developments in hop-growing, the servicing of the hop industry, quantitative trends in hop production, the impact of the dwarf hop, and the influence of changes in marketing, drinking tastes and government regulation over the course of the twentieth century.

The book has two major strengths: a wealth of factual detail on the technical aspects of hop growing; and a strong sense of hop-picking as experienced by the hop-pickers. The latter is imparted by the inclusion of lengthy reminiscences from interviews and letters and a wide range of high-quality monochrome photographs. As with most books of this type, however, the portrayal of social life is open to the charge of being overly rose-tinted; there is little indication of the hardships suffered by such workers, nor of the tensions and conflicts that often arose between growers and pickers.

Unsurprisingly, given its amateur status and local remit, the book does not seek to locate hop-growers and pickers in the context of a wider historical division of labour. Nor is there any serious attempt to place Bromyard hop-growing in wider geographical context; this is very much a descriptive, idiographic study. The absence of any attempt to assess the significance of hop-growing to the local economy of Bromyard beyond some disjointed references to the wages of hop pickers in the nineteenth century means that the book would be of limited interest to economic historians.

These caveats aside, and bearing in mind the paucity

of historical studies in this area, *A pocketful of hops* provides a valuable, if narrow, insight into the history of hop-growing in England and its significance for rural society.

GRAHAM GARDNER
Aberystwyth University

PETER DEWEY, *'Iron Harvests of the Fields': the making of farm machinery in Britain since 1800* (Carnegie Publishing Ltd., 2008). xvi + 352 pp., 89 illus, 48 tables. £18.99.

When this book arrived on my desk my musician son looked rather sniffily at it and then expressed some pity that I had perforce to read such dreary stuff. Perhaps he had a point, I thought; after all, a number of authors addressing the subject of the history of farm machinery have managed to produce tomes of unutterable tedium and of little academic, to say nothing of literary, value. But, as I began to read, it became clear with every page that Peter Dewey had risen far above the slender achievements of that unhappy pantheon. His is the work of the mature historian, combining economic and business insight with a deep understanding of the practical aspects of the agricultural machinery industry and its role in the success of British farming over the past two centuries. It is a work of considerable scholarship tempered with agreeable lucidity.

Based substantially on archive material from repositories the length and breadth of Britain, *Iron Harvests* leads us chronologically from the efforts of the wheelwright and carpenter of the late eighteenth century through to the creators of the behemoths stalking the fields of modern-day Britain. As he describes each generation of new machinery, with specific examples being covered in some detail, Dewey is careful to set developments alongside the national and international economic background and changes in the fortunes of the home-based agricultural economy. Indeed, one of the book's great strengths is its success in explaining the sometimes subtle relationships between technological change, social conditions and the relative success or failure of the many agricultural engineering firms whose beginnings lay in the industrial foment of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Driven by the spirit of innovation and inventiveness, firms like Ransomes of Ipswich, Bamfords of Uttoxeter and Blackstones of Stamford marched triumphantly through the cutthroat world of Victorian capitalism, maintaining their competitive edge by constant and undivided attention to business, enterprise and entrepreneurship. Dewey writes elegantly on the structure and function of these businesses, of their successes and failures and of the personality clashes between the often larger-than-life characters running

them. The relationship between the great machinery dynasties, their workers, the government and the farmers themselves are also carefully considered.

The quantum increases in agricultural prosperity in the third quarter of the nineteenth century stimulated demand for field, barn and dairy equipment of every description. Once the government prohibition on the export of farm machinery had been lifted in 1849, the growth of companies was underpinned by an expanding export market. In effect, British agricultural machinery dominated the world market in the years before the Great War. Subsequent to 1914–18, when war work had been a priority (with Foster's of Lincoln alone producing no less than 2,909 tanks between 1915 and the Armistice), the fortunes of the industry were linked closely to the booms and slumps of the period, the state of European trade and the degree of harmony in the home labour market. While there were significant technical developments, the overall environment was one of loss of exports and a degree of restructuring leading to a slimmer industry whose output by the mid-thirties was a mere two-thirds that of 1914.

The substantial profits accruing to the industry during the Great War were mirrored in World War II as outputs of farm machinery grew dramatically to satisfy the needs of the 'Plough-Up' campaign and munitions, armaments and aircraft parts flowed from agricultural engineering factories to meet the insatiable demand of the war machine. But a cloud lay just visible on the horizon. Fordsons, David Browns, Marshalls and other home-built machines were no longer the sole mechanical power units in Britain's fields, and by the end of the war they could be seen working alongside the Allis-Chalmers and Minneapolis-Moline tractors which had arrived via 'lease-lend' from across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, if the USA had become the world's largest manufacturer of tractors, Britain still lay in second place immediately after the war. Meanwhile as technical developments led to significant increases in tractor efficacy and efficiency, British companies like Bamford, Dowdeswell, Palmiter, Tasker, Simplex, Alfa-Laval and Gascoigne were at the forefront of innovation in field, barn and dairy machinery by the mid-1970s.

During the next thirty years these and many other firms came face-to-face with the inexorable tide of foreign competition, to the extent that Britain's tractor industry, in terms of relative size, stands today where it did in the early twentieth century. India is presently the world's largest producer of tractors. Yet, in today's environment of computer technology and satellite navigation, there still remain a large number of British farm machinery makers serving regional, national and international markets. Many of these are relatively small

family-run businesses which continue in the tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship characteristic of the early days of the industry. Their survival and ready preparedness to embrace new ideas should remind us (despite the irresponsible nostrums of the organicist elite) that if Britain and the rest of the world are to survive the crisis of food security that looms ahead, every available technology will need to be exploited to the limit.

It is, of course, easy to quibble with some of Dewey's observations. I doubt, for example, whether Neolithic men in their right minds ever *totally* abandoned hunting and gathering in favour of settled agriculture, and I am not altogether convinced that the failure of the machinery industry to attract graduates in the 1980s had any material effect on its progress! Marginally more seriously, I am suspicious of his definition of 'a Quarter' as 28 lbs (see p. 3). If this was the case, as opposed to the Quarter of 8 bushels of approximately 56 lbs per bushel, then with wheat at more than 126 shillings per quarter in 1812, little wonder that bread riots were commonplace!

But these are trivial whinges. Dr. Dewey has produced a *tour de force* which is unlikely to be bettered in the near future. His beautifully illustrated and scholarly book is a major achievement. Whether they sip it like a good wine and savour it in small amounts, or swallow it whole like a Galway oyster, a generation of agricultural, economic, business and urban historians will benefit from Dewey's efforts.

R. J. MOORE-COLYER
Aberystwyth University

M. MASHEDER, *Carrier's Cart to Oxford. Growing up in the 1920s in the Oxfordshire village of Elsfield* (The Wychwood Press, 2007). 140 pp., 40 illus. £10.

This is a book about a world which has all but disappeared. A former teacher and academic, Mrs Masheder is now in her eighties and here presents us with an account of her childhood in rural Oxfordshire. Elegantly and persuasively written, the book reveals a memory as clear as the morning dew. Men and animals long dead, kindly and eccentric vicars, tramps slumbering in haystacks, gaily-coloured gypsy caravans, and a world dominated by order and regularity and the endless cycle of the seasons; all are recalled with astonishing clarity.

What Elsfield lacked in physical sophistication (dark, dank, if picturesque, houses, no electricity, stand-pipes and long-drop privies) was amply compensated by the vibrancy of the community and the sense of belonging and communal harmony which prevailed. There may have been few alternatives to farm labour or domestic servitude for the sons and daughters of poorer families, but this situation was generally accepted until the

1930s when economic opportunities broadened and the deference born of dependence began to evaporate. Before this, though, parish church and village school propagated the idea of a rigid social hierarchy which tended to be paralleled in the alarming pecking order of the school playground. If many children from labouring families were educated in the village school rather against their will, they would have taken some solace from the knowledge that, however poor they might be, they were eminently superior to those lesser breeds in the Empire who daily counted their blessings as subjects of that most benevolent of Emperors, our dear King George V. The celebration of Empire Day was always great fun for young people, as were the village outings, fairs and fetes, and the shenanigans associated with seasonal festivals. To the unfortunate child growing up in today's febrile emotional climate and subject to the unwholesome dictates of political correctness and risk averse 'healthunsafety' fascism, life in 1920s Elsfield would seem paradisaical. There was tea to be taken in hay and harvest field, trees to be climbed and ponds and streams to be fished, birds' nests to be sought, rabbits to be snared, gardens and allotments to be played in and kisses to be stolen in wood and meadow. And there were darker things to be learned. Closeness to animals may have engendered a respect for certain values, yet when kittens were drowned and pigs slaughtered, a child soon awoke to the nature of mortality and the transience of earthly things. The same child would learn something of the hypocrisy of a society which so passionately and cruelly condemned illegitimacy and even something of the nature of sexual deviancy through unwonted contact with the occasional expositors and molesters who lurked in all communities.

One of the great virtues of this book is its freedom from nostalgia. If, like me, the author deprecates the inevitable abandonment of the English village by its indigenes and the almost total severance of the village's link with the surrounding farm land, she does not make a big issue of it. The old, stable, well-ordered community has gone, and whatever the efforts of some *advenae* to revive seasonal festivals, it will never return. After all, Maypole dancing, like Morris dancing, is a wholly ludicrous activity when disconnected from the realities of the agricultural and vegetational year.

Mrs Masheder's book is a valuable contribution to the growing volume of published recollections of the earlier inter-war period. I am sure I will not be alone among her readers of a certain age in noting that much of what she describes in the 1920s would have been readily recognizable to a child of the 1950s. The old village was a long time a-dying.

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LADY EVE BALFOUR, *The living soil* (Soil Association, 2006). xlv + 246 pp. £8.95; SIR ALBERT HOWARD, *Farming and gardening for health or disease* (Soil Association, 2006). xxiv + 282 pp. £8.95; LIONEL PICTON, *Thoughts on feeding* (Soil Association, 2006). xxiii + 265 pp. £8.95.

Growing acceptance of organic foods has been one of the most significant developments in the British retail food sector over the past ten to fifteen years. However, this organic boom has affected British farmers considerably less than it has consumers; despite spiralling organic food sales, less than five per cent of British agricultural land is under organic production. The organic revolution, viewed from the perspective of British farmers, has largely been about food imports and conversion to organic production by some livestock or mixed farms in the west; very little of Britain's organic acreage lies in the arable areas of the east of England.

Nevertheless, public embrace of organic food raises questions for agricultural historians, not least 'where did the organic food movement come from?' and 'what are its fundamental principles?' Three books, originally published in the 1940s, and recently brought back into print by the Soil Association (SA) offer some answers.

Philip Conford was the driving force behind the Soil Association's decision to reprint these 'organic classics' and he acted as series editor. The original idea was to develop a longer series: however, these three are unlikely to be joined by other titles, despite the existence of several books from the same period that might warrant reprinting. The chosen three are: Lady Eve Balfour's bestseller, *The living soil* (first published in 1943), Sir Albert Howard's tract on compost, *Farming and gardening for health or disease* (1945), and the Cheshire GP Lionel Picton's presentation of organic concepts and their relevance to nutrition, *Thoughts on feeding* (1946).

Those familiar with Conford's work, particularly his *Origins of the organic movement*, will have no difficulty understanding his reasons for wanting to see these books come back into print. For the SA perhaps they serve to emphasize that it is not a new, inexperienced organisation. Despite the organic movement's recent successes, it remains vulnerable to accusations that it is little more than the product of woolly ideas dating back to the 1960s and '70s about working with, rather than against, Mother Nature. These books are a reminder that the SA has a longer history and a more developed intellectual foundation than many might suspect.

Of the three authors whose 'organic classics' have been revived, Sir Albert Howard tends to be remembered by people who have taken the time to investigate composting techniques and their history. An agricultural scientist who spent most of his career working at research

stations in colonial India, Howard has long been viewed as one of the most acceptable (i.e. scientific) faces of the organic movement. Howard developed the 'Indore' composting technique during the 1920s, after observing and modifying methods used by Indian peasant farmers to protect and enhance soil fertility. During the 1930s and 1940s, Howard promoted Indore composting as the key to sound agriculture. He was scathing about inorganic fertilizers and the new chemical-based crop protection products. Indeed, Howard's response to any approach to agricultural science other than his own was negative. As this book makes clear, he liked to be in charge and was not a team player.

Farming and gardening for health or disease is, Conford explains, Howard's 'most panoramic and inclusive' book. Howard places composting within the context of his personal understanding of agricultural history (he begins with primitive agriculture, takes in farming in classical Greece and Rome, considers medieval farming traditions, and ends with the Second World War). This is also a profoundly ecological book; ensuring that agriculture does not threaten ecological functioning is Howard's overriding concern. Howard refers frequently to 'Mother Earth' and expresses an almost spiritual belief in the power of (feminine) nature. Agricultural problems and diseases affecting a range of crops – from tea to potatoes – are discussed, with Howard arguing in each case that only composting has the power to restore and maintain the health of soil, crops and livestock. It has been argued that Howard was the most significant figure of the British organic movement of the 1930s and 1940s. *Farming and gardening* offers insights into his thinking and, in so doing, provides clues about how many early organic supporters viewed agriculture and wished to see it develop.

Lady Eve Balfour's *The living soil* is known more widely than Howard's work, primarily thanks to the Soil Association's tendency to refer to Balfour as its founder. However, it is unlikely that many people have read *The living soil* and those who have probably read the 1975 version, which was radically different from the original 1943 edition. Conford has wisely chosen the first edition for reprinting. An introduction by Lawrence Woodward, of Elm Farm Research Centre, offers useful biographical and agricultural context.

The living soil was the organic movement's biggest publishing success, and was reprinted many times during the late 1940s and 1950s. It is easy to see why. In it, Balfour brings together organic concepts and arguments, presenting them in a direct and enthusiastic writing style. Discussion about what was then new scientific research is presented in an accessible, almost suspenseful style. *The Living Soil* was as close to a page-turner as

the early organic movement ever came. It was also published at the right moment, when people in Britain and its colonies were being urged to grow as much food as possible and were thus receptive to information and debate about agriculture and horticulture in a way they had not been before the war.

Another appeal of *The living soil* is its wide ranging nature and optimism. Balfour discusses everything from soil erosion to the future of Britain's housing policy, encouraging her war-time readers to dream of a better world in which healthy people eat highly-nutritious food, live in airy homes, and contribute passionately to the rebuilding of Britain and its empire. Essentially, this was a call to arms and remains so in spite of passages that have inevitably dated. Re-reading *The living soil*, it is easy to see why Lady Eve Balfour became a leading figure in the post-war organic movement.

The third 'organic classic', *Thoughts on feeding*, is the least well-known and, until now, the most difficult to secure from second-hand book dealers. Lionel Picton's book is part memoir, part personal statement on nutrition, part organic tract. A GP in Cheshire during the first decades of the twentieth century, Picton was convinced that poor diet was the culprit behind most disease and that food grown organically was more nutritious. He and a group of his fellow Cheshire doctors published a 'testament' to this effect in 1939, which included the following statement: 'We feel that the fact should be faced. Our daily work brings us repeatedly to the same point: "This illness results from a lifetime of wrong nutrition." *Thoughts on Feeding* is much more uneven in tone and pace than Howard's or Balfour's works, and some of the scientific explanations are rather convoluted. Other passages are simply odd, sometimes delightfully so. Picton has much to say on flatulence, bowel movements, and why (human) mothers should institute breastfeeding schedules identical to those of cows. Given Picton's strong opinions and his discussion of specific medical cases, *Thoughts on Feeding* may be of interest to historians of medicine as much as to agricultural and rural historians.

Together, these three 'organic classics' do not tell the whole story of the early organic movement. Several other long-out-of-print works come to mind, including Maye E. Bruce's two books on composting and Friend Sykes' *Humus and the Farmer*. By reprinting three, Conford and the Soil Association have made it a great deal easier for historians to understand the ideas of the early organic movement and the arguments its leaders presented as part of their (unsuccessful) effort to resist the rise of industrial agriculture.

ERIN GILL
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MARK HAMILTON LYTLE, *The gentle subversive. Rachel Carson, Silent Spring and the rise of the environmental movement* (New York: OUP, 2007). x + 277 pp. £13.99.

Does the world need another biography of Rachel Carson? As Mark Hamilton Lytle notes in the Afterword to *The gentle subversive*, prominent biographies of Carson already exist, most notably Linda Lear's definitive work *Rachel Carson: witness for nature* (1997). Lytle's intention is not so much to fill in gaps left by such accounts, for he believes few if any, exist. Rather, his aims are roughly threefold: to render an abbreviated and more narrowly focused account of her life and legacy (Lear's book is nearly 500 pages); to provide an update of Carson's legacy in light of current controversies surrounding *Silent Spring* and DDT; and to tell Carson's story in 'narrative' form – that is, to tell it from Carson's point of view as much as possible. A narrative approach seems appropriate for a biography of Carson, Lytle suggests, given that her writing often sought to tell a story from the perspective of non-human life-forms, so as to minimize human biases. But such an approach also requires that the writer – in this case, Lytle – must struggle to 'stay out of the story' (p. 253). Presumably, Lytle's fidelity to the narrative form explains why the bulk of his original and insightful commentary on Carson's life and legacy is relegated to the book's Epilogue and Afterword.

This is not to say that Lytle offers nothing of interest for readers already familiar with Carson's life and work. Even while he struggles to stay out of the story, Lytle gives welcome attention to Carson's religious background and sensibilities, noting that her work echoes 'the jeremiads of her Presbyterian forebears' (p. 62). He also draws parallels between Carson's understanding of ecology and that of the 'Ecology Group' of philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, which flourished during the 1930s and 1940s. Like those thinkers, Carson tended to reject reductionism in favour of an organicism aimed at restoring 'moral values to the scientific enterprise' (p. 89). Unlike them, Carson cared little for deriving political implications from ecology. Reforming society in the light of ecological principles such as cooperation was not her goal; protecting nature from humans was. (p. 90). Yet Carson's harshest critics were quick to draw such connections, even suggesting that communist sympathies motivated her arguments in *Silent Spring*. Lytle's genealogy of Carson's ecological ideals is interesting and it covers some ground not covered by Lear (Whiteheadian ecology makes no appearance there; Donald Worster briefly comments on Carson's Whiteheadian ideals in *Nature's economy*). But it may be a stretch to link Carson's interpretation of ecology

so closely with a 'cooperative ideal' evident, according to Lytle, in *'The sea around us* and books that followed' (p. 90). Nature's interdependence and the 'web of life' were indeed prominent themes in Carson's writing. But interdependence frequently takes on Darwinian overtones of fierce competition and harsh struggle, particularly in *Silent Spring*, where Carson draws on Darwinian principles to illustrate the folly of targeting insects with chemicals. She advocates using nature's own 'weapons' against it (what she terms 'biological controls') as the more effective option. Hers was no arcadian vision.

Lytle resumes an analysis of Carson's brand of ecology in his Epilogue, situating her within the environmentalism of Pinchot and Muir (she had affinities with the latter's rejection of anthropocentrism), and the ecological models of Elton and Tansley (she embraced the former's community concept). But this discussion never picks up the earlier thread regarding the Ecology Group's influence on Carson, leaving readers to guess about the precise connection. The constraints of the narrative approach make some of the biographer's observations appear almost as *non sequiturs*.

In the Epilogue and Afterword, Lytle reveals his rationale for the book's title. Carson may have appeared thoroughly conventional, even quaintly old-fashioned in dress and demeanour, but a subversive fire burned below the surface. Carson challenged authority – scientific and governmental – and encouraged citizens to do the same. Though her life was extinguished by cancer within two years of the publication of *Silent Spring*, that fire would spread to a 'community of dissenters,' a counterculture seeking an ecologically responsible life (pp. 205–06). The Epilogue sketches the history of the ecology movement from these subversive roots to the rise of environmental legislation, the first Earth Day, and the 1972 ban on DDT in the United States. Lytle concludes with a detailed discussion of current controversies surrounding DDT, mosquito-borne malaria, and Carson's work. Internet blogs (and respected sources such as the *New York Times*) have laid the blame for the deaths of 'third-world' children from malaria directly at Carson's door. Latter-day critics depict Carson (as they did 45 years ago) as the very symbol of an environmental movement concerned more with birds and bugs than with human babies. Yet, as Lytle notes, Carson never called for a complete ban on DDT, but only for more moderate and responsible use. Moreover, the DDT ban in the United States did nothing to prevent other countries from using it, nor did it preclude the use of DDT in public health emergencies. In fact, the reasons for phasing out DDT in malaria-stricken regions have relatively little to do with Carson's crusade and much

to do with patent law, the global economy, and the proliferation of newer, and more profitable, chemical pesticides. Lytle's tempered analysis of this nettlesome issue is one of the book's most valuable contributions.

Carson's subversiveness was equally matched by a gentleness that was not wholly a media stereotype. In labelling Carson 'gentle,' Lytle notes that she was morally outraged at cruelty to animals, for example; she loved birds and wildlife, detested hunting, and she formed close bonds with women and appealed strongly to women through her writing. Themes of home and domesticity 'were central to Carson's descriptions of the interdependence of living things' (p. 242). With such references to her gentleness, Lytle implies that Carson exuded, or retained, a certain femininity or womanliness, a nurturing quality. But precisely what Lytle intends by juxtaposing these two dimensions of Carson's character remains somewhat elusive. (Does he believe that her subversiveness and gentleness were at odds, something paradoxical? Did Carson's gentleness make her an unlikely subversive? Or, on the contrary, did it make her an effective subversive? Was Carson more or less 'gentle' than other women of her generation?) At times, Lytle seems to hint at a certain proto-feminism (or eco-feminism) discernible in Carson's work and in reactions to it from female readers and colleagues. This is a theme worth pursuing and one wishes Lytle would stay in the story a little longer. In the absence of a sharper analysis of these features of Carson's character and their relationship to one another, Lytle's portrait might be read as condescending. Lytle intends no disrespect; his admiration for Carson is clear, even when his observations about her are not. Carson might respond to Lytle much as she did to readers (especially men, she noted) who were shocked to discover that not only could a woman write about the subjects Carson tackled, but also that this particular author was not a masculine or 'oversize, Amazon-type female.' 'I can offer no defense,' Carson replied with customary equanimity, 'for not being what people expect.'

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ARTHUR STANIFORTH, *Straw and Straw Craftsmen*
(Shire Publications, 2008). 32 pp., 3 figs, 43 illus.
£4.99.

This reprint of Staniforth's 1981 classic, with its detailed and finely-illustrated descriptions of the traditional straw-using trades, comes as a welcome reminder of the value of this versatile natural product at a time when the cost of fossil fuels and products associated with them is spiralling almost beyond control. While horse collar making is now of little contemporary relevance,

thatching is every bit as important as it was twenty-five years ago and the onwards expansion of the heritage building industry continues to stimulate demand for cob walls and traditionally-made basket ware. Paula Sunshine's 2006 Shire volume on wattle and daub emphasized the environmentally advantageous benefits of straw in the building industry and Staniforth's work further underlines her comments. At present the vast majority of straw produced in this country is employed either as livestock bedding or as a source of domestic or agricultural heating, despite the wide scope of alternative uses. As demand for traditional hand-crafted products increases in line with advancing prosperity, there is good reason to predict a bright future for the 900 thatchers, 120 basket makers and the various other straw workers scattered around Britain in the early years of the twenty-first century.

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ERIC WOOD, *The south-west Peak. A landscape history* (Landmark Publishing, 2007). 191 pp., illus. £19.99.

In this book 'south-west Peak' is defined as the area bounded by lines joining Macclesfield, Whaley Bridge, Buxton and Leek, thus encompassing Macclesfield Forest, part of the High Peak and part of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The wisdom of not considering a wider area, including the country east of Leek town and even all the western margin of the Carboniferous limestone outcrop may be questioned, but however defined, the south-west Peak most certainly comprises an interesting tract of hard country straddling the boundary of the national park. In his exploration of the history of its landscape, Eric Wood has set out to 'appeal to the general reader and those with an interest in local history' using a 'broad-brush' treatment. The book is arranged in twenty-one chapters which, in turn, are broken down into short sections with notably bold headings, thus giving a guide or gazetteer-like feel. A wide, but by no means comprehensive, range of published sources has been consulted and the ground has also been walked, evidently with some enthusiasm. However there are a number of aspects of the book which limit the success of Wood's endeavours, most particularly an imbalance of content and the manner of its presentation.

The photographs on the front cover and the fly-leaf set the tone for the volume. A good two-thirds of the content is given over to the development of communications and the exploitation of natural resources. Clearly the author's interests lie with relict features in the landscape, notably trackways, roads, quarries, coal mines and water power sites. Someone seeking a guide to such aspects will find much of interest. The reader's understanding would have

been enhanced by more systematic discussion of the associated physical environment and also by a greater use of distribution maps so that specific sites could be seen in their wider context. Some subsections are generalized in content and could apply to England as a whole, such as those about highwaymen and coaching services, and add little to an appreciation of the south-west Peak landscape.

The agrarian scene is dealt with less confidently. The difficulties occasioned by the extensive wet moorlands extending to over 500m, dissected by deeply cut valleys deserve greater elaboration. The south-west Peak has long been marginal country with a scarcity of evidence of coherent settlement until medieval times. For example, there is but scant reference to the area in the Domesday Survey. The reader is offered some detail on surviving Anglo-Saxon crosses, again emphasizing Wood's concern with extant landscape features. This too would have benefited from basic distributional mapping. There is proper recognition of the extent to which the area came to be dominated by the Macclesfield, Peak and Malbac Forests, and likewise the importance of monastic grange communities. The farming scene after the Dissolution and during and after seventeenth-century disafforestation, is but briefly summarized.

Landmark Press produces books to a high standard but a number of presentational aspects merit comment. The maps are not drawn in a consistent style and a few appear as hand-drawn working sketches. Some are appropriately located with grid references and sources but others are not. Similarly the sources of photographs are not acknowledged and one suspects that many originate with the author. Tighter editing would have helped to ensure that the title as given on the front cover matched that on the title page and to correct such statements as 'Macclesfield Forest is bounded by Peak Forest' to the west rather than the east and that the coal seams occur in the Namurian. Some do but others lie in Westphalian or Coal Measures basins. The bibliography contains duplication and regrettably there is no listing of other sources consulted, thus preventing the reader from exploring further.

The south-west Peak would have benefited from a longer period of gestation. It is particularly unfortunate that the book ends abruptly, with no attempt to draw the various themes of agrarian development, industry and communications together. The wholeness embodied in the concept of landscape is thus passed by along with the opportunity to identify what makes the south-west Peak a distinctive tract of country worthy of consideration separate from the rest of the Peak District.

ROGER DALTON
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GARY J. WEST, *An historical ethnography of rural Perthshire, 1750–1950. Farm, family and neighbourhood* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2007). ix + 311 pp., 4 figs, 17 tables. £74.95.

This book is an ethnological study of belonging or identity between 1750 and 1950, in Perthshire, a county that has received little research by rural and agricultural researchers. The study stems from the author's own interest in his family roots, especially on his father's side of the family, 'most of whom continued to live and work on farms in and around Perthshire until recent retiral' (p. 1). The author brings together a wide range of evidence including oral testimony from his own semi-structured interviews of his relatives, archival recordings, documentary evidence and estate records, to examine the themes of the agricultural transformation of Perthshire (improvement and post-improvement); family labour (especially women and children) and its importance to the post-improvement agricultural communities and the experience of farming life; and the 'temporary family' of the farm bothy (examined through the development of that system of housing and an account of bothy life). This is followed by a detailed analysis of communal labour and neighbour-based reciprocity and charity (exchange labour and charity labour) in the second half of the book.

For each theme, the author provides closely argued and reflective theoretical, historical and cultural frameworks, bringing together and considering the wider debate of a number of scholars. That analysis provides a helpful framework for his work on Perthshire. The author adopts and uses a number of well established methodological approaches to examine a range of themes: for example, he uses those developed by Åke Campbell and Bjarne Stoklund (1976) to provide a cultural ecology model of Perthshire (pp. 76–81), and Ian Levitt and T. C. Smout's (1979) methodological approach to the examination of the Poor Law Enquiry of 1843 to assess the employment of children in agriculture (p. 87). He also develops further some of the existing methodological approaches. In particular, his development of a working model of communal labour systems is particularly useful.

The strongest, and also the most interesting, part of the book examines communal labour systems; the author has already separately published this work in a number of articles. This is an aspect of rural life that has received very little attention in Scotland but has received some interest in other countries, such as Ireland. Indeed, he acknowledges Anne O'Dowd's *Meitheal: A study of co-operative labour in rural Ireland* (1981), as an important stimulus for his work and draws extensively on her theoretical framework. The author explains that these systems were a 'phenomenon [that] has been widespread

throughout Perthshire during the past two centuries, and its various manifestations have contributed to local society at a number of levels' (p. 284). It was also a feature that 'was by no means unique' to this county. (p. 284). This is an area of study that deserves further attention.

As a county study, the absence of a map which details the various localities and districts mentioned is frustrating. This is particularly so for understanding the distribution of evidence on child employment (pp. 87–8), the geographical location of the agricultural improvement case studies (pp. 42–56, 67–61, 61–74), as well as the distribution of the bothy system in 1867 (p. 133), and the preference for married or unmarried servants (pp. 138–40).

The research is clearly a personal journey for the author to 'document and understand the way of life of those people from whom I have come ...' (p. 2). On the last page, he indicates that this had a profound impact on him: 'only now do I feel I have the personal and ethnological grounding from which to move on' (p. 288). However, while he accomplished a personal journey in undertaking his research and writing up his findings (the manuscript formed his doctoral thesis, completed in 2000), he ran out of energy before he published his manuscript. The theoretical and cultural frameworks which he used as a context for his work are mostly from studies published between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s – they took me back to the books I was reading as an undergraduate nearly 20 years ago – and take no account of developments thereafter. Indeed, beyond 1995 there are few references: there are six between 1995 and 2000 and seven from 2000 onwards, of which four relate to the author's own work. Some of the debates are out of date and have not been revised to take into account new developments since he started his research around 1990. For example, his account of the nature of the agricultural revolution hinges on the work of C. Beveridge and R. Turnbull, published in 1989, and others who also undertook research at an earlier date. Since that time, the debate has moved significantly forward by studies such as T. M. Devine's *The transformation of the Scottish countryside* (1994). Although Devine's study does not discuss Perthshire, it provides much invaluable evidence that would have informed West's analysis of the improvements at Delvine. West's recordings of his family members were made in 1995–6, and neither the text nor the bibliography reveal whether he undertook further interviews as his research developed. In a number of instances he refers to 'recent research' and 'in recent years', which he specifically denotes as being in the 1980s and 1990s (pp. 9, 10, 14, 31, 40, 84, 143, 173–178,

215, 279) – it should be remembered that his book was published in 2007. As it stands, the book is an out-dated study that regrettably would have had more force if it had been published a decade ago.

HEATHER HOLMES
Livingston

L. KENNEDY and P. M. SOLAR, *Irish Agriculture: A price history from the mid-eighteenth century to the First World War* (The Royal Irish Academy, 2007). 205 pp., 27 figs, 21 illus, 38 tables. €30.

Prices are the lifeblood of economic history. They tell us so much about economic well being, about decision-making and about comparative wealth across time and across space. And these are only a few of the uses and tests to which we put prices. If they are as important as I suggest, then it is necessary to have confidence in the prices that are used, in their origins, their robustness, and their fitness for purpose. Not all economies are involved in all aspects of economic life. Comparative advantage may dictate emphasis on one, or a few, or a range of activities rather than others, and over time comparative advantage adjusts to external competition and circumstance, and to internal growth and development. For Ireland, agriculture was the lifeblood of its economy. The centrality of the 1840s Famine adds more weight to that position. It is not that economic and agricultural historians of Ireland have had want of a good range of prices, but perhaps what has been lacking has been a range of prices in which everyone can be utterly confident. Time will tell whether the data brought together in this important project will serve the next generation of historians, but for the time being it is a massive step forward.

This project has seemingly been rapidly put together in three years. It has a much longer history in the concerns of its two authors who acknowledge everything I have said so far, and more besides, in their opening chapter. In an extended fashion, that chapter sets out the *raison d'être* of the centrality of prices generally and for agricultural prices in Ireland in particular. The authors detail the historiography of price history as pioneered by first Thomas and then Richard Barrington (not familiarly related), of the importance of regional animal, butter, and grain markets, of the government returns as set out in parliamentary papers. This chapter is heavy on admiration for the pioneers, but also critical of their ready adoption of prices without sensitivity to their origins and their meanings. There was a cavalier attitude to the ages of animals, and perhaps by some also to the quality of both animals and grain products, as well as to the regional variations related to those products. There is a tendency to be overcritical perhaps.

After all, by definition, pioneers show us the way and inspire us to improve.

If the historiography is important in declaring an admiration for the pioneers, it is also an inspiration to do better, but chapter two perhaps brings us plummeting back to earth. It is about weights and measures, a problem that all agricultural and regional historians have to confront, whatever the location, whatever the time. The authors illustrate this problem with an account of the regional weights and measures for potatoes and other products. How heavy was a barrel or a bushel? Was it the same in Kilkenny in 1802 as it was in Dublin the previous year? Or the same in Galway in 1824 as it was in Armagh in 1804? If it is a problem for potatoes, one of the least traded products, what about those products that dominated the market place?

In chapter three we have the backbone of the book, the discussion of prices and the way they were reported in newspapers. We have therefore consistent data sources but which are treated regionally: for the south they rely on Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford, but predominantly Cork for the eighteenth and Waterford for the nineteenth centuries; and for the north they are based on Belfast and Londonderry. Unaccountably, and unfortunately, Dublin newspapers did not report prices regularly for certain products before 1810. The authors get their retaliation in first because they recognize the obvious question that splicing series from different places implies a good degree of market integration. That remains an untested assumption, but what is certain is that the comparative analyses in this chapter (and the underlying data in the appendices) will serve important functions in their own right for the inward gaze centred on Ireland, but so also outwardly in comparisons with Europe and further afield.

Chapter four covers similar ground to chapter three but specifically on beef and cattle, embracing Dublin prices as well as other regional sources. In chapter five the authors attempt to bring together the different commodities in the construction of an agricultural price index. The weighting problems involved in such a construction are well known, not only for Ireland but generally, and in this chapter the authors try a number of different schemes based on supposed product shares for a number of different base years. There may be nuances in year-to-year variations, but the long-run picture is more or less identical regardless of the date of the weights chosen, and also regardless of the broad geography of the north relative to the south. There are hints, though, that the devil might be in the detail, and so perhaps others will exploit the new product series in times to come. The scripted part of the book is completed with a short conclusion. It is followed by

three appendixes on sources, and finally the book is rounded off by tables of the raw prices. These tables consume perhaps one-third of the whole book. In summary, then, this is will surely be the standard source for future new work for years to come, and for revisions of old positions on Irish economic development before 1914.

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CORMAC Ó GRÁDA, RICHARD PAPING and ERIC VANHAUTE (eds), *When the potato failed: causes and effects of the last European subsistence crisis, 1845–1850* (Brepols, 2007) (Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area Series 9). 342 pp., 58 tables, 68 figs. €66.

The changes in consumption patterns resulting from the European expansion after 1500 were perhaps its most durable consequence. Long after the price revolution had been forgotten and after many of the colonies in the New World had shaken off their colonial ties, European consumption habits were still affected by these 'exposure effects'. The most dramatic effect on Europe was brought about by the lowly potato. A recent paper by two economists has estimated that the growth of agricultural productivity in Europe attributable solely to the introduction of the potato from America accounted for 18 per cent of the observed post-1700 increase in population growth and 37 per cent of urbanization (Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, 'Columbus's contribution to world population and urbanization: a natural experiment examining the introduction of potatoes', unpublished working paper, Harvard University, 2008). The potato produced up to three times the calories per acre that cereals did, and on soils that were often not suitable for any other kind of arable farming. As a side bonus (unknown to the people at the time), the potato also contained ascorbic acid and other important trace elements that made those who consumed it healthy. Arthur Young, that inveterate observer of crops and farms, noted in the late 1770s of the Irish that 'when I see their well-formed bodies, their men athletic and their women beautiful, I know not how to believe them subsisting on an unwholesome food'.

Yet the potato carried with it a dreadful risk that was only to be revealed much later. In 1845 a vicious fungus named *Phytophthora infestans* attacked the potato crops in Europe and, for a number of years the harvest was almost completely wiped out. The food scarcity was compounded by an especially poor rye harvest in 1846. The famine could not have come at a worse time. The mid-1840s were already a period of crisis in rural western Europe because, by that time, the competition

of mechanized textile manufacturing had severely cut the income of the workers in cottage industries who subsisted in part on earnings in domestic manufacturing. The crisis would thus have occurred in any event, because home production of cheap textiles was doomed. But those areas where the poor subsisted in part on the collapsing earnings from domestic industry and in part on potatoes were dealt a double whammy in the difficult years from 1845 to 1850. To add injury to injury, many of the regions afflicted by hunger and economic crisis were ravaged by the second cholera outbreak in Europe in 1848–9.

The economic and demographic impact of the potato failure depended on two main determinants: the degree to which diets depended on potatoes and the ability of the economy to come up with substitutes for the potato for the most affected regions at short notice. The failure of cereal crops in Europe did not help, but suffering also depended to a great degree on policy and the approach that governments took to famine relief.

Ireland, in which over three million people depended almost entirely on potatoes for their sustenance, suffered the most, but many other regions in Europe were badly hit. In this collection, a number of scholars from different countries produce comparative essays on the effect of the potato failure on their countries. Ireland, because it was by far the worst-hit nation, has three essays devoted to it, one by co-editor Cormac Ó Gráda, the leading economic historian of Ireland and one of the world's leading experts on famines in general (see his *Famine: a short history*, Princeton University Press, 2009). Irish history was altered forever by the famine. As Ó Gráda points out, most pre-industrial famines led to rapid demographic recovery in the years following the famine. Ireland, by contrast, continued after the dreadful shock of the Great Famine to lose population decade after decade until the twentieth century. Here, three elements came together: a heavy dependence on potatoes, especially in the west and south; low levels of commercialization; and a poor infrastructure. To that, we may add the almost fanatical commitment of the Whig government of John Russell to free markets and its desire to 'reform' Ireland by teaching it to behave more prudently (as a brief essay by Peter Gray explains). The result was a ghastly excess death toll of about 1.1 million people plus at least another 400,000 averted births.

In most of the other areas affected, the demographic effects were noticeable but not nearly as disastrous. In the Scottish highlands, as Tom Devine points out, dependence on potatoes was lower than in Ireland, and the industrialized and richer parts of Scotland were able to absorb the shock. In Flanders, local authorities were more successful in supporting the starving peasants,

although Belgium, too, was fortunate that it had a large modern industrial sector that could mobilize the resources to pay for food imports. In the Netherlands, which had considerable regions heavily dependent on the potato, the effects were palpable, but compared to Ireland they were modest and transitory. In a detailed and well-researched essay, Paping and Tassenaar struggle with a complicated story, in which both rural and urban regions were affected, but the demographic picture is a bit muddled because of outbreaks of malaria and cholera between 1845 and 1850. But here, too, the nation was far less vulnerable than Ireland, because it was considerably wealthier and more commercialized.

Elsewhere in Europe, the potato harvest and the rye harvest failure in 1846 brought a great deal of misery, but not anything that can count as catastrophic. Not everywhere did the potato failure figure prominently in the crisis. Thus, in France, Vivier concludes that the 1846–47 crisis ‘was severe but not exceptional’ and cannot bear the causal responsibility for the overthrow of the July Monarchy. Chevet and Ó Gráda, in an essay significantly entitled ‘Crisis: what crisis?’, fail to see any connection, in France, between production shortfalls and price increases on the one hand and mortality on the other. A fine essay by Hans Bass describes in detail the exact dimensions of the crisis in Prussia, and concludes that distribution was more important than production. Elsewhere in Europe, in Spain and Scandinavia, as essays in the volume explain, the impact of the potato blight was relatively mild.

All in all, this interesting volume illustrates the power of well-done comparative economic history. As in all edited volumes, the contributions are of uneven quality and not always in consensus. The main conclusion is that, as we move away from Ireland, the potato failure declines in its impact. For the historians of Ireland, that conclusion must underline the depth of Irish exceptionalism and the urgent need to explain it better.

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Europe and Elsewhere:

SAMUEL LETURCQ, *Un village, la terre et les hommes. Toury en Beauce (XII-XVII siècle)* (Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, Paris, 2007). 565 pp., 35 figs, 32 tables. €35.

Many readers of this review will have passed through Toury without realizing it, because the *commune* is traversed by one of the railway lines between Paris and Orléans and by the *route royale* described by Marc Bloch, which is now identified as *route nationale* 20. Samuel Leturcq, lecturer in medieval history at the Université

François Rabelais in Tours, begins his monograph with a methodological introduction that draws the distinction between agrarian structures (landscapes) and farming systems (rotations), summarizes research on open-field and *bocage* by historians, geographers and archaeologists, and recognizes the contrast between deliberately simplified ‘models’ and the messy complexity of the empirical record. Of particular interest is the rejection of the old belief that nucleated settlements in areas of open-field cultivation, such as the Beauce, were necessarily original features. Another hypothesis sees them as the result of spatial reorganization in the past when small settlements disappeared to the benefit of surviving central places. These remarks indicate that Leturcq’s study of a village in the Beauce will provide a much more complex account than the stereotypical image of an arid, tree-less plateau, whose broad horizons are only broken by the church steeples of nucleated villages.

Adopting a ‘retrospective’ approach, the author presents the collective rural structure of Toury between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, making particular use of a detailed terrier and plan that date from 1696 following the transfer of property from the abbey of Saint-Denis to the benefit of the nuns of Saint-Cyr. The pattern of strip fields at Toury was highly fragmented and most property units were extremely small (especially gardens and vineyards), but only seven owners held one-third of the total area. Landowners lived not only in Toury but also in surrounding parishes and in more distant towns, including Blois, Orléans and Paris. Functioning farms were complex assemblages of owner-occupied and rented strips dispersed widely across the parish and beyond. Far from involving three great ‘fields’, or sections of territory, the three-fold rotation operated across three dozen clusters of strips whose geography reflected the existence of four tiny hamlets in the parish in 1696 and hinted at the presence of others that had disappeared in the past. Collective stubble grazing of vast flocks of sheep was practised not just within the parish, or across the territory worked by farms located in Toury, but in a zone that extended as far as the seven villages in adjacent parishes, on average four kilometres away. Here, Leturcq introduces some elementary notions of spatial analysis. Collective obligations were certainly important but so, too, were individual rights in the tiny plots surrounding the village of Toury and its dependant hamlets.

Thanks to the survival of an array of medieval fiscal documents relating to Toury, and to the parish of Rouvray-Saint-Denis further north, it is possible to reconstruct communal agrarian activities in this central part of the Beauce between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Outlying hamlets were more important than

in subsequent times and the results of archaeological field walking give very strong evidence for the location of one of two deserted hamlets. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the settlement pattern of Toury parish was concentrated to a greater degree on the central village. Some useful diagrams relating to regularly repeated distances between settlement clusters suggest how this may have happened. A sideways look at Rouvray-Saint-Denis not only provides complementary information on patterns of strips and crop rotations but also indicates the presence of 'waste' that was being brought into cultivation in the late fifteenth century. This process of *défrichement* emerged emphatically from the record left by *abbé* Suger in the early twelfth century that described properties in the Beauce held by the abbey of Saint-Denis. The final section of the book moves further from archival evidence into the application of ideas and hypotheses derived from other studies of the evolution of rural settlements and agrarian structures. For example, the north-south alignment of the *route royale* appears to have played an important role in structuring the arrangement of cultivated strips. Archaeological evidence dating from Gallo-Roman times suggests the presence of several small settlements, of which one (Toury) came to dominate the local area, whilst others survived as tiny hamlets or isolated farms, and some were abandoned completely.

In addition to this interpretation, Samuel Leturcq provides a thorough discussion of the challenges confronting the researcher. Agrarian and fiscal vocabularies in the past are shown to have been complex and variable across both time and space. Functioning farms did not correspond neatly with property units, with many examples extending into surrounding parishes and a mixture of owned and rented strips being commonplace. Ecclesiastical parishes conformed to administrative entities but some agricultural practices extended across wider territories (in the case of stubble grazing), whilst others operated over smaller areas around the ancient hamlets. This fascinating monograph is enhanced by an array of detailed interpretative maps and is supported by a large bibliography. It reveals a rural world that changed across the centuries, in response to economic trends, modified land ownership, warfare, disease and a host of other factors, and whose landscape expression was transformed by the process of plot consolidation (*remembrement*) completed in 1951. Four decades later, production of wheat and sugar beet across the Beauce was accompanied for several years by the imposition of set-aside that evokes some of the fluctuations in land use recorded in medieval times.

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N. LOCKLIN, *Women's work and identity in eighteenth-century Brittany* (Ashgate, 2007). viii + 170 pp., 3 tables, 1 map. £55.

Nancy Locklin's detailed and innovative study of the lives of women in Brittany in the eighteenth century will appeal to a range of readers, including those interested in gender history, local and regional history, legal history and French history. It is ambitious and holistic, attempting to provide, as the introduction tells us, a study of women encompassing 'their work, their lives, their rights, their tragedies, and their triumphs' (p. 1). Brittany, distinguished from the rest of France by a number of laws and customs, is chosen because it potentially offers a unique regional case-study. Locklin suggests that such an approach can be used to challenge some of the generalizations and models that have defined the history of women (and particularly women's work) in the last couple of decades.

The book begins with a demographic overview of women in Brittany from childhood to widowhood, utilising as its main source *capitation* tax rolls. The data will be useful for comparative purposes and throws up some interesting and perhaps unexpected insights. Locklin finds, for example, that a relatively high number of married women kept a separate trade, independent from their husbands, and this enabled them to provide considerable support to their family's subsistence. The percentage of households headed by unmarried women was surprisingly higher in small towns and villages than the larger cities, probably because of inheritance of property and tenure rather than economic opportunities, which remained limited in rural areas. The next chapter deals in more detail with the complex question of women's work and identity. It begins with a comprehensive analysis of the position and treatment of women in guilds, and then goes on to look at 'non-guild' urban and rural work. Although there were no exclusively female guilds some, such as the tailors' guild of Quimper, took female members on roughly the same terms as men. In the world of work outside the guilds, the women of Brittany, like most of their European counterparts, were concentrated in a limited number of 'female' trades, notably food, clothing and textiles, cleaning and caring. In rural areas peasant women contributed to the family economy through vital but gender-segregated labour, although Locklin struggles to really shed light on this as such women 'are largely invisible in early modern sources' (p. 71). The strengthening of the sexual division of labour in the textile industry, which dominated much of rural Brittany, is handled in more detail, with an again familiar pattern of female-spinner and male-weaver emerging by the late eighteenth century. Locklin concludes that this position arises as much out of cultural

and social assumptions as from biological or patriarchal explanations.

The third chapter analyses the position of women under Breton law and, although beyond the expertise of this reviewer, I thought that in many ways it provided the most compelling material. Locklin argues that a grasp of the range of legal codes and customs that guided women's lives is necessary to gain a real understanding of their work and identity, and here the focus on Brittany as case-study really reaches fruition. She shows that Breton law gave women certain rights and protection that they simply did not have elsewhere in France, or in other European nations. Partible inheritance was the most important, giving women access to resources on the death of parents. Unmarried women and widows were also allowed to maintain businesses and property, and could make wills or donations that were protected from demands of other heirs or kin. Although Locklin does not deny that patriarchal power was strengthening in the eighteenth century, she shows that Breton women's unique position in regard to law gave them 'greater latitude as they negotiated society and the economy' than women elsewhere were allowed (p. 111). Women were also aware of their rights and responsibilities and were able to defend them through recourse to law where necessary. This is illustrated in the final substantive chapter, where women's social life, friendship networks and codes of honour are explored largely through legal records.

This book is a welcome addition to regional studies of women's work and lives in early modern Europe. Whilst women in eighteenth-century Brittany endured many of the hardships, impediments and suppositions that were familiar to women in other areas of Europe, in some respects they enjoyed favourable rights and resources, which in turn aided their social and economic position. I would have liked more explicit analysis of how the major findings of the study connect with the key concepts in women's history (separate spheres, continuity and change, etc.) in the conclusion, but this is undoubtedly an interesting and valuable exploration of the complexity of women's lives in the past.

NICOLA VERDON
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PHILIPPE MADELINE and JEAN-MARC MORICEAU (eds), *Bâtir dans les campagnes. Les enjeux de la construction de la protohistoire au XXI^e siècle* (Presses universitaires de CAEN-MRSH coedition, 2007). 368 pp., 135 illus, 4 tables, 4 maps. €25.

This collection of twenty-two papers offers a kaleidoscopic view of the main issues which confront those wishing to update or renovate villages, houses or

agricultural buildings. One might have imagined that France's greater area might reduce the number of issues and make the task easier; not so. Some villages and towns need renewal because of population expansion or earlier, unwise planning permissions. To increase in scale, farms need modern buildings and mechanized systems to house larger herds or greater crops. Ancient buildings need sensitive conversion or renewal to allow them to remain in the countryside. Above all, each area's character needs to be considered and conserved.

The authors are drawn from a wide range of academic disciplines. Their papers are grouped under six broad titles: buildings and rural modernization; the historical and archaeological study of buildings; buildings seen from within; aspects of modernization; case studies of agricultural buildings and aspects of landscape representation. Overall, the papers cover ten regions and include both lowland and upland sites. In each group the papers explore different aspects of the same theme, but not necessarily in logical or chronological progression. Mainly stock-keeping and viniculture issues are discussed with little mention of any arising from intensive arable cultivation.

Space is the linking theme. Farmers' need for more modern and usually larger buildings affects, in different ways, the area around them. Farm buildings are still present in many villages and small towns, how are farms to expand here? Solutions which involve moving them into the surrounding area create other problems: how to disperse them, where to put them, whether to create a farming enclave or to scatter the buildings in smaller units. For larger, modern buildings, careful decisions about using modern materials in buildings of traditional shape, and siting them sensitively into the landscape, are necessary. Many villages and small towns now sprawl where originally they were organized round a natural centre. How can those centres be regained while allowing the settlements modern amenities and further expansion? How can empty building space within the sprawl be used? A table of acronyms distinguishes one method of legal approach from another.

Rural buildings, such as the traditional buildings of the Franche-Comté in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, are considered from an historical and archaeological point of view. Important questions concerning the use of archive and material are posed. Can we be sure the documents themselves are reliable – do they describe an original building or one that had already been enlarged or adapted? In villages formerly razed by warfare in earlier centuries had the buildings been rebuilt in their original forms? Careful use of archival, archaeological and architectural information is necessary. When Iron Age buildings in the northern

Alps are considered, the documents are rock engravings, the texts of classical Latin and Greek authors or the ground plans of excavated buildings and the study of palaeo-botanical remains. Whereas Roman villas, their plan forms and the agricultural buildings built alongside them through to Gallo-Roman times, are amply described, the dearth of detailed knowledge about buildings which may have existed in the Early Middle Ages is acknowledged and deplored. Documents start to become available in the twelfth century but many have yet to be discovered and studied for any architectural detail. Do we correctly understand the terminology used? Archaeological excavation could help, but far too little rescue archaeology has been directed towards rural buildings. In the Caen plain developer-archaeology has revealed many thirteenth- to fifteenth-century sites, but most were only partially excavated. Correlation between archives and archaeology then becomes impossible. Furthermore many developer reports have yet to be consulted for their historical information.

Practical considerations include the use of tile or thatch for roofs; how did ventilation and ergonomic layout influence the size and disposition of agricultural buildings and how were these needs translated into different regional styles? Using the Breton farmstead as an example, did the different farming roles played by men and women influence the layout of the farmstead. Also studied is the disposition of farmsteads in Languedoc: grouped or dispersed? In the mountains, however, buildings shelter families, animals and crops. Their farmsteads are isolated by the terrain and their evolution and modern forms are both studied.

As younger generations take over farms, adaptation and reconstruction of the buildings are needed to achieve modernization. They aim to rationalize work to create a more ergonomic system. Where buildings need to be replaced because for years little or nothing had been done to keep them in good repair, the new buildings have to fit into their surroundings. Where old buildings can be retained, additions are made. Then many spread out from the original site, making a large farmstead where harmonization is difficult to achieve. Contrastingly, in the mountains, the traditional form of the chalet has frequently been adopted, adapted to domestic use and overused as a 'traditional local style' whose elements have been incorporated into non-rural buildings such as blocks of flats. Elsewhere its essential elements: use of timber in construction, cladding, roof lines and sense of space have been designed into modern buildings of the area.

Finally, how do farmers themselves see the landscape? The discussion centres on views taken with disposable cameras, views which they considered important for

six reasons: landscapes which belonged, seemed right; where changes were for the better or where they were explicable in terms of progress. They were also asked to consider past and future changes and those which were inevitable in order for farming progress to be made.

Our countries share many of the problems, but our area is less.

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PIERRE CORNU and JEAN-LUC MAYAUD (eds), *Au nom de la terre. Agrarisme et agrariens en France et en Europe du 19^e siècle à nos jours* (Paris, La Boutique de l'Histoire, 2007). 464 pp. € 27.

Les agrariens français de Méline à Pisani appeared in 1968. In it, Pierre Barral explored French rural society from the agricultural protectionism of the late nineteenth century, through the demographic disaster of World War I and the economic collapse following 1929, to the structural reforms of the early 1960s that sought to modernize family farming by encouraging the elderly to retire, the young to acquire agricultural skills, and farms to be enlarged. Barral discussed these developments in national terms but, in 1969, he edited an issue of *Le Mouvement Social* that examined regional aspects of French agrarian life before 1930. Thirty years later, members of the *Association des ruralistes français* met in Lyons for their 23rd colloquium, which focused on 'Agrariens et agrarismes, hier et aujourd'hui, en France et en Europe'. Thirty-one papers were delivered and twenty five of these are included, in revised form, in the long-delayed volume under review. Editors Cornu and Mayaud begin by explaining how Barral's ideas have been refined by recent research in France and other European countries.

The first cluster of papers examines agrarian life and nation building, with evidence from Germany and Spain being set alongside discussions of rural policies in France. Protracted debates considered whether a single syllabus for primary education was appropriate, or whether French rural children should experience a modified programme incorporating rural skills. Despite suffering more than any other class on the killing fields of World War I, the French peasantry remained the bedrock of the nation during the 1920s, when half the population still lived in the countryside. The second group of papers concentrates on rural development in Britain, Germany and France. Isabel Boussard highlights the activities of successive ministers of agriculture during the Vichy era who strove to keep farmers on the land, return abandoned farms to cultivation, promote plot consolidation, and improve rural housing. A complementary paper by Wolfram Pyta traces German rural

policy during the Nazi period. Rural planners, headed by Konrad Meyer, travelled widely through the German lands to identify farms to be conserved and improved, and others that were too small to be viable and should be merged with adjacent holdings.

Social and political issues figure largely in the third cluster of essays, which explores the specificities of landholding and peasant unions in the Landes and Provence. These French discussions are complemented by papers on the peasants' political party in Poland and on the evolution of rural communism in the USSR and in parts of western Europe. Rural depopulation and representations of rural life form the heart of the fourth section, with essays reviewing how the *exode rural* was debated in the French parliament. In the 1960s, depopulation was viewed as a necessary part of agricultural modernization, but it is now perceived as a social problem at the core of service deprivation that afflicts the poor and elderly in the countryside. The last throes of traditional rural life in France were captured by documentary film-maker Georges Rougnier and by journalists writing for magazines whose focus gradually shifted from the virtues of the family holding to the environmental advantages of organic farming.

The final group of essays highlights aspects of 'productivist' farming, environmental damage, and nature conservation. New agrarian associations, such as the *Confédération Paysanne* and *Coordination Rurale*, have emerged seeking to defend small farmers and their ecologically sensitive brand of food production in the face of mechanized farming on ever-larger units. Intensive application of chemicals and the removal of long-established landscape features in the name of agricultural progress have caused serious ecological damage in many regions. The European Union and other institutions have defined areas for nature conservation and have tried to impose new approaches to resource management. Such policy innovations have been challenged by many farmers who insist that food production remains their prime function, despite their political masters insisting they should re-invent themselves as landscape managers and guardians of nature embracing biodiversity and sustainable development.

The book concludes with Barral's own appraisal of the social and environmental challenges that now face members of the much diminished and increasingly diversified 'farming class'. He insists that productivist farming caused 'a fissure [to develop] in the traditional relationship between farming and nature' (p. 458). Reconciling exploitation with conservation, and recognizing that members of urban society expect more from the countryside than the production of food, are just some of the challenges facing rural Europe in the

twenty-first century. This interesting and long awaited collection of essays has neither tables nor illustrations. Information on the disciplinary background and affiliation of the authors would have been a welcome addition.

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RENÉ BOURRIGAUD and FRANÇOIS SIGAUT, *Nous Labourons. Actes du colloque technique de travail de la terre, hier et aujourd'hui, ici et là-bas* (Editions du Centre d'histoire du travail, Nantes, 2007). 399 pp., 135 figs, 5 tables, 7 maps. €33.

At a moment when global hunger threatens and policies such as the set-aside of farmland in western Europe are things of the past, this is undoubtedly a very timely book. Its focus is on ploughs and the ploughing of agricultural land especially in north-western France but also in other parts of the country and abroad. Specifically, it presents the proceedings of a colloquium held in 2006 as a continuation of an exhibition on ploughing that had been held at the château of Châteaubriant, to the north-east of Nantes, during 2005 and 2006. This event brought together a sample of the exhibits of ploughs, tractors and other farm implements found in eight local museums in the *département* of the Loire-Atlantique. Demonstrations of traditional ploughing techniques and visits to various agricultural localities complemented the presentation of formal papers at the colloquium. These extramural activities are captured on the CD-Rom that accompanies this volume. Participants included local enthusiasts as well as academics; as the images and affiliations indicate, many were retired.

After five introductory papers that describe the organizing body (the Centre International de Culture Paysanne et Rurale) and reflect on scholarly aspects of the history of ploughing and food production (François Sigaut), the text is arranged in six sections. In the first of these, six contributions trace ploughing activities in ancient Egypt, and in Gallo-Roman and medieval times, and the legacy of ridged fields in Germany. The diversity of ploughing practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries forms the substance of the second section, which includes case studies from Brittany, the Loire-Atlantique, the Lot-et-Garonne, the Haute-Marne and the Brie. Then, three essays widen the gaze to examine raised ploughing ridges in eighteenth-century Ireland, research into ploughs in Slovenia, and the complex vocabulary surrounding agricultural activities in Portugal. Indeed, this point of intricate and variable descriptive terminology permeates the whole volume with a multitude of words being used to characterize similar implements, field working processes

and landscape features. In the fourth section, six papers examine ploughing in parts of 'the South', namely Ethiopia, Tunisia, the Cameroon, Peru and Bolivia, Nicaragua, and east Asia. Next comes a cluster of five historical pieces that trace how ploughs were improved from the latter years of the *ancien régime* to the early twentieth century. Case studies explore attempts to transfer ploughing techniques from the Paris basin to Bas-Poitou, and from England to Switzerland, and trace how Lorraine and Belgium were distinctive centres of innovation. A particularly interesting piece is devoted to the evolution of the Huard company, based at Châteaubriant, between 1863 and 1927 showing how a craft-based enterprise developed into a major industrial organization making ploughs and other forms of agricultural machinery. The two papers in section six discuss the controversial process of applying agricultural chemicals and reducing ploughing to a minimum.

These papers combine academic scholarship with local enthusiasm, some being supported by bibliographic references but others standing alone. An array of maps, diagrams, engravings and photographs provides valuable additional information. The editors use the concluding pages to take stock of what was discussed at the conference and to remind readers that the issue of working the soil, sowing seed and producing food is not just a matter of history but is also an urgent, pressing challenge at the present time and will continue to be so in the years ahead. A single regret must be that no contribution comes from the United Kingdom.

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ANNIE ANTOINE and DOMINIQUE MARGUERIE (eds), *Bocages et sociétés* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007). 512 pp., 41 figs, 28 tables, 79 maps, 89 illus. € 23.

Along with *défrichement* (wasteland clearance), *bocage* was one of the few French words that H. C. Darby required his novice historical geographers to learn back in the 1960s. But what was *bocage*? Was it woodland or hedgerow? Was it a natural response to a moist oceanic climate or the cumulative response of landowners seeking to define their property or constrain their animals? Were its origins back in the distant past, lost in the mists of time and perhaps associated with the Celts, or were the hedgerows of the *bocage* planted after moorland clearance during periods of population growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Could *bocage* be found in areas of crop cultivation or was it only associated with livestock husbandry? These, and other questions, filled my head when I started research on my first *bocage* territory in the

Pays de Bray where some hedgerows were arranged irregularly but others were geometrical features resulting from heathland reclamation after 1789. In later years, I witnessed the uprooting of hedges in Brittany and the Auvergne, in the company of Pierre Flatrès and André Fel, and conversely saw new hedges being planted near Nantes, with the guidance of Jean Renard. Recently, I have explored how thick *bocage* in Basse-Normandie concealed German ambushes and hindered the advance of the Allies after D-Day.

These questions and experiences were set in context by the three dozen essays, written by 68 authors, that have been brought together by Annie Antoine (Université de Rennes II) and by Dominique Marguerie (also at Rennes) whose expertise spans archaeology and the 'archéosciences' as well as history. Indeed, *Bocages et sociétés* had its origins in a conference with the same title that was held at Rennes in October 2004. In their introduction, the editors explain how studying the rural landscape was once the preserve of geographers who produced regional monographs during the first half of the twentieth century in the tradition established by Paul Vidal de la Blache. However, the arrival of the 'new geography' in the 1960s and 1970s pushed study of the *structure agraire* off the main agenda of academic geography, opening the way for historians, ecologists, landscape archaeologists, and practitioners of new techniques, such as remote sensing, geographical information systems and environmental modelling, to colonize that territory. The 'productivist' thrust of West European farmers, to produce more foodstuffs with greater efficiency, during the 1960s and 1970s has been replaced by 'post-productivist' concerns for managing the whole rural environment in sustainable ways. Thus, hedgerows are now protected rather than being uprooted in the process of field enlargement. *Bocage* landscapes are now viewed as repositories of tradition and authenticity that respect biodiversity rather than as tangible expressions of backward farming. Legislation has been passed to protect enclosed landscapes that figure on international lists of 'fragile environments' and are widely seen as part of national *patrimoine* and regional heritage.

These changes in research practice and in popular perception resonate throughout *Bocages et sociétés*. Initial homage is paid to pioneer geographers, especially André Meynier and Pierre Flatrès, but geographical voices become muted in the greater part of this beautifully illustrated volume. Its spatial context is largely, but not exclusively, north-western France; a few essays refer to other parts of France, to Portugal, Spain and even Quebec. Unfortunately, there are no contributions from, or devoted to, the *bocage* landscapes of Britain, Ireland or

other parts of the Atlantic fringe of Europe. Archaeology and palaeo-ecology figure largely in the first cluster of chapters that report latest research findings, which date the origin of enclosed landscapes in north-west France to the late middle ages. However, *bocage* was still being planted during the nineteenth century, as an intriguing discussion of the experience of agronomist Jules Rieffel on the former heathlands of Grand-Jouan reveals. The structure and evolution of *bocage* environments through time is at the heart of the second group of contributions, which introduce the recent practice of *rebocagement*, as farmers in Brittany plant new hedgerows in conformity with sustainable land-management policies. Echoing the views of archaeologists and ecologists, Annie Antoine declares how in western France

the *bocage* is essentially a 'historic' feature and to search for its origins prior to the last centuries of the middle ages would be in vain. Its history is thus one of implantation and increasing density that runs from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries until the middle of the twentieth century (p. 185).

Les sociétés bocagères are discussed in the third cluster of essays, which contain both historic and contemporary studies. For example, attention is drawn to the legal significance of hedgerows as property boundaries, reviewing evidence from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, and the role of *bocage* environments as sources of firewood is illustrated from the countryside around Rennes in the nineteenth century. Recent enquiries in Brittany reveal a duality of attitudes, with some farmers recognizing the ecological and heritage value of hedgerows but others still favouring 'productivist' messages from the 1960s and 1970s that extolled the supposed virtues of hedgerow removal associated with plot consolidation (*remembrement*). Such contrasting ideas figure prominently in the final group of chapters that include nineteenth-century literary representations of *bocage* country as wild and rustic territory, and further deliberations on hedgerow-reconstitution policy to produce areas of *néobocage*.

This highly informative volume contains an excellent array of photographs and maps, some of which are in full colour. Each chapter has a substantial abstract in English, as well as one in French, thereby making the collection more accessible to an international audience. At only €23 for over 500 pages, the Presses Universitaires de Rennes have produced another publishing miracle. *Bocages et sociétés* is recommended to all with an interest in the evolution of French rural landscapes and in the farmers and landowners who produced, and continue to refashion, them. My one regret is the absence of detailed work on *bocage* country found in the British

Isles, but I have benefited by expanding my vocabulary on landscape features.

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VICENTE PINILLA NAVARRO (ed.), *Gestión y usos del agua en la cuenca del Ebro en el siglo XX* (Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2008), 759 pp. €40.

The Ebro valley, in north-eastern Spain, constitutes that country's most important river system. Due to its semi-arid climate, the area has a long tradition of irrigation dating back two millennia. During the late-nineteenth century, when rural Spain was ravaged by the ubiquitous Agricultural Depression, caused by the invasion of cheap wheat from the United States and Tsarist Russia, many influential commentators south of the Pyrenees diagnosed irrigation as a panacea for the nation's cereal farmers, whose livelihoods were seriously under threat. The fundamental question was: who should pay? Private individuals, who had so far shown little inclination, or the near-bankrupt state? At the turn of the century, when Spain was humiliated by the loss of Cuba in the Spanish-American War of 1898, regenerationist politicians, foremost among them the Aragonese polymath Joaquín Costa, attempted – with only limited success – to persuade the reluctant political class of the Restoration regime to adopt what he termed an 'hydraulic policy'. Later, when the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera sought to modernize the backward country through the implementation of a comprehensive programme of infrastructural reforms, the regenerationists finally got their way. As Vicente Pinilla recounts in his tidy introduction to this exhaustive treatment of the management and uses of water in the Ebro valley during the twentieth century, by this stage a combination of incipient economic growth and a belated demographic revolution gave rise to a growing demand for water for a variety of purposes. The best-known and most enduring outcome of such pressures was the Hydrographical Confederation of the Ebro (Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro – CHE), founded in 1926 under the direction of the engineer Manuel Lorenzo Pardo. This collective volume, edited by Vicente Pinilla, was almost a decade in the making. The book was originally intended to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the pioneering Ebro Confederation in 2001. In its present form, it accompanies the international exhibition on 'Water and Sustainable Development' taking place in Zaragoza in the summer of 2008.

After a background geographical surveys of the landscape, ecology, climate, vegetation and soils of the Ebro valley, together with its potential for irrigation, by Paloma Ibarra, Fernando Pérez, Isabel Rabanque

and Víctor Rodrigo, the book is divided into five sections of varying length. The first of these sections focuses on the institutions that were responsible for the management of the water, including three essays from Antonio Fanlo, Eloy Fernández Clemente and Ernesto Clar on diverse aspects of the CHE. Secondly there are five wide-ranging contributions, by Joseán Garrigués, Luis Germán, Josep Maria Ramon, Antonio Peiró and Vicente Pinilla, on long-term changes in the water infrastructure along the Ebro, from the mountainous terrain of the Upper Ebro to Catalonia, where the river flows into the Mediterranean. Thirdly, the work contains no less than seven accounts by agricultural historians on the use of irrigation by farmers in Navarre and Álava (Iñaki Iriarte and José Miguel Lana), La Rioja (José Ramón Moreno), Aragon (Alberto Sabio) Lleida and Tarragona (Josep Maria Ramon and Víctor Bretón). Fourthly, there are five studies, by Joseán Garrigués, Luis Germán, Martí Boneta, Juan Manuel Matés and Ernesto Clar, on the non-agricultural uses of water, with a special emphasis on hydro-electricity. The volume concludes with three analyses of the impact of water management and its usage on the environment (Paloma Ibarra, Juan de la Riva, Iñaki Iriarte, Víctor Rodrigo and Isabel Rabanque), demography (Ernesto Clar and Javier Silvestre) and economic development (Alfonso Herranz). In addition, the book boasts an abundance of information in the form of graphs, tables and maps. There is also an extensive bibliography which bears ample tribute to the outstanding contribution of Spain's geographers, agricultural and economic historians to the study of that scarce commodity, water, and its many uses.

All the contributors to this detailed and exhaustive study, without exception, are to be congratulated for the depth of their understanding, encyclopaedic range and original approach to the emerging debate on the role of water in modern times. Their collective study of the Ebro valley should serve as a model for future analyses. Long in gestation, it will surely stand the test of time.

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DAVID CELETTI, *La canapa nella Repubblica veneta. Produzione nazionale e importazioni in età moderna* (Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti). xx + 345 pp. €30.

Hemp, like other products used in shipbuilding, was a strategic resource in the age of sail. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why a state so closely linked to the sea, like the Republic of Venice, should make such an effort to produce it within its boundaries and thus be freed from the need to import the fibre.

David Celetti's book analyses how, by introducing, maintaining and regulating the cultivation and trade of hemp, the Venetian State aimed to provide a supply for its Arsenal, one of the oldest and most important pre-industrial complexes in Europe. The book spans the period from the Battle of Lepanto, in 1571, to 1660, during the latter part of the twenty-three-year war with the Ottoman Empire. During that time, the Arsenal bought more than 7,759 metric tons of hemp and 310 metric tons of tow, most of which was imported from the Bologna area, while the rest came from the Venetian town of Montagnana, near Padua. From 1571 to 1648, three years after the Turkish invasion of Crete, which had led to the war, the Arsenal purchased large stocks of Bolognese hemp from a group of foreign merchants who closely controlled the trade. Celetti demonstrates that the ten most important merchants supplied 76 per cent of the hemp used for the Arsenal. Later, the Republic authorized Arsenal officials to buy at a fixed price a ten per cent quota, afterwards reduced to 7.5 per cent, of all the hemp imported into Venice. In this way, throughout the period of the war with the Turks, shipbuilding in the Venetian State had at its disposal large quantities of hemp.

The second part of the book is devoted to the growing and processing of hemp in Montagnana. In 1455, a commission of three Venetian magistrates appointed to find land suitable for growing hemp on the Venetian mainland discovered in that area the right conditions for the cultivation of the plant: a soil rich in clay and plenty of water. Some months later, the Republic ordered everyone who possessed two oxen to sow two Paduan *campi* (1.88 acres) with hemp. The cultivation of hemp was widespread in early modern Veneto, but the fibre was used mainly for threading cord and for making textiles for domestic use, such as tablecloths and aprons. In order to produce strong, water-resistant ropes, more advanced methods of cultivation were required; in fact an expert from the Bologna area was hired to instruct the peasants from Montagnana and to oversee the whole process of the growing and refining of hemp. It was difficult and heavy work for the peasants, who were required to plough the soil several times and to use a quantity of manure that was far in excess of that produced on their farms. In the countryside around Bologna, landowners put considerable pressure on farmers to hoe the soil instead of ploughing it. After harvesting, the hemp was retted underwater in huge open-air basins built by the rural communities; it was then dried and underwent a series of further operations to free the fibre from the wooden part of the stem.

Hemp growing in Montagnana and in the neighbouring communities was imposed on the

peasants by the state. A complex hierarchy of Venetian officials oversaw the cultivation and the initial stages of fibre production on site, and then organized the transport of the raw material by cart and boat, under armed escort, to the Arsenal in Venice. Here state experts fixed the price paid for Montagnana hemp. It is hardly surprising that the results did not meet the expectations of the government: the hemp cultivated in Montagnana did manage to reduce the amount imported, but the national hemp never reached the quality of that produced in the area of Bologna. State-fixed prices reduced profits and this led peasants and landowners to resorting to every possible subterfuge in an attempt to replace hemp with more profitable crops. This kind of behaviour was more common when the price of wheat rose. Not even the considerable increase in the sums paid by the state for hemp – it rose from 21 ducats for 1,000 pounds in 1577 to 29 ducats at the end of the sixteenth century – managed to stop a decrease in the number of fields sown and the consequent fall in production. Moreover, the meagre profits from growing hemp induced peasants to cut costs and cut down on the numerous ploughings required and the abundant fertilizer required by state-issued regulations. As a result, much of the fibre that reached the Arsenal was not suited for making durable rope. Efforts to enforce quality standards and to curb smuggling met with little success. Only in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did Venice change this policy, allowing a freer fluctuation in prices and freer markets. The result of this policy was that, at the fall of the Republic, hemp growing had spread well beyond the Montagnana district and a steady improvement in the quality had been achieved.

David Celetti's book is remarkable for the wealth of quantitative data collected by the author and presented to the reader, and for the effort to single out the key factors and economic variables that shaped the production system and the dynamics of output, market and consumption, viewing them through the lens of economic analysis. At the same time, it takes into account the many institutional and administrative layers that oriented the actors' choices and set boundaries to their freedom, and it also provides a comprehensive examination of the shortcomings that plagued the enforcement of state policies. For these reasons this book is useful as a case study for a comparative analysis of public intervention in support of naval expansion in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

F. M. VIANELLO
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ANDREAS DIX and ERNST LANTHALER (eds), *Grüne Revolutionen. Agrarsysteme und Umwelt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes 2006). €29.90.

This volume (*Green Revolutions. Agrarian systems and environment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*) is collected from a number of papers delivered at a meeting of the *Arbeitskreis Agrargeschichte* (the German equivalent of the BAHS) in 2004. The novelty of the collection is two-fold. Firstly, it follows in the pioneering path of the volume *Agrarmodernisierung und ökologische Folgen* (*Agrarian modernisation and ecological consequences*) that appeared in 2003, in explicitly linking the concerns of agricultural history, which has been primarily focused historically upon productivity, and environmental history. Secondly, it argues implicitly for seeing the major historic transformation in German agriculture as being a product of processes of changing energy regimes, the vastly expanded role of science in agriculture, and governmental interventions that are frequently associated with the green revolution in the developing world, although they were underway at an earlier date in Europe. Chapters cover shifts in the energy regime, developments in insurance, seed production, Spanish forestry (by Gloria Sanz Lafuente), soil science, pesticides and fungicides, government agricultural policy, and environmental protection (by Rita Gudermann). The geographical focus ranges from pre-war Germany and the two post-war Germanies, to Austria and Switzerland.

Fridolin Krausmann draws on his major collaborative study of three villages in Austria to provide a detailed quantitative assessment of energy flows and their influence on agricultural productivity since 1830. Krausmann views the agrarian world through the prism of social ecology, 'society and nature as structurally bound systems', and with a perspective that sees human influences as a 'colonisation' of natural processes. The work of Krausmann and others in the 'Vienna school' is beginning to exercise wider influence in European agrarian history and is well worthy of attention. He provides both a sophisticated model and striking evidence as to how Austrian agriculture shifted from a regime intent on conserving and raising the quantity of biomass to one utterly dependent on inputs of fossil fuels. He finds significant efficiency improvements in the century after 1830 (with a doubling in the ratio of energy outputs to inputs), but that a radical transformation in agricultural practice only occurred after 1950: a transformation that, in energetic terms, has vastly decreased the efficiency of agricultural work. While not the first to provide an ecological model for farming, Krausmann represents a state-of-the-art approach that

could be widely adapted to identify critical shifts in agricultural practice.

Krausmann has next to nothing to say about institutions, but it is these that provide the focus of the other chapters. Frank Oberholzner provides a history of the slow birth of hail insurance in Bavaria over the nineteenth century, where private and statutory bodies had a chequered history until a system managed through the local administration took off in the 1880s. Peter Moser tells a fascinating story of academic and institutional rivalry, and state subsidy and monopoly controls in the development of crop breeding in Switzerland. By the 1930s Swiss seed production and crop varieties were tightly regulated by the national Organisation for Seed Breeding (*Saatzuchtverband*), and a network of regional bodies. Domestically-produced seed varieties were linked with national identity and a conscious drive for self-sufficiency until the model was overturned by forced privatisation following the GATT agreement of 1986.

Moser's analysis of the institutional politics of farming links well with the chapters of Frank Uekötter and Jürgen Büschenfeld on the chemical industry and agriculture, and Arnd Bauerkämper on post-war environmental impacts. The former stresses the essential role of a particular knowledge regime in conditioning agricultural practice, a regime based not only on developments in science but relations of trust built up between experts and producers (and allowing for the rapid marginalization of dissenters). Uekötter sees the 1920s and '30s as key decades in the triumph of the chemical industry in agriculture, resulting in a subsequent rapid loss of knowledge about soil quality. Büschenfeld traces Germany's drive for high productivity, supported by subsidy and massive inputs of chemicals, to a reaction to the extreme shortages of the immediate post-war years, although a move towards self-sufficiency was general in post-war Europe. He notes, though, that the chemical industry's greatest ally in its continuing leading role in agriculture has been the continual adaptability of insects in the face of chemical attack, which continues to keep insecticide producers busy and profitable. Unsurprisingly, Bauerkämper finds that agriculture in the Federal Republic, with the retention of some price pressure from international markets, a more responsive regulatory regime and greater flexibility in farm size and type, proved capable of both greater productivity increases and, in the long-run, more effective environmental protection than the vast centrally-directed farming co-operatives of the east, with the latter's high degree of specialization and poor integration.

As is frequently the case with a conference-based collection of essays, the contributions are rather disparate

in their theme, level of analysis, and evidential detail; many are essentially reports on work the authors have published elsewhere. The volume remains however a useful guide to contemporary developments in germanophone agricultural history of the modern era.

PAUL WARDE

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CORINNE GAUDIN, *Ruling Peasants. Village and state in late Imperial Russia* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2007). x + 271 pp., 13 tables. £25.95.

'The rural commune presents itself', according to Aleksandr Herzen,

as a social unit, a moral being: the state has never been able to infringe upon it; the commune is the possessor of a taxable entity and is thus responsible for everyone and for each individually, and for this reason it has autonomy in everything concerning its internal affairs.

This view of the Russian rural commune has proved remarkably durable. Since the mid-nineteenth century the commune has been seen as something impenetrable, mysterious, 'differently rational'. This peasant institution is thought to have operated according to its own logic, impervious to outside intervention, including attempts by the state in the early twentieth century to undermine the practice of communal land tenure and land repartition (the periodic redistribution of communal arable among member households).

In this important new book, Corinne Gaudin challenges this traditional conception. Her study makes two major contributions to the history of rural Russia in the post-emancipation period. First, it highlights the importance of institutions for our understanding of the way rural communities functioned. Drawing on archival documents for districts in several provinces of European Russia, Gaudin demonstrates that, contrary to Herzen's assertion, the *mir* was not an island unto itself; it was part of a larger institutional framework. Members of rural communes used local courts, engaged with local (state) officials, and responded to changes in state policy. Evidence from peasant petitions and communal resolutions indicates that peasant behaviour – from the frequency of land repartitions to changes in household size and structure – was often a response to changes in state policy. Gaudin argues convincingly that resistance to land reform in the early twentieth century was not rooted in defence of communal tradition, but in concerns about the laws governing poor relief and taxation, and the absence of a reliable system of property rights enforcement. The peasants in this study, like those studied by Jane Burbank, did not hesitate

to involve courts and local officials in their internal disputes, often employing the official rhetoric of the state in their arguments. Defendants were denounced as *miroedy* and *kulaki* in attempts to discredit them with state officials, while plaintiffs, knowing that officials were charged with upholding 'communal custom', were quick to argue that custom supported their claims. The picture of the commune painted here is not one of an organic 'social unit' or 'moral being', speaking with one voice, but rather one of conflicting interests and internal discord. In this way, Gaudin's study is part of a growing body of revisionist work which emphasizes communal conflict over cohesion.

Second, this study casts much-needed light on the Russian state's failed attempts at rural reform in the period after 1861. Gaudin persuasively argues that major reforms, such as the Land Captain Statute (1889) and the Stolypin Land Reform (1905–17), failed because they were ill-conceived and poorly implemented, *not* because the communal culture of the peasantry was impervious to change. Land captains, for instance, were charged with both integrating peasants into the state legal framework and upholding 'communal custom'. Or, in other words, they were responsible for 'the practical impossibility of simultaneously promoting and preventing change' (p. 32). This task was made even more impossible by the lack of training for the job; most land captains had little or no knowledge of the local institutions they were sent in to uphold, and they received little guidance from the state.

Land reform in the early twentieth century was carried out in a similarly inconsistent way. The reform project encouraged peasants to privatize their communal allotments without creating the institutions necessary to enforce property rights. It encouraged the abandonment of communal land tenure without changing laws that linked communal tenure to taxation and welfare provision. As a result, many peasants were reluctant to seek title, given the lack of enforcement, and many communes were reluctant to grant it, out of fear they might be left with a larger tax burden or, should those granted title choose to sell their land, a larger landless population to support.

The only thing missing from this path-breaking study is a more comprehensive discussion of the sources. Gaudin's research is meticulously documented and a detailed bibliography is provided, but given the strikingly revisionist nature of the work, it would have been useful to have a fuller discussion of the sources in the main body of the text. What is the range of information provided in the various reports and court records? What are the advantages of these sources and what are their limitations? How have they been used in the past, if at

all? And are the records better for some provinces than others? Such information would be especially valuable to those who might, as Gaudin suggests, pursue a similar line of inquiry in the context of a local study.

But this does not detract from a major achievement. Gaudin convincingly challenges longstanding orthodoxy with an ambitious and exciting new study, which promises to guide research on rural Russia for many years to come.

T. K. DENNISON

California Institute of Technology

JAMES S. DUNCAN, *In the shadows of the tropics. Climate, race and biopower in nineteenth-century Ceylon* (Ashgate, 2007). xvi + 212 pp., 5 tables, 8 figs, 3 maps. £55.

Beginning in the 1820s, a handful of British would-be planters arrived in Ceylon, with aspirations to establish successful plantations. By the 1830s, it was clear that highland coffee was the most promising crop, and the coffee era was in full bloom by the 1840s. It ended somewhat abruptly in the 1870s, as the spread of a fungus, coffee rust, ruined the coffee plants, and the coffee plantations collapsed.

James Duncan explores the world of the British planters and their relations with the immigrant Tamils who laboured on their plantations, the Sinhalese villagers who lived nearby, and the British colonial government. His title evokes a nineteenth-century trope of light and shadows, in which the self-perceived 'modernity' of the British planters in Ceylon with their 'rational' strategies of plantation management was juxtaposed with their perceptions of the dark and dank highland forests. It is a book about the cultural constructions of Britishness within a largely male plantation elite in the heart of the Asian tropics and the exercise of British plantation power and its limitations.

In the shadows of the tropics is organized in seven chapters, with a brief conclusion. In his introductory chapter, the author explores the European discourse about race in the tropics, and in his second chapter he covers the rise of the plantation economy in the early nineteenth century, synthesizing the literature on the evolution of the coffee sector in Ceylon in the context of the global coffee enterprise. These are very successful, drawing upon diverse literatures about the larger European project of colonization in the tropics.

The third chapter, entitled 'Dark thoughts: reproducing whiteness in the tropics' explores British anxieties about cultural and racial deterioration. His thesis is that the largely male colonists in the highlands of Ceylon developed their understandings of their vulnerability to disease in the idiom of climate and that their vulnerability

to disease prevented them from establishing British domestic values, in good measure because there were few British women who would travel to the tropics and submit to the rude lifestyles of the coffee planters. The result was profound cultural anxiety about maintaining their Britishness, as they found sexual partners among the labouring populations of Tamil migrants and local Sinhalese villagers. The colonists expressed their cultural concerns about degeneration in a discourse about race, and they used their financial power to dominate brutally the Tamil labourers who worked on their plantations.

In the fourth chapter, the 'Quest to discipline estate labour,' Duncan breaks entirely new ground, exploring the authoritarian power relations between the white manager, the 'kangani' or Tamil overseer, and the Tamil labourers. In chapter five, 'The medical gaze and the spaces of biopower,' he explores the British efforts to establish a modest program of public health to protect the Tamil workers who crossed annually by small boat from south India to Ceylon, and then walked for days under duress from the coast into the highlands. Duncan illuminates the tensions between the coffee planters who resisted paying for these public health initiatives, the unwillingness of the colonial government to impose financial obligations on the vitally important coffee sector, and the resistance by the Tamil workers themselves, who were suspicious of European medical practices.

In the sixth chapter, 'Visualizing crime in the coffee districts,' the author explores the tensions between the surrounding Sinhalese villagers and the plantation managers. Villagers 'trespassed' with their cattle onto the plantations. Some villagers stole coffee beans. These frictions continued throughout the coffee era. The British planters were unable to extend the writ of their authority and never successfully addressed these issues. The seventh chapter, 'Landscapes of despair: the last years of coffee,' synthesizes the historical literature on the impacts of coffee rust disease and investigates the social abandonment of the plantations. Here again, the planters were able to fend off the efforts of the colonial government to make them bear some of the costs of displaced workers. In the final years of the coffee enterprise, the plantation workers suffered grievously from short food supplies and negligent care.

Nineteenth-century studies of the plantation sector in Ceylon depend fundamentally upon English language materials that reflect British perspectives. These sources necessarily shape and constrain our historical understanding. The voices of the British plantation managers and government officials are clear; the voices of the Tamil workers are barely audible. The constraints of these historical sources likewise limit our understanding of the indigenous Sinhalese highland

system of 'biopower' that was expressed, in part, in an idiom of 'caste' rather than 'race'. The internal dynamics of Sinhalese communities played a large role in the nineteenth-century transformation of the highlands, far beyond the coffee plantations themselves. An even fuller understanding of 'biopower' and 'governmentality' in nineteenth-century Ceylon will come when scholars develop ways to explore these indigenous dynamics and integrate the two literatures.

Duncan has read the nineteenth-century materials on Ceylon closely and drawn thoughtfully on the broader literatures on race, sexuality, and power in the colonies. His analysis is refreshingly free of jargon and is full of new insights. *In the shadows of the tropics* makes a welcome and highly significant contribution to the historical literature on Ceylon. It deserves a broad readership.

JAMES L. A. WEBB, JR.
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COLIN GRIER, JANGSUK KIM and JUNZO UCHIYAMA (eds), *Beyond affluent foragers. Rethinking hunter-gather complexity* (Oxbow Books, 2006). viii + 200 pp. £40; MARJAN MASHKOUR (ed.), *Equids in time and space* (Oxbow Books, 2006). viii + 200 pp. £45; DEBORAH RUSCILLO (ed.), *Recent advances in ageing and sexing animal bones* (Oxbow Books, 2006). ix + 240 pp. £65. (Various Proceedings of the 9th ICAZ conference, Durham, 2002.)

Animals are central to our understanding of most archaeological problems in one way or another, including and beyond the development of agriculture itself. All the Big Questions, as the American Lewis Binford once phrased them, involve animals, from the emergence of modern humans, to settling down and the development of social complexity. Even if you prefer a series of smaller questions in more complicated narratives of long-term social change, it is hard to keep animals out of the frame, as prey, resource and capital on the one hand, and as partners, actors in their own right, and conceptual focus on the other. The International Council of Archaeozoology has been going since the 1970s as the principal international forum for the study of animal bones from archaeological sites. Every four years it holds an international conference, whose scope and significance, as these three volumes indicate, is steadily increasing. The three volumes (handsomely published by Oxbow) nicely illustrate two important dimensions of such activity: advances in specialist research, and wide-ranging, critical reflection on long-term change.

The volumes edited by Ruscillo and Mashkour show the way to the first theme. Archaeozoologists do a lot of unsung hard work, but which lies at the heart

of wider archaeological and historical interpretations. Reliable ageing and sexing of animal bones are central to characterizing animal bone assemblages, and beyond them the nature of human activities in given times and places. *Recent advances* offers a close insight into these processes, papers working away at growth rings, dentition, epiphyseal fusion, body size and other issues. *Equids* gives an even more concentrated look at a single species, the contributions ranging from geographical and Pleistocene data to the ongoing debate about the nature and timing of horse domestication. Marsha Levine shows how studies of mitochondrial DNA are adding to the possible picture of restricted times and places for the first domestications (probably somewhere on the Eurasian steppe, and certainly by 2000 BC) by suggesting the continuing incorporation of wild populations into domestic herds. Here are both Grand Narratives (the origin story of first domestication) and smaller and more local histories (the messy business of action at any number of local scales).

That tension, or combination of scales, is also evident in *Beyond affluent foragers*. 'Affluent foragers' is a term with baggage. It echoes the characterization by Sahlin in the 1960s of mobile foragers as the 'original affluent society' because of the ease with which they satisfied their needs and wants. It more strongly reflects the subsequent characterization in the late 1970s by Koyama and Thomas of coastal fisher-hunters in productive environments, with features of rich resources, highly organized social structures and high degrees of sedentism. Both sets of connotations have proved problematic, and perhaps the single most important strand in the last thirty years' research on foragers has been the demonstration of their diversity. 'Complexity' has been a tricky word, and many definitions prove to imprison rather than clarify.

Beyond affluent foragers takes these debates onwards. Eleven papers (with supporting introduction and conclusion) present richly documented studies from Japan, Korea, North and South America, and Australia, combining archaeological and ethnographic research. Diversity is again underlined. From the very wide range of these contributions, we can note the contrast between the eel-fishing Gunditjmarra of temperate south-west Australia (paper by Builth), who were probably sedentary and had hereditary chiefs, and the people of the Lower Paraná wetlands of Argentina (paper by Loponte, Acosta and Musali), who exploited a rich if uneven resource base of fish and vegetables, with coordinated labour and periodic population aggregation, but without significant social hierarchy. Likewise, Uchiyama shows in a study of the prehistoric Japanese Jomon culture that, rather than year-round residence in one place, there was an unstable alternation between what he calls 'clumped' and

'dispersed' systems of residence, perhaps reflecting or responding to local environmental changes; even in the clumped phase, one midden site, Torihama, can be seen (based, as noted above, on careful analysis of animal remains, including dentition) as a residential base in summer and autumn, but as a wild boar hunting camp in winter and spring, when the residential base probably fissioned. As a final example, Grier's study of north-west coast (of America) foragers stresses that affluence is a social construct, a dynamic promoted by social actors and fostering inequality; the economy is a political one, with agendas and interests firmly embedded in households and other key groupings.

The long-term shift from foraging to agriculture is not likely to have been straightforward. Even mobile foragers could have had a complicated network of subsistence practices, patterns of residence and social relations. In some cases, incoming farmers may have replaced and disrupted forager societies, but in others foragers may have been sufficiently robust, or sufficiently similar, to resist either the lure or the compulsion to become agricultural. In yet other settings, there must have been intense interactions and fusions between foragers and farmers. *Beyond affluent foragers* helps to show us how and why.

ALASDAIR WHITTLE
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R. COMPATANGELO-SOUSSIGNAN, J.-R. BERTRAND, J. CHAPMAN and P.-Y. LAFFONT (eds), *Landmarks and socio-economic systems. The construction of pre-industrial landscapes and their perception by contemporary societies. Proceedings of the Le Mans COST Conference (7–9 December 2006)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008). 286 pp., 140 figs., 16 illus. €29.

This volume of conference proceedings is made up of twenty-three essays by forty-two contributors, framed by an introduction and conclusion. Eleven essays are in French, the rest in English. Although there is an understandable bias towards French evidence, there are papers on England and Wales (three), Spain and the Balearics (three), and one paper each on Rome, Morocco, Libya, Pannonia, Ireland, Iceland/Greece, Denmark and the Andes. The volume is divided into three sections: 'symbolic markers', 'structured systems' and 'north-west Europe and the future'. Symbolic markers refer to such things as boundary stones, churches, shrines, tombs or settlements. Structured systems refer to Roman centuriation, terraced fields, road networks, drainage, and irrigation systems. The final section considers how these pre-industrial 'marked' landscapes are still relevant today and deals with cultural heritage issues

in the present and future. The volume is well produced, with numerous illustrations adding a great deal to its usefulness. The chronological range is wide, ranging from two papers which deal with France in Antiquity to several dealing with current policy issues. In a short review it is not possible to deal with all papers equally, so I will highlight those I enjoyed most.

In the first section there are seven papers looking at late Antique land surveying (a thorough review of the evidence); religious sanctuaries in western France in the second century; churches in tenth- and eleventh-century Burgundy (a good survey based on extensive charter evidence, which locates the founding of many churches to the early Carolingian period); a survey of markers in medieval Morocco; a summary of the evidence for markers produced by historic mining in France, especially mining of metals. The remaining two papers deal respectively with pastoralism throughout Spain and olive oil production in Écija (Seville). Esther Pascua Echegaray, who has published widely on the history of medieval Spain, has a particularly interesting essay here on the landmarks left by pastoral activities. She shows how the markers produced by 'town pastoralism' (i.e. that practised close to urban settlements) were different to those produced by transhumant activities. For example, in the former, strong physical boundaries were enforced around village settlements: milestones were erected, which indicated ownership of land and water rights. By contrast, bridges were crucial markers within transhumant systems. She then goes on to explore the historical competition between these two systems and, importantly, how change over time occurred. Pastoralism in Spain as elsewhere was far from static or environmentally determined. The chapter on oil in Écija is also a most interesting study in the place of the mill as the main territorial marker. The paper investigates the expansion of oil production in the eighteenth century and substantial implications for the landscape. The authors point out that the characteristic counterweight towers are now in a state of collapse in the face of more profitable types of agriculture in Andalusia, such as sunflowers and cotton. Their role as landscape markers is rapidly disappearing and the need for their conservation pressing.

In section two the seven papers are as follows: a fascinating study of the 'Via Domitia' in the Narbonnaise over a long time period; a good survey of Roman field boundaries in Western Pannonia (eastern Austria and adjacent parts of Hungary) which points up the heterogeneity of Roman practice in this area; a discussion of the southern Libyan *foggaras* (massive irrigation works contemporary with the Roman empire), in which the author argues convincingly for the social importance of

these features in the perception of the landscape, as well as their technical brilliance; an important discussion of the relationships between castles and roads in Northern Languedoc, which stresses the economic connection at the expense of the strategic; an interesting article which shows how fluid road networks were in Toury (Eure-et-Loir); an impressive survey of terraces in the Andes, which raises many questions about the origins of terracing here and about the sustainability of farming over a long timescale. Felix Retamero's investigation of irrigated agriculture in the medieval Balearic Islands shows how eleventh-century court agronomists were deeply interested in soil types and soil improvement, manuring and watering, to produce a wide range of crops. He develops an interesting argument about the relationship between irrigation and settlement and the nature of Arab and Berber peasant migration. Irrigation caused not only increases in agricultural production but also in the strength of political power.

The nine chapters in the final section are equally diverse. The first paper describes relict field systems in later medieval Ireland (north Roscommon) drawing on a wide range of evidence; there follows a comparative analysis of human adaptation to volcanoes in Iceland and Greece; next is a discussion of field systems in Denmark and cultural heritage issues; similar issues are raised in a paper on the visual impact of enclosure in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and Wales, which is interesting for the number of informal enclosures discussed. The next paper argues that English cities must be understood as landscape and that much can still be learnt about the pre-industrial past from such sites; this is followed by three papers about Normandy, two of which deal with field systems and timber-framed buildings in the light of contemporary farmers' understandings of the historic landscape; the other is about the Regional national park of Normandie-Maine and the ways in which the park is marketed to tourists as a 'natural' site. The final paper argues that sustainable landscapes in Bonsall (Derbyshire, England) can be encouraged by new architectural designs which help to preserve the place as a working landscape rather than one aimed at tourism. As can be seen, these papers are very diverse in time and place, but the excellent introduction and conclusion help to hold the volume together. The editors and contributors have succeeded in their aim to highlight what markers were significant in past landscapes and how and why these are still significant today. There is much in this stimulating collection of interest to historians but much also for policymakers and planners.

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LINDA KALOF, *Looking at animals in human history* (Reaktion Books, 2007). ix + 222 pp., 64 illus. £25.

Given the recent renewed concern over the use of animals in research, the continued and increasing popularity of domestic pets (especially cats and dogs), and the renaissance of interest in natural history and biodiversity, Linda Kalof's book, *Looking at animals in human history* should find a ready audience. Written in an engaging style with the author's keen attention focused upon her reader, Kalof's monograph provides a rapid and concise overview of the reciprocal relationship between animals and humans from pre-history to the modern times. Of course, such a vast and breathtaking survey may not satisfy those academic historians with their penchant for deep micro-history, but the educated animal lover will find much to enjoy and savour in the book.

Kalof does not offer a new argument or novel thesis. Instead, her book is a breezy secondary review and compilation of the available literature dealing with interactions between animals and their human brethren. She masterfully marshals this material to her task, while also providing the inquiring reader with an extensive and comprehensive bibliography (and reference notes) to pursue specific aspects of the book in more detail. Kalof's historical approach also draws heavily upon both the visual arts and a variety of literary traditions, especially since direct references to the animal-human interactions before the early modern period are quite scanty.

Looking at animals in human history is organized chronologically, beginning with a chapter on 'pre-history', and then progressing through antiquity, the medieval period, the renaissance, and a two-century version (1600–1800) of the enlightenment. As mentioned, for source material in these chapters she depends upon interpretations of art and literature. With the more modern period, however, she examines the transition from understanding animals as mechanized beasts to humanized objects, with the attendant rise of anthropomorphism. In the final chapter, she adds information from the emerging museum tradition, the popularity of zoos and aquaria, and the contemporary mania for natural history exhibitions. All of this material is treated carefully and offered clearly.

Kalof should be commended for producing such an accessible treatment of how humans have interacted with animals over such an extended period of time. The book should find a ready audience among animal lovers, who will find much to enjoy. But it could also be profitably used for courses in the history of science, medicine, and veterinary medicine.

KEITH R. BENSON
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MARCEL MAZOYER and LAURENCE ROUDART, *A history of world agriculture from the Neolithic age to the current crisis* (Earthscan, 2006). 528 pp., 60 figs. £22.95.

Given the great age and variety of world agricultures, and their continuing evolution and involvement of a large fraction of mankind, the writing of a comprehensive history of agriculture is a daunting venture. Marcel Mazoyer and Laurence Roudart, in this substantial book, with its strongly philosophical approach, make an unusual contribution to this important subject. Their particular concern is for the very large number of impoverished farmers and their families in many developing countries in recent years.

The authors begin with the evolution of agriculture and its 'hominization' and other characteristics not altogether clear to me but leading to a chapter on the 'Neolithic Agricultural Revolution'. This makes only passing mention of V. Gordon Childe (whose name is mis-spelt in the notes) but who proposed both the concept and the term. The agricultural advances made during the Neolithic Revolution probably entailed linguistic and other developments along with them, as Bellwood suggested in 1994. The extension of Neolithic agriculture into many regions of the world, and its further diversification are then considered, with the curious comment (p. 92) that 'the origin of domestic plants and animals has long been part of those mysterious phenomena surpassing human understanding'.

Then come 40 pages on slash-and-burn agriculture in diverse forest environments, which the authors refer to as 'post-forest agrarian systems', going back to the Neolithic epoch but still quite widely practised. Problems with shortening of the reforestation cycle, the reduction of soil fertility, erosion and climate change are considered, among others.

Many aspects of irrigation are then examined in a chapter focussed on 'The evolution of hydraulic agrarian systems in the Nile Valley'. Here again the authors rely heavily on their own observations and first-hand experience to give a comprehensive account of procedures and problems, culminating in the building of the Aswan high dam, the impact of which was then limited by almost a decade of weak floods. Next comes a similarly long and very sparsely referenced chapter on the Inca agrarian system as 'an archetype of mountain system(s)', 'practically destroyed by colonization'. A chapter on agrarian systems based on fallowing and animal-drawn cultivation with the ard in temperate regions, referred to as the 'Agricultural Revolution in Antiquity', follows with digressions into agrarian reform and a very limited and rather unsatisfactory section on crop yields, on which much has been published.

Chapter seven deals with the 'Agricultural Revolution of the Middle Ages in north western Europe', i.e. with agrarian systems in cold temperate regions based on fallowing and animal power, whose evolution and improvement is described.

Agrarian systems without fallowing in the temperate regions, subtitled 'The First Agricultural Revolution of Modern Times', are then covered in chapter eight, as distinct from the preceding Neolithic, Ancient and Medieval revolutions described in earlier chapters. Then come chapters on mechanization and 'the first world crisis of agricultural overproduction' and another on the 'modern revolution' involving 'motorization, mechanization, synthetic fertilizers, seed selection and specialization'.

I have listed these developments and 'revolutions' in the agricultures of the world because, although together these chapters constitute about three-quarters of the book, they are all light on citations, reflecting rather the interpretations and experience of the authors. Much wisdom and history is enshrined here, but also ample scope for debate. The final chapter discusses the origins and expansion of the agrarian crisis in developing countries, focussing particularly on how the lot of the poorest peasants can, indeed must, be improved.

The book ends with a brief but eloquent conclusion from which I quote:

Today's world agricultural and food economy is less disorganized and chaotic than the price jolts, surpluses, shortages, famines and hostile international trade negotiations lead one to believe ... But insofar as agriculture generally forms the blind spot in analyses of the crisis we have tried to share what our personal origins and our professions allow us to understand better – to wit that it is not possible to explain the contemporary world crisis without taking into account the immense and contradictory transformations that drive today's agricultures.

This is a history with a mission and there are many facets which it omits, such as the role that scientific research, both national and international, has played in the recent changes in agriculture. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is barely mentioned, and none of its Centres, not even for their contributions to raising the yields of wheat, rice and many other staple crops. There is no consolidated list of references, but a numbered list of notes allows some citations to be traced, if not very satisfactorily.

I have not read the original French edition of this book but the translation by James Membrez for Earthscan appears to retain the spirit of the original,

although he admits to having modified the text in several places.

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J. RADKAU, *Nature and Power. A global history of the environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). xvii + 430 pp. £45.

Although Joachim Radkau's book, now translated into English by Thomas Dunlap, undoubtedly provides students and researchers with a valuable synthesis of the historical literature on global environmental change, it remains in many ways a highly problematic text. The organizing idea throughout is that of sustainability or, perhaps more accurately, how material nature and social and economic power have interacted to create either sustainable or unsustainable societies. In the preface, Radkau is keen to defend the text from the charge of anachronism on this count, arguing (reasonably in my view) that sustainability has long been one of the fundamental problems facing any society. However, if the problem of sustainability gives coherence and legitimacy to Radkau's attempt at a universal history, it is also the most problematic and under-theorized aspect of his text.

The first problem that arises is that the relationship Radkau sets himself to address is not really followed through coherently. At times it is difficult to decipher whether the author intends primarily to present a new interpretation of world history or a clever synthesis of existing literature in environmental history. Ultimately he is more successful at the latter than the former. Although it displays great erudition, the text contains neither sufficient new primary material, nor a sufficiently coherent interrogation of the interaction of power and nature to present any decisively new interpretation. Indeed, the book often reads more like a series of insightful impressions and interpretations, a commentary on environmental historiography, than a traditional monograph. There is nothing particularly wrong with this approach, and there are moments of real enlightenment contained within this text, but there is also no real sense of a definitive argument. Perhaps this characteristic is a result of the author's obvious desire to avoid falling into a 'declinist' narrative of humanity's relationship with nature. Radkau certainly views environmental history as much as a particularist as a universalizing activity concerned with the complexities and indecipherability of ecological change in the past.

However, it is also clear that Radkau does not wish

to abandon the idea of decline completely; indeed, it is ultimately critical to his narrative as demonstrated towards the end of the book in a chapter entitled 'The Failed Americanization of the World'. This really deals with the green revolution of the twentieth century and the break up of traditional farming practices and their replacement with intensive methods. This transformation, we are told, represented a shift in the reproduction of agricultural fertility from a solar to a carboniferous energy regime: a shift from a more or less sustainable mode of agricultural production to an unsustainable one. Yet this kind of observation immediately makes one want to uncover the sources of social and economic power that have so vigorously transformed the world's ecology. On this point Radkau's position seems remarkably uncritical. One obvious candidate for study, capitalism, is barely mentioned (and indeed receives no entry in the index), which is astonishing. The social relations underpinning the production and reproduction of society and nature are not really subject to any kind of sustained analysis, which is unfortunate considering the wealth of well-informed historical materialist analyses that it is now possible to draw upon. Surely some reference to the eco-socialist literature is necessary when addressing this kind of subject, if only as a point of departure. Technological determinations largely take the place of such an analysis, especially in the final stages of the book, but the role of technology in the making of twentieth-century environmental problems is laid in accusatory rather than critical fashion at the door of the United States 'whose expansiveness' we are told 'became a trump card like never before in the age of motorization and mobility'.

The underlying message of this book is that the solutions to our environmental problems (the road, in other words, to sustainability) can be found in a continental European model of social organization, specifically the example of German forestry, in which limits to growth were recognized and ecologies were sustained and reproduced by communities: 'second nature' as sustainable nature. This federalized vision of environmental governance will perhaps be superficially

attractive to those of an anarchistic or communitarian frame of mind. However, the failure to question certain assumptions underlying this conclusion is disturbing. Sustainability is the lingering shadow of this book, but it mostly exists at a subconscious level as an obvious 'good'. It is not brought to the surface, as it should be, to be exposed to critical analysis for the work that it may do in framing and recomposing social relations with the environment, and relations of power amongst human beings. This is a major problem.

One must not be too harsh on *Nature and Power*; it remains a very valuable synthesis of existing material, including much continental European scholarship. The book will certainly provide an essential introductory text for postgraduate students in the field. Its flaws are in some ways indicative of more general problems with environmental history as a field of study. Having identified the environment, or sustainability, or conservation as key themes of research, these concepts are perhaps too often read back into the past without sufficient consideration of their epistemic status. Much of the power of a word is present at the moment of its creation, which is itself a historic event. There is, therefore, a general need for more attention to be paid to the genealogy of such key terms and the power relations embedded in them. Before a concept is turned to historical analysis, it is necessary to understand what it is we are invoking, and what power relations we may be reproducing with its use.

In a globalizing world, any invocation of 'sustainability' is an inherently political intervention. In *Nature and Power* there is an underlying respect for the principles of locality, a suspicion of an Anglo-American economic and social model, and an admiration for a historical continental European model of human-nature relations. However, all this embodies a political vision of the ideal relationship between humanity and the environment. The politics of invoking terms like 'sustainability' or 'environment' in historical study has yet to be subjected to adequate self-reflection by environmental historians.

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Conference Report:

The Society's Spring Conference 2008

by Erin Gill

This year's spring conference was memorable for many reasons, but is likely to go down in the Society's history as the first (almost) teetotal conference. In addition to the usual stresses and strains of conference organisation, John Broad and John Beckett had to negotiate the unfortunate combination of thirsty delegates and firmly-drawn bar shutters on both nights of the conference! Leaving aside the question of alcohol (and its absence), the University of Nottingham campus proved an attractive environment, with miles of green lawn, blossoming trees and at least one owl screeching in the night.

Elizabeth Griffiths, University of Exeter, began proceedings with a paper questioning the dominance of the landlord-tenant system. Presenting evidence of frequent use by English farmers of 'alternative agreements' that involved the sharing of financial risk and reward, particularly during the first decades of the twentieth century, Griffiths argued that England's particular brand of share-farming – farming to halves – should not be viewed as an aspect of agriculture associated primarily with the late seventeenth century. Share-farming has continued, argued Griffiths, often as a 'hidden structure' behind a more visible landlord-tenant framework. If proof were needed that share-farming is back on the agenda, she reminded us of the 'fact' that *The Archers'* arch-capitalist, Brian Aldridge, has entered into a share-farming agreement with his children Debbie and Adam.

Following Elizabeth Griffiths' paper and the enthusiastic discussion that followed it, dinner was served. It was at this point that absence of alcohol became impossible not to notice. Sensing that action was required, the ever-resourceful Prof. Beckett set off for the off-licence.

With dinner over, Andrew Powers and Tim Medlock of the Forestry Commission offered a slide show and talk giving insights into the history and current priorities of the Commission as well as a broader look at the ways in

which arboriculture has often been a sister to agriculture. Powers touched on the threat to tree seedlings posed by rabbits – 'whenever we can, we shoot them' – which I trust was noted by John Martin. It was interesting to learn that, until the 1990s, the Commission was expected to achieve a three per cent return on any site it acquired, thereby ensuring continued proliferation of plantations of the most productive timber species, regardless of their impact on local ecology or landscape.

Following Powers' entertaining and thoughtful talk, many of us made our way to the Ancaster halls of residence, where the evidence of John Beckett's sprint to the off-licence was displayed, and with which Alun Howkins proved a highly capable barman.

The programme for Tuesday 1 April began with two papers from new researchers. Mark Dawson, University of Nottingham, examined the accounts of the Willoughby family in order to demonstrate the extent to which sixteenth century gentry estates were *not* self-sufficient in food production. In addition to purchasing luxury foods, such as wine and spices, the Willoughbys bought or received as gifts a considerable amount of meat, fish, poultry and eggs. The accounts also suggest that the family purchased cattle from markets as far away as a hundred miles. Although the Willoughby family produced a good deal of its own food, and sold its surplus grain, theirs was not a completely self-sufficient life.

My own paper was next, focusing on the early history of the organic campaigning organisation, The Soil Association, and the role played by 'New Age' religion in its early history. Considering first the significance of unconventional religious belief in the life of the Soil Association's founder and early leader, Lady Eve Balfour, I went on to argue that certain Spiritualist and New Age concepts appear to have been accepted by some key figures involved in the early Soil Association. This raises the question of how the early Soil Association and the

wider organic food and farming movement in Britain should be viewed by historians.

After the coffee break, Juan Pan-Montojo, from the Autonomous University of Madrid, gave a paper about agrarian policy and change in Spain from 1836. He described the way in which, following the end of Franco's regime, historians have reassessed established views of nineteenth-century Spanish agriculture. Long dismissed as having been a period when inefficient practices were maintained at the expense of innovation, Pan-Montojo outlined a revisionist perspective. Substantial extensive growth in agriculture was achieved during the nineteenth century in Spain, following annexation of millions of acres previously held in common by villagers or held by the church. Although Pan-Montojo's paper focused on the 'myth of nineteenth-century agricultural failure', he also discussed Franco's impact on rural Spain, particularly the way in which rapid urbanization led to a collapse of the agricultural sector in the mid-twentieth century. As co-editor of the journal *Historia Agraria*, Pan-Montojo also emphasized the academic revival that has taken place, not least in the field of history, since Franco's death. Where once there were about three academic journals devoted to history published in Spain, there are now more than fifty.

After lunch we embarked on our outing to Sherwood Forest. Our bus journey took us through suburban Nottingham, with John Beckett acting as tour guide and offering a surprisingly detailed history of the city's council estates. Once in the countryside, there were views of British pig farming as well as a rather dramatic example of 'live-action' soil erosion. Meeting up once again with Andrew Powers, Tim Medlock and others from the Forestry Commission, we saw first hand how large-scale conifer plantations can dominate a landscape. Traces of the Sherwood Forest's past were pointed out; these included boundary stones, an old meeting spot known as Hanger Hill and an area where veteran oaks are being protected and where regeneration of oak woodland is being attempted. There was no sign of Robin Hood, though, despite the most delicious cakes and tea served up *en plein air*.

Traffic congestion on the return journey to Nottingham gave John Beckett a further opportunity to pass on information about the history of the area's suburbs, prompting some to question whether they knew their own home cities and towns half as well as Beckett knows Nottingham. Back at the university, a hurried but enjoyable annual general meeting was conducted, with Nicola Verdon's election as next secretary of the British Agricultural History Society confirmed. At dinner John Chartres delighted his audience by recalling past

conference mishaps and adventures, alluding briefly to the question on many people's minds: was there an bar open nearby for those wishing to socialize after supper? The answer was yes, but only if we hurried.

The first paper of Wednesday morning was given by Sarah Webster, University of Hertfordshire, whose research focuses on the Earl of Egremont and his estate. Webster described Egremont's use of two London-based surveyors, John Claridge and William Smith, as advisers on agricultural and mineral resource issues. In particular, Smith's geological investigations contributed to his later achievement – a geological map of Britain. The role of such surveyors as metropolitan 'experts' prompted much discussion about whether their advice was really of much use to Egremont, compared to the advice likely to have been available from local professionals. Were these men akin to today's management consultants, eager to recommend the same solution to every client?

Turning to livestock, Ted Collins' paper examined the revival in the use of oxen in some parts of England from the late eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth. Acknowledging that England was the first nation in Europe to replace oxen with horses – a process that began before the sixteenth century and was completed by the mid-nineteenth – Collins argued that, nevertheless, a partial revival in the fortunes of the ox occurred in some parts of England and Wales. The South West, Welsh Marches and southern and central England experienced either a temporary increase in the number of oxen or a slowdown in a reduction in their numbers during the late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Breeding played a role in this revival, with distinct breeds developed by 1820. Describing the nineteenth-century ox as 'a veritable racehorse compared to its predecessor', Collins argued that the ox returned to favour in some parts of England and Wales because it was, under certain conditions, 'the perfect work animal'.

The final paper of the conference was given by Umberto Arbarella, University of Sheffield, who emphasized the role played by livestock improvements, which began as early as the fourteenth century, in setting the stage for the agricultural revolution. The late medieval period saw greater changes to livestock management than has often been assumed, with zooarchaeological records demonstrating that significant genetic improvements in cattle were achieved during this period.

The conference ended after lunch, with thanks given to John Beckett and John Broad for putting together a stimulating and highly enjoyable 48 hours. I very much look forward to next year's event, which will be at Northampton. I'm happy to bring a bottle or two, if that's any help.

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